



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **U.S. ARMY AND NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE ANNOUNCE JOINT HEALTH AND WELLNESS INITIATIVE**

### **Players & Soldiers Encouraged To Seek Help if They or Their Teammate/Battle Buddy Are Affected by a Head Injury**

**WEST POINT, NEW YORK** -- The U.S. Army and the National Football League launched today a long-term initiative to enhance the health of its soldiers and players by sharing information, providing education and engaging in discussion on concussion and health-related issues that affect both organizations.

The multi-faceted initiative, built upon the mutual respect shared by the two organizations, is designed to promote help-seeking behaviors and empower soldiers and players to maintain healthier minds on the playing field and battlefield. The initiative includes event-based programs, websites and social media that will foster peer-to-peer opportunities to share information, lessons learned and tips on how to recognize, prevent and manage concussions and reduce the stigma associated with reporting brain injuries or asking for help with health issues.

**GENERAL RAYMOND T. ODIERNO**, Army Chief of Staff, and **NFL COMMISSIONER ROGER GOODELL** made the announcement at The United States Military Academy at West Point as part of a panel discussion that included former NFL players and soldiers, as well as leading medical professionals. The discussion took place in front of an audience of nearly 200 West Point Cadets, underscoring the NFL and Army's intention to promote healthy behaviors to younger and older generations alike.

This was the third such discussion between the two organizations. Current and former players met this offseason at The Pentagon with soldiers and Marines who have experience with the injury.

In a letter announcing the initiative to soldiers and current and former NFL players, General Odierno and Goodell said: "Our organizations share common traits: pride and passion, dedication and determination, and an enduring belief in the power of team. On a personal level, there is mutual respect, appreciation and admiration between Soldiers and Players. While the execution of our crafts is fundamentally different, these traits make America's Soldiers and NFL Players who they are and the best at what they do. With this initiative, we are seeking to integrate the uncompromising devotion to win with



a need to address traumatic brain injuries with the necessary care, consideration, and commitment to prevention that these injuries require."

Among the initiative's tactics:

- New interactive websites: the NFL launched today a website dedicated to this initiative– [www.NFL.com/military](http://www.NFL.com/military). As an extension of NFL.com, this site provides service members with both exclusive access to football news and the most up-to-date information on brain injuries. In addition, a new site [www.army.mil/tbi](http://www.army.mil/tbi) will serve as the Army's first-ever centralized hub of information on traumatic brain injury for soldiers.
- Event-based forums that will bring players and soldiers together at NFL team facilities and Army bases across the country to share experiences and reinforce the need for care.
- PSAs and social media interactions designed to increase awareness and promote help-seeking behaviors in each organization.
- Development of a peer-to-peer program that matches recently retired NFL players with soldiers transitioning out of the Army.
- Sharing of medical research and information between the NFL and Army.

General Odierno and Goodell stressed the need for soldiers and players to seek help if they may be suffering from a head injury and also to get medical attention for a teammate or soldier who may need assistance.

"We know that this mission cannot be accomplished alone," they wrote in the letter. "It is a shared responsibility. A concussion is a brain injury that is not always easily recognizable to the untrained eye. We want to encourage and empower Soldiers and players to take an active role in the education and prevention process. We all have a crucial role in making sure a brain injury is properly identified and treated.

"By coming together in this historic effort, we are combining and strengthening our forces," the letter concludes. "As we continue to focus our efforts on encouraging safer environments, we will continue to celebrate the spirit of competition and determination that define our two organizations. Working together, we will ensure longer careers and healthier lives. Working together, we all become stronger. And working together, we have the power to make a real difference. We hope you will join us."

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