



DEFENSE SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE

QUARTERLY CONNECTION

News and Announcements

Lethal Means Safety Flyer

As we move through the winter season, it's important to prioritize safety at home, especially when it comes to securely managing medications and firearms. DSPO has developed a [guide](#) providing practical tips to reduce risks and promote overall well-being.

The tips featured in the guide are especially important during the winter months, as seasonal stress and reduced daylight can increase vulnerability. Taking simple actions, such as using lockable storage containers or sharing lock combinations with a trusted person during times of distress, can make a big difference in preventing harm.

Protect yourself and those you care about this winter by practicing safe storage. Download the [New Year, Safe Storage flyer](#) and other lethal means safety resources on the [DSPO website](#).

Chaplain's Roundtable Recap



Chaplains serve a critical role as confidential counselors and bridge support service within the military community. On January 13, 2026, DSPO brought together military

chaplains from across the Services, suicide prevention leaders, mental health partners, and policy and training stakeholders at the Mark Center in Alexandria, VA, to discuss fostering resilience and reducing suicide risk within the military community.

This gathering underscores how chaplains support suicide prevention, response, and postvention efforts.

The roundtable featured dynamic sessions in which participants discussed the suicide prevention landscape and did a deep dive into a chaplain's role during a crisis. Breakout groups explored best practices for navigating postvention efforts with compassion while implementing practical tools for suicide prevention and care.



WINTER 2026

Director's Corner



Dr. Alicia Matteson
DSPO Acting Director

Our Department's suicide prevention efforts require a "Whole of DoW" approach as we each have a role in protecting ourselves, each other, and our units and communities from suicide.

At DSPO, we remain steadfast in our dedication to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts. This means partnering with offices and agencies across the DoW to equip the Total Force with resources to address challenges, encourage help-seeking, and ensure that leaders and peers recognize their ability to make a positive impact.

We encourage everyone to speak up and connect to care and support if you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, self-harm, or other mental health-related crises.

Together, we can, and we will, save lives!

Are you or someone you know experiencing suicidal thoughts?

Reach out to a free, confidential counselor at the Veterans/Military Crisis Line: dial 988 then press 1, text 838255, or chat online by visiting www.veteranscrisisline.net.





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Face Your Dragon: Keep It Secure to Save Lives



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) and Department of War's *Face Your Dragon* public service announcement (PSA) is a powerful new addition to the national conversation on lethal means safety and suicide prevention. Featuring U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Rudy Reyes alongside fellow Service members and Veterans, this PSA emphasizes the importance of creating time and space between thoughts of suicide and access to lethal means.

The PSA, part of the broader [Keep It Secure](#) campaign, demonstrates the weight of suicidal crises many warriors face and that help is available to navigate moments of crisis. [Watch Face Your Dragon here.](#)

WINGS Act Addresses Brain Health, TBI, and Suicide Risk Among Service Members

The bipartisan Warrior Impact from Neurological and G-Force Stress (WINGS) Act was introduced in July 2025 to study the long-term brain health impacts of military aviation service. The legislation directs VA to examine how repeated G-force exposure and flight stress may contribute to traumatic brain injury (TBI), cognitive changes, and mental health challenges over time.

By improving understanding of these neurological risks, the WINGS Act aims to strengthen prevention, early detection, and treatment efforts. This research is especially important as TBIs and neurological stress are known risk factors associated with depression and suicide.

Connect to Protect

In a [Message to the Force](#) sent ahead of the 2025 holiday season, the DoW reinforced its commitment to preventing suicide and strengthening the well-being of the Total Force. Initiatives like the Brandon Act, which empowers Service members to confidentially seek mental health support through their chain of command, play a crucial role in breaking barriers and reducing stigma.

By promoting proactive measures and making resources more readily accessible, the DoW demonstrates that suicide prevention is a shared responsibility. Together, we can join the fight and connect to save lives and ensure every Service member and their family has access to the care they deserve.

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