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Army Vice Chief Of Staff: Suicide Prevention Is 365-Day Mission

From the Army News Service:

September is suicide awareness month and while the Army will highlight suicide prevention this month, the service's vice chief said the effort is year-round.

"This is something we can't just look at in one month," said Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. John F. Campbell. "It has to be a 365-day mission to make sure we can provide our Soldiers with the tools they need to deal with the stressors of everyday life, and help them understand that seeking help is a sign of strength not weakness."

Comparing the March through July 2013 time period to the March through July 2012 time period, Army suicides have gone down slightly — by about 17. But if

January and February are included in those numbers, the Army has so far had the same number of suicides this year as it had last year during the same period: 184. In 2012, the Army reported 325 suicides.

Campbell said he's kept abreast of every suicide in the Army. He knows the numbers. And the Army researches every suicide to try to determine what might be the cause. He said that the trends show that most suicides are the result of financial or relationship issues, often exacerbated by drug and alcohol use.

The general said as a way to prevent suicides in the Army, it is critical that commanders and noncom-

missioned officers know their Soldiers that work for them. And it's important Soldiers know their fellow Soldiers as well.

“Much of it is just about knowing your Soldier, knowing if they have a financial issue, if they have gone through a breakup with a girlfriend, or if they have a problem in their marriage,” Campbell said. “It's as

simple a thing as sitting down and talking to a Soldier. A lot of time a Soldier is going to keep that to himself. The more you can figure out whether a Soldier is higher risk, you will watch them a little bit more closely and make sure they have the resources to get help.” ■

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