

FALL/WINTER 2005

# Connections

A BI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON COALITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS



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## Military Culture and Sexual Assault Victims

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ACCREDITATION UPDATE: "AVOIDING THE ACCREDITATION ABYSS"

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## Director's Desk



Renee M. Sparks

Males and females serve their country through military draft, enlistment, or as commissioned service members for various reasons. For some, it proves to be an adventurous career and travel, for others it is embraced as a loyal duty. Others perceive it as a means to obtain a college degree or acquire technical skills. There are still others that view it as a means to provide for their families.

In conversation some females have expressed that besides “structure and a rigorous regime, serving in the military also fills their need to be a woman within a male dominated culture.” Whatever the reason service members comply and commit to serve their country, they all come to understand that military culture has a life uniquely its own.

Somewhere I read according to Pentagon reports that approximately “216,400 women are on active duty in the five branches of the military; 163, 832 more are Reservists, and 62, 902 are in the Army and Air National Guards, and women make up about 9% of the 231,260 U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.”

The purpose of this issue, “Military Culture and Sexual Assault” is to affirm that sexual assault complexities are ills of our society whether we abide in a military culture or civilian communities. This issue is not intended to point a finger at the military, but to create dialogue about the layers of complexities of sexual assault in a military culture that some of our heroes and “sheroes” have experienced. This issue also lends ear to hear the military’s response to the issue of sexual assault within its ranks.

Starting on page 8, Courtney Mullins shares a legal perspective about the elements of the military legal system and its legal source that commanders use when addressing sexual assault issues. Stephanie Sacks’ article, “Sexual Assault and the Military: A Community Sexual Assault Program’s Perspective” explores varying ways the military address sexual assault issues.

In this issue we also take a look at voices within the military speaking out on actions that are being implemented through Nicole Guardino’s article, “Air Force Issues Long – Awaited Report on Sexual Assault Issues.”

In addition, Lt. Colonel Laurent Fox, Director of Public Affairs for the Air Force Academy, Deputy Director of Communications, shares relentless efforts and insight with us. We also had the privilege of dialoguing with Retired Colonel Elizabeth Brooks who speaks frankly about her experiences as an officer and a woman in the ranks of a military culture.

Photographs in this issue are complimentary of Ken Wright who is Assistant/ Editor and Photographer of Checkpoint Magazine with the Association of Graduation of the U.S. Air Force Academy. Wright’s work was recently honored as a recipient of the Thomas Jefferson Award which recognizes military and civilian employees who advance the communications objectives of the Department of Defense.

Last, but certainly not least, also included in this issue is information provided by Evelyn Larsen with the primary focus of easing the anxieties of accreditation.

We hope that this issue and this new year spark and stir all of us, who are committed to the effort of ending sexual violence, to seek avenues to expand collaborations, persevere with determination and ingenuity, and to be mindful to take care of ourselves through the process.

*“...besides structure and a rigorous regime, serving in the military also fills their need to be a woman within a male dominated culture.”*

# Sexual Harassment: The Weak Preying on the Perceived Weaker

BY RETIRED COLONEL ELIZABETH BROOKS



Colonel Elizabeth Brooks

When is power truly powerful? As a retired Air Force Officer, I've been around long enough to see and experience those parts of our humanity that hinder and help us live lives full of true authenticity and power. In this brief expose about sexual harassment I will provide a snapshot of how God prepared me to do what I was supposed to do within the military context. My goal is to generate a glimpse of true power...the desire to be your brother's/sister's keeper by empowering him/her to live beyond self.

Since the beginning of time, there has been a need in the human heart for "power." Adam and Eve, despite their abundance, sought to have the one thing that they were restricted to have. They chose to focus on what they couldn't have versus focusing on what they had. At the heart of the human need to "do it my way" is the need to live outside the boundaries and establish new rules. Since man was never designed to make rules that could govern the world perfectly, the quest for power that is motivated by selfishness and greed weakens the human spirit. It is in this weakened emotional and mental state that an individual can look at another human being and see an opportunity to bully, marginalize, stereotype, violate, and disenfranchise. So, you have the cycle of the weak preying on the perceived weaker and both are without authentic power.

Because our society was, and to some extent still is, emotionally and mentally weakened, there is a general practice in our society to marginalize women and relegate them to objects of men. Sexual harassment is defined by unfair treatment and unwanted advancements that are sexual in nature or related to one's sex. The term sexual harassment was coined in the late 1970s but its practice dates back to the first family. Therefore, sexual harassment is not a military service related term. It is a term that characterized the behavior of men and women in our society that we had to name so we could remind people of the rules regarding treatment of human beings.

Because the military is comprised of men and women from the larger society, sexual harassment became a part of the military complex because it was part of the larger society. The military system followed the model of the larger society and, therefore, perpetuated that attitude in their structure that women were generally relegated to support positions and men were given the operational positions. Also, in keeping with the model of the larger society military men were taught to view military women as servants (as they were in general society) rather than co-workers. In the larger society women were viewed as homemakers and men worked in various capacities, doctors were expected to be men and women nurses, and so on. For many years the practice of sexual harassment was tolerated by the larger society and the military. It was part of the fabric of how life worked.

I was born in Alabama but spent most of my childhood and adulthood in Los Angeles, California. My family members left the south in search for better opportunities but they set up environments similar to the one they left. I am the proud beneficiary of an environment that fostered neighborhood accountability and strong values. It was at home that I learned that hard work was required and how to work hard. I was taught self and mutual respect, the principle of the sower (your harvest depends on the seed you plant) and delayed gratification (I would have to wait for some of the things I wanted). The principles I learned

*(continued)*

at home were echoed when I went to church so I relied upon them as rules to live by. I saw and appreciated the sacrifices that everyone had to make for me to stay focused in high school. I was the first person in my immediate family to get a college degree, and I felt the responsibility that went along with that achievement.

When I entered the Air Force in 1979 the concept of sexual harassment was a baby but it was growing quickly. Nourished by the new breed of women and men being commissioned who were not married to the status quo of weak mindedness. We were products of the civil rights and women's liberation generations who believed in the strength of human dignity and rights. We liked ourselves, therefore, we were not interested in marginalizing anyone else. I realize that some people in the women's movements bashed men, however, I had no need for that concept as I saw the need to have strong African American men and I thought that the best means to achieve that end was to become a strong woman.

In addition, I was the first African American woman to graduate from the Reserve Officers Training Corps (R.O.T.C) at UCLA. It was tough getting through UCLA with my inner city school preparation; it seemed like swimming upstream in ROTC detachment politics. By the time I got on active duty, my character had been tried by several fires of adversity that in effect strengthened my resolve to live a life of dignity and absent of compromise. The experiences had created a mental toughness that was unprecedented. I see my experience as typical for the African American officers of that day. Our experiences that preceded our checking into the base had prepared us for the job that we had to do. We brought to the military service table the ability to work hard, to think quickly and decisively, congeniality, and mutual respect. We laid our cards on the table and said "ladies and gentlemen" let's play the game of defending this country.

In the early years of my service the "good old boy" network was fully entrenched with both weak and strong minded men and women. Sexual harassment was very prevalent in the forms of unwanted sexual advancement, job placement, and discipline. Female officers were being assigned to jobs that had previously been filled by men. Weak minded superior officers responded inappropriately and saw the assignment of a female to a job as an opportunity to prey on her perceived weakness. In this scenario one of three things happened. In some cases the female junior officer gave into the inappropriate advances because she feared for her career opportunities as an officer. In other cases she played him by leading him into compromising positions then later reporting him to his superiors. In both cases the result quickly spread through the "good old boy" network. The third case was the hardest case to isolate because in this case the weak minded boss approached the female but she did not read his advances as anything to fear, and quickly put him in his place. Fortunately, cases where the female gave into the boss' weakness did not become the standard. Before long women began to stand up to the advances; victimized women began to tell superior officers, legal officers, and civilian lawyers. Offenders were prosecuted using the military code of military justice as well as the civilian courts. News of prosecuted officers quickly spread through the "good old boy" network so the good old boy became good boys.

