

## **The Department of Defense to Recognize Installations for Exceptional Suicide Prevention Efforts**

Every year in September the Department of Defense (DoD) focuses on suicide prevention and education during Suicide Prevention Month. While it is important that we build-up the momentum going into the September observance, the focus on suicide prevention is not just once a year -- but every day. This annual observance is a major force for raising public awareness and mobilizing communities to prevent suicide. As part of this observance, the DoD recognizes installations for their dedicated and influential efforts to build community support for suicide prevention. In 2017, the following installations were the recipients of the DoD Suicide Prevention Outreach Recognition:

- Army: United States Army Garrison Italy;
- Marine Corps: Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia;
- Navy: Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington;
- Air Force: 35th Fighter Wing, Misawa, Japan; and
- Reserve Component: United States Army Reserve Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

These recipients offered a variety of innovative activities in their multi-component programming for Suicide Prevention Month. One installation implemented a visual campaign that included a Suicide Prevention Month banner with over 100 personalized messages of support. This was placed at the Base Exchange and was viewed by nearly 10,000 Service members, families, DoD civilians and local community members. Many offered dynamic, interactive trainings, workshops and presentations addressing the signs of suicide and strategies for intervening with Service members or Veterans who may be at risk for suicide. These targeted leadership, Service members, their families, Veterans, as well as students and staff at DoDEA schools on base. Several recipients incorporated push-up challenges and suicide prevention awareness walks to promote awareness of suicide among Service members and Veterans. To build bridges to base and community resources, one installation scheduled a soccer tournament which teamed Service members with helping professionals; while another organized a scavenger hunt to find local resources. Various items were disseminated that emphasized the theme to “BeThere”, which is DoD’s emphasis. Other awareness products included dog tags and bracelets with the Military Crisis Line number, and wallet cards listing national and local resources.

Nominations for the 2018 DoD Suicide Prevention Month Outreach Recognition are accepted by the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) until November 30, 2018. Suicide prevention events and activities eligible for this recognition include: a) Installation event(s) and activity/activities conducted wholly or partially with DoD assets directed at Service members, Veterans, their families and DoD civilians; or b) Installation event(s) and activity/activities supported strictly by voluntary efforts of DoD personnel targeted to appropriate populations, with or without contributions from other non-DoD sources.

Nominations will be evaluated by a Recognition Committee on the following criteria:

- **Audiences:** Event(s) and activity/activities targeted specific populations.
- **Participation:** The nominations documented participation in Suicide Prevention Month observances (photos, website or social media posts, newspaper articles, etc.). Nominations that do not document Suicide Prevention Month participation will be disqualified.
- **Effectiveness:** The effectiveness of the installation's event(s) and activity/activities were determined by apparent and measurable events, such as the number of personnel who participated, various populations participating, survey outcomes, etc.
- **Timeliness:** Event(s), activity/activities and achievements occurred between September 1 and 30, 2018.

Guidance for submitting nominations is available on the DSPO website (<http://www.dspo.mil/2018SPM/>). Recipients will be announced in January 2019, and an award ceremony will be held in the National Capital Region during May 2019.

While the DoD is recognizing suicide prevention outreach efforts during September's Suicide Prevention Month, it is important to #BeThere for yourself and others every single day. Everyday connections can make a big difference to someone feeling alone, in need or having thoughts of suicide. If you or someone you know is in crisis, there is help. You can call the Military/Veterans Crisis Center at 1-800-273-8255, press 1, or visit <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/> 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.