



# SAPR NEWSLETTER

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

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"I'm serious about it. This is important to me. This is unit readiness.  
This is combat readiness. This is morale."

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS

REUTERS INTERVIEW – LAS VEGAS, NEV. – 10 SEPTEMBER 2012

## WE OWN IT...WE'LL SOLVE IT...TOGETHER. 2013 SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH CARRIES THEME OF DUTY AND SOLIDARITY

This April marks the thirteenth annual Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), a national campaign aimed to educate communities and individuals about sexual assault prevention and response.

This year's Department of Defense SAAM theme is: "We Own It ... We'll Solve It ... Together." The new theme's message of duty and solidarity reinforces the Marine Corps tenets of loyalty and faithfulness, and echoes the Commandant's assertion that "it's every Marine's inherent duty to step up and step in to prevent sexual assault."

Sexual Assault Awareness Month provides commands across the Marine Corps the opportunity to highlight SAPR principles and efforts, helping to maintain a positive command climate in which all Marines understand the devastating impact of sexual assault, as well as their responsibility to protect



Brig. Gen. Craig C. Crenshaw, right, with Lt. Col. Gilbert A. Warner, left, speaks after units of 3rd Marine Logistics Group conducted a run for SAAM on Camp Kinser, 20 April 2012. Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Steven A. Dennis.

each other by intervening whenever the situation calls for it.

SARCs and commanders are encouraged to plan awareness events during SAAM. Activities from previous years included training briefs, races, workshops, information booths, and other awareness and promotional events.

## SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS:

"Remember this, not just for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, but whenever a Marine needs your help: You are your brother's and sister's keeper. We always stand together and protect one another. We *always* remain faithful."

– From the SAAM Public Service Announcement. To view the PSA, click [here](#).

KEEPING FAITH





# SAPR CAMPAIGN PLAN UPDATE

## **STRIKE PHASE: COMPLETE. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: ON TRACK**

The 2012 SAPR Campaign Plan, signed by the Commandant in June 2012, has progressed according to schedule. The *Strike* Phase – the first of the plan’s three phases – ended in November, and included the implementation of several training initiatives. Initiating these training efforts, the Commandant held the General Officer Symposium in July, a two-day event focused entirely on SAPR. Sexual assault was also made a centerpiece topic of the 2012 Sergeants Major Symposium, held in August. Other *Strike* Phase initiatives included: Command Team Training for all commanders;

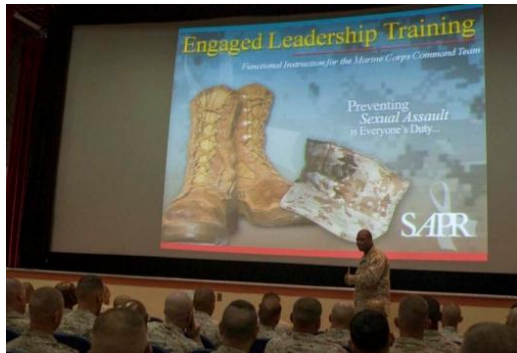
“Take A Stand,” bystander intervention training, for all non-commissioned officers; and All Hands training.

Phase II of the Campaign Plan – the *Implementation* Phase – continues these efforts, with SAPR training being developed for a wide range of environments – from Delayed Entry Programs to Expeditionary Warfare Schools to Commander’s Courses for prospective commanding officers and senior enlisted leaders.

The flagship initiative of Phase II, however, is the implementation of Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs), which are multidisciplinary

teams of first responders that work together to deliver comprehensive care and services to victims of sexual assault.

While a lot of work has yet to be done, Campaign Plan efforts are succeeding in raising awareness of the effects of sexual assault, and instilling the notion that preventing this crime is a duty inherent to every Marine.



LEFT: Marine leaders receive Command Team Training aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., 28 August 2012. Photo by Cpl. Kowshon Ye.

