



STORY RELEASE



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2 CR trains Soldiers, Families on ways to prevent sexual assault, protect each other

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ROSE BARRACKS, Germany – The 2d Cavalry Regiment Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention program office hosted an information booth at the Rose Barracks post exchange building April 16, 2013.

The SHARP team's goal to inform Soldiers and their Families about April being sexual assault prevention month and explain the SHARP program and how and where someone could report an instance of sexual assault or harassment. The information reinforces the Army's commitment to eliminate incidents of sexual assault.

The SHARP program is part of every unit. There are unit victim advocates in each battalion size unit and, or above to assist Soldiers and Families whose lives have been affected by sexual assault or harassment. The U.S. Army has put a strong emphasis on training Soldiers about the program.

"I like the emphasis they (U.S. Army) are putting on the SHARP program. It needs to be out there and needs to be explained," said Sgt. 1st Class Nichelle Clay-Vaughn, SHARP Unit Victim Advocate for Regimental Support Squadron, "because some Soldiers just don't get it and I don't want their first interaction to be as a victim."

Clay-Vaughn has been a UVA under the previous sexual assault prevention program since 2009 and attended the SHARP training when it started earlier this year. In addition to her four years experience she also has a family member who has been affected.

"When we transferred over to the SHARP program I decided to stay because its one of my passions and I also have had an experience with my own child," said Clay-Vaughn.

Being informed is the key to prevent sexual assault. The SHARP training program focuses on prevention and training Soldiers to be aware of their surroundings and what actions to take if they see a situation that could become an incident.

“I let the Soldiers know that we are one big family, we spend more time around each other than we do our own families. So, to me, you are my brother or sister and if I see you in trouble I want to help prevent it,” said Clay-Vaughn, “I feel like, even if you out-rank me or not, that everyone belongs to me and if I see you getting into a bad situation it’s my duty to prevent it.”

Clay-Vaughn advises Soldiers to act if they see another person that might become a victim.

“They are your sisters and brothers, their parents entrusted us to take care of them, and each other, and that’s what we are here for, so, if you think that something is going on then just remove that person from the situation,” said Clay-Vaughn.

Soldiers that have been harassed or assaulted can report it in two different ways, restricted and unrestricted.

Restricted Reporting

This option is recommended for victims of sexual assault who wish to confidentially disclose the crime to specifically identified individuals and receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering the official investigative process. Service members who are sexually assaulted and desire restricted reporting under this policy must report the assault to a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), Victim Advocate (VA), or a healthcare provider.

Unrestricted Reporting

This option is recommended for victims of sexual assault who desire medical treatment, counseling and an official investigation of the crime. When selecting unrestricted reporting, you should use current reporting channels, e.g. chain of command, law enforcement or report the incident to the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), or request healthcare providers to notify law enforcement. Upon notification of a reported sexual assault, the SARC will immediately assign a Victim Advocate (VA). At the victim’s discretion and, or request, the healthcare provider shall conduct a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE), which may include the collection of evidence. Details regarding the incident will be limited to only those personnel who have a legitimate need to know.

“I was really surprised that they were willing to help me with reporting my situation,” said Spc. Laura Agosto, a 2 CR, Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop Soldier, “I was really happy and comfortable with the whole experience.”

Agosto reported her incident to the 2 CR Unit Victim Advocate, Sgt. 1st Class Wibke Griffin and the unit Sexual Assault Response Coordinator Sgt. 1st Class Walter Blackman and they explained what her options were and how to proceed. They gave her options to report it as restricted or unrestricted and where else to get support.

“Once I came up with my decision they explained each one and what would happen and how, said Agosto, “Nobody has ever sat me down and explained all of this to me before.”

2 CR Soldiers have received the unit SHARP training and are informed of their reporting options and how to prevent future occurrences.

“Compared to what the old sexual harassment and assault training used to be I believe it’s a step in the right direction, it’s a big improvement,” said Sgt. Jonathan Jackson, a Soldier with lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2 CR. “It makes it more involved than just sitting there listening or sitting there watching a slide show.”

The new training is more interactive and consists of a brief on reporting information, a film on sexual assault in the Army and an interactive online training course.

“I think when Soldiers get involved they are part of the solution and become less of part of the problem,” said Jackson.

For more information about sexual assault prevention and reporting you can visit the Army’s SHARP website at <http://www.sexualassault.army.mil/index.cfm>.