I thank God that He put me in places where there was a need for a strong presence to strengthen those that might have succumb to weakness and to under gird those that needed encouragement. I treated every effort they took to harass me with dignity and pride. When a superior would say something to me that could be looked at as

harassment I would say, “Sir you are better than that” which was my way of saying I will take the high road. I never feared for my job because I told everyone that “I could work hard any where.” The crew that rolled in the Air Force around the same time I did was the pioneers who laid the foundation for the high standard that the service enjoys today. The power we used was motivated by the need to strengthen the next generation. We were paying a debt that we owed to the generation before us.

It took a tremendous amount of hard work and faithful leadership to get a handle on sexual harassment. My term in the Air Force was categorized by the aftermath of the Vietnam war, the height of the cold war, the shattering of the Berlin wall, NATO restructuring, the Gulf war and its’ restructuring, and “star wars.” Given the life and death nature of military service, any undermining of the personnel that affects the mission must be dealt with immediately. Sexual harassment undermined the mission; therefore, it had to go. We had a finite number of people and everyone must be focused on his/her job. The military leaders put there hearts into eliminating sexual harassment because of its impact on the hearts and souls of its people. It was incompatible with ensuring that everyone on the team were using their skills to maximize national defense. The military is no longer taking its cues about sexual harassment from the larger society. I would venture to say that the reverse is true.

So back to the question of, “When is power truly powerful?” True power comes from the motivation to leave a deposit into the earth. It comes from the recognition that life on this side of heaven is short and that all of ones experiences are there to prepare one for the next venture or adventure. True power helps rather than hurts, it is humble rather than haughty, and it is always motivated by love and characterized by strength.

# Understanding Sexual Assault in the United States Military Culture

By COURTNEY MULLINS,  
WCSAP LEGAL INTERN

In order to better advocate for survivors of sexual assault in the military it is necessary to understand how the military responds to sexual assault and the impact this response has on victims. The United States Military is set apart from civilian culture by its own laws, social customs, and practices. The function of the military legal system and the effect other military practices can have on a victim are key areas of the military's response to sexual assault.

## The Military Legal System

Similar to how other states and countries have their own legal systems, so does the U.S. military. The military legal system is comprised of three elements that work together: the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Judge Advocate General Corps, and command discretion.

The first aspect of the legal system is the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Every state has a system of official rules and regulations that are used to help govern and discipline its citizens. In Washington we use the Revised Code of Washington, the Washington Administrative Codes and case law. In the military the UCMJ is used. The UCMJ is heavily relied upon by military commanders and is the legal source consulted by commanders when addressing sexual assault.

As the corner stone of military justice, the UCMJ has not been significantly revised since the 1950's.<sup>1</sup> Recognition of marital rape was not codified until 1996.<sup>2</sup> Two elements must be present for rape to exist in the military. It must be by force and without consent.<sup>3</sup> In some areas of the armed forces, the force element has been interpreted as a loophole to avoid the charge of rape. For example, this was the rationale employed by the Air Force Academy in cases where the victim had some social contact with their perpetrator.<sup>4</sup> Another problematic aspect of the definition of rape, as outlined in Article 120 of the UCMJ, is that it must be an act of sexual intercourse with a female – thus male victims are excluded under the definition.<sup>6</sup>

There are no victim protection statutes in the military. Military Rules of Evidence contain specific exceptions for sexual assault that preclude any privacy or confidentiality rights for the victim or offender. As a result, what many of us understand as rape shield laws that serve to protect victims from unnecessary discrimination and victim blaming do not exist. Thus a wide breadth of questioning, often informed by many rape myths in our culture that are not allowed in state and federal courts, are allowed in the military legal system.

Like sexual assault victims in the criminal legal system, victims of sexual assault in the military also lack legal representation. In the military, attorneys

work in the Judge Advocate General Corps (JAG). Unlike their civilian counterparts, a military attorney may not, and are not required to be admitted to the state bar in which the military installation is located. Indeed, JAGs are qualified to practice military law, but are not necessarily competent to practice law or even be familiar with the laws of the state where the assault occurred. This lack of qualification can manifest as a barrier to victims of sexual assault because a JAG may not know what rights exist in state law for victims or what legal remedies may be available to him or her within that state.

Similar to the role of prosecutor's in the criminal system, the JAG does not represent the survivor's interests. As prosecutors represent the interests of the state, JAG's represent the commanding authority of a particular installation. JAG attorneys do not function independently, but are under the authority of the commander. The JAG office functions as both the investigating authority like a civilian prosecutor and at the same time, as defense counsel to the accused. As such what many of us in the civilian world may consider a conflict of interest, such as the role of prosecutor and defense attorney being played by the same entity, are in fact viewed very differently by the military system.

Key to understanding military culture and how it impacts survivors of sexual assault, is appreciating the role of command discretion. It is commonly understood that military culture is based on a system of hierarchy called the chain of command. Broadly, the chain of command gives higher ranked persons authority over lower ranked persons. As such those entitled to utilize command discretion in regard to the legal system are more than just individuals with a higher rank (or the highest rank) – they are individuals who are in command of the entire unit, units or base. Thus the commander may be responsible for both the victim and the offender, in command of both or either of their units, or the entire base or ship where the assault occurred.

More specifically, command discretion empowers commanders to decide if the case goes forward to court martial. They determine which JAG officer will serve as prosecutor and which as defense counsel; who oversees the investigation; they may serve as the convening authority in court martial; and determine any disciplinary action. All of these functions are given to the discretion of one person. In a state or federal court, several different entities would be involved with the above functions. Thus the great deference afforded command discretion raises legitimate concerns about conflicts of interest and the potential for abuse of power.

Though problems exist, it is important to recognize that many commanders do not abuse the power they are given. Organizations, like the Miles Foundation<sup>7</sup> work with commanders that are sensitive to the needs of victims. However, given the nature of individualized responses, command discretion has helped to create a confusing and inconsistent response to sexual assault. Responses vary between each branch of the military and between commanding officers and bases within a single branch. Thus given the individualized responses to sexual assault and the general lack of any standardized response, a victim may often encounter great uncertainty with respect to how he or she will be treated by the military should the victim report the assault.

*(continued)*

## **Military Practices Adverse to Sexual Assault Victims**

Unfortunately there are other aspects of military culture that are adverse to victims of sexual assault. The lack of sensitivity which victims are treated within the military's legal system is pervasive throughout military culture. A lack of privacy, an overall lack of trained personnel, and the individualized response manifested within the chain of command all serve to create additional barriers for military victims. Combined with the military legal system and out-dated codes, these other aspects help maintain a system that is inadequate for victims of sexual assault who seek support and justice.

### **Lack of Privacy Protections**

In addition to the general lack of privacy afforded victims due to the nonexistence of any rape shield protections, the military has a practice of mandatory reporting which serves to further eliminate any privacy protections that may otherwise be afforded to a victim of sexual assault. Under this practice, if a victim reports the assault to medical personnel, the military police or even a military Chaplain, that person must report the assault to the victim's command. The facts of the assault are then filtered past several more persons, within the chain of command, before finally coming to the attention of the actual commander. The offender's command also receives a report. Although discretion may be encouraged in such matters, there are few if any specific provisions in the code that prohibit any of these individuals from talking about such reports and/or disclosing the allegations amongst military personnel. Thus in a rather socially isolated environment such as the military, which already tends to subscribe to rape myths, reporting the assault can be particularly damaging and further traumatize a victim.

