



# SOF Cancer Study

## Our Commitment to the Health of the Force



### WHAT IS THIS STUDY?

In keeping with our commitment that ***Humans are more important than Hardware***, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), in partnership with the Defense Health Agency (DHA), commissioned a study to investigate cancer rates among our personnel.

### WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

The study examined medical records from SOF personnel and their non-SOF counterparts. While rates for most cancers were similar to the non-SOF cohort, the study found these statistically significant results:

1. SOF personnel have an 18% higher incidence of cancer overall compared to non-SOF personnel.
2. This increase is mostly driven by a higher incidence of *melanoma* (33% higher) and *testicular cancer* (21% higher). While these percentage increases sound high, **the absolute risk remains low** and equate to just 11 additional cases per 100,000 SOF members per year.
3. SOF are diagnosed at a younger age than their non-SOF peers. This is presumed to be a result of a proactive health culture and earlier screening.
4. SOF have better survival rates. The lower mortality rate is a critical and positive finding, highlighting the exceptional health, fitness, and care within the SOF community.

### WHAT IS USSOCOM DOING NOW?

USSOCOM is committed to our people and is taking immediate and deliberate action.

**Enhancing Health Protocols:** We are working with medical experts and DHA to review our current health screening and monitoring protocols to ensure they are aligned with these new findings.

**Pursuing Further Research:** This study answered ‘if’ there was a difference. The next phase will focus on ‘why.’ We will work with DHA epidemiologists and DOW researchers to pursue follow-on studies to better understand the higher rates of melanoma and testicular cancer.

**Ensuring Transparency:** We are openly sharing these findings with the force, families, and the public to ensure our entire community is informed.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Your proactive engagement in your own health is your best defense.

**Be Proactive About Your Health:** Know your body. Do not ignore symptoms like new or changing moles, persistent pain, or other unexplained health issues.

**Seek Early Evaluation:** Report any health concerns to a medical provider immediately, regardless of your age. Seeking medical care is a sign of strength and will not negatively impact your clearance.

**Reduce Your Risk:** Protect your skin from the sun, maintain a healthy diet, avoid tobacco and other carcinogens, and get adequate rest.



### LEARN MORE

USSOCOM is committed to the long-term health and well-being of the entire SOF community. For detailed information, a full Q&A, and additional health resources, please visit our central information hub: <https://www.socom.mil/cancerstudy>