

# *Another U.S. Army Veteran Commits Suicide*

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Phoenix, June 12 (RHC)-- A U.S. Army veteran has killed himself in an apparent suicide in front of the Veterans Affairs compound in Phoenix, Arizona. Police spokesman Sergeant Jonathan Howard told reporters that "Thomas Murphy, 53, likely died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound outside the Department of Veterans Affairs Phoenix Regional Office." Howard added: "We're still looking into this, but at this point all indications are that he did commit suicide."

Police said that the 53-year-old veteran drove to the Phoenix Veterans Affairs regional office with a goodbye letter and a loaded pistol. The Veteran's Affairs spokeswoman Jean Schaefer said that "we're unable to comment directly on this veteran's death out of respect for his privacy. We extend our condolences to his family and friends."

The agency said that Murphy served in the U.S. Army for 4 years. The former trooper was found by a witness lying in the parking lot just outside his car with a gun on the ground nearby. It was reported to police immediately and, and medical crews pronounced the veteran dead at the scene.

An activist who is the director of the local Concerned Veterans for America told U.S. media that because Murphy "left a note; it seemed pretty symbolic."

In a daunting report by the U.S. military published last year 475 active service members took their own lives in 2013, while 127 soldiers lost their lives during combat. The suicide crisis has been an issue in the military since the U.S. deployed troops to Iraq and Afghanistan more than a decade ago. The high rate of unemployment, post traumatic stress disorder and combat injuries among veterans have sharply raised the rate of suicide among them.

Another study last year found that almost half of the U.S. soldiers who have recently returned from deployment in Afghanistan or Iraq have chronic pain, and 15 percent use painkillers. A study conducted by the Veterans Affairs [VA] in 2012 concluded that there are 22 veterans killing themselves each day in the United States.

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