



Report Concerning  
the Assessment of USAF  
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response



August 2004

Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force  
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON DC

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

10 AUG 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE

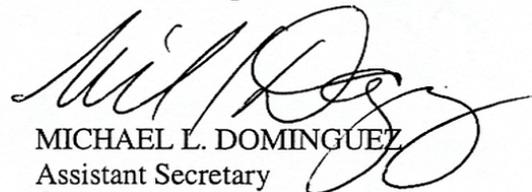
FROM: SAF/MR

SUBJECT: Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

This memorandum forwards to you a "Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response." The assessment was undertaken in response to your direction in February 2004. Our effort included a series of self-evaluations conducted by each Air Force Major Command (MAJCOM), and a Headquarters Air Force/MAJCOM integrated planning team (IPT) that assimilated those evaluations, isolated headquarters level issues, benchmarked our findings with corporations and universities, gained insight by engaging subject-matter experts external to the Air Force, and, ultimately, collaborated on the findings and recommendations contained in this report.

In May 2004, the preliminary findings and recommendations were briefed to you at CORONA. As with the challenges we confronted last year at the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), addressing sexual assault in the U.S. Air Force requires deep, long-lasting, cultural and institutional change. Change of this nature requires persistence and a comprehensive approach. The campaign plan, outlined in this report and endorsed by the Air Force leadership last May, provides the comprehensive approach. The realization that sexual assault undermines our Core Values guarantees our response will be persistent. Again, as is the case at the USAFA, the essence of the campaign is living up to our Core Values of Integrity, Excellence, and Service, and emphasizing the self-respect, mutual respect, and respect for the institution inherent in those values. Airmen must not only live up to those values, but they must not tolerate among us those who do not.

We trust that this report will be the basis and catalyst for positive, institutional change.

  
MICHAEL L. DOMINGUEZ  
Assistant Secretary  
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

# Contents

Executive Summary .....	5
MAJCOM Sexual Assault Tasking .....	14
MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MAJCOM/CCs .....	14
MAJCOM Template: Sexual Assault Review.....	15
Team Composition and Acknowledgements .....	18
Introduction .....	21
Methodology .....	24
Step One: Data Collection.....	24
Step Two: Integration and Assessment.....	25
Step Three: Findings and Recommendations .....	26
Findings.....	28
Sexual Assault Realities .....	28
Policy and Leadership.....	32
Education and Training.....	38
Reporting .....	42
Response .....	48
AEF/Deployed Environment.....	53
Recommendations .....	58
Policy and Leadership.....	58
Education and Training.....	61
Reporting .....	62
Response .....	63
AEF/Deployed Environment.....	65
Conclusion.....	67
Acronyms .....	69
Appendix 1: Expert Biographies .....	72
David Lisak, Ph.D.....	72
Anne P. Munch, Esq. ....	73
Heather M. Schumacher Karjane, Ph.D. ....	74
Deborah D. Tucker, MPA .....	75

Appendix 2: Noteworthy MAJCOM Practices ..... 76

Appendix 3: Corporate Benchmarking Efforts ..... 86

    Methodology and Results of Corporate Benchmarking ..... 86

    Corporate Benchmarking Table ..... 87

    Private Sector Template: Sexual Assault Review ..... 88

Appendix 4: Victim Support Liaison Memorandum ..... 91

Appendix 5: Victim Advocate Coordinator Example ..... 96

## Executive Summary

In February 2004, the senior leadership of the Air Force initiated this assessment to review the Air Force's sexual assault prevention and response capabilities and identify recommendations for improvements. The Air Force established five goals for the assessment:

- Strive to eliminate sexual assault and any environment that fosters it.
- Ensure an environment where victims feel comfortable reporting.
- Conduct appropriate investigation and prosecution.
- Address victims' well-being and health as effectively as possible.
- Ensure commanders and senior leaders oversee program effectiveness.

The cornerstone of this effort was a series of self-assessments conducted by Air Force Major Commands (MAJCOM) focused on sexual assault prevention and response capabilities. A headquarters integrated planning team (IPT) undertook a parallel effort to review established policies, conduct corporate and university benchmarking, and engage sexual assault subject-matter experts external to the Air Force. Representatives from the MAJCOMs and the headquarters IPT worked jointly to capture findings and develop recommendations.

This assessment is the culmination of a journey that began in January 2003, when allegations of sexual assault at the United States Air Force Academy came to light. In March 2003, after multiple investigations into these allegations, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force implemented the *Agenda for Change*. The *Agenda for Change* was a map for complete cultural change within the Academy. The Air Force learned a great deal about sexual assault from its experiences with the Academy. Consequently, during a four-star summit in the fall of 2003, Air Force senior leadership decided to look beyond the Academy to determine whether the Academy experience was an anomaly or Air Force-wide. The Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) commander volunteered to do an assessment within his command. This assessment was limited to allegations of rape within the command and findings were presented to the next four-star summit in February 2004. Based on the PACAF findings, the senior leadership of the Air Force agreed on the necessity of an Air Force-wide assessment.

### Methodology

The Air Force-wide assessment followed a three-step methodology focused on data collection, integration and assessment, and generation of findings and recommendations. The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) does not have a specific offense of "sexual assault." As used by the Air Force, the term sexual assault consolidates a number of different UCMJ offenses and is defined as:

Any of several offenses of a sexual nature, committed without the lawful consent of the victim, that are punishable as crimes under the UCMJ. The term "sexual assault" includes rape and carnal knowledge (Article 120), forcible sodomy or sodomy with a child (Article 125), assault with intent to commit rape or sodomy, indecent assault, indecent acts or liberties with a child (Article 134), or an attempt to commit any of these offenses.

Assessment team members visited more than 85 Air Force installations in the United States and overseas (including Iraq and Afghanistan) and attempted contact with more than 100,000 personnel via surveys, interviews, focus groups, and feedback sessions. MAJCOM teams conducted an initial assessment of their own data and provided findings and recommendations to the headquarters IPT. The headquarters IPT integrated these findings, adding input gleaned from its own policy and literature reviews, input from external subject-matter experts, and the results of corporate and university benchmarking efforts. This multi-step process generated a set of

findings that represent the current state of the Air Force's sexual assault prevention and response capabilities, areas in which these capabilities need to be improved, and recommendations for doing so in the form of a "campaign plan."

### **Findings and Recommendations**

Findings and recommendations focused on six topic areas: Sexual Assault Realities; Policy and Leadership; Education and Training; Reporting; Response; and AEF/Deployment. Each topic area except Sexual Assault Realities contains a series of recommendations. While findings and recommendations are linked to a particular topic area for organizational purposes, all were derived from data collection and assessment activities occurring in multiple topic areas.

### **Sexual Assault Realities**

Before assessing its own sexual assault and prevention capabilities, the Air Force sought to gain a better understanding of the victim and offender realities surrounding the sexual assault issue. In this endeavor, the Air Force relied on external subject-matter experts, a review of pertinent research studies and literature, and Air Force statistics. The assistance of external subject-matter experts was invaluable in this effort. Data collected by MAJCOM assessments and input offered by subject-matter experts identified a set of sexual assault realities applying to victims and offenders. These realities debunked a number of myths about sexual assault, and they are vital to understanding the issues surrounding sexual assault prevention and response.

#### *Victim Realities*

Sexual Assault is a pervasive crime in the United States. Recent studies focused on colleges and the national population indicate that as many as one in four women have been victims of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault.<sup>1</sup> Victimization on this scale constitutes a significant public health and criminal justice issue. However, studies also reveal that many victims are uncertain about what constitutes sexual assault. Victims often do not "label" the act committed against them as sexual assault. This mislabeling, together with the shame and stigma that victims typically experience following an assault, means that most victims do not report the incident as a crime. The need to improve education and training in this area is critically important.

Indeed, low reporting rates are the norm for sexual assault, in particular for the reporting of rape. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has described sexual assault as "the most underreported violent crime in the nation." The most methodologically sound study of college-aged women found sexual assault reporting rates for victims of rape or attempted rape as low as 5 percent.<sup>2</sup> Low reporting rates are perhaps the most important issue surrounding sexual assault. If a sexual assault is not reported, the chances that victims are getting necessary medical care and counseling are very low. Low reporting rates also indicate that many offenders remain at large to victimize again. Finally, low reporting rates create a false sense of institutional security, making it more

---

<sup>1</sup> Fisher, B., Cullen, F., and Turner, M. (2000). The sexual victimization of college women: Findings from two national-level studies. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics. See also Brener, N.D., McMahon, P.M., Warren, C.W., & Douglas, K.A. (1999). Forced Sexual Intercourse and Associated Health-Risk Behaviors Among Female College Students in the United States. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 67, 252-259. This is a CDC sponsored study of 2,823 college women. 20% were victims of rape; Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2000). Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women (NCJ 183781). National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Washington, DC. This is a DOJ/CDC sponsored study of 7,856 women from across the U.S. 15% were victims of rape; Koss, M.P., Gidycz, & Wisniewski, N. (1987). The scope of rape: Incidence and prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization in a national sample of higher education students. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 55, 162-170. This is a National Institute of Mental Health study of more than 6,000 college women. 15.4% of women were victims of rape since the age of 14.

<sup>2</sup> Fisher, B., Cullen, F., and Turner, M. (2000). The sexual victimization of college women: Findings from two national-level studies. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics. This national study of more than 4000 college women showed that under 5% of victims of rape or attempted rape reported to incident to police.

difficult to quantify the prevalence of sexual assault. It is tempting for large organizations with a handful of sexual assaults to discount the severity of the problem and the need for a decisive response.

Many victims of sexual assault require care and counseling to recover. While rape is only one form of sexual assault, rape trauma is now recognized for the deleterious effects it has not only on victims but also on their families, their co-workers, and others involved in their lives. Victims of rape are left shattered, experiencing feelings of intense fear and anger, helplessness, and a profound sense that they have lost control of their lives. When a non-stranger commits an assault (the most common form of sexual assault), the victim also experiences a profound sense of betrayal and loss of trust. Rape trauma has physiological, psychological, and social consequences on the victim, characterized by disempowerment and a disconnection from others. This results in involuntary psychological movement between the expectation of danger (hyper-vigilance, flashbacks, sleep disturbances, and anxiety) and emotional numbing (indifference to pain, lack of empathy, difficulty with intimacy and tenderness).<sup>3</sup> Trauma affects interpersonal attachments and the ways people relate to and perceive the victim, as well as ways the victim relates to and perceives others. Feelings of shame, stigma, and isolation are common. In most cases, victims suffering from this level of trauma need ongoing care and support to make a full recovery.

#### *Offender Realities*

One of the great myths surrounding sexual assault is that strangers with no relationship to the victim commit most assaults. Research shows conclusively that the opposite is true.<sup>4</sup> In the majority of sexual assault cases, there is some level of familiarity between the victim and the offender. Air Force statistics reflect this societal norm. A recent Air Force review of internal statistics determined that victims and offenders were familiar with one another (friend, acquaintance, colleague, ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.) in 85% of all sexual assault cases reviewed.<sup>5</sup> Statistics for college-aged women reveal similar trends. The two landmark studies examining sexual assault on college campuses indicated that between 80% and 90% of victims knew their attacker.<sup>6</sup> In one study, the set of non-stranger offenders in this study broke down as follows: 36% were identified as classmates; 34% were identified as friends; 24% were identified as former boyfriends; and 3% were identified as acquaintances. The reality of the non-stranger offender is forcing the Air Force to reconsider traditional views of victims and offenders.

The Air Force relied heavily on the work of Dr. David Lisak to gain a further understanding of sexual assault in general and rape in particular. Dr. Lisak's primary research focuses on the motives and characteristics of the "undetected rapist." While rape is but one form of sexual assault, these findings are important to understanding the larger issues surrounding sexual assault, and crafting realistic solutions to these issues.

During his presentation at the Air Force offsite, Dr Lisak noted that, based on the past five decades of research on rapists, it is estimated that only 5% of rapists are ever incarcerated. That

---

<sup>3</sup> Schumacher Karjane, H., Addressing Campus Sexual Assault: Basic and Promising Practice Findings from a National Investigation, briefed to the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site, 21 April 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Rennison, C.M. and Rand, M.R. (2003), Criminal Victimization, 2002: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice; Tjaden, P. and Thoennes N. (2002), Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequence of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. Report for Grant 93-IJ-CX-0012, funded by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Washington DC.

<sup>5</sup> The statistics referred to were gathered at the request of DoD as data inputs for its own sexual assault review.

<sup>6</sup> Fisher, B., Cullen, F., and Turner, M. (2000). The Sexual Victimization of College Women: Findings from Two National-level Studies. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics. This national DOJ-sponsored study of more than 4000 college women showed that under 5% of victims of rape or attempted rape reported incident to police. Koss, M.P., Gidycz, & Wisniewski, N. (1987). The Scope of Rape: Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization in a National Sample of Higher Education Students. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 55. This is a National Institute of Mental Health study of more than 6,000 college women.

5% normally represent the stranger rapist, whose profile includes the fact that he is a stranger to the victim and usually commits a single act in a blitz attack with brutal injuries. This is the rapist who for years was the subject of research on rape. However, the vast majority (estimated 95%) of rapists are never incarcerated and go undetected. The fact that they are undetected can be attributed partly to false stereotypes about rapists. The stranger rapist who wears a ski mask, attacks with a weapon, and causes brutal injuries, is the stereotype most associated with rapists, when in fact, non-stranger rape is far more prevalent and often goes undetected because of false stereotypes regarding the “nice guy” rapist. The non-stranger rapist is often overlooked because of society’s inclination to accept his behavior as “normal” – e.g., he drank too much, there was a miscommunication, it wasn’t premeditated, and it won’t happen again. Dr. Lisak’s research indicates that of this larger population of undetected rapists, the typical rapist does not use a weapon, uses instrumental, not gratuitous violence, has access to consensual sex, is not mentally ill and comes from all racial and ethnic groups. He plans and premeditates his attacks, uses multiple strategies to make the victim vulnerable, uses alcohol and/or other substances deliberately, and increases violence as needed.

Dr. Lisak’s research indicates that in any community, the majority of sexual assaults are committed by a relatively small, core group of serial rapists who frequently commit other interpersonal crimes (e.g., battery and child abuse). According to Dr. Lisak, a majority of rapists (58%) are “crossover” offenders, meaning that in addition to rape they have also committed a second form of violence. The following from Dr. Lisak’s study illustrates the serious impact of the serial offender. Out of his study of 1,882 men, 1,762 were non-rapists and 44 men were single act rapists who committed or attempted 44 rapes. The remaining 76 men were serial rapists who committed 49 sexual assaults, 439 rapes and attempted rapes, 66 acts of physical abuse of children, 277 acts of sexual abuse of children, and 214 acts of battery for a total of 1,045 offenses. Focusing on this core group, Dr Lisak’s research shows that these rapists were well entrenched in their environments. They are often successful in their careers or other pursuits. Most important, they are able to rely on “third-party actors” to perpetuate an environment conducive to their behavior.

Dr. Lisak identifies two categories of third-party actors. “Facilitators” are those who consciously perpetuate an environment that allows non-stranger rapists to function. Facilitators offer encouragement and fail to act when they know an assault may be imminent, thereby reinforcing the behavior of non-stranger rapists. Facilitators may engage in sexual assault themselves because of the confluence of the “right” circumstances, but they do not become entrenched in that behavior. “Bystanders” are the second category of third-party actors. They are further removed from the non-stranger rapist and his crime, but they have knowledge of the event and fail to act to stop it—possibly because they do not recognize it as a crime.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Lisak believes that core sex offenders are beyond the reach of education and rehabilitation. The solution is to identify them and isolate them from the community. However, the enabling behavior of facilitators and bystanders can be altered by education and training. In a resource-constrained environment, maximum investment should be directed at facilitators and bystanders.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, these enablers can be turned into agents of prevention through a successful education and training program. The information and insight provided by Dr Lisak’s study has profound implications for preventing sexual assaults, educating the Air Force community, investigating and adjudicating crimes, and understanding and caring for victims.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, slide 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, slide 19.

### **Policy and Leadership**

The policy and leadership topic area explores the existence of policy direction and standardized procedural guidance for sexual assault prevention and response. It also examines the role of commanders as they formulate the Air Force response to sexual assault. The major finding in this topic area is the lack of a cohesive and proactive Air Force policy regarding sexual assault. Because sexual assault is a crime of shame for many victims, building an institutional framework that fosters trust in the willingness and ability of commanders to punish offenders and care for victims is viewed as particularly important. Thus, the Air Force must aggressively address its cultural and institutional environment to ensure that respect and dignity are upheld for each member.

Nearly all MAJCOM respondents noted the lack of a sexual assault policy at the headquarters or MAJCOM levels. A similar lack of overarching policy was noted at the DoD level. Because no sexual assault policy existed, there was, in turn, no compelling anti-sexual assault message and no common definitions established for key sexual assault terms and concepts. While commanders are responding appropriately in most cases to ensure that victims receive immediate care, assessments noted that some commanders are unaware of the prevalence of sexual assault and its potential impact on the Air Force mission. Assessments also noted the lack of an integrated database capable of identifying trends that would enable commanders to be proactive in prevention and response. This lack of awareness could be based on the low number of reported sexual assaults, the lack of top-down guidance on sexual assault prevention and response, and the absence of resources to develop and sustain effective programs. Finally, MAJCOMs recognize the need to respond to sexual assault, but several expressed concern at possibly having to provide “out of hide” resources to fully implement the Air Force’s forthcoming sexual assault program.

In the course of the MAJCOM assessments, focus group participants and survey respondents highlighted Air Force environmental factors that may affect the incidence of sexual assault. For example, alcohol use was cited as a common characteristic of many sexual assaults. MAJCOM reports included the need to address alcohol use through a research-based responsible drinking program.

MAJCOM recommendations focused on identifying an office of primary responsibility (OPR) to oversee development and promulgation of an Air Force-wide sexual assault prevention and response policy at the Air Staff and implementation at the MAJCOM and base level. The OPR optimally would be charged with formalizing sexual assault prevention and response procedures; standardizing education and training objectives; identifying metrics for evaluation; and making program improvements. It also would be tasked with (1) defining key terms and concepts surrounding the sexual assault issue; (2) developing a single, unifying Air Force message and communications strategy focused on preventing sexual assault that capitalizes on the unique cultural aspects of the Air Force; and (3) ensuring that resource needs are addressed in a systematic fashion to translate sexual assault policy into effective programs. The eventual fielding of DoD’s Defense Incident Based Reporting System (DIBRS) will allow senior commanders and leaders to track sexual assault trends.

The Air Force has already taken the first step in adopting these recommendations. In May 2004, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower & Reserve Affairs) was given responsibility for developing sexual assault policy and overseeing its implementation. The Air Force must designate a permanent OPR to support Air Force commanders in policy implementation, program development, and progress assessment.

## **Education and Training**

The education and training topic area examines current sexual assault prevention and response training in the home station environment, the training environment, and the AEF/Deployed Environment. The assessment found that existing sexual assault prevention and awareness training lacks a unifying message and tends to focus on sexual harassment rather than sexual assault. The absence of a formal Air Force sexual assault policy plays a significant role in this finding. Air Force and MAJCOM training programs are uncoordinated, ad hoc in content and frequency, and intermingled with other subjects in multi-purpose briefings. Of the training that exists, that provided to first responders (personnel expected to offer immediate medical, investigative, and legal assistance to victims) is judged to be the highest quality. However, it is focused on discrete aspects of sexual assault response. First responders would benefit from a general treatment of sexual assault that explores the topic in its entirety. A first responder will be more effective if he or she has a general understanding of the totality of sexual assault response to complement functional expertise. It also was noted that all levels of leadership would benefit from this training. Finally, the assessment found that current training methods do not effectively address the sexual assault problem. The “one-size-fits-all” briefing will not be well received by key target populations (18-25 years of age). Training needs to be interactive, targeted, and additive.

In the education and training topic area, recommendations include the development of a sexual assault education and training strategy focused on a clear message from the Air Force. The Air Force should develop a strategy to create a minimum training baseline for sustaining a total force, multi-tiered sexual assault training program for all personnel (from recruits to senior leadership). Although training for first responders received praise in the assessments, it too can be improved and enhanced, as can training for Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) Liaisons and Victim Support Liaisons. In all cases, training must be linked to the overarching Air Force policy and communications strategy to ensure consistency. Training delivery should be focused on career transition points, evolving as airmen mature and progress in their careers.

## **Reporting**

The reporting topic area examines a victim’s decision to formally inform his or her chain of command that an alleged sexual assault has occurred. The victim’s decision to report emerges as the critical element of the sexual assault issue—if no report is made, there can be no response by the chain of command to provide victim care, launch an investigation, and reach resolution. Available evidence suggests that the majority of sexual assaults occurring in the Air Force might not be reported. In this finding, the Air Force mirrors the society it protects. U.S. Department of Justice statistics and research show that between 68% (national sample of general population) and 95% (national sample of college population) of sexual assault victims are not reporting. Air Force victims face numerous real or perceived reporting barriers. The lack of privacy/confidentiality is the most frequently cited barrier to reporting. Other barriers include stigma, fear, or shame; fear of disciplinary action because of a victim’s misconduct; fear of being reduced in the eyes of one’s commander/colleagues; fear of re-victimization; and fear of perceived operational impacts, including loss of security clearances, effect on training, and impact on overseas deployments. Finally, the assessments concluded that the key issue in improving reporting rates is the creation of a reporting process that balances a commander’s responsibility to maintain good order and discipline, law enforcement’s mandate to investigate crimes, and the victim’s need for care and justice.

The Air Force’s current reporting system needs to be improved with the objectives of (1) getting more victims into care and (2) providing commanders with more information to support investigation and prosecution of offenders. An improved reporting system must take systematic steps to build victim trust and confidence by addressing barriers to reporting. At the same time, the improved reporting system must acknowledge the commander’s responsibility to maintain

order and discipline and law enforcement's mandate to investigate crimes. Moreover, while enhancements to privacy protection can be accomplished largely at the service level, instituting any form of expanded confidentiality protection must be coordinated with DoD, which has an interest in maintaining a consistent privacy/confidentiality policy across all branches of the military.

### **Response**

The response topic area examines the ability of the Air Force to provide victim care and perform legally sufficient investigations of alleged sexual assaults leading to resolution. Currently, there is no Air Force policy or organizational entity that organizes, guides, and/or motivates a functionally integrated response to victims of sexual assault. Indeed, outside of VWAP, the Air Force did not have a requirement for a formal victim support program until April 2004, when the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force instituted an interim Victim Support Liaison program as the first step to a permanent enhancement of victim care capabilities. Air Force installations also partner with community resources to assist with victim care. Community resources fill important gaps and leverage the Air Force's ability to meet the needs of victims of sexual assault.

Traditionally, the Air Force has emphasized the importance of promptly investigating and adjudicating allegations of sexual assault. However, despite this emphasis, delays at the Army lab that processes military rape kits are having a negative impact on sexual assault investigations and prosecutions. These delays frustrate investigators and prosecutors, increase the anguish of victims and alleged offenders seeking final resolution, and can contribute to the misperception that the Air Force does not make responding to sexual assaults a priority. Additionally, the impact of the VWAP is inconsistent across the Air Force. The VWAP was established to facilitate the investigation and adjudication of criminal cases and currently serves as the primary response mechanism for victims of sexual assault on most bases. However, the program suffers from manpower and resource limitations.

Recommendations to improve victim care focus on providing a structure for policy and program coordination and integration at all levels. This new structure, managed by an OPR, would oversee all aspects of prevention and response, to include victim care and support, ensuring continuity of care, closing any gaps that emerge in the response efforts of functional agencies, and ensuring needed training and education. The OPR would also focus on building and maintaining partnerships with community service providers. Improving victim care is dependent on continuing to develop and/or expand relationships with these community resources. When they are available, the Air Force needs to take advantage of community service providers in surrounding communities. Base leadership needs to become involved in this effort. Beyond victim care, the Air Force should reach out to community service providers for assistance with training and education.

The Air Force must ensure that the VWAP is adequately resourced. VWAPs at large bases should be sufficiently staffed. Sexual assault training needs to emphasize the proper role of VWAP in victim support and care. The timeline for forensic analysis needs to be improved. The Air Force has increased funding for Army lab processing, and must continue these proactive steps to limit delays. Finally, the Air Force must expand training to enhance the quality of investigation and prosecution of non-stranger offenders. Research indicates that these offenders have common behavioral characteristics and are often able to avoid detection and prosecution.

### **Air and Space Expeditionary Force (AEF)/Deployed Environment**

The AEF/Deployed Environment topic area examines the effect a deployment or AEF rotation has on the Air Force's ability to prevent and respond to sexual assault. The AEF/Deployed Environment creates unique challenges for sexual assault prevention and response. Personnel of

all ranks and skill sets are frequently rotated in and out of an expeditionary environment characterized by diverse military formations including joint and coalition forces. This requires units to re-form quickly and establish themselves as strong cohesive squadrons. As a result, continuity for sexual assault prevention and response is difficult to establish or maintain. Chain of command issues are also present in the AEF/Deployed Environment. Air Force personnel may be assigned to joint units with support provided by other service components, leading to uncertainty about sexual assault programs and regulations that may be different from those adopted by the Air Force. Finally, conditions in the AEF/Deployed Environment have a detrimental effect on sexual assault investigations. Sufficient resources to conduct criminal investigations may not be deployed. The transient nature of many deployed units impedes investigations. The ability to collect, assess, and secure sexual assault evidence is limited—assessments noted a lack of trained personnel (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners) and the difficulty of finding safe, sterile, and private areas for evidence collection and storage.

The first step in mitigating the difficulties of the AEF/Deployed Environment is the establishment of a sexual assault OPR within the combatant command's air component command. The air component command OPR should have responsibilities similar to MAJCOM and base-level OPRs, and should be linked to these OPRs to ensure consistency. The MAJCOM OPR will ensure that sexual assault policy is implemented and that Air Force sexual assault prevention and response programs are standardized and adapted as they are moved from the home station to the deployed environment. As necessary, the Air Force OPR will work with representatives from its sister services and the OSD to craft sexual assault procedures that function in the joint environment. Finally, the Air Force must enhance the training it provides to its deployed forces. Mandatory pre-deployment sexual assault training should be provided to all deployed personnel. The training should focus on the risk of sexual assault, means of prevention, and proper response if a sexual assault occurs.