## **NEW MARINE CORPS ORDER SIGNED IN MARCH**

On 1 March 2013, Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1752.5B on the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program was signed by Lt. Gen. R. E. Milstead Jr., Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

The new order details several significant advancements within the SAPR program, including the implementation of Expedited Transfers, SAPR 8-Day Briefs, and new credentialing requirements for SAPR personnel.

To view and download the updated order, visit <https://ehqmc.usmc.mil/org/ar/ard/ardb/default.aspx>. Click on “General Category (SSIC) : 01000 Military Personnel” and “Sub-Category 01-700 Morale, Community and Religious Services.”

## **2013 SARC OF THE YEAR: MAJOR ROBYN MESTEMACHER**

Congratulations to Major Robyn Mestemacher (I MEF), the 2013 Exceptional SARC of the Year. Major Mestemacher will be honored at a ceremony at the Pentagon during Sexual Assault Awareness Month.



**“Those who have had to personally respond to an incident of sexual assault know how poisonous it can be for a command – no matter the outcome.”**

Major Mestemacher, from her article “Sexual Assault” *Marine Corps Gazette*, January 2012



# ATTENTION ALL SARCS, VAs, & UVAs: CREDENTIALING DEADLINE FAST APPROACHING

To meet the 1 October 2013 credentialing deadline specified in the FY12 National Defense Authorization Act, all SARCs, VAs, and UVAs must submit their completed DoD Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program (D-SAACP) application packages to the National Organization of Victim Assistance (NOVA) by **31 July 2013**.

## A FEW TIPS:

The D-SAACP application package – DD Form 2950 – can be downloaded from: [http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/info\\_mgt/forms/eforms/dd2950.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/info_mgt/forms/eforms/dd2950.pdf).

Request a local record check from the Provost Marshal's Office as soon as possible, as it can take weeks to complete. Remember: the results of the record check are for SARC review only. Do NOT submit them to NOVA.

Make certain that your USMC Certificate of Training specifies the completion of 40 hours of training over five consecutive days. Do NOT submit more than one certificate to NOVA. If your certificate differs from the one pictured (top right), contact the Installation SARC who trained you.

The supervisor or senior commanding officer writing your second letter of recommendation must be ranked as follows: O-3 and above, E-7 and above, or GS-9 and above.

Double-check that all your paperwork is signed. Many applications have been returned due to lack of signatures.

For more guidance, consult the sample application packet on the SharePoint SARC workspace [here](#) or the UVA workspace [here](#).



LEFT: Sample of the only approved Victim Advocacy Training Certificate, which must specify the completion of 40 hours of training over five consecutive days.



## DISPELLED

While it is certainly a good thing that the ski-mask-rapist myth is being increasingly dispelled, we must be sure that other, more subtle myths do not emerge in

its wake. The realization that most rapes are not committed by strangers has given rise to terms like “acquaintance rape,” “non-stranger rape,” and “date rape.” The natural tendency is to view such incidents as something other than “actual” rape – something bad, but slightly less criminal.

By extension, victims of acquaintance rape or date rape tend to be looked at as less harmed and are more easily blamed for making bad decisions, like hanging out with the wrong crowd or drinking too much. These are dangerous myths that may contribute to the vast under-reporting of sexual assault, silencing victims who feel compelled to suffer alone. Meanwhile, the date rapist – as opposed to the ski-mask rapist – is often not looked at as a criminal at all, but someone who merely misread the signs, or suffered from a lapse of judgment at the worst possible time. In this way, the ski-mask-rapist myth is reframed and lives on, continuing to affect us by giving cover to offenders who do not fit its relatively uncommon paradigm.

The truth is – by either malice or willful unawareness – those who commit date rape often show a pattern of this behavior, and the lives of their many victims are changed forever. Rape myths that claim otherwise enable countless offenders to continue on for years, victimizing scores of individuals, before ever being caught or prosecuted. In addition to raising awareness, perhaps the most effective weapon of prevention is bystander intervention. If you see someone in need – especially if it's one of your fellow Marines – don't hesitate to step up and do something about it. Remember: there's never a wrong time to do the right thing.

