



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION  
AND RESPONSE**

**EXCEPTIONAL  
SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE COORDINATOR  
AWARD CEREMONY**



**FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2009  
GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR CORRIDOR,  
THE PENTAGON, WASHINGTON, D.C.**



**BY THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:  
A PROCLAMATION**

**NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH, 2009**

Sexual assault scars the lives of millions in the United States. To increase awareness about this issue, prevent future crimes, and aid victims, this month we mark National Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Sexual assault is pervasive in the United States. Study after study has shown that this crime impacts people at all age levels and in every part of this Nation. One recent study found that 18 percent of women in this country have been raped in their lifetime. In addition, rates of sexual assault remain startlingly high for students from high school to college. A 2005 survey of high school students found that 10.8 percent of girls and 4.2 percent of boys from grades nine to twelve were forced to have sexual intercourse at some time in their lives. A study of college women found that 13.7 percent of undergraduate women had been victims of at least one completed sexual assault since entering college. Unlike victims of sexual assault in the larger community, students victimized by other students often face additional challenges in a "closed" campus environment. For example, a victim may continue to live in danger if the perpetrator resides in the same dormitory or attends the same classes. These statistics are all the more alarming given that, according to recent research, a majority of victims do not report their attacks to police.

Victims of all ages suffer from both the physical and emotional consequences of the attack. Sexual assault can lead to long-term health problems including chronic pain, stomach problems, and sexually transmitted diseases. It can also cause severe emotional harm that may be even more painful than the assault itself and resulting physical injuries. The effects of sexual assault go well beyond the direct victim: sexual assault also has a profound impact on a victim's family, friends, neighbors, and workplace.

Victims need an array of services to heal from the trauma of sexual assault, including crisis intervention, 24-hour sexual assault hotlines, medical and criminal justice accompaniment, advocacy, and counseling. Victim service providers are essential to this effort and work tirelessly to help victims cope with the trauma of sexual assault and transition from "victim" to "survivor."

Landmark legislation has helped fund these critical services. The Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA, Public Law 98-473) established the Crime Victims Fund to fund services such as forensic sexual assault examinations and compensation claims for both adult and child victims. For example, since 1997, VOCA funding has supported the development of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) programs and multi-disciplinary Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART). The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 (VAWA, Public Law 109-162) authorized the Sexual Assault Services Program, the first Federal funding dedicated exclusively to sexual assault services. The Program includes funding for culturally specific programs that serve victims who face unique cultural and linguistic barriers. In addition to helping victims, offenders must be held accountable for their crimes. Sexual assault forensic examinations and trained examiners can ensure that victims are treated with requisite sensitivity and that critical evidence is collected to facilitate a successful prosecution. To this end, VAWA mandates that all States that accept Federal grants to combat violence against women ensure that sexual assault victims receive forensic examinations free of charge, even if the victim chooses not to report the crime to the police.

To make continued progress, my Administration supports efforts to help Americans better understand this issue. Working together, we can reduce the incidence of sexual assault and help all who have experienced this heinous crime.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2009, as National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. I urge all Americans to respond to sexual assault by creating policies at work and school, by engaging in discussions with family and friends, and by making the prevention of sexual assault a priority in their communities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

**BARACK OBAMA**



**BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

**SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH, 2009**

April marks the Department of Defense's fifth observance of National Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). This observance was designated to address an important concern in our ranks - the reduction of sexual harassment and assault of service personnel. The Department of Defense has a no-tolerance policy toward sexual assault. This type of act not only does unconscionable harm to the victim; it destabilizes the workplace and threatens national security.

The 2009 SAAM theme, "Our Strength is for Defending," reflects the Department's efforts to raise awareness and stop sexual violence. Fighting this crime begins with accountability and strong leadership - up, down, and across the chain of command - from junior enlisted members to senior noncommissioned officers to commanders. Every employee must know how to prevent such situations and report any incident that occurs. Leaders must promote proper workplace behavior and take action as necessary.

Sexual assault is not a matter to take lightly, and the Department of Defense remains committed to the safety, welfare, and readiness of its personnel. Trained sexual assault coordinators and victim advocates from the Services are available for assistance with prevention and intervention. More information about the Department of Defense's efforts is available at [www.MyDuty.mil](http://www.MyDuty.mil).