### Next Steps

Impacting behavior will require institutional change. Institutional change will be dependent on the evolution of the Air Force's culture, as expressed in its core values. The process of institutional change will begin immediately. In late May 2004, the preliminary findings and recommendations of this assessment were briefed at CORONA. A campaign plan with an associated timeline was approved and the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force agreed to convene a summit of its most senior leaders in August 2004 to review proposed actions. The headquarters IPT, working with the MAJCOMs, was tasked to bring recommended actions from the Campaign Plan to the August summit. This summit will consider recommendations stemming from the following institutional efforts to start the process of improving the Air Force sexual assault prevention and response capabilities:

- **Policy and Leadership:** A policy and leadership team will develop an Air Force prevention and response policy to guide institutional change. The policy will address institutional and individual attitudes and beliefs and identify concrete behaviors that will achieve higher standards. Key terms and concepts will be defined as required to support this effort. A communications strategy will also be developed, with the goal of re-orienting Air Force culture into a proactive force that emphasizes behavior that respects the dignity of each Airman. Additionally, the Air Force will assign a sub-team to work with OSD on the development of an enterprise-wide database for information sharing and program management. Finally, the Air Force will review "environmental" factors (dorm policy, alcohol use policy) that affect sexual assault prevention. The policy and leadership team will identify resources needed to sustain a continuous and consistent sexual assault prevention and response program.
- **Education and Training:** An education and training team led by AETC will develop an education and training strategy that establishes a training

baseline and a multi-tiered program for all Air Force personnel (recruits to senior leaders). The education and training team will also focus on training enhancements for first responders, including the newly created Victim Support Liaison positions.

- **Reporting:** A reporting team will review the current Air Force reporting system and make recommendations for ultimate presentation to DoD for the establishment of a reporting system that (1) gets more victims into care (by maximizing reporting rates) and (2) improves reporting rates by balancing the victim's need for privacy/confidentiality, the commander's responsibility for maintaining good order/discipline in his unit, and law enforcement's mandate to investigate every crime that is committed.
- **Response:** A response team will recommend an office of primary responsibility for prevention and response activities at the MAJCOM and base level and explore the creation of a specific position(s) to assume responsibility for prevention and response activities at the appropriate level. The response team will also focus on developing a strategy for full use of community resources to enhance victim care and first responder training, enhancement of VWAP and its integration with other victim support and care activities, and improvement of investigation and prosecution techniques.
- **AEF/Deployed Environment:** A deployed environment team led by ACC, AMC, and USCENAF will recommend standardized sexual assault prevention and response policies during deployment, to include the designation of an OPR in the combatant commander's air component command. Finally, the deployed environment team will recommend protocols for pre- and post-deployment training for all troops and commanders.

Sexual assault prevention and response presents a direct challenge to the Air Force. In meeting this challenge, the Air Force has the opportunity to lead the way in crafting the largest institutional response to sexual assault in our Nation's history. Together with our sister services and OSD, we commit to this path to improve the lives of our Airmen and their families.

# MAJCOM Sexual Assault Tasking

## MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MAJCOM/CCs



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, DC

24 Feb 04

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MAJCOM/CC's

FROM: HQ USAF/CV  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1670

SUBJECT: Sexual Assault Assessment Teams

1. The SECAF and CSAF tasked each MAJCOM Commander to establish teams to visit your installations and assess the current status of your sexual assault response programs. We have established a Sexual Assault IPT at the Air Staff to assist you in this effort. Our Air Force goals include:

- a. Striving to eliminate sexual assault and the climate that fosters it
- b. Ensuring an environment where victims have confidence to report
- c. Conducting appropriate investigation and prosecution
- d. Effectively addressing victims' health and well-being and
- e. Ensuring commanders and higher headquarters oversee program effectiveness

2. As promised at CORONA, attached is a template for use in assessing your MAJCOM/Base/Unit programs. This is a starting point for your assessment, but should not be considered all-inclusive. You may add items, as you deem appropriate. Your response should be a candid assessment of what you are doing in the area addressed, to include best practices, special issues, problems, and challenges we should consider in plotting a collective AF way ahead. The attachment also provides a suggested composition for your survey team.

3. Request you appoint a MAJCOM project officer and forward the person's name, DSN, and e-mail address to Ms Charlene Bradley, SAF/MRM, [charlene.Bradley@pentagon.af.mil](mailto:charlene.Bradley@pentagon.af.mil), DSN 224-4753. Please forward your "rolled-up" MAJCOM survey results to AF/DP NLT 24 Mar 04.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Michael Moseley".

T. MICHAEL MOSELEY  
General, USAF  
Vice Chief of Staff

Attachments:

1. Report Template
2. Talking Points

## MAJCOM Template: Sexual Assault Review

The following definition of sexual assault should be used in your review:

Sexual Assault refers to any of several offenses of a sexual nature, committed without the lawful consent of the victim, that are punishable as crimes under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The term “sexual assault” includes rape and carnal knowledge (Article 120, UCMJ), forcible sodomy or sodomy with a child (Article 125), assault with intent to commit rape or sodomy, indecent assault, indecent acts with another or indecent acts or liberties with a child (Article 134), or an attempt to commit any of these offenses.

**SCOPE of REVIEW:** At a minimum, the review must encompass an end-to-end review of policies and programs within the command. This is not designed to assess disposition of individual cases, but to provide a holistic review of sexual assault policy and programs.

### Education and Training

1. What awareness education and training is provided to members, commanders, supervisors, and dependent family members?
  - Where, when, by whom or by what media, how frequently?
  - Do you use a standard curriculum? If yes, please attach a copy.
2. Prevention Programs - What is available, how effective are they, and how are they communicated? Respond to all of the following that apply in your command.
  - Home-station environment
  - Training environment
  - AEF environment -- Do you deploy assets to continue your programs? Does the Combatant Command or unit of attachment provide programs?

### Reporting Procedures

3. What are the existing reporting systems and processes used to report sexual assault allegations?
  - Have you received any complaints of impediments to reporting, including attitudes, environments, or other factors? If so, what are they and what has or is being done to overcome the impediments? Does a particular environment lead to any repression of ability to report sexual assaults, e.g., training or expeditionary locations?
  - Are there timelines for reporting cases from command to law enforcement agencies to include OSI? If so, what are they?
4. Do you have methods or programs that cross flow information on sexual assaults? If so, what are they and how do they work? Have you encountered barriers to the cross flow of information? If so, what are they, and what can or should be done to eliminate them?
5. Where sexual assaults have occurred, are there demonstrable common denominators? (e.g., alcohol, in the dorms, airman-on-airman)

### Response Programs

6. Individual:
  - Are victim advocates assigned? If so, are they full-time or collateral duties? Are they available when no military justice action has been initiated?

- Are victims informed of resources, services, and rights? By whom, when, in what way?
  - How long does medical and counseling support last in each of the following environments if applicable in your command?
    - Home-station environment
    - Training environments
    - AEF environment
  - How are counselors and others involved in your sexual assault response programs trained, how often, by whom, using what media? Please attach a copy of any standardized written training.
  - Are counseling/rehabilitation/wellness programs” (e.g., suicide prevention, alcohol counseling, marriage counseling) used to assist the accused or “other parties”?
7. Internal (investigative, legal, and administrative remedies):
- Are installation VWAPs in compliance with DOD and AF instructions and policies?
    - Have you received complaints from victims or witnesses about their treatment in the VWAP? If so, what types of complaints and were they validated or not?
    - How is the base population informed of the VWAPs?
      - Home-station
      - Expeditionary environment
  - Are command actions resulting from complaints of sexual assault communicated in any manner to the other members of the installation or command?
  - Are there reports or complaints indicating that victim’s feel “re-victimized” by the process for handling their allegations?
  - What training/preparation regarding sexual assault is provided for law enforcement and investigative staffs?
  - What, if any, care is provided to alleged victims who do not come within the parameters of the military-justice VWAP?
8. Community:
- What is the availability of resources in the local community or communities surrounding installations?
  - Do you have data on use of civilian resources by your military and dependent family members?
  - Are victims referred to outside agencies and, if so, under what circumstances?
  - Do your commanders meet with outside agencies, and is there a forum to allow interaction between the installation and local communities?

### **Program Oversight**

9. What tools do you provide to assist commanders in this area?

10. Do your commanders and First Sergeants proactively work on this issue, and when necessary, do they respond appropriately during a sexual assault case?
  - If so, please provide one or more best practices.
  - If not, why and what can be done about it?
11. Is there a single point of integration at the installation/command for sexual assault, e.g., CAIB, DP, SG, etc?
12. Communication:
  - Is there an adequate communication plan so it is clear to all members of your sexual assault response programs where, when, and how to report?
  - How do the members of your sexual assault response programs monitor ongoing cases and learn of the command disposition of individual cases?
  - Are victims told of the disposition of the case and, if so, by whom, when, and in what detail?
  - Is the community kept informed of sexual assaults? If so, how, when, and by what media? (control of rumors and misperceptions)
  - When does a commander first know of an alleged sexual assault?
13. Performance Management and Monitoring:
  - How are the results of sexual assaults communicated to commanders at each level of command?
  - Are there any best practices that commanders are using to monitor the force? Any leading edge indicators developed? Are measures or metrics developed?
  - Are commanders using the Commander's Climate Surveys? If so, how are they being used?

#### **Summary Assessment by MAJCOM**

14. Provide a copy of any best practices discovered during your review.
15. Provide recommended amendments to policy, practice, or organization.
16. In your report, provide a description of any unique variable that you identify during your review that affects either the reporting, investigation, or command actions taken after a sexual assault (e.g., location [deployed, attached, small unit], composition of forces [joint, coalition].)

#### **ACTIVITIES AND SUSPENSE: Suggested MAJCOM Team Composition:**

**Team Leads:** Colonel with command experience.

**Team members:** Representatives from DP, SG, JA, IG, SF, AFOSI, and a First Sergeant.

**Suspense:** MAJCOMS should conduct operating location assessments and report to the AF/DP NLT 24 March 2004.

# Team Composition and Acknowledgements

## **Executive Leadership**

Honorable Michael L. Dominguez, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force  
(Manpower & Reserve Affairs)

LtGen Roger A. Brady, Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel

MGen John Speigel, Director of Personnel Policy

## **IPT Senior Steering Group:**

### **SAF/IG**

LtGen Steven Polk

### **AF/SG**

LtGen Peach Taylor

### **SAF/GC**

Mr. Kip Atlee

### **AF/JA**

MGen Thomas Fiscus

### **AF/HC**

MGen Charles Baldwin

### **SAF/PA**

BGen Frederick Roggero

### **AF/RE**

BGen William Rajczak

### **NGB/CF**

BGen David Brubaker

## **Air Force IPT Membership:**

### **SAF/MR: Manpower and Reserve Affairs**

Ms. Charlene Bradley, IPT Lead

### **AF/IG & AFOSI: Inspector General and Office of Special Investigations**

Lt Col Lee Shaffer

### **SAF/GC: General Counsel**

Mr. Phil Deavel

### **AF/HC: Chaplain**

Lt Col Bob Page—Chaplain

### **SAF/PA: Public Affairs**

Ms. Jennifer Stephens

### **AF/SG: Surgeon General**

Lt Col Jim Favret

### **AF/CCC: Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force**

SMSgt Chris Anthony

**AF/JA: Judge Advocate**

Mr. Jim Russell

**AF/DP: Personnel**

Ms. Barb Murray

**AF/CZ: AF Chief of Staff Issues Team**

Lt Col Leslie Roberson

**AF/XOF: Security Forces**

Maj Robert Garza

MSgt Kevin Tait

**ANG: Air National Guard**

Lt Col John Wakefield

**AF/RE: Air Force Reserve**

Maj John Unger

**Advisors to the IPT:**

**SAF/MR**

Ms. Linda-Stephens Jones

Ms. Carol Thompson

Ms. Diane Wakeham

Lt Col Kevin Driscoll

**AF/CZ**

Lt Col Dennis May

Lt Col Doug Murdock

**MAJCOM Team Leads & IPT Off-Site Participants**

**Air Combat Command:**

BGen Steve Miller

**U.S. Central Command Air Forces:**

Col Steven Brunin

**Air Education and Training Command:**

BGen (S) K.C. McClain

**Air Force Materiel Command:**

Col Cheryl Dozier

**Air Force Reserve Command:**

Col Robert Bailey

**United States Air Force Academy:**

Col Deb Gray

**11th Wing:**

Lt Col Parson

**IPT Support**

The Air Force would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions:

Dr. David Lisak—Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts, Boston; Forensic consultant specializing in the “Undetected Rapist.”

Ms. Anne Munch—Director of the Ending Violence Against Women Project; Colorado prosecutor.

Dr. Heather M. Schumacher-Karjane—Principal Investigator for Research on Procedures of Higher Education to Report Sexual Assault (National Institute of Justice study).

Ms. Deborah Tucker—Executive Director, National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence; Co-chair of the DoD Domestic Violence Task Force.

**SAIC Staff**

Mr. Von Hawley

Mr. Graham Hankey

Ms. Kathy Day

Ms. Heidi Henderson

Ms. Diana Smyth

Mr. Peter Beck

# Introduction

In February 2004, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force requested an assessment of sexual assault prevention and response capabilities, including those areas in need of improvement. The assessment was not intended to be a compliance inspection. Instead, the Air Force was directed to perform a qualitative assessment capable of generating findings to inform senior leadership of potential program improvements. The Air Force established five goals for the assessment:

- Strive to eliminate sexual assault and any environment that fosters it.
- Ensure an environment where victims have the confidence to report sexual assault.
- Conduct appropriate investigation and prosecution.
- Address victims' well-being and health as effectively as possible.
- Ensure commanders and senior leaders oversee program effectiveness.

Mr. Michael L. Dominguez, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) and Lt Gen Roger A. Brady, Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, supervised the assessment on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. The cornerstone of this effort was a series of self-assessments conducted by MAJCOM commanders focusing on each command's sexual assault prevention and response capabilities. This report contains the findings and recommendations resulting from these assessments.

## Background

For the Air Force, sexual assault prevention and response emerged as a critical issue in January 2003, when the Secretary of the Air Force received an email describing a significant sexual assault problem at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), which the writer alleged had been ignored by the Academy's leadership. Receipt of this email triggered an institutional response from the Air Force that continues today. In the course of a rigorous investigation into events at the Academy, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force promulgated and directed implementation of the *Agenda for Change* in March 2003. The *Agenda for Change* directed a series of policy and process changes to "restore trust and confidence" in the Academy's commitment to zero-tolerance of sexual assault.<sup>9</sup> By June, the Secretary of the Air Force had installed new leadership at the Air Force Academy to facilitate rapid improvement in the Academy culture.

Over the course of 2003, two studies focusing on the sexual assault crisis at the Air Force Academy were conducted. In the first, the General Counsel of the Air Force was tasked by the Secretary of the Air Force to establish a high-level working group to review cadet complaints and cases of sexual assault over the prior ten years to evaluate whether the Academy's policies, programs, and practices "to deter sexual or respond to sexual assault [have]...functioned appropriately and provide recommendations for change."<sup>10</sup> *The Report of the Working Group Concerning Deterrence of and Response to Incidents of Sexual Assault at the U.S. Air Force Academy* (Working Group Report) was delivered in June 2003.

---

<sup>9</sup> United States Air Force Academy: Agenda for Change, 26 March 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Secretary of the Air Force Guidance for the General Counsel and Working Group, Exhibit 3, The Report of the Working Group Concerning Deterrence of and Response to Incidents of Sexual Assault at the U.S. Air Force Academy, June 2003.

In the second study, former Representative Tillie Fowler led a panel chartered by the U.S. Congress<sup>11</sup> to review the actions of the USAFA and the Air Force in response to allegations of sexual misconduct at the Academy, review directives issued by the Air Force pertaining to sexual misconduct at the Academy, and review the effectiveness of the processes, procedures, and policies used by the USAFA to respond to sexual misconduct. The *Report of the Panel to Review Sexual Misconduct Allegations at the U.S. Air Force Academy* (Fowler Report) was released in September 2003. The Working Group Report and the Fowler Report focused on the environment at the Academy and identified areas for improvement to effectively deter and respond to sexual assault. Both reports informed the ongoing implementation of the *Agenda for Change* as the culture at the Academy was recast.

Subsequently, senior Air Force Leadership decided to look beyond the Academy to determine if the same sexual assault issues were emerging elsewhere in the Air Force.<sup>12</sup> General William J. Begert, Commander, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) volunteered to conduct an assessment within his own command and subsequently limited his review to alleged rapes. PACAF formed an assessment team to collect and analyze data reflecting trends in rape. As part of this effort, PACAF developed a profile of rape offenses, subjects, and victims in PACAF; evaluated the Command's ability to respond to sexual assault allegations; and assessed the PACAF VWAP.

General Begert's findings were sobering. Young airmen constituted the majority of victims and offenders in PACAF. A majority of victims and their offenders knew one another before the assault, which usually took place in a location where both parties were voluntarily present. Alcohol was a prominent factor in PACAF allegations, and most rapes did not involve sufficient physical force to cause visible injury. PACAF's ability to respond to rape was also assessed. Rapes were described as extremely difficult crimes to prosecute, made more so by delays in victim reporting. Commanders were holding alleged offenders accountable for any offense arising out of the rape allegation, even when the evidence did not support action on the rape allegation itself. PACAF also reviewed its VWAP capabilities. While basic VWAP functions were found to be in place, the onus was commonly on the victim to seek care. Current Air Force policies resulted in inadequate VWAP record keeping and self-assessment, and VWAP support frequently ended if the Air Force decided not to prosecute.<sup>13</sup>

Shortly after PACAF completed its assessment, the *Denver Post* reported a "wave" of sexual assaults had occurred at Sheppard Air Force Base, a major Air Force training facility. General Donald G. Cook, Commander of the Air Education and Training Command (AETC), initiated his own assessment at Sheppard. This review found that the base had an effective sexual assault response system in place, with required reporting systems and VWAP processes, and did not substantiate a "wave" of sexual assaults. However, the assessment did uncover deficiencies in sexual assault training for leadership and airmen, a general reluctance on the part of airmen to report sexual assaults unless they were violent, and little coordination between functional agencies tasked with responding to sexual assaults. General Cook's final report was released in March 2004.

Reacting to these events, senior Air Force leaders agreed on the necessity of a service-wide assessment to (1) review the Air Force's sexual assault prevention and response capabilities and (2) identify recommendations for improvements. This effort was launched in February 2004. MAJCOM commanders were asked to establish teams to visit their bases and installations and conduct self-assessments using a standard template focused on five major topic areas: education

---

<sup>11</sup> H.R. 1559, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2003) (subsequently enacted as part of the Emergency Wartime Appropriations Act of 2003, Pub. L. No. 118-11, 117 Stat. 559 (2003)).

<sup>12</sup> This decision was made at CORONA Fall conference in October 2003. The CORONA conferences are regular meetings of the Air Force's most senior generals

<sup>13</sup> Subsequently, PACAF established and implemented its Sexual Assault Study Action Plan and Supplemental Action Plan

and training (prevention), reporting, response programs, oversight, and recommendations. Additionally, a headquarters-level IPT under the supervision of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower & Reserve Affairs and the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, was established to oversee the assessment process. The IPT was composed of subject-matter experts representing functional areas that commonly deal with sexual assault prevention and response.<sup>14</sup> The headquarters IPT worked with the MAJCOMs to capture findings and generate recommendations. The assessment's findings and recommendations were briefed to Air Force senior leadership on 18 May 2004 at CORONA Top.<sup>15</sup> They are presented in greater detail in the following sections of this report.

---

<sup>14</sup> The IPT included representatives from the following offices: Security Forces, Inspector General (including Office of Special Investigation), Surgeon General, Personnel, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Judge Advocate General, General Counsel, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, and Chaplain. A full list of IPT members and contributors appears in the front of this report (IPT Composition and Acknowledgement)

<sup>15</sup> Key findings and recommendations from this effort were briefed to Air Force senior leaders at the CORONA Top conference in Alaska on 18 May 2004.

# Methodology

The objective of this assessment was to evaluate the Air Force’s sexual assault prevention and response capabilities and identify recommendations for improvements. In early February, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force asked Air Force MAJCOMs to undertake a self-assessment of their bases and installations. At the same time, a headquarters IPT was established to oversee this assessment by accomplishing the following tasks:

- Conducting a review of headquarters-level policies.
- Conducting corporate and university benchmarking.
- Contributing to the effort of the DoD sexual assault task force.
- Engaging sexual assault subject-matter experts external to the Air Force.
- Synthesizing MAJCOM self-assessments.
- Capturing findings and generating recommendations.

Development of a sound methodology was the first task of the headquarters IPT. With the majority of the data derived from independent MAJCOM efforts, the methodology required parallel processes with ample opportunity for integration. The headquarters IPT settled on a three-step process that focused on data collection, integration, and assessment, and generation of findings and recommendations. Figure 1 illustrates the study methodology:

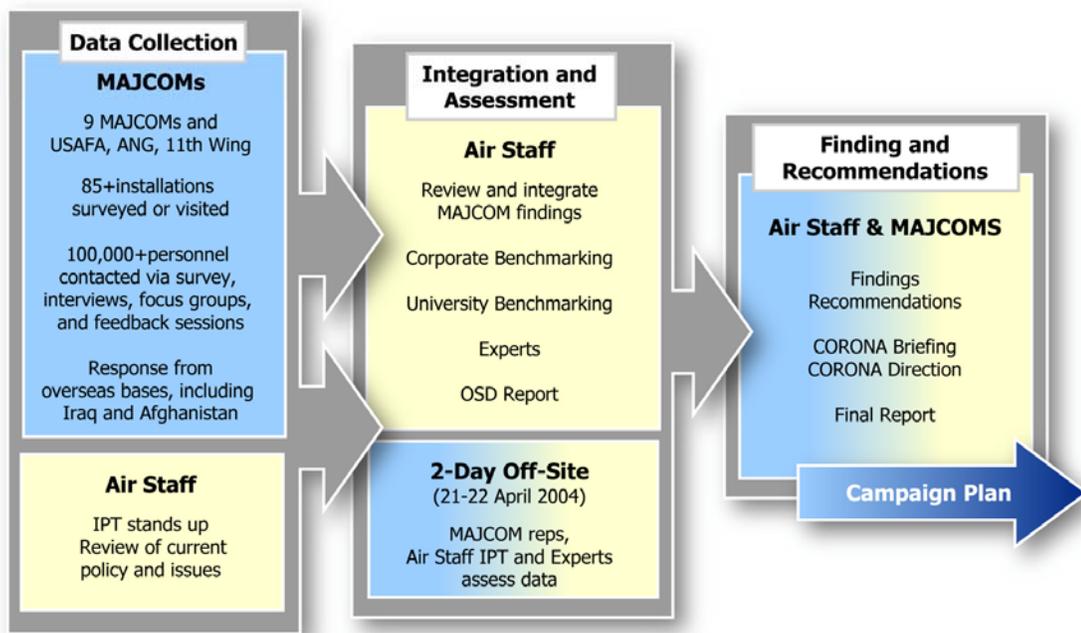


Figure 1. Study Methodology

## Step One: Data Collection

Step One focused on data collection. The headquarters IPT selected a standard definition for sexual assault to guide the assessment, and this definition was the foundation of all headquarters and MAJCOM activity. The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) does not have a specific

offense of “sexual assault.” As used by the Air Force, the term sexual assault consolidates a number of different UCMJ offenses and is defined as:

Any of several offenses of a sexual nature, committed without the lawful consent of the victim, that are punishable as crimes under the UCMJ. The term “sexual assault” includes rape and carnal knowledge (Article 120), forcible sodomy or sodomy with a child (Article 125), assault with intent to commit rape or sodomy, indecent assault, indecent acts or liberties with a child (Article 134), or an attempt to commit any of these offenses.

With an established definition, data collection began. The headquarters IPT and MAJCOMs moved on separate but parallel data collection tracks driven by tight timelines. The key elements of Step One included:

**Policy/Issue Review:** The headquarters IPT undertook a wide-reaching review of current Air Force and DoD policy related to the sexual assault issue. It emphasized a review of current Air Force Instructions and Air Force Policy Directives; events at the USAFA with particular emphasis on the *Agenda for Change*, Working Group Report, and Fowler Report; and the recent assessments conducted at PACAF and Sheppard AFB. The Policy/Issue review extended to external research on sexual assault literature to examine current thinking and research, civilian response protocols, and best practices.

**MAJCOM Self Assessments:** MAJCOM commanders established teams to visit their bases and installations and conducted self-assessments using a standard template focused in five major topic areas: education and training (prevention), reporting, response programs, oversight, and recommendations. Nine MAJCOMs, the USAFA, the Air National Guard, and the 11<sup>th</sup> Wing (the Direct Reporting Unit supporting the headquarters) visited more than 85 Air Force installations in the United States and overseas (including Iraq and Afghanistan) and attempted to contact more than 100,000 personnel via surveys, interviews, focus groups, and feedback sessions. MAJCOM teams assessed their data and provided their findings and recommendations to the headquarters IPT. The MAJCOM assessment template is included in the second section of this report (MAJCOM Sexual Assault Tasking).

## Step Two: Integration and Assessment

When initial data collection was completed, the integration and assessment phase began. The headquarters IPT engaged in a series of activities suggested by the initial data collection phase while the MAJCOMs continued to refine their data and prepare for a joint meeting in Washington, D.C.

**Review of MAJCOM Findings:** The headquarters IPT reviewed and integrated MAJCOM findings, recommendations, and noteworthy practices. Working from a common assessment template greatly facilitated this effort. The headquarters IPT sought to identify trends in the MAJCOM submissions as well as uncover unique events, practices, or findings. The review process was intended to simplify the joint assessment of the data by headquarters and MAJCOM personnel.

**Expert Interface:** The headquarters IPT contacted key experts identified during Step One’s Policy and Issue Review. These experts played two key roles over the course of this effort. They participated in the deliberations, educating participants and helping to inform the outcomes of the study. They also functioned as a mechanism for independent review of the findings and recommendations, providing important substantive feedback. Experts who played an integral role in the Air Force study included:

- Dr. David Lisak—Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts, Boston; Forensic consultant and expert in the “Undetected Rapist.”

- Ms. Anne Munch—Director of the Ending Violence Against Women Project; Colorado Prosecutor.
- Dr. Heather Schumacher Karjane—Education Development Center, Inc.; Principal investigator and co-author of the largest study of campus sexual assault policy.
- Ms. Deborah Tucker—Executive Director, National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Co-chair of the DoD Domestic Violence Task Force.

Biographies for these experts can be found in Appendix One.

**Corporate Benchmarking:** The headquarters IPT sought to develop comparative data by benchmarking in private sector environments similar to the Air Force. Thirty corporations were selected based on congruencies with the Air Force (large workforce, international presence and operations, multiple product/service divisions, etc.).<sup>16</sup> The majority of corporations were unwilling to discuss their specific sexual assault or harassment provisions. Those that did comment indicated that any sexual assault would be handled by law enforcement, and that most of their attention was focused on sexual harassment. A complete list of benchmarked companies can be found in Appendix Three.

