

**For Immediate Release**  
**Veterans For Peace: [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)**

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**Veteran Organization: “Congress Must Face Escalating Military  
Suicides. Bring the troops home now!”**

The United States military is scrambling to head off what has turned into an epidemic of suicides. As reported on CNN, 24 service members killed themselves in January of this year, six times as many as in January of last year. 2008 was the fourth consecutive year of increases in soldier suicides.

Veterans For Peace Executive Director Michael McPhearson said this is not a surprise to him. “It is tragic. It is the culmination of years of continuous deployments and general stress the Armed Services have been put under because of an invasion and subsequent occupation that should have never happened.”

The Army Times reports that Army Secretary Pete Geren has ordered a February 13, 2009, one day halt to recruitment activities also known as stand-down of the Army’s entire recruiting force and a review of almost every aspect of the job in the wake of a wide-ranging investigation of four suicides in a Houston Recruiting Battalion.

Mike Ferner, Veterans For Peace’s National President stated, “I don’t want to see anybody in Washington shed one tear for the families surviving these suicides as long as Congress continues to fund these wars and the President continues to deploy more troops. You put people through combat; you get suicides and PTSD-related violence back home. That’s the simple equation Congress and the President cannot ignore.”

One vivid example of this equation comes from the Houston Chronicle, which reported in a May 18, 2008 that an Army investigation attributed the 4 recruiter suicides to a combination of work environment, stress and personal issues. The latest was the March 6, 2007 death of Sergeant Nils Aron Andersson who shot himself in the temple less than 24 hours after his wedding to Cassy Walton. Cassy killed herself the next day.

McPhearson went on to add; “Nils Anderson’s death was nearly two years ago and the Army is just reacting to the 4 deaths in one Battalion. They should have seen these 24 deaths in January coming. Veterans For Peace is asking our members to visit with their Congressional Representatives and Senators next week to discuss these suicides, that the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan contribute to the deaths and how our economy must transition from a reliance on war spending to human needs spending. We look to Congress to take these suicides seriously and stop spending our taxes on war. Bring all our troops home now.”

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Founded in 1985, Veterans For Peace is a national organization of men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations spanning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts cold or hot. It has chapters in nearly every state in the union and is headquartered in St. Louis, MO. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary. Veterans For Peace is an official Non- Governmental Organization (NGO) represented at the U.N.

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