**ROBERT M. GATES**



**MY STRENGTH IS FOR DEFENDING.**

So when that guy tried to cross the line with my battle buddy, **I GOT HER OUT OF THERE.**

**PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS PART OF MY DUTY.**

Military OneSource • 1-800-942-9847

**SARC**  
Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

U.S. ARMY

www.preventsexualassault.mil

MyDuty.mil

READINESS = RESPECT

**MY STRENGTH IS FOR DEFENDING.**

So when I saw she was drunk, I told that Marine: **ASK HER WHEN SHE'S SOBER.**

**PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT IS PART OF MY DUTY.**

MyDuty.mil

READINESS = RESPECT

**OUR STRENGTH IS FOR DEFENDING.**

**PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT IS PART OF OUR DUTY.**

MyDuty.mil

READINESS = RESPECT

**MY STRENGTH IS FOR DEFENDING.**

So when she told the SARC what that guy did to her, I said: **I'M GLAD YOU CHECKED OUT YOUR OPTIONS.**

**PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT IS PART OF MY DUTY.**

MyDuty.mil

READINESS = RESPECT

**MY STRENGTH IS FOR DEFENDING.**

So when she told me that guy went way too far with her, I said: **LET'S CALL THE SARC.\***

**PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT IS PART OF MY DUTY.**

MyDuty.mil

READINESS = RESPECT



**2009 Exceptional Sexual Assault  
Response Coordinator  
Awards Program**

Opening by

**Kaye Whitley**

Director, Sexual Assault Prevention and  
Response Office

Remarks

**Gail H. McGinn**

Performing the Duties of the  
Under Secretary of Defense  
(Personnel and Readiness)

Presentation of Awards

**Marci Hodge**

Sexual Assault Awareness Month Coordinator

Closing Remarks



**EXCEPTIONAL  
SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE  
COORDINATOR WINNERS**

Master Sergeant Verlean Brown  
United States Army

Ms. Catherine Miller  
United States Navy

Captain Sally Falco  
United States Marine Corps

Captain Maritza Sayle-Walker  
United States Air Force

Sergeant Major Donald Werts  
National Guard Bureau







## **Master Sergeant Verlean Brown United States Army**

MSG Verlean Brown is the Senior Deployed Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) assigned to 3<sup>rd</sup> Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) in support of Joint Base Balad (JBB), MSG Verlean Brown has performed exceptionally as the DSARC for over eight months. MSG Brown provided information, counsel, and assistance to over 100 individual service members; single handedly, supervised and trained over 200 victim advocates, conducted over 40 education and training classes for a total of 2,000 Soldiers, Airmen and civilians located at JBB. She effortlessly co-chaired or chaired over 30 case management group meetings, luncheons, and sexual assault review boards in support of the JBB SAPR Program. MSG Brown executes this critical program with minimal assistance and administrative staff, while she functions as the Equal Opportunity Advisor for the 3d ESC.

MSG Brown broke ground in developing an enduring and mutually supportive relationship with the Air Force Sexual Assault Response Coordinators located on JBB. She excelled in integrating staff energy and agency resources to develop the first “joint” team SAPR office leveraging all local resources for a joint response team. MSG Brown’s efforts generated a high level of interaction within the joint combined operation environment resulting in training events, response, a monthly sexual assault review board, and awareness and development activities which are all function jointly.

She spearheaded efforts to codify the “joint” relationship between USAF and her unit’s sexual assault training and response program. She crafted the Letter of Agreement (LOA) to seal the relationship and outline the responsibilities between the 332d Air Expeditionary Wing (332 AEW) and the tenant units assigned to JBB. The LOA, which was the first of its kind, defined the major aspects of cooperation and integration regarding BOS-I (Base Operating Support-Integrator) responsibilities on the installation and the responsibilities and authorities for tenant unit support while allowing for continuous operations and top notch response.

She, with the USAF SARC and four other resident tenant units, organized and executed various SAPR training events supporting the response efforts for victims, awareness of commands, and the implementation of the Army’s new I.A.M. Strong Campaign. She spearheaded a program of diverse events including a 5K run and Jeopardy Game for operating base participation, coordination and planning for the Sex Signals Tour, development of sexual assault and harassment prevention skits as a training tool, leader level information luncheons, and creation of a local information campaign.

MSG Brown worked with combat stress personnel to develop a support group for sexual assault victims who have, since their trauma, joined the SAPR team to talk about sexual assault from a personal perspective. Her innovative efforts of involving victim volunteers in campaign promotion and awareness has assisted in identifying and communicating with potential “at risk” victims. She has published several news articles throughout the JBB print media and been recognized by various senior level leaders for the outstanding progress of the JBB program.



## **Ms. Catherine Miller United States Navy**

Ms Miller established the SAVI program at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island that was cited by a 2004 Navy IG study as the best of its type in the Navy. She has implemented and exceeded the OPNAV and DoD program goals by catalyzing community support in many creative ways.

Ms. Miller provides training for her advocates that incorporates sociological, moral and psychological aspects of sexual assault, and the attendees have described the week-long seminar as profound and life-changing. She provides ongoing mentoring of her volunteer advocates with regular office meetings and 100% personal staffing of all reports. Her prevention training for sailors likewise is extremely well-received per critiques, which recognize her sincerity, passion and clarity. She personally trains all base watch standers on 24/7 response to sexual assault and has provided clear written guidance to the quarterdeck and hospital.

