

Diana Wong  
Western Conference Chairman

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Promotional #1



*Our Veterans-Now and Forever*

I'd like to briefly introduce myself. I am a U.S. Air Force veteran, Desert Storm, serving 9 years before medically retiring. I am a 3X cancer survivor. A Member of VFW and Life Member of the Auxiliary to George O'Breece Post 401 in ABQ, NM. My family has a long line of veterans and I joined under the eligibility of myself and my father, a Korean War veteran who served 26 yrs in the Army. As a veteran I am dedicated to supporting our VA Hospitals. I have been a volunteer at our local VA Medical Center for 10 years, volunteering in many areas to include Chapel Services/Eucharistic Ministry, organizing the Women Veterans Clothing Closet, Popcorn Sales, District Council, Escorts, assisted in starting a Veterans Ostomy Support Group and helping wherever/whenever needed.

As you know September 2015 was Military Suicide Awareness Month. I hope that everyone was able to promote awareness in some way or by contacting your Senators & Representatives to make them aware of this crisis we are facing, not only with veterans currently returning home from war, but with our past generations of veterans. Let our Congress know that this crisis needs continued funding.

You can also help by contacting a local or nearby VA Suicide Prevention Representative or Program – most units will send/give you information/pamphlets on how to recognize symptoms, posters, bracelets, info cards for your wallet and other items that have the Veterans Crisis Line phone #, Internet chat and text # on it. Having that bit of contact information could save someone's life. You can give these items out at any veterans event, put them in gift bags for our veterans at the VA hospital, place them on information counters or bulletin boards at different Posts or hospitals around town, have a booth at a local restaurant, Veterans Day or State Fair. Our Auxiliary placed these items in tote bags for a Women Veterans Luncheon & Tribute Event. This info is great to give out at your meetings or for the District Hospital School of Instructions so that people are aware and may possibly recognize the symptoms or signs of someone who may be in need of help. The blue Military Suicide Awareness Teardrops are available on our website and can be worn to show our concern about the rate of suicides and the issues our military face.

**Recent studies show that 22 veterans commit suicide per day, that's one every 65 minutes.**

**Warning Signs:**

Anger or rage, sleeplessness, agitation, anxiety, mood swings, hopelessness with feelings of no way out, depression, increased alcohol or drug abuse, engaging in risky activity without thinking, withdraw from family and friends, feeling like there is no reason to live.

**Symptoms that Require Immediate Attention:**

Looking for a way to commit or talking about suicide, talking about death or dying, thinking about hurting or killing themselves, self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse/weapons, etc.

**Remember the Crisis line is open 24/7, 365 days** - Call 1-800-273-8255/Press 1, Confidentially Chat Online at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text 838255 if you need help or are concerned about someone who is distressed or suicidal.

**LET'S SHOW OUR VETERANS THAT WE ARE CONCERNED, WE CARE & THAT THEY ARE NOT ALONE**