**University Benchmarking:** The headquarters IPT worked with Dr. Heather Schumacher Karjane to benchmark college and university sexual assault practices that focused on education and training, reporting, response, and oversight practices. Dr. Schumacher Karjane is the principal investigator for the largest federally funded study of sexual assault response and prevention policy on the Nation's campuses.<sup>17</sup> Many characteristics common to universities/colleges were found to exist in the Air Force environment. Dr. Schumacher Karjane's report was funded by the Department of Justice (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs). The Department of Justice has provided grants that support much of the research surrounding sexual assault.

**Department of Defense Report:** The headquarters IPT interfaced with the DoD Sexual Assault Task Force. On February 2004, DoD commenced a 90-day effort to review all sexual assault policies and programs among the Services and DoD, with the objective of recommending necessary changes to increase prevention, promote reporting, enhance quality of support provided to victims, and improve accountability for offender actions. The headquarters IPT was responsible for meeting all DoD data requests and providing comments on draft products. The *Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report* was released by the Department of Defense on May 13, 2004.

**Two-Day Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site:** Headquarters IPT, MAJCOM representatives, and two subject-matter experts<sup>18</sup> attended the off-site, held in Washington, D.C. The off-site participants reviewed trends in the MAJCOM self-assessment data, discussed recommendations and noteworthy practices, and began laying the groundwork for development of findings and recommendations.

### Step Three: Findings and Recommendations

The distillation of the vast amount of collected data from numerous sources was the focus of Step Three. The process continued to feature a partnership between the headquarters IPT and the

---

<sup>16</sup> The 30 "congruent" corporations were selected from a larger list of companies assembled based on their appearance in *Fortune* and *Business Week* as companies with highly admirable business practices.

<sup>17</sup> Karjane H.K., Fisher, B.S., & Cullen, F.T. (2002). *Campus Sexual Assault: How America's Institutions of Higher Education Respond*. Final Report, NIJ Grant # 1999-WA-VX-0008. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

<sup>18</sup> Dr. David Lisak and Dr. Heather Schumacher Karjane attended the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site.

MAJCOMs—draft products were provided to headquarters IPT representatives and MAJCOM representatives for review and comment.

**Development of Findings and Recommendations:** The headquarters IPT, working with MAJCOM representatives, developed a series of findings and recommendations that were reviewed by the senior leadership of each headquarters IPT functional member. This multi-step process generated a set of findings and recommendations that represented a consensus view of the Air Force’s sexual assault prevention and response capabilities, areas in which these capabilities need to be improved, and recommendations for doing so in the form of a “campaign plan.”

**Development of CORONA Briefing:** The headquarters IPT prepared a final briefing to carry the results of the study and the campaign plan to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force on May 13, 2004 and to the Air Force’s senior leaders at CORONA Top on May 18, 2004.

**Drafting of Written Report:** The report presents a detailed treatment of all findings and recommendations presented to the Secretary of the Air Force by Mr. Michael L. Dominguez, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower & Reserve Affairs).

# Findings

This section is divided into six topic areas reflecting the major thrusts of the Air Force's sexual assault prevention and response assessment. Each topic area has a set of associated findings. The findings reflect the synthesis of MAJCOM self-assessments and Air Staff policy and procedure reviews, the input of subject-matter experts, and the results of corporate and university benchmarking. The six topic areas are listed below in order of treatment:

- Sexual Assault Realities
- Policy and Leadership
- Education and Training
- Reporting
- Response
- AEF/Deployment

*Sexual Assault Realities* examines the general environment surrounding sexual assault and draws heavily on the insight gained from subject-matter experts. *Policy and Leadership* focuses on overarching Air Force policy to combat sexual assault and explores the role of the commander in executing that policy. *Education and Training* reviews Air Force educational programs intended to prevent sexual assault and provide procedural instruction to victim care and investigative agencies charged with responding to sexual assault. *Reporting* examines the issues surrounding a victim's decision to report a sexual assault and details real or perceived barriers that influence that decision. *Response* focuses on victim care and investigation/adjudication in the wake of a sexual assault. *AEF/Deployment* considers the unique impact deployments have on preventing and responding to sexual assault.

While each finding is described in a particular topic area for organizational purposes, most findings were derived from data collection and assessment activities occurring in multiple topic areas.

## Sexual Assault Realities

Before assessing its own sexual assault and prevention capabilities, the Air Force sought to gain a better understanding of the realities surrounding the sexual assault issue. In this endeavor, the Air Force relied on external subject-matter experts, a review of current literature on the topic, and Air Force statistics.

### **Finding One: Understanding the realities surrounding victims and offenders is critical to developing a successful institutional response to sexual assault.**

Data collected by MAJCOM assessments and input offered by subject-matter experts identified a set of sexual assault realities applying to victims and offenders. These realities debunked a number of myths about sexual assault, and they are vital to understanding the issues surrounding sexual assault prevention and response.

#### **Victim Realities**

Sexual assault is a pervasive crime in the United States. Recent studies focused on colleges and the national population indicate that as many as one in four women have been victimized by

sexual assault or attempted sexual assault.<sup>19</sup> Victimization on this scale constitutes a significant public health and criminal justice issue. However, studies also reveal that many victims are uncertain about what constitutes sexual assault. Victims often do not “label” the act committed against them as sexual assault. This mislabeling, together with the shame and stigma that victims typically experience following an assault, means that most victims do not report the incident as a crime. The need to improve education and training in this area is critically important.

Indeed, low reporting rates are the norm for sexual assault, in particular for the reporting of rape. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has described sexual assault as “the most underreported violent crime in the nation.” The most methodologically sound study of college-aged women found sexual assault reporting rates for victims of rape or attempted rape as low as 5 percent.<sup>20</sup> Low reporting rates are perhaps the most important issue surrounding sexual assault. If a sexual assault is not reported, the chances that victims are getting necessary medical care and counseling are very low. Low reporting rates also indicate that many offenders remain at large to victimize again. Finally, low reporting rates create a false sense of institutional security, making it more difficult to quantify the prevalence of sexual assault. It is tempting for large organizations with a handful of sexual assaults to discount the severity of the problem and the need for a decisive response.

Many victims of sexual assault require care and counseling to recover. While rape is only one form of sexual assault, rape trauma is now recognized for the deleterious effects it has not only on victims but also on their families, their co-workers, and others involved in their lives. Victims of rape are left shattered, experiencing feelings of intense fear and anger, helplessness, and a profound sense that they have lost control of their lives. When a non-stranger commits an assault (the most common form of sexual assault), the victim also experiences a profound sense of betrayal and loss of trust. Rape trauma has physiological, psychological, and social consequences on the victim, characterized by disempowerment and a disconnection from others. This results in involuntary psychological movement between the expectation of danger (hyper-vigilance, flashbacks, sleep disturbances, and anxiety) and emotional numbing (indifference to pain, lack of empathy, difficulty with intimacy and tenderness).<sup>21</sup> Trauma affects interpersonal attachments and the ways people relate to and perceive the victim, as well as ways the victim relates to and perceives others. Feelings of shame, stigma, and isolation are common. In most cases, victims suffering from this level of trauma need ongoing care and support to make a full recovery.

### **Offender Realities**

One of the great myths surrounding sexual assault is that strangers with no relationship to the victim commit most assaults. Research shows conclusively that the opposite is true.<sup>22</sup> In the

---

<sup>19</sup> Fisher, B., Cullen, F., and Turner, M. (2000). *The sexual victimization of college women: Findings from two national-level studies*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics. See also Brener, N.D., McMahon, P.M., Warren, C.W., & Douglas, K.A. (1999). *Forced Sexual Intercourse and Associated Health-Risk Behaviors Among Female College Students in the United States*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 67, 252-259. This is a CDC sponsored study of 2,823 college women. 20% were victims of rape; Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women (NCJ 183781)*. National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Washington, DC. This is a DOJ/CDC sponsored study of 7,856 women from across the U.S. 15% were victims of rape; Koss, M.P., Gidycz, & Wisniewski, N. (1987). *The scope of rape: Incidence and prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization in a national sample of higher education students*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 55, 162-170. This is a National Institute of Mental Health study of more than 6,000 college women. 15.4% of women were victims of rape since the age of 14.

<sup>20</sup> Fisher, B., Cullen, F., and Turner, M. (2000). *The sexual victimization of college women: Findings from two national-level studies*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics. This national study of more than 4000 college women showed that under 5% of victims of rape or attempted rape reported to incident to police.

<sup>21</sup> Schumacher Karjane, H., *Addressing Campus Sexual Assault: Basic and Promising Practice Findings from a National Investigation*, briefed to the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site, 21 April 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Rennison, C.M. and Rand, M.R. (2003), *Criminal Victimization, 2002: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice*; Tjaden, P. and Thoennes N. (2002), *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequence of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence*

majority of sexual assault cases, there is some level of familiarity between the victim and the offender. Air Force statistics reflect this societal norm. A recent Air Force review of internal statistics determined that victims and offenders were familiar with one another (friend, acquaintance, colleague, ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.) in 85% of all sexual assault cases reviewed.<sup>23</sup> Statistics for college-aged women reveal similar trends. The two landmark studies examining sexual assault on college campuses indicated that between 80% and 90% of victims knew their attacker.<sup>24</sup> In one study, the set of non-stranger offenders in this study broke down as follows: 36% were identified as classmates; 34% were identified as friends; 24% were identified as former boyfriends; and 3% were identified as acquaintances. The reality of the non-stranger offender is forcing the Air Force to reconsider traditional views of victims and offenders.

The Air Force relied heavily on the work of Dr. David Lisak to gain a further understanding of sexual assault in general and rape in particular. Dr. Lisak's primary research focuses on the motives and characteristics of the "undetected rapist". During his presentation at the Air Force off-site, Dr Lisak noted that, based on the past five decades of research on rapists, it is estimated that only 5% of rapists are ever incarcerated. That 5% normally represent the stranger rapist, whose profile includes the fact that he is a stranger to the victim and usually commits a single act in a blitz attack with brutal injuries. This is the rapist who for years was the subject of research on rape. However, the vast majority (estimated 95%) of rapists are never incarcerated and go undetected. The fact that they are undetected can partially be attributed to false stereotypes about rapists. The stranger rapist, who wears a ski mask, attacks with a weapon and causes brutal injuries, is the stereotype most associated with rapists, when, in fact, non-stranger rape is far more prevalent and often goes undetected because of false stereotypes regarding the "nice guy" rapist. The non-stranger rapist is often overlooked because of society's inclination to accept his behavior as "normal" – e.g., he drank too much, there was a miscommunication, it wasn't premeditated, and it won't happen again. Dr. Lisak's research indicates that of this larger population of undetected rapists, the typical rapist does not use a weapon, uses instrumental rather than gratuitous violence, has access to consensual sex, is not mentally ill, and comes from all racial and ethnic groups. He plans and premeditates his attacks, uses multiple strategies to make the victim vulnerable, uses alcohol and/or other substances deliberately, and increases violence as needed.

Dr. Lisak's research indicates that in any community, the majority of sexual assaults are committed by a relatively small, core group of serial rapists who very frequently commit other interpersonal crimes (e.g. battery and child abuse). According to Dr. Lisak, a majority of rapists (58%) are "crossover" offenders, meaning that in addition to rape they have also committed a second form of violence. The following statistics from Dr. Lisak's study illustrates the serious impact of the serial offender. Out of his study of 1,882 men, 1,762 were non-rapists and 44 men were single act rapists who committed or attempted 44 rapes. The remaining 76 men were serial rapists who committed 49 sexual assaults, 439 rapes and attempted rapes, 66 acts of physical abuse of children, 277 acts of sexual abuse of children and 214 acts of battery for a total of 1,045 offenses. Focusing on this core group, Dr. Lisak's research shows that these rapists were well entrenched in their environments. They are often successful in their careers or other pursuits.

---

Against Women Survey. Report for Grant 93-IJ-CX-0012, funded by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Washington DC.

<sup>23</sup> The statistics referred to were gathered at the request of DoD as data inputs for its own sexual assault review.

<sup>24</sup> Fisher, B., Cullen, F., and Turner, M. (2000). *The Sexual Victimization of College Women: Findings from Two National-level Studies*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics. This national DOJ-sponsored study of more than 4000 college women showed that under 5% of victims of rape or attempted rape reported incident to police. Koss, M.P., Gidycz, & Wisniewski, N. (1987). *The Scope of Rape: Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization in a National Sample of Higher Education Students*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 55. This is a National Institute of Mental Health study of more than 6,000 college women.

Most important, they are able to rely on “third-party actors” to perpetuate an environment conducive to their behavior.

Dr. Lisak identifies two categories of third-party actors. “Facilitators” are those who consciously perpetuate an environment that allows non-stranger rapists to function. Facilitators offer encouragement and fail to act when they know an assault may be imminent, thereby reinforcing the behavior of non-stranger rapists. Facilitators may engage in sexual assault themselves because of the confluence of the “right” circumstances, but do not become entrenched in that behavior. “Bystanders” are the second category of third-party actors. They are further removed from the non-stranger rapist and his crime, but they have knowledge of the event and fail to act to stop it.<sup>25</sup> Dr. Lisak believes that core sex offenders are beyond the reach of education and rehabilitation. The solution is to identify them and isolate them from the community. However, the enabling behavior of facilitators and bystanders can be altered by education and training. In a resource-constrained environment, maximum investment should be directed at facilitators and bystanders.<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, these enablers can be turned into agents of prevention through a successful education and training program. The information and insight provided by Dr. Lisak’s study has profound implications for preventing sexual assaults, educating the Air Force community, investigating and adjudicating crimes, and understanding and caring for the victim.

**Finding Two: In the context of sexual assault, the college campus is the environment most analogous to the Air Force.**

To gain further insight into its own sexual assault issue, the Air Force sought to identify other models that could offer lessons for sexual assault prevention and response. The lack of solid victim-focused sexual assault data in the Air Force emerged as a significant hurdle to developing a full understanding of the scope of this crime.<sup>27</sup> Assessing similar environments, with more rigorous and focused sexual assault data, was a valuable component of the Air Force study. The college campus was judged to be the most promising environment because of its similarities to the Air Force. Colleges and universities have also been the subject of the most wide-ranging and methodologically sound research on the topic. Researchers have focused on this environment for the past 30 years, and the most important sexual assault trends have been identified and validated repeatedly by subsequent data collection and assessment efforts. Additionally, as colleges and universities grappled with legal liability stemming from sexual assaults, they engaged in a series of institutional responses that provide important lessons for the Air Force. In this effort, the Air Force benefited greatly from the work of Dr. Heather Schumacher Karjane, the principal investigator for the largest federally funded study of sexual assault response and prevention policy on the nation’s campuses.<sup>28</sup>

In examining the college and university environment, it quickly became clear that this model was the most similar to the Air Force as it pertained to the age groups most affected by sexual assault. In particular, Air Force analysts focused on the following congruencies:

- Like most Air Force bases, college campuses host large populations of young adults living and working together in close proximity.
- College students and airmen are away from a structured home environment, often for the first time.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, slide 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, slide 19.

<sup>27</sup> Data on sexual assault in the military does exist, but much of it is focused on military veterans. See the Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, pp. 57-58. While veterans’ information offers insights, the Air Force assessment emphasized the 18 to 27 year age range, where the vast majority of sexual assault victims and offenders are found.

<sup>28</sup> Karjane H.K., Fisher, B.S., & Cullen, F.T. (2002). *Campus Sexual Assault: How America’s Institutions of Higher Education Respond*. Final Report, NIJ Grant # 1999-WA-VX-0008. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

- College administrators and Air Force commanders have responsibility and accountability for students and airmen outside of the normal work environment (though the level of responsibility and accountability is much greater in a military environment).
- Victims and offenders in both environments belong to similar age ranges, acknowledge the involvement of alcohol in more than half of all sexual assaults, and report familiarity between victim and offender in a majority of incidents.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, colleges and universities are struggling with issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy; prevention education and training; policies that mandate adjudication once a report is made; and other issues the Air Force will need to address. As the Air Force seeks to understand its own sexual assault issue, the college campus emerges as a valuable comparative tool.

## Policy and Leadership

The policy and leadership topic area explores the existence of policy direction and standardized procedural guidance for sexual assault prevention and response. The topic area also examines the role of commanders as they orchestrate the official Air Force response to sexual assault, including the effectiveness of the tools and databases at their disposal. The policy and leadership topic area reviews resource allocation realities attendant to any meaningful solution to the sexual assault issue. Finally, a set of “environmental” issues ranging from alcohol policies to dormitory procedures is explored in regards to their capacity to impact the sexual assault issue.

### **Finding Three: There is no cogent Air Force-wide sexual assault policy.**

Nearly all MAJCOMs report there is no clearly defined, comprehensive Air Force sexual assault policy at the headquarters or MAJCOM level.<sup>30</sup> A similar lack of overarching policy was noted at the DoD level:

“Although there are well-defined policies and programs for the prevention of sexual harassment, there is no clearly-defined DoD policy aimed at preventing sexual assault.”<sup>31</sup>

The lack of an overarching policy for sexual assault prevention and response at the headquarters level is significant. Air Force rules and regulations relevant to sexual assault are spread across multiple Air Force Policy Directives (AFPD) and Air Force Instructions (AFI)<sup>32</sup>, sometimes

---

<sup>29</sup> The common characteristics shared by sexual assault victims and offenders in the college and Air Force environments are notable. The average Air Force sexual assault victim is 22 years old and the average offender is 24 years old (the statistical modes were 19 for victims and 21 for offenders). The average age range of collegiate students is 18 to 24 years of age. 54% of Air Force victims and 69% of offenders had consumed alcohol during the time frame of the incident. The involvement of alcohol is well documented in college sexual assault. Familiarity between Air Force victims and offenders (friend, colleague, acquaintance, etc.) was acknowledged in 85% of all reported sexual assault cases. Familiarity exists in between 80% and 90% of all college sexual assault cases.

<sup>30</sup> Reference to no existing Air Force policies in place to specifically address sexual assault programs were mentioned in the following MAJCOM reports: Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. 4; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AFSOC, 9 April 2004, p. 4.; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 5.; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, USAFE, 28 March 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Response Assessment, AFRC, 31 March 2004, p. 3.; Sexual Assault Review, ANG, 6 April 2004, p. 1; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, CENTAF, Undated, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, p. 23.

<sup>32</sup> The following is a list of Air Force policy directives, instructions and pamphlets relevant to sexual assault prevention and response: AFPD 36-27—Social Actions, 3 September 1993; AFPD 36-29—Military Standards, 1 June 1996; AFPD 51-2—Military Justice, 7 September 1993; AFI 10-403—Deployment Planning and Execution, paragraph 1.6.2.2—outlines minimum training requirements for all identified to deploy; AFI 36-704—Discipline and Adverse Action (Civ Personnel), 22 July 1994; AFI 36-2104—Nuclear Weapons Personnel Reliability Program, 29 May 2003—describes conviction or involvement in a serious incident as possible grounds for decertification. Serious incidents include, but are not limited to, any criminal or petty offense, assault, sexual misconduct, and child or spouse abuse; AFI 36-2110, Assignments, 9 June 2003—contains Threaten Person

leading to confusion and uncertainty when guidance is sought on particular issues. Existing Air Force sexual assault programs are often ad hoc. Sexual assault prevention and education efforts may exist in isolation from one another. Procedures for end-to-end oversight of sexual assault cases have not been standardized across the Air Force until recently. Victim care and criminal investigation/prosecution are overseen by multiple agencies that sometimes operate independently without coordinating oversight. MAJCOM respondents agreed that a formal sexual assault policy backed by standardized procedures and overseen by a single responsible agency could greatly improve current prevention and response efforts. The Air Force Space Command (AFSPC) assessment recommended:

“The Air Force [should] develop standard training resources for all personnel, and direct training should be done at various levels from accessions programs to senior professional military development education courses. A single office of primary responsibility for sexual assault needs to be identified.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, the lack of an overarching sexual assault policy is related to the fact that no single headquarters office has been responsible for the development, promulgation, and maintenance of such a policy. Until recently, there was no single OPR at the headquarters level for developing sexual assault policy.<sup>34</sup> Such an office would optimally be charged with formalizing sexual assault response processes and procedures; standardizing education and training objectives; identifying metrics; and making program improvements.

This need exists at the MAJCOM and base level as well. While the headquarters develops policy and oversees implementation, MAJCOMs and bases are charged with the actual implementation of that policy. Centralized sexual assault policy and planning oversight is absent at the MAJCOM level and, with several notable exceptions, at the base level. Most MAJCOMs and bases use a number of functional agents for conducting investigations, supporting victims, and pursuing the appropriate legal actions. However, there is no single staff office responsible for overseeing cross-functional activities; coordinating the integration of information, data, and resources; and assisting commands to ensure unity of effort. Several exceptions to this trend have emerged. Recently introduced programs at the United States Air Force Academy and Nellis Air Force Base exemplify localized efforts to implement standardized sexual assault prevention and response policies.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, as a result of its fall 2003 internal assessment, PACAF established and implemented its own action plan.

---

Assignment Procedures; AFI 36-2706—Military Equal Opportunity and Treatment Program, 1 December 1996; AFI 36-2707—Nondiscrimination in Programs and Activities Associated or Conducted By the Dept of the AF, 1 May 1998; AFI 36-2909—Professional and Unprofessional Relationships, 1 May 99; AF PAM 36-2704—Military Equal Opportunity Unit Climate Assessment Program, 1 February 1998, paragraph 3.5.6.1.1—requires Security Forces to track and report on crimes and incidents involving assault, sexual assault, vandalism, destruction of government property and AWOL; AF PAM 36-2705—Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, 1 February 1995; AFI 40-301—Family Advocacy (para 1.14.5), 1 May 2002—Gives Installation AFOSI Detachment Commanders responsibility to investigate aggravated assault, sexual assault and all incidents of child sexual abuse; AFI 44-102 Community Health Mgt, 17 November 1999, paragraph 2.36 (“Reporting Serious Incidents”)—Requires reporting incidents of suspected child abuse, spousal abuse, homicide, suicide and attempted suicide, aggravated assault, rape, other sex offenses, intentional prescription overdose and narcotic overdose to AFOSI and other authorities; AF 1 44-109, Mental Health, Confidentiality, and Military Law, 1 March 2000—Air Force policy to encourage Air Force personnel to seek needed help from Air Force social support agencies, including mental health clinics. These rules balance the commander’s need to know the mental well being of members of his/her command with the mental health patient’s need for confidentiality and privacy; AFI 44-154—Suicide and Violence Prevention Education and Training, 2 January 2003—Provides lesson content outlines for both suicide and violence awareness; AFI 51-201—Administration of Military Justice, 26 November 2003, Chp 7, “Victim and Witness Assistance Program”—Describes the Victim and Witness Assistance Program and processes for establishing victim liaisons, etc.; AFI 51-202—Non-judicial Punishment, 7 November 2003; AFI 71-101, vol 1, para 1.3 & atch 2, Table A2.1, rule 25 - Criminal Investigations, 1 December 1999—Cites rules for investigation of sexual misconduct.

<sup>33</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> The Assistant Secretary for Manpower & Reserve Affairs was given responsibility for developing sexual assault policy and overseeing its implementation.

<sup>35</sup> The USAFA has instituted the Academy Response Team (ART) focused on sexual assault and Nellis Air Force Base has instituted a Sexual Assault Prevention Project (SAPP) to combat sexual assault. These programs are discussed in greater detail in the Noteworthy Practices Appendix.

The absence of formal policy has resulted in two other issues that face the Air Force as it responds to sexual assault. First, there is no compelling Air Force-wide anti-sexual assault message. The Air Force lacks a comprehensive, high-level message to unify its personnel and institutionalize sexual assault prevention and response. Focus group members and survey respondents urged the Air Force to recognize sexual assault as a cultural issue in need of a compelling and sustained message:

“At the Air Force level, we need to start with a very large communication plan to educate all airmen (officers and enlisted) on this issue. It should be focused on zero tolerance and desire for the Air Force to eliminate the problem. This should be one of those campaigns that are multi-faceted and geared toward strengthening the resolve of ‘facilitators’ and ‘bystanders’ to step up when needed.”<sup>36</sup>

The Air Force needs to aggressively address its cultural environment to ensure that dignity and respect for each individual prevails.<sup>37</sup> The Air Force’s task is to reinforce those acceptable values, instill an institutional culture, and eliminate inappropriate behaviors that impede mission success.

The second issue stemming from the lack of a formal sexual assault policy is the need to develop common definitions for key sexual assault terms and concepts in conjunction with DoD. Tremendous confusion exists over the exact meaning of many terms used to describe aspects of sexual assault prevention and response.<sup>38</sup> In completing their own assessments, headquarters and MAJCOM personnel often encountered confusion in others (or experienced it themselves) as they sought to distinguish sexual harassment from sexual assault, victim advocate from victim liaison, and confidentiality from privacy (as well as the relationship of anonymity to both). The distinction between privacy and confidentiality was the subject of much confusion from respondents in all areas:

“The problem with confidentiality and privacy is that the words are not universally defined. Some talk about confidentiality when they are really talking about privacy.”<sup>39</sup>

Simple definitions that can be used by personnel without legal training are required. The Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC)/CV noted:

“There is a general lack of understanding as to where the line is drawn between sexual harassment and sexual assault—we need plain English definitions that our folks understand.”<sup>40</sup>

In many cases, defining these terms and concepts will not be easy, and the ultimate definitions may defy plain English. Nonetheless, the Air Force must start working on this issue, engaging with DoD and other services as necessary. Inconsistent terms and definitions, when coupled with the lack of overarching policy, present difficult (and perhaps unnecessary) challenges for organizations trying to develop and implement effective sexual assault prevention and response programs for their personnel.

---

<sup>36</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Education and Training Topic Area, 21 April 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Reporting Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>38</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; all sessions, 21-22 April 2004; Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, pp. 20-21; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, pp. 1,10-11.

<sup>39</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Reporting Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, cover memo, paragraph 2.

**Finding Four: Major commands are concerned about being tasked to solve the sexual assault issue as part of an unfunded mandate from the headquarters.**

Although not specifically addressed as a MAJCOM assessment topic, several commands voiced concerns over the possibility of having to provide “out of hide” resources to fully implement an Air Force sexual assault program. Command representatives identified time, manpower, and funding as key constraints impacting their ability to implement a sustained sexual assault prevention and response program.<sup>41</sup> As such, Air Force leadership at all levels must recognize the importance of prioritizing the sexual assault issue in their resource allocation decision-making.