To increase community awareness of sexual assault, she adapted the Silent Witness program from the field of domestic violence. She used the silhouettes and their moving stories during April each year to make an opportunity for all passersby to process the issue at their own pace, thereby encouraging ownership by all community members. When the installation commanding officer wanted to establish an innovative prevention program to address high-risk behavior including sexual assault, Ms. Miller was hand picked to generate an effective syllabus for junior sailors. Again, their critiques validated her ability to make the message hearable. Ms Miller teaches by asking questions and engaging; her audience is challenged to craft their own conclusions and articulate their values. As one result of this program, three female Sailors came forward to report having been assaulted; prior to the training, they did not have the confidence in themselves or their chain of command to speak up.

Her thorough knowledge of local resources also means that she is able to refer victims to relevant support and expedite their recovery. When the local Navy hospital ceased providing the Sexual Assault Nursing Exam (SAFE), Ms. Miller initiated the training of several flight surgeons, who volunteered and whose commands funded the training based on her ability to convey to all levels of leadership the critical nature of the SAVI program and of competent, prompt response that avoids re-victimization. This training meant that providers could potentially respond in-theater as well as on shore.

Ms Miller also rapidly forged a coalition of Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), Navy hospital and base leadership, and clinical Fleet and Family Support Center providers to engineer the transition to local hospitals taking on the SAFE. Her long-standing alliances with all agencies and individuals ensured follow-through and minimized any disruptions in victim service or law enforcement response. Her boundless energy and focus has been the heart of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island's SAVI program since she established it in 1994.





## **Captain Sally Falco United States Marine Corps**

Since September 2007, Captain Sally Falco has tirelessly served the Marine Corps Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program. Through Captain Falco's unyielding efforts, Marine Corps Bases Japan's (MCB Japan) SAPR program stands as an example of dedication and commitment to the care and support of sexual assault victims. Notwithstanding her primary duties as Aide-de-Camp for the Commanding General, Marine Corps Bases Japan and the Officer In Charge of the Commanding General's Inspection Team for Personnel and Administration, Captain Falco manages to devote the required time and effort to establish and sustain a highly efficient SAPR program. As MCB Japan's SARC, Captain Falco has implemented initiatives designed to reduce sexual assault incidents through improved sexual assault awareness and prevention strategies. She planned and coordinated the inclusion of the MCB Japan Newcomer's and New Join Briefs into the orientation process for all incoming military personnel. Through Captain Falco's efforts MCB Japan was one of the first Marine Corps installations to incorporate the improvisation-style training of "Sex Signals" into their SAPR training program. Captain Falco's initiative directly led to over one thousand Marines and Sailors viewing "Sex Signals" in an effort to increase sexual assault awareness and prevention.

Captain Falco's commitment to the SAPR program extends beyond the island of Okinawa. In her efforts to provide support to Marine Corps commanders in the Western Pacific, Captain Falco offered her services in conducting SAPR training for Marines and Sailors stationed aboard MCAS Iwakuni. Marines aboard MCAS Iwakuni received their required annual SAPR training thanks to the unselfish devotion to duty of Captain Falco. Captain Falco's demonstrated her intuition and inspiration in training by incorporating rank-specific focus into her SAPR training. However, her commitment to the SAPR program goes beyond - Captain Falco is committed to playing an active role in ensuring leadership possesses a fundamental understanding of the SAPR program. Captain Falco was instrumental in coordinating the availability of focus groups for the U.S. Forces Japan Sexual Assault Awareness Task Force's visit to Okinawa. Additionally, Captain Falco provided a program brief to the task force members. Captain Falco availed herself to Marine Corps leadership in order to provide sage advice on the intricate nuances of the SAPR program. Her commitment to the SAPR program is beyond reproach. Captain Falco consistently demonstrates her desire to provide the highest level of support to sexual assault victims, Marines, and commands aboard MCB Japan. The Marine Corps SAPR program recognizes and sincerely thanks her for her unwavering dedication to the victims of sexual assault, Marines, and leadership aboard MCB Japan.



## **Captain Maritza Sayle-Walker**

### **United States Air Force**

As the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) for Hickam AFB, Hawaii, Captain Maritza Sayle-Walker provided exceptional support for Air Force military and DOD civilians assigned to two Active Duty Air Force wings and over 140 associate and tenant units across Wake Island and the remaining 8 Hawaiian Islands. During this period, she educated 6,286 service members and DOD civilians by conducting 124 awareness training classes. Captain Sayle-Walker also served as the Executive Director to the Community Action Information Board, chaired 14 case management groups in support of Hickam's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, and developed brilliant strategies to combat sexual assault within the state of Hawaii.

