"Marines of the Ozarks"

COMMANDING OFFICER'S POLICY STATEMENT ON SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide robs us of our most precious asset, the individual Marine. Unfortunately, some Marines feel overwhelmed by stressors or by a sense of loss in their lives and choose to remedy that situation by making a permanent choice, by killing themselves. Once done, it is done, irreversible. Given that, suicide prevention is important to each and every one of us.

My philosophy for preserving Marines is rooted in small unit leadership, all the way down to the peer level. Leaders must know their Marines, what may be troubling or isolating them, and what resources can help. Leaders must also ensure all their Marines are trained to recognize the signs of distress in fellow Marines, and more importantly, what to do about it. Trained peers are in the best position to recognize changes in personal habits and behavior patterns that are out of the ordinary, often long before someone in the chain of command recognizes them.

The Detachment Suicide Prevention program will be a component of a larger Detachment Force Preservation program that will integrate available resources and programs to keep Marines healthy and safe--physically, mentally and socially—and able to withstand the trials and tribulations life may bring. Information will be disseminated to all hands on the many resources available to aid people in enhancing their physical, mental, and social well being, such as Master Resiliency Training, Anger Management classes, alcohol abuse prevention programs, services offered by the hospital's Behavioral Medicine Department, and Strong Bonds retreats.

The Marine Detachment Suicide Prevention Officer is Chaplain Storie who can be reached at (573) 433-0884. He is assisted by Gunnery Sergeant Wilkinson from Military Police Instruction Company who can be reached at (573) 596-2163. Chaplain Storie stands ready to provide pastoral counseling, and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). Both he and Gunnery Sergeant Wilkinson will assist in coordinating training, raising awareness of the causes and effects of suicide, and proactively directing Marines to appropriate resources.

No Marine gets left behind in battle—no Marine gets left behind in this arena either. Never leave a person alone who is contemplating suicide, no matter how remotely possible. Immediately take positive control of the situation and find someone to help. Your chain of command and the Suicide Prevention team are always available. Working together we can preserve our Marines.

Colonel N. A. Springer
Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Detachment, Fort Leonard Wood