



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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MAR 22 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Establishment of the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee

We have the strongest military in the world because we have the strongest team in the world. It is imperative that we take care of all our teammates and continue to reinforce that mental health and suicide prevention remain a key priority. One death by suicide is one too many. And suicide rates among our Service members are still too high. So, clearly we have more work to do.

To that end, I hereby establish the "Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee" (SPRIRC) to address and prevent suicide in the military, pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (section 738). The SPRIRC will conduct a comprehensive review of the Department's efforts to address and prevent suicide. The result of this review will be a report to me and to the congressional armed services committees detailing actionable improvements to policies, programs, processes, and resources to prevent these tragedies in our military. The review will require visits to specific military installations, focus groups, individual interviews, and a confidential survey of Service members at the designated locations. The SPRIRC will review relevant suicide prevention and response activities, as well as actions underway on my immediate actions on addressing sexual assault and recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, to ensure SPRIRC recommendations are synchronized with current prevention activities and capabilities. The SPRIRC shall conduct such other activities as it deems appropriate.

Consistent with Congressional intent, I have approved the following installations as the initial designated locations for review. These installations were selected in coordination with the Military Departments to increase DoD's understanding of the needs of various geographies, to include geographically-isolated areas and installations outside of the contiguous United States. The review of these initial installations will yield recommendations for the Department that can be applied at enterprise scale across our Force as we collectively take action to address this issue.

- Fort Campbell, Kentucky
- Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
- Naval Air Station North Island, California
- Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada
- Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska
- Fort Wainwright, Alaska
- Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska
- Camp Humphreys, South Korea

- North Carolina National Guard

Within 60 days of this memorandum, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) will issue a memorandum identifying the members of the SPRIRC, the timeline for installation visits, and the SPRIRC charter that will outline the approach to our comprehensive and collective efforts. The SPRIRC will commence its work no later than May 14, 2022, and will begin installation visits no later than August 1, 2022. By December 20, 2022, the SPRIRC will send an initial report to me for review, in advance of sending a report of findings and recommendations to Congress by February 18, 2023.

As I have said many times, mental health is health – period. I know that senior leaders throughout the Department share my sense of commitment to this notion and to making sure we do everything possible to heal all wounds, those you can see and those you can't. We owe it to our people, their families, and to honor the memory of those we have lost.