Understandably, for many victims mandatory reporting serves to discourage them from reporting sexual assault to military authorities. This lack of reporting gives military authorities skewed data on how prevalent sexual assault is in the United States military. It also means that many military victims report to civilian based programs and rely upon these programs for more accurate information regarding their legal rights in both the civilian and military legal systems.

### **Lack of Training**

Military victims must often contend with military personnel that are not trained to address sexual assault. SANE nurses are a rarity on military bases. For example, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, did not receive its first SANE nurse until October 2002. This lack of trained medical staff often necessitates the victim's transfer to a local community hospital. Though he or she may receive trained medical care while there, civilian intervention in the administration of rape evidence kits can trigger military issues regarding chain of evidence and add further complications to the victim's military case.

Another example of untrained military personnel is the military police. Military police (MP's), do not function in the same way their civilian counterparts do. A MP's primary function is base security. This is the physical base, the equipment and facilities on it. Law enforcement is a secondary function. They may not be trained in conducting a sexual assault investigation or in how to respond to a victim. As with mandatory reporting, lack of trained staff can serve as a deterrent to reporting and to receiving proper care.

*“Military victims must often contend with military personnel that are not trained to address sexual assault.”*

## **Serving with the Perpetrator**

A third aspect of military culture that has a profound impact on victims is the effect of having to continue to serve with offenders. Victims are often serving in the same unit or under the authority of the person who assaulted them. Continuing to serve with and show respect for one's perpetrator compounds the trauma already sustained by the victim. In a recent interview with Christine Hansen, the Executive Director of the Miles Foundation, indicated her agency has repeatedly talked with many survivors who encounter their rapists on a daily basis and that they may even be required to salute the person due to military regulations regarding rank.<sup>8</sup>

## **In the words of one victim:**

“Over the years I have learned that women in the military who report harassment or sexual assault become the guilty party. Most women don't report such crimes because they fear no one will believe them or it will ruin their career. Women who make reports are considered troublemakers, in most cases...”<sup>9</sup>

## **Conclusion**

There are things that advocates can do to help create positive change in the United States military and assist victims of sexual assault. To create change Ms. Hansen suggests talking with local senators and representatives. “Ask them hard questions and demand answers,” she urges. Our representatives then need to urge the military to create and codify changes in the UCMJ. Changing this legal foundation will create a basis for future changes.

Advocates working with military victims may also need to redefine what constitutes a “crisis.” Ms. Hansen points out that for many crisis advocates, a crisis is something immediate in time. However, those working with military victims need to be sensitive to the survivor who is years removed from the assault, but is just now reaching out for assistance. Due to recent stories in the press of assaults of military personnel serving in Iraq, the Miles Foundation is seeing an increasing number of survivors who are now experiencing re-victimization and PTSD symptoms. There has also been an increase in reports of sexual assault from women who served as nurses in Viet Nam who are now coming forward about their experiences of sexual violence for the first time.

The more we understand military culture and its effect on sexual assault victims the better we will be able to advocate for this population. We would like to thank the Miles Foundation for their generosity in assisting us in preparing this article. For more information about the Miles Foundation please can contact them directly at PO Box 423, Newtown, CT 06470; [milesfdn@aol.com](mailto:milesfdn@aol.com), 203-270-7861.

<sup>1</sup> Christine Hansen, Executive Director, The Miles Foundation, Inc. (Telephone interview, 8/26/2004)

<sup>2</sup> Nelson, T.S. For Love of Country: Confronting Rape and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military, (Hawthorne Maltreatment and Trauma Press 2002), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Uniform Code of Military Justice, Article 120. Rape and Carnal Knowledge. (a) Any person subject to this chapter who commits an act of sexual intercourse with a female not his wife, by force and without consent, is guilty of rape and shall be punished by death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct. (b) Any person subject to this chapter who, under circumstances not amounting to rape, commits an act of sexual intercourse with a female not his wife who has not attained the age of sixteen years, is guilty of carnal knowledge and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct. (c) Penetration, however slight, is sufficient to complete either of these offenses.

<sup>4</sup> Reform Military Code on Rape, Denver Post, (April 27, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> UCMJ, Article 120, et seq

<sup>6</sup> However, Article 125 of the UCMJ prohibits all service members from engaging in sodomy as defined in the UCMJ, primarily oral and anal sexual conduct both between members of the same and opposite gender.

<sup>7</sup> The Miles Foundation is an advocacy agency for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault associated with the military. The Miles Foundation has a 24 hour hot line number that is staffed year round. The number is (203) 270-7861. Callers may receive assistance with jurisdictional issues, the rights of military victims or receive referrals to attorneys with military law experience.

<sup>8</sup> Christine Hansen, Executive Director, The Miles Foundation, Inc. (Telephone interview, 8/26/2004)

<sup>9</sup> Nelson, T.S. For Love of Country: Confronting Rape and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military, (Hawthorne Maltreatment and Trauma Press 2002), p. 121

# Military Sexual Assault Victims Faced Inconsistent System of Treatment

BY JOHN J. LUMPKIN, ASSOCIATED PRESS  
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WASHINGTON – Victims of rape and other forms of sexual assault in the military have too often suffered additionally from a lack of support from commanders, criminal investigators and doctors, according to military report released.

The report, ordered in February (2004) by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld after a number of sexual assaults against soldiers in the Iraqi theater came to light, described inconsistencies throughout the military in the treatment and investigation of such assaults.

Those responses varied unit to unit, case to case, said Ellen P. Embrey, head of an eight-member task force that authored the report. Embrey and her team heard from dozens of victims in Iraq and Kuwait. “In many cases the commanders were very supportive of (a victim’s) circumstance,” she told reporters at the Pentagon. “It was the process of investigation, the backlog of forensic analysis, or the failure to provide timely legal assistance that ended up being a problem. In other cases, the commander was insensitive to the fact that the assault was an assault. Some ignored it.”

In some cases, commanders were unsure of the difference between sexual harassment, misconduct, and assault. For her inquiry, Embrey defined sexual assault as rape, forcible sodomy, indecent assault, or attempts to do any of those. The task force recommended a series of primarily administrative changes that are aimed at increasing awareness through the ranks of how to respond, both medically and judicially, when a soldier reports being assaulted. The recommendations include new offices to focus on the issue as well as new training procedures.

David Chu, the undersecretary of defense for personnel, said some early changes were being implemented. The study was initiated by Rumsfeld in response to media reports about sexual assaults in Iraq and Kuwait. In almost all of these cases, male U.S. troops were reported assaulting female soldiers. In all, the military received 94 reports of sexual assault from soldiers in the region that includes Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan in 2003. It received 24 reports in that region in 2002. Chu attributed the increase to the massive increase of U.S. service members sent to the region for the invasion and occupation of Iraq. He said the rate was consistent with the rate reported throughout the military.

“It occurs here in Garrison in the U.S.,” Embrey said. “It occurs in combat environments.” Chu said those figures probably represent a small fraction of the number of assaults that actually occurred, because soldiers are often afraid or unwilling to report it to their chain of command.

Chu also disputed the notion that sexual assault cases are swept under the rug when commanders use less-severe administrative punishments on alleged sexual offenders, rather than send them to courts-martial. Chu states those cases are frequently the result of the victim not wanting to go through the investigative and legal processes, so commanders take what measures they can against the assailant.

*“In other cases, the commander was insensitive to the fact that the assault was an assault. Some ignored it.”*

Military-wide, sexual assault in the military has dropped by half since the mid-1990s, Chu said. He cited military surveys in which soldiers can anonymously report being assaulted. In the mid-90s, between 6 and 7 percent of women answering the survey reported they had been assaulted in the last year; in 2002, the figure was around 3 percent, he said.

