17 ON THE 17TH

Reach One: Participation Guide

A monthly action for veterans, friends, families, and communities

WHY THE 17TH?

The 17th is our monthly reminder to turn awareness into a real connection. The campaign name is inspired by veteran suicide statistics, but no single number defines a person or a life.

THREE SIMPLE STEPS

01 **Choose someone**

Think of a veteran you know, served with, work with, or have not spoken to recently.

02 **Make contact**

Call, send a message, or invite them to coffee. Ask a genuine, open-ended question.

03 **Listen and follow up**

Give them your attention. Avoid rushing to fix things. Check back on another day.

A MESSAGE TO START WITH

“Hey, I was thinking about you today and wanted to check in. How have you really been doing? If you want to talk, I’m here.”

IF SOMEONE NEEDS MORE SUPPORT

Listen without judgment, take statements about suicide seriously, and help them connect with qualified support. In immediate danger, call 911 or local emergency services.

Veterans Crisis Line

Call 988, then press 1 | Text 838255

Chat: veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/

Protect privacy:

Share that you participated, not someone else’s identity, diagnosis, crisis, or personal story without their explicit permission.

SUPPORTER GUIDANCE

Keep the connection going

A practical, respectful approach to monthly outreach

DO

• Reach out even if you do not have perfect words.

• Ask how they are doing and give them time to answer.

• Offer specific connection: a call, walk, coffee, or another check-in.

• Respect privacy, boundaries, and whether they want to talk.

• Encourage qualified help when a conversation reveals a need.

AVOID

• Treating the 17th as the only day to check on someone.

• Pressuring a veteran to disclose trauma or personal experiences.

• Publicly tagging someone as at risk or posting their story.

• Promising secrecy when immediate safety is at stake.

• Representing this campaign as a crisis service or VA program.

SHARE THE TRADITION

Invite one friend or organization to reach out, too. Use #17OnThe17th and #ReachOne17 to share the invitation—not private conversations.

ABOUT THE NUMBER 17

The VA's 2026 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report estimated an average of 17.7 veteran suicides per day in 2024. "17 on the 17th" is a campaign name and monthly reminder, not a claim that exactly 17 veterans die by suicide each day.

Source: news.va.gov/press-room/va-releases-annual-veteran-suicide-prevention-report-updated-with-2024-data/

17 on the 17th is an independent grassroots awareness initiative, not a crisis line or clinical service, and is not affiliated with or endorsed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.