

Tattered flag helps struggling veterans

Patrick McCallister

FOR VETERAN VOICE

patrick.mccallister@yahoo.com

You just never know. Marty Zickert, president of the Veterans Council of Indian River County, was just trying to be helpful. Before he knew it, the Upward American Veterans Fund was \$10,000 in the gain. The money came from a local business owner whom Zickert met for the first time when he went to talk to him about the tattered American flag flying in front of his place of business.

“One of the ladies who works in the (Victory Center Military Store) here told me the fella had (an American flag) that was really ratty,” Zickert said. “Looked like it was from the Civil War.”

That fella was Kip Smithers, owner of Escutcheon Antiques, 7707 U.S. Highway 1, Vero Beach. Zickert headed to the store with a new flag to offer. He went in wearing a Veterans Council shirt.

Smithers was expecting him. Well, not Zickert, but someone like him.

“I hadn’t said a word, Zickert said. ‘His immediate reaction was, ‘You’re here about my flag,’ he said. ‘I know I need a new flag, but I figured if I left it up some



Original source: defenseimagery.mil.

Senior Leaders of Boy Scout Troop 755 from Gambrills, Md., prepare a tattered flag for a proper retirement during a ceremony in Gambrills, Md., June 14, 2013. It is ceremonial tradition to cut out the blue section, then each stripe, and finally place the piece of flag in a fire as you salute it. — Wikimedia Commons

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The Congressional Budget Office is considering how to cut costs in military budget and says the most effective way is to cut veterans medical benefits. Do you agree?

Send your thoughts to:
info@veteranvoiceweekly.com

OUR MISSION STATEMENT AND OUR OBJECTIVE

Veteran Voice is a weekly publication designed to provide information to and about veterans to veterans and to the broader community. Veterans are an integral part of their Florida communities, which currently have individual organizations of their own, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Vietnam Veterans of America and many other groups with a narrow focus, but no convenient way to connect to a wider population of veterans and to the community in general within a limited geographic area, their community.

The mission of Veteran Voice is to publish a weekly source of information that will provide, in one place, a listing of resources available to veterans, articles about changes in policies or organizations affecting veterans and events of interest to veterans as well as articles about veterans of interest to the general public.

Veteran Voice LLC is organized as a partnership of experienced newspaper executives with an interest in veterans and in the communities of Florida veterans and friends. Veteran Voice is a start-up intended to address a perceived lack of information readily available to veterans on programs and policies affecting them and objective reporting of veteran affairs to the public. To our knowledge, and based on comments from leaders of local veterans organizations, there was no media or website currently meeting this need until the launch of Veteran Voice.

We hope you agree, and will support this publication with your subscription. Without subscriptions there will be a limited number of people we can help, without which this mission will not be realized. As part of our commitment to supporting local veteran communities, we will donate 10 percent of our profits each quarter to qualified veteran charities recommended by you, our readers and subscribers. Please let us know what you think by emailing news@veteranvoiceweekly.com or mailing your comments to us at **1919 S.W. South Macedo Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34984.**

IMPORTANT NUMBERS ...

County Veterans Service Officers

St. Lucie County, Wayne Teegardin
Phone: (772) 337-5670
Fax: (772) 337-5678
veterans@stlucieco.org

Dorothy J. Conrad Building

(formerly the Walton Road Annex Bldg.)
1664 S.E. Walton Road, Suite 205
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
By appointment
Mon., Tues, Thurs, Fri * 8:30 am-4:30 pm
Wed * 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

St. Lucie County Community Services Bldg.

(Corner of Avenue D and 7th Street)
437 N. Seventh St., Fort Pierce, FL 34950
Walk-ins
Mon. and Fri. * 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Brevard Veteran's Services Office

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way,
Bldg. B, Suite 102, Viera, FL 32940
Office: (321) 633-2012
Fax: (321) 637-5432
Mon., Tues. and Thurs., 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Wed. and Fri, 8 a.m.-noon
Manager: Glenn McGuffie

Indian River County

Joel Herman
Vero Beach
2525 St. Lucie Ave.,
Vero Beach, FL 32960
Ph: (772) 226-1499
Fax: (772) 770-5038

Sebastian Square

11602 U.S. 1, Sebastian, FL 32958
Ph: (772) 589-6597 Fax: (772) 581-4988

Martin County

Tony Reese, Veterans Service Office
Supervisor
Nick Ciotti, Veterans Service Officer
(772) 288-5448

Veterans Services Office

Martin County Community Services
435 S.E. Flagler Ave., Stuart, FL 34994
Office Hours: Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

VA Life Insurance Ctr., Phil., PA -

1-800-669-8477

VA Regional Office - 1-800-827-1000

VA Medical Ctr, W. Palm Beach -
1-800-972-8262

Pharmacy, VA Medical Center -

1-800-317-8387

Military Retired Pay Activities,

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Navy, Air Force ONLY)
1-800-321-1080

Military Retired Pay Activities,

Topeka, KS - (Coast Guard ONLY)
1-800-772-8724

Survivor Benefits (SBP),

Denver, CO - 1-800-435-3396

Stuart VA Clinic - (772) 288-0304

Okeechobee County

Veterans Services office

(863) 763-6441, Ext 5.
Fax: (863) 763-0118.

