



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS - NEW YORK
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18 FEB 2009

MNAG-TAG

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Suicide Prevention

1. Soldier suicide is a growing concern within today's Operational Forces. Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom continue to place significant stress on our returning veterans and their families. In 2008, Army forces had 128 suicides, up from 115 in 2007. During the same period, the Army National Guard had 38 confirmed suicides nationwide. Regrettably, the New York Army National Guard has had 2 suicides within our formations since 9/11. So far in 2009, Army suicide continues to increase at an alarming rate.

2. One suicide is too many. On 15 February 2009, the Vice Chief of Staff for the Army ordered a Suicide Prevention STAND DOWN and subsequent Chain Teach program designed to inform Leaders, Soldiers and Families about suicide prevention programs, resources and training. I whole heartedly support this effort. NYARNG Commanders and Leaders must embrace suicide prevention as a force protection issue. NYARNG Commanders and Leaders over the coming months will institute such a Suicide Stand Down and Chain Teach program within their units.

3. We must use all available resources to help Soldiers and families in need. Over the next few months we will commit our efforts to this Stand Down and training. MNOT will provide specific Suicide Prevention Stand Down and Chain Teach Instructions under separate cover. The DMNA Suicide Prevention Program Manager, LTC Kelly Hilland will coordinate Suicide Prevention Training for MACOM and Brigade sized unit Suicide Intervention Coordinators. During our comprehensive Yellow Ribbon Reintegration efforts we will speak candidly on suicide prevention. Family Programs will use its support system to provide Suicide Prevention training to our Family Readiness Groups and Volunteer network. During the Commander's call 24-25 April 09 I look forward to hear of your innovative strategies and progress.

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4. Remember, any Soldier or family member in distress or requiring immediate suicide prevention assistance may call the Veterans Administrations hotline at **1 800 273-TALK**. This VA hotline is available 24 hours a day. Soldiers and family members will be assisted by a trained Veteran counselor.



JOSEPH J. TALUTO
Major General, NYARNG
The Adjutant General

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