



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 10 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER
CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR OF COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM
EVALUATION
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR LEGISLATIVE
AFFAIRS
ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC
AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR OF NET ASSESSMENT
DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES OFFICE
DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

This April, we are observing our 13th Annual Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. In those 13 years, we have made significant progress in addressing the crime of sexual assault; **recent events reinforce that we have much more to do.**

The theme for this year, "Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission," reminds us that sexual assaults are crimes with an undeniable impact on individuals, and affect a unit's warfighting readiness. We must ask ourselves, "What can I do to protect those to my left and right? What can I do to ensure we are at peak warfighting readiness?"

It starts with protecting each other. All Service members, regardless of rank or job, must uphold their Military Service's values and standards of conduct. Stopping sexual assault begins with respecting one another in all aspects of our interactions, including—as we have recently seen—communications via social media. Inappropriate behavior online contributes to a culture that begets other misconduct, including the devastating crime of sexual assault. Such behavior cannot be tolerated.

We are all part of a team and need to work together to prevent crimes that affect us and our warfighting readiness. We must never lose sight of our goal to eliminate sexual assault from our military. The men and women with whom we are privileged to serve deserve nothing less.

John Matis



OSD004363-17/CMD006132-17