A 2008 study released by the Rand Corporation revealed that 31% of soldiers return from Iraq with a mental disorder, approximately 300,000 suffering from PTSD, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

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The Emotional Cost of War

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor: And there are some staggering new numbers out tonight on the number of American soldiers who are coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan with wounds most of us can't see: post traumatic stress and depression. Our own Jim Miklaszewski on duty at the Pentagon tonight with more.

JIM MIKLASZEWSKI reporting:

It's the combat wound that doesn't leave any physical scars, but a staggering number of US troops from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are suffering combat stress. A new study released today by the Rand Corporation shows that 31 percent of US forces return from Iraq or Afghanistan with some kind of mental disorder; that's an estimated 300,000 who suffer from post traumatic stress, 320,000 with traumatic brain injury. Much higher than the more than 30,000 who have been physically wounded in the war.

Ms. TERRI TANIELIAN (Rand Corporation Study Author): These particular conditions, PTSD and depression, as well as traumatic brain injury, are occurring at rates that are 10 times the number of physical injuries that we're experiencing in these conflicts.

MIKLASZEWSKI: Multiple and longer combat tours increase the chance of combat stress. Twelve percent of troops show signs of stress after one combat tour. That jumps to 19 percent after two. And unlike Vietnam, where soldiers were given frequent breaks from the war, troops in Iraq and Afghanistan are constantly in the line of fire.

Colonel LOREE SUTTON (United States Army): I will tell you as a psychiatrist, I would be far more worried about someone who had that experience for 12 to 15 months and came back saying, `It didn't affect me at all.'

MIKLASZEWSKI: More troubling, the Rand report shows that only half of those who need treatment actually seek it.

Ms. TANIELIAN: There's a concern among the group that if they get help, they may be seen as weak.

Col. SUTTON: Of course, when you that have that fear, are you going to come forward and say, `I need
help.' No. That's why we as leaders have got to get the word out.
MIKLASZEWSKI: The Army is now aggressively screening soldiers for combat stress and traumatic 
brain injury. But today's report claims the numbers are so overwhelming, only half the soldiers get the 
care they need. Jim Miklaszewski, NBC News, the Pentagon.