NGB-ZA   1 April 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADJUTANTS GENERAL OF ALL STATES, PUERTO RICO, THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS, GUAM AND THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SUBJECT: Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) – April 2010

1. Each year in April the Department of Defense and National Guard observe Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). This year's theme is **" Hurts one. Affects all. Preventing sexual assault is everyone's duty."** As part of SAAM's activities in April, I encourage every leader in the National Guard to take time to call attention to the damage sexual assault causes, not only to an individual, but also to overall readiness and unit cohesiveness. All leaders are able to begin to change the culture that allows sexual assault by ensuring that all units conduct required annual sexual assault prevention training.

2. Sexual assault prevention must focus on stopping offenders before they act and by teaching bystanders to safely intervene when they recognize inappropriate behaviors that may lead to sexual assault. We can do this by ensuring Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) and Victim Advocates conduct annual prevention training for all of our people.

3. All leaders also have the responsibility to create a climate where our service members feel respected and part of the greater purpose. In order to fulfill any state or federal mission, we rely on our biggest resource – our people. Our overall climate must always reflect respect for all of our people. If a climate exists which tolerates sexual assault, our people cannot feel part of the greater Guard Family and we've done a serious disservice to our greatest resource.

4. Sexual assault degrades mission readiness and is at odds with our core values. It is the responsibility of all men and women in the National Guard to "Never let Your Guard down." Remember that preventing sexual assault is everyone's duty.

CRAIG R. MCKINLEY
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