Orlando VA Medical Center

5201 Raymond St., Orlando, FL 32803
(407) 629-1599 or (800) 922-7521

Telephone Care

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7305 North Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL 33410
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Viera VA Outpatient Clinic

2900 Veterans Way, Viera, FL 32940
Phone: (321) 637-3788
1 (877) 878-8387
Mon. - Fri. - 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

St Lucie County PTSD Clinical Team (PCT) Outpatient Program

126 S.W. Chamber Court,
Port St Lucie, FL 34986
Phone: (772) 878-7876

Fort Pierce Community Based Outpatient Clinic

727 North U.S. 1, Fort Pierce, FL 34950
Phone: (772) 595-5150
Fax: (772) 595-6560

St Lucie Community Based Outpatient Clinic

128 S.W. Chamber Court,
Port Saint Lucie, FL 34986
Phone: (772) 344-9288

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3501 S E Willoughby Boulevard,
Stuart, FL 34997
Phone: (772) 288-0304
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372 17th St., Vero Beach, FL 32960
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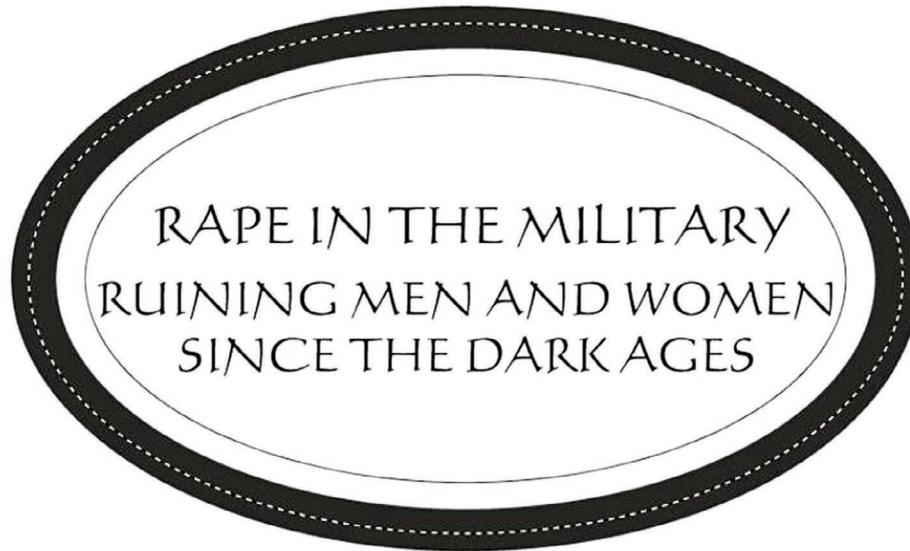
Pressure's on Department of Defense to put a stop to MST

Mary Kemper

STAFF WRITER

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Editor's note: Military sexual trauma rate reports skyrocketed in 2013, as reported in the national news. Coupled with that, allegations against high-ranking or high-authority servicemen of the very crime they're supposed to prevent have captured attention. Veteran Voice is examining this issue in three parts. Part I was dedicated to an overview of the issue, to include how central Florida has been affected and will be expected to contribute to eradicating the crime. Part II broke down the anatomy of sexual assault crimes, especially by gender, and examined some of the many factors that complicate the issue even more for military victims. In this, Part III will explore what progress has been made toward eliminating the crime throughout the Department



of Defense and in Florida.

SHARP, the Pentagon calls its main weapon against military sexual trauma.

It stands for Sexual Harassment and Assault Response Program. It's been around awhile — but

it's kicked into higher gear as a direct result of the massive jump in reported cases last year, and in the uncovering of vast numbers of unreported cases.

The problem is big — in a Dec. 27, 2013 report by Associated Press reporter Lolita C. Baldor,

“there were more than 5,000 reports of (military) sexual assault filed during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, compared to 3,374 in 2012.”

But the number that shocks the most comes from an anonymous Department of Defense survey that shows that “about 26,000 service members reported some type of unwanted sexual contact or sexual assault,” Baldor reported.

Considering there are about 1.5 million people currently serving in the armed forces, that number is significant.

Women are the primary victims of military sexual trauma; however, evidence has shown men have suffered also, and in numbers that have surprised many.

Of the 26,000 incidents reported in the DoD survey, an astonishing “53 percent involved attacks

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Saving memories

Patrick McCallister

FOR VETERAN VOICE
patrick.mccallister@yahoo.com

Editor's note: Under most circumstances journalistic tradition is to stay out of stories reported. Veteran Voice felt it important to waive that tradition when someone called to tell us about her friend, a veteran with a short time left and many stories to tell. The staff believed it wasn't an option to simply tell her about the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project and let the family take it from there. We elected to tap our resources to find a Vero Beach man who is making a mission of capturing and preserving veterans' stories and connected him with the veteran's fam-

ily. We elected to tell the story to inspire other veterans to get their stories recorded. As fate had it, the veteran with many stories left to tell died after work started on this story. Veteran Voice dedicates it to a man we didn't know, but who by all accounts was a soldier's soldier. Godspeed, Ted Griesinger.

There's no soft way to say it. Ted Griesinger died of cancer on Saturday, Jan. 11. When he did, many memories of his extensive military life went with him. Memories important to the character of America. A friend — who requested anonymity — wanted some of those memories preserved for posterity and the public.

