

# Veterans march to combat soldier suicide

Walk for veterans

Phil Dawson, WZZM 11:52 PM. EDT April 27, 2017



From the Desk of  
**Senator Brian Boquist**

CONNECT TWEET LINKEDIN GOOGLE+ PINTEREST

**CEDAR SPRINGS, MICH. –**

By some accounts, roughly 22 American military veterans are committing suicide every day.

Some say that is an exaggeration, but whatever the number, some west Michigan veterans say it's too many suicides.

To do something about it, a squad of former marines and soldiers are marching 92 miles up the White Pine Trail from Comstock Park to Cadillac. "92 for 22, No Veteran Left Behind" is what they call this mission. The marchers say they want to bring attention to the suicide problem and the resources available for veterans trying to cope with what they saw and did during their military service.

"And to know they are not the broken individual," explains organizers and former Marine Bart Gramek. "It is just a result of what happened back at war. The things they saw that no man or woman should have ever seen."

"There are veterans out there dealing with stuff they feel they can't talk to anyone else about," adds veteran Gary Tenhaaf. "They need to know they have people they can talk to."

The 92 for 22 marchers plan three nights and four days on the trail before reaching Cadillac on Sunday. They have a Facebook page with a link to their GoFundMe site.

They say donations will go to help disabled troops.

"We just want to raise as much awareness as possible to let veterans know they are not alone," says Gramek.

# Family of National Guardsman found dead: 'There's no shame in asking for help'

by KATU Staff, February 21st 2017

**CLACKAMAS, Ore.** -- After several weeks of searching, family members say missing Oregon National Guardsman Will Naugle was found deceased.

The Naugle family first started searching the area around the Clackamas Town Center where 26-year-old Will was last seen in late January.

Soon dozens of friends, family and fellow service members joined in. They used social media to spread the word about his disappearance, and the veteran suicide epidemic.

Will's body was found on Powell Butte on Sunday. His sister, Julie Terry, says he took his own life.

Terry says her brother wasn't the same once he returned from Afghanistan after serving with the Oregon National Guard, but they had no idea how badly he was hurting.

Instead of planning another search, now she's planning a funeral. We met her at the Willamette National Cemetery, where a headstone for Will's father Michael lies among the flags, flowers and memorials. He served more than 20 years in the Air Force, and was an inspiration to his late son.

"My aunt gave him [Will] my cousin's Army uniform, a costume replica. He would never take it off. It would be four days straight, we're begging him to let us wash it, and he would refuse to take it off," Terry recalled of Will's love for the military.

The family hopes to lay Will to rest at the cemetery as well. They also hope this tragedy serves as a reminder that we need to support our veterans once they come home.

"We have a saying in our section that whenever anyone needs assistance, 'all hands on deck,'" said Michelle Kochosky, the Branch Chief overseeing Service Member and Family Support for the Oregon National Guard.

Kochosky is a civilian, but she has her own mission. She works with the Oregon National Guard to prevent veteran suicide. She says each unit now has an embedded suicide prevention officer, and military members must undergo regular training. She says those efforts are helping but this latest tragedy shows there's still work to be done.

Now Terry is hoping Will's death serves as a reminder to always support those who fought for our freedoms.

"Speak up. Especially if a veteran has said or shared that they are having thoughts of suicide or that they've even attempted suicide. Even if they say they are okay right now, speak up," Terry said.

**As part of its commitment to end veteran suicide, the Veterans Affairs department hired dozens of responders to answer calls to the "veteran's crisis line" at 1-800-273-8255, or by text at 838255.**

Trained staff is available around the clock for veterans and their loved ones.

**Below is a list of other resources for veterans:**

- **Oregon National Guard Service Member & Family Support Office**
- **Military One Source**
- **Oregon National Guard Family Program Facebook page**
- **Oregon National Guard Child & Youth Program Facebook page**
- **Oregon Military Teen Panel Facebook page**
- **Oregon Survivor Outreach Services Facebook page**
- **Oregon ESGR Facebook page**

From the Desk of  
**Senator Brian Boquist**