With every new initiative, additional resources are required for program development and administration. Even if a sexual assault program is integrated with existing programs (e.g., domestic violence, sexual harassment), initial resources for program development will still be required. This need will be most notable in the area of education and training. Regarding new training materials, one MAJCOM respondent cautioned:

“Resources. We must ensure that whatever is mandated is resourced. Everyone will want to add this to our current curriculum that is already full. If we mandate to add, then we must be willing to pay for the extra time or take something out that is currently being trained.”<sup>42</sup>

The interim Victim Support Liaison model is an example of a new program with an associated resource tail that must be considered if the program is to be successful and sustainable.<sup>43</sup> Until this program can be evaluated, it will be difficult to determine what resources it requires (full-time or part-time manpower, etc.). If adequate resources are not provided to support this program, its impact will be uncertain.

The resource strategies employed to man VWAP liaison slots are instructive of the challenges faced by MAJCOMs. While the majority of MAJCOMs indicated that full-time VWAP liaisons and coordinators would improve the utility of the program, only a few have been able to commit the resources and manpower to do so. VWAP coordinator and liaison positions are primarily being staffed with existing personnel in a collateral capacity.<sup>44</sup> This uneven allocation of resources and manning translates into an uneven impact across the Air Force for VWAP. On some installations, the program works well. On others, it has much less success. VWAP will be discussed further in Finding Seventeen.

Although the VWAP is a single example, it illustrates the resource prioritization challenge. Resource needs and leadership priorities that drive resource decision-making must be addressed in a systematic fashion to ensure that proactive policies are translated into effective programs.

---

<sup>41</sup> Resource constraints and restrictions were mentioned directly in the following assessment reports and discussions: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site, Afternoon Session, Education and Training Topic Area, 21 April 2004; Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site, Afternoon Session, Program Oversight Topic Area, 22 April 2004; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 12; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 10; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 5; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, CENTAF, Undated, p. 38; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, USAFE, 28 March 2004, p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Program Oversight Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>43</sup> The Victim Support Liaison model was implemented as an interim measure by AF/CC on 1 April 2004.

<sup>44</sup> References to VWAP liaison being utilized in a collateral duty capacity were mentioned in the following reports: Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 5.; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 6.; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AFSOC, 9 April 2004, p. 13.; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 14.; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 4; Sexual Assault Response Assessment, AFRC, 31 March 2004, p. 5; Sexual Assault Review, ANG, 6 April 2004, p. 2; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, CENTAF, Undated, pp. 22-24.

**Finding Five: Commanders are unaware of the prevalence of the sexual assault problem.**

MAJCOM assessments indicate that when a sexual assault is reported, commanders are often responding appropriately to ensure that victims receive immediate care and access to long-term care and support assets. However, a general impression is that many commanders are unaware of the prevalence of sexual assault and its potential impact on the Air Force mission. Commanders were perceived by some respondents as not being as involved as they should be and failing to support sexual assault response and prevention with resources, active outreach, and public backing at visible events.

Some individual respondents in MAJCOM reviews believed that if they reported an incidence of sexual assault, their senior leaders would take action; however, they remained unconvinced that a report would ever make it to the senior leadership level:

“While commanders and first sergeants believed people in their units would report sexual assault, that was not the view of focus group participants. Depending on the incident, and the relations of the parties involved, many women would not report a sexual assault. Reasons included personal embarrassment, loss of privacy, fear of punishment for other infractions, and fear of being ostracized by peers in the unit or dorm. Women who would report believed their senior leadership would take action, but were doubtful a report would make it through the chain of command to the top.”<sup>45</sup>

Some of these individual respondents cited several reasons why they believed a commander might not push a sexual assault report up the chain of command: the commander’s fear of negative exposure; thinking the report could be dealt with at lower levels; or not believing the allegation.<sup>46</sup> Still others indicated a lack of trust in leadership doing enough to punish the accused, especially if the accused had a stellar record.<sup>47</sup> Commanders want to believe that they have created an environment in which people are comfortable reporting sexual assault incidents. The reality is that a significant percentage of people say that they would not report a sexual assault incident if it occurred.

Commanders tend to deal with sexual assault on a case-by-case basis rather than treating the crime as a cultural issue requiring a long-term preventive approach. As compared to other criminal activities, the incidence of reported sexual assault is statistically insignificant. However, low reporting rates create a false sense of security. This has a significant impact across the scope of sexual assault prevention and response:

“I bet many commanders don’t know or fully appreciate the statistics that tell us many more sexual assaults are happening than are reported. A base with only two reported sexual assaults in two years may be a tough sell to expend resources towards the problem—commanders need to be educated at the strategic level.”<sup>48</sup>

Many commanders admitted they were not as knowledgeable as they could be on the subject of sexual assault and the long-term impact these incidents have on victims. It was also reported that commanders lack sufficient training, tools, and resources to proactively engage in sexual assault

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, Undated, p. 36; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 4; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, PACAF, Undated, p. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Education and Training Topic Area, 21 April 2004.

prevention and response. Training and education is perceived as a significant weakness. MAJCOM assessments agree that it is essential to educate leadership on this topic:

“First and foremost: we must educate wing CCs, group CCs, squadron CCs, and first sergeants. They set the tone for the wings. Leadership is absolutely key toward establishing the climate.”<sup>49</sup>

Commanders indicated they did not have the tools to adequately educate squadron members on preventing, deterring, and responding to a sexual assault. Pre-command training and leadership courses focus on sexual harassment and equal opportunity issues. There is little discussion of sexual assault in these programs. Unlike their civilian counterparts, commanders have unique responsibility and accountability for the care and discipline of their people. Therefore, they must be adequately trained and prepared to assist a victim or prosecute an offender.

Currently, there is no way for senior leaders above the base level to efficiently track sexual assaults across their command. Databases housed within Security Forces, OSI, JA, and SG are not integrated to allow tracking of cases from start to finish. As such, they are incapable of efficiently providing pertinent information to senior leaders to assist in program oversight and trend analysis. MAJCOM assessments cited this as a major issue for commanders:

“Leaders need to have one integrated database to draw information on sexual assault from so they can understand the nature and scope of the problem at their base.”<sup>50</sup>

The DoD Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report indicates that problems with databases are common across all services:

“The Department cannot identify or explain trends with respect to how cases are handled using current data collection methods. Service investigative and military justice databases vary widely among and within each military department and often do not capture significant information to analyze why so many initial reports of sexual assault do not result in criminal convictions.”<sup>51</sup>

While each functional agent addresses its own area of the case, the lack of integration and cross-flow of communication ensures that data does not flow to the command level on a consistent basis. Trend data and metrics are not always visible at the command level and are not consistently examined in any cross-functional forum. If commanders and key leadership are to be held responsible for eliminating sexual assault, an integrated database must be engineered to allow access to required data at any given time.

**Finding Six: Other Air Force “environmental” issues impact on sexual assault and should be examined.**

In the course of the MAJCOM assessments, focus group participants and survey respondents highlighted general Air Force environmental issues that impact on sexual assault. These include alcohol policies and dormitory policies. Respondents believed that these issues should be examined within the context of improved sexual assault prevention and response programs developed by the Air Force.

---

<sup>49</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Education and Training Topic Area, 21 April 2004.

<sup>50</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Program Oversight Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>51</sup> Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, p. 19.

MAJCOM assessments noted that alcohol use was a common factor in reported sexual assault cases. In a recent review of Air Force sexual assaults, where data existed on involvement of alcohol, it was found that 69% of the offenders and 54% of the victims consumed alcohol prior to the assault.<sup>52</sup> In a separate study conducted by PACAF in March of 2004, alcohol involvement was also cited as a major factor in the majority of rape allegations. As a result of these studies, some commands have moved to tighten dormitory alcohol consumption policies to prohibit consumption of alcohol in dorm hallways and common areas. In some cases, bases adopted “dry dorm” policies that prohibit alcohol storage or consumption in dormitories for all residents.

As part of this assessment, MAJCOMs recommended addressing alcohol use through a research-based responsible drinking culture program or developing a consistent approach to address all high-risk behaviors, such as driving with excessive speed, seat belt usage, and underage drinking.<sup>53</sup> Citing concerns related to unintended consequences (such as forcing drinking off-base into more risky environs), MAJCOMs urged reliance on long-term, institutional culture changes, and the avoidance of “knee jerk” type solutions.<sup>54</sup>

Although dormitories were not a specific focus area, several MAJCOMs indicated dormitory policy was critical to their overall assessment.<sup>55</sup> A large percentage of airmen in grades E-1 through E-3 reside in on-base dormitories and are assigned to semi-private rooms. These airmen generally fall within the 18- to 25-year-old age group, those most at risk for excessive drinking and sexual assault. The Air Force is currently in the midst of the “Dorms-4-Airman”<sup>56</sup> construction project, envisioned to replace existing “1+1” dorms. The intent of the new configuration is to provide a more sociable, peer group environment for dorm residents.

Air Mobility Command (AMC) collected data on airmen’s views about the new dorm configurations.<sup>57</sup> Some male respondents believed that this dorm layout would provide a better opportunity to drink and socialize. Female occupants believed they would feel less secure and would sacrifice privacy and cleanliness. In light of these concerns, some MAJCOMs advocated that commanders and first sergeants give further attention to the “Dorms-4-Airman” configuration.

## **Education and Training**

The education and training topic area examines current sexual assault prevention and response training. The topic area explores training and education programs available to airmen, supervisors, and commanders and focuses on the home station environment, the training environment, and the AEF/Deployed environment. Findings in this topic area examine the impact of the hazy boundary between sexual harassment and sexual assault, the lack of a comprehensive anti-sexual assault message in the Air Force, and the utility of current education and training strategies to meet the needs of a sexual assault prevention and response program.

---

<sup>52</sup> The data covered sexual assaults reported in the 2002-2003 timeframe and was collected for the DoD Care for Victims of Sexual Assault task force.

<sup>53</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Corporate Benchmarking Topic Area, 21 April 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Focus on dormitory environment was mentioned directly in the following: Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. iii.; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 2; Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Reporting Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>56</sup> This project is built around suites containing four separate bedrooms with one shared bath.

<sup>57</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Response Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

**Finding Seven: Existing sexual assault prevention and awareness training lacks a unifying message and tends to focus on sexual harassment instead of sexual assault.**

The absence of a comprehensive sexual assault policy (see Finding Three) has made it difficult for the Air Force to develop a clear message to unify its personnel and institutionalize sexual assault prevention. Inculcating such a message throughout the Air Force is critical so that MAJCOMs and base-level installations can tailor, promulgate, and maintain consistent education programs to provide meaningful sexual assault awareness and prevention training. The recently released DoD Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report echoed these findings and described the result of the failure to integrate and standardize training materials:

“Because the Department has not developed or required standardized education and training materials for the prevention of sexual assault, most service members lack a basic understanding of what constitutes sexual assault, risk factors, or preventative measures. This lack of knowledge and understanding of sexual assault was prevalent across both officer and enlisted ranks. Service members of all levels often confuse the definition of sexual assault with that of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct.”<sup>58</sup>

Most MAJCOMs reported they had few, if any, education or training programs that effectively covered sexual assault prevention; some noted that there is no overarching Air Force requirement to provide this type of training. Many had programs focused on sexual harassment, but these offer little assistance in training personnel how to prevent or respond to sexual assault. Of those MAJCOMs that offered sexual assault prevention education and training, the majority described it as:

- Ad hoc in content and frequency.<sup>59</sup>
- Intermingled with other subjects in multi-purpose briefings.
- Uncoordinated and not tailored to all target groups (accessions, technical trainees, first duty station, permanent party, senior leadership).

The utility of training is further degraded when the instructors lack the expertise in the subject area. While some bases have instructors or counselors capable of providing sexual assault training, the majority do not. The quality and quantity of prevention training that bases can produce is often dependent on the experience level of the functional agent providing the training.

There are notable exceptions to this trend. The United States Air Force Academy has a sexual assault prevention program in place as a result of a separate assessment conducted within the past year. Numerous awareness, education, and training opportunities are provided to cadets, staff, and permanent party personnel. A four-year training plan has been implemented that provides a wide range of topics that vary in venue and frequency. An Academy Response Team (ART) provides immediate and lasting assistance to sexual assault victims. To ensure all cadets are familiar with this team and its responsibilities, ART personnel provide an informational briefing at newcomers' orientation processing.

---

<sup>58</sup> Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, p. 26.

<sup>59</sup> Reference to ad hoc training programs were mentioned in the following reports: Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. 4; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AFSOC, 9 April 2004, p. 4.; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 5.; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, USAFE, 28 March 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Response Assessment, AFRC, 31 March 2004, p. 3.; Sexual Assault Review, ANG, 6 April 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, CENTAF, Undated, p. 1.

Several bases have taken a proactive approach to developing programs that focus on awareness and prevention measures. Examples include pamphlets, trinkets, videos, pocket cards, interactive and reality-based courses, improved dormitory programs, and heightened visibility and involvement by senior leadership. Two bases, Moody Air Force Base and Nellis Air Force Base, maintain web sites with potentially benchmark-quality sexual assault information.

**Finding Eight: First responders receive the highest quality and quantity of sexual assault training, which is focused on response.**

Of all existing sexual assault education and training programs, those focused on first responders were routinely cited as the best. First responders are personnel expected to offer immediate medical, investigative, and legal assistance to victims. Judge Advocates, Security Forces, Office of Special Investigations personnel, chaplains, and medical personnel tend to receive specialized training via formal professional training courses. Assigned VWAP liaisons with active, robust programs receive adequate training; however, some installations either assign a VWAP when required or have a VWAP liaison assigned in a collateral duty capacity and the quality and frequency of training varies in these types of programs. As would be expected, the sexual assault-related training received by first responders is tailored to their responsibilities; as such, it is focused on sexual assault response rather than prevention.

Although first responders are receiving the sexual assault training they require to perform their duties, the training is not integrated or standardized across the Air Force. Again, the lack of a unifying Air Force sexual assault policy contributes to this reality. MAJCOM assessments noted this fact in their reports:

“SG, SF, MEO, JA and FS education and training programs address, in general, medical and criminal responses, sexual harassment, the Victim Witness Assistance Program, and referral services. However, an integrated program focused specifically on sexual assault does not yet exist. Response programs are the same as for any criminal or medical emergency circumstances.”<sup>60</sup>

While functional training is essential (and should be enhanced whenever possible), there is also a need for broader training that covers each facet of sexual assault (from prevention through victim care to investigation and resolution). A first responder will be more effective if he or she has a general understanding of the totality of sexual assault response to complement functional expertise.

Air Force leadership, including commanders and first sergeants, could also benefit from this type of training. Many commanders and first sergeants are not prepared to discuss sexual assault prevention and response with a high level of confidence or expertise. This lack of education and training is considered to be a limiting factor. In some instances, commanders and first sergeants may not appreciate sexual assault as a significant issue in the Air Force. This could have an enormous impact across the scope of sexual assault prevention and response.

The burdens faced by today’s commanders and first sergeants are immense. These leaders are responsible for numerous programs that did not exist 10 years ago, with a much higher home-station operating tempo and full AEF requirements. In this environment of increased responsibility and increased expectations, the Air Force needs to develop clear guidance on how to handle the sexual assault issue and provide commanders and first sergeants with the tools to implement this guidance. Education and training will be a major part of this toolbox.

---

<sup>60</sup> Sexual Assault Response Assessment, AFRC, 31 March 2004, p. 1.

**Finding Nine: Current training methods will not effectively address the sexual assault problem.**

Many existing training methods and forums are not conducive to an effective sexual assault prevention and response program. Based on today's cultural environment, young airmen are entering the Air Force from civilian society with their own personal set of standards and values. It is imperative that training capitalize on the unique cultural strengths of the Air Force. Many participants in the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site focused on the cultural aspects of the sexual assault problem and emphasized the importance of the Air Force culture in any meaningful solution:

“The Air Force has the opportunity to influence behaviors of ‘facilitators and bystanders’ at their point of entry into the service. We need to communicate, in ways today’s generation will internalize, the differences in the Air Force culture and values versus those of society at large. ‘We are all airmen and should respect and treat each other as such’ is a powerful statement that has the ability to change behaviors.”<sup>61</sup>

While a cultural message will be potent, it must be delivered in the right medium to be effective. Traditional briefing techniques in mass venues will not achieve this objective. For example, the target audience (18 to 25 years of age) will not retain the sensitive subject matter of sexual assault if rolled into a multi-subject briefing using a typical PowerPoint presentation. Training stratification techniques must be developed to allow the Air Force to reach all target groups with a consistent message tailored to their level of understanding. A “one-size-fits-all” briefing will not be receptive or effective to the large majority of the base population. Unlike NCOs and Commanders, young airmen are more receptive to short but frequent messages constantly reinforced over an extended period of time.

“If we really want to reach our airmen, the training must be comprehensive and meaningful—not just another PowerPoint briefing. Recommend using videos (Vandenburg has a good one) to show in small groups to stimulate discussion. Recommend small groups by gender and then mixed.”<sup>62</sup>

Vignettes with realistic examples to generate interactive discussions are effective, as are pop-up ads on computer screens or subtle reminders that appear frequently on television screens. The use of peer educators to reinforce the message and peer advocates to assist with victim care provides credibility to the program and makes a compelling case for building confidence in the system. When victims believe that they can trust the system to treat them with respect and investigate the assault as a crime, they will feel more comfortable seeking assistance and more confident in reporting the crime.<sup>63</sup> All personnel receiving training, regardless of age group, must clearly understand where they fit into the larger picture in preventing or responding to sexual assault incidents.

Several potential benchmark programs are being implemented by various commands to enhance sexual assault training programs. These include the use of videos, computer login banners and pop-up messages, role-playing, interactive discussions, and victim testimonials. These are reviewed in greater detail in Appendix Two, Noteworthy MAJCOM Practices.

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Education and Training Topic Area, 21 April 2004.

<sup>63</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Corporate Benchmarking Topic Area, 21 April 2004.

## Reporting

The reporting topic area examines a victim's decision to formally inform his or her chain of command that a sexual assault has occurred. The victim's decision to report emerges as the critical element of the sexual assault issue—if no report is made, there can be no response by the chain of command to provide victim care, launch an investigation, reach resolution, and ultimately remove a dangerous offender from the Air Force community.

MAJCOMs were asked to provide information regarding their existing reporting processes. Specifically, the data call focused on “barriers to reporting”—impediments to reporting that could be related to existing attitudes, operational factors, or cultural aspects of Air Force life. Respondents were asked to identify these barriers and describe any attempts to mitigate their impact. There was particular emphasis on whether certain environments lead to suppression of the ability to report sexual assaults. As will be seen in Finding Eleven, MAJCOMs identified a significant number of barriers crossing operational and functional lines, and noted these barriers can have a significant impact on sexual assault reporting rates.

The reporting data call also examined the efficiency of the Air Force's response when a sexual assault allegation is formally reported, focusing on the timeline required to move a report from the point of first contact (any entity, from the command post to a medical practitioner) to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Respondents indicated there is no formal reporting timeline mandated in policy or regulations focusing specifically on sexual assault, but evidenced a clear understanding that such reports needed to be made as soon as possible. Most MAJCOMs rely on checklists or reporting matrices to guide the initial response to this and other crimes. Many cited the evidentiary imperatives inherent in sexual assault cases—the need for trained practitioners to collect physical evidence as soon as possible. The data call indicates that the initial response to the vast majority of reported cases is appropriate and timely.

The major findings in this topic area focus on (1) the number of victims likely to report a sexual assault; (2) common barriers victims face when deciding to make a sexual assault report; and (3) the Air Force response once a formal report is made.

### **Finding Ten: A significant percentage of Air Force sexual assaults are likely unreported.**

Evidence indicates the majority of sexual assaults occurring in the Air Force are never reported. In this finding, the Air Force mirrors the society it protects. The Federal Bureau of Investigation describes sexual assault as the most underreported crime in the United States. Research conducted by the government and academic institutions consistently shows that the majority of sexual assault victims choose not to make formal reports to law enforcement. This research shows that between 68% (national sample of general population) and 95% (national sample of college population) of sexual assault victims are not reporting the incidents,<sup>64</sup> for a variety of reasons, a reality that places limitations on society's ability to provide victim care and law enforcement's ability to investigate and prosecute these crimes. Response systems need to provide victims with a reasonable expectation that reporting a sexual assault will result in care and justice rather than frustration or re-victimization.

---

<sup>64</sup> Rennison, C.M. (2002), *Rape and Sexual Assault: Reporting to Police and Medical Attention, 1992-2000*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC; Fisher, B., Cullen, F., and Turner, M. (2000). *The Sexual Victimization of College Women: Findings from Two National-level Studies*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

Not surprisingly, the Air Force assessment indicates many Air Force sexual assaults may not be reported. A comment from the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site captures the criticality of this issue:

“The most vexing problem regarding the issue of sexual assault is why people do not report. Commanders all believe or want to believe that they have created an environment in which people are comfortable reporting. The reality is a significant percentage of people say they would not report. We have to work this problem hard.”<sup>65</sup>

The Air Combat Command (ACC) Sexual Assault Team Assessment Report noted:

“The key finding from the assessment effort is the impression that there are more sexual assaults occurring in the command than what is being reported; however, obtaining a reliable estimate is difficult to capture.”<sup>66</sup>

Focus group participants, survey respondents, and interviewees contacted during the MAJCOM assessments identified a long list of reporting barriers that limit the number of victims who report sexual assaults in the Air Force. Covering many different aspects of Air Force life and cutting across MAJCOM and functional lines, the wide variety of reporting barriers impact Air Force reporting rates. Victims recognize barriers and factor them into their decision-making process. In many cases, these barriers appear to be more compelling than the victim’s interest in seeking legal redress. Reporting barriers will be discussed in detail in the next finding.

While the Air Force data collection effort did not engage with victims of sexual assault directly,<sup>67</sup> MAJCOM assessments were uniform in their opinion that more sexual assaults are occurring than are reported. The Air Force also reviewed other segments of society to find analogous models with reliable data on sexual assault reporting rates. As noted in Finding Two, the college campus is considered to be the model most similar to the Air Force. In both cases, large populations of young adults are living and working in close quarters, often engaging in risky social behavior, and living with a greater degree of personal autonomy than they have previously experienced. Recent studies investigating the willingness of college women to report sexual assaults show that less than 5% of rapes or attempted rapes on college campuses were reported to law enforcement.<sup>68</sup> While no similar studies exist for the Air Force, the strong congruencies between the college environment and the Air Force environment invite comparison.<sup>69</sup> It can be surmised that a large number of Air Force sexual assault victims are not reporting. When reporting barriers (discussed below) are factored into this assessment, this finding becomes even more profound.

---

<sup>65</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Reporting Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>66</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. ii.

<sup>67</sup> While the Air Force can identify those sexual assault victims who reported the incident, it is unable to identify the set of victims who chose not to report.

<sup>68</sup> Fisher, B., Cullen, F., and Turner, M. (2000). *The Sexual Victimization of College Women: Findings from Two National-level Studies*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics. This national DOJ-sponsored study of more than 4000 college women showed that under 5% of victims of rape or attempted rape reported the incident to police. Koss, M.P., Gidycz, & Wisniewski, N. (1987). *The Scope of Rape: Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization in a National Sample of Higher Education Students*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 55, 162-170. This is a National Institute of Mental Health study of more than 6,000 college women.

<sup>69</sup> The decision to use the collegiate-model to explore Air Force reporting rates was validated by Dr. Heather Schumacher Karjane, co-author of the largest academic study reviewing the collegiate response to the sexual assault issue. Dr. Schumacher Karjane addressed the Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Integrated Process Team on 21 April 2004.

**Finding Eleven: The victim's lack of privacy/confidentiality<sup>70</sup> is the most frequently quoted barrier to reporting.**

Barriers to reporting sexual assault were identified by most MAJCOM assessments. MAJCOMs submitted a lengthy list of individual barriers they believed affected a victim's decision to report a sexual assault. ACC identified 20 distinct barriers to reporting.<sup>71</sup> Most other MAJCOMs offered similar lists, if not as lengthy. Reviewed in total, it is clear these barriers are pervasive throughout the Air Force, cutting across MAJCOM and functional lines. The barriers are meaningful enough to cause a victim to forego reporting a sexual assault. The most common barriers are listed below:

- Lack of privacy/confidentiality.
- Stigma, shame, fear.
- Fear of being reduced in the eyes of one's commander or colleagues.
- Fear of disciplinary action due to a victim's misconduct.
- Fear of re-victimization.
- Fear of operational impacts on training, security clearances, and overseas deployment.

Lack of privacy/confidentiality is the most frequently quoted barrier to reporting. Victim information is generally restricted to persons with "the need to know." However, the perception is widespread that many persons with "no need to know" are able to access and spread this information in an uncontrolled fashion. In addition, a sexual assault report requires an investigative response<sup>72</sup> that involves interviews with witnesses and other related persons and can involve interviews with the victim's friends, family, and colleagues as well. Collection of evidence can also be intrusive. This investigative response is necessary to hold an offender accountable consistent with the right to due process of law. This lack of privacy/confidentiality reinforces a victim's sense of lack of control, a major source of the fear and uncertainty that is the product of many sexual assaults.

---

<sup>70</sup> As noted above in Finding Three, privacy, confidentiality, and other related terms have yet to be defined by the Air Force or DoD in the context of sexual assault. Though both terms have precise meanings in certain legal contexts, privacy and confidentiality are used interchangeably throughout many of the data sources used to inform this report, and we make no attempt to distinguish them in this forum.

<sup>71</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, pp. 7-8.

<sup>72</sup> The local OSI detachment is the focal point for most investigations. AFI 71-101, Criminal Investigations, guides the OSI response. Other Air Force organizations must notify OSI of when they become aware of a sexual assault: AFI 41-102 requires that all medical personnel report allegations of sexual assault to OSI; AFI 40-301 requires that FAP staff notify OSI of instances of family maltreatment, including sexual assault; AFI 36-2706 requires MEO to refer allegations of sexual assault to OSI; and AFI 90-301 requires the IG to refer all allegations of sexual assault to OSI.

Nearly all organizations participating in the MAJCOM assessment identified privacy/confidentiality as significant barriers to reporting.<sup>73</sup> ACC's assessment noted:

“Explanations why victims were reluctant to report covered a wide spectrum, but the most common reason given was the perceived lack of privacy that resulted from reporting a crime to military authorities.”<sup>74</sup>

The recently released DoD Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report echoed these findings:

“The perceived lack of privacy and confidentiality within DoD is thought by many to be one of the most significant barriers to reporting by military sexual assault victims.”<sup>75</sup>

The impact of the lack of privacy/confidentiality on reporting rates has been validated in academic research. Subject-matter experts consulted by the Air Force offered the unanimous opinion that a system that effectively promotes privacy/confidentiality will impact positively on reporting rates. Failure to institute a system that promotes victim privacy/confidentiality was viewed as a major hurdle to increasing reporting rates. The lack of privacy/confidentiality surrounding the report of a sexual assault also functions as an enabler to other reporting barriers. Many reporting barriers are dependent on the victim's expectation that third parties will gain knowledge of the incident. Any systematic characteristic that limits privacy/confidentiality increases this expectation, thereby enhancing the influence of the particular barrier on a victim's decision to report.

