

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #32- October 2013

Just a Thought

One of the most challenging issues today is reaching military victims. Keith Gethers shares insights on how the military culture makes it difficult for these victims to report their abuse, and offers suggestions on how we can better assist these individuals in the community

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Web Links

You never know what resources await you on the world-wide web ...come see what our latest surfing expedition uncovered

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Save the Date!

Find out what trainings and events are just around the corner. It looks like there are lots of ways to keep you busy this fall!

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Alumni Updates

Always find yourself thinking, "I wonder what happened to..." Check out what your fellow Alumni are up to!



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Best Practices

Learn about how one military training facility in Maryland is working to better serve soldiers and their families who have experienced some form of victimization

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The 20/20

Each newsletter get an inside look at one of the RVAAM peers - 20 questions, 20 unique answers

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Just a thought...

Victimization in the Military

Despite the many controversial issues connected with our recent war and operations involving the military, efforts to show appreciation and provide assistance to America's service members and veterans are increasing. Wonderful ... right?

Many of the things that contribute to the U.S. Armed Forces being one of the best in the world - such as specialized training, specialized units, and international deployments - reinforce the existence of a rigid subculture. This subculture that is hundreds of

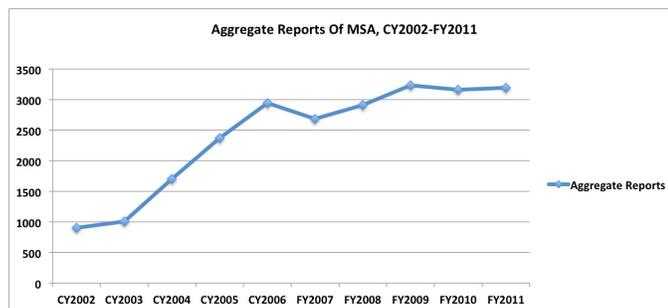


years old, historically has been shaped and controlled by men and has required discipline, obedience, loyalty, bravery, and adherence to strict standards. Good ... right?

Unfortunately, there is a problem that exists within that indicates there is something that is very wrong when it comes to the military. It is a phenomenon that is difficult to address because it is limited by the strong focus on mission objectives. Military victimization occurs when a member of the armed forces is victimized at the hands of another member, or any person that is associated with the military.

Military victimization is not limited in scope to sexual assaults, but it is probably the most well-known and is no small problem. In FY 2011 alone, there were a total of 3,192 reported military sexual assault crimes. Sadly, as illustrated in the table, this pattern has been increasing over the past decade. According to an

article published by the Military News (2013), more than 85,000 veterans were treated last year for injuries or illness stemming from sexual abuse in the military, and 4,000 sought disability benefits. Such figures underscore the staggering long-term impact of a crisis that has roiled the Pentagon and been condemned by President Barack Obama as "shameful and disgraceful."



What is even more disturbing is by the end of FY2011, only 240 of the original 3,192 reported crimes had made it to trial, and just under 6 percent of the total reports resulted in a conviction by court martial.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Hello Alumni!

The fall season is upon us, and with that comes the hectic time of year for those of you with school-aged children. Every day we grapple with a balancing act between the demands of work and home, both of which take up our time and energy. Sometimes it's hard to find that healthy balance. I think in our particular field of work, it is even more difficult because we are caretakers at work and at home. So sometimes those boundaries can become blurred. But we need to put things into perspective and remember our priorities.

Remember, your job is to make sure victims can move forward and make decisions for themselves - not to depend on you for their stability. You need to take a step back and allow them to make their own decisions, right or wrong, and support them, not be responsible for them. Your sense of commitment and responsibility can eventually contribute to you feeling burdened, overwhelmed, and hopeless in the face of great need and suffering. It can also lead you to extend yourself beyond what is reasonable for your own well-being or the best long-term interests of others.

So please remember during this very busy time of year to slow down, take a good look at what you are doing and try to balance your life. And if you think you need help in doing that, don't forget you have a very large network of people - your fellow alumni - who can help, all you have to do is ask!

Wishing you all the best ~ until next time...

Debbie Bradley, C.A., VASIII

bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org

"Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring, and integrity, they think of you." - H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Web Links

Although we have a virtual library at our fingertips every time we turn on the computer, we often lose sight of the forest through the trees just trying to navigate the world-wide web. Here are a few sites that relate to this issue's "Just a Thought" ... happy surfing!

Military OneSource

Military OneSource is a Department of Defense funded program providing comprehensive information on every aspect of military life at no cost to active duty, Guard and reserve service members, and their families. Information includes, but is not limited to, deployment, re-union, relationship, grief, spousal employment and education, parenting and child care. Services are available 24 hours a day by telephone and online. For more information, go to: <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>



Department of Defense Safe Helpline - Sexual Assault Support for the DOD Community

This website, operated by the Department of Defense in partnership with the Rape Abuse and Incest National Network [RAINN], provides resources to members of the military who have been a victim of sexual assault and provides specific contacts and resources for each of the five branches of the Armed Forces: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and National Guard. To learn more, go to <https://www.safehelpline.org/>

SWAN: Service Women's Action Network

This website specializes in providing support for servicewomen, women veterans, and their families who has experienced Military Sexual Trauma. SWAN

advocates for better victim protections, professionalized and impartial prosecution of the accused, and service members' access to civil courts. The organization also operates a helpline staffed by a women veteran caseworker who will work in collaboration with experienced group of veterans, health providers, and attorneys to provide victims with the best assistance possible. For more information, go to <http://servicewomen.org/military-sexual-violence/>

Alliance of Military & Veteran Family Behavioral Health Providers - Sexual Assault Resource Guide for Military and Veteran Program Staff

The The Alliance of Military and Veteran Family Behavioral Health Providers is a network of more than 600 providers and advocates from DOD agencies, the Services, the Department of Veteran Affairs, other federal agencies, academic institutions, non-profit organizations and community advocates. This directory provides a comprehensive list of websites, resources, and contacts in each branch of the Armed Services that address sexual assault within the military. To learn more, go to <http://www.ecu.edu/che/alliance/docs/Sexual%20Assault%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

Office of Victims of Crime, Military Personnel Section

This page of the OVC website contains information on publications, resources, forum discussions and FAQs for military crime victims. To learn more, go to <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/topic.aspx?topicid=64>





Save the Alumni Date Updates

RVAAM's 10th

Anniversary Party

Come help us celebrate this incredible milestone by joining us on a lunch cruise on the Spirit of Baltimore on Saturday, December 7th from 12:00-2:00pm. Come listen to music, eat great food, and catch up with all your favorite alums as we sail around the Chesapeake Bay! Family and friends are welcome to join in the festivities too - the more the merrier!!