COMMANDING OFFICER,
MARINE TACTICAL AIR COMMAND SQUADRON-18

SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

Ensuring for the well being and safety of every Marine and sailor in MTACS-18 is a priority. Suicide is a widespread problem and one of my top concerns. We must make every effort to help prevent our fellow Marines and sailors from taking this drastic and unnecessary action. I ask that everyone in the squadron, to include families, practice suicide awareness and immediately seek help for anyone displaying suicidal intentions.

Suicide numbers in the Marine Corps reached a record high in 2009, and suicide continues to be a leading cause of non-combat related deaths in the organization. A number of different factors can lead to suicide, including relationship issues, financial concerns, time away from family, post-traumatic stress, and problems at work. Suicide can often be prevented if the warning signs are detected early and help is provided.

Unit leaders in the squadron must train their personnel to recognize the indicators of suicidal behavior and what steps to take to help those in need of assistance. Never hesitate to help anyone showing signs of depression and be particularly attentive to those that openly express suicidal intentions. Never assume that a suicide-related comment is harmless. Statistics show that most people who attempt suicide have given some sort of indication of their intentions beforehand. Never leave someone alone if they appear to be suicidal. Talk to them and let them know you want to help. Seek assistance immediately and inform the chain of command. The individual must always be examined by a medical officer to determine what steps should be taken from there.

Marines endure a great deal of stress, yet often keep their problems to themselves to avoid appearing emotionally weak. Such behavior is counterproductive and can have devastating consequences. If you are experiencing depression or thoughts of suicide, do not hesitate to speak with someone. Immediately seek help from your chain of command. The Commanding Officer and Sergeant Major are always willing and available to provide you help and support. A number of other resources are available to assist you, to include MCCS, Base Medical, a 24-Hour Civilian Suicide Hotline (1-800-SUICIDE), and a 24-Hour Marine Corps Suicide Hotline (1-800-273-TALK).

For more information on suicide prevention, contact the Chaplain at 636-3156 or 090-6861-4634, or the Group Surgeon at 636-3570.

Semper Fidelis,

S. M. KAMPEN
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding

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