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Military Academies Making Progress in Efforts to Address Sexual Assault

Press Operations

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Today, the Department of Defense released its Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the United States Military Service Academies (MSA) for academic program year (APY) 2014 - 2015. As part of a comprehensive review, DoD officials conducted site visits at the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy, held focus groups with cadets and midshipmen, and reviewed academy policies, training, and procedures.

“We are encouraged by the steps the academies have taken to eliminate sexual assault,” said Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols, the director of the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. “All three academies are taking innovative approaches to improve both respect and safety of cadets and midshipmen. These future leaders are being armed with the knowledge that military units operate best in climates of dignity and respect – where sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other inappropriate behaviors and attitudes are not tolerated.”

The MSAs received a total of 91 reports for allegations of sexual assault that involve cadets or midshipmen as either victims or subjects in APY 14-15, compared to a total of 59 reports in the prior APY. When a crime like sexual assault is underreported, it is a strategic objective to encourage reporting as a way to connect victims with support and to hold offenders appropriately accountable.

Official crime reports only represent a portion of the incidents that occur. Every two years, the department conducts scientific surveys to estimate how many cadets and midshipmen experience sexual assault in a given year. The 2014 survey of cadets and midshipmen showed that rates of sexual assault had decreased significantly for women and trended downward for men. The next Congressionally-required survey will be conducted in the spring of 2016.

Department officials found that all academy programs met the requirements of existing DoD policies and public law, based on information obtained during site visits. This year’s assessment identifies suggested program enhancements and action items for each academy to further prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault at the MSAs.

The Annual Report for APY 2014 – 2015 is available online at www.sapr.mil/index.php/annual-reports. Additional information about the department's sexual assault prevention efforts can be found at www.sapr.mil.

Members of the DoD community who have been affected by sexual assault can access 24/7, confidential, anonymous support through the DoD Safe Helpline at safehelpline.org, or by calling 877-995-5247.