



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF

WASHINGTON, DC

**MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM/FOA/DRU CC
AF/RE**

DEC 17 2001

**FROM: HQ USAF/CC
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670**

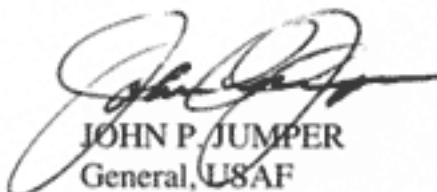
SUBJECT: High OPSTEMPO Suicide Prevention

Since the inception of the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program, Air Force suicide rates have fallen significantly. During the last four years we averaged 32 deaths per year for a rate of 8.9/100K. This compares to an average of 65 suicides annually and a rate of 13.5/100K for the previous ten years. Despite our efforts, 35 active duty airmen have been lost this year.

The basic principle behind the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program is to involve the community in meeting the needs of those who serve and their families, whether that community is at their home installation or in the deployed environment. This is consistent with our tradition of "taking care of our own." During this period of high OPSTEMPO, the increase in stress experienced by active duty airmen and their families can have a significant impact on readiness and mission accomplishment.

As we begin the new year, we must remember that some of our personnel and their families are separated from their loved ones, often for the first time. Encourage your units to embrace those who appear withdrawn or isolated, and ensure they are familiar with the resources available through the Integrated Delivery System at each installation.

Now more than ever we must remain vigilant. I urge leadership at every level to engage our community support agencies to provide a safety net for all airmen and their families, especially those in need.


JOHN P. JUMPER
General, USAF
Chief of Staff