



American Association  
of Suicidology

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2012**

**CONTACTS:** Dr. Alan Berman, Executive Director  
American Association of Suicidology

202-237-2280 (office)  
berman@suicidology.org

Lt. Cmdr. Andrew Martin  
Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program Manager

703-432-9062 (office)  
andrew.l.martin@usmc.mil

**MARINE CORPS ORDERS SUICIDE PREVENTION STUDY**

The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) is set to launch a two-year long psychological autopsy research study for the U.S. Marine Corps, the goal of which is to translate research findings into more effective prevention strategies. Researchers will conduct in-depth interviews with friends, family members, and fellow Marines of active duty Marines who died by suicide in 2010 and 2011. They will also use a full spectrum of surveillance reports and records to gather information about what was going in the Marine's life prior to death. AAS hopes to investigate 37 suicides, beginning with deaths that occurred in 2011.

**Lt. Cmdr. Andrew Martin**, Marine Corps suicide prevention program manager, said, "Marine Corps routinely studies Marine suicides for lessons learned. As part of a focused study of deaths in 2010 and 2011, AAS will join the effort, lending their expertise in suicidology and public health policy. AAS will examine existing Marine Corps and Department of Defense data, and will gather additional data using the psychological autopsy interview - a gold-standard method for suicide investigation. AAS will look comprehensively at each one of these tragic losses, and do so with a fresh and expert perspective. I believe we will learn more about contributing factors, what additional questions we need to ask, and better ways for us to ask those questions. This will translate into stronger and more effective suicide prevention policy and practices for the Corps."

**Dr. Alan Berman**, Executive Director of the American Association of Suicidology, added, "The current postmortem investigative tool used by the Armed Services fails to sufficiently inform and target needed prevention programming. This effort not only will offer a rich database to better understand pathways and warning signs for suicides by Marines, hence informing prevention approaches, but will allow us to make significant improvements in the quality of the Corps' data on suicides for years to come."

The psychological autopsy is the best practice postmortem procedure to reconstruct the proximal and distal causes of an individual's death by suicide. It helps promote understanding to the often-asked "why?" question raised by survivors regarding the suicide of their loved one, is used to ascertain risk factors for suicide, and helps to answer questions of causation.

AAS is dedicated to the understanding and prevention of suicide. It leads the advancement of scientific and programmatic efforts in suicide prevention through research, education and training, the development of standards and resources, and survivor support services.

###