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**Veteran Suicide Rates Drop Dramatically in Northeast Florida**

*The Fire Watch's annual statewide report represents  
the most current and comprehensive data available*

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla. May 3rd, 2023** – According to comprehensive data released today by [The Fire Watch](#), veteran suicides are down by nearly 50 percent in Northeast Florida from 2019 to 2021. Collected by NLP Logix from the Florida Department of Health and the American Community Survey, the report represents the most current data available on the crisis facing Florida veterans. The data was released at the beginning of Military Appreciation Month and Mental Health Awareness Month, both designated in the month of May.

The report details trends both statewide and in Northeast Florida, which is defined in the report as Duval, St. Johns, Clay, Baker, and Nassau counties. Veteran suicides in Northeast Florida dropped from 78 in 2019 to 42 in 2021, representing a 46 percent decrease. During the same period, veteran suicides decreased 4 percent across the entire state of Florida.

“We’re encouraged by the trends we’re seeing in Northeast Florida, where we launched the organization in late 2019. But we recognize there is still a lot of work left to do to eliminate veteran suicide,” said The Fire Watch executive director and U.S. Navy veteran Nick Howland. “At The Fire Watch, we’re committed to collecting this comprehensive data in a manner that accurately reflects the crisis among our veterans in Florida. This data helps us to better plan the implementation of our veteran suicide prevention programs. Our programs are working, and there is a role for everyone to play. Visit our website to learn how you can help us stand watch over the men and women that have served our country. Together, we will end veteran suicide.”

Among the other key findings in the report are:

- An increasing number of female veterans are dying by suicide. Although women represent 10 percent of the overall veteran population in Florida, the suicide rate for female veterans rose significantly in 2021, reaching its highest point over the past 10 years.



- As in previous years, suicide is disproportionately common in Caucasian veterans. However, there was a 3 percent increase in the proportion of minority veteran suicides statewide in 2021.
- The percentage of veteran suicides in Florida involving a firearm increased to 81 percent in 2021. That represents a six-point increase from 2019.

The Fire Watch is striving to reduce veteran suicide in Florida by empowering the community to recognize suicidal behavior in veterans. The nonprofit offers free, suicidal behavior intervention training through its Watch Stander program on its website. The training covers basic military culture and key steps supporters can take to connect veterans with life-saving resources. Currently, 4,000 supporters throughout the state have completed the training (referred to as Watch Standers) with a large majority of them residing in Northeast Florida.

To review the full data report or to register to become a Watch Stander, please visit [www.thefirewatch.org](http://www.thefirewatch.org)

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#### About The Fire Watch:

Based in Florida, The Fire Watch is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to ending veteran suicide by raising awareness of the urgent need for intervention. By training community members to recognize suicidal behaviors in veterans, The Fire Watch strives to build a life-saving network of co-workers, family and friends that stands watch over our nation's heroes and can direct a veteran in need to vital resources and certified mental health professionals. Learn how you can stand watch with us at [www.thefirewatch.org](http://www.thefirewatch.org).