In 2002, military authorities investigated 901 alleged cases of sexual assault; in 2003, they investigated 1012 cases, the report says. Across both years, more than three quarters of the alleged assailants were members of the Armed Forces. Almost all the assailants were men; 91 percent of the victims were women.

# Air Force Issues Long – Awaited Report on Sexual Assault Issues

By NICOLE GAUDIANO, WRITER, ARMY TIMES

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*Photograph by  
Ken Wright, USAFA*

The most frequently quoted barrier to reporting sexual assault in the Air Force is the fear of a breach of confidentiality, according to a 96-page study of sexual assault in the Air Force released today.

Other barriers include shame, fear of being reduced in the eyes of a commander or colleague, fear of disciplinary action, fear of re-victimization and fear of operational impacts on training, security clearances and overseas deployment.

Reporting barriers are among 20 findings listed in the report along with 14 recommendations, all focusing on sexual assault realities, policy and leadership, education and training, reporting, response, and air and space expeditionary forces and deployment.

The report, titled “Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response,” culminates an 18-month process beginning in January 2003, when allegations of sexual assault at the Air Force Academy came to light, according to an Air Force press release.

Based on what it learned from the academy and a study of rape cases in Pacific Air Forces, Air Force leaders launched the service-wide assessment in February.

The Air Force review of internal statistics found that victims and offenders were familiar with each other in 85 percent of all sexual assault cases reviewed.

But the team of assessors found there was “no cogent Air Force-wide sexual assault policy” for dealing with sexual assault reports. Meanwhile, they found major commands are concerned about being tasked to solve the sexual assault issue as part of an unfunded mandate from headquarters.

Commanders are unaware of the prevalence of the sexual assault problem, the study found. While commanders are “often responding appropriately” to ensure victims receive immediate care, “a general impression is that many commanders are unaware of the prevalence of sexual assault and its potential impact on the Air Force mission,” the study states.

The existing sexual assault prevention and awareness training lacks a unifying message and tends to focus on sexual harassment instead of the sexual assault problem. The Air Force has already implemented responses, such as establishing victim-support liaisons, to some of the findings.

The following are the study team's recommendations:

- Identify an overseer of development and promulgation of sexual assault policy at the Air Staff, major command and base level.
- Develop an Air Force-wide sexual assault prevention and response policy focused on cultural and institutional change.
- Develop a communications strategy to re-orient Air Force culture into a proactive force for change.
- Allocate resources over the long-term to sustain continuous and consistent sexual assault prevention and response programs.
- Integrate databases used to report and track sexual assault cases.
- Develop a sexual assault education and training strategy.
- Enhance training for key first responders and Victim Witness Assistance Program liaisons.
- Develop a system of reporting that maximizes reporting rates.
- Improve the oversight structure for sexual assault prevention and response at the MajCom and base level.
- Develop and expand relationships with community service providers to enhance sexual assault training and response.
- Appoint an Air Component Command office of primary responsibility to standardize sexual assault procedures as they relate to the Air Expeditionary Force and deployed environment.
- Require mandatory pre-deployment training focused on sexual assault prevention and response.



*Photograph by  
Ken Wright,  
USAFE*

# An Atmosphere of Change

BY LT COLONEL LAURENT FOX, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS FOR THE AIR FORCE ACADEMY,  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, HQ USAFA/PA

In December of 2002, an anonymous email was sent to Congress, senior Air Force officers, and the media, describing how female cadets were ignored or punished when reporting sexual assault. Following an initial review, the Air Force Academy noted a much larger problem than previously understood regarding sexual assault. Dozens of women reported that they had been sexually assaulted at the Academy over the past decade and that their claims were either ignored, mishandled, or felt that they were inappropriately punished for infractions that occurred concurrent to the alleged sexual assaults. As investigators dug deeper, they found that 142 cadets, between the years of 1993 and 2002, alleged they were sexually assaulted while at the Academy. The majority of these cases were non-stranger sexual assaults. The victim and the perpetrator knew each other. This crisis created a firestorm that highlighted severe problems at the Academy, not only with the reporting system, but also with leadership management of the problem.

The crisis was not just discovered internally. Several different groups, including U.S. Congresswoman Tillie Fowler, and the Department of Defense, conducted studies of the environment at the Academy to attempt to determine what went wrong and how to fix it. These groups reported “a chasm of leadership” and “an atmosphere that helped foster a breakdown in values which led to the pervasiveness of sexual assaults” showing that the problems were very deeply rooted and would require a long term solution.

Following these studies, Air Force Academy officials went on an introspective look at what went wrong and what path to take. It was determined that alcohol was a factor in many of the cases, that victims were being punished for infractions that occurred simultaneous to the incidents, that there was a lack of trust of leadership by the cadets, and that sexual assault was only one of several cultural problems that needed to be addressed immediately.

In March of 2003, Air Force Secretary Dr. James Roche and Chief of Staff General John Jumper immediately implemented a policy document entitled the “Agenda for Change.” This document provided a blueprint for future change at the Air Force Academy including changes in cadet life, utilization of the discipline system, and reporting of sexual assaults. In addition, four of the senior officers at the Academy, that included the Superintendent and Commandant, were removed from their duties and replaced with new leadership.

Further change was implemented. The creation of the Academy Response Team developed with functional area experts, assists cadets in reporting sexual assaults. Their purpose is to provide effective immediate response and victim support as well as follow-up case management. The ART is under the direction of the Vice Commandant for the Training Wing and includes a Victim Advocate Coordinator, an Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) representative, a legal liaison, a nurse from the Cadet Clinic, a chaplain, a Security Forces representative, and a representative of the chain of command. The AFOSI and legal liaisons of the team are specially detailed to the Vice Commandant for this purpose and do not perform investigative, prosecutorial or defense functions in connection with sexual assault cases.

In addition, the Academy implemented changes more in line with the operational Air Force. The old cadet disciplinary system, which utilized demerits and physical punishment were abolished and the Academy replaced it with the Air Force’s Uniform Code of Military Justice, which deals with infractions and crimes with much more serious outcomes. The Academy also required all active duty officers leading the 36 cadet squadrons to have a Masters degree in counseling so that they can be better conduits for handling sexual assault incidents.

While there have been many positive changes over the past two years, improvement continues daily. Senior leadership has been quoted as saying this cultural change will be a long process, a marathon, and we are only in the second mile of this marathon. While it is a long process to try to correct years of mistakes regarding sexual assault reporting and handling, Academy leadership realizes the issues of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and related alcohol consumption requires broad-scope intervention of a wholistic cultural change plan. This remains a top priority for our Air Force Academy leaders.

*“Senior leadership has been quoted as saying this cultural change will be a long process, a marathon, and we are only in the second mile of this marathon.”*

# Sexual Assault and the Military: A Community Sexual Assault Program's Perspective

BY STEPHANIE SACKS



Stephanie Sacks, Clinical Director of Therapy Services  
Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County

Working in a county with a large military presence brings with it many opportunities to be both encouraged and frustrated with the progress, and the lack thereof that the military is making in addressing sexual assault issues. Recently several Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County (SACPC) staff sat down to talk about the military's response to sexual assault. Therapists, educators and advocates, some with a history of personal military involvement and some not, discussed this issue with varying views. As a Certified Sexual Assault Center we provide therapy and advocacy services to active duty and retired military personnel and their dependents. Sometimes those clients report favorably about the way the military has handled sexual assault, and at other times we hear concerns.

