DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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JUL 2 6 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Secretary's Special Assistant for Military Deployments

Today I am announcing the establishment of the new position of Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Military Deployments (SA/MD) effective immediately.

Responsibilities of the Office of the Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses (OSAGWI) are transferred to the SA/MD. Effective with this transfer, the position of the Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses is abolished. During a transition period, Dr. Bernard Rostker will serve as the Special Assistant along with his other responsibilities as Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness).

The new Special Assistant will continue the work of OSAGWI in support of Gulf War veterans, but will be in a position to address health-related deployment matters for on-going and future deployments, and will continue to work with Veterans and Military Service Organizations and individual veterans. We remain as committed as ever to helping veterans of the Gulf War and to addressing the many health issues that remain.

The description of the duties of the new SA/MD is attached. I ask all DoD organizations and personnel to provide the SA/MD the same support and cooperation they provide to OSAGWI.

I request that the Director, Administration and Management, in consultation with Dr. Rostker, develop a proposed chartering DoD Directive for the SA/MD based on the attached duties. I further request that those administrative, financial, and other support actions needed to implement this memorandum be completed within 60 days.

Rudy de Leon

Attachment
As stated

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Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense
for Military Deployments
[June-27-00]

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, the Special Assistant for Military Deployments is responsible for advising the Secretary on deployment matters as they pertain to force health in the Department of Defense (i.e., the physical and mental well being of deployed service members and civilian personnel). The SA/MD is responsible for accounting to the Secretary, and, as appropriate, to the Congress, the Executive Branch, veterans, and the American people for force health issues within his cognizance that arise during deployments and on the battlefield. The SA/MD will proactively develop, as appropriate, and work with cognizant offices on the implementation of lessons learned. As directed by the Secretary, the SA/MD will conduct outreach to the Total Force, Veterans and Military Service Organizations, veterans, and the public concerning military deployments.

The SA/MD will advise the Secretary on force health aspects of deployment activities, including aspects of doctrine, policy, readiness, and medical research, within his cognizance. However, the SA/MD shall not engage in policymaking, oversight and execution of deployment activities, which remain the responsibility of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness), the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics), Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commanders, and the Secretaries of the Military Departments, as prescribed by law and regulation. In exercising his authorities and responsibilities, SA/MD will coordinate with those officials having deployment policy, oversight, or execution responsibilities.

Specifically, as determined by the Secretary, the SA/MD will:

- Advise the Secretary on the force health aspects of deployment activities within his cognizance, including,

  - Reviewing the findings of investigations, inspections, and exercises related to force health aspects of military deployment activities conducted by DoD Components. Where appropriate, submit recommendations for corrective actions to the Secretary of Defense.
  - Collecting, analyzing and assessing information concerning the force health of military deployments from servicemembers, veterans, and DoD Components.
  - Using hazard modeling to aid the investigation and explanation of force health-related incidents occurring during deployments.
  - Responding to force health deployment-related questions or issues raised by the Military and Veterans' Health Coordinating Board and its working groups and estimating and reporting their impact.
  - Maintaining an information system and database that support the investigation, knowledge sharing and reporting of pertinent force health-related deployment information.
  - Publishing, as appropriate: case narratives, information papers, and environmental exposure reports.
  - Maintaining capability to respond rapidly to urgent deployment related issues, as tasked by the Secretary.

- Develop and report on force health lessons learned from deployments for consideration by cognizant DoD officials in revisions to policies, doctrine, training, education, and materiel, as requested by the Secretary:

- Reviewing force health-related deployment plans and after action reports to identify opportunities to improve force health protection of service members and civilian personnel.
  Conducting liaison with deployment-related staffs and lessons learned staffs of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, CINCs, and the Military Departments, as appropriate.
- Sponsoring DoD advisory groups and special studies (e.g. National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Medicine study on deployments) to examine deployment force health issues.
- Monitoring implementation of OSD and Joint Staff deployment and readiness related policies and programs, such as Joint Medical Surveillance and Force Health Protection, while providing feedback to the Secretary on potential force-health issues.

- As requested by the Secretary, initiate and coordinate actions to preserve and assure the trust of service members and the public in the force health-related information and activities associated with Military deployments. In coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), and the Military and Veterans' Health Coordinating Board and other agencies, conduct risk communication initiatives to respond individually and collectively to service members, veterans, and the public, on their concerns about potential deployment force health-related issues. This may include:

  - Proactively representing DoD positions on behalf of service members and veterans.
  - Collecting Force health deployment information from service members and veterans and, responding directly to individuals and groups through outreach visits.
  - Establishing a web site with interactive e-mail; maintaining a 1-800 telephone number.
  - Maintaining role as primary DoD point of contact with Veterans and Military Service Organizations on deployment issues.
  - Maintaining capability to expand resources to meet critical risk communication or outreach needs.

- Provide the DoD focal point for the Military Veterans Health Coordinating Board (MVHCB) and maintain the on-going information system and database for Gulf War illnesses-related actions, including maintaining a copy of the automated system of records known as the Persian Gulf Veterans Illnesses Files for the purpose of researching issues pertaining to the Gulf War deployment.

As force health programs mature and appropriate lessons learned that impact force health are institutionalized in future deployment processes, periodic reviews will be conducted of these duties to assess mission, costs, and benefits.