



COMMANDING OFFICER'S STATEMENT ON SUICIDE PREVENTION



Suicide prevention is maximized in our formations when leaders at all levels, most especially Non-Commissioned Officers and first-line supervisors, practice the art of servant leadership and ensure every Marine, Sailor, and civilian Marine is fulfilled in his or her primary duty, receives continuous personal and professional development, and feels like an integral part of a high-performing team. Units that train hard and smart, provide opportunities for resident PME and advanced MOS training, achieve measurable results and, most importantly, do it all together in an inclusive fashion – those units stand out and thrive. My goal is for MCLB Albany to always be one of those stand-out units.

Inevitably, even in units with strong foundations as described above, stressors and challenging circumstances can cause cracking that requires our collective attention. Arguably, the critical first step is to become familiar with the baseline behaviors and habit patterns of your peers and those in your charge. Any negative deviation – such as someone who's normally punctual but now tardy, normally physically fit but now struggling, or normally highly motivated but now less so – requires immediate and sustained attention, as these are indications that one or more stressors may be present. In these situations, it is imperative that leaders ask questions, be intrusive, show genuine concern, and identify which stressors are at hand.

Statistically, the stressors that most often lead to harmful behaviors are intimate relationship problems, mental health issues, and legal or administrative action, among others. Often, one of us has been through the same or similar situation currently affecting someone and therefore has a precious opportunity to share that life experience and perspective with someone who needs it. I have personally been through many trials in my life, as have others, and we are all here to help whenever and however needed. For those uniquely challenging problems that are beyond our capability to handle “kneecap to kneecap”, the Chaplain, medical providers, substance assessment counselors, and many other invaluable resources are standing by and 100 percent committed to your care.

To all Marines, Sailors, and civilian Marines of MCLB Albany, please know that my command team and I care about you, deeply value the daily contributions you make to our team, and want nothing more than to see every one of you thriving both personally and professionally. To that end, I trust you will have the comfort and courage to come forward and let us know if there is more we can do to help.

Semper Fidelis,

STEPHEN A. RITCHIE
Colonel, United States Marine Corps
Commanding Officer
Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany

Resources for you or a teammate:

DISTRESS Hotline (877) 476-7734
DoD Safe Helpline (877) 995-5247
Veteran's Crisis Line (800) 273-8255
Military OneSource 24-Hour Hotline (800) 342-9647
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-TALK

Command Duty Officer (229) 639-5202
Community Counseling Center (229) 639-5252
Naval Branch Health Clinic Albany (229) 639-7886
Suicide Prevention Program Officer (229) 639-6073
Base Chaplain (229) 639-7426