MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS
CHIEFS OF THE MILITARY SERVICES
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

As leaders of the Department of Defense, we share a commitment to ensuring the safety and welfare of our people as well as the health of this institution and the trust of the American people. Our collaborative efforts to combat sexual assault are making a difference in the choices of victims who are seeking care and reporting in unprecedented numbers. Still, we must continue to sustain our commitment to developing and employing essential reforms to enhance the administration of military justice, increase accountability, and ensure a healthy and respectful command climate throughout the Armed Forces. As we work together to overcome underreporting of this crime, it is essential that victims have confidence in our accountability and response systems.

In the past year, we have all taken aggressive action to improve victim confidence, including the creation of dedicated legal support to victims, enhanced access to victim advocacy, and increased training and awareness for the entire force. Furthermore, we are working to implement the most sweeping reforms to the Uniform Code of Military Justice since 1968. We will continue to engage victims to ensure their voices are heard and to field responsive services to the men and women who suffer the terrible wounds of this crime. As seen in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, more victims are reporting this crime and accessing support. The FY13 Annual Report, however, clearly demonstrates a persistent problem and an urgent need to step up our efforts to prevent this crime.

Preventing sexual assault in the military requires a personal commitment from all Service members, at every level, to be a steadfast participant in creating an appropriate culture and upholding standards of behavior and military core values. We can and will address the entire continuum of harm by embedding prevention principles throughout the Department and underscoring the importance of individual actions to establish an environment of dignity and respect. Ultimately, we must ensure that every Service member understands that sexist behaviors, sexual harassment, and sexual assault are not tolerated, condoned, or ignored. Every Service member must live our values and possess the social courage to act to reduce risk, safely and proactively intervene to stop inappropriate behavior and to report crimes.

Therefore, I am directing the implementation of the attached 2014-2016 DoD Sexual Assault Prevention Strategy, which through a collaborative Department-wide approach, provides
authoritative guidance on delivering consistent and effective prevention methods and programs. This plan builds on your efforts and identifies leaders at all levels as critical components in prevention and integrates accountability, community involvement, communication, deterrence, incentives, training, education, and harm reduction. The Secretaries of the Military Departments, with input from the Chiefs of the Military Services, and Chief of the National Guard Bureau (NGB) will report back to me on implementation of this strategy by July 31, 2014, with a copy to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)).

In addition, I am directing immediate implementation of the following measures to further strengthen our shared approach to sexual assault prevention programs:

- **Advance and Sustain Appropriate Culture:** To further enhance prevention programs, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, in conjunction with the Chiefs of the Military Services and NGB, will update and integrate gender-responsive and culturally competent programs for leaders and Service members to address healthy relationships, active bystander intervention, social courage, and core values that support the establishment of mutual respect. In addition, the Chiefs of Military Services will review policies that influence culture and behavior on military installations and in units, and adjust policy within their purview, as appropriate. Report your implementation plans and methods, and recommendations to me through the USD(P&R) by November 1, 2014.

- **Evaluate Commander SAPR Training:** To ensure that all leaders are educated on sexual assault response policies and provided the appropriate tools to prevent the crime, the USD(P&R) will conduct assessments of the effectiveness of newly-developed core competencies and learning objectives for Pre-Command and Senior Enlisted Leader Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) training. USD(P&R) will report findings to me by September 1, 2014.

- **Review Alcohol Policies:** To improve safety and reduce the risks posed by alcohol, the Secretaries of the Military Departments will review and as necessary revise alcohol policies to address risk factors beyond the individual use of alcohol, to include such matters as training of alcohol providers, emphasizing responsible sales practices, and engaging local community leadership and organizations to expand efforts off-post. Report your implementation plan and methods to me through the USD(P&R) by November 1, 2014.

- **Improve Reporting for Male Victims:** To promote recovery among male victims, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, in conjunction with Chiefs of the Military Services and NGB, will implement and monitor methods to improve reporting and enhance efforts to encourage male victims to seek assistance. Solicit male victim input in the development of these methods. Report your implementation plan and methods to me through the USD(P&R) by January 5, 2015.

- **Develop Collaborative Forum for Sexual Assault Prevention Methods:** To leverage and advance ongoing research and effective preventative methods, the USD(P&R) will establish a community of practice and collaboration forum to share best and promising practices and
lessons learned with external experts, federal partners, Military Services, NGB advocacy organizations, and educational institutions. USD(P&R) will report the implementation plan and methods to me by August 1, 2014.

- **Develop Standardized and Voluntary Survey for Victims/Survivors:** To further improve our collective response by engaging victims, the Chiefs of the Military Services and NGB, in cooperation with the USD(P&R), will jointly develop and participate in a standardized victim survey. This survey tool will provide the sexual assault victim/survivor the opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences with SAPR victim assistance, the military health system, the military justice process, and other areas of support. The survey shall be developed collaboratively and regularly administered in such a way that protects victim privacy and does not impact adversely victim legal and health status. The USD(P&R) will report the joint methods and implementation plan to me no later than June 1, 2014.

Considerable efforts are underway to combat sexual assault. Our success depends on a continued proactive, focused, and comprehensive approach. Our mission can only be accomplished when everyone understands their role in preventing this crime. Your strong leadership has been and will continue to be essential in our prevention efforts as the words and actions of leaders set the tone of dignity and respect. If leaders establish the right climate, Service members will be clear on what they need to do to prevent sexual assault and victims will feel more confident in accessing support. These initiatives and plans, in addition to our ongoing efforts, provide a roadmap for this Department to enable military readiness, establish an enduring culture of dignity and respect, and eliminate this crime from our military.

Thank you.

Attachment:
As stated

cc:
Under Secretaries of Defense
Commanders of the Combatant Commands
Inspector General of the Department of Defense
Assistant Secretaries of Defense
Directors of the Defense Agencies
Directors of the DoD Field Activities