She called our office in December, saying she hoped *Veteran Voice* would do a biography about Griesinger, but there wasn't a lot of time left. Not in the paper's usual article repertoire. But, there are people who capture and archive veterans' stories for history's sake. Mark Ossenfort is one. He's starting the Veteran's Story Initiative.

Veteran Voice got him in touch with Griesinger's wife, Elizabeth. Ossenfort went to the family's home on a Sunday afternoon and recorded two hours of Griesinger's story.

A couple days later, doctors recommended hospice. Not long after, Griesinger died.

"They talked about a lot of things," Elizabeth said. "Some things I never heard before."

Ossenfort said he was grateful to have captured at least some of Griesinger's memories. Those recorded memories are going to an



Photo courtesy of Mark Ossenfort

Vero Beach veteran Ted Griesinger recently died of cancer. Before he did, he left about two hours of his military-life story with the Veteran's Story Initiative.



Mark Ossenfort

archive that researchers, students and interested folks will soon be able to access by the Internet.

"Every business gives something back to their community," Ossenfort said. "I'm giving back to my community and my country as a business owner."

Ossenfort owns Crossroads Media in Vero Beach, and has extensive experience in videography. He decided to use his skills and equipment to capture veterans' tales. He doesn't charge for the service, but wouldn't mind finding donors willing to help defray some of the costs. Ossenfort hopes to take what's starting as a small, local project and get it national. The Vero Beach man is working with a private high school to help its students regularly record veterans' stories at the Victory Center

Military Store, Indian River Mall, 6200 20th St., Vero Beach. That should start in February.

The Veterans Council of Indian River County owns and operates the combined museum and store. The president, Marty Zickert, said he hopes many veterans go in to have their stories recorded.

"We need to tell the story," he said. "When (veterans) die, they take the story with them. In most cases, they will not have told their children a thing."

Griesinger is about the 15th veteran Ossenfort has talked with on camera to preserve their memories. He gives families DVDs of the interviews.

"That's the most important thing,

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Warriors need to act like real warriors

Military sexual trauma.

It's a crime only possible at this point in history.

Oh, it's been around since earliest recorded times; but with women serving in the ranks, only now is it being seen as its own, unique crime.

It makes people uncomfortable to talk about it – and it should. It is a terrible crime. And the time for pretending MST doesn't exist is over. It does. And it can destroy everything we hold dear as American warriors.

As someone with a background in psychology, I know some things about sexuality. There is sexuality geared toward pleasure



Mary Kemper
staff writer/marketing consultant

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the family gets a DVD," he said. Ossenfort isn't alone in preserving veterans' stories. Likely the most famous repository of veterans' stories is the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center. The project gives family members and others opportunities to record veterans' stories and preserve them at the library. Bob Patrick is the director. "This stuff doesn't just get put in a box and shipped up to Maryland," Patrick recently told *Veteran Voice*. "It is made accessible to researchers. It's a history from the bottom up. We have 89,000 collections now. That's oral histories as well as other materials. About 13,000 are actually digitized." Digitized and available any time to anyone anywhere in the world with an Internet connection by going to loc.gov/vets. While the project has volunteers who regularly record veterans' stories at public libraries and other places, Patrick said most of the material it has produced and

sent by veterans and their families. "The Veterans History Project field kit helps them walk through that process," he said. Ossenfort said he's not submitting material to the Veterans History Project. "The government can barely take care of running our country. The last thing they can do is take advantage of the newest technology," he said. "They're working with 15-year-old technology." This story started with a family friend calling *Veteran Voice*, worried that Grisinger's stories might go untold. She was grateful Ossenfort quickly responded to the opportunity to speak to him. "I think it's wonderful," she said. "I know he really enjoyed it. (The military is) something he likes to talk about and always has." She hopes the story will inspire other veterans to record their stories. Zickert said interested veterans can watch the Victory Center's Facebook page for when student videographers will record stories there. *Its website is* vcms-fl.com.

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veteran would come by to tell me how to dispose of it." Zickert explained the council worked with local Boy Scouts to properly retire flags. He offered to remove and store the flag until it could be properly burned. Smithers agreed, and said something about getting Zickert a check. "Normally when I get a check, I don't look at it," Zickert said. "For some reason, this one, I caught a flash of zeroes there. I opened it up, and it was \$10,000. My thought was, 'Holy (big bucks, Batman).'" OK, that's the family-friendly version of Zickert's reaction to the \$10,000 donation. Unfortunately Smithers was tied up with antique show preparations at press time and couldn't tell *Veteran Voice* his side of the tale. Zickert said he's a veteran. That money went to the Upward American Veterans Fund, which the council established with about \$50,000 a couple years ago to help struggling veterans. Zickert said it has about \$20,000 remaining. Kathy Allston is one of the fund's director. She said 73 Indian River veterans requested help in 2013. "It was mostly Vero and Sebastian," Allston said. "Out of 73 requests, we were able to help 53 of them." She added, "We are seeing a lot of veterans that need help finding a place to live. They need first, last and security deposits. A lot of them need help with electric. We don't know why, but we often get calls saying, 'If I don't pay it tomorrow, it'll get turned off.'"

