

Joining the Military is Hazardous to Women

Sexual Assault is Ten Times More Likely in the Military

Listen to the Headlines

- "a former drill sergeant on Monday pleaded guilty to 11 counts of having sex with female trainees."
- "the Army's Criminal Investigation Command opened a hot line to permit women to [bypass] the chain of command and make their complaints directly. After only 12 weeks, the command recorded almost 7,000 calls."
- "Eugene McKinney, former Sergeant Major of the Army, who was accused by six women of crimes ranging from sexual harassment to criminal sexual assault, was acquitted on all such charges, though convicted of one count of obstruction of justice."

This could be you

"I remember his face," says Pamela Richardson of the private that raped her, "I don't remember his last name, but I will always remember his face." She also remembers being held to a motel room bed at knife point during basic training. Young and away from home, Pamela "didn't know who to run to, who to call...After a while [she] was in denial; [she] couldn't believe that it had happened." Her disbelief was tested at Fort Gordon, where she was sent after basic training, when a staff sergeant tried to intimidate her into sleeping with him. But despite her multiple experiences, Pamela turned the pain inside where she tried to control it with excessive drinking. What else could she do when the people to whom she was supposed talk were the people abusing her?

"I thought I'd take this to my grave," Pamela says now, after reporting the incidents, something she did only after she had safely distanced herself from the military. But "suddenly they want proof," Pamela sighs, and they ask, "why didn't you report it right away?" She never seems to be able to answer this to their satisfaction. Still, the flashbacks and the nightmares persist.

Let the Numbers Clue You In

When the Pentagon surveyed 50,000 active-duty women in 1996:

- 78% reported some form of sexual harassment
- 40% reported being coerced, touched, or cornered
- 4% report having been assaulted (ten times the civilian rate!)

When the VA surveyed recent women veterans in 1995:

- 90 percent reported sexual harassment
- Of those, one-third reported having been raped
- Rates of reports of completed or attempted sexual assaults while in the military were 20 times higher than those of other government employees.

The Veterans Administration has served over 20,000 women since 1993 for post-traumatic stress as a result of sexual assault while in the military.

When the Army commissioned a report in 1996-97:

"Most women kept their complaints to themselves, in many cases because they thought nothing would be done. Of those who did report harassment, 56 percent said that they had been urged to drop the complaint or had not been taken seriously, that their supervisor had received

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intelligent

a WOMAN?

and interested in
joining the
military?

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to use when deployed in the Persian Gulf, when she was awakened in her tent by the groping hands of an Air Force major whose name and face were familiar to her. When she screamed, the major fled — and Tamela wasted no time in running, in bare feet on desert sands, to her commander's tent. "I know who did this, and this is what he was wearing." In response, the Army tried to hospitalize Tamela in the psychiatric ward; persistently claimed that it was powerless to do anything, because her attacker was in the Air Force; continued to do so even when she went to the battalion commander. "Thank God I found you," Tamela told Dorothy Mackey after she found STAMP in the Army Times.

Talk to women who know the military!

Contacting STAMP or CCCO is an easy way to get in contact with women, either currently in the military or recently retired, who are experts on military realities.

the report with hostility or that no action had been taken."

"Of the soldiers who indicated that they were sexually harassed in the last twelve months, 12% used the formal complaint system, 33% resolved their sexual harassment complaint informally, and 55% apparently chose either to ignore it or handle it themselves."

Voices of Survivors

Kelly Hoyle, U.S. Army, 1980 - 1990; U.S. Coast Guard, 1991-1997

Kelly's first experience of sexual harassment happened in one of the Army's first coed basic training units, where her drill sergeant would "walk up to us in the middle of scissor-kicks, and stare right into our crotch; we weren't allowed to stop our kicks unless we made a date with him." In her first unit, the first sergeant "would rub up against my back with a rock hard-on." Still, Kelly persevered in her pursuit of a military career, transferring to the Coast Guard in 1990 as a full lieutenant — until the night she was raped by an Army NCO who had served under her command. After an investigation in which the JAG officer asked her the size of her attacker's penis, the CID dismissed the charges, saying she hadn't "acted like a victim." Eventually, her attacker received a letter of reprimand. "Here I am in the hospital for months, with flashbacks and nightmares — and he gets a letter of reprimand?"

Tamela Campbell, U.S. Army, 1980-1991

Capt. Tamela Campbell was an EEO officer for the Army, which gave her the opportunity to watch CID agents laugh as women who had been raped arrived at the base hospital for treatment. She put this knowledge



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