

## Remembering Those Who Died – on the Battlefield and Off

On Memorial Day, we remember those who gave their lives in service to our country and reflect on their sacrifices. Nearly 27,000 Wisconsinites have given their lives on battlefields around the world, and we honor them with our thoughts, prayers, and tributes.

This Memorial Day, however, I would like to also draw attention to the casualties that occur off the battlefield – the veterans who fall to suicide. Since September 11, 2001, more than 30,000 American veterans have committed suicide – that's four times the number who were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Reports from the VA show that former service members died from suicide at double the rate of civilians. The rate for 18-34 year old veterans is almost three times as high.

Every man or woman who has served carries scars; some are visible while others remain unseen. Fortunately, resources are available. This session, the legislature specifically set aside funds to invest in suicide prevention awareness activities. On top of that, the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255 by phone, 838255 by text, or on-line at [veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net)) is available twenty-four hours a day to provide confidential support.

As we honor those who have fallen, let's make sure to remember those among us who are still carrying the weight of their service – a burden they've chosen to bear so that we all can live in freedom.