

Beat: Miscellaneous

4th U.S. service member dies after Afghanistan attack

-, 16.05.2013, 02:22 Time

USPA News - Another U.S. service member has died after being injured in a roadside bomb attack in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday, raising the death toll from the bombing to four, the coalition said on Wednesday. It raises the number of foreign troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year to 63. The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said the service member died on late Tuesday after a roadside bomb hit an American convoy in the Zhari district of Kandahar Province, which is located in Afghanistan's volatile south.

Three other U.S. service members were also killed in the blast. "The fourth service member died as a result of circumstances surrounding the same incident. An assessment is ongoing to determine the exact cause of death," ISAF said in a brief statement, giving no other details. The attack came just a day after a truck bombing killed three Georgian soldiers in southern Helmand province. The latest death raises the number of coalition troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year to 63, 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. Late last month, the Taliban insurgent group announced the beginning of its so-called spring offensive against coalition forces. A statement from the Leadership Council of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the official name of the Taliban, said this year's spring offensive will be called "Khalid bin Waleed," a reference to a famous Arab general of the Muslim army during the Muslim conquests of the 7th century. "The Afghan Mujahid nation, in defense of their religion and country, has occupied the trenches of Jihad and resistance for the past eleven years against the invading crusaders and their spineless backers," the council said in a statement on April 27. "During this lengthy period, with the Grace of Allah Almighty, the Jihadi determination and patience has only increased in perseverance by the day and, with the divine help of Allah Almighty, has handed the world a memorable defeat in every field." The insurgent group said the offensive would begin across the country on April 28 and aims to defeat the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The Taliban each year announces spring offensives against coalition forces, with an offensive called "al-Farooq" in 2012 and "Badar" in 2011. Less than a week after the beginning of the spring offensive, eight coalition service members were killed in three separate attacks across Afghanistan, making it the bloodiest day so far this year for foreign troops in Afghanistan. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attacks, but those claims cannot be independently confirmed as the group frequently makes false claims of responsibility. 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.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-981/4th-us-service-member-dies-after-afghanistan-attack.html>

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