



Army report: Soldier suicides on the rise

By Roxana Tiron - 11/13/09 03:08 PM ET

Suicides reported among active-duty soldiers more than doubled in October, according to Army data released Friday.

The Army is investigating 16 potential suicides for October in comparison to the seven suicides reported to Army officials in September of this year. The Army is still investigating four of the suicides reported in September.

The newly released October data brings the number of reported suicides in 2009 to 133, 18 more cases than were reported between January 2008 and October 2008.



Among soldiers in the Reserve component of the Army, who are not serving on active duty, there were eight potential suicides in October, bringing the total number so far this year to 69 reported suicides among reservists. For the same period last year, the Army reported 47 suicides among reserve soldiers.

The latest Army suicide data comes as the service ramps up its suicide-prevention efforts.

"Stigma continues to be one of the most difficult challenges we confront," Brig. Gen. Colleen McGuire, the director of the Army's Suicide Prevention Task Force, said in a statement. "The more we educate our Army community about the need to get help, the need to get it early, and that a full recovery is often possible, the less stigma we'll see."

The Army chartered the suicide prevention task force in March seeking to make rapid improvements across the full spectrum of health promotion, risk reduction and suicide prevention programs. The Army in October also started a program known as Comprehensive Soldier Fitness designed to give the same emphasis to psychological, emotional and mental strength that is given to physical strength.

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