



2021 DOD/VA

Suicide Prevention CONFERENCE

Make Every Connection Count



‘O28’: Building Social Connectedness in the Reserve Component during the ‘Other 28 Days’

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Reserve Component (RC) Suicide Prevention Efforts

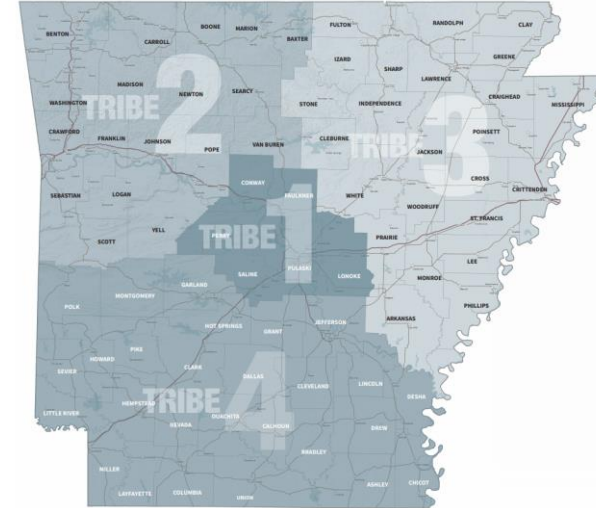
- **The vast majority of suicidal actions occur outside of ‘drill weekends’**
- **Active Component approach applied in a RC environment**
- **All Service Members are trained in basic suicide surveillance and response (‘ACE’ – Ask, Care, Escort)**

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- **How do we increase the effectiveness of our suicide prevention, surveillance and response in our geographically dispersed RC environment?**

O28 Pilot Program Overview

- ‘MWR-type’ events are conducted regionally during the other 28 days outside of drill *(program does not interfere with unit training objectives)*
- RC Service Members build relationships during events with other SMs who reside in their same communities
- These relationships bridge the gap of suicide surveillance and response outside of drill weekends *(when traditional measures can be ineffective)*



O28 builds Mental Resiliency

- Resilience skills are taught by certified MRTs in a more conducive learning environment



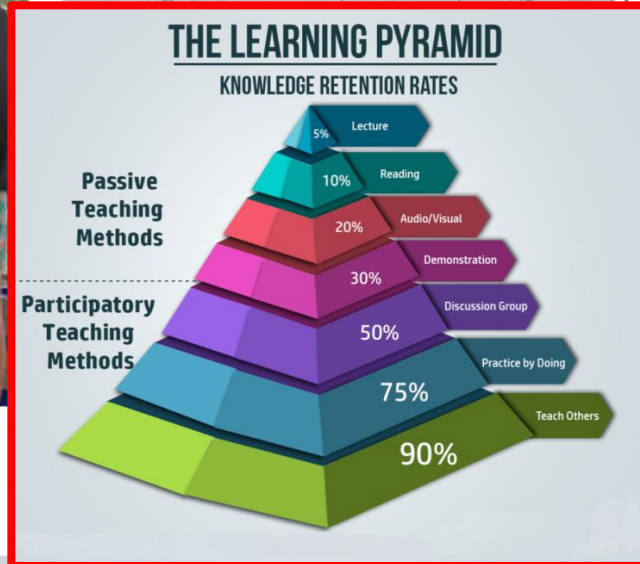
ARKANSAS NATIONAL GUARD
O28

POST-EVENT SURVEY – SCUBA, 01 August 2020

Name (optional): [REDACTED]

Contact info - cell # or email (optional): [REDACTED]

Are you in the Army or Air NG?	What is your Age?	What is your Gender?	What year did you join the NG?
Air NG	23	Male	2015



11. Did you learn of any NG 'quality of life' programs that you were previously unaware of? ☒ YES ☐ NO

12. Suppose you felt trapped or stuck in a stressful situation. How likely or unlikely is it that you would use each of the following ways to deal with our cope with the situation? **CIRCLE ONE**

	very unlikely	unlikely	neither likely or unlikely	likely	very likely
Ignore the situation			<input checked="" type="radio"/>		
Deal with the situation on your own or try to fix it				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Ask someone in the NG to help you try and fix it				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Ask someone outside of the NG to help you try and fix it				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	

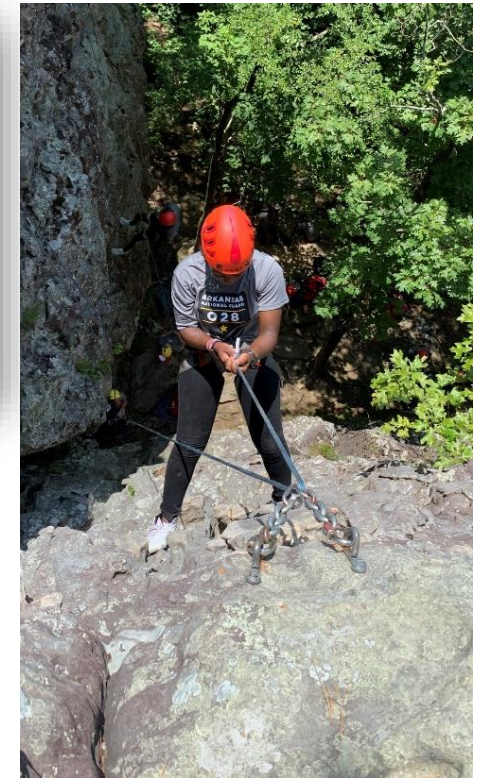
13. Has the NG met your expectations? ☒ YES ☐ NO

14. Please use the space below to tell us what the NG can do better?

★ Continue to grow this program. It shows very clearly that you care about my mental health as much as my physical health. If I'm required to pass PT exams and workout my body at drill, then there should be an equivalent to exercise my mental resiliency. This program proved to be a great equivalent today.

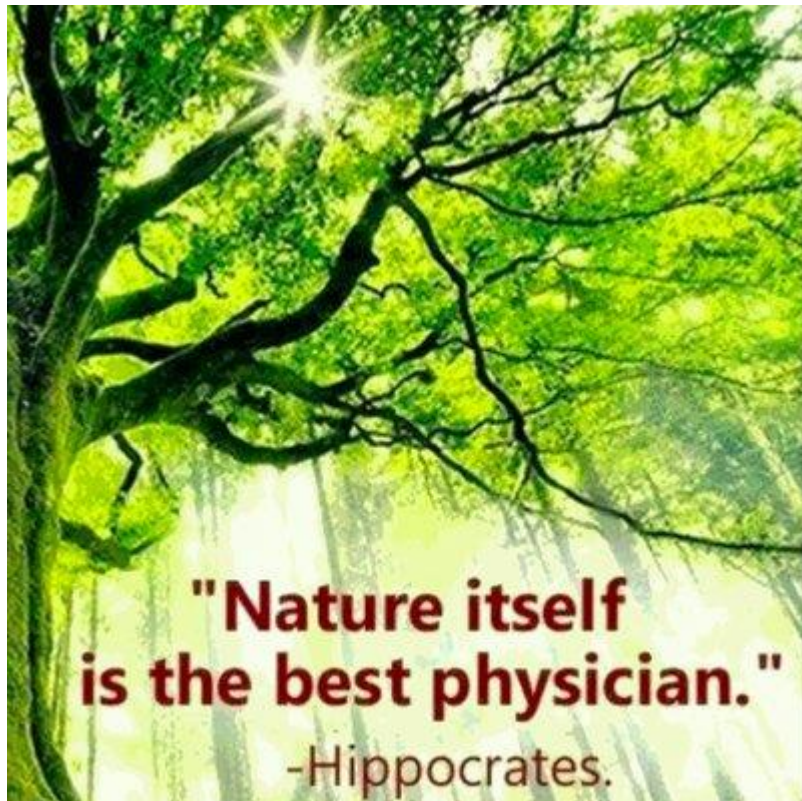
O28 builds Physical Resiliency

- Instills intrinsic motivation to achieve Total Force Fitness objectives
- Introduces SMs to group activities that replace sedentary past times



