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## Army to Launch Database on Sexual Assault Incidents

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The Army is planning to launch a database by the end of the month that will track sexual assault incidents.

The Army will add the Sexual Assault Data Management System Files to its existing records systems on Nov. 25, according to a recent *Federal Register* notice.

The electronic system will provide a centralized place to store data related to sexual assault incidents in the Army, including information about the health care provided to service-member victims treated at Army medical facilities, resolution of investigations and disciplinary action.

The system will hold the names, Social Security numbers, birthdates, demographic information and service data of sexual assault victims and alleged perpetrators, according to the notice. Investigation-related information, including a summary of the assault, police report data, DNA processing dates and medical information also may be included.

Records only will be accessible to authorized personnel who have an “official need [to see them] in the performance of their assigned duties,” the notice states.

Service members outside the Army could be included if they are involved in an incident on an Army base or with an Army service member or employee, according to Janice Thornton, a privacy act manager for the Army’s Records Management and Declassification Agency and the contact person for this notice.

There is no limit on how long the records will be kept in the database, Thornton said. But a record retention plan that would limit storage times has been submitted to the National Archives and Records Administration for approval.

“For right now, they are considered permanent,” Thornton said. “Until the record retention plan is approved, we have to keep them.”

Thornton said such plans can take several months to a year to be approved.

No comments have been received regarding the notice, according to Thornton, but the National Organization for Women did call to find out how to submit a comment.

Anita Sanchez, spokeswoman for the Newtown, Conn.-based Miles Foundation, a nonprofit group that assists military service members who are victims of sexual assault, said her organization is concerned about the development of the database. The Army has not clearly stated who will have access to it, she said.

“This poses some very serious questions about privacy and due process,” Sanchez said. “This database is going to contain identifying information for an alleged victim or an alleged assailant.”

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