Commander’s Corner

RADM John C. Scorby, Jr.

Leadership involvement **AT ALL LEVELS** is key to a successful sexual assault prevention strategy and based on the recent results of the FY 16 DoD Annual report on Sexual Assault in the Military, your efforts are working. The number of sexual assault reports increased in 2016 from 2015. While there is no room for this toxic behavior, increased reporting is an encouraging sign. It shows me there is great progress in your efforts to educate our Sailors and Civilians on what constitutes a sexual assault, on what reporting avenues are established, as well as what support our team receives when they report a sexual assault.

That said, we still have much more work to do. Understanding the realities of sexual assault and the conditions under which it occurs is a requirement to advance prevention strategies.

Our efforts within our Region in preventing sexual assault **NEVER STOP**. Look for other methods to combat sexual assault...when was the last time you asked yourself how your Command mentorship and sponsorship programs are playing a role in preventing sexual assault? The FY16 DoD report states that many Commands have experienced success in their peer-to-peer sponsorship and mentoring programs. These programs mentor Junior Sailors (especially the new ones) in professional development, mission readiness, and positive communication; the efforts have resulted in enhanced teamwork among peers and promoted events that excluded alcohol.

Sexual assault destroys trust, divides teams, and degrades operational effectiveness. I ask everyone, Civilian and Military, to continue looking out for and taking care of each other. Continue building a culture of respect and mutual dignity for all; one that’s intolerant of destructive actions and behaviors. Remember, we are **ONE CNRMA TEAM**. I’m counting on you!

CMC’s Remarks

CMDCM Steven Timmons

Team CNRMA: the truth is, the vast majority of Sailors and Civilians we serve alongside have never – and will never – sexually assault another person in their lifetime. But the ability and the responsibility to stop sexual assault does not begin and end here. Every survivor, and every Sailor/Civilian who has ever served at a Command impacted by these acts, can tell you first hand it has the same effects as a natural disaster. It’s very real, very devastating and leaves a trail of total destruction in its wake. You are the heart of our Navy. With you, the mission will never fail; without you, the mission will not succeed. And sexual assault deeply and severely impacts our ability to perform the mission.

All of you, whether on your own or together in a group, have the ability to stop this behavior in its tracks; but putting an end to this devastation within our ranks requires each of us to be engaged, every day, all year round.

People sometimes define integrity as “doing what’s right when no one is looking.” Integrity is also doing what’s right when EVERYONE is looking. Understanding how to recognize opportunities for intervention is what stops unsafe or unacceptable behaviors. That can be learned, and it’s fairly easy. Speaking up when no one else has – that’s the hard part.

Today, tomorrow, and every day, I’m counting on you – and the Sailors/Civilians...especially the CPO Mess...who are part of Team CNRMA – to be the ones who put an end to sexual assault in OUR Navy. I have your back in this fight and I’m asking you to have mine.
Chaplain Corps Unveils New Sexual Assault Recovery Program

By Gloria Colon-Buzatu, Navy Chaplain Corps Public Affairs

In a unique approach to assist sexual assault victims, the Navy Chief of Chaplains initiated a pilot for a personal resiliency retreat modeled after those offered by the Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO).

“Chaplain Corps designed a new retreat program for survivors of sexual assault. It’s called ‘Hope to Healing’ (H2H),” said RADM Margaret Kibben, Chief of Chaplains.

CREDO, led by chaplains in 11 regions around the world, offers workshops, seminars and retreats to inspire hope and improve spiritual well-being among Sailors, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and their families as well as DOD civilians.

“The H2H retreat differs from a personal resilience retreat... we have a target of instilling hope and healing, where the emphasis is placed on hope,” said CmDr. Jennifer Bowden, Navy chaplain and CREDO director for Navy Region Mid-Atlantic.

The goal is to help sexual assault victims heal,” said CAPT William Stallard who has a doctorate in psychology and helped design the H2H when he was a CREDO director. He is currently the Force Chaplain for Navy Region Southeast. “CREDO was the vehicle, and with collaboration from a team of chaplains, Fleet and Family Service Center, mental health care providers, and partnership with the Department of Navy Sexual Assault Prevention Office, the product evolved.”

After facilitating three successful pilots, Bowden explained the difference that a 72-hour weekend retreat can make.

“Hope takes us out of our experience and on the path to healing,” she said.

The program uses techniques such as counseling, prayer, and meditation as well as technology to help sexual assault survivors reduce the feeling of hopelessness.

Did you know that college aged students (18-26) are at the highest risk for being sexually assaulted? With Summer now here, RAINN, the nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization and contracted with the Department of Defense has released helpful safety tips for you.

Whether you are headed to the beach or overseas or devoting your Summer to community service, it’s important to keep your safety top of mind. In addition to common sense travel safety tips like wearing sunscreen and keeping your passport safe, there are some things you can do to reduce the risk and prevent you or a friend from being the victim of sexual assault.

1. **Trust your instincts.** If you feel unsafe in any situation, go with your gut. If you feel uncomfortable or something doesn’t feel right, leave and get to a safe place immediately. If someone is pressuring you, it’s better to lie and make up a reason to leave than to stay and be uncomfortable, scared, or worse.

