

Naval District Washington Implementing New Initiatives to Navy SAPR Program

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by Patrick Gordon NDW Waterline writer

Naval District Washington (NDW) is beginning to implement new initiatives to help combat sexual assault in the Navy.

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Ray Mabus announced the change in July, approving nearly \$10 million for additional resources for investigators and a new initiative designed to enhance accountability and transparency across the Department of the Navy. The additional funds will be used to hire more than 50 additional Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) Family and Sexual Violence Program personnel Navywide to shorten investigation times. Additionally, Mabus directed the Navy and Marine Corps to regularly publish online the results of each service's courts-martial.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kiona Miller Jim Thrift, self-defense instructor for Calvert Mixed Martial Arts, performs a self-defense move for participants during a self-defense class as part of several events that took place in Naval District Washington (NDW) during last year's Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April 2012. NDW is beginning to implement new initiatives to help combat sexual assault in the Navy as announced by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.

NDW is preparing its personnel in light of Mabus' announcement.

"The goal of the program is to eliminate sexual assault in the Navy; all of the existing and new initiatives are geared toward that end," said Kim Reese, NDW Regional Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC). "The Navy has had a sexual assault prevention and response program in place since 1994 with Navy Sexual Assault Victim Intervention [SAVI] and now Sexual Assault Prevention and Response [SAPR]. There is a powerful commitment to victim centered services and support and to the criminal justice process that holds offenders accountable for crimes they are found guilty of. Additionally, Department of Defense civilian and active duty military are being taught at an unprecedented level how to intervene safely when they believe there may be someone at risk of being assaulted. In order to achieve our goal of elimination of sexual assault from the Navy we really do all need to engage in 'One Team, One Fight.'"

Reese said that while it is not certain yet what kind of increase the region can expect, SAPR training has continued to run prior to and since the SECNAV's announcement with positive results.

"I am encouraged by the honest and sometimes difficult conversations people are having as a result of SAPR training," said Reese. "And I am hopeful that it has brought a new level of awareness to all of us, and that it is helpful in the fight to prevent this crime. Currently SARCs are providing sexual assault awareness and bystander type of training to the resident advisors in barracks, and commands are working right now on completing the training of all of our civilian staff. We expect this will all be done by the end of September."

The mission of the Navy's SAPR program is to prevent and respond to sexual assault, eliminating it from the ranks through a balance of focused education, comprehensive response, compassionate advocacy, and just adjudication in order to promote professionalism, respect, and trust, while preserving Navy mission readiness. It aims to promote and foster a culturally aware and informed Navy respectful of all, intolerant of sexual assault, and supported by a synergistic program of prevention, advocacy, and accountability. The SAPR program maintains that sexual assault affects Navy readiness, and that the Navy is committed to preventing sexual assault.

"Our Navy and Marine Corps is the greatest maritime force the world has ever known. To uphold our core values of honor, courage, and commitment, we must do all we can to protect our people from those who would wish to do them harm, especially if they reside within our own ranks," said Mabus. "This department is fully committed to using all available

resources to prevent this crime, aggressively investigate allegations and prosecute as appropriate. We will not hide from this challenge - we will be active, open and transparent.”

For more information on available SAPR training contact your installation SAPR representative.

For more information on the Department of the Navy's SAPR program, visit www.sapr.navy.mil.

For more information on NDW, visit www.facebook.com/NavDistWash.