Stigma, shame, and embarrassment are common reporting barriers. The belief that everyone in a victim's unit would know about a sexual assault and view the victim through a filter colored by this knowledge is a significant factor in many decisions not to report. Fear of gossip and concerns about the impact on a victim's credibility are cited as related barriers in most MAJCOM assessments. This set of reporting barriers links closely to a victim's fear of being “reduced” in the eyes of his or her commander and colleagues. One comment from the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site highlights this barrier:

“Victims feel that once they report it [sexual assault] it will become common knowledge...One of the reports said that a senior enlisted female said that she would never tell her commander because ‘he thinks I am a super troop’...her impression was that once he saw her as a victim, he would no longer see her as a ‘super troop.’ Once the victim reports who absolutely has to know?”<sup>76</sup>

These are all barriers directly related to a victim's perception of the level of privacy/confidentiality surrounding his or her decision to report. The fact that MAJCOM reports routinely cite the existence of such barriers indicates many victims in the Air Force have little confidence in current systems designed to ensure privacy protection when a report is made.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Privacy/Confidentiality barriers were mentioned directly in the following assessment reports: Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. ii, 8; Sexual Assault Response Assessment, AFRC, 31 March 2004, p. 5; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Outbrief, CENTAF, 9 April 2004, slide 13; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 3; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 3; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 12. The importance of confidentiality was also noted at the United States Air Force Academy. See The Report of the Working Group Concerning the Deterrence and Response to Incidents of Sexual Assault at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Headquarters, United States Air Force, June 2003, pp. 41-43.

<sup>74</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. ii.

<sup>75</sup> Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, p. 30.

<sup>76</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Reporting Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>77</sup> SAF/GC noted that this may relate, in part, to recognition that due process requirements, such as Constitutionally-mandated notification to an accused and public trial, may drive such outcomes, but appears to be a more pervasive concern.

A victim's fear of disciplinary action related to his or her own conduct can also be a significant barrier to reporting. Underage drinking is a common example, but such fears also apply to adultery, fraternization, and being in restricted areas. Survey respondents and focus group members in most MAJCOMs indicated that fear of repercussions for associated behavior is also a major barrier to reporting. A victim's unwillingness to be subjected to re-victimization is another commonly identified reporting barrier. Once an investigation begins, a victim may have to relay the events surrounding the assault numerous times to different audiences. Experts have found that this process can be traumatic for many victims.

Finally, MAJCOM assessments uncovered a series of reporting barriers linked to operational areas. Specifically, victims are concerned about the impact a sexual assault report will have on their training, their ability to receive or maintain a security clearance, and their role in an AEF/Deployed environment. The training environment raises a series of unique concerns for victims of sexual assault, as the AETC assessment noted:

“Although we believe the training environment does not repress reporting sexual assaults per se, there are some unique training factors. These include students' concern that lengthy investigations will cause them to be held over in training if they report an assault.”<sup>78</sup>

Respondents have acknowledged that they fear the impact of a formal incident report on their security clearance and other requirements for sensitive duties, such as the Personnel Reliability Program. In reality, a sexual assault may cause a victim to temporarily be denied access to secure material for a temporary period of time (e.g., in cases where the victim is suffering severe emotional/mental distress), but being identified as a victim is not grounds for denial of a security clearance.

The last major operational reporting barrier is linked to the AEF/Deployment Environment. MAJCOM assessments noted that sexual assault victims feared the investigative process might disrupt the unit's mission or negatively impact unit morale and cohesion. The direct impact of a sexual assault in the AEF/Deployed Environment could have the effect of either keeping a victim or an alleged offender at the deployed location for an extended period of time, or hastening their return to their home-station. MAJCOM respondents viewed both outcomes as potential barriers.

**Finding Twelve: The key issue in developing an improved reporting process is balancing commanders' responsibility for maintaining good order, criminal investigators' mandate to investigate crimes, and victims' need for care and support.**

Assessments at all levels (MAJCOM, Headquarters, DoD) have identified the lack of privacy/confidentiality as a leading reporting barrier. Colleges and universities, which have been compelled to address the issue of sexual assault proactively in an effort to limit legal liability, have turned to private/confidential reporting structures in an effort to maximize reporting rates and get more victims into needed care.<sup>79</sup> Experts retained by the Air Force noted that the importance of privacy/confidentiality is tied to the concept of control. The victim's ability to control who knows about the incident and what happens to that information is critical on many different

---

<sup>78</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 4. AETC also stated that the training environment is usually more restrictive than other Air Force environments, and that many sexual assaults occurred in conjunction with a violation of one of these restrictions. Fear of being punished for the accompanying violation was frequently cited as a reporting barrier in these cases.

<sup>79</sup> Karjane H.K., Fisher, B.S., & Cullen, F.T. (2002). *Campus Sexual Assault: How America's Institutions of Higher Education Respond*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc., pp. 68. A majority of all school types—8 in 10, with the exception of North American tribal colleges and universities—offer a confidential reporting option.

levels—from a victim’s decision to report to his or her ability to recover mentally and emotionally from the trauma of the incident:

“Qualitative data...strongly suggests that any policy or procedure that compromises or, worse, eliminates a victim’s ability to make his or her own informed choices throughout the reporting and adjudication process not only reduces reporting rates, but may also be counter-productive to the victim’s healing process.”<sup>80</sup>

This conclusion is supported by findings in the recently released DoD Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report:

“Experts consulted suggested that sexual assault victims benefit from access to a safe haven—that is, a place to receive confidential advice, referrals for needed medical and social services, and to feel safe and protected from physical and verbal attacks. For military victims, this would mean providing means to receive immediate care, legal advice, and support following an incident without, at least initially, having to advise his/her chain of command or trigger an investigation”<sup>81</sup>

While the notion of a safe haven protected by privacy/confidentiality is an attractive solution, it runs into major procedural and statutory hurdles. First, Air Force criminal investigative organizations operate under a DoD mandate to investigate any and all crimes. The report of a sexual assault involving Air Force personnel or occurring on an Air Force installation triggers an automatic investigative response—a response that is beyond the control of the commander.<sup>82</sup> Second, commanders are responsible and accountable for the health, well-being, and safety of their personnel *at all times*. This duty does not expire at the end of the workday or the beginning of the weekend. It is constant and pervasive, and it does not always dovetail well with notions of victim privacy/confidentiality. A participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site highlighted this tension:

“We must deal with the issue of victim support and privacy while balancing the commander’s need to, and responsibility to, deal with misconduct and enforce good order and discipline. The commander will be held responsible for knowing what is happening on his or her base...how can we capture that information and provide the alleged victim and the alleged offender with privacy?”<sup>83</sup>

The Air Force and DoD currently recognize no blanket right of privacy/confidentiality that could approximate the safe haven example referenced above.<sup>84</sup> Air Force and DoD investigative organizations are empowered to initiate investigations at their discretion.<sup>85</sup> Even if the Air Force were to decide that a limited privacy/confidentiality reporting mechanism was desirable, such a procedure would need to be implemented by DoD to achieve DoD-wide consistency in scope and application. DoD would also need to harmonize its investigative requirements with the new reporting mechanism. Trying to go alone raises the potential for significant confusion. For example, if different confidentiality standards applied to different services, whose rules would apply if an Army soldier was assaulted on a Navy base? Any solution to this issue will by necessity involve all of the services and DoD.

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p. 81.

<sup>81</sup> Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, p. 30.

<sup>82</sup> See footnote 60, above, for a summary of the Air Force Instructions that bear on this requirement. Note that the power to investigate military crimes is mandated by statute and independent of the chain of command. Military investigators are empowered to conduct criminal investigations even when command structure opposes such investigations.

<sup>83</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Reporting Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>84</sup> In their role as spiritual advisors, military chaplains guarantee their counselees confidentiality. In this setting, a person could disclose a sexual assault without further disclosure. It is significant that military chaplains provide a safe place where victims can tell their story and begin the healing process without fear of report. However, at present, there is no mechanism that would allow the chaplain to extend such confidentiality for a victim to access military healthcare, legal advocacy, or mental health support while preserving his or her confidentiality.

<sup>85</sup> DoD instruction 5505.3 Initiation of Investigations by Military Criminal Investigative Organizations (1986).

As the Air Force develops its own position on the issue of privacy/confidentiality, it will have to decide where the service's best interests lie. This is an issue that goes to the heart of what it means to be a member of the United States Air Force—an institution where the needs of the individual are commonly secondary to the needs of the organization.

“The confidentiality discussion is one of the few places where the military service is considering placing the needs of the individual over the needs of the service. Here the discussion is self before service—a concept that must be looked at carefully.”<sup>86</sup>

At the moment, one position holds that expanded privacy/confidentiality runs counter to the responsibilities of Air Force commanders and investigators and ultimately puts self before service. Low reporting rates for sexual assaults will need to be improved through means other than enhanced privacy/confidentiality, albeit with robust protection designed to limit knowledge of the circumstances to those requiring such knowledge for official purposes. The alternative position holds that the broader interests of the Air Force are best served through some form of privacy/confidentiality. A victim who has greater control over his or her information will be more likely to make a formal report and cooperate with an investigation, allowing the Air Force commanders and investigators to fulfill their responsibilities. The eventual solution to this issue will be a key element of the success or failure of the Air Force's endeavor to respond effectively to the issue of sexual assault.

## Response

The response topic area examines the ability of the Air Force to provide victim care and perform a legally sound investigation of sexual assaults. MAJCOM assessments exploring victim care focused on the Air Force's capability to meet victim needs in a unified and efficient manner, the likelihood of continuous care (even when a victim moves to a different base), and the ability to leverage community resources to support victims in all aspects of their care and recovery. The MAJCOM assessment of investigative and judicial response emphasized lab processing issues, investigative timelines, and the utility of the VWAP.

### **Finding Thirteen: There is no current Air Force policy that mandates a functionally integrated response to care for victims of sexual assault.**

As noted in Finding Three, the lack of an overarching Air Force sexual assault policy impacts the service's ability to respond to sexual assault. Currently, there is no single point of contact or OPR at the MAJCOM or base level to integrate the functional response effort to victims of sexual assault.<sup>87</sup> The DoD Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report noted that a system to coordinate and track victim services for effective case management does not exist at all installations:

“From our focus group discussions, there did not appear to be any organizational mandate to coordinate or integrate services and care for each victim of sexual assault case at most installations.”<sup>88</sup>

MAJCOM assessments noted that once the victim chooses to report a sexual assault, he or she typically uses a variety of reporting avenues. Once an assault is reported, information sharing and

---

<sup>86</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Reporting Topic Area, 22 April 2004. Note that one of the three Air Force core values is “Service Before Self.”

<sup>87</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. 14; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 9; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 8; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AFSOC, 9 April 2004, p. 24; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 25; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, pp. 8-9; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, USAFE, 28 March 2004, p. 7.

<sup>88</sup> Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, p. 36.

preliminary response efforts occur through an informal notification chain. There is no standardized information sharing method to ensure that all necessary functional agents are notified and kept informed, though many installations have instituted their own matrixes or checklists.<sup>89</sup> Though information sharing between involved functional agents is occurring, there is no overarching coordination of efforts between each office involved in the case. Furthermore, there is no point of integration for victims to use. Each functional agent is working a distinct element of the case, and it is difficult to provide a complete picture of victim care and the investigative/adjudicative progress.

While MAJCOM respondents noted the positive impact of a coordinating point of contact, they urged a degree of caution in selecting which person or office should be charged with this responsibility. Concern was expressed at the thought of an entity involved in the investigation and/or adjudication of a sexual assault being given responsibility for coordinating the entire response effort, to include victim care. This concern was echoed repeatedly in the MAJCOM assessments. Some of same issues have been raised in regards to the VWAP. The common concern seems to be reconciling the investigation and disposition of the case with victim care needs if investigative and victim care objectives diverge.

Despite the lack of a coordinating entity for sexual assault, such cases are updated periodically in a variety of general forums that review ongoing criminal investigations. These forums include the Community Action Information Boards (CAIB), Status of Discipline meetings, “Cops and Robbers” meetings, and Quality Review Boards. No single forum currently in operation brings together all first responders or functional agents involved in the typical sexual assault case.<sup>90</sup> This causes case oversight problems, as updated case information may or may not be shared between each functional agency at any of the aforementioned forums.

**Finding Fourteen: The Air Force had no requirement for an overarching victim support program until April 2004.**

No Air Force requirement for overarching victim support covering the full continuum of victim needs existed until April 2004, when the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force created an interim Victim Support Liaison position under the oversight of vice wing commanders.<sup>91</sup> One of several options to improve victim care, the Victim Support Liaison was intended to be a step towards permanent enhancement of victim care and support. With the exception of the VWAP, which was usually limited to elements of victim support related to investigation and judicial processes, prior efforts at victim support were ad hoc and localized, built on the initiative of local commanders. For the most part, MAJCOM assessments noted that sexual assault victims were typically referred to community resources that have established victim advocacy programs.<sup>92</sup> Where available, these community victim advocates exist to provide medical and legal services, as well as emotional support to victims.

The newly mandated Air Force Victim Support Liaison is intended to work in tandem with the previously established VWAP liaison. The support liaison position is designed to focus “solely on the alleged victim of the sexual assault and supporting him/her throughout the process.” Additionally, the support liaison is intended to assist in closing the seams among various

---

<sup>89</sup> MAJCOMS who reported developing matrices or checklists included: Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. 12; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 3.; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, USAFE, 28 March 2004, p. 1.; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 3; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AFSOC, 9 April 2004, p. 11; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, CENTAF, Undated, p. 18.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Interim Measure for Victim Support, memorandum released by SECAF/CSAF, 1 April 2004, pp. 1-5. A copy of the memorandum is appended at Appendix Four.

<sup>92</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, pp. 21-23.

functional agents responding to both victim care and investigative needs. The Victim Support Liaison will provide care and support to the victim while the VWAP liaison will continue to focus on investigative and legal support. The support liaison is meant to ensure continuity of care without regard to the outcome of legal or administrative actions, and will remain engaged with the victim for as long as needed, including availability beyond the end of any adjudicative process that might arise.<sup>93</sup>

Currently, the Victim Support Liaison model is one of several interim suggestions offered to improve victim care. The memorandum announcing the support liaison model also urges local commanders to consider the Nellis Air Force Base “Sexual Assault Prevention Program” (SAPP) and the United States Air Force Academy ART programs in providing focused victim support and care.

**Finding Fifteen: Air Force installations have successfully partnered with community resources to assist with victim care.**

MAJCOM assessments reported that many Air Force installations rely heavily on community resources for victim care. Sexual assault victims were typically referred to an off-base facility if the necessary support capability was not available on base. Air Education and Training Command’s (AETC) assessment was typical of MAJCOM responses on this subject:

“At most AETC bases, sexual assault examinations are performed by Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) at civilian hospitals. Additionally, many AETC bases refer victims to off-base crisis counseling centers because Life Skills manning cannot always support the demand for counseling.”<sup>94</sup>

MAJCOMs indicated that lists of community resources are maintained and that first responders and involved functional agents are well versed on available community resources. Generally, adequate relationships exist between the installation and community service providers, and these relationships are maintained through informal means. Though these relationships are currently strong, some MAJCOM assessments opined that there were many ways for them to be improved. This inclination is sound. Community service providers are often able to maintain higher levels of expertise in sexual assault protocol procedures because of their higher (relatively) caseloads.

Typically, community service providers interact only with the Air Force functional agencies with whom they directly work.<sup>95</sup> The majority of MAJCOMs reported that base leadership did not normally have a large amount of interaction with community service providers. Additionally, most MAJCOMs indicated that no formalized forum exists for information sharing and recurring contact between the community service providers and installation functional agencies and leadership. MAJCOMs noted that while functional agents maintain lists of community resources, this information is generally not publicized to the base population. Military personnel will use community resources, but they generally have to initiate a proactive search for information about available community services. Off-base service providers can sometimes extend privacy/confidentiality protections to sexual assault victims, which can make them attractive options, although their use in this regard presents the same concerns for law enforcement and commanders discussed above in the reporting topic area. Finally, community resources are

---

<sup>93</sup> Interim Measure for Victim Support, memorandum released by SECAF/CSAF, 1 April 2004, p 1-5.

<sup>94</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 9; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, USAFE, 28 March 2004, p. 6; Sexual Assault Response Assessment, AFRC, 31 March 2004, p. 11; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 7; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AFSOC, 9 April 2004, p. 21; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 23; Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Report, PACAF, Undated, p. 35.

<sup>95</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 23; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 7; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, pp. 13-14; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 9; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 7.

typically not used during sexual assault prevention training and education. When possible, the Air Force should engage community resources to broaden its training capabilities. This report recognizes the difficulties of establishing such relationships with host nation law enforcement and other community agencies in the overseas environment.

Many MAJCOMs report their installations are proactively seeking out and establishing Memoranda of Understanding or Memoranda of Agreement (MOUs or MOAs) with community resource providers to enhance information sharing:

“Some [bases] have formal MOA’s and regularly use the crisis center counselors for training and guidance. However, because of confidentiality rules, the civilian centers cannot provide the names of victims they see without the victim’s consent. Several bases are developing ways of getting statistical data from off-base medical facilities and crisis counseling centers. This data would provide valuable feedback for the base.”<sup>96</sup>

This is a positive trend that should be encouraged. Though each memorandum is unique in some way, they generally serve to allow limited information sharing (not who, but perhaps when, where, and how) between the community resource and the installation. The Air Force benefits from increased data on the impact of sexual assault and the victim benefits by maintaining privacy/confidentiality and control while receiving care. Law enforcement and command protection issues, however, are largely unaddressed unless victims chose to report after receiving such counseling. Currently, there is no Air Force-wide standard format for these memoranda.

**Finding Sixteen: Lab processing delays and investigative timelines negatively impact Air Force sexual assault investigations and prosecutions.**

The Air Force response to alleged sexual assaults is focused on building legally sound cases that can be successfully adjudicated, with the end result of removing an offender from the Air Force community. Despite an emphasis on the investigative side of the response equation, delays in critical evidentiary steps are having a negative impact on sexual assault investigations and prosecutions.

Air Force sexual assault cases are dependent on the United States Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory (USACIL) to provide analysis of forensic evidence. Reliance on USACIL presents several difficulties. MAJCOMs reported that USACIL is selective about accepting and processing rape kits, and those completed in off-base hospitals may not be accepted.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, USACIL has a significant DNA processing backlog. MAJCOM assessments indicated that in some cases Air Force investigators and prosecutors are waiting up to six months to get laboratory reports on DNA or similar analyses. The DoD Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report focused on the implications of the USACIL backlog and the resultant delays:

“The results of laboratory analyses are frequently needed before deciding to prefer charges against an alleged offender and, even if they are not required, preferral of charge starts the 120-day speedy trial clock.”<sup>98</sup>

These delays frustrate investigators and prosecutors, increase the anguish of victims seeking final resolution, and contribute to the misperception that the Air Force does not make responding to

---

<sup>96</sup> MOU’s and MOA’s were mentioned directly in the following assessment reports: Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, pp. ii, 8; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 4, Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Response Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>98</sup> Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, p. 30.

sexual assaults a priority. Such delays have been cited repeatedly as a barrier to reporting.<sup>99</sup> The Air Force is moving proactively to improve this situation. The Air Force's senior leadership has approved the expenditure of \$1 million to expand the dedicated manpower at USACIL in an effort to decrease the evidence processing timeline for sexual assault cases.

Most MAJCOMs reported that they did not have the medical capability to gather evidence from a sexual assault victim on base, since medical care is often limited to clinics open during regular business hours.<sup>100</sup> Fortunately, the Air Force has been successful at partnering with community medical facilities. Depending on the location of the installation, availability and quality of local community services varies, especially in overseas locations. Additionally, the recently released DoD Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report indicated unacceptably long wait times at some community hospitals.<sup>101</sup> However, use of civilian facilities is often the best option because they are able to maintain higher levels of expertise in sexual assault protocol procedures because of their relatively higher volume of cases.

**Finding Seventeen: The effectiveness of the Victim Witness Assistance Program is inconsistent across the Air Force.**

MAJCOM assessments catalogued a wide variability in the effectiveness of base VWAPs. The VWAP is a congressionally mandated program that provides liaisons to victims of serious crimes, including sexual assault. The program was established to facilitate the investigation and adjudication of criminal cases and provide victims with a source of information pertaining to their case. Currently, VWAP is the primary response mechanism for victims of sexual assault on most bases. MAJCOM assessments reported that knowledge about the program was low, with most airmen unable to recollect the purpose and services of the program from their initial training:

“The VWAP is the primary response mechanism for victims of sexual assault. Overall awareness of this program is very low among commanders and base populace. As the program exists, victims must actively seek assistance instead of agencies proactively responding to the situation.”<sup>102</sup>

Most VWAP liaison services are provided by military attorneys or paralegals assigned to VWAP as a collateral duty. The majority of MAJCOM assessments reported that liaisons were appointed to provide initial information as soon as a case was identified, regardless of the initiation of UCMJ action.<sup>103</sup> However, because liaison support is tied to the UCMJ case, the liaison is not obligated to provide services if the case does not go to adjudication because of insufficient evidence or some other factor.

The ability to provide victim support above and beyond the minimum VWAP requirements is severely limited by resources and staffing. While most MAJCOMs agree that a full-time VWAP liaison would strengthen their victim support programs, only a few have managed to assign full

---

<sup>99</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. 12; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 7; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 20; Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AMC, 2 April 2004, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Response Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>101</sup> Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, p. 30.

<sup>102</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. iv; See also Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 20; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, CENTAF, Undated, p. 33.

<sup>103</sup> See the Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 6; Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 4; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, pp. 14-15; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, USAFA, 28 March 2004, p. 3.; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, CENTAF, Undated, pp. 22-23; Sexual Assault Assessment Teams Memo, 11 WG/CV, Undated, p. 2-3; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, USAFA, Undated, p. 3.

time personnel to the program. The lack of resources has resulted in uneven manning, which translates into uneven impact:

“Two complaints at one installation concerned the inconsistency of the VWAP liaison. VWAP liaison was an additive duty and was not paid the correct amount of attention in the crush of duties. As a result, victims had multiple liaisons during the course of an investigation and trial.”<sup>104</sup>

Another MAJCOM noted a similar situation in its own VWAP:

“The effectiveness and scope of the VWAP at bases varied markedly. Bases with experienced and trained civil service Victim Witness Assistance Program Coordinators (VWAPCs) had the most robust programs, although their effectiveness was limited by competing assigned duties. No VWAPC had VWAP duties assigned full time (5% to 50%). Other bases had military paralegals or inexperienced military attorneys assigned as a VWAPC as collateral duty.”<sup>105</sup>

Despite the inconsistent impact of VWAP, MAJCOM reports indicate installation VWAPs are, with minor exceptions, in compliance with DoD and Air Force instructions and policies. Nonetheless, victims seem less than fully satisfied with the program. Some victim interviews conducted by MAJCOMs indicated frustration with the services offered by VWAP. These concerns centered on the inconsistency of contact with the VWAP liaison and dissatisfaction with having to seek out information about the status of their case rather than the information being provided for them.<sup>106</sup>

Until recently, victims had no other mechanism to provide *victim-focused* support and care. Because of this, they may have sought in VWAP something the program could not deliver. As the Air Force moves to fill the victim care void with Victim Support Liaisons and other victim advocacy programs, expectations for the VWAP may become more balanced.

## **AEF/Deployed Environment**

The AEF/Deployed Environment topic area examines the impact a deployment or AEF rotation has on the Air Force's ability to prevent and respond to sexual assault. In the original data call, this was not broken out as a separate topic area. Instead, MAJCOMs were asked to consider the impact of the AEF/Deployed Environment on each topic area. Before addressing individual findings, it is useful to review the overarching impact the AEF/Deployed Environment has on the original four topic areas.

Leadership and policy issues already discussed were magnified in the AEF/Deployed Environment. No centralized sexual assault oversight or reporting process exists for sexual assault, in large part because there is no Air Force requirement to have one. Sexual assault education and training is significantly degraded in the AEF/Deployed Environment. In most cases, personnel did not receive any sexual assault prevention and awareness training at their home station as part of their pre-deployment training, and the likelihood of receiving it once deployed was minimal. Initial in-briefs contained minimal information on sexual harassment and no information on sexual assault.

Reporting issues are also prevalent in the AEF/Deployed Environment. Normal chains of command are disrupted by deployments, frequent rotations, and joint operations, and many junior enlisted personnel indicate they do not know what functional agencies to contact outside of

---

<sup>104</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. 12.

<sup>105</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AFSPC, 7 April 2004, p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. 12; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, AETC, 9 April 2004, p. 7.

their chain of command in the event of a sexual assault. Reporting barriers raised by respondents in home stations were repeated by troops in the AEF/Deployed Environment. Response capability was also significantly impacted in this environment. There are no dedicated evidence rooms or dedicated security/storage equipment for criminal evidence and the VWAP is poorly publicized to personnel.

While the AEF/Deployed Environment creates new sexual assault issues, operations in that environment also exacerbate existing issues common at most home stations. The following findings reflect the most significant MAJCOM observations.

**Finding Eighteen: The AEF/Deployed Environment creates unique challenges for sexual assault prevention and response.**

MAJCOM assessments commenting on the AEF/Deployed Environment were uniform in their opinion that this environment disrupts unit integrity and program continuity. Units are rotating and moving constantly. Personnel of all ranks and skill sets are being constantly replaced with multiple combinations of joint and coalition forces. This requires units to re-form quickly and establish themselves as strong cohesive organizations. The MAJCOMs indicated that entire bases change out often, making the response and tracking of sexual assault cases a major challenge.

“Continuity with any program within the AOR is difficult to maintain. Entire bases change out every 90 days. Written, standardized reporting procedures and checklists can help bridge the continuity gap. From reporting to investigation to completion of a potential sexual assault is a challenge to keep track of between AEF movements”<sup>107</sup>

The nature of the combat environment creates major challenges for sexual assault prevention, response, and victim care. A formal sexual assault support infrastructure containing complete “first responder” teams, prevention training, rigorous reporting and response procedures, and victim advocacy processes is very difficult to establish. In most cases, such a network does not exist at deployed locations. Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) or Family Support resources are rarely deployed and VWAP assistance is dependent on JA presence. Prevention and awareness training is difficult to accomplish because of the need to focus on the mission. Investigations are made more difficult because of personnel limitations (OSI/SF investigators are few in number and focused on other combat-related issues like counter surveillance).

