



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
U.S. NAVAL FORCES CENTRAL COMMAND  
PSC 901 BOX 10000, FPO AE 09805-0001**

5720  
N013/019  
June 11, 2019

Geoff Ziezulewicz  
1919 Gallows Rd  
Suite 400  
Vienna, VA 22182

Dear Mr. Ziezulewicz:

**SUBJECT: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST**

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated December 10, 2018, wherein you asked for copies of any and all line of duty investigations for any and all flag officer deaths from December 1, 2018 to present. Your request was received in this office on January 10, 2019 for processing under FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552. It was assigned FOIA file number FY19-001.

Enclosed are copies of the responsive documents found based on your request. If you seek any further information, you may submit an additional FOIA request to our office.

Because information has been withheld under 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6) and (b)(7)(A), you are advised of your right to appeal this determination in writing to the Office of the Judge Advocate General, Code 14, 1322 Patterson Ave., Suite 3000, Washington Navy Yard, D.C. 20374-5066. Any appeal must be received within 60 calendar days from the date of this letter in order to be considered and a copy of this letter should be attached along with a statement regarding why your appeal should be granted. It is recommended that the letter of appeal and the envelope both bear the notation, "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

My POC for this matter is LT Sara Wooten. Please do not hesitate to contact her if you have any further questions regarding this matter. She may be reached at 011-973-1785-9926, or email at [sara.wooten@me.navy.mil](mailto:sara.wooten@me.navy.mil).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SDC", written over a horizontal line.

SHANE D. COOPER  
Captain  
Judge Advocate General's Corps  
U.S. Navy  
By direction  
of the Commander



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
COMMANDER, U.S. NAVAL FORCES CENTRAL COMMAND  
PSC 901 BOX 10000, FPO AE 09805-0001

IN REPLY TO:

5800

N00

12 Feb 2019

FINAL ENDORSEMENT on (b)(6) ltr 5800 of 4 Feb 19

From: Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command

To: File

Subj: PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF VADM SCOTT STEARNEY

1. I have reviewed the subject report of investigation and find that the information contained therein is sufficient to make a line of duty determination in the subject case.
2. I concur with the findings, opinion, and recommendation in the subject report. I specifically find that VADM Scott Stearney's death was incurred in the line of duty and not due to his own misconduct.
3. A copy of this determination will be forwarded to Commander, Navy Personnel Command, Navy Casualty (PERS 00C).

  
JAMES J. MALLOY

Copy to:  
PERS 00C

5800  
4 Feb 19

From: (b)(6) USN  
To: Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command

Subj: PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF VADM SCOTT STEARNEY

Ref: (a) JAGMAN, Chapter II  
(b) Your ltr 5830 Ser N00 of 9 Dec 18  
(c) My ltr 5800 of 19 Dec 18  
(d) Your ltr 5830 Ser N00 of 20 Dec 18

1. This reports completion of the preliminary inquiry conducted in accordance with references (a) and (b) into the death of Vice Admiral Scott Stearney, USN, on 1 December 2018. LT (b)(6), JAGC, USN and LT (b)(6) JAGC, USN; USNAVCENT Deputy Assistant Force Judge Advocates, participated as legal advisors. All materials reviewed are on file with the originating office. Per references (c) and (d), an extension of time from the original completion date of 21 December 2018 was requested and approved for a completion date of 4 February 2019.

2. Personnel Contacted: Special Agent in Charge (b)(6), NCIS, Middle East Field Office, NSA Bahrain; Special Agent (b)(6), NCIS, Middle East Field Office, NSA Bahrain, DSN (b)(6); Special Agent (b)(6), NCIS, Middle East Field Office, NSA Bahrain, DSN (b)(6).

3. Materials Reviewed: NCIS Report of Investigation Control #: (b)(7)(A) Kingdom of Bahrain Ministry of Health Medical Notification of Cause of Death, DD Form 2064 Certificate of Death (Overseas) dtd (b)(7)(A) and NCIS Report of Investigation Control (b)(7)(A)

4. Summary of Findings: On 1 December 2018, VADM Scott Stearney, USN was on active duty, assigned as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. On the afternoon of 1 December 2018, VADM Stearney was found deceased in his personal residence located in Janabiya, Bahrain. Per materials reviewed, the cause of death was determined to be (b)(6) suicide. (b)(6) The timeline of events and witness statements support this conclusion, (b)(6), indicating his intent to commit suicide. No information uncovered during the subsequent NCIS investigation, including multiple interviews and forensic analysis of VADM Stearney's electronic devices, contradicted this finding.

5. Opinion: VADM Stearney's death occurred in the line of duty and was not due to his own misconduct. Per reference (a) paragraph 0218(b), all members are presumed to be mentally responsible for their acts unless a question of responsibility is raised; the investigation must then clearly and convincingly establish a member's mental responsibility before an adverse line of duty determination can be made. Per paragraph 0218(c), suicide creates a strong inference of a lack of mental responsibility which has not been overcome by any of the facts uncovered from this investigation; therefore, no adverse line of duty determination is recommended.

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Subj: PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF VADM SCOTT STEARNEY

6. Recommendation: VADM Stearney's death should be found to be in the line of duty and not due to his own misconduct and a finding to that effect should be entered into his medical record. No further investigation is warranted.

(b)(6)