Serving as an advisor to the 15th Airlift Wing Commander, Captain Sayle-Walker provided expert counsel identifying sexual assault trends within Hawaii. She established mission essential relationships with the local community to build a solid foundation to create a state wide comprehensive sexual violence prevention plan. Her notable work with the State of Hawaii creating profiles and assessing trends contributed in creating a state-wide comprehension of understanding the magnitude of sexual violence in Hawaii. Captain Sayle-Walker's joint effort with the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and the Hawaii Air National Guard (ANG) to educate all service members in combating myths of sexual assault reporting, directly resulted in victims feeling able to come forward and report.

Captain Sayle-Walker trained 34 new victim advocates (VA) across all services guaranteeing that victims always have somewhere to turn in a time of need. Her tremendous victim advocate program ensures 31 VAs are ready to support military and civilian personnel at all times whether at home station or in deployed locations. Captain Sayle-Walker's quarterly training schedule for victim advocates is a hallmark of success for client support as well as victim advocate self-care.

Captain Sayle-Walker continued her efforts of combating sexual violence by working to eliminate underage drinking. As one of four bases to receive the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Grant of \$950K from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Program, she was a key leader in developing Hickam AFB's work-plan to implement the grant. Her efforts to facilitate a cooperative effort between the State, ANG, and senior base officials directly led to a reduction in alcohol-related incidents by 25 percent in fiscal year 2008, putting Hickam AFB on the leading edge of the program. Captain Sayle-Walker's loyalty, determination, and top-notch performance greatly enhanced the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program at Hickam AFB.



## **Sergeant Major Donald Werts National Guard Bureau**

SGM Donald R. Werts is the premier Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Coordinator and has been instrumental in the development and maturation of the Pennsylvania National Guard's (PNG) SAPR Program.

SGM Werts is a national leader, as evidenced by his recent appointment as the national SAPR Advisory Committee Chairman. He has been influential in the development of the National Guard regulation which governs the SAPR program and has been called upon numerous times to serve as a guest instructor at national training events for the National Guard, the US Army Reserve, and the Army.

SGM Werts has assisted multiple National Guard victims of sexual assault, supervises Victim Advocates (VAs), provides education and training for unit personnel, and serves as chair of several case management groups in support of the JFHQ's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program. In addition, SGM Werts chairs the PNG monthly Sexual Assault Response Board (SARB) meeting, attended by key leaders such as the Chief of Staff and Directors, to discuss open cases, education, training and additional program support and ideas.

SGM Werts has developed a training program to train VAs for Pennsylvania. In August 2008, he trained an additional 27 VAs to support Pennsylvania. He has coordinated with local civilian agencies to participate in the training and to discuss their experiences as an advocate. In addition, SGM Werts has developed a database of 68 available civilian agencies and resources throughout PA and is distributed to all VAs and is routinely updated. SGM Werts has extended the VA training invitation to states within the region to assist those states in training their VAs. Due to his diligence, Pennsylvania has a total of 109 VAs & Deployable SARC (DSARC), all monitored via a local database SGM Werts developed. This database includes the type of training they received to keep the command informed of the number of DSARCs and VAs within each brigade, and identify those who have been trained on the Bystander Intervention training. SGM Werts also keeps track of which VA he has used in order to ensure all VAs the opportunity to assist a victim and to ensure that a VA doesn't have responsibilities to support more than one victim at a time.

SGM Werts has been influential in developing SAPR brochures, posters, and provides expertise in the development of the state website. He ensures the SAPR Program has presence at many Pennsylvania National Guard events to include: Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Yellow Ribbon Events, Senior Leaders Workshop, New Employee Orientations, Health & Wellness Fairs and Unity Day Celebrations. SGM Werts is dedicated to forming close rapport and working relationships with civilian agencies for more than just a resource for a victim. He wants to ensure that civilian agencies understand the military's SAPR program. He assisted in the development of a training package for civilian VAs on how to work with military sexual assault victims. Since the training was completed, he now serves as a trainer for both the pilot project and the final project offered recently to civilians in Washington, DC.

SGM Werts is extremely passionate about the SAPR program and has gone above and beyond the call of duty to implement the program, obtain command support, and assist in educating over 21,000 Pennsylvania National Guard Soldiers, Airmen, Families, and civilian federal employees.



**OUR STRENGTH IS FOR DEFENDING.**



**PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT  
IS PART OF OUR DUTY.**



[myduty.mil](http://myduty.mil)



Copyright © 2014 War Can Stop Rape, Inc. Photographs by Linda Trovati

**SAPRO**

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Office