2. **Protect your location on Social Media.** Think twice before sharing every detail of your Summer on Facebook and Twitter. Despite security settings, posting information about your whereabouts or activities can still reveal details that are accessible to the public. Use your best judgment when ‘checking-in’ on Facebook and be cautious of revealing personal information through status updates or tweets with Twitter trends like #Summer and #Summer2017.

3. **Get Local.** Know your accommodation address and the safest routes to and from your local destinations. Have the number for local cab companies on hand and always keep enough cash on you to take a taxi home. Know who to contact in the event of an emergency, such as 911 or local authorities. If traveling out of country, have the contact information for the U.S. Embassy with you.

4. **Be a good friend and stick together.** Arrive together, check in with one another throughout the night, and leave together. Think twice about going off alone; if you have to separate from your friends, let them know where you are going and who you are with. If something seems questionable or someone is acting aggressively, don’t be afraid to intervene. By speaking up, you may help prevent your friend from being the victim (or perpetrator) of a crime.

5. **Don’t let your guard down.** A Summer destination can create a false sense of security among vacationers. Don’t assume that fellow vacationers will look out for your best interests; remember they are essentially strangers.

6. **Use your cell phone as a tool.** If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, shoot a quick text for a ‘friend-assist.’ Make a back-up plan before you go out just in case your phone dies. If you are traveling out of country, buy a pay-as-you-go phone or contact your cell phone provider to activate international coverage during your trip.

7. **Drink responsibly and know your limits.** Always watch your drink being prepared, and, when possible, buy drinks in bottles. If you lose sight of your drink or believe it might have been tampered with, throw it out and get a new one. If you or your friend seem too intoxicated for the amount of alcohol consumed or you suspect that someone has drugged, get to a hospital.

In the event of a sexual assault during Summer, seek immediate medical attention. In the U.S., call 911 for emergency help or the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE) for advice and support. If you are traveling internationally contact the State Department or the American Embassy in country, to be connected with special services for American victims of crime abroad. You can also register your international trip with the U.S. State Department, to be notified of safety status changes.

Regardless of when the sexual assault occurred, it’s never too late to get help. If you or someone you know has been affected by sexual violence, talk to someone who understands what you’re going through. Help is just a call or click away via the DoD Safe Helpline (877-995-5247 or https://safehelpline.org)
Victim Advocates: Critical Members of Sexual Assault Prevention Response

By MCSN Krista DaCosta, USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69)

The Navy’s Sexual Assault and Prevention Response Program, known as SAPR, not only seeks to prevent and respond to sexual assaults, but also is working to eliminate that crime from the ranks.

The SAPR team aboard the aircraft carrier USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER strives to accomplish this mission through education, comprehensive response, compassionate advocacy and fair resolution, working to promote professionalism, respect and trust while preserving Navy mission readiness.

Nineteen credentialed victim advocates are aboard “IKE,” and another victim advocate is on-call.

“We make sure the command is in compliance with the Navy SAPR regulations, and we make sure we have enough SAPR victim advocates to assist all of our sailors,” said Navy Chief Petty Officer Claudia Ohar, a logistics specialist and IKE’s SAPR point of contact. “We also ensure all of our sailors receive the initial SAPR training every year.”

Ohar said victim advocates go through an extensive interview process to be considered for the position. They first must receive a recommendation from their chain of command. After their department head gives approval, the sailors are interviewed by Ohar or Navy Chief Petty Officer Sal Nacci, an interior communications electrician and the second of IKE’s SAPR points of contact.

“Some of the main qualities that we look for in a victim advocate are integrity, trustworthiness and maturity level,” Ohar said. “Depending on the severity of the case, being an advocate can be very stressful. It’s important for the advocates to be mature enough to handle that kind of stress and responsibility.”

After an interview with Ohar or Nacci, prospective advocates have a secondary interview with the IKE’s Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC). If all of those interviews go well, Ohar said, they can then attend victim advocate training.

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“The advocate is for the sailors,” she said. If a sailor reports a sexual assault to a victim advocate, the report remains restricted, she explained, but if the sailor reports it to a point of contact, it must be reported to the chain of command.

Ohar stressed that it is crucial for victims of sexual assault to take the initial step and report the crime.

“I highly encourage sailors to at least file a restricted report and talk to someone,” she said. “When they are ready emotionally, physically and mentally, they can take the next step to go unrestricted and obtain justice.”
DOD FY16 Annual Report
Released By CNIC N9 SAPR Team

On May 1, 2017, The Department of Defense (DoD) released the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military to Congress. According to the Department of Defense, “the data provided in the annual reports serve as the foundation and catalyst for future sexual assault prevention, training, and accountability goals.” This year’s report indicates that there was a decrease in the number of occurrences of Service members experiencing sexual assault over the past year and an increase in the number of Service members reporting the crime.

Although this is promising news, there is still a long way to go as many continue to experience sexual assault.

In a Department of Defense press release, Rear Admiral Ann Burkhardt, Director of the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), said, “We’re encouraged that there was a decrease in the number of Service members experiencing sexual assault and further evolve our prevention efforts to stop the crime before it occurs.”