Most veterans learn about and make requests through the county's veterans services office. A committee examines requests with an eye toward whether temporary assistance will benefit a veteran in the long haul. It refers many to other programs for employment and money-management help, too. "We spent, last year alone, spent \$36,825," Allston said. Zickert said he's concerned that the fund might run too short to help more veterans. He said that while the \$10,000 donation was surprising, the veterans council appreciates all donations. Zickert said sometimes a few dollars is a larger sacrifice for a giver than thousands to another. The U.S. Flag Code states: "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning." Anyone can respectfully perform the disposal. For more about properly displaying and handling of the flag, visit usflag.org. The Victory Center Military Store will take retired flags to store for proper disposal. It's at the Indian River Mall, 6200 20th St., Vero Beach. Many veterans organizations, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, offer similar services. Indian River's veterans office are at 2525 St. Lucie Ave., Vero Beach, and 11602 U.S. 1, Sebastian. The phone numbers are (772) 226-1499, and (772) 589-6597. *More about the council is at* indianriverveterans.org.

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on men, mostly by other men,” according to James Dao in a report for *The New York Times*.

Why does military sexual trauma happen at all? Is it “hypermasculinity,” as psychologist Janet Meyer, theorized in a paper on the root causes of sexual assault? Experts agree the perpetrators are nearly all men, regardless of the gender of the victim. Is it a “male thing,” or even a “military thing?”

Research has been conducted in the population at large, and is ongoing. Nearly all experts agree it is not a sexual issue at all, but rather an issue of power and control.

Research specifically focused on military crimes is still in early stages. That said, it is still a crime, and it is happening every day – until more studies are conducted that point toward better ways to combat it, SHARP is how the armed forces is taking the issue on.

Before 2013, many victims reported that their attackers were in their direct chain of command — some going to the top, according to reports in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Associated Press* and other na-

tional news organizations. There was a flurry of cases reported in 2013 of high-ranking or high-authority service members being accused of military sexual trauma, including Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair, who, before he was relieved of command, served as deputy commander of support for the 82nd Airborne Division. His case is pending resolution.

Victims reported that the perpetrators having such control over their lives made the effects of their assaults doubly devastating, according to DoD’s anonymous survey.

In the case of Kori Cioca, a former member of the Coast Guard, her perpetrator still holds his job, despite giving her injuries that will last a lifetime, including shattering her jaw so badly she must eat soft foods to this day.

Cioca’s story, and those of more than 60 other women, are told in the documentary “The Invisible War.” Men’s stories have been told in the documentary “Justice Denied.”

Diane Chamberlain, a psychotherapist who treated women at an Air Force base, had harsh words for commanders, based on her own experience:

“Women find the tables turned, letters in their files, trumped-up

charges; isolation and transfer are common, as are court-ordered psychiatric referrals that label the women as lying or incompatible with military service because they are “Borderline Personality Disorders” or mentally unbalanced. I attended (to) many of these women, after they were discharged, or were wives of abusers, when I was a psychotherapist. That was always their diagnosis, yet retesting tended to show something different after stabilization, like PTSD” (from Chamberlain’s book, “Conduct Unbecoming: Rape, Torture, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from Military Commanders,” 2013, Friesen Press).

If being assaulted by a superior isn’t enough, many victims have had to go through the VA denying their claims for medical treatment due to their injuries. It took Cioca seven years before her claim was accepted — she will need treatment for a lifetime, she said in the documentary.

Donna Carlsen, an Army veteran who served in the 1990s, served as the Veteran Services Coordinator for St. Lucie County up until April of 2013. In her capacity, she processed several claims of service members for military sexual trauma.

During her tenure, she said she processed claims for MST for at least six to 10 female service members, and at least two males. “These were compensation cases,” she said. “There were a lot more.”

It’s these issues — and others — that make military sexual trauma different from civilian cases. And it’s these issues that DoD’s updated policies are meant to address.

So what, exactly, is Defense doing about it?

SAPRO — the Department of Defense’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office — was begun in February 2004, when former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld directed Dr. David Chu, the former undersecretary of Defense for personnel and readiness, to review the Defense process for addressing sexual assault in the military.

One objection was commanders’ ability to keep on governing their individual commands. Some regulations were seen as onerous, even harmful, to that time-honored dictum — too much additional paperwork, time, and resources.

Commanders asked: What if so many regulations are ordered

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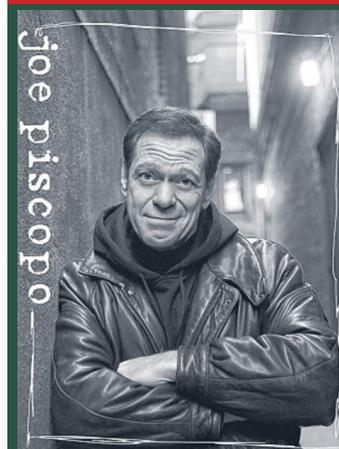


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that the unit's mission is compromised? Until the Congressional hearings in 2013, their concerns were given priority over reforming the way investigations were handled.

Back in 2004, DoD used strong language to show how committed it was to eradicating military sexual trauma. According to advocates, though, it continued the very procedure that led to problems in the first place: Namely, keeping commanders in charge of prosecuting the cases.

From DoD's 2005 release (*sapr.mil*):

"One of the recommendations emphasized the need to establish a single point of accountability for sexual assault policy within the Department. This led to the establishment of the Joint Task Force for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response."

