



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

Commander's Message for Suicide Prevention Month

Comrades, families, and friends,

As we begin Suicide Prevention Month, I want to speak from the heart about something that touches every corner of the veteran community. We all know the terrible toll that suicide has taken on our brothers and sisters in arms. Each loss is one too many—and each one leaves a hole that can never be truly filled.

This month, I'm asking all of us to look out for one another a little more closely. Sometimes the strongest among us are the ones struggling in silence. A conversation, a phone call, or even just a simple "How are you doing?" can make a world of difference. Let's remind each other that it's okay to ask for help—and it's always okay to talk about what we're facing.

The VFW exists because we understand the unique challenges veterans face. This is a place where you are never alone, and where someone always has your back. Throughout September, we'll be sharing resources, hosting events, and reaching out to make sure nobody slips through the cracks. If you ever find yourself in need, please know that support is here—today, tomorrow, and as long as you need it.

Let's stand together in hope and solidarity. Let's make it clear that every life is valuable, and that help is always available. If you or someone you know needs to talk, the Veterans Crisis Line is open 24/7—just dial 988 and press 1.

You matter. We're in this together.

Yours in comradeship,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Harrell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Greg" and last name "Harrell" clearly distinguishable.

Greg Harrell
Commander
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"Veterans First, Families Always, Our Promise"

VFW Suicide Prevention Month Outreach Calendar

WEEK 1: Kickoff & Awareness

- Sept 1: Launch Suicide Prevention Month with a Commander's Message (video or letter) posted on all VFW channels and displayed in the post.
- Sept 2–3: Update post bulletin boards and website with crisis numbers, resource flyers, and the event calendar.
- Sept 4: Social media post: "Know the Signs: Suicide Warning Signs in Veterans." Include infographic and Veterans Crisis Line info.
- Sept 5: Email/newsletter to all members highlighting the month's events, training sign-ups, and resources.

WEEK 2: Education, Training & Community Walk

- Sept 8: Host a QPR/SAVE suicide prevention training for members and families.
- Sept 10 (World Suicide Prevention Day): Candlelight vigil or moment of silence at the post; social media post with photos and a message of hope.
- Sept 11: Partner with a local mental health organization for a "Coffee & Conversation" open house—invite all veterans and their families.
- Sept 12: Community Walk or 5K for suicide prevention. Use proceeds to fund mental health programming or donate to a relevant organization.
- Sept 13: Share a veteran's recovery story (with permission) on social media and in the post newsletter.

WEEK 3: Connection & Support

- Sept 15–19: "Buddy Check Week"—assign teams to call or visit at-risk or isolated members, and encourage everyone to reach out to a veteran friend.
- Sept 16: Social media share: "How to Start the Conversation—Tips for Checking on a Friend."
- Sept 18: Family support workshop—focus on signs to watch for and how to help a loved one in crisis.

WEEK 4: Community & Advocacy

- Sept 22: Family support workshop—focus on signs to watch for and how to help a loved one in crisis.
- Sept 24: Advocacy Day: Encourage members to contact lawmakers about supporting veteran mental health funding—provide a sample letter/email.
- Sept 25: Social media highlight: "Local Resources for Veterans"—list counseling, peer groups, and crisis lines.
- Sept 27: End-of-month BBQ or gathering—celebrate the community and share gratitude for participation; distribute resource cards and encourage ongoing support.

ONGOING (ALL MONTH):

- Weekly social media posts on mental health tips, myths vs facts, and encouragement to seek help.
- Resource table at all events and in the post.
- Encourage open conversations at every meeting.
- Collect feedback and stories to share next month.