



## Sexual Assault Awareness Month – April 2014

### “Speak Up! A Voice Unheard is an Army Defeated”

In April, the Army, and the Nation it serves, observes Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Under this year’s theme, “Speak up! A voice unheard is an Army defeated,” we reinforce our determination to take the offensive in the fight against sexual assault. We stress the critical role of every member of the Army Family to prevent sexual assault and advocate for the victims and survivors of these crimes.

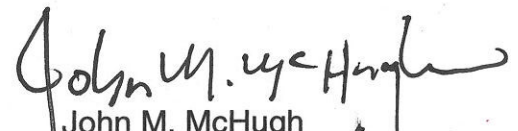
Although the Army implements a robust Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program year round, April provides an additional opportunity for all Army leaders to raise awareness, promote action and encourage bystanders to intervene and survivors to report crimes. Sexual assault is a national problem that affects civilian and military communities alike. When sexual assault occurs within the Army, it compromises our force readiness and capability to successfully achieve missions. More importantly, it lessens America’s trust in our ability to keep its sons and daughters safe. This is unacceptable.

The Army continues to combat sexual harassment and assault through the “I. A.M. (Intervene - Act - Motivate) Strong” campaign. We’ve made exceptional progress to include an unprecedented number of program and policy initiatives – more than 30 this past year. As we continue to lean forward in this enduring priority, all Army leaders must set conditions for a positive command climate. Soldiers must uphold the ideal that defending a Nation built on the principles of freedom, justice and liberty for all leaves no place for sexual assault.

Only by working together will we achieve an environment free of sexual harassment and assault, where inappropriate behaviors are not condoned, tolerated or ignored, where bystanders intervene, where victims are supported and feel safe to report crimes and where commanders hold offenders appropriately accountable. As an Army Family, we must commit to speaking up and making our voices heard to prevent and defeat this insider threat.

  
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