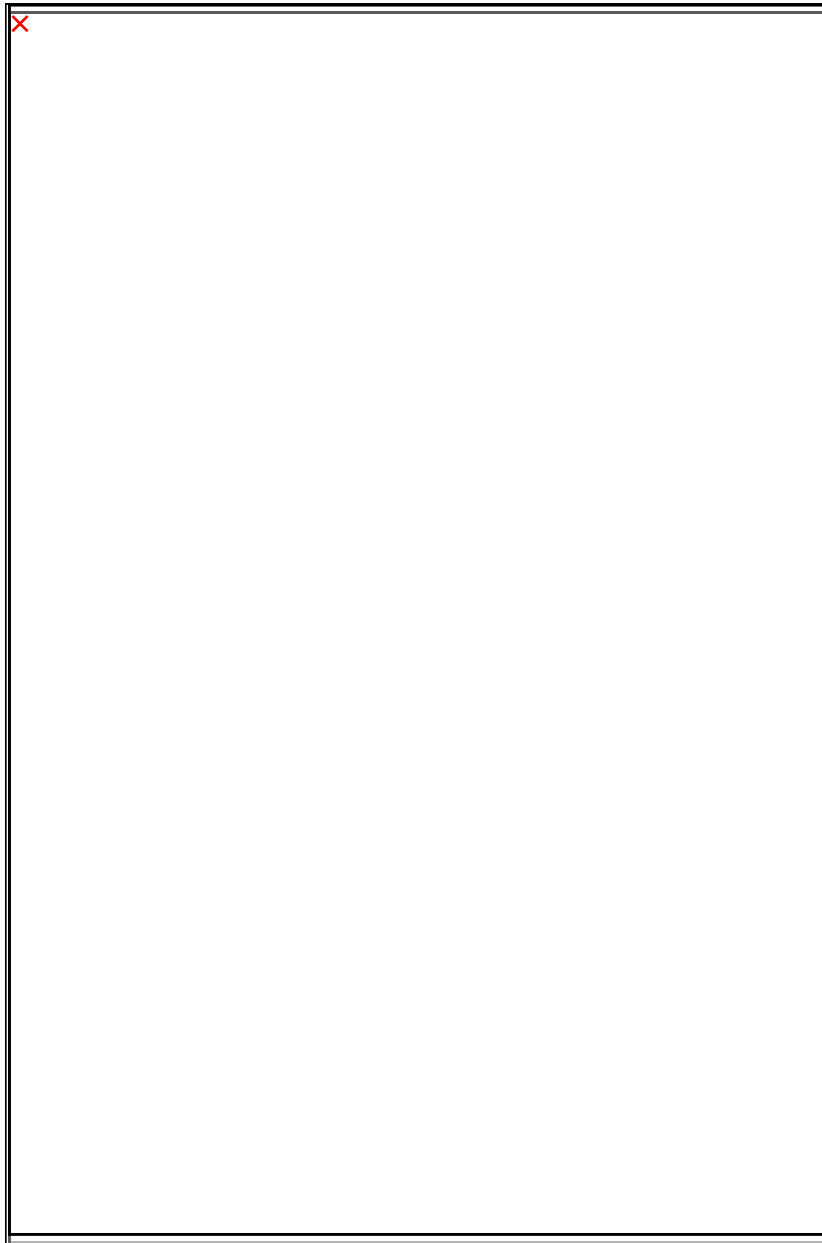


Army focuses command attention, leader education on suicide prevention

by Carol Kerr and Thomas Zimmerman

Army focuses power, attention on suicide prevention



Sep 24, 2012 – Worldwide, the Army will stand down from daily operations and focus on suicide prevention awareness.

At Carlisle Barracks and the Army War College community, Suicide Stand Down Day will bring command attention and senior leader education to the challenge of military suicides.

Check here for ...

[HELP AND RESOURCES](#)

This is for you: Stand-down, Thursday, Sept. 27 activities --

Shoulder-to-Shoulder Walk/Run, 6:30-7:30 a.m. -- start and end at Indian Field -- Starting with reveille, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo will briefly speak before leading off a

set-your-own-pace community run/walk: your choice of a 5K run or 1-mile walk. This active community gathering is encouraged for military and civilian employees, Army War College students, families -- and pets! with educational postings along the route. Return to Indian Field for coffee,

bagels and oranges upon completion.

Command Focus: Maj. Gen. Cucolo and Dr. Tom Williams [Senior Leader Development and Resilience Program] will address the Army War College student body in Bliss Hall, **8:30 - 9 a.m.** Presentations will be broadcast to all interested members of the community in **Reynolds Theater.**

Deeper Look, 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., Reynolds Theater -- All community members are invited to view a special video presentation of *The Other War* produced by Dunham Army Health Clinic to raise understanding of post-deployment issues and the neurobiology of post-traumatic stress, with following discussion.

Army War College student exercise, concurrent with the Reynolds Theater video presentation -- a leader-focused exercise for which students will review policies and resources and help craft potential policies, drawing from the cross-section of experience in each seminar to help inform senior leaders about what's working well and what they see as potential strategies to mitigate the suicide risk. The student exercise will harness critical thinking, leader responsibility, and "the wisdom of the crowd," according to Dr. Tom Williams, director of the War College's Senior Leader Development and Resiliency Program, who designed the stand-down exercise to create sharper understanding of policies, processes and culture.

