SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 14 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Preserving the Force

From Memorial Day through Labor Day, many of us will face increased exposure to hazards at home and on the job. Warm weather and longer days combine for greater opportunities to travel, play sports, and enjoy recreational activities of every kind. As leaders, we must prepare ourselves and engage our people to ensure we exercise sound judgment and focused leadership to lessen the vulnerability of our uniformed and civilian workforce to unique summertime hazards. One loss is too many. The preservation of our force is a national security imperative.

While the actions you took last year resulted in fewer losses than the year before, we still lost 59 noble warriors to a variety of fatal mishaps, primarily motor vehicle crashes and water-related activities. Therefore, I challenge you to build upon your excellent efforts from last year to continue this downward trend. To safely enjoy an active season this summer, each of us must learn and heed those lessons painfully gleaned from past mishaps. The personal use of known best practices such as proper diet and sleep hygiene, responsible use of alcohol, regular physical exercise, and driving without distraction will help ensure all are prepared to tackle the critical work of defending the Nation. Uniformed and civilian personnel alike must leverage every available tool to prevent injuries as well as the loss of valuable material and equipment.

The opportunity to lead this Department is humbling, and I am truly honored to serve the world's finest military, civilian personnel, and their families. Thank you for your selfless service to the Nation and enjoy a safe and healthy summer season!

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