



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
INSPECTOR GENERAL
Washington DC 20420**

**Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs Statement on Death
of Veteran Joseph Petit on November 9, 2012, at Atlanta VA Medical Center**

The Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) first learned of the death of Mr. Petit on the morning of November 9, 2012, when an OIG Special Agent was notified by telephone by a VA Police Officer of a possible suspicious death at the Atlanta VA Medical Center (VAMC). This notification was pursuant to requirements of VA regulations. The agent immediately responded to the facility and called the DeKalb County Medical Examiner's office en route. The medical examiner investigator met the OIG agent outside the facility and both the OIG agent and medical examiner investigator entered the scene simultaneously. VA Police had secured the scene by this time. The medical examiner directed the investigation on the scene and the removal of the decedent's body to the medical examiner's facility. An autopsy concluded the decedent died from suicide. The investigation found no foul play occurred and was closed. The investigation included interviews of the first responders and VA medical personnel.

A VAMC must conduct reviews of unexpected deaths by VA policy. For further information on any reviews conducted by the Atlanta VAMC and the decedent's medical care and treatment, please contact the VAMC.

VA OIG issued two healthcare inspection reports on April 17, 2013, concerning the Atlanta VAMC. These reports are available online at VA OIG's web site at www.va.gov/oig, as are all published reports by the OIG.

Contrary to a media report, the VA OIG had no staff on-site conducting any reviews at the Atlanta VAMC facility on the date of the Mr. Petit's death prior to responding to the VA Police notification of his death. The VA OIG's on-site visits for the reports issued in April were July 23-26, 2012, September 24-27, 2012, and February 26-28, 2013.

The OIG requests that the erroneous media report be corrected, and a retraction issued to correct the record of what happened on November 9, 2012.