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| [http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4742512344826502&pid=1.7&w=139&h=143&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=dod+logo&id=1A76F7B10688DA5EDD3A6051116B16C44035F67E&FORM=IQFRBA#view=detail&id=C7BB2CFADA79B8E4EEE918EAE4AB10A9291B0884&selectedIndex=2) | **April 2013 Sexual Assault Awareness Month**  ***We own it…We’ll solve it…Together****.* | [http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4824460272271693&pid=1.7&w=129&h=152&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Teal+Awareness+Ribbon&Form=IQFRDR#view=detail&id=CBD74C95B178909AC1379808BDBB5FC8209DE123&selectedIndex=10) |

**Speech Template for Commanders at SAAM Event**

Good [*morning, afternoon*], and welcome to [*event title*]!

Here at [*command, base, unit*], we are supporting the Department’s observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This year’s theme is “We own it…We’ll solve it…Together.” This statement sums up our approach and our responsibility to solving this problem.

Sexual assault is a crime. It has no place in the United States military, and certainly not [*in our unit, on our base, in our command*]. It is a violation of everything that we stand for and it is an affront to the values we defend.

One of the key reasons we observe SAAM is to show our support for victims. Many victims have come forward and filed a report and hopefully they are getting the desired care. But as with every unit in our military, I know we probably have victims who have chosen to not report their sexual assault. I want every victim to know that we are here to care for you and to support you. We are committed to showing you our solidarity as you heal and become a survivor.

Every person in this [*unit, base, command*] must be committed to eliminating sexual assault from our military. Together, our goal is to prevent and respond to this crime in order to enable military readiness and to reduce—with a goal to eliminate—sexual assault from the military.

We are fighting this crime from multiple fronts. We aren’t just relying on one tool or one program. Combating sexual assault requires strong prevention efforts, sustained progress, innovative approaches and a multi-pronged, multi-disciplinary strategy.

The success of every program and initiative is dependent on the daily and continued commitment of every single one of us to fostering a climate of mutual dignity and respect, where sexual assault is not tolerated, condoned, or ignored.

We must work hard to prevent the crime, but when it does occur, we need to be there for victims. And anyone who commits this crime – or thinks they can get away with it if they do commit it – will be held appropriately accountable.

Solving this is up to us—we own it. As commanders, as leaders, as fellow *[Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines]* it is essential that we all live the core values of our profession of arms and treat each other with dignity and respect. Our victims and our fellow Service members are depending on us. And we all need to recognize this fact: They are watching us. They are paying attention to how we treat our victims, our efforts to hold perpetrators appropriately accountable, and whether we treat one another with dignity and respect.

We take care of our people on the battlefield better than anyone else. We must extend that same ethos of care to the sexual assault victims among us and the same level of execution to preventing and combating sexual assault within our ranks.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and events like [*this event today]*, give us a chance to renew our commitment to owning this and solving this, together. We must and we will eliminate sexual assault from our [*command, base, unit*]. I urge you to continue your engagement and promote prevention strategies and victim advocacy.

Your participation today, and your continued support in the coming months and years, will help move us closer to a culture free of sexual assault.

*- End -*