The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County has acted as a resource for military bases providing training, consultation, expert testimony, and working on various committees and boards that help to ensure appropriate response for victims. When the Department of Defense panel on sexual assault in the military recently came to Ft. Lewis, we were asked to testify on the issues. At times we have actively complained about the way particular cases or issues were handled. We are called out to the military hospital on base (Madigan) when there is a sexual assault exam so that an advocate from our agency may be present to assist the victim.

Over the last few years various reports of sexual assault in the military and military academies have made the news and there has been a very public effort to assess and hopefully address sexual assault in the military. It should be said that different bases and military personnel through out the system have been working long before that to effect change. Madigan for example, had begun putting together training for all hospital personnel on sexual assault issues some time ago. In April of this year the Department of Defense published a Task Force Report on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault. This report highlights many of the issues sexual assault victims in the military face. As a Community Sexual Assault Program (CSAP) we are not directly affiliated with the military and, therefore, we offer a perspective on the issues as we experience them.

First and foremost the military is a powerful system and so like any powerful system the same myths, attitudes, and ignorance that permeate the rest of society are also present there. The difficulty is that the military has more power and control over those involved in it than other systems may. It truly is a closed system, acting as a judge and juror to its own. It is this power, that for many in the military defines where they live, who they socialize with, where they get medical care, what they are paid, what job they must do, etc..., that can create a sense of safety or fear. Like in the civilian world many in the military believe that sexual assault victims may need special support and assistance and deserve respect and care following an assault; the problem arises in defining who a sexual assault victim is.

There is an overriding perception that false reports are common and that victims bring about or contribute to their own assaults, thus making them partially responsible and, therefore, not a true victim. This belief is, of course, present in the civilian world but is especially strong in the military world. Until this issue is addressed and perceptions change, no policy will ever be effective in addressing the needs of sexual assault victims. They will not be recognized as the victims they are but instead will be viewed as suspect.

The military, like the civilian world, does not have good statistics on the rates of "false reports." Many times unsubstantiated reports are viewed as false. As a therapist I know that the pain of those

*(continued)*

*“Over the last few years various reports of sexual assault in the military and military academies have made the news and there has been a very public effort to assess and hopefully address sexual assault in the military.”*

*“The military is a powerful system and so like any powerful system the same myths, attitudes, and ignorance that permeate the rest of society are also present there.”*

“unsubstantiated rapes” is just as real as the pain from “substantiated” ones. But too many believe if it is unsubstantiated, it didn’t happen and the victim is seen as attempting to manipulate the system.

Unfortunately it is also quite common that in both the civilian and military world one looks to the victim to determine how they may have contributed to their own rape. Just as we often look to potential victims to be responsible for preventing their own assaults. It is not uncommon (as the Task Force Report points out) that sexual assault victims may have been participating in some “misconduct,” underage drinking, fraternization and drinking, and violations of other orders or regulations when the assault occurred.

We know that victims may be reluctant to disclose to law enforcement officers in the civilian world because they may feel guilty, or believe they will be blamed, disbelieved or that they will get into trouble. In the military world the consequences are even more severe. There could be disciplinary actions, of all sorts against a victim as well as any witnesses that she might also unintentionally implicate by telling the truth of the events that preceded the rape. At times victims may feel that these minor misconducts are handled more severely than the sexual assault.

Even in the Task Force Report they caution “It would be improper to communicate any type of ‘amnesty’ message for minor victim misconduct in cases involving sexual assault, especially because such a message might encourage false reporting of a sexual assault if service member wanted to divert attention from his or her own misconduct (e.g., pregnancy through adulterous relationship).” The ramifications for a military service member or their family for such “minor misconducts” can have much more severe consequences than in the civilian world. However, we know that such “misconduct” does not cause someone to be assaulted. Not understanding that fear of repercussions for these “minor misconducts” can influence a rape victim’s description of the rape and her reluctance to discuss the details causes investigators to draw false conclusions. This does not mean that she/he was not assaulted.

The mission is always the first priority in the military. This has many implications for sexual assault victims. Unit cohesion is vital to a successful mission and so service members have an allegiance to those in their unit. If the victim and perpetrator are in the same unit and the victim accuses the perpetrator or turns them in they may fear being seen as disloyal to the whole unit. In fact, following a disclosure of sexual assault, many victims feel their unit chose sides and that the victim was no longer supported by her unit. This clearly has serious implications in a military setting.

In addition, women are still devalued in much of the military because as many will point out, they are not allowed to engage in front line combat. Therefore to some, they are seen as ultimately less valuable than men and so more dispensable in a case of “he said, she said.” In addition, some feel that because of this, women should not be in the military – which is viewed as a man’s world. Because women cannot engage in frontline combat, they are seen as not really deserving of being in the military and having to sacrifice less to be there. This means that many still believe that if a woman is sexually assaulted in the military it is at least a little bit her fault because she didn’t really belong there to begin with. And so the line goes that if you are going to voluntarily put yourself in the company of large groups of men, especially who are on a deployment and so not having easy access to consensual sex, what do you expect.

Still today if a woman complains of sexual assault/harassment it is not uncommon for fellow service members to meet it with the eye rolling that might occur if they were to break a nail, “This is what we get when women go out to do a man’s job. They are diverting the focus of the mission with secondary issues. If they weren’t here we wouldn’t have to worry about these sorts of things.” Of course, men are also sexually assaulted in the military but the vast majority

*“But too many believe if it is unsubstantiated, it didn’t happen and the victim is seen as attempting to manipulate the system.”*

of victims appear to be women. At times female victims describe that even other female service women seem upset with them for “allowing” themselves to be sexually assaulted and creating a “bad name” for all service women.

The critical focus on the mission might cause a victim’s immediate needs or well being to be put aside if that most serves the mission. It is not to say that the military’s priority should not be the mission but rather to say that when it is, the victim may suffer. For example it may be in a victim’s best interest to be separated from her perpetrator following allegations of sexual assault. However, this may not be in the best interest of the mission depending on the availability of other service members and the function of the victim or perpetrator.

The other issue that often complicates sexual assault in the military is the set of values that the military prides itself on instilling within its ranks. “Self-less service, courage, honor, respect, discipline, confidence, respect, a willingness to go forward during the most difficult situations, and strength” top the list. When a military service member comes forward as a victim of a sexual assault many may feel that he or she failed in upholding these values. Being a victim is not often seen as synonymous with being strong, courageous and respected and rarely do victims, at least initially, see themselves this way. When a service person is victimized and experiencing the impact of that victimization, they may feel they have let the military or their unit down. And that being a victim is inconsistent with the military’s definition of a good service member.

Privacy is another difficulty for military service members. The military teaches and reinforces the idea that a service person must report anything of significance that occurs to them to their commander. As a result many service members feel they must report a sexual assault to their commander and fear that if they don’t they’ll be seen as going outside the chain of command. But once this report is made or actually once anyone in the military system finds out about the sexual assault the victim’s privacy takes a backseat to the mission. This means at the very least, that if anyone-- medical personnel, counselor, even Chaplain believes the sexual assault could impact the victim’s performance or affect the mission they are obligated to speak up. It also means all records related to the victim could be accessed by their command. It is for this reason that some victims choose to access private services off base when they exist and the victim is aware of them or can afford them. Thus military service members and their family use our services as a local CSAP. They know that our allegiance is not to the mission but to their needs.

Some have remarked that perpetrators of sexual assault/harassment can be disciplined more swiftly and severely in the military than in the civilian world. There are also various ways that a commander might reprimand someone if they suspect that sexual harassment or assault occurred even if they do not have the proof they might require for a court martial or more severe disciplinary actions. However, the commander is also the person who initially takes the complaint and may begin or end an investigation. This means that in cases where the perpetrator and victim are in the same unit there may be conflicting loyalties. On the other hand, a perpetrator’s assistance with the mission and service record also directly relates to the likelihood of him facing a court martial. From the list of factors a commander should consider when deciding how to dispose of an offense are listed: the character and military service of the accused, possible improper motives of the accuser, reluctance of the victim or others to testify, the availability of and admissibility of evidence. Considering the dynamics of sexual assault, it is easy to see how a popular perpetrator with a good military record could be let off the hook.