Advocates argued that it was that policy — a one-person, top-down structure — that enabled crimes to keep on happening.

Thus the National Defense Authorization Act, signed into law in December 2013, had a key provision written in by U.S. Rep. Lois Frankel, D-Florida, whose district includes Palm Beach to Broward counties.

The provision "directs the military to examine the need for a new definition of rape and sexual assault in cases when someone abuses their position in the military chain of command," stated a press release issued by the Congresswoman's office.

"The measure in the national defense bill seeks to address a flaw in current military law, which requires proof of physical harm or threat of life in order to prosecute a commanding officer for serious sexual crimes. The current law does not account for situations in which the superior abuses his or her position to take advantage of victims."

Back in 2005, military sexual trauma was receiving a lot of attention, if not from across the spectrum of the national news, as was the case in 2013.

According to a CBS news report of Feb. 25, 2005:

"Allegations that not enough is being done to help victims or prosecute offenders have been raised from the service academies to the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan — where hundreds of cases of sexual assault have been reported by women in uniform.

"It was that revelation, plus pressure from Congress, that's forced the Pentagon to once again examine sexual misconduct in

the military — which has been done 18 times in the last 16 years. The result has been more recommendations and sweeping policy changes."

That was in 2005, and the issue has been reported off and on since the 1990s.

Clearly, "sweeping" changes have not happened. However, the widespread attention the issue received last year has resulted in direct and Defense-wide reaction.

Once again, DoD has restated its "commitment to eliminate sexual assault from the Armed Forces" in its re-issuing of its Sexual Assault Prevention and Response plan in May 2013, as a result of the hearings held in Congress.

Key goals include (but are not limited to):

1) Enhancing commander accountability — Service chiefs are to direct their subordinate commands to develop plans to assess commanders' progress in implementing directed initiatives.

2) Assessing military justice systems — Service chiefs are directed to ensure a timely and independent assessment of the systems used to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate crimes involving adult sexual assault and related offenses assessment of military justice systems.

3) Ensuring appropriate com-

mand climate — to ensure DoD facilities promote an environment of dignity and respect, and are free from materials that create a degrading or offensive work environment, DoD component heads will direct comprehensive and regular visual inspections of all DoD workplaces (*sapr.mil*).

So, how are the individual services making sure they get it right this time?

With regard to the first goal, Navy Rear Adm. Sean Buck, the Navy's designated SAPR officer, began his efforts by attending a SAPR forum in San Diego, Calif., Tuesday (Jan. 14), according to a report at *navy.mil*.

"The SAPR Forum included a variety of sailors, enlisted and officers, who have volunteered to be part of a collaborative research and analysis project ... to develop fleet communication strategies and messages that will help accomplish the Navy's SAPR vision," the report stated.

A key group Buck said he pins his hopes on is local chapters of the Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions, which is peer-to-peer operated.

"CSADD is a game-changer," Buck said. "Fleet sailors are going to solve our sexual assault prob-

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DoD from page 7

lem through peer pressure that can help change the culture of our society,” the report stated.

Complicating things for the Navy, however, is the resignation Tuesday (Jan. 14) of Acting Undersecretary Robert Martinage following allegations of sexual misconduct with a subordinate, according to DoD officials in a report by Richard Sisk of *military.com*.

Martinage had replaced Robert Work, who resigned to take a position in the private sector.

“Last week, the controversial nomination of Jo Ann Rooney to become the new undersecretary of the Navy passed the Senate Armed Services Committee despite opposition from Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., over the nominee’s remarks on sexual assaults in the military,” Sisk reported.

Rooney aroused Gillibrand’s ire by stating that she, Rooney, opposed removing commanders from deciding whether serious crimes go to trial, according to the Associated Press.

Despite the opposition, Rooney’s nomination has passed the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Clearly, the services’ changes to investigation and prosecution are still evolving.

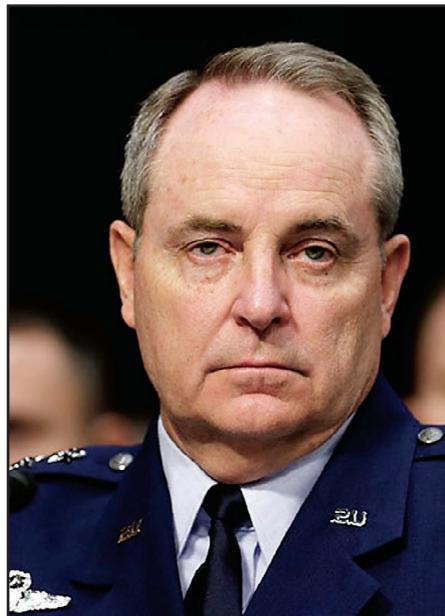


Jo Ann Rooney

On the Army side, however, training is the focus. Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno issued a statement that read, in part:

“Commanders, non-commissioned officers, and law enforcement must ensure that every allegation of sexual assault and sexual harassment is thoroughly and professionally investigated and that appropriate action is taken ...

“I urge everyone to start a conversation within your unit or organization, among leaders, peers, and subordinates and with family and friends to better understand one another’s experiences and to



Gen. Mark A. Welsh III

develop better solutions to this problem” (*armylive.dodlive.mil*).

