

PROTECTING AMERICA'S PROTECTORS

New Program Protects Military From Fraud

(NAPS)—While most Americans view the men and women of the armed forces with respect and gratitude, some criminals see them as targets for fraud or unfair business practices.

These criminals assume that members of the armed services and their families are likely victims because they have nonstandard work schedules, are away from home for long periods of time, relocate often, and aren't always able to use the normal consumer protection channels because they are living outside the U.S.

Further, service members and military civilian employees may be targets for certain scams because their personal identifying information may be available as a matter of a public record.

The Department of Defense (DoD) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have responded to this problem by creating a Web site to collect and investigate consumer complaints about such issues as telemarketing fraud, online scams and abusive lending practices from the DoD and military communities.

Consumer fraud and identity theft complaints entered on the site—called Military Sentinel—are accessible to more than 550 law enforcement agencies via the Consumer Sentinel Network.

Information from these complaints will help guide law enforcement actions and consumer education initiatives and



A new Web site encourages armed forces personnel and their families to report cases of fraud and identity theft.

will result in better protection for consumers in the DoD and military communities.

Military Sentinel allows members of the military community to report consumer protection complaints directly to DoD officials and the FTC via a secure online form.

A complaint can be entered 24 hours a day on the site. In turn, that information is then shared with all 50 state attorneys general, the FBI, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Identity theft complaints are reviewed with the help of the U.S. Secret Service and are shared with local financial crime task forces.

To learn more, or to file a complaint, visit the Web site at www.consumer.gov/military.