FACTS ON UNITED STATES MILITARY SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Statistics from the 2016 – 2019 DoD SAPRO Reports and their appendices/annexes, unless otherwise noted.
https://www.sapreo.defense.gov/Reports
Updated August 2020

Sexual Violence Remains Pervasive
- In FY18, 20,500 service members were sexually assaulted or raped including 13,000 women and 7,500 men. The rate of sexual assault and rape jumped by almost 40% from FY16 to FY18, and for women the rate increased by over 50% to the highest level since 2006.
- Of women who reported a penetrative sexual assault, 59% were assaulted by someone with a higher rank than them, and 24% were assaulted by someone in their chain of command.

Vast Majority of Cases Go Un-Reported
- 76.1% of victims did not report the crime in FY18.

Retaliation Is the Norm
- 66% of servicemembers who reported retaliation after filing a sexual assault complaint were women.
- 73% of retaliation reports alleged that retaliators were in the reporter’s chain of command.
- A third of victims are discharged after reporting, typically within 7 months of making a report.i
- Victims received harsher discharges, with 24% separated under less than fully honorable conditions, compared to 15% of all service members.ii

Low Trust and Satisfaction in System
- In FY18, over 1 in 4 victims who did not report feared retaliation from their command or coworkers.
- Nearly 1 in 3 victims who did not report feared the process would be unfair or nothing would be done.
- Less than half of female survivors felt well supported by their chain of command.

Conviction and Prosecution Rates
- Despite a 22% increase in unrestricted sexual assault reports since 2015, convictions have plummeted by almost 60% in the same timeframe.
- In FY 2019, of the 5,699 unrestricted reports of sexual assault, 363 (6.4%) cases were tried by court martial, and 138 (2.4%) offenders were convicted of a nonconsensual sex offense.

High Demand for VA Care
- Over 1,325,000 outpatient visits took place at the VA for Military Sexual Trauma (MST)-related care in FY17, a 1.3% increase from FY15.iii
- Approximately 38% of female and 4% of male military personnel and veterans have experienced MST.iv
- 40% of women homeless veterans have faced MST.Veterans with an MST history are over twice as likely to experience homelessness.

Sexual Harassment is Alarmingly High
- 6.3% active duty men and 24.2% active duty women were sexually harassed in FY18.
- 1 in 5 women who experienced sexual harassment were also sexually assaulted.
- DoD concluded that “sexual harassment is a leading factor affecting the unit climate on sexual assault.”
- The majority of victims were harassed by someone in their chain of command.
- 1,021 formal sexual harassment complaints were made in FY19, a 10% increase from FY18.

Good Order and Discipline at Risk
- Service members who are sexually harassed are at significantly greater risk of sexual assault.
- More than 1 in 4 survivors of either sexual assault or sexual harassment/discrimination took steps to leave the military as a result.

Definitions: Sexual assault in the survey corresponds to crimes defined by Uniform Code of Justice (UCMJ) Article 120 (rape & sexual assault) and Article 80 (attempts). Sexual harassment is defined in federal law and military regulations and includes a pervasive and severe sexually hostile work environment that interferes with the ability to do one’s job and/or sexual quid pro quo. Gender discrimination, also defined in law and regulations, refers to gender-based mistreatment that results in harm to one’s career.

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iv Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Guidebook (2018).
