

Beat: News

U.S. soldier shot dead in eastern Afghanistan

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USPA News - An American soldier was killed over the weekend when insurgents attacked his unit in eastern Afghanistan, the U.S. Department of Defense confirmed on Sunday. It raises the number of foreign troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year to 122. The Pentagon said one of its soldiers was killed on Saturday when enemy forces attacked his unit with small arms fire while it was on a dismounted patrol in eastern Ghazni province, which is to the southwest of the country's capital.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) classified the incident as a "direct fire attack" but gave no other details. The casualty was identified as 28-year-old Staff Sergeant Joshua J. Bowden of Villa Rica, a city in the U.S. state of Georgia. He was assigned to the 242nd Ordnance Battalion (EOD) of the 71st Ordnance Group (EOD) based at Fort Carson in Colorado, but other details about his deployment were not released. It was not known if any other service members were injured in Saturday's attack, as neither ISAF or the Pentagon usually releases such information. Bowden's death raises the number of coalition troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year to 122, according to official figures. A total of 402 ISAF troops were killed in Afghanistan in 2012, down from 566 fatalities in 2011 and 711 in 2010. A majority of the fallen troops were American and were killed in the country's south, which is plagued by IED attacks on troops and civilians. There are currently more than 100,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, including some 68,000 U.S. troops and 9,000 British soldiers. Approximately 3,800 British soldiers are expected to withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2013, with all foreign combat troops due to leave by the end of 2014. In June, Afghan President Hamid Karzai announced the fifth and final phase of security transition in which coalition forces hand over control of the remaining 95 districts - including Taliban stronghold areas in the south and east - to Afghan security forces. ISAF will still be responsible for military air support as well as support in combat operations until the end of 2014.

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