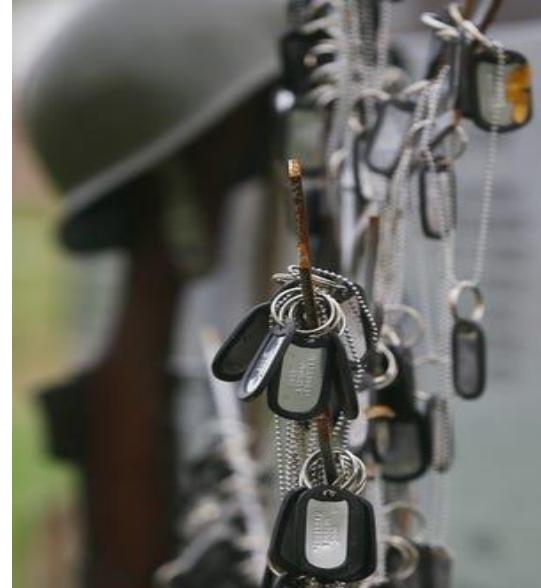


Akron-area Witness Tree ceremonies highlight veteran suicides, help mark Veterans Day



Every day, an average of 22 veterans take their lives in the United States.

"We are highlighting the issues most veterans have in returning home," said John Schluep, whose Warriors' Journey Home agency organized the events. "Veterans often say, 'The return home is the most difficult part of deployment.'"

"Veterans Day is a day on the calendar when we say thank you for your service," said Schluep, an Army veteran whose father, a Navy veteran, died by suicide.

Schluep has the goal of making Witness Trees an annual tradition in the Akron area.

To draw attention to this problem, 22 dog tags will be placed on the Witness Tree at Trinity UCC Wadsworth (High St.) from 11:00 - 11:15 am starting on Nov. 1st. The ceremony will be repeated at 11 a.m. each day through Veterans Day on Nov. 11. By then, 242 dog tags will adorn the tree. The public is invited to take part each day.

Rev. Dr. John Schluep will be bringing the Veterans Sunday message at Emanuel on November 13th.

For more information about Warriors' Journey Home of Northeast Ohio, which is based in Cuyahoga Falls, visit <http://warriorsjourneyhome.org/>.