In addition to the annual report, the results of the 2016 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members (WGRA) were also released to Congress. This survey is DoD-wide with some Service-specific questions as well. Some of the topic areas include perceived retaliation, trust in the military process, sexual harassment and gender discrimination prevalence rates, and social media misuse.

Here are a few key findings from the FY16 Annual Report and WGRA survey:

• More victimized Service men reported the crime than ever before (17%, up from 10% in 2014)
• Despite some negative perceptions and experiences of retaliation, 67% of women and 59% of men who reported sexual assault would recommend for other Service member to make a report
• Recent events demonstrate there is still a great deal of work to do to advance a culture of respect, both at work and at home.


Naval Submarine Base New London Sailors and Civilians observe SAAPM
By: LTJG Daniel Mongiove

Sailors and civilians from Naval Submarine Base New London (SUBASE) are striving to highlight awareness, sensitivity, understanding, and intervention as the Navy New London community came together to observe Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM). SAAPM, traditionally observed in April, is dedicated to making a concerted effort to raise awareness about and prevent sexual violence through special events put together by installations and command Sexual Assault Awareness Coordinators (SARCs). The 2017 SAAPM Theme “Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission,” highlights that any service member -- regardless of grade -- can encourage behaviors that foster a climate of dignity and respect, and in doing so, help ensure our readiness to complete the Department’s mission. “It’s each Sailor’s responsibility to stand up against sexual assault,” said Shannon Ramsey, SUBASE SARC.

IGNORING, EXCUSING AND REMAINING PASSIVE TO THE CRIME AND THE TRAUMA CAUSED BY SEXUAL ASSAULT DEVALUES OUR SHIPMATES AND THE NAVY’S CORE VALUES OF HONOR, COURAGE, AND COMMITMENT.

Navy Team New London kicked off SAAPM observations with events ranging from tying teal ribbons throughout the base and conducting a moment of silence for Survivors of Sexual Assault at the Dealey Center flag pole. “Several active duty members in leadership roles participated in the 4th annual basketball tournament, ‘Hooping for SAAPM,’” said Ramsey. “This shows that the SAPR program and raising awareness is important, which will have a trickle-down effect throughout the installation.” Across the Navy, SAAPM engages Sailors and civilians up and down the deckplates to keep the focus on preventing sexual assault and supporting those impacted. Since the Navy’s inception of the Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) program in 1994, the Navy has continued to develop the program. According to SAPR.mil, the first national observation of SAAPM was in 2001. “Our SAPR team of over 130 sailors worked very hard to raise awareness within their commands,” said Ramsey. “They are excited to be a part of the program and participate in outreach events that engage their peers, and they are ready to assist Sailors in any questions with SAPR.”

Military Sexual Trauma
https://safehelpline.org

If you survived sexual assault while serving in the military, there are services available to help you recover from the experience.

What is Military Sexual Trauma?: Military Sexual Trauma, or MST, is the term used by the Department of Veteran Affairs to describe the effects of sexual violence experienced by a military Service member. Many of the effects are similar to the experiences of civilian survivors. As a Service member, you may experience additional reactions that are more specific to your military experience.

Active Duty Service Member Resources: DoD Safe Helpline provides live, one-on-one support and information to the worldwide DoD community. The service is confidential, anonymous, secure, and available worldwide, 24/7, providing survivors with the help they need anytime, anywhere.
• Call the Telephone Helpline at 877.995.5247
  The phone number is the same inside the U.S. or via the DSN.
• Visit the Online Helpline at Safe-Help.org for live, confidential help through a secure instant-messaging format.
• Visit “Safe HelpRoom” (https://www.safehelpline.org/about-safe-helproom) to connect to a secure community of survivors that can meet to help each other in a safe, moderated, online platform, 24/7. Visit the online chatroom at SafeHelpRoom.org.
• Download the free “Self-Care App” (https://safehelpline.org/about-mobile) to create a customized self-care plan and connect to all of the Safe Helpline resources from anywhere in the world. Self-care plans and exercises can be accessed any time, even without an internet connection. Users can also use the App to call the Telephone Helpline for free using Voice over IP (VoIP) technology.
• Text your ZIP code or installation/base name to 55-247 (in the U.S.) or 202.470.5546 (outside the U.S.), and you will receive a text back with contact information for the resource you requested. (Message and data rates may apply.)

Transitioning Service Members Resources: Are you in the process of separating or retiring from Military Service? Being a survivor of sexual assault and going through the transition process can be difficult. Visit Safe Helpline’s “Transitioning Service Member Resource Search” to access hundreds of resources for Active Duty, Veteran, and civilian resources that best fit your needs.

Veteran Resources: If you are a veteran and survivor of sexual assault, there are resources to help you recover. You can receive help even if you didn’t report the crime when it occurred. Most likely, a VA benefits coordinator will ask you directly if you’ve survived sexual assault. The VA recognizes that this is an underreported crime and hopes directly asking will let survivors know that there is special care available for them.
• Contact the MST Coordinator at your local VA medical facility.
• Contact your local Vet Center.