The AEF/Deployed Environment also creates a unique set of unit and social circumstances. Airmen suddenly find themselves living and working in extremely close quarters with unfamiliar personnel, including senior NCOs and other supervisory figures who would normally live apart. This intimate environment creates a “fishbowl effect.” The unit becomes transparent; the life of each airman and NCO becomes completely visible to every other member of the unit. The normal separation between troops and supervisors is compressed. When the fishbowl effect is coupled with the lack of social services and resources in the AEF/Deployed Environment, victim behavior is impacted significantly. MAJCOM assessments commenting on problems at deployed locations indicated that limited support infrastructure, combined with an intense focus on mission, caused some victims to avoid reporting sexual assaults or delay reporting until they returned to their home station.

“Anecdotal information about problems at deployed locations where limited support infrastructure, combined with an intense focus on mission and lack of supervisor support for the claim, may be impeding the reporting of sexual

---

<sup>107</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Reporting Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

assaults. Some victims indicated they either did not report sexual assault at all or waited until they returned to home station”<sup>108</sup>

While unit cohesiveness is critical to combat success, it may have the unintended consequence of hampering victim reporting and care. Commanders are routinely faced with difficult decisions regarding the disposition of their units. To lose a member for any reason disrupts the efficiency and effectiveness of the unit, decreasing utility and increasing vulnerability in the combat zone. Consequently, in the case of sexual assault, commanders have to weigh the impact of removing the victim and/or offender (sometimes a dangerous operation in a combat zone) against the impact on overall unit effectiveness.

“In the deployed environment, many of which are extremely dangerous (e.g., combat zone), commanders are routinely forced to face the decision of whether it is safer to keep an impaired military member on-site or to evacuate the member and potentially be short of personnel”<sup>109</sup>

Similarly, concern for the unit and its members also affects the victim’s decision to report a sexual assault. Despite austere and dangerous conditions, military members often prefer to stay with their units rather than leave early. As a result, some victims expressed reluctance to report a sexual assault for fear of being redeployed away from the unit and thereby abandoning their comrades. Strong unit cohesiveness can also create a negative environment where a victim is not comfortable filing a complaint. There is the perception that a victim who reports an incident is not a “team player.” As a result, these victims were afraid to report for fear they would be required to stay with their units and then be ostracized.<sup>110</sup>

The operational realities of the AEF/Deployed Environment create significant challenges for sexual assault response and prevention. Current programs at home stations do not transfer well. Any broad effort to improve the Air Force’s sexual assault policies and programs must view the AEF/Deployed Environment as a unique challenge requiring unique solutions.

**Finding Nineteen: Chain of command issues impact sexual assault prevention and response in the AEF/Deployed Environment.**

MAJCOM assessments noted that Air Force personnel are often deployed to locations that rely on support from operational chains of command that involve other service components (to include Joint/Combined Commands). The assessments expressed concern that if a victim did not know or trust the chain of command, reporting could be impeded:

“Troops often feel isolated in a deployed environment and only know members of their own team. If they have a problem and team leadership is unwilling or uninterested in dealing with the issue, they need an alternative at a higher level. Every deployed location should make this alternative clear and easy to locate.”<sup>111</sup>

Additionally, units and/or personnel who deploy pursuant to an AEF tasking are subject to the programs or regulations established by the combatant commands or Service component that may be different from the programs and regulations that govern their behavior in the Air Force.<sup>112</sup>

MAJCOM assessments also reported concerns about the ability of some commanders in the AEF/Deployed Environment to effectively manage sexual assault prevention and response. It was reported that almost half of the deployed commanders were not commanders at their home

---

<sup>108</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment, AFMC, 18 March 2004, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Report, PACAF, Undated, p. 20.

<sup>110</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AFSOC, 9 April 2004, p. 34; Sexual Assault Assessment Team Outbrief, CENTAF, 9 April, 2004, slide 13.

<sup>111</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Morning Session, Reporting Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>112</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AFSOC, 9 April 2004, pp. 10, 33.

station. As such, they had not received the necessary training required to handle common sexual assault issues arising within their command:

“At Kirkuk AFB, the MEO liaison mentioned some commanders and other members in leadership positions do not hold those positions at their home stations and, therefore, while they have good intentions, they do not have the necessary skills to do the job.”<sup>113</sup>

The U.S. Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF) assessment had similar findings:

“In the AOR, one-half of sitting commanders were not commanders at the home station and had not been trained in many issues.”<sup>114</sup>

As a result, MAJCOM assessments report cases being mishandled in part because of the commander’s confusion over the right procedures, including how to properly handle sexual assault allegations, oversee investigations, and provide feedback to victims.<sup>115</sup> All AOR bases indicated that commander action was the key to setting the proper tone and to gaining confidence and trust from the troops. It is imperative that personnel being deployed as first-time commanders receive all necessary training, including sexual assault prevention and response training, to emphasize that they are responsible and accountable to all AEF deployed personnel who fall in their expeditionary organization and how to best care for them.<sup>116</sup>

**Finding Twenty: Conditions in the AEF/Deployed Environment have a detrimental impact on sexual assault investigations.**

The operational realities of the AEF/Deployed Environment can have a detrimental impact on the ability of the Air Force to investigate and prosecute sexual assault cases in a timely and efficient fashion. The DoD Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report emphasized this issue:

“In theater, agents working for AFOSI, NCIS, and USACID are often tasked to perform counter-intelligence and force protection duties in addition to their criminal investigations responsibilities. Those agents deployed to Kuwait and Iraq during the initial months of Operation Iraqi Freedom reported that they lacked sufficient manpower and transportation resources to cover every forward operating location in a timely manner.”<sup>117</sup>

MAJCOM assessments echoed this finding:

“OSI does deploy agents to the AOR but their focus is on counter-intelligence, not criminal investigation. There is no Unit Type Code (UTC) to solely deploy a SF investigator. A recent message to deployed OSI detachments directed them to also give priority to criminal investigations.”<sup>118</sup>

OSI has competing responsibilities to prioritize in the AEF/Deployed Environment, ranging from force protection and counter-intelligence to criminal investigation. In the AOR, OSI is focused on counter-intelligence, though they will respond to any reported criminal activity. However, lengthy sexual assault investigations will further stretch OSI responsibilities away from their primary roles. Sexual assault is regarded by OSI as a reach-back capability in the AOR. But even with

---

<sup>113</sup> Comment from participant at the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Off-Site; Afternoon Session, Oversight Topic Area, 22 April 2004.

<sup>114</sup> CENTAF Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, Undated, pp.1-2. Subsequent research indicates the actual number of commanders and first sergeants in this category is approximately 40 percent.

<sup>115</sup> CENTAF Sexual Assault Assessment Team Assessment, Undated, pp. 12-13, 36, 38.

<sup>116</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Report, AFSOC, 9 April 2004, p. 30.

<sup>117</sup> Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report, Department of Defense, 14 May 2004, p. 39.

<sup>118</sup> Sexual Assault Assessment Team Report, ACC, 17 March 2004, p. 5.

reach-back augmentation, sexual assault investigations are impeded by the constantly changing, transient nature of many deployed units. Investigations become more difficult when the members of a unit, including the commander, do not have their finger on the “pulse” of the group.

The ability to collect, assess, and protect sexual assault evidence is another key issue in the AEF/Deployed Environment. The majority of MAJCOMs with deployed units agreed that rape kits were available in the AOR and that medical responders understood the procedures that go along with administering a rape kit. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) are not typically available, however, and many foreign countries do not have a similar service available. Though rape kits are generally available in the AEF, the environment may hamper evidence gathering and storage. Gaining access to a private, safe, and sterile area to collect evidence from a sexual assault victim can be challenging because of lack of space as well as safety considerations. Furthermore, if there is not a full-service medical facility available, it is difficult to ensure secure refrigerated storage for DNA evidence while awaiting shipment to a laboratory.

Medical facilities and hospitals are often not located in the immediate vicinity of a unit, and may not have acceptable standards of care. One MAJCOM reported that victims are often sent back to their home station because there are no resources and established procedures available in the AOR. This situation is further aggravated by the different cultural perceptions of sexual assault around the world, which may even place outright blame on the victim.

The AEF/Deployed Environment presents a series of hurdles to efficient and timely investigation of sexual assault cases. Air Force policy needs to address these unique investigative issues as it crafts a new Air Force sexual assault policy.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations guide the Air Force's development of a proactive response to the sexual assault issue. The same topic area framework used to present the findings is retained for recommendations. Although an individual recommendation may be located in one topic area, it has most likely been informed by findings from multiple topic areas. As with the findings, recommendations represent the synthesis of MAJCOM assessments and Air Staff policy and procedure reviews, the input of subject-matter experts, and the results of corporate and university benchmarking. Special attention was focused on MAJCOM recommendations, which were part of each MAJCOM assessment report.

## Policy and Leadership

### **Recommendation One: Identify an OPR to oversee development and promulgation of sexual assault policy at the Air Staff, MAJCOM, and base level**

MAJCOM assessments found no single point of responsibility and accountability at the Air Staff, command, or base level. The establishment of a single OPR for sexual assault policy is a critical first step in the Air Force's effort to improve its sexual assault prevention and response capability. The OPR for sexual assault policy oversight and management would be charged with a series of objectives:

- Development, promulgation, and maintenance of Air Force sexual assault policy.
- Definition of key terms and concepts.
- Standardization of procedures directed at sexual assault prevention and response.
- Development of quantitative and qualitative metrics for ongoing assessment.
- Development of a resource allocation strategy to sustain this effort.

Centralized policymaking will facilitate decentralized execution at the command and base level. If the commands and bases are provided with well-defined policy guidance, they will be able to implement a successful Air Force program.

The Air Force has already taken the first step in meeting this recommendation. The Assistant Secretary for Manpower & Reserve Affairs was given responsibility for developing sexual assault policy and overseeing its implementation. The Air Force must designate a permanent OPR to support Air Force commanders in policy implementation, program development, and progress review.

### **Recommendation Two: Develop an Air Force-wide sexual assault prevention and response policy focused on cultural and institutional change.**

A formal sexual assault policy should greatly improve current sexual assault prevention and response efforts. The first task of the designated OPR will be the development of overarching sexual assault prevention and response policy. The policy will provide guidance on sexual assault prevention and response, and identify norms of behavior focused on the cultural changes necessary to improve the Air Force. It will become the centerpiece of an Air Force communications strategy intended to spread institutional change throughout the active, guard, and reserve force.

While presenting clear guidance and expectations, the overarching policy should be flexible enough to enable decentralized execution by commands, functional agencies, and other entities. At a minimum, the policy will address:

- Standardized guidelines for sexual assault prevention education and training.
- Minimum training requirements for functional agents.
- Reporting mechanisms focused on getting more victims into care and providing commanders with more actionable information.
- Guidelines for responding to sexual assault, with equal emphasis on victim care and advocacy, and investigative/adjudicative outcomes.
- Guidelines for sexual assault prevention and response in AEF/Deployed environments.
- Expectations for commanders.

Any successful policy must address institutional and individual attitudes and beliefs and identify concrete behaviors that will achieve higher standards, which in turn will ensure that young women and men will continue to want to join and remain in the Air Force.<sup>119</sup>

Development of a successful sexual assault policy will depend on accurately defining key terms and concepts that surround the sexual assault issue. Tremendous confusion exists over the meaning of terms and concepts associated with sexual assault prevention and response. Headquarters and MAJCOM personnel encountered confusion as they sought to distinguish between sexual harassment and sexual assault, victim advocate and victim liaison, and confidentiality and privacy (as well as the relationship of anonymity to both). In many cases, defining these terms and concepts will not be easy, and the ultimate definitions may defy plain English. Nonetheless, the Air Force must work this issue if it is to develop a meaningful overarching policy.

As it works to define key terms and concepts, the OPR must engage DoD and other services, as only DoD can establish the degree of commonality necessary to address cross-service concerns and develop metrics that allow meaningful assessment of progress. As the OPR begins to grapple with more detailed elements of sexual assault response and prevention, the need for this type of cooperation will increase. Setting policy and establishing procedures in the deployed environment is a prime example. In joint environments, it will be essential for sexual assault policies and procedures to be complementary between services.

### **Recommendation Three: Develop a communications strategy to re-orient Air Force culture into a proactive force for change.**

The Air Force lacks a comprehensive, high-level message to unify its personnel and institutionalize sexual assault prevention and response. MAJCOM respondents repeatedly described sexual assault as a cultural issue in need of a compelling and sustained message. To address this issue, the OPR will be responsible for developing a communications strategy intended to reorient Air Force culture into a proactive force that refuses to accept behavior that facilitates sexual assault. The communications strategy should identify norms of behavior necessary to drive institutional change across the active, guard, and reserve force. The communications strategy should focus on:

- Mutual Respect: No airman should ever be afraid of another airman.
- Mutual Support: Always take care of your wingman.
- Strong Team: Everyone physically, mentally, and spiritually sound.

---

<sup>119</sup> As advocated by Ms. Deborah Tucker, Executive Director, National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence; Co-chair of the DoD Domestic Violence Task Force, 2004.

- Success: We succeed when we are at our best and take care of one another.

It is imperative that communication with today's generation of airmen capitalizes on the unique cultural aspects of the Air Force. For a cultural message to be potent, it must be delivered in the right medium. Traditional briefing techniques in mass venues will not achieve this objective. The principal target audience of young airmen will not respond to a multi-subject briefing using typical PowerPoint presentation aids. Training techniques must be developed in sufficient diversity to reach all target groups, especially airmen, according to their particular level of understanding. Simply put, the Air Force must be creative as it attempts to explain this issue and reorient the behavior of its personnel. The OPR will leverage existing resources and create new information sources and communication vehicles to disseminate this message across the total force.

**Recommendation Four: Allocate resources over the long-term to sustain continuous and consistent sexual assault prevention and response programs.**

Although not specifically addressed as an assessment topic, several commands voiced concerns over the possibility of having to provide "out of hide" resources to implement an Air Force sexual assault prevention and response program. Command representatives identified time, manpower, and funding as key constraints impacting their ability to implement a sustained program. A major responsibility of the OPR will be the development of planning objectives and program guidance to ensure that needed resources, including manpower, are identified, programmed, budgeted, and executed as part of the Air Force's resource allocation process. The OPR will function as an Air Staff advocate for resource requests from MAJCOM and other functional agencies. Resource needs must be addressed in the Air Force Corporate Structure in a systematic fashion to ensure that proactive sexual assault policies are translated into effective programs that benefit all members of the Air Force family.

**Recommendation Five: Integrate databases used to report and track sexual assault cases.**

Currently, there is no effective way for senior leaders above the base level to efficiently track sexual assaults across their command. Databases housed within the SF, OSI, JA, and SG functional organizations are not integrated. The lack of integrated connectivity makes it difficult to track the status of cases above the base level. Without this tracking capability, the Air Force cannot provide pertinent information to its senior leaders to assist in program oversight and management. Further, the lack of connectivity severely impedes the ability of the Air Force to holistically assess the magnitude of sexual assault or capture emerging trends.

The Air Force must continue to support DoD in its effort to engineer an enterprise database system for information sharing and program management at the headquarters and command level. Such a network must be usable by senior commanders, functional service providers, legal staff, and law enforcement organizations. The Air Force gives its commanders responsibility for maintaining good order and discipline by investigating crimes, holding offenders accountable, and maintaining safety throughout the command. To hold commanders accountable for this duty, the Air Force must provide them with the necessary tools to track sexual assault cases. Assisting DoD in the development of a case management and tracking system is a major step in fulfilling this obligation. The Defense Incident Based Reporting System (DIBRS) is expected to provide this linkage.

**Recommendation Six: Review Air Force environmental issues related to sexual assault.**

In the course of the MAJCOM assessments, focus group participants and survey respondents highlighted general Air Force environmental issues that may impact sexual assault. These include alcohol policies and dormitory policies. Respondents believed that these issues should be

examined in the context of the Air Force's development of improved sexual assault prevention and response programs. Familiarity between victim and attacker, and involvement of alcohol were cited as common characteristics in many sexual assault cases. Several commands reported the implementation of rapid dorm and alcohol policy changes to address these environmental risks, and urged the evaluation of these policy changes in the context of preventing and responding to sexual assault. However, commands also warned that uniform, alcohol-free dorm policies can run the risk of unintended consequences. Responses cautioned against rushing to implement a policy that encourages off-base consumption of alcohol, especially in foreign countries. The likely costs and benefits of any policy change must be weighed carefully before implementation.

## **Education and Training**

### **Recommendation Seven: Develop a sexual assault education and training strategy.**

The absence of a formal sexual assault policy has made it impossible for the Air Force to develop a comprehensive education and training strategy. Such a strategy is critical so that commands and bases can develop, promulgate, and maintain meaningful sexual assault awareness and prevention training. Existing training is sporadic, inconsistent, and often focused on sexual harassment. MAJCOM assessments confirmed that many personnel do not have a good understanding of the difference between sexual assault and sexual harassment, fail to appreciate the realities of sexual assault, and do not know response procedures in the event a sexual assault does occur.

The Air Force must develop a training baseline capable of sustaining a total-force, multi-tiered sexual assault training program for all personnel (from recruits to senior leaders). Such training must be offered in the context of the Air Force's larger institutional values. The Air Force training strategy must build on the communications strategy discussed in recommendation three, emphasizing the cultural aspects of the problem and the solution. Additionally, commanders and first sergeants must be aware of the realities of sexual assault and the impact it has on victims and their ability to accomplish the Air Force mission. Linkage to the overarching Air Force policy and communications strategy will ensure that education and training is consistent, focusing on key themes personnel will recognize as they build their careers. Indeed, career transition points offer major opportunities to reinforce the Air Force message. The education and training strategy will target career transition points, including BMT, AFROTC, FTAC, OTS, SOS, ACSC, ALS, NCOA, SNCOA, First Sergeant School, and the Flight Commander course.

Finally, sexual assault training and education must be delivered in the right medium to be effective. Traditional briefing techniques in mass venues will have little or no impact on most personnel, especially those 18- to 25-year-old airmen in the principal target range. A creative, interactive training approach is needed to ensure the Air Force communicates clearly to today's generation of airmen. Short messages repeated multiple times through various media, interactive training and videos that employ realistic scenarios, commercially produced products, and gender-based training are suggestions that should be considered when developing a sexual assault training and education strategy.

### **Recommendation Eight: Enhance training for key first responders and VWAP liaisons.**

First responders are those functional agents who typically respond once a sexual assault is reported. They can include OSI, SF, JA, SG, HC, and others. Of all existing sexual assault education and training programs, those focused on first responders were routinely cited as the best. MAJCOM assessments reported that first responders are trained as part of their initial training on how to respond properly to various crimes, including sexual assault. Moreover, it is particularly important to establish through training at entry points the core values, standards, and behaviors that individuals will be expected to exhibit as airmen throughout their careers.

Many first responder training programs focus on major criminal or emergency medical circumstances; sexual assault is addressed partially or indirectly.

While most first responders receive the basic level of sexual assault response training, the training is not integrated or standardized across the Air Force. There is value to ensuring that first responders receive training focused solely on the unique attributes of sexual assault, ranging from its impact on victims and their families to the specialized investigative and adjudicative requirements inherent in building a successful sexual assault case. Such a training program will expose each first responder to the general medical, counseling, investigative, and legal issues that surround typical sexual assault cases. A standardized training program will lay the groundwork for a more seamless and anticipatory response. A first responder will be more effective if he or she has a general understanding of the totality of sexual assault response elements to complement functional expertise. Such a training program would be beneficial for commanders, first sergeants, and anyone else who could expect early and continuing contact with victims of such a crime.

VWAP facilitates the interaction of crime victims with the investigative and adjudicative process. Each program has one or more liaisons assigned to interact with victims. In most cases, these personnel are assigned to VWAP as a collateral duty. If a base has a strong, well-funded program, the liaison usually receives adequate training. Liaisons assigned to poorly funded programs usually receive little or no training. The sexual assault training program for first responders will also benefit VWAP liaisons. While they are focused on the investigation and adjudication, it is very useful for VWAP liaisons to fully understand victim care issues as well.

In April 2004, the Air Force initiated an interim Victim Support Liaison program. Victim Support Liaisons will focus solely on the care and support of victims (as opposed to the VWAP liaisons, who focus on the investigative and adjudicative elements). While Nellis Air Force Base and the United States Air Force Academy already have active programs, most Air Force installations are just beginning to develop some form of victim support liaison program. Training must be developed and provided to these newly established Victim Support Liaisons.

## **Reporting**

### **Recommendation Nine: Develop a system of reporting that maximizes reporting rates.**

The Air Force assessment uncovered a strong set of data that indicates many Air Force sexual assaults are not being reported. Focus group participants, survey respondents, and interviewees contacted during the MAJCOM assessments identified a long list of reporting barriers that limit the number of victims who report sexual assaults in the Air Force. The Air Force's current reporting system needs to be improved with the objectives of (1) getting more victims into care and (2) providing commanders with more information to support investigation, prosecution, and the ultimate isolation of offenders from Air Force communities. Therefore, the Air Force must explore with DoD a reporting mechanism that balances the three equities at play in this issue: the victim's need for care, the commander's need for information, and law enforcement's mandate to investigate all crimes.

Air Force findings and expert research indicate that the objective of increasing reporting rates is tied to the level of privacy/confidentiality protection offered by the reporting system. An improved reporting system must take systematic steps to build victim trust and confidence by countering widely held perceptions that third parties (lacking a "need-to-know" status) will gain knowledge of the incident. At the same time, the improved reporting system must acknowledge the commander's responsibility to maintain good order and discipline by investigating crimes, holding offenders accountable, and maintaining safety throughout the command. Moreover, while enhancements to privacy protection can be accomplished largely at the service level,

instituting any form of expanded privacy/confidentiality protection must marry with DoD efforts, since DoD has an interest in maintaining a consistent privacy/confidentiality policy across all branches of the military and any level of privacy/confidentiality must be reconciled with existing DoD policies regarding the authority of investigative agencies. The Air Force should encourage OSD, in coordination with the other services, to aggressively pursue resolution of this challenging issue.

While the confidentiality/privacy issue is perhaps the most significant reporting barrier, other barriers need to be countered as well. For example, an improved reporting system should explore means of mitigating the common fear of re-victimization, by limiting the number of interviews that force victims to relive traumatic events. A victim's fear of disciplinary action related to his or her own conduct is also a significant barrier to reporting. An effective reporting system should account for the impact of discipline for minor transgressions associated with a sexual assault. In addition to removing real and perceived barriers to reporting, an improved reporting process needs to be supported by improved training and education for those persons operating the system. Finally, the Air Force should strive to partner with community support assets to expand the range of services available to victims, increasing the benefits accruing to victims who report.

The end result should be an improved reporting system that encourages reporting through well established, publicized, and unobstructed channels. Developing such a system will not be an easy task. Confidentiality is a difficult and at times divisive issue. Nonetheless, the current system leaves many sexual assaults unreported. An improved reporting system is critical to the Air Force's objective of improving its sexual assault prevention and response capabilities.

## **Response**

### **Recommendation Ten: Improve the oversight structure for sexual assault prevention and response at the MAJCOM and base level.**

Currently, the Air Force response to an alleged sexual assault is undertaken by a variety of functional agencies that focus on victim care or investigation/adjudication. There is no point of integration to coordinate this response or provide feedback to the victim. Each functional agent manages a distinct element of the case, and it is difficult to provide a complete picture of victim care or the investigative/judicial progress.

Oversight for sexual assault prevention and response should be provided by a designated OPR at the MAJCOM and base level. The OPR would be responsible for ensuring that (1) the overarching Air Force sexual assault prevention and response policy is being implemented and (2) the Air Force's sexual assault training strategy is being executed.

The establishment of interim Victim Support Liaison was an important first step for the Air Force as it seeks to improve care. From a practical standpoint, the Air Force also should consider the creation of a specific position to oversee sexual assault prevention and response activities. These activities would include victim care and support, ensuring continuity of care, closing gaps that emerge in the response efforts of functional agencies, and ensuring that appropriate training and education programs are in place. This position would also be responsible for cross-functional policy implementation and sexual assault response coordination and integration. This position would integrate the efforts of the Victim Support Liaisons (or equivalent entities) and interface with VWAP Liaisons to ensure victim care requirements are properly balanced with investigatory needs. It would also focus on building and maintaining partnerships with community service providers.

This new structure should increase information sharing capabilities, ensure that victims receive the support and information they need, and facilitate the decentralized execution of the Air Force's sexual assault policy. Moreover, the new structure must also ensure the physical,

emotional, and mental well-being of alleged offenders. The needs of the victim are obvious, but the Air Force also has a duty to offenders (alleged and convicted) as well.

A graphic detailing one possible structure of a victim advocate was developed to guide further work. This graphic is found in Appendix Five.

**Recommendation Eleven: Develop and/or expand relationships with community service providers to enhance sexual assault training and response.**

MAJCOM assessments reported that Air Force installations often rely on community resources for victim care. Sexual assault victims were typically referred to off-base service providers if the necessary support capability was not available on base. Current relationships between the Air Force and these service providers are often ad hoc or informally defined. However, some bases have started to formalize their relationships with community service providers. This trend should be accelerated where possible and appropriate. Base commanders and other supervisory personnel should become involved this effort whenever possible. Developing new and/or expanded relationships with community service providers may enhance the Air Force's sexual assault prevention and response capabilities.

In many cases, surrounding communities offer sexual assault response capabilities unavailable on Air Force bases, particularly if the base is not a large one. Information about these community assets, ranging from hospitals staffed with Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) to rape crisis and counseling centers, should be available to Air Force victims of sexual assault with appropriate safeguards. Those organizations providing victim care should be well versed in the administrative and logistical requirements necessary to link Air Force victims to the care that qualified assets offer. When appropriate, these relationships should be formalized through the use of Memoranda of Understanding or Memoranda of Agreement (MOUs or MOAs) with community resource providers. MOUs/MOAs offer the benefit of formalizing and streamlining administrative and logistical practices while enhancing the potential for information sharing. However, in each situation, consideration must be given to the extent to which the Air Force may incur responsibility for the quality of services rendered by such providers by virtue of MOUs or MOAs or any other form of referral. Because of confidentiality rules, civilian centers cannot provide the names of victims they see without the victims' consent. An MOU/MOA can be structured to allow limited information sharing (not who, but perhaps when, where, and how) between the community resource and the installation. The Air Force will benefit from increased data on the sexual assault while the victim overcomes a major reporting barrier by maintaining confidentiality and control.

The MAJCOM assessments noted that community resources are not typically included in Air Force training and education efforts. This can be a significant oversight. Both airmen and functional agencies may benefit enormously from interacting with qualified, experienced practitioners with first-hand experience in responding to sexual assault. All Air Force sexual assault training efforts should consider the use of qualified community resources whenever possible. Direct interaction with living and breathing experts is a potent training tool with the added benefit of familiarizing the base community with available off-base resources.

**Recommendation Twelve: Enhance investigative and legal tools required to build and adjudicate sexual assault cases.**

Tools employed in the investigation and adjudication of sexual assault cases need to be enhanced through additional funding or training. MAJCOM assessments emphasized the need to improve the effectiveness of VWAP and the need to improve lab processing timelines.

