



22 A DAY!

Unfortunately, many of us have family or friends who have gone the way of suicide or have attempted suicide.

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, which includes National Suicide Prevention Awareness Week, September 9-15, and World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10. During the month of September organizations highlight suicide prevention efforts by advocating for prevention strategies and networking to share resources and information. If you notice any warning signs, starting a conversation with the person may save their life. Share the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number, 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) and be willing to assist the person with the call. Taking the person directly to help can be the best option to ensure they receive the help they need.

*If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive free, confidential support and crisis intervention available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, text to 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat)*

The statistic that there are **22** veteran suicides each day — or, more than 8,000 when multiplied by the number of days in a year — is a widely cited figure in reference to veteran suicides. The Army suffered 52% of the suicides from all branches. In 2013, the VA released a study that covered suicides from 1999 to 2010, which showed that roughly 22 veterans were dying by suicide per day, or one every 65 minutes. Some sources suggest that this rate may be undercounting suicides. **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** is a leading factor in veteran suicides.

All Veterans with **PTSD** have lived through a traumatic event that caused them to fear for their lives, see horrible things, and feel helpless. Strong emotions caused by the event create changes in the brain that may result in **PTSD**. Yet only some will **develop PTSD**; the reason for this is not clear. **PTSD** is a **serious** mental condition that some people develop after a shocking, terrifying, or dangerous event. These events are called traumas. After a trauma, it's common to struggle with fear, anxiety, and sadness. But if you have **PTSD**, these thoughts and feelings don't fade away. In some cases, particularly where it is not treated, **PTSD can last** a very long time, perhaps the remainder of one's life.

To screen yourself or a family member for **PTSD** look for the following:

Persistent avoidance of distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about or closely associated with the traumatic events or of external reminders (i.e., people, places, conversations, activities, objects, situations)

Two or more of the following:

- inability to remember an important aspect of the traumatic events (not due to head injury, alcohol, or drugs)
- persistent and exaggerated negative beliefs or expectations about oneself, others, or the world (e.g., "I am bad," "No one can be trusted," "The world is completely dangerous")

- persistent, distorted blame of self or others about the cause or consequences of the traumatic persistent fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame
- markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
- feelings of detachment or estrangement from others
- persistent inability to experience positive emotions
- irritable or aggressive behavior
- reckless or self-destructive behavior
- hypervigilance
- events
- exaggerated startle response
- problems with concentration
- **difficulty falling or staying asleep or restless sleep**
- significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning not attributed to the direct physiological effects of medication, drugs, or alcohol or another medical condition, such as traumatic brain injury.

This is a call to action to prevent Veteran suicide, I am encouraging everyone to make suicide prevention your business. The **#BeThere** campaign provides some simple yet tremendously impactful ways individuals can reach out to and engage Veterans. Simple acts such as a phone call, text or email can be exactly what someone in crisis needs to hear. We need for everyone to reach out to Veterans and show support, stating that we, as a nation, must “honor the code and **Be There** for them, as they were there for us.”

Strength in Unity!
The Voice of the Enlisted

Lady Sunny Wirth
Grand Knight