SOURCE: David Lisak, Ph.D., “Understanding the Predatory Nature of Sexual Violence,” *Sexual Assault Report*, 14 (2011)





# INTERVIEW: COURTNEY ABBOTT of Catharsis Productions Discusses “Sex Signals”

**Q. Sex Signals, being an improv comedy show, is a very unconventional method of education, especially given the subject matter, and especially within the Marine Corps, where training often takes a more rigid and austere form.**

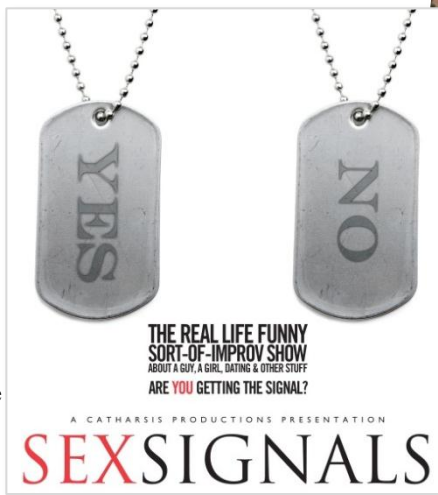
**What are the benefits of taking a deliberately light-hearted and entertaining approach to such a serious matter?**

**A.** Let's be honest, not many people wake up in the morning eager to discuss the problem of rape. (This even goes for those of us who [advocate] for a living – you will rarely come across a group of people so eager to work themselves out of a job!) So taking a humorous look at the way our culture teaches us about sex, and the (often unspoken) pressures to which both men and women feel compelled to respond, allows us to create a safe space to talk openly and honestly about sexual assault. We find the Marines appreciate our candor, and the fact that the training is so different from the typical “death by PowerPoint” makes our message much more memorable.

**Q. Sex Signals is a show that relies on audience participation. In addition to military venues, the show is frequently booked on college campuses. Regarding audience reaction and participation, how do the performances differ between the two settings?**

**A.** One of my favorite things about performing for any military audience is that everyone in the room has committed themselves to a shared set of core beliefs and a higher standard of behavior. When we're speaking to civilian audiences, we can hope that everyone feels motivated to take a stand and change the culture in their community, but it's ultimately up to each individual to determine whether or not they will take action. Pride in the Corps is a strong drive for us to lean on when we want to convince a Marine of his/her personal responsibility for the well-being of their brothers and sisters-at-arms, and for the public perception of the Corps as a whole.

Courtney Abbott has been performing Sex Signals since 2005. She is a graduate of Northwestern University and received her rape victim advocate training through the YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago.



ABOVE:  
Courtney Abbott and Chris Beier perform Sex Signals at Camp Barrett, MCB Quantico on 5 March 2013.  
Photo by Heather J. Hagan.

**Q. In addition to consent, bystander intervention is a major theme in Sex Signals, and such a theme lends itself readily to the Marine Corps, where commitment to each other is a central tenet. How is bystander intervention represented in Sex Signals, given that it's a two-person show? Also, how important is bystander intervention in eradicating sexual assault from an entire institution?**

**A.** We get the audience to play the role of the bystander! There's a bit in the show wherein the two of us demonstrate some sexually aggressive behavior at a party, and we arm the audience with STOP signs to hold up when they think it's going too far. Every group reacts differently, and it allows us to discuss how everyone has their own idea of what is acceptable and what is crossing a line, and it always highlights how aware they are of one another's reactions while deciding what to do themselves. Plenty of people will say they thought it should stop, but didn't hold their sign up because they thought no one else was holding one up. This is the problem we're hoping to combat in real-life situations: that no one is stepping up to intervene because they imagine they're the only one who sees it as a problem. What we need is for each individual to feel empowered to make that call and take action, which in turn will empower others – that's what will lead to widespread change.

Throughout SAAM, **SEX SIGNALS** will be performed at several Marine Corps installations, including Iwakuni, Parris Island, Camp Allen, Cherry Point, and 29 Palms. | Check with your Installation SARC for show times.