Health Fair, 10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. in Root Hall Gym, open to the entire Carlisle Barracks community - will leverage and share the expertise of those who counsel and work with Soldiers, Families, Veterans and Retirees. 20 partners from on and off Carlisle Barracks will provide health and resiliency information. **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** Enter post at "Claremont & Jim Thorpe Roads, Carlisle 17013

Participants: Holy Spirit Hospital, Military One Source, Defense & Veterans Brain Injury Center, American Red Cross, Health Net, Harrisbur Veterans Center, Essentials for Wholeness, Army Wellness Center, Leslie Hoover Soldier Project, Dunham Army Health Clinic Behavioral Health, Tranquility Salon & Wellness, Divine Wellness, Hypnosis Office of Carlisle, TEMPLE Family Center, Camille Baughman & Associates, Carlisle Family YMCA, Military Family Life Counselor, Lifestyle Entrees, and multiple Carlisle Barracks counseling offices

Facilitated stand-down discussions, in small work groups, scheduled by group leaders

MORE, this week --

Gatekeeper training, Wednesday, Sept. 26, 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Upton Hall's command conference room. A small-group 'gatekeepers' awareness-building workshop for those who can learn to recognize

signs in spouses and friends, and know what to say, how to help – led by Dunham’s Behavioral Health therapist Dr. Inez Roe. Limited seating: call 245-4602.

Chaplains’ presentation, Friday Sept. 28, 11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. in Upton Hall. The military chaplains' special perspective: *Sustaining the Soul of a Soldier*. Open to all

WHY, this attention? --

The numbers tell part of the story: 38 Soldier suicides in July alone – 116 Soldiers lost to suicide in this year’s first seven months. For a Service that identifies by the warrior ethos tenet -- “I will never leave a fallen comrade” -- the Army’s focus on suicide prevention awareness is designed to heighten awareness, resiliency, risk assessments, and targeted training.

“To combat [suicide] effectively will require sophisticated solutions aimed at helping individuals to build resiliency and strengthen their life coping skills,” said Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, who ordered the Army-wide suicide "stand down" Sept. 27 to focus tremendous time, personnel and attention to a formidable problem.

Austin’s insights for making progress in combating suicide has guided the plans for Suicide Prevention Month and for the Suicide Awareness Stand-Down at Carlisle Barracks where senior officers and NCOs and their Families comprise much of the community.

Month-long awareness and education activities create opportunity **to build awareness, strengthen community ties, and create a heightened commitment to resiliency.** Among them --

- **Army and National Football League** announced an initiative to work together to improve awareness of traumatic brain injury and increase into its causes, prevention and treatment, Aug. 31
- **Army Wellness Center** officially opened a new Public Health Command initiative offering expert assessments and individualized guidance for building physical fitness and resiliency across all of our community’s military, civilian, retiree and Family members, Sept. 14, 10 am, at 315 Lovell Avenue

Since 2010, suicide has outpaced traffic accidents, heart disease, cancer, homicide and all other forms of death in the military other than combat.

"... suicide continues to be a major concern. It's something that is vexing to us, and we have studied it incredibly hard," said **Gen. Ray Odierno**, Chief of Staff of the Army, during a recent visit to Ft. Hood. "We're focused on this, and we're going to sustain our focus on this."

“Suicide is the toughest enemy I have faced in my 37 years in the Army,” said Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III,

vice chief of staff of the Army. “We must continue to address the stigma associated with behavioral health. Ultimately, we want the mindset across our force and society at large to be that behavioral health is a routine part of what we do and who we are as we strive to maintain our own physical and mental wellness.”

Army response: better access to quality behavioral health care, effective screening, better documentation of mild TBI and PTS, improved leader awareness of high-risk behavior

The Army has been working aggressively to increase the number of behavioral health providers by 83 percent since 2007, according to The Surgeon General of the Army, **Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho**. Now, the effort is to embed those providers into brigade combat teams, as well as to make behavioral health a part of a Soldier's primary care experience.

"It's making sure that behavioral health -- the mental and the spiritual, the total aspect of our Soldiers and our family members -- is in the fabric of who we are and it's one component of wellness," Horoho said.

Increased screening of Soldiers' physical and behavioral health occurs before, during, and after deployments.

Dunham Army Health Clinic's Traumatic Brain Injury team is skilled in assessing and treating predominately mild TBI and residual symptoms related to other more serious TBI and PTSD diagnoses, for personnel who have recovered enough to leave major medical centers.

Comprehensive neuropsychological assessments are available to diagnose and help identify and understand any cognitive problems or symptoms that may be a result of any type of TBI. Other services have been developed specifically to evaluate and treat symptoms that are related to TBI, such as depression, chronic headache, balance issues, dizziness, fatigue, vision problems, and sleep disturbance.

Access to care: Personnel eligible to receive medical care in a military treatment facility can schedule an appointment for assessment by calling Dunham Army Health Clinic Behavioral Health at 717-245-4602 or the Clinic Care Line at 717-245-3400 or toll free at 1-877-787-2569. Eligible beneficiaries include active duty, retired and TRICARE For Life military personnel. Veterans no longer eligible for care in a military treatment facility can receive further evaluation at a Veteran's Administration facility; find one at

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?dnum=ALL&STATE=PA>