Because the military is responsible for providing care to those impacted by a sexual assault in the military, victims may find the military reluctant to label legitimate symptoms as such. I have seen cases where female rape victims with symptoms of anxiety, depression, intrusive symptoms and avoidance are diagnosed with having personality disorders but never diagnosed

*“Many still believe that if a woman is sexually assaulted in the military it is at least a little bit her fault because she didn’t really belong there to begin with.”*

*(continued)*

with PTSD. At other times those responsible for investigating cases of sexual assault or making judgments about the best course of action lack relevant training. This can be particularly true during a deployment when people are drawing conclusions about whether or not a sexual assault occurred based on inaccurate information about how victims respond or who perpetrators are.

We know that in traumatic situations individuals do as they have practiced not as they would hope. Within the military service-men and women are trained from basic, and practice from then on, to follow the chain of command. When a service person is at risk, especially from someone who outranks them the typical impulse is to do as they have practiced and obey their superior. This set up a dynamic where the victim may feel that they consented because they did not fight back and others view the sexual activity as “fraternization” rather than sexual assault.

Another issue that can create difficulties is when the perpetrator is a service member but the victim is not. If a service member commits an offense off base there are no clear guidelines for who should handle the matter. Civilian law enforcement may pass the investigation and disciplinary action onto the military. Yet the military may have no allegiance to a civilian. And the civilian victim may be at a loss as far as how to navigate the military justice system which is really not set up to address civilian issues. To whom should this person turn for a protection order? How can she get information if she can't even get on base?

Many of those who go into the military feel a large sense of patriotism and or they develop it over their time in service. Like so many sexual assault victims, those assaulted in the military often report being most harmed by the system's response. Many victims report being hurt and injured by the perpetrator, but the damage they are unprepared for is inflicted by the system. Many victims report this betrayal by trusted systems as being the most difficult to heal from. For some, this betrayal comes from an employer in the case of an irresponsible response to sexual harassment, for others it may be their families response when they learn about sexual abuse, students may find themselves ostracized by their peers after reporting a date rape, still for others it may have to do with the response of law enforcement or prosecuting attorneys response or comments.

For those who are sexually assaulted in the military, when the system betrays them, it often involves a betrayal at all levels. Their job and military career may be impacted; their peers, social support and positive co-worker relations suffer; their commander, military police and prosecutors may not respond effectively. Ultimately many feel like their country betrayed them. The quote “With great power comes great responsibility” seems especially appropriate in reference to sexual assault in the military. Clearly the military is a powerful system; as such it has a responsibility to protect those who serve in it so far as it is able. Those who join the military clearly recognize that it is dangerous and that there are risks. However, most imagine those risks would come from an outside “enemy.” Unfortunately for many service members the greatest risk comes from the person serving next to them, above them or the system at large. Those who serve our country have the right to know that the system that works so hard to protect others is also protecting them from those within it.

This article was written in collaboration with input from Penni Maples, Jennifer Quitugua, Tamra Donohue and Maribeth Gage. Stephanie Sacks is the Clinical Director of Therapy Services with the Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County where she has worked for the past 10 years. She holds a Master's degree in Psychology with an emphasis in Drama Therapy from the California Institute of Integral Studies and is licensed with the state and certified with the National Board of Certified Counselors as a Mental Health Therapist. She has worked directly with hundreds of survivors of sexual assault/abuse/harassment as well as provided training, consultation and supervision to many others in the field. Stephanie has spoken to a wide variety of audiences regarding the impact of sexual violence on the victim, including as an Expert Witness in the military court system.

# Avoiding The Accreditation Abyss

EVELYN LARSEN  
ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICES COORDINATOR  
WCSAP



*Evelyn Larsen*

Okay, the accreditors have come and gone and you're good for four more years. Congratulations! That is an impressive accomplishment and a stamp of approval that your organization can certainly be proud of.

Being the manager that you are, and the fact that you have been through accreditation, you know that this is not the time to rest on your laurels, tempting as it may be. There is no choice, but to face the fact that accreditation is just plain easier if you keep up with it through time.

Recognizing this, here are some tips to help you maintain records between accreditation visits:

- Continue to ensure that all personnel are qualified, according to the core service standards and standard P10. When was the last time you reviewed these standards? How does your hiring practice uphold these standards? Spot check yourself, pull a random file and pretend you are the accreditor, check it over. Does it meet the standard?
- Continue to orient personnel (including board members) in accordance with your agenda for orientation developed in response to AGA3, P13, and FE 3. If your orientation has changed from your agenda then you need to adjust one or the other. Check AGA3 for a list of topics that need to be included in board orientation. Do you have them addressed? Follow your plan to provide board members with on-going training & document their attendance at these trainings. Review your written plan for personnel and client safety needs per FE3.

## **IDEA 1**

Have a sign in sheet for every meeting held and make sure that everyone in attendance signs it, then file it in the correct place.

## **IDEA 2**

When you compile your board manuals have the first page be a sheet that the new board members sign and date upon receiving the manual and completion of board orientation. Be sure to take the sheet and file it in their board member file. Do a similar sheet for new employees.

- Provide all personnel with annual evaluations, giving staff an opportunity to comment on the evaluation and receive a copy of it before placing it in their file (P15). You might consider a specific time of year to dedicate this type of work. For example, if you decide that personnel evaluations will take place every June, then mark the calendar (putting it on your year long training and topic calendar) and stick to it. Do your procedures match your policy regarding personnel evaluations?

*“There is no choice, but to face the fact that accreditation is just plain easier if you keep up with it through time.”*

*(continued)*

- Keep all personnel files up to date! (P16). Occasionally agencies forget why they have included an item in a file and discontinue placing it there. So review what is required to be in personal files per P 16 standard. Again, here is an opportunity to spot check yourself, pick a file (the one you are most concerned about would be a good choice) and review it as an accreditor would; checking for the required records. Also, ask yourself if your written policies provide personnel with access to their records? Your operational procedures should address how employees can review, add, or make corrections to the information contained in their records. Do your current working procedures match your stated policies? Pay close attention to your volunteers; any volunteer with management or direct service responsibilities are treated as an employee with regards to this standard.

**NOTE:**

Have you changed or altered personnel policies or procedures in any way? If you have, then updated copies must be provided to those affected when change is made. Do you have documentation of providing this updated information to those affected?

- Document collaboration efforts (AC4) and opportunities to advocate for social change (AC5 & CS7). Start a file or notebook that contains a collection of materials, brochures, pamphlets, etc. of activities that outline the services you provide; it should identify your role, function and your relationship to other agencies or organizations. You are trying to document collaboration or interagency cooperation so keep this in mind. Do you have any written interagency agreements? Do you keep copies of minutes or letters outlining what both parties agreed to do? Follow up with documentation outlining phone conversations you have with other agencies. In other words, document, document, document.
- A written cultural competency plan (AC1). When was the last time you took a look at your cultural competency plan?
- A written plan that identifies the diversity of the community at large and your diversity objectives and a timeline for achieving those objectives (P4). Be sure you understand the difference between cultural competency and diversity. Evaluate your recruiting, employment and promotional practices. Identify if they support the diversity of the community at large?
- Documentation of working with others in the community (CS 3, 4, 6, 7). This can include: letters, emails, meeting minutes, notes of phone conversation, interagency agreements, etc. Know where you keep information that substantiates and demonstrates your relationship with others within the community.
- Follow your policies, procedures and plans! For example: diversity plan (P4), cultural competency plan (AC1), review of barriers to service (AC3), review of salary schedule (P7), review of job descriptions (p2), review of personnel policies (p3), etc. Pick a month and assign one of these to review. For example, the action plan for June will be reviewing your diversity plan, for July it will be to review barriers to service, and for August? Time to review the salary schedule, and so on, spacing them appropriately given your known time constraints.

