



‘Being available to my friends and brothers: That is my mission’

At a time when more people than ever face mental health challenges, Veteran Eddie Daniel is eager to help his fellow service members.

Please note: The story below and video above contain sensitive material related to suicide that some people may find upsetting.

By Kara Corridan

When Eddie Daniel, a Premier Accounts executive for Prudential Group Insurance, served as a corpsman in the U.S. Navy, 19 of his fellow service members, and one of their interpreters, died during a ninemonth deployment to Afghanistan.

Since that deployment, he has lost twice as many in his battalion to suicide.

It’s a shocking number — but it tracks with national statistics. Research conducted by Brown University in 2021 found that 30,177 active-duty personnel and veterans who served in the military after Sept. 11, 2001, have died by suicide, compared to the 7,057 service members killed in combat during that time.

This is why Daniel and some fellow Veterans have developed what he describes as a sort of “911 service” on social media, where Veterans in crisis, or those who love someone in crisis, can reach out for help.

“It doesn’t matter if we have to drive two or three hours away. We try to find this individual so they don’t harm themselves,” he explains. “It’s almost a second job. If there’s a friend who’s struggling and they call at 2 a.m. or 3 a.m., I answer the call. Being available to my friends and brothers — that is my mission.”

In the video above, Daniel describes his decade in the military, during which he was awarded a Purple Heart for wounds received in action. He also talks about his transition to the corporate world. “I feel a sense of

responsibility to represent the veteran community as best as I can.”

Daniel says he finds camaraderie as a member of Prudential’s [VETNET](#) business resource group, which has placed emphasis on providing emotional support for its members. The group leads Table Talks, candid (and not recorded) discussions, often with members of other business resource groups, focused on mental wellness. For example, September’s Table Talk addressed suicide and post-traumatic stress disorder, among other crucial topics.

Daniels points out that while his story does not represent all veterans’ experiences, he does believe that, as an issue, “suicide should be at the forefront.”

“The friends I’ve lost are sons, brothers, fathers,” he says. “Thinking about their families in the aftermath is the most difficult thing to accept in all of this.”



The certificate that accompanied Daniel’s Purple Heart medal

About VETNET

VETNET’s mission is to make a positive impact in Prudential and our communities through professional development especially focused on the community of military veterans and veteran supporters. VETNET represents Prudential within the military veteran community, provides resources to educate Prudential associates and leadership on military veteran issues and articulates the military veteran viewpoint by providing a vehicle for communication and sharing common issues.