

For more information please contact:

Touchstone Veterans Outreach (headquartered at St. Andrew's UCC), Perkasio at pastor@standrewsucc.org 215.257.2880

Veterans Community Network, Co-founder Donald Glen Miller, Harleysville at veteranscommunitynetwork@gmail.com or dglenmiller@verizon.net 215.527.6203
Mary P. Miller at marypmiller1@verizon.net 215.527.6204

22ADAY Veteran Suicides We Have To Ask WHY?

Veterans Community Network (VCN), Veterans Coalition, Harleysville and Touchstone Veterans Outreach, Perkasio from Bucks and Montgomery Counties are asking WHY? They are hanging twenty-two sets of dog tags on "witting trees" in a public remembrance of the estimated twenty-two veterans who take their lives by suicide every day.

Our intention is to create awareness of the invisible deaths of veterans here on our own home front who are taking their lives. "The Witting Tree" began two years ago by Touchstone Veterans Outreach at St. Andrew's United Church of Christ in Perkasio. Each morning starting Tuesday, November 1st at 7:00am until Sunday, November 13th people will gather in reverent silence to hang the twenty-two sets of dog tags. By Veterans Day, at St. Andrew's 286 dogs tags will be on their tree in front of their church.

Glen Miller, Army Ranger, Vietnam, co-founder of Veterans Community Network shared his perspective on the suicide rate. "I travel around Montgomery and Bucks County quite a bit. Wherever I go I talk to people about our military. More often than not folks just do not know that the suicide rate for veterans is much higher than the general population." Glen asks, "Why is the veteran suicide rate 21% higher than other adults living in the United States that are not veterans?"

"New statistics are generated often. According to the Department of Defense 2016 July report, 20 veterans kill themselves daily. This number, although lower than the previously published 22 a day figure is still very worrisome. The number 20 suicides for veterans do not illuminate the sorrow, suffering, physical, and emotional pain that is behind this figure. It is important to ask why, as a community of caring neighbors, is this happening."

"The witnessing does not provide a solution to this traumatic trend. Witnessing does, however, raise the consciousness for all of us and hopefully those passing by will stop and ask or join us."

This 22ADay remembrance started as a 22PushUp Challenge by veterans to honor all heroes. Individuals around the world reached a goal of 22 million pushups to raise awareness of veteran suicide prevention through education and empowerment. The missions still continues, so keep spreading the word and keep pushing on, until 22 is 0.

Veterans Day is an official Federal holiday that honors the men and women who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. In other parts of the world, this day is called Armistice Day and Remembrance Day. This day marks the anniversary of the end of World War I, as the majority of the hostilities were formally ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 when the Armistice with Germany went into effect.



Glen Miller, co-founder of Veterans Community Network, a Vietnam veteran, and his longtime friend, Raymond Decker, hang 22 dog tags on a tree in remembrance at their home in Harleysville.