**IDEA:**

Ryan Warner from WCSAP is available to do site visits and an assessment regarding barriers to service for people with disabilities. Not only does he do an assessment, but also has a tool that can provide you with ideas on how to overcome the barriers indicated. This addresses the required annual review as well as a way that demonstrates positive movement towards overcoming barriers to service, both of which are required by AC3.

- Fiscal maintenance: complete annual report, audit, minutes/reports of finance committee (FM2) follow fund-raising plan (FM4). An annual report is required to meet FM2, but it also can be used as a marketing and fundraising tool. Can you think of a better publication that showcases the good work you have done over the past year? Do you have a file/book/designated place for minutes or reports of the finance committee or reports of the Board Treasurer (or other designated member of the governing body)? Can you access them easily? Do your operating financial procedures align with written policies? Have you reviewed your established contingency plan in the event of a reduction in agency funds lately? When was the last time you reviewed your fund-raising plan?

**IDEA:**

Send copies of your annual report to people/agencies/organizations and potential donors to let them know more about your agency and all you have done in the past year.

- Collect useful data & use data to plan program (QA 1 & 2). How do you collect data regarding the clients you serve and the service you provide? How is that data used to improve service? The accreditor pulls random samples, so pull some yourself and objectively assess the data your organization is collecting? Do you have meeting minutes (staff and/or board) or other evidence reflecting the use of that data for evaluating, planning and improving services?
- Make sure that you comply with requirements for annual updates:  
List of annual plans/tasks:
  - board/advisory committee training and documentation of attendance at training (AGA3)
  - review of barriers to service (AC3),
  - review of salary and benefit schedule (P7),
  - review of job descriptions (P2), “Written policy for annual review of job descriptions”
  - agency personnel receive a performance evaluation at least one time per year (P15)
  - annual documentation process that ties staff hours worked to the funding source (FM3)

- Other plans that need periodic review:
  - diversity plan (P4)
  - cultural competency plan (AC1)
  - review of personnel policies (P3) review fund raising plan (FM4)
  - community resource list, updated within the past six months (CS1)
- Every two or more years
  - financial audit report or financial review and a formal or informal plan to address any areas of concerns raised by the audit or financial review (FM2)
  - record of fundraising over the past three years (FM4)

Other recommendations from WCSAP:

- Get a volunteer to make an agency scrap book, highlighting what you do. It can include: brochures, flyers, photos, press releases, newspaper articles, campaign summaries, or samples of anything distributed. This creates another useful marketing tool that can showcase your agency's good work.
- Make another notebook focusing on collaboration and networking. Highlight your partners and the work you do. Add to this one, any of the above list of suggestions plus, sign-in sheets, minutes of meetings, memos, letters, copies of emails, etc.

**IDEA:**

Keep the notebook in a convenient place with a 3-hole punch next to it. You can just punch it and throw it in the notebook. Later you can have that trusty volunteer rearrange your notebook in the fashion that you want, chronologically or by type of item, when accreditation rolls around you aren't scouring the place looking for something that indicates meetings were held. You will have it all at your finger tips.

- Social change notebook. Create it the same as you do your collaboration and network notebook.
- Make a year-long meeting topic and training calendar. Your staff and board will love you and then there will be no reason for not being aware of what is going on.
- Create a personnel file checklist and attach it to the front inside cover of each employee/ volunteer's personnel file. Do the same for board members.
- Create a training logbook.
- Write position qualifications & employee classification into job descriptions.

WCSAP personnel are available to provide technical assistance for the accreditation process upon request, at no cost to the requestor. Please use the form below or call Evelyn at 360-754-7583

## Clip and fax or mail to:

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs  
Evelyn Larsen  
2415 Pacific Ave SE  
Olympia, WA 98501  
360-786-8707 fax

I would like some additional assistance.

Please call me at: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me additional information on: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in a visit by WCSAP \_\_\_\_\_

Other, Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

## Celebrating Twenty-Five Years of Service



*Joan Renner*

We honor and give tribute to Joan Renner and Mary Ellen Stone, who have influenced and served working towards ending sexual violence twenty-five years.

**Joan Renner** embarked on this career laboring in the field of sexual assault 25 years ago. In addition to years of advocating and supporting victims and survivors of sexual assault, she also provided assistance in determining policies.

Joan now serves as Director of YWCA of Clark County's Sexual Assault Program. Suzanne Brown-McBride, Executive Director of WCSAP summed it up in her statement; Joan's "been the glue, the catalyst and the fire under the pan."

**Mary Ellen Stone** started with the agency in 1976 when it was a small, volunteer crisis line called King County Rape Relief; she became Executive Director in 1979 at the age of 27. Through her dedication, vision and fortitude, she has built one of the most respected sexual assault agencies in the state.



*Mary Ellen Stone*

Mary Ellen has spent 25 years fighting for the rights of victims, lobbying to ensure that their needs are met, and challenging our community to overcome the fear and denial that help perpetuate the crime.

Both Joan and Mary Ellen devoted careers transcends beyond the revolving doors of those who come and go so quickly as a result of intense labor in advancing the eradication of sexual violence. As we well know, working in this field is not an easy task; however, the movement is strengthened by their wellspring mirrored commitment and illustrated dedication.

As we mount up and venture onward to advancing beyond barriers to end sexual violence, we are honored to continue this march with two remarkable legends that are gifted, spirited, and highly committed.

Their commitment and labor is part of the continuum of social change and a challenge to us who embrace this work. Joan and Mary Ellen, we share a common bond with you because we are an extension of those who come before us and those who labor amongst us. Thank you for your dedicated service and commitment.

# Highlights of Community Sexual Assault Programs



*Lindsay Palmer*

Lindsay Palmer, Director of Education at KCSARC immediately gave thought of their most recent efforts in putting new word to their mission as a sexual assault program when asked, What's new at KCSARC? "In our numerous discussions we have continued to reflect on our roots in this work, giving voice, being a voice for others, and being a voice to end sexual violence."

According to Lindsay, "As an educator, to give voice means that we listen in a way that does not give answers, but offers a hand. It means that we begin a dialogue in a classroom instead of a lecture. It means when a group of neighbors tell us how unsafe they feel, we listen, and don't cover up their emotions with statistics and strategies."

"Our foundation in the work of sexual assault and violence prevention is being the voice that can speak when others are unable. In the education department at KCSARC, it is the base from which we build all our prevention efforts, the old and the new."



*Connections Staff at 2004  
Annual Retreat, Republic, WA*

Twinflower Wilkie with Connections Sexual Assault Programs located in Republic shares that "Community development can happen when you're working on something else. At CONNECTIONS, we worked hard to get our Voices Against Violence (VAV) group underway. We held meetings, invited the public, fed them, and got them involved in forming a Sexual Assault Prevention Action Plan; identifying a community, stakeholders, goals and underlying conditions that allow sexual assault to occur. They went to work to help implement the plan. Activities began in the Republic Schools, our identified community. Things are going strong there, with CONNECTIONS staff involvement. Suddenly, the VAV pool dwindled as people changed jobs, became ill, or retired. We still have hopes for VAV, but we're losing steam. Meanwhile, The Business and Professional Women (BPW) collaborated with CONNECTIONS in a "Get out the Vote" campaign using a video about the suffrage movement. BPW also sponsored a project to educate senior girls on sexual safety issues in preparation for college. The LDS church women's group offered to do a service project for our shelter such as supplying toiletry kits. A businesswoman began donating her delicious homemade truffles to our events and fundraisers. We're working with AmeriCorps volunteers to do sexual abuse prevention education in the Orient School District. We've collaborated with the hospital and the Colville Tribe to apply for health care funding for sexual assault victims. The Colville Tribe is seeking to provide more victims' services and is requesting technical assistance and offering help to us in exchange. Curlew School District called just this week to ask about accessing our services for their students. These things have resulted, in part, from staff members joining organizations and attending public meetings. We're more involved with our community, and they're more involved with us. Doors open, doors close, and the community development goes on."