Currently, VWAP is the primary response mechanism for victims of sexual assault on most bases. VWAP's ability to provide victim support above and beyond the minimum requirements is limited by resources and staffing. While most MAJCOMs believe that a full-time VWAP liaison would

strengthen their victim support programs, only a few commands have assigned full-time personnel to the program. The Air Force should ensure that VVAP receives ample funding to meet dedicated manpower requirements. VVAPs at large bases should have full-time personnel. Part-time personnel assigned to the program at smaller bases should not be overwhelmed with corollary duties. MAJCOM assessments also reported that general base knowledge of VVAP was low; most airmen were unable to recall the purpose and services of the program from their initial training. Distinct improvements are needed in educating Air Force personnel on what VVAP is and what it can (and cannot) do for victims.

Delays in critical evidentiary steps are having a negative impact on the timely adjudication of sexual assault cases. Air Force sexual assault cases are dependent on the United States Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory (USACIL) to provide analysis of forensic evidence. Because of a significant USACIL processing backlog, Air Force investigators and prosecutors may wait up to six months for laboratory reports on DNA or similar analyses. The Air Force's senior leadership approved \$1 million of extra funding to expand dedicated manpower allocated to Air Force sexual assault cases at USACIL in an effort to decrease the evidence processing timeline for sexual assault cases. While continuation of such enhanced funding is important, it should be the result of appropriately resourcing the Army lab through the normal appropriations process. The Air Force should encourage this result to ensure processing delays do not cause unreasonable delays in investigative/adjudicative timelines.

Finally, a significant body of evidence indicates a majority of sexual assault victims know their assailants. In the case of rapists, research shows that such non-stranger rapists commonly avoid prosecution in the civilian community. Given that sexual assaults are generally underreported, it is logical that this circumstance is mirrored in the military community and poses a great danger to the safety of other airmen. Consequently, the Air Force should enhance the tools used by investigators and prosecutors to bring these cases to successful prosecution. Training can increase recognition of the behavior patterns enabling the crime, thereby providing investigators and prosecutors insight into individual cases.

## **AEF/Deployed Environment**

### **Recommendation Thirteen: Appoint an Air Component Command office of primary responsibility to standardize sexual assault procedures as they relate to the AEF/Deployed Environment.**

The nature of the AEF/Deployed Environment creates major challenges for sexual assault prevention, response, and victim care. A formal sexual assault support infrastructure containing complete first responder teams, prevention training, rigorous reporting and response procedures, and victim advocacy processes is nearly impossible to establish in a deployed environment. Operations over the past two years have demonstrated that deployments tend to result in unsatisfactory sexual assault prevention and response conditions.

The first step toward mitigating this trend is the establishment of a sexual assault OPR within the air component command. The OPR should ensure the Air Force sexual assault policy is implemented in the AEF/Deployed Environment. The OPR should ensure adequate materials are provided to supporting commands to facilitate standardized training in command sexual assault prevention and response procedures before commanders, supervisors, and troops deploy. These procedures should focus on creating well-defined reporting mechanisms at each deployed location and developing response protocols that balance victim care and investigative/adjudicative requirements.

By necessity, defining standard sexual assault prevention and response procedures in the AEF/Deployed Environment will require a joint approach. MAJCOM assessments report that Air Force personnel are often deployed to locations outside their component chain of command. It is

common for operational chains of command (to include Joint/Combined Commands) to incorporate other service components subjecting personnel to unfamiliar regulations, programs, and procedures, further inhibiting sexual assault reporting and response. The Air Force must work with its sister services and the DoD to craft standardized sexual assault procedures and protocols that function in the joint environment.

**Recommendation Fourteen: Require mandatory pre-deployment and post-deployment training focused on sexual assault prevention and response.**

MAJCOM assessments reported very limited sexual assault training for personnel prior to deployment or once deployed. Airmen are entering their assigned theater with little or no knowledge of what constitutes sexual assault, how to protect against it, and what to do if it happens. Additionally, some 40% of commanders and first sergeants lack meaningful sexual assault training because they are not sitting commanders or first sergeants at their home stations who normally would have received sexual assault training by virtue of their leadership position. Such training would need to emphasize the particulars of the deployed environment, such as the impact on unit integrity, the role of different living and social arrangements, and issues surrounding operations in a joint environment.

To address these issues, it is recommended that sexual assault prevention and response training be developed and provided to members as part of their pre-deployment training prior to leaving for the deployed location. Finally, a process should be developed to identify personnel who will assume command or supervisory positions in the deployed location and ensure they receive all necessary training, including sexual assault training, so they are prepared to deal with any sexual assault incident they may encounter in theater.

## Conclusion

This assessment represents the culmination of an eighteen-month journey. Over this time, the United States Air Force learned a great deal about sexual assault. Although this learning process continues, the Air Force is comfortable drawing three overarching observations:

- The sexual assault problem is much more complex than it seemed initially.
- Sexual assault is a societal problem. Consequently, it is also an Air Force problem. There are no quick solutions to address sexual assault. It will require positive, ongoing efforts to foster and inculcate institutional change.
- Commanders and leadership at all levels are key to the process of institutional change. Recognizing and understanding the sexual assault problem is challenging. Air Force commanders have been working this issue on a case-by-case basis rather than attacking it as cultural and societal issue. The Air Force must do a better job of defining and understanding the crime of sexual assault and the behavior that spawns it. Ultimately, the Air Force must work through its commanders to create an institutional environment that refuses to accept or facilitate such behavior.

Impacting behavior will require institutional change. Institutional change will be dependent on the evolution of the Air Force's culture, as expressed in its core values. The process of institutional change will begin immediately. In late May 2004, the preliminary findings and recommendations of this assessment were briefed at CORONA. A campaign plan with an associated timeline was approved and the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force agreed to convene a summit of its most senior leaders in August 2004 to consider recommended actions. The IPT, working with MAJCOM representatives, will bring recommendations the summit.

### **IPT/MAJCOM Campaign Plan Actions**

The summit will validate the following institutional recommendations to start the process of improving the Air Force sexual assault prevention and response capabilities:

- **Policy and Leadership:** A policy and leadership team will develop an Air Force prevention and response policy to guide institutional change. The policy will address institutional and individual attitudes and beliefs and identify concrete behaviors that will achieve higher standards. Key terms and concepts will be defined as required to support this effort. A communications strategy will also be developed, with the goal of re-orienting Air Force culture into a proactive force that emphasizes behavior that respects the dignity of each airman. Additionally, the Air Force will assign a sub-team to work with OSD on the development of an enterprise-wide database for information sharing and program management. Finally, the Air Force will review "environmental" factors (dorm policy, alcohol policy) that impact sexual assault prevention. The policy and leadership team will identify resources needed to sustain a continuous and consistent sexual assault prevention and response program.
- **Education and Training:** An education and training team led by AETC will develop an education and training strategy that establishes a training baseline and a multi-tiered program for all Air Force personnel (recruits to senior leaders). The education and training team will also focus on training enhancements for first responders, including the newly created Victim Support Liaison positions.

- **Reporting:** A reporting team will review the current Air Force reporting system and make recommendations for ultimate presentation to DoD for the establishment of a reporting system that (1) gets more victims into care (by maximizing reporting rates) and (2) improves reporting rates by balancing the victim's need for privacy/confidentiality, the commander's responsibility for maintaining good order/discipline in his unit, and law enforcement's mandate to investigate every crime that is committed.
- **Response:** A response team will recommend an OPR for prevention and response activities at the MAJCOM and base level and explore the creation of a specific position(s) to assume responsibility for prevention and response activities at the appropriate level. The response team will also focus on developing a strategy for full use of community resources to enhance victim care and first responder training, enhancement of VWAP and its integration with other victim support and care activities, and improvement of investigation and prosecution techniques.
- **AEF/Deployed Environment:** A deployed environment team led by ACC, AMC, and USCENTAF will recommend standardized sexual assault prevention and response policies during deployment, to include the designation of an OPR in the Combatant Commander's air component command. Finally, the deployed environment team will recommend protocols for pre- and post-deployment training for all troops and commanders.

Sexual assault prevention and response presents a direct challenge to the Air Force. In meeting this challenge, the Air Force has the opportunity to lead the way in crafting the largest institutional response to sexual assault in our nation's history. Together with our sister services and OSD, we commit to this path to improve the lives of our airmen and their families.

# Acronyms

ACC: Air Combat Command  
ACSC: Air Command and Staff College  
AEF: Air and Space Expeditionary Force  
AETC: Air Education and Training Command  
AF/CCC: Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force  
AFB: Air Force Base  
AFI: Air Force Instruction  
AFMC: Air Force Materiel Command  
AFOSI: Air Force Office of Special Investigations  
AFPD: Air Force Policy Directive  
AFRC: Air Force Reserve Command  
AFROTC: Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps  
AFSOC: Air Force Special Operations Command  
AFSPC: Air Force Space Command  
ALS: Airmen Leadership School  
AMC: Air Mobility Command  
ANG: Air National Guard  
AOR: Area of Responsibility  
ART: Academy Response Team  
ASART: Adult Sexual Assault Response Team  
BHS: Behavioral Health Services  
BMT: Basic Military Training  
CAIB: Community Action Information Board  
CENTAF: U.S. Central Command Air Forces  
CC: Commander  
CV: Vice Commander  
CSAF: Chief of Staff of the Air Force  
CZ: Chief of Staff Issues Team  
DIBRS: Defense Incident Based Reporting System  
DoD: Department of Defense  
DP: Personnel  
EVAW: Ending Violence Against Women Project  
FS: Family Support  
FTAC: First Term Airmen Center

GC: General Counsel  
HC: Chaplain  
IDS: Integrated Delivery System  
IG: Inspector General  
IPT: Integrated Planning Team  
JA: Judge Advocate  
MAJCOM: Air Force Major commands  
MEO: Military Equal Opportunity  
MOA: Memorandum of Agreement  
MOU: Memorandum of Understanding  
NCIS: Naval Criminal Investigative Service  
NCO: Non Commissioned Officer  
NCOA: Non Commissioned Officer Academy  
OHC: Organizational Health Centers  
OPR: Office of Primary Responsibility  
OSD: Office of Secretary of Defense  
OSI: Office of Special Investigations  
OTS: Officer Training School  
PA: Public Affairs  
PACAF: Pacific Air Forces  
PME: Professional Military Education  
POSH: Prevention of Sexual Harassment  
RE: Air Force Reserve  
SA: Sexual Assault  
SAF/MR: Secretary of the Air Force Manpower and Reserve Affairs  
SANE: Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner  
SAPP: Sexual Assault Prevention Program (Navy)  
SART: Sexual Assault Response Team  
SARRT: Sexual Assault Response and Resources Team  
SAVI: Sexual Assault Victim Intervention Program  
SECAF: Secretary of the Air Force  
SF: Security Forces  
SG: Surgeon General  
SITES: Standard Installation Topic Exchange Service  
SNCOA: Senior Non Commissioned Officer Academy

SOS: Squadron Officer School

STAR: Standing Together Against Rape

TCFV: Texas Council on Family Violence

TESSA: Trust, Education, Safety, Support, Action Team

UCA: Unit Climate Assessment

UCMJ: Uniform Code of Military Justice

USACID: USA Criminal Investigation Division

USACIL: United States Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory

USAFA: United States Air Force Academy

USCENTAF: U.S. Central Command Air Forces

USAFE: United States Air Forces in Europe

UTC: Unit Type Code

VWAP: Victim and Witness Assistance Program

VWAPC: Victim Witness Assistance Program Coordinator

XOF: Security Forces

## Appendix 1: Expert Biographies

### **David Lisak, Ph.D.**

Dr. David Lisak is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, where he conducts and supervises research on the causes and consequences of interpersonal violence. In particular, he has studied the motives and characteristics of "undetected" rapists—men who rape but who are never prosecuted. He also studies the long-term effects of childhood abuse in adult men, and the relationship between early abuse and the later perpetration of interpersonal violence.

He has more than fifteen years of experience as a psychologist and operates his own private practice, specializing in psychological trauma. Dr. Lisak has served as a forensic consultant for civil and criminal cases in fourteen states throughout the United States, providing psychological evaluations and consultations. He has also worked with individual prosecutors on rape cases, and testified before the New Mexico House and Senate Judiciary Committee on pending sex offender legislation. He also serves as an expert witness in sexual violence and homicide cases across the country.

Dr. Lisak's research has been published in leading journals in psychology, trauma, and violence, and he is the founding editor of the journal *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*. In addition to his research and teaching, Dr. Lisak serves as faculty for the National Judicial Education Program, and the American Prosecutors Research Institute, and has served as a consultant to judicial, prosecutor, and law enforcement education programs across the country. Through the National Judicial Education Program, he has consulted on the video productions: "*The Undetected Rapist*," "*Understanding Sexual Violence: The Judge's Role in Stranger and Nonstranger Rape and Sexual Assault*," and "*Building Credibility: Direct Examination of the Victim in a Nonstranger Rape Case*." Dr. Lisak also conducts trainings for judges and prosecutors on non-stranger sexual violence.

He has conducted workshops in more than thirty states across the United States, focusing on the "undetected rapist," characteristics and treatment of sex offenders, and the neurobiology of trauma. He consults widely with universities and other institutions regarding sexual assault prevention and policies.

Dr. Lisak has been awarded several research, development, and scholarship grants, including the Junior Faculty Development, Faculty Development and Scholarship, and Faculty Summer Research Grants from the University of Massachusetts-Boston. The American Psychological Association elected Dr. Lisak as a fellow in 1999, and awarded him with the *Researcher of the Year Award (Div. 51)* in 1996. He is a member of the American Psychological Association and the National Organization on Male Sexual Victimization, and was appointed to the Victim Rights Committee to Monitor the Boston Archdiocese, as well as the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault. Dr. Lisak received his doctorate from Duke University.

**Anne P. Munch, Esq.**

Anne Munch serves as director of the Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) Project, a state wide multi-disciplinary training and technical assistance project in Golden, Colorado. EVAW is focused on providing free training for persons involved in working with domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking cases. The project, which is funded through the STOP Violence Against Women Act (DOJ grant # 2002 WF-BX-0017), has delivered education and technical assistance to criminal justice workers since 1995.

Ms. Munch conducts training sessions and presents at conferences around the country, including in more than thirty local Colorado communities. She has presented for such organizations as the National College of District Attorneys, the National Judicial Education Project, and the National Center for Women in Policing. Specific presentation topics include “Myths and Realities of Sexual Assault,” “Victim and Suspect Dynamics,” and “Using Victim Advocates.” She also examines the sexual assault issue from a prosecutor’s perspective, determining how law enforcement and prosecutors can work together to develop successful cases.

She worked for seven years as a Deputy D.A. in the Denver District Attorney’s office, where she specialized in domestic violence and sexual assault cases. Additionally, she served as the Chief Deputy District Attorney for the 7th Judicial District, covering three rural counties in southwestern Colorado. She also directed the San Miguel Resource Center, a domestic violence and sexual assault program in Telluride, Colorado. Ms. Munch has worked for the Colorado District Attorney’s Council since February 1996 as a member of the state-wide, multi-disciplinary Ending Violence Against Women team. She attended the University of Denver, receiving a law degree as well as a B.A. in psychology and sociology.

## **Heather M. Schumacher Karjane, Ph.D.**

Dr. Heather Schumacher Karjane is a Project Director/Research Scientist for the Center for Violence & Injury Prevention at the Education Development Center, Inc. She specializes in sexual assault and intimate partner violence prevention and response policy, particularly institutional and community responses, and traumatic stress and survivorship, particularly the cultural dimensions. She has seventeen years of basic and applied research experience, and has been funded by and directed grants for the National Institute of Justice, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health. She is currently an institutional ethnographic specialist on the National Evaluation of the Greenbook Demonstration Initiative, a five-year community systems-reform project to address co-occurring forms of family violence (intimate partner abuse and child maltreatment). In addition, she is currently completing two federally funded evaluations of hospital- and community-based violence intervention programs for high-risk youth. Previous to EDC, during her tenure with New England Research Institutes, she developed and evaluated a variety of public health interventions for women and high-risk families. She is an appointee to the Governor's Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence responsible for making policy recommendations to the state of Massachusetts.

Recently, Dr. Schumacher Karjane completed the congressionally mandated investigation *Research on Procedures of Higher Education to Report Sexual Assault*, funded by the National Institute of Justice. The groundbreaking two-year study, summarized in the widely praised *Campus Sexual Assault: How America's Institutions of Higher Education Respond (2002)*, provides a comprehensive benchmark of sexual assault policy on the Nation's campuses. The investigation—which included content analysis of policy material and surveys of campus administrators from a sample of over 2,400 schools, identification of promising practices, and legal analysis of state statutes—was the first national-level examination of how well the country's institutions of education comply with federal law (i.e., the *Clery Act*) in responding to student allegations of rape and/or sexual assault as well as preventing its occurrence.

Dr. Schumacher Karjane's research interests and designs draw upon ecological models to examine institution and community policies and responses to interpersonal violence (e.g., colleges and universities, hospitals, social service and criminal justice agencies, mass media), as well as to assess their impact on individuals. Her research has been published in leading health, education, and criminal justice journals, including the *National Institute of Justice Research for the Practitioner Series*, and the *Journal of Forensic Nursing*, and is regularly presented at national, international, and local conferences. *The Communication of Trauma in Media Culture: A Poststructural Analysis of Women's Experience of Gender-Based Violence and Healing*, her doctoral research, explored the relationship between women's interpersonal experiences of violence and media violence. Dr. Schumacher Karjane's innovative research on the "communication of trauma" within multiple social contexts has been spotlighted by the National Communication Association.

In addition to her research, Dr. Schumacher Karjane has served as a consultant to Children's Safety Network, a national technical assistance center servicing state maternal and child health agencies, to guide the development of their strategic planning and programming for family and adolescent dating violence, and the Media Education Foundation, to develop content for *The Date Rape Backlash: The Media and the Denial of Rape*, an educational video designed to address media coverage of rape. She is the founding co-editor of *CommOddities: A Journal of Communication and Culture*, an internationally distributed cultural studies journal, and serves as a reviewer, specializing in interpersonal violence manuscripts, for the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*. She holds a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, an M.A. in Gender and Feminist Studies from Simmons University, and a B.A. in Psychology and Women's Studies from Rutgers University.

## **Deborah D. Tucker, MPA**

Deborah Tucker is the executive director for the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence in Austin, Texas. Established in 1998, the center sponsors conferences and provides customized training, consultation, and technical assistance nationwide. It also trains law enforcement officers nationwide on their response to domestic violence and sexual assault. Funded through the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, the center collaborates with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the National Center for Rural Law Enforcement to improve educational opportunities. The center is partnering with the Battered Women's Justice Project to demonstrate collaboration in military and civilian response to domestic violence in Jacksonville, Florida, with the Navy and in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and Clarksville, Tennessee with the Army.

Ms. Tucker has been dedicated to ending violence against women since she became a volunteer and then a staff member at the first rape crisis center in Texas in 1973. During her tenure, she represented the group in studying the battering of women in the Austin area as part of the National Organization for Women's national study of domestic violence. She directed the first domestic violence shelter in Texas, the Austin Center for Battered Women, from 1977 to 1982. (The two organizations have since merged into Safeplace, a Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survivor Center.)

From 1982 until 1996, she founded and directed the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV), one of the largest state coalitions, with more than 50 staff members, which provides training and technical assistance, public policy advocacy, and public education. She assisted other communities in Texas in establishing shelters and other services for battered women, initiated batterer's treatment programs, and represented battered women to the Texas Legislature. Additionally, in this role, she advocated for the laws and policies necessary to improve the response of the criminal justice system to domestic violence. TCFV was awarded the responsibility to operate the National Domestic Violence Hotline (800-799-SAFE) during Ms. Tucker's tenure.

In 1996, Ms. Tucker joined Sarah M. Buel in opening Tucker, Buel and Associates. The firm offered customized consultation and training to end violence against women. Through her work with the firm, Ms. Tucker was able to draw upon her experiences and knowledge to assist a wide variety of professional and advocacy groups in combating violence against women. In 1998, Ms. Tucker and Ms. Buel co-founded the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Ms. Tucker has extensive experience at the national level; she served as founding chair of the National Network to End Domestic Violence during its development and passage of the Violence Against Women Act. She was nationally recognized for her leadership by being awarded the Marshall's Domestic Violence Peace Prize. Ms. Tucker served as co-chair of the Defense Task Force on Domestic Violence from 2000-2003. She is on the Advisory Board for the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence and the Board of Texans Against Gun Violence.

## Appendix 2: Noteworthy MAJCOM Practices

The following list represents each MAJCOM’s list of self-reported programs. These programs may not necessarily be implemented across an entire command, and may be base-specific. Additionally, many of these programs are newly implemented as part of an effort to improve sexual assault response and prevention and have not been evaluated.

Source	Area	Program name	Details
AFA	Policy/Leadership	ART (Assault Response Team)	<p>The purpose of the ART is to provide effective, immediate response and victim support, as well as follow-on case management. Additionally, ART performs tracking and reporting of sexual assault cases. ART has four major responsibilities: (1) first response; (2) case management; (3) training; and (4) assessment.</p> <p>In its first response role, Tier I of the ART will be notified immediately upon report of an allegation of sexual assault. The Tier I team consists of the Vice Commandant of Cadets, a Victim Advocate Coordinator, an AFOSI liaison, a legal liaison, an AFOSI representative and a Security Forces representative.</p> <p>The AFOSI liaison and legal liaison are detailed directly to the Vice Commandant and, along with the Victim Advocate Coordinator, will be responsible for ensuring that the complainant is offered all available services and for explaining to the complainant the applicable investigative and legal processes. Whenever necessary, the Vice Commandant may activate Tier 2 of the response team, which could include chaplains or medical personnel. Additionally, the Vice Commandant will be responsible for the dissemination of information up or down the chain of command.</p> <p>In its case management role, the ART will address longer-term</p>

<b>Source</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Program name</b>	<b>Details</b>
			issues, such as whether the complainant or the alleged perpetrator should be moved out of the dormitories and if the complainant needs assistance in alleviating the impact on her studies. Most importantly, the ART will be responsible for addressing collateral misconduct and infractions committed by a complainant or witnesses to the offense and, where warranted, stopping inappropriate Academy cadet disciplinary actions that may be in process. In its training role, the ART will be responsible for providing training to all levels of the Academy.
ACC	Policy/Leadership	Sexual Assault Prevention Project (SAPP)	SAPP, taking into account the unique characteristics of AF sexual assault victims, provides information and offers resources to victims of sexual assault. SAPP includes both education/training and reporting/response capabilities. Partnerships with the University Medical Center SANE program as well as the Rape Crisis Center maximize educational opportunities. Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) serve in a victim care capacity and integrate all pieces of the AF response to a sexual assault.
11th Wing	Education/Training	"Leader's Guide to Managing Personnel in Distress"	Guide specifically referencing response and reporting procedures for new CC's.
11th Wing	Policy/Leadership	Partnership Council	Forum established to allow for interaction between federal/military branches.
ACC	Assessment	Dormitory Climate Assessment	Annual assessment geared towards identifying quality of life issues.
ACC	Assessment	CAIB tracking	Use of the CAIB to track known sexual offenders in the area.

Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

<b>Source</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Program name</b>	<b>Details</b>
ACC	Policy /Leadership	Dormitory Initiatives	Various dormitory programs/monitoring techniques instituted.
ACC	Response	SART (Sexual Assault Response Team)	This is a team that includes the OSI, JA, Chaplain, Life Skills, Law Enforcement, and off-base rape crisis response centers. It provides an integrated approach to victim care (see SAPP).
ACC	Education /Training	"Choices have consequences"	This is a Nellis program consisting of an educational video with a discussion-oriented briefing. It includes a presentation on sexual assault targeted at Right Start, FTAC, etc.
ACC	Education /Training	"Relationship survival"	PPT briefing that deals with the myths/realities and prevention of sexual assault.
ACC	Education /Training	Pre-deployment briefings	Pre-deployment sexual assault awareness brief in the mobility line which includes the distribution of wallet/pocket cards.
ACC	Education /Training	Healthy relationships presentation	Explains characteristics of healthy adult relationships.
ACC	Education /Training	Chaplain programs	These programs provide sexual assault training to chaplains. Also, chaplains have been reassigned to groups that place them out of their offices into the unit work areas in order to increase visibility.
AETC	Policy /Leadership	AETC Communication Plan	Assists wings in responding to the media when a SA issue arises.
AETC	Education /Training	SA Awareness, Prevention, & Assistance /Don't Marry a Jerk	Unique awareness programs to educate airmen about being smart in relationships.
AETC	Education /Training	Data automated SA awareness briefing	Computer training available to all students.
AETC	Education /Training	Technical Training prevention programs	Lackland: weekly rape awareness briefing provided to all incoming female technical training students.  Goodfellow and Keesler: SA awareness briefings for all new pipeline students.

Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

<b>Source</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Program name</b>	<b>Details</b>
			"Wingman" programs at several bases similar to the buddy system ensure trainees always have others with them.
AETC	Education /Training	VWAP publicity techniques: targeted towards airmen	Bases use pocket cards, Web sites, computer login banners, articles, etc. to inform population about services.
AETC	Reporting	Wallet cards	Cards distributed during in-processing with sexual assault reporting procedures and commonly needed phone numbers.
AETC	Response	Assault notification checklist	Used to assist in communication with all functional agencies, making sure they are kept informed of a reported SA.
AETC	Policy/Leadership	Legal case reviews	Review of cases closed without UCMJ action for future case review purposes.
AETC	Response	MOU's and use of community resources	Working relationships and formalized information sharing agreements with off-base medical facilities and crisis counseling centers that deal with SA. Some regularly use center counselors for training and guidance.
AETC	Response	Victim Monitors	Individuals charged with contacting victims on a monthly basis to give them case status updates.
AFA	Policy/Leadership	Cadet X/Cadet Y slides	Slides provided on a weekly basis to illustrate action taken in response to alleged SA cases. Assists in rumor control among cadets.
AFA	Education/Training	Integrated program approach	Ongoing training conducted for all cadets consisting of interactive small group discussion, role playing, and videos.
AFA	Education/Training	TESSA (Trust, Education, Safety, Support, Action)	Utilization of SA community resource experts to provide interactive training sessions.
AFA	Reporting	MOU: Anonymous report form	Established an MOU with local rape crisis center to provide generic information on use of center by AFA personnel.

Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

<b>Source</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Program name</b>	<b>Details</b>
AFA	Reporting	Commandant's Guidance	Memorandum that explicitly spells out where, when, and how to report SA.
AFA	Response	Victim Advocates	Use of full-time and collateral victim advocates as a victim care measure. Provided to all victims, regardless of legal case status.
AFMC	Response	MOA/Formal Partnerships	Several bases working on MOAs with civilian agencies, and one has established an interagency SA council.
AFMC	Education/Training	Pamphlet	Locally developed pamphlet for crime victims.
AFMC	Policy/Leadership	VWAP Council Realignment	Placed VWAP Council under IDS/CAIB to streamline information flow.
AFMC	Policy/Leadership	Navy Programs	Use of Navy SAVI program and red/yellow light system for categorizing relationship behavior.
AFMC	Policy/Leadership	"Big Brother"	Wing commanders meet personally with all young females who are deploying and often assign a male airman to act as a big brother during deployment.
AFMC	Policy/Leadership	Communication Plan	IDS is currently developing a command plan to prevent and respond to SA incidents when they do occur.
AFMC	Policy/Leadership	OHC's (Organizational Health Centers)	Use of Organizational Health Centers to assist commanders with morale issues and improving organizational climate.
AFMC	Policy/Leadership	Internal website to share UCA results	Information sharing mechanism to communicate best practices/concerns found during UCAs.
AFMC	Training/Education	Reality based training	Use of reality based training course in FTAC.
AFMC	Training/Education	Internal training	Agencies train each other in functional responsibilities.
AFMC	Response	CC meetings with helping agencies	Partnership and information sharing weekly meetings to review the status of domestic violence, child abuse, and SA cases.

Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

<b>Source</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Program name</b>	<b>Details</b>
AFMC	Response	CC briefings	Victim and accused status is briefed to wing CC to aid in information sharing.
AFRC	Training/Education	"Understanding Sexual Assault"	Family Support Center slides and PowerPoint presentation.
AFSOC	Training/Education	BHS	Voluntary Spouses orientation programs, associated training initiatives.
AFSOC	Training/Education	Inclusion of community agencies for training purposes	Hurlburt Field uses a rotating calendar inviting community agencies to speak at various venues.
AFSOC	Training/Education	Moody Programs	Web site is a comprehensive training, reporting, and response tool for SA-related issues and questions. Additionally, Moody has a "Responsible Relationships" briefing.
AFSOC	Training/Education	Sexual Assault Campaign Plan	Plan focusing on educating victims as well as subjects. Covers everything from education to response programs available.
AFSOC	Training/Education	Chapel programs	Sessions for singles on boundaries in dating, and for married couples on intimacy in marriage.
AFSOC	Training/Education	Annual first responder training	Personnel who may be required to interact with victims are provided with annual training. Use of Domestic Violence Training at Naval Air Station, which has specific SA/Rape training.
AFSOC	Training/Education	"Boundaries and Dating"	Educational presentation concerning relationships.
AFSOC	Reporting	SITES: Standard Installation Topic Exchange Service	Web site providing information on whom SA victims can report to and how to report.
AFSPC	Training/Education	SA Taskforce	Integrated team focused on designing a formal prevention program targeting base members and dependents.
AFSPC	Reporting	MOU	MOU that ensures community resources and information are available to airmen and unit leadership.

Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

<b>Source</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Program name</b>	<b>Details</b>
AFSPC	Policy/Leadership	Dormitory Initiatives	Various dormitory programs/monitoring techniques instituted.
AFSPC	Response	Crisis Support Teams	CSTs look at all of the individuals in a situation who need or might need support (victim, accused, family, etc.) and work with Life Skills and the VWAPC to ensure all are kept informed and receive treatment.
AFSPC	Policy/Leadership	SA Surveys	Surveys monitor attitudes about SA, alcohol use, and personal safety.
AFSPC	Training/Education	"Helping Victims/Witnesses of Crime"	Guide designed by VWAP coordinator for victims and witnesses of crime. Similar guide being developed for CCs.
AFSPC	Training/Education	Responsible Drinking Culture	0-0-1-3 drinking norm advocated, link to SA prevention provided.
AFSPC	Training/Education	"Was it Sex or was it Rape"	SJA developed briefing available to all airmen.
AFSPC	Training/Education	"Acquaintance/Date Rape"	FAP designed educational briefing for all personnel.
AFSPC	Training/Education	Character Videos	Real case scenario video using airmen from the base as actors to illustrate common unhealthy behaviors.
AFSPC	Training/Education	SANE nurse training	SANE nurses brief first responders on what is involved in the medical and evidentiary gathering processes for SA victims.
AFSPC	Reporting	Reporting checklist	Matrix to assist in responding to SA and other crimes.
AFSPC	Reporting	Incident Response Checklist	Checklist including useful memory joggers, e.g., people to call as well as actions to take.
AFSPC	Response	Victim Response Panel	Allows victims an avenue for discussion of SA case handling.
AFSPC	Response	ASART	Adult Sexual Assault Response Team: Involves victim response personnel, and ensures robust coordination among all relevant agencies.
AMC	Training/Education	Integrated program approach	Use of stage presentations, videos, and an interactive CD to increase understanding of response,

Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

<b>Source</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Program name</b>	<b>Details</b>
			reporting, and support available to airmen.
AMC	Policy/Leadership	SNCO position	SNCO position as Special Assistant to the Commander on Sexual Assault Issues.
AMC	Reporting	MOU	Most bases had formal agreements where reports of SA made to local off-base agencies would be reported back to the appropriate base agency.
AMC	Training/Education	Self defense courses	SF sponsored self defense course for base populace.
AMC	Training/Education	"Dorm Calls"	M/F ppt briefing sessions
AMC	Training/Education	Reality based training	Two-hour FTAC seminar on relationship skills/dynamics using ppt slides and interactive discussion.
AMC	Training/Education	"Managing Personnel in Distress"	CD for new commanders.
AMC	Training/Education	Dormitory Briefing/Awareness Programs	Split gendered, mass briefing to dorm residents specifically concerning SA.
AMC	Training/Education	OSI Trend brief	Information on the date rape drug.
AMC	Training/Education	Self defense training	Course offered in conjunction with the local police department.
AMC	Training/Education	Pre- and Post-Deployment Briefings	Briefings for personnel who are being deployed or are coming off a rotation that address SA/Domestic Violence issues.
AMC	Training/Education	"Don't Marry a Jerk"	Program to educate men and women on being smart in relationships.
AMC	Reporting	Contact lists	Bases have contact lists for on-base agencies that are involved in SA response.
AMC	Response	Personnel Issues Meetings	Weekly meetings where senior wing leadership is informed of SA case status.
ANG	Training/Education	POSH training classes	Training classes that stress personal accountability.

Report Concerning the Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

<b>Source</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Program name</b>	<b>Details</b>
ANG	Policy/Leadership	Zero Tolerance Policy	Zero tolerance from leadership concerning any sexual misconduct. Aimed at cultivating a strong culture of respect, excellence, and strong advocacy of victims' rights.
CENTAF	Training/Education	SA Primer	Provides JA additional education on the topic of SA.
CENTAF	Training/Education	"Candy Grams"	Addresses the issue of SA and alcohol consumption in a personal e-mail to all base residents.
PACAF	Policy/Leadership	VWAP Questionnaire	Survey given to victims in order to improve the response process and solicit feedback.
PACAF	Policy/Leadership	Joint Services Family Center	Provides asylum for victims of SA/Domestic Abuse as well as a 24/7 hotline.
PACAF	Response	Crime Update Forum	Forum attended by all involved functionals for case information sharing.
PACAF	Response	Sexual Assault Response Team	Immediately responds (can assemble within 30 minutes) to cases of SA, working in tandem with a community agency, Standing Together Against Rape (STAR), for SA victim advocacy, legal aid, and counseling.
USAFE	Policy/Leadership	Victim survey	Written mechanism to gain victim feedback on AF SA process.
USAFE	Policy/Leadership	SAVI	Use of Navy Sexual Assault Victim Intervention program.
USAFE	Policy/Leadership	SARRT	Sexual Assault Response and Resources Team provides case management and oversight.
USAFE	Training/Education	DoD SA expert: Barbara Craig	All inclusive training program: medical, psychological, and social aspects of assault.
USAFE	Reporting	Reporting checklist	Matrix to assist in responding to SA and other crimes.
USAFE	Response	Community Resource Listings	List of available off-base services for SA victims.
USAFE	Response	Sexual Assault Response and Resources Team	Victim care/program oversight team that effectively cross- flows information until case completion.

<b>Source</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Program name</b>	<b>Details</b>
USAFE	Response	First Sergeant Sexual Assault Response Checklist	Guides FSs in responding to needs of SA victims.
USAFE	Response	Medical Management Flowchart	Explains medical processes for SA victim treatment.

# Appendix 3: Corporate Benchmarking Efforts

## **Methodology and Results of Corporate Benchmarking**

In an effort to evaluate sexual assault response and prevention in the private sector, the sexual assault policies of thirty organizations were catalogued and analyzed. These organizations were selected from Fortune and BusinessWeek magazine listings of corporations with highly admirable business practices. The list of organizations was further narrowed down based on congruencies (possessing a large workforce, international presence and operations, multiple product/service divisions, etc.) with the Air Force. A template was designed for this effort, following the structure of the questionnaire that had been distributed to each MAJCOM. The template appears below. Preliminary research was completed for each organization, to determine whether sexual assault policy was mentioned in publicly available documents, including each organizations employee code of conduct. Additionally, each organization was contacted by telephone and/or email in an attempt to speak with a human resources representative and have them respond to the questions posed in the template. Unfortunately, the vast majority of organizations (25/30) were unwilling to share any information relating to their corporate sexual assault policy. Of those who were willing to discuss the topic, all stated that local law enforcement personnel would handle a reported sexual assault. In assessing each organizations employee code of conduct and corporate governance documents, all had detailed references to sexual harassment, and reporting procedures for harassment complaints, though only one-third mentioned sexual assault. Because of the lack of information available through direct contact with each organization, a case study methodology was assumed. The policies of Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America (MMMA) were analyzed, as well as a well-publicized lawsuit brought against the organization for sexual harassment. The organizational climate prior to the case, the details of the lawsuit, and the resultant policy changes that MMMA put into effect were reviewed.

**Corporate Benchmarking Table**

	Code of Conduct References	Sexual Harassment	Sexual Assault	Education & Training	Awareness Education	Prevention Education	Reporting Procedures	Multiple Avenues avail.	Hotline	Anonymous Reporting	Response Programs	Statement concerning action	Internal channels available	Program Oversight	No retaliation against victims	Prompt Investigation
Mitsubishi	X		X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X		
Progressive Corporation	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X		
Xerox Corporation	X		X			X	X			X			X			
Johnson and Johnson	X	X	X			X	X	X		X			X	X		
MBNA America	X		X			X	X	X					X			
Nike	X		X			X				X			X	X		
Wal-Mart Stores, INC	X		X	X		X	X									
Southwest Airlines	X		X													
General Electric	X		X			X										
Starbucks Coffee	X	X	X			X	X			X			X	X		
Proctor and Gamble	X		X			X				X					X	
Walt Disney Company	X		X			X	X	X		X			X			
General Mills	X	X	X			X	X	X					X	X		
Sysco Corporation	X		X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X		
Citigroup	X		X			X	X	X		X			X	X		
American Express	X		X			X		X		X					X	
United Parcel Service	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X		
BellSouth Corporation	X		X	X		X				X			X	X		
Microsoft Corporation	X		X			X	X	X					X	X		
Tyson Foods Inc.	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X		
Halliburton Company	X	X	X			X				X			X	X		
Home Depot	X		X			X	X	X					X			
Time Warner	X	X	X			X	X	X		X			X	X		
Best Buy	X		X			X	X	X		X			X	X		
Sears Roebuck	X	X	X			X	X	X		X			X	X		
PepsiCo	X		X			X	X	X		X			X	X		
Ace Hardware	X		X													
USAA	X		X													
IBM	X	X	X			X	X	X		X			X	X		
Coca Cola	X		X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X		

## Private Sector Template: Sexual Assault Review

Questions asked of each HR staff member contacted for private sector benchmarking sexual assault review follow.

These questions will be posed to organizations that confirm addressing the issue of sexual assault within individual company policy (either as a part of sexual harassment procedures or independently).

### Education & Training:

1. What awareness education and training is provided to employees and supervisors?
  - Where, when, by whom or by what media? How frequently?
  - Do you use a standard curriculum? How was this curriculum developed (e.g. guided by laws, company policy, etc.)?
2. Prevention Programs—What programs are available, how effective are they, and how are they communicated to employees? Respond to all of the following that apply in your company:
  - Work environment (plant, office, etc.)
  - Orientation/training environment

### Reporting Procedures:

3. What are the existing reporting systems and processes used to report sexual assault allegations?
  - Have you received any complaints of impediments to reporting, including attitudes, environments, or other factors?
  - If so, what are they and what has or is being done to overcome these impediments?
  - Does a particular environment lead to any repression of ability to report sexual assaults (e.g. training, travel)?
  - Are there corporate policies for timelines regarding the reporting of sexual assaults to law enforcement agencies?
4. Do you have methods or programs that cross-flow information on sexual assaults?
  - If so, what are they and how do they work?
  - Have you encountered barriers to the cross-flow of information?
  - If so, what are they, and what have you done to eliminate them?
5. Where sexual assaults have occurred, are there demonstrable common denominators (e.g., alcohol)?

### Response Programs:

6. Individual:
  - Are victim advocates assigned?
  - If so, are they professionally trained and qualified?
  - Are they available when the victim chooses not to proceed with a legal investigation?

- Are victims informed of resources, services, and rights?
    - By whom, when, in what way?
  - How long does medical and counseling support last in each of the following environments, if applicable in your business?
    - Work environment
    - Training environments
  - How are counselors and others involved in your sexual assault response programs trained?
    - How often, by whom, using what media?
    - Are counseling/rehabilitation/wellness programs used to assist the accused or “other parties” (e.g., suicide prevention, alcohol counseling, marriage counseling, etc.)?
7. Internal (investigative, legal, and administrative remedies):
- Does your company have a victim assistance program?
    - Have you received complaints from victims or witnesses about their treatment within this program?
      - If so, what types of complaints and where they validated or not?
    - How are your employees informed of your victim assistance program?
  - Are corporate actions resulting from complaints of sexual assault communicated in any manner to other members of the organization?
    - If so, which employees are included in the communication (managers/supervisors, executive officers)?
    - Are there reports or complaints indicating that victim’s feel “re-victimized” by the process for handling their allegations?
8. Community:
- Are victims referred to outside agencies?
    - If so, under what circumstances?
    - Do your supervisors/managers coordinate with outside agencies and is there a forum to allow interaction between the company and local communities?
      - If so, what is the structure of this forum?

**Program Oversight:**

- 9. What tools do you provide to assist supervisors in dealing with employee reports of sexual assault?
- 10. Do your supervisors proactively work this issue, and when necessary, do they respond appropriately during a sexual assault case? (assessing workplace environment)
  - If so, please provide one or more best practices.
  - If not, why and what can be done about it?

11. Is there a single point of integration at the organization for sexual assault?
  - If so, what is this point?
12. Communication:
  - Is there an adequate communication plan that makes it clear to all members of your sexual assault response programs where, when, and how to report?
  - How do the members of your sexual assault response programs monitor ongoing cases and learn of the disposition of individual cases?
  - Are victims told of the disposition of the case and, if so, by whom, when, and in what detail?
  - Is the company kept informed of sexual assaults? If so, how, when and by what media? (control of rumors and misperceptions)
  - When does a supervisor first know of an alleged sexual assault?
13. Performance Management and Monitoring:
  - How are the results of sexual assaults incidents communicated to levels of the company?
  - Are there any best practices that companies are using to monitor the force? Any leading-edge indicators developed? Measures or metrics?

## Appendix 4: Victim Support Liaison Memorandum



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON DC



1 APR 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM-FOA-DRU/CC  
DISTRIBUTION C

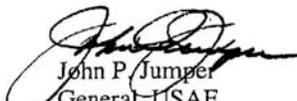
SUBJECT: Interim Measure for Victim Support

As we travel around the world, we are convinced that our Air Force is one of the safe environments in which to live and work, and that is why we find the issue of sexual assault to most troubling. While the vast majority of our Airmen act with great respect, care, and honor toward each other, sexual assaults are a societal problem, and, as such, are reflected in our Air Force. That is not an excuse, but it adds importance to solving the problem since our nation properly holds us to a higher standard.

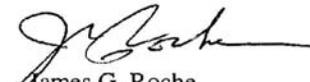
Many of you are in the middle of your MAJCOM assessments, and we look forward to reviewing those results in early April. However, it is obvious there is one area where we must move forward now: victim care and support. We all agree that we can do a better job. To help in that effort, attached is a template, benchmarked from several different programs, that you might wish to adopt to fit your command needs. Another good source of information is the Nellis AFB Sexual Assault Prevention Project, at website <https://wwwmil.nellis.af.mil/units/ja/SAPP.htm>. While we continue working toward an agreed Air Force-wide program, these suggestions represent proven victim support programs for your interim consideration.

The role of the victim support liaison is to focus solely on the alleged victim of the sexual assault and to support him/her throughout the process. Victim support must continue as long as the victim's needs exist regardless of whether a case is prosecuted. The Vice Wing Commander or installation equivalent, should exercise oversight of victim liaisons and ensure the liaisons have direct access to him or her when circumstances warrant. The liaisons must keep the chain of command informed of the process and the victim's well being. Victim liaisons can be appointed from a variety of organizations across the installation or from within the unit. This liaison should not be confused with the Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP), but should be additive to the VWAP service. Alternatively, the Nellis AFB program uses a team approach as does the Air Force Academy and, you may have a better approach in mind. You should determine which works best in your commands.

We will continue refining these interim guidelines as we assess our existing support network, but taking care of sexual assault victims must be our first concern. We have made this a priority, and we appreciate your personal involvement as well.



John P. Jumper  
General, USAF  
Chief of Staff



James G. Roche  
Secretary of the Air Force

Attachment:  
Guidelines/Checklist

**A Basic Model for Sexual Assault Victim Support  
Guidelines**

1. The Vice Wing Commander should identify an appropriate number of individuals to serve as victim support liaisons. Normally, victim support liaisons should not be assigned from the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) or the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate (JA), as these organizations will provide other dedicated services to the victim. Upon initial notification of an alleged sexual assault, the Vice Wing Commander, or installation equivalent, will ensure a Victim Support Liaison is appointed, exercise oversight of the performance of liaison duties and ensure direct access for the liaisons. Individuals performing these duties should be mature, objective, and trustworthy.
2. The role of the Victim Support Liaison is to focus only on the alleged victim of the sexual assault, to support him/her throughout the process, ensure continuity of care without regard to the outcome of legal or administrative actions, and close the seams among the many AF functions that must respond to the victim's needs.
3. Victim Support Liaisons must have unfiltered access to the Vice Commander for purposes of this duty. The assignment of a victim support liaison does not substitute for normal command/supervisory responsibilities in caring for the victim. They do not replace, for example, the very important assistance provided by First Sergeants. They will provide day-to-day support throughout the process, which will likely last beyond any specific judicial procedure.
4. The liaison does not need to know any details of the alleged assault and should not solicit them.
5. The liaison cannot provide confidentiality to the victim. The liaison may provide information on the availability of confidential counseling provided by the installation chaplains. The liaison will provide information on the full range of on and off-base assistance available, e.g. chaplains, family support center, medical and off-base crisis centers and support groups.
6. The liaison should ensure that the individual is treated in a dignified, respectful, and considerate manner by all staff.
7. Victim support liaisons are not counselors, legal officials, or investigators, and should not attempt to provide any type of clinical counseling or guidance that should be provided by a professional in AF Life Skills professions, legal office or the OSI. They do provide critical care giving support to assist the individual through out the initial response, investigative, legal and recovery process until the victim is on the path to restored health and well-being.
8. Victim support liaisons must be thoroughly briefed on their responsibilities and the need for sensitivity and privacy (in the sense of close hold information). Upon receipt of these guidelines, it is important to assemble a meeting of key functional representatives through which the victim support liaisons will be assisting the victim to navigate. This should include as a minimum the SF, OSI, JA, SG, Family Support, and First Sergeant. The Family Advocacy Officer will serve as OPR to facilitate orientation/education for the liaisons. A template with lesson plan and slides will be provided by separate cover. First sergeants and Family Support Center specialists are also valuable resources for advising the interim victim support liaisons.

9. Victim support liaisons will keep the appropriate members of the chain of command informed of the process and the victim's well being.

**Victim Support Liaison Checklist**

**Note:** After meeting with your internal victim support agencies (e.g. SF, OSI, JA, SG, HC), you may wish to supplement this checklist with more specific instructions.

**First Contact:**

1. After introducing yourself to the sexual assault victim, find a private place to talk. At all times, treat the victim with dignity and sensitivity.
2. Ensure the victim understands the limits to the privacy protection you can provide (strict, official need to know, but not confidential communications).
3. Discuss your role as the Victim Support Liaison.
  - a. Make sure the victim knows she/he does not have to disclose any details of the alleged assault to you (and, generally, should not) and do not solicit details
4. Ensure immediate safety and physical needs.
  - a. Working with other support agencies; if immediate medical attention is needed, accompany the victim to the appropriate medical facility.

**Discussion of services available to the victim:**

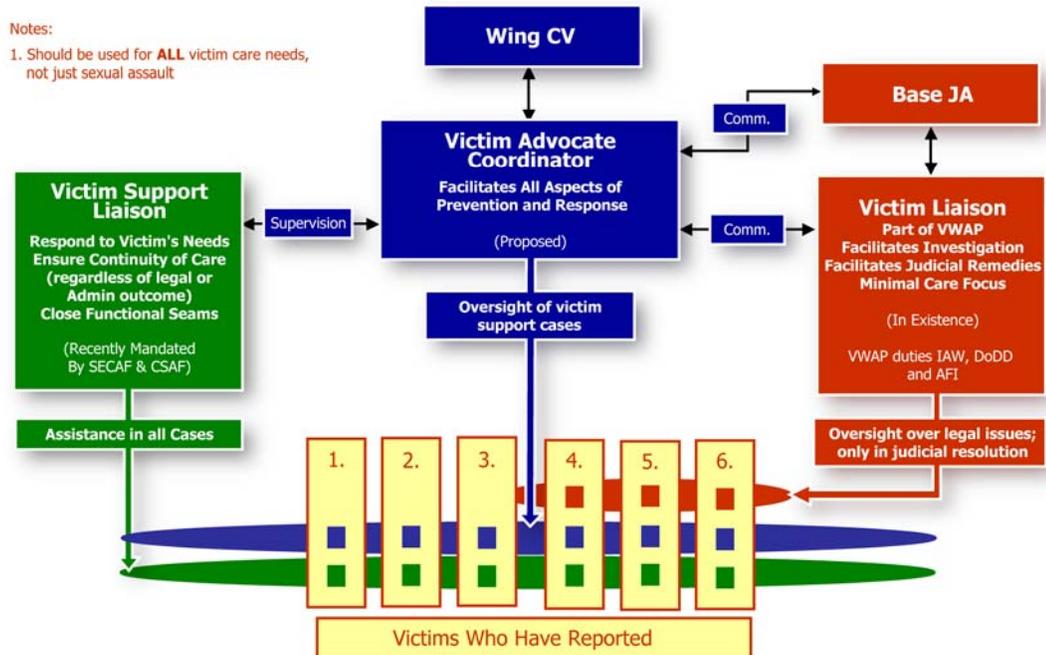
1. Discuss sexual assault reporting (insert local procedures). Note that the victim will likely have already been given some information.
2. Discuss the counseling services that are available immediately as well as for follow-up.
3. Discuss the spiritual services that are available immediately as well as for follow-up.
4. If a forensic examination is necessary, you may accompany the victim to the hospital and explain the role of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE). After the exam is completed, assist with any needs such as obtaining food or drink and the need to make any personal phone calls.
5. The liaison may accompany the victim to the OSI interview but should remain in the waiting room. After the victim has spoken with the OSI and has been released, talk with the victim about such issues as: her/his concerns about safety, duty requirements, and classes she or he may be attending, etc...any work or social engagements that may need temporary adjustment. Note: The OSI may return the victim to the First Sergeant or other chain of command.
6. Assist in arranging what services (if any) the victim states she or he would like to receive (chaplain, counseling, legal appointment, etc.)

**Follow-Up and Tracking Services:**

1. Provide continued support at whatever levels the victim requires and that is available. Allow the victim's actions and decisions to guide you, within the law. Keep the appropriate members of the victim's chain of command informed of the process and the victim's well being.
2. Make personal contact with the victim at least every 2-3 days to make sure she or he is coping well until it is mutually agreed to terminate contact regardless of whether any legal case is closed.

3. Work with appropriate installation agencies to ensure that the victim is kept reasonably informed if prosecution of the perpetrator is on-going. (Coordinate your activities with the legal office's VWAP liaison to avoid inconsistent information and services.)
4. Should the victim be transferred to another installation, work with appropriate agencies to ensure that the victim is not dropped from care. In the event the victim leaves the Service, discuss with the victim available services in the community and offer to make an initial contact.
5. Keep the Vice Wing Commander, or installation equivalent, informed of the status of victim care and of any assistance needed that cannot be, or is not being, readily met by base providers.

## Appendix 5: Victim Advocate Coordinator Example



This graphic presents one possible scenario for day-to-day management of victim care discussed by the headquarters IPT. As noted in Recommendation Ten, broad oversight for sexual assault prevention and response would be provided by a designated OPR at the MAJCOM and base level. The OPR would be responsible for ensuring implementation of overarching Air Force policy and execution of the Air Force’s training strategy.

Prevention and response activities could be overseen at the MAJCOM and base-level by Victim Advocate Coordinators. The Victim Advocate Coordinator would oversee and integrate the response efforts of Victim Support Liaisons (or equivalent organizations) and interface with VWAP Liaisons to ensure a high level of victim care across the full continuum of sexual assault response activities. The Victim Advocate Coordinator would provide oversight of victim care in all sexual assault cases, supervise the Victim Support Liaisons in their day-to-day interaction with victims, and report directly to the wing CV. Working with the Victim Support Liaisons, the Victim Advocate Coordinator would respond to specific victim care needs, ensure continuity of care, and close any seams or gaps that emerge in the response efforts of functional agencies. The Victim Advocate Coordinator would work in partnership with the VWAP Liaison, interfacing as necessary to ensure the smooth flow of information, efficient investigation and prosecution, and ongoing victim care and support. The Victim Advocate Coordinator would also work with community service providers to build and maintain partnerships critical to the care of Air Force victims.

This structure would integrate the different aspects of a sexual assault case, ensuring the needs of victims are adequately addressed and balancing those needs with investigation/adjudication requirements. The new structure should increase information sharing capabilities, ensure that victims receive the support and information they need, and facilitate the decentralized execution of the Air Force’s sexual assault policy.