

Defense Ministry to Bury 1,000 Russian Soldiers in 4 Years

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Russia's Ministry of Defense has spent 53.2 million rubles (\$829 thousand) to pay for the funerals of more than 1,000 soldiers in the past four years, the RBC news website [reported](#) Wednesday.

According to a report obtained by the news outlet, the larger portion of the money was spent on burials for veterans of the Second World War and military retirees, with only 0.25 percent being spent on funeral services for actively serving military personnel who died either in training or military operations.

RBC's calculations, however, show that in the 2013-2016 period, the Ministry of Defense paid for the burial of roughly 250 active-duty servicemen each year. In 2016, the figure was 277.

The last time such statistics were published was in 2009. Then, the reports showed that, in 2008, 471 servicemen had died. Half of those deaths were due to suicide. The following year the figure was 478. After that, no such reports were published by any department for the next

five years.

According to Presidential Human Rights Council member Sergei Krivenko, RBC's calculations correspond to the army's loss figures from 2010-2011.

"Each year, the army lost about 300-400 men compared to the current 200-250, despite the fact that since then the size of the armed forces has decreased from 1.2 million to 800,000 people," Krivenko said.

Krivenko's own data shows that in the period from 2014 to mid-2015, 150 Russian service members were killed. However, he believes that the real figure could be twice as high.

Krivenko suggests that soldiers killed in Ukraine make up half of the figure from 2014-2015.

"The relatives did not disclose the place and circumstances of death [and] there was no clear information on inspections of the bodies by investigators or military prosecutors to establish the cause of death," he said.

In 2016, the Russian Ministry of Defense spent 5.9 billion rubles on funeral services. In 2017, it plans to increase that amount to 6.3 billion rubles.

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