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<http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/06/28/an-epidemic-of-military-suicides/>

## An Epidemic of Military Suicides

### The Latest Victim of America's War Crimes

by TOM McNAMARA

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Box me up and ship me home

Pin my medals upon my chest

Tell my mom I've done my best

- Marine Corps Cadence

*Rennes, France.*

On June 10th of this year, Daniel Somers, a veteran of more than 400 combat missions in Iraq, killed himself. One more name to be added to the list of US veterans who have committed suicide.

It's a very long list. And it is growing at an astonishing rate. Just about every single hour, of every single day, another name gets added to it. What America's enemies could not accomplish

in hostile zones, American society appears to be able to do with complete abandon; facilitate the death of US soldiers.

It's quite an impressive accomplishment when one thinks about it, really. In 2012, the number of active duty soldiers who killed themselves was greater than the number killed in combat (about every other day a US soldier committed suicide). The same was true for 2011.

The family of Daniel Somers agreed to make his suicide note public. It can be found here.

In his final letter Mr. Somers says that he "was made to participate in things, the enormity of which is hard to describe. War crimes, crimes against humanity." He says that to return to society and to "move on in life after being part of such a thing would be the mark of a sociopath" in his mind.

He goes on to talk of being sick and injured, and of having been abandoned by his government in his time of need. Furthermore, he tells us that he is fully aware of the crisis currently going on in the US with regards to veteran suicides, citing the statistic that the number of veterans who kill themselves per day is greater than the number of children killed at Sandy Hook in Connecticut.

Think about that for a minute. The suicide epidemic among US soldiers and veterans is the equivalent of one Sandy Hook massacre every single day.

Finally, Mr. Somers talks of the freedom and peace that suicide will bring him, no longer having to be subjected to the pain, nightmares, flashbacks or hallucinations caused by what he saw and took part in Iraq.

It has been estimated that 655,000 Iraqis have died as a direct result of the US led invasion of 2003. According to the principles put forth at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal and the founding charter of the United Nations this is clearly a war crime that borders on being a crime against humanity. The war in Afghanistan and America's use of targeted drone strikes (in what can only be described as a terror campaign) can also be considered as war crimes.

One lowly US soldier found it impossible to live with himself due to his perceived complicity in America's war crimes.

How President George Bush and President Barack Obama can unapologetically live their lives knowing the deeds they have engineered, committed and are responsible for is unconscionable.

Tonight President Bush and President Obama will sleep quietly in their beds. If we lived in a correct and just society they would be on trial.

For murder.

**Tom McNamara** is an Assistant Professor at the ESC Rennes School of Business, France, and a former Visiting Lecturer at the French National Military Academy at Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan, France.

## *Notes*

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