



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

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

SUBJECT: Support to the Force During the Holiday Season

With the holiday season upon us, I want to take the time to wish our Service members, DoD civilian employees, and their families the happiest of holidays. I truly appreciate your hard work, dedication, and sacrifice over the last year to accomplish our important mission, one in which your contributions are profoundly important.

The holiday season can be joyous for many, a time to connect with family and friends, share meals, and spend time with loved ones. These acts of connection help reduce feelings of loneliness, bolster our mental health and wellness, and can protect us from tragic outcomes. Even small acts of connection, such as checking in on each other, can greatly protect against negative outcomes and promote resilience during challenges.

For some, the holidays can also be a time of increased anxiety, stress, and overall heightened emotions. We cannot ignore this reality and want to remind you that you are not alone. This year's suicide prevention campaign, "Joining Your Fight: Connect to Protect," centers the Department's commitment to mental health and resilience initiatives, promoting life-saving resources and crisis response systems, and focusing on suicide prevention and response capabilities for the Total Force. You are our greatest resource, and to accomplish our mission, we must prioritize and protect our entire well-being. We know that good sleep hygiene, healthy eating habits, regular exercise, and reaching out for help are all factors that make us stronger and better able to fulfill our duties. We can go further in protecting our family, friends, and loved ones by creating a culture of lethal means safety, by using gun locks and gun safes for firearms, and by securing household poisons. Studies show that putting time and distance between suicidal thoughts and the means to act can save a life.

For Service members who are struggling or need help for a loved one, help is available. Please connect with chaplains and faith leaders, get non-crisis support through Military OneSource, or contact TRICARE, which can connect anyone with mental health and counseling services. If you are a suicide loss survivor, we know that losing a loved one to suicide is difficult and can come with complicated emotions. Support is available to help you navigate this life-altering loss.

To anyone in distress, please dial 988 to access the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for free and confidential support 24/7. Selecting Option 1 will connect to the Veterans Crisis Line/Military Crisis Line, which provides help for Service members, veterans, and their loved ones. For Service members serving overseas, the Veterans Crisis Line/Military Crisis Line

provides specialized lines based on geographic area. Civilian employees can access confidential help through the Employee Assistance Program.

Veterans and Military Crisis Line *(Service members, veterans, and their families)*

CONUS

Call: Dial 988 and press 1

Text: 838255

Chat: VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat

For TTY Users: Use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988.

OCONUS

Europe: +1 844-702-5495 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)

Pacific: +1 844-702-5493 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)

Southwest Asia: +1 855-422-7719 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call: 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Visit: <https://988lifeline.org/>

Chat: Text with a Crisis Line responder – Send a text message to 838255

For TTY Users: Use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988.

Military OneSource

Free, confidential, non-crisis support for eligible Service members and their families

Call: 800-342-9647

Chat: livechat.militaryonesourceconnect.org/chat

Website: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>

Employee Assistance Program

Provides eligible civilian employees resources, information, and confidential help 24/7

Call: 800-222-0364

Website: <https://magellanascend.com/>

Please look out for each other, yourself, and your families during this holiday season. Thank you for your commitment and effort to support the Department's priorities and for your dedication to this great Nation. I look forward to seeing you all return safely in 2025!



Ashish S. Vazirani

Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness