



Army Health Promotion and Risk Reduction Campaign

# Suicide Prevention Across the U.S. Army

**DoD/VA Suicide Prevention Conference  
14 January 2010**

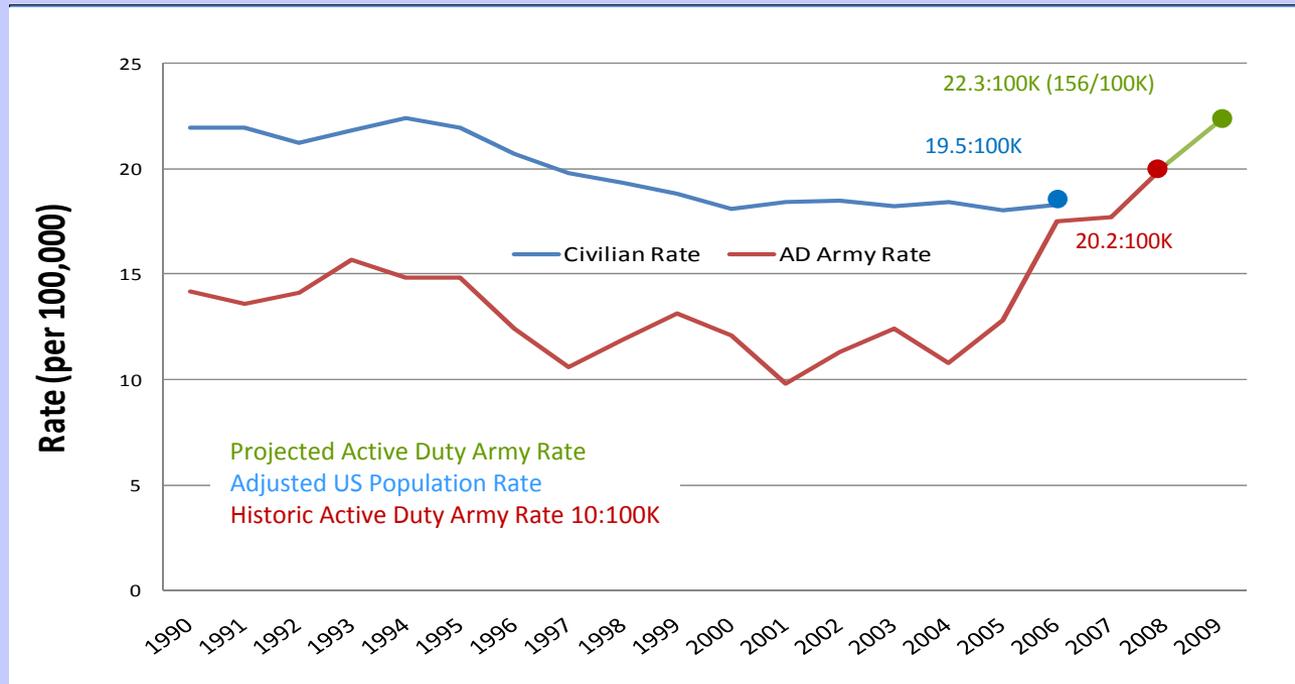
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## Army Suicide Prevention Overview

### Suicide Rates



- Army suicide rate has been historically lower than the US population rate
- From 2001 to 2006, the “adjusted” US population suicide rate was steady at 19.5:100K while the Army rate doubled from 10:100K to 20.2:100K



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## Army Suicide Prevention Overview

### Risk Factors/Stressors

#### Institutional Risk and Soldier Behavior

Soldiers with poor life decisions-making skills and who are prone to impulsive behaviors are “adapting” themselves to high risk operational and personal environments.

#### Inexperienced Company-Grade Leaders

- Risk takers
- Not products of “good order and discipline” Army of the 1990s
- Training to clear pre-deployment requirements
- Unclear on “Art of Commanding in the Garrison”
- Not focused on UCMJ / separations
- Not aggressively pushing support services – instead focused on deployment cycle activities

#### High Risk Soldiers + Inexperienced Leaders =

#### High Risk Behavior

- Undetected Suicidal behaviors
- Sexual assaults and violent crimes
- Infidelity and failed relationships
- Drug / alcohol abuse
- Sleep deprivation
- Vehicle and motorcycle accidents
- Impulsive behaviors
- UCMJ Offenses

*“Because subordinates learn best by doing, leaders should be willing to take calculated risks and accept the possibility that less experienced subordinates will make mistakes.” FM 6-22*

- Focus on both individual and institutional risk factors and stressors



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### Initiatives

- Established Task Force – Mar 09
- Published ACPHP – Apr 09
  - Identified over 250 discrete tasks for HQDA implementation
  - Over 90% complete as of 1 Dec 09
- Published FRAGO for comprehensive program review - Nov 09
  - Detailed recommendations for program revisions to VCSA by Apr 10 <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/default.asp>
- Assisted in the development and fielding of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program
  - Long term assessment / development program to build resilience and enhance Soldier performance
  - <http://www.army.mil/csf/>



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### Way Ahead

- Expansion of Task Force focus to include examination and assessment of the full scope of programs that attend to the overall mental health and well being of the force
  - Identify / categorize / assess plans and programs that address Army “stressors”
- Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers (STARRS) study support
  - Initial IPR with NIMH Dec 09
- Development of metrics and standards to measure program success