



UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Sexual Assault Awareness Month – April 2013

This April, the Department of Defense observes the ninth annual Sexual Assault Awareness Month with the theme “We own it... We’ll solve it... Together.” Preventing sexual assault requires sustained vigilance and a steadfast team effort. Unprecedented senior leader commitment must be matched throughout the Services with a personal commitment from every Service member to treat each other with dignity and respect. We must collectively instill a climate that does not tolerate, condone, or ignore sexist behavior, sexual harassment, or sexual assault.

The active role of commanders, leaders, and Service members at every level is critical. Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an excellent opportunity for every command team to engage their unit to underscore their personal commitment, discuss the importance of supporting victims, and reinforce the importance of bystander intervention to help stop unsafe behavior. The Service Chiefs have made it clear that commanders are responsible for the readiness of their unit and the health and welfare of their Service members.

Please find attached guidance for messages and activities that can be employed in the field to observe Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Additional information and resources can also be found at www.sapr.mil.

Thank you in advance for your personal commitment in addressing this issue which profoundly impacts mission readiness and the health of our warfighters.

If you have any questions, Major General Gary S. Patton, Director of the Department’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, and his team stand ready to assist. They can be reached at sapro@wso.whs.mil.


Jessica L. Wright
Acting

Attachment:
As stated

DISTRIBUTION:

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April 2013 Sexual Assault Awareness Month

We own it... We'll solve it... Together



"As military professionals we must fully understand the destructive nature of these acts (of sexual assault), lead our focused efforts to prevent them, and promote positive command climates and environments that reinforce mutual respect, trust and confidence. Sexual assault among Service members is a problem we face together, one that can only be solved together."

The Joint Chiefs of Staff
Strategic Direction to the Joint Force on
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in April is recognized across the country by both civilian and military communities. April offers a unique opportunity to build on existing momentum to fight this crime and ensure all Service members are treated with dignity and respect.

What can we do during April? Throughout every level of the Department of Defense (DoD), we should offer messages and activities that will reinforce...

- ***We own it...*** Emphasize we own this problem and our commitment to solving it.
 - *Commanders and senior enlisted leaders set and enforce standards of discipline within our organizations and are the key to creating a culture free from sexual assault.*
- ***We'll solve it...*** Leaders establish a culture where bystanders intervene, offenders are held appropriately accountable, victims are provided high-quality care and every soldier, sailor, airman and marine is treated with dignity and respect.
 - *Combating sexual assault requires strong prevention efforts, sustained progress, innovative approaches, and a multi-pronged, multi-disciplinary strategy.*
- ***Together.*** Reinforce the many ways we work within each Service, across DoD, and with our communities to combat sexual assault.
 - *We all have a role in combating sexual assault. It is essential that every Service member, at every level in our military, lives the core values of our profession of arms and treats each other with dignity and respect.*

Initiatives to Convey Ownership, Solutions and Solidarity: Consider using the entire month of April for SAAM activities to generate maximum awareness. Below are event ideas, starting with those of potential highest payoff:

- Distribute installation-wide message from Commanders reinforcing leadership's commitment to fighting this crime
- Facilitate meetings between victims, commanders, and leaders to deepen understanding of victim issues
- Organize visits and volunteer efforts at local rape crisis centers for leaders to more fully understand depth of problem
- Display large teal ribbon in high visibility areas with signage explaining the ribbon and SAAM
- Kick off the month with an event, such as unveiling of a large ribbon, to demonstrate public commitment
- Conduct run/walks to show solidarity around the theme and communicate support for victims
- Install signage at key locations on bases/installations, such as InfoKiosks and sign boards at entrance gates
- Implement social media campaign with daily tweets on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) messages and reminders
- Hold a local ceremony to recognize those who help victims to include community responders
- Place articles throughout April in base media profiling SAPR efforts, outstanding care providers, and Commander's commitment

Resources to Help: Go to www.sapr.mil for the following:

- SAAM Messages from Senior Leaders
- Recent SAPR Initiatives
- Links to Key SAPR Programs
- Sample Media Materials
- Sample Speech for Commanders
- Graphics to Download



We own the problem of sexual assault. We all have a role in fighting it.

SAPR program details can be found at www.sapr.mil. Contact SAPRO@sapr.mil.