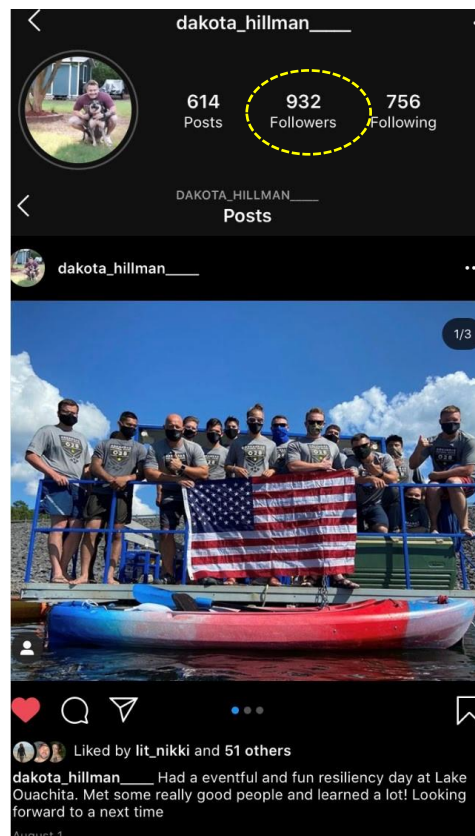
O28 builds Healthy Coping Mechanisms

- Cortisol levels and prefrontal cortex activity drop after only 15 minutes in nature
- Service Members are taught effective ways to 'self medicate' through time in nature



O28 Enhances Recruiting and Reduces Attrition

- Events provide content that SMs share with peers (P2P recruiting increases market reach)
 - Promotes a 'military family' culture that enhances likelihood of reenlistment



Events provide opportunities for SMs to build relationships with like-minded comrades who are committed to remaining drug free. Removes SMs from negative peer pressure environments

One Hundred Sixteenth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Friday,
the third day of January, two thousand and twenty*

An Act

To make certain improvements relating to the transition of individuals to services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, suicide prevention for veterans, and care and services for women veterans, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment Act of 2020” or the “Veterans COMPACT Act of 2020”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF TRANSITION OF INDIVIDUALS TO SERVICES FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Sec. 101. Pilot program on information sharing between Department of Veterans Affairs and designated relatives and friends of veterans regarding assistance and benefits available to the veterans.

Sec. 102. Annual report on Solid Start program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE II—SUICIDE PREVENTION

Sec. 201. Department of Veterans Affairs provision of emergent suicide care.

Sec. 202. Education program for family members and caregivers of veterans with mental health disorders.

Sec. 203. Interagency Task Force on Outdoor Recreation for Veterans.

Sec. 204. Contact of certain veterans to encourage receipt of comprehensive medical examinations.

Sec. 205. Police crisis intervention training of Department of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 203. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON OUTDOOR RECREATION FOR VETERANS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 18 months after the date on which the national emergency declared by the President pursuant to the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID–19) expires, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a task force to be known as the “Task Force on Outdoor Recreation for Veterans” (in this section referred to as the “Task Force”).

(b) COMPOSITION.—The Task Force shall be composed of the following members or their designees:

- (1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- (2) The Secretary of the Interior.
- (3) The Secretary of Health and Human Services.
- (4) The Secretary of Agriculture.
- (5) The Secretary of Defense.
- (6) The Secretary of Homeland Security.
- (7) The Chief of the Army Corps of Engineers.

(8) At least two representatives from veterans service organizations.

(9) Any other member that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines to be appropriate.

(c) CHAIRPERSONS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior shall serve as co-chairpersons of the Task Force (in this section referred to as the “Chairpersons”).

(d) DUTIES.—

(1) TASK FORCE.—The duties of the Task Force shall be—

(A) to identify opportunities to formalize coordination between the Department of Veterans Affairs, public land agencies, and partner organizations regarding the use of public lands and other outdoor spaces for facilitating health and wellness for veterans;

(B) to identify barriers that exist to providing veterans with opportunities to augment the delivery of services for health and wellness through the use of outdoor recreation on public lands and other outdoor spaces; and

(C) to develop recommendations to better facilitate the use of public lands and other outdoor spaces for promoting wellness and facilitating the delivery of health care and therapeutic interventions for veterans.

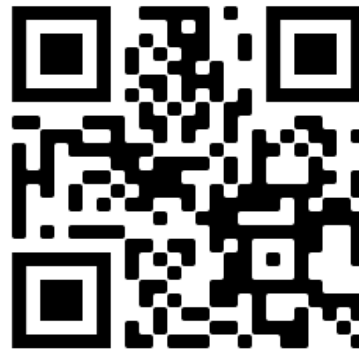
Can O28 data assist the Interagency Task Force in carrying out the duties of HR 8247?

Questions / Discussion / Suggestions

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QR code for a video overview of the O28 program