One unit, the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga., has developed a “bystander” focus on training, according to *army.mil*.

“It was based on the Mentors in Violence Prevention, or MVP, program at Northeastern University in Boston, which has been operating since 1993, and focuses on encouraging bystanders to take an active role by promoting a positive environment and teaching participants there are many effective ways to intervene in difficult situations.”

The Marine Corps also emphasized training in its SAPR directive to all members:

“(Policy) references require specific training across a Marine’s career, to include annual, pre-deployment, post-deployment, and pre-command/senior enlisted leader SAPR training.

“SAPR training is also required during recruit training and at military occupational specialty schools,” the statement read.

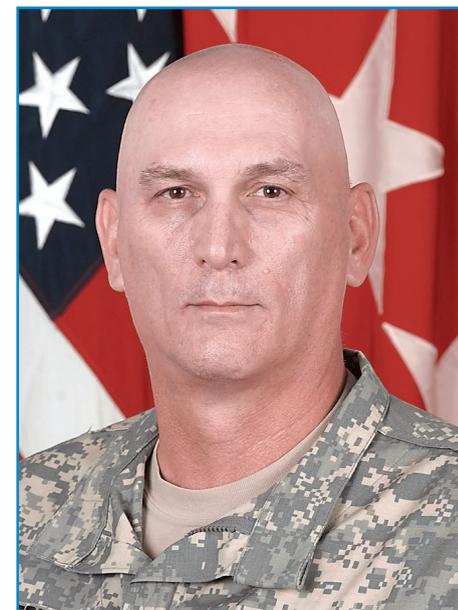
“Newly promoted corporals and sergeants will be required to complete ‘Take A Stand’ training, to be given by Uniformed Victim Advocates and delivered in small-group format, to encourage discussion and reduce the stigma of reporting” (*marines.mil*).

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III emphasized health care in issuing the Air Force’s response to DoD policy updates.

“This interim change implements new guidelines that clarify the definitions of health-care providers and health-care personnel; revises the definition of sexual assault; specifies roles and responsibilities of health-care providers and health-care personnel in providing medical care to victims of sexual assault, participation in the Case Management Group, reporting requirements



Steve Murray



Gen. Ray Odierno

and confidentiality, and collection and preservation of evidence; and expands personnel actions to include guidelines in the event a Line of Duty determination is required,” Welsh’s statement read.

The only service not under the direction of the DoD, the Coast Guard, is governed by Department of Homeland Security rules.

The Coast Guard has also developed a SAPR policy, and its primary focus is improving the culture, or prevention.

“The success of Coast Guard operations has always rested on the twin pillars of prevention and response, and our first priority is always to prevent an incident from occurring,” stated Adm. R.J. Papp, Coast Guard commander, in his release of SAPR policy.

To that end, the Coast Guard’s existing and new training puts the emphasis on fully accrediting its victim advocates, according to Cmdr. Chris O’Neil, public affairs officer for the Coast Guard Sexual

See DoD page 9

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KEMPER from page 4

and having babies, and there is sexuality used as a weapon. As a veteran, I know sexual abuses have always occurred in the armed forces, dating as far back as Hector and the gang in Troy, or farther. If it wasn't troops raping civilians, it was troops raping each other. Nowadays, we're more "civilized." But we're still doing it. Some of it goes back to childhood, sadly. Way too many children are abused, and grow up to repeat the behavior. (While you're at it, DoD, try to help warriors with that also, if they need it, while they're getting other mental-health treatment.) I served in peacetime, during the 1980s. I was lucky – I didn't either personally witness MST or

have it happen to me. But I know the culture well – and it pertained to all of us, but especially men: Warriors are tough. Warriors have power. Warriors have to be men (so do women) in every sense of the word – hard, strong, merciless when necessary. So far, so good. But warriors are supposed to be courteous, respectful, and always willing to help others when needed, too. When they make women (or other men, or children) the "enemy," they are no longer warriors, but big, big problems. Morale, readiness, discipline – all of the important military goals are wiped out by sexual abuse. Worst of all, though, warriors tear up their humanity when they abuse other people, and once lost, it's not easy to get back. It doesn't help that DoD hasn't

truly handled the issue very effectively up until now. (But kudos to Coast Guard Cmdr. Chris O'Neil, who personally invested a lot of time helping me gather information.) Hardly anyone in any of the services has wanted to admit that it's a problem; but under the surface, people's lives have been getting truly messed up. In writing the three-part series on MST, I was horrified to read some of the stories victims told. It began with someone violating them, and went downhill into a varying spiral of official denial, marriage breakups, long fights for compensation, and even suicides. Thanks to movies like "The Invisible War" and "Justice Denied," plus a whole lot of passionate advocates, plus some key members of Congress, plus the nation-

al media, 2013 was the year MST came out of the shadows – and we need to make sure it stays in the light of day. It helps if we all try to maintain awareness about it – and talk about it openly and honestly. If you know someone impacted, offer your help. Donate to some of the many networks working to get rid of MST. If you hear someone putting women down (or other men), tell them it's wrong, right out loud. DoD says they're really cracking down, this time, but we must keep our eyes on them. If their efforts work, I'm hopeful this is the year we really do bring MST to an end. *U.S. Army veteran Mary Kemper is a staff writer and marketing consultant for Veteran Voice.*

