Sexual Assault Awareness Month – April 2013

"We Own It...We'll Solve It...Together"

April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Over the last year, the Army achieved great progress toward institutionalizing our Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program. We improved SHARP training, revised command climate surveys, increased investigative and legal efforts to fully employ special victim capability, implemented full-time Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates in brigades and identified program gaps. Together, these achievements are moving our "I. A.M. (Intervene - Act - Motivate) Strong" Sexual Harassment/Assault Prevention Campaign forward to realize our goal of achieving cultural change.

We have worked hard to combat sexual assault and continuously demonstrate our commitment to education and prevention. Although we have come a long way, we still have much to do. Our Army faces many threats and risks, but sexual harassment and sexual assault emanate from within our core, causing a corrosive effect on our unit readiness, team cohesion, command environment and the trust of our Soldiers and family members. We need all Soldiers and Civilians to rededicate themselves to achieving a cultural change that enables intervention, reporting and thorough investigations in response to sexual violence. We must persist in collectively and publicly demonstrating through our actions our commitment to preventing sexual violence, caring for survivors and holding offenders accountable. Our Soldiers and their families are counting on us to lead; we cannot afford to let them down.

As our Army's center of gravity, Commanders and Senior Enlisted Leaders are key to creating a command climate free of sexual violence by setting, exemplifying and enforcing standards of discipline. However, it is the responsibility of all leaders – Soldiers *and* Civilians – to ensure we foster a culture that rejects sexual harassment and sexual assault. As the Army recognizes Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we charge our leaders to revisit command policies and SHARP program action plans and demonstrate its core message of respect for all personnel. We must continue to lead this charge by confronting and changing destructive attitudes. Our Profession of Arms is built on trust and we must make every single effort to take care of and protect each other. We own it, and we'll solve it ...together!

Army Strong!

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