**Karen Boone**  
**SAFet Response Center of Spokane, Washington**

Karen Boone, Prevention Education Coordinator shares about efforts being made in the perspective of Diversity. “Over the years, many of our social change efforts have had their beginnings within our offices, planned and implemented with limited or informal community support and involvement. Our primary focus has been to build awareness and skills to avoid victimization, and therapeutic interventions to help survivors heal and avoid re-victimization. As a direct result of our efforts in the community, we have experienced a heightened awareness of sexual violence and the victimization of women. We have also discovered an overwhelming need to expand services to reach the underserved populations and individuals that reside within marginalized communities.

Instead of relying on traditional outreach methods based upon what we deemed important, we turned to the community and requested their assistance in developing innovative strategies to effectively reach marginalized members of their communities. Challenged to broaden the way we look at our current system of service delivery, we formed a plan to renew our investment in the community as resources and partners in prevention.”

# Technical Assistance from the Legal Services Department



*Catherine Carroll, WCSAP Staff Attorney*  
*Sherina James, former WCSAP Legal Services Coordinator*

## **Can Juvenile Sex Offenders Attend the Same School as the Victim?**

**No.** Pursuant to Wash. Rev. Code § 13.40.215 (5) a convicted juvenile sex offender “shall not” attend the same school as the victim or the victim’s sibling.

Upon release, a convicted juvenile sex offender shall not attend a public or approved private elementary, middle, or high school that is attended by a victim or a sibling of a victim of the sex offender.

## **Parental Obligation**

The parents or legal guardians of the convicted juvenile sex offender shall be responsible for transportation or other costs associated with or required by the sex offender’s change in school that otherwise would be paid by a school district.

## **Notice Requirement**

Upon authorized release of a convicted juvenile sex offender, the secretary shall send written notice of the authorized release and the requirements of this subsection to the common school district board of directors of the district in which the sex offender intends to reside or the district in which the sex offender last attended school, whichever is appropriate. The secretary shall send a similar notice to any approved private school the juvenile will attend, if known, or if unknown, to the approved private schools within the district the juvenile resides or intends to reside.”

## **When Can a Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Victim Break His/Her Lease Because of Their Victimization?**

Under the new law, Wash. Rev. Code §59.18.575, victims of sexual assault and their household members may end their lease with the landlord if they meet the following three conditions:

1) The victim and/or their household members must either have: a valid domestic violence protection order, an anti-harassment order or a domestic violence criminal no contact orders; OR a record of reporting the incident of sexual assault to a “qualified third party.”

A “qualified third party” means any of the following people: law enforcement officers, state court employees, doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, licensed mental health professionals or counselors, members of the clergy, or crime victim/witness program advocates. Although reporting to a qualified third party may help a victim end a lease, victims should be aware that it does not provide them with the legally enforceable safety provisions that come with an order for protection.

2) Victims must notify their landlord in writing that they (and/or their household member(s)) are a victim of sexual assault, and attach a copy of the valid court order or the record of the report to a qualified third party to the letter.

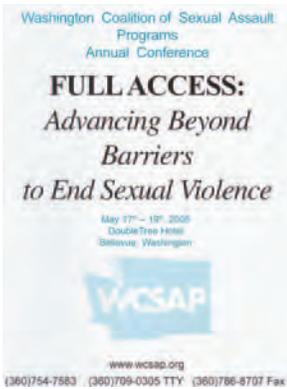
3) Victims need to inform their landlord that they will be moving out within 90 days of the incident of sexual assault that caused them to seek a court order or make a report to a “qualified third party”. They can do this in the same letter that they used in step 2. It is 90 days from the

*(continued)*

date the incident occurred, not 90 days from when the victim reported the incident.

Generally, if these three conditions are met, a victim of sexual assault may end her lease and move out without having to pay for the rest of the time on the lease. She will still have to pay the rent due for the month in which she left (even if she leaves in the middle of the month), but will be entitled to a refund of their deposit.

For more information about the new housing law that offers protections to victims of sexual assault see Wash. Rev. Code §59.18.570, §59.18.575, §59.18.580 and §59.18.585.



## 2005 WCSAP Conference Information

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs Annual Conference.

Full Access: Advancing Beyond Barriers to End Sexual Violence.

May 17th - 19th, 2005

DoubleTree Hotel

Bellevue, Washington

For additional information about the 2005 conference visit our web site at [www.WCSAP.org](http://www.WCSAP.org) or call Renee Sparks at 360-754-7583 extension 111.

## Sexual Assault Awareness Week

Sexual Assault Awareness Week will be observed April 11th - 15th, 2005.

This year's theme, "One State of Mind Can END Sexual Violence" speaks to broader communities in participating in solutions to preventing sexual violence. "Every two minutes, someone somewhere in America is raped." This is not just a women's issue; this is a human issue. This is a global issue. The purpose of our campaign is to engage individuals, communities, and organizations to take a vocal and active stand against sexual violence.



2004 SAAW PROCLAMATION SIGNING  
BY FORMER GOVERNOR LOCKE

## Upcoming Trainings

| Training   | Trainer                        | Date                        | Location                               |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Group Facilitation Skills                        | Dawn Larsen, MA                | 2/25/05                     | Vancouver, WA                          |
| Sexual Assault in the African American Community | Dr. Carolyn West               | 3/25/05                     | Talaris Conference Center, Seattle, WA |
| Advocate Core                                    | WCSAP                          | 4/9 & 4/10/05<br>4/16 & TBD | Skagit County                          |
| Therapist Core                                   | WCSAP & Stephanie Sacks, SACPC | 5/9-5/11/05                 | Ellensburg, WA                         |

# Library Resources

**Military in Crisis: Sexual Harassment and Rape in the Armed Forces**  
by Leigh Roche

**Women in Shadows** by Kim Bok-Lim is a handbook for service providers working with Asian wives of U.S. military personnel. Describes countries of origin, cultures and values of Asian born women, adjustments tasks and problems that Asian women experience in the U.S.

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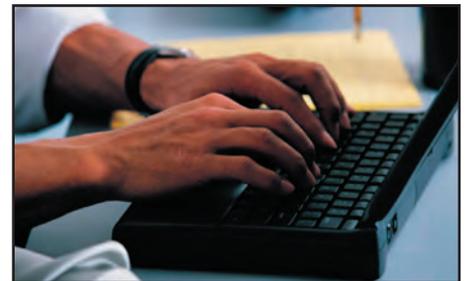
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## We want to hear from you

E-mail your letters or opinions to [renee@wcsap.org](mailto:renee@wcsap.org) or mail correspondence to 2415 Pacific Avenue SE, Olympia, WA 98501. Letters chosen for publication will be edited for length and clarity.

For advocacy technical assistance email [janet@wcsap.org](mailto:janet@wcsap.org) or [renee@wcsap.org](mailto:renee@wcsap.org).

**For information of other departments log on to [www.wcsap.org](http://www.wcsap.org)**



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The *Connections* publication is available free to all WCSAP members.\*  
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