



United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School  
**INSIDE SWCS**

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

## BEING THE DIFFERENCE

By Angela E. Kershner

A chance phone call late one evening, coupled with prompt actions of personnel at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, helped a Soldier in crisis on the other side of the world.

A chaplain was trying to reach the 82nd Airborne Division here at Fort Bragg and instead reached Bryant Hall at SWCS. "I don't know what's up with my phone, but I get calls for the 82nd all the time," said the officer assigned to the G-3 who picked up.

The chaplain had been contacted by a young specialist who was worried about a friend – a fellow Soldier currently serving with the 82nd in Afghanistan. Through a series of e-mails, the specialist became concerned about the deployed Soldier and sought the chaplain's counsel. Convinced that the Soldier had been "unequivocally talking of committing suicide," the chaplain was trying to reach someone at the 82nd.

Since the call came in after normal duty hours, and given the immediacy of the situation, the SWCS officer decided to take action. Lt. Col. Corey Weller and the officer had been working on a project when the call came in. After quickly talking about the details, he and Lt. Col. Weller discussed how to secure help for the Soldier.

They informed SWCS leadership and contacted individuals whom they knew to be in a position to facilitate help. The unique structure of the U.S. Army allows each Soldier to form an extensive database of contacts from previous and current assignments. "Just having the network in place sped it up exponentially," said Lt. Col. Weller.

## SWICK HITS

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Click [here](#) for several resources from the Army's Suicide Prevention Program.

Click this [here](#) to watch an Army training video on suicide prevention.

For additional resources on suicide, please visit [Military OneSource](#).

### NETWORKING

Ms. Dee Ray, executive administrative support to the CG at SWCS, will speak about her experiences during "[Wallflower no more! How to be a better networker.](#)" a Firestar presentation.

It will be held in the JFK Auditorium at Kennedy Hall on Feb. 23 at 10 a.m.

### EFFICIENCY

Think about efficiency: You don't have to be a Lean Six Sigma Ninja to make your work place more efficient. The command at SWCS is very receptive to ideas and new initiatives to increase efficiency.

Managers: consider tying efficiency initiatives to your office's performance awards program.

### NEW M.O.S.

Forty students will begin the first 18L course on Feb. 20. This course is designed to bring students from a 1/1 language proficiency to a 2/2 and deepen their cultural understanding. The course will be taught in Pashto, Urdu, Dari and Arabic (Iraqi). This course increases the operational capability of our force in both communication and cultural expertise.

### CAAS & POAS

The second group of Soldiers to attend the pilot assessment and selection programs for Civil Affairs (CAAS) and Psychological Operations (POAS) start Feb. 29.

The courses will test the mental agility of the candidates and determine if they possess the desired ARSOF attributes necessary to excel as CA and PSYOP Soldiers.

The current non-attrition model will be used for the next couple of years to allow SWCS to gather data, develop the course and plan financial estimates for DA and SOCOM support.

### OVERTIME

Only 2% of the SWCS civilian pay budget is provided to support overtime. Conserving those resources for critical periods and requirements is necessary. This doesn't mean that overtime has been eliminated; it means that managers should scrutinize work plans and eliminate overtime as much as possible. All overtime must be authorized.

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Within 20 minutes they had received a response that the Soldier had been located and immediately escorted to a combat stress clinic for evaluation. "A couple of phone calls and a couple of emails – it was heartening to see caring, senior leaders get involved," said the SWCS officer. "Any cry for help, I think we should take seriously."

The U.S. Army has seen a steady rise in suicides over the past decade. Last year there were 160 active-duty suicides reported and 78 suicides among reservists. Both statistics are a marked increase over the reported suicides in 2008 and every unit has the potential to be affected. Even SWCS has been touched by suicide in the recent past.

In an effort to decrease further tragedies, the Army has implemented several programs. The Army Suicide Prevention Task Force was formed under the ongoing Army Campaign Plan for Health Promotion, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention. Combat stress clinics have been set up in Iraq and Afghanistan to provide help for Soldiers currently deployed. A variety of resources are also available online 24-hours a day, accessible by all Soldiers and their Family Members. Last year a partnership was formed with the National Institute of Mental Health combining the power of four research universities to thoroughly analyze the disturbing increase.

Deputy Directory of the Army Suicide Prevention Task Force Col. Christopher Philbrick discussed the partnership with NIMH in a U.S. Department of Defense news release. "Our assessment will give us the data we need to make decisions about how our programs should be expanded or adjusted, while at the same time maintaining our focus on saving Soldiers' lives."

As in the case of the deployed 82nd Soldier, friends and Family are often the first line of defense against suicide. Fellow Soldiers and coworkers also play a role. "Any suicide is a tragedy. We have a stern challenge considering the stress our Army is under. Suicide prevention takes serious effort and personal involvement from everyone," said Brig. Gen. Bennet Sacolick, deputy commanding general of SWCS.

"The military is not just a culture, it's a family and we each have an individual responsibility to care for our teammates," said Lt. Col. Weller.