



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

**4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000**

APR - 6 2005

**PERSONNEL AND
READINESS**

**MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
DIRECTOR, PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT
DIRECTOR, FORCE TRANSFORMATION
DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES**

SUBJECT: National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month – April 2005

National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month traces its origin to “Take Back the Night” and other grass root events in the late 1970s. Those activities sought to raise public awareness of and provide a forum for victims of sexual assault. In 2003, Congress passed a bipartisan joint resolution that President George W. Bush signed into law establishing National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

As we begin our 2005 observance of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, I wish to emphasize that the Department of Defense (DoD) does not tolerate sexual assault of any kind.

During the past six months, DoD has developed a comprehensive, Department of Defense-wide sexual assault policy (available at www.defenselink.mil/releases), and we are now vigorously working with the Military Departments to implement these measures to enhance our prevention and response to incidents of sexual assault. These policies include a clear Department-wide definition of sexual assault as well as guidance on an array of subjects such as confidential reporting, increased victim support, sexual assault response coordinators, victim advocates, a commander’s checklist to help guide unit leaders, baseline training standards for first responders, education programs for all Service members, pre-deployment training, and increased collaboration with civilian service providers. The Department has also mandated the incorporation of sexual assault prevention and response training into all initial entry programs, to include officer commissioning programs as well as all leadership development and Professional Military Education programs.

Please ensure that your observances increase individual awareness of sexual assault and its consequences in addition to underscoring the vital role that each and every one of us has in combating this crime.

Thank you for the variety of commemorative events planned for National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and for your support in putting an end to sexual assault.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles S. Abell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" being the most prominent.

Charles S. Abell
Principal Deputy