

	<p>Veterans and Family Support Department of Missouri November-December 2023</p>	<p>Judi Reine 1022 W 7th St Sedalia, MO 65301 Judi.Reine@gmail.com (660) 287-1604</p>
---	---	--

I am so proud of all the work Missouri auxiliaries have been doing. You have filled backpacks and passed them out to homeless veterans, volunteered at food pantries geared towards veterans and sent out care packages to our troops. Great job! You are making a difference in the lives of those who served our country.

In this report I will highlight Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness.

Our veterans are our heroes and it's time we show them how much they mean to us. Many veterans returning home do so with heavy hearts and minds. We need to be proactive in looking after our heroes. Be mindful of the characteristics associated with thoughts of suicide and be watchful of our veterans' mental health. One veteran lost to suicide is one veteran too many!

The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can:

- Call 988 and Press 1.
- Call 1-800-MyVA4 1 to access all VA departments.
- Chat online at veteranscrisisline.net.
- Send a text message to 838255.

Confidential support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline number is 988 – pressing 1 after you call gets you in touch with someone trained specifically for veterans. For those who aren't comfortable verbally talking to someone, an option for texting is available by texting the number 838255.

Here's an awesome idea: have a rock painting party and decorate rocks with "Veterans Crisis Line" and "Dial 988 then press 1". Place the rocks throughout your community. It's a great way to reach people who might need help.

Under the Members Resources section in Malta, in the Veterans and Family Support section, there is a Veterans and Military Suicide Awareness Stickers template. Use it to

make your own stickers to wear at auxiliary events. When someone asks you about your sticker, tell them that the VFW Auxiliary is concerned about the rates of suicides among veterans and military personnel and that we want everyone to be aware of the unique stresses that face veterans. Make some business cards with the Veterans Crisis Line information and give them one.

Here are some other wonderful resources for Mental Wellness Support:

- **VFW Mental Wellness Campaign:** vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness
- **The Campaign to Change Direction:** ChangeDirection.org
- **Give An Hour:** GiveAnHour.org
- **Patients Like Me:** PatientsLikeMe.com/join/vfw
- **One Mind:** OneMind.org
- **The Elizabeth Dole Foundation:** ElizabethDoleFoundation.org
- **Help Heal Veterans (Therapeutic Craft Kits):** HealVets.org
- **Veterans Voices Writing Project:** VeteransVoices.org

Now is the time to start preparing for events for Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. These holidays provide the perfect opportunity to recognize our veterans with a Thank You for Your Service Coin. Coins can be ordered from the VFW Store. Host a dinner or make plans to deliver meals to homebound veterans. Send care boxes to deployed troops. It's a great opportunity to get the community and youth involved.

We can't pass up the time to honor our veterans' service to this great nation. One of the easiest ways to do this is by giving our time to serve in any way that we can to give back to those who've given so much for us. What will you do for our veterans, service members and their families this holiday season?

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and thank you for all you do for our veterans, service members, and their families!

Remember: This year all reports are being done online; if you don't have a computer, you can call or send me details about your activities, projects, and/or donations and I will enter your report for you. Please give me the information shortly after you complete your project.

Show Me Teamwork...as We Work for Our Veterans ~ Banding Together for Our Veterans