DoD from page 8

Assault Prevention and Response Military Campaign Office in Washington, D.C. "The Coast Guard currently has more than 800 personnel who are fully trained as victim advocates," O'Neil said. "However, under a proposed mandate, not every unit that requires an advocate currently has one. The victim advocate mandate would ensure the

proper distribution of advocates by unit type and size. It would also require national-level training for all advocates, including chaplains. "While we are still examining the numbers, we know that our current process of accepting, vetting and then training volunteers, regardless of assignment, is not sustainable and in the end is inefficient," he said. There were 196 total report-

ed cases in the Coast Guard in 2013, up from 156 in 2012, which O'Neil attributes to more confidence in the changes being made to ensure the system works, he said. Every service member and veteran, regardless of type of service, can be treated for military sexual trauma not only through medical care, but also through related service such as counseling and group support, according to Steve Murray, communications director for the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs.

- Records from law enforcement authorities, rape crisis centers, mental health counseling centers, hospitals or physicians.
- Pregnancy tests or tests for sexually transmitted diseases.
- Statements from family members, roommates, fellow service members, clergy members, or counselors.
- Request for transfer to another military duty assignment.
- Deterioration in work performance.
- Substance abuse.
- Episodes of depression, panic attacks, or anxiety without an identifiable cause.
- Unexplained economic or social behavioral changes.
- Relationship issues, such as divorce.
- Sexual dysfunction.

"If you go to the website, you'll see that each and every medical center offers treatment and programs," Murray said. The website is <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp> — and at the bottom of the third paragraph, there is a blue hyperlink that directs to a VA fact sheet called Disability Compensation for Personal Assault or Military Sexual Trauma. "There is a wide range of resources people can access just from the website," Murray said, including hotlines for immediate needs and many mental-health resources. He added, however, that people can always contact their medical centers directly.

Military sexual trauma is a terrible crime that many feel has taken too long to be addressed. It cuts across genders, services, ranks and families, devastating not only the victims, but also their families and their units. While its causes are still being researched, the need to combat military sexual trauma is immediate.

Because medical claims have been tough to prove under DoD's standards, the guidelines have been revised for the VA. From the fact sheet: "VA knows that events involving personal assault or sexual trauma are not always officially reported. Therefore, VA has relaxed the evidentiary requirements and looks for "markers" (i.e., signs, events, or circumstances) that provide some indication that the traumatic event happened, such as:

However, with so much scrutiny in the national news on the issue last year, DoD has been prompted to act more forcefully. In the coming months, as reports from the individual services are compiled, it remains to be seen whether all the improvements will show results. DoD is under heavier pressure, now, which victim advocates say will not ease until real changes are made. "It's a train wreck," Kori Cioca said in remarks on ABC TV. "It keeps on getting swept under the carpet. It's way past time to stop."

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Inventor of AK-47 dead at 94

'When you saw that, it was identified as an unfriendly'

Patrick McCallister

FOR VETERAN VOICE

patrick.mccallister@yahoo.com

Introduced in the late 1940s, American service members have faced it in combat for decades. The Avtomat Kalashnikova. Better known as the AK-47.

Its inventor, Mikhail Kalashnikov, recently died at age 94, according to Russian press. His legacy is what the "Guinness Book of World Records" has identified as the most common combat gun on the globe. With around 75 million to 100 million in circulation, the AK regularly shows up in cringe-worthy images. For example, one of the most famous videos of Osama bin Laden featured him shooting an AK.

Sonny Hartwell was a Marine in Vietnam, '68 to '70. He said Kalashnikov's death has no meaning to him.

"He was just the inventor," Hartwell said. "He never pulled the trigger on me."

Still, Hartwell's voice audibly shudders when he talks about the gun with an unmistakable profile that's killed innumerable Americans.

"That's a hell of a weapon," he said. "They could drag that thing through mud and tunnels and it never would misfire."

Hartwell said he picked up numerous AK-47s from battlefields. Never shot one. He mostly remembers one thing about the gun.

"The sound," Hartwell said. "That probably strikes a cord with me more than anything."

Rick Kaiser, executive director of the National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum, Fort Pierce, was an active-duty SEAL from 1979 to 2001. He faced multiple combat situations in numerous places against people carrying the AK.

"We used them ourselves," Kaiser said. "The SEALs used them on operations. You'd take whatever



Source: LOOK Magazine photo, Library of Congress

Taiseir, a veteran of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, cleans a Kalashnikov assault rifle, in Jordan early in 1969.

was the best weapon for a situation."

He said the gun has a couple downsides.

"That weapon is not the most accurate in the world," Kaiser said. "But the reliable functionality is its great asset."

Hartwell said the AKs infamous inaccuracy gave Marines in Vietnam a small measure of comfort.

"I'm glad they had that weapon rather than us," he said. "We didn't have to worry so much, especially at distance, because they couldn't hit us."

The AK's other problems?

"That was one of the cons of the AK-47, it's quite heavy," Kaiser said.

Originally almost 8 pounds unloaded. Later models shed some of that weight.

Kaiser added, "The magazines

themselves are quite heavy."

Those were originally almost a pound. They too had weight trimmed over time.

"It's got a hell of a kick," Kaiser said.

That's never changed. Many shooters say the AK leaps badly in automatic or fast firing.

Kaiser said he never had any particular feeling about the AK — what someone was shooting at him never made a difference to him.

"A .22 will kill you just as dead as an AK-47, or M-16," Kaiser said.

Operation Restore Hope, Somalia, veteran Donna Carlsen had much the same feeling. Getting shot at is getting shot at. But —

"When you saw (an AK-47), it was identified as an unfriendly."

Kalashnikov reportedly wrote an emotional letter to the head of the Russian Orthodox Church less than a year before his death. He expressed much shame about inventing the rifle that bears his name and became a widespread tool of death.

"My spiritual pain is unbearable," he reportedly wrote.

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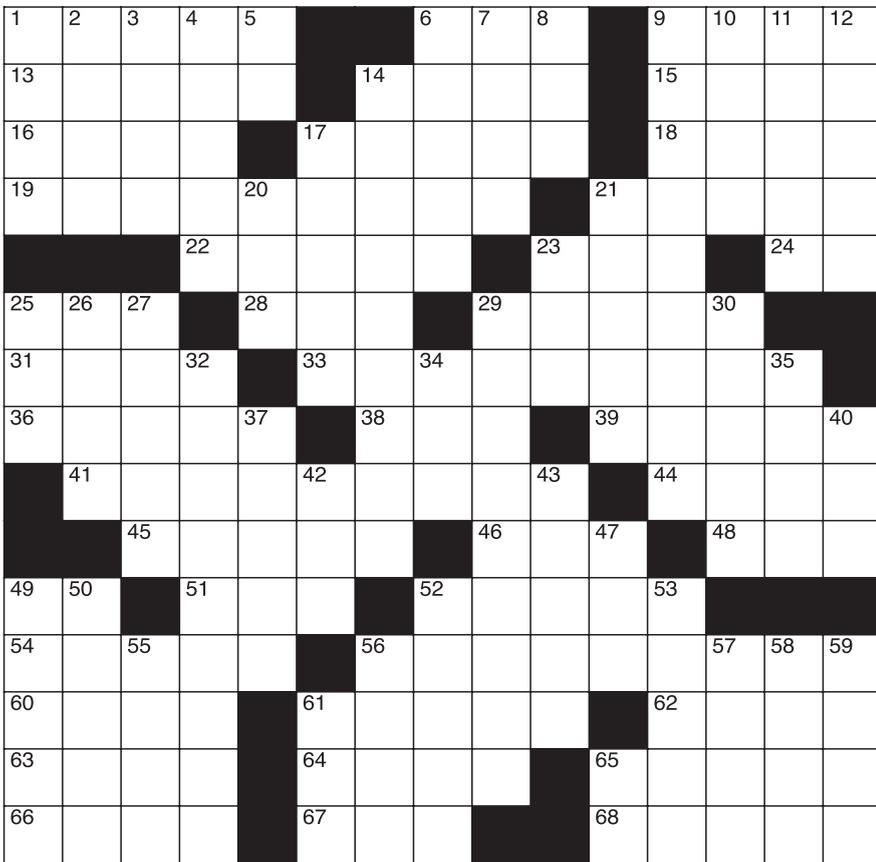
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- 19. Divertimentos
- 21. Indian wet nurses
- 22. Flatfishes
- 23. Haitian currency (abbr.)
- 24. Southeast
- 25. One point N of due W
- 28. 10 decibels
- 29. Wild oxes of SE Asia
- 31. Ancient Greek City of SW Italy
- 33. A passing glancing blow
- 36. Marriage announcement
- 38. Tandoor bread
- 39. Mag____: Time
- 41. Portended
- 44. Alicante's 7th city
- 45. Gulf of, in the Aegean
- 46. Strike
- 48. Hill (Celtic)
- 49. Stuart Little's author White
- 51. Male sheep
- 52. Indian dresses
- 54. Pears
- 56. Tardy arriver
- 60. Smudge of ink
- 61. Youngsters
- 62. About aviation
- 63. Small ornamental ladies' bag

- 64. Unreturnable serves
- 65. Fante and Twi peoples
- 66. Round shape
- 67. Of she
- 68. Beard lichen genus

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Strikes lightly
- 2. Fencing sword
- 3. Hooked pericarp
- 4. Entreats
- 5. Edison's Corp.
- 6. Cooks in an oven
- 7. Amounts of time
- 8. Tooth caregiver
- 9. Spellbind
- 10. Solo opera piece
- 11. Audible exhales
- 12. Siddhartha author
- 14. Coach's game area
- 17. Gross revenue
- 20. Toff
- 21. 1896 Italian defeat (alt. sp.)
- 23. Auto fuel
- 25. A woven structure
- 26. Reveal a secret
- 27. Hawaiian geese
- 29. Brings into being
- 30. Displaced liquid
- 32. Frigid Zone
- 34. Newsman Rather
- 35. Prefix for inside
- 37. Short-billed rails
- 40. Sensory receptor
- 42. Egyptian temple ____-Ombo
- 43. Challenges
- 47. Photograph (slang)
- 49. Declined gradually
- 50. Tilapia nilotica
- 52. One-edge sword
- 53. Wets
- 55. Small coins (French)
- 56. Twine together
- 57. The middle point
- 58. Sea eagle
- 59. Activist Parks
- 61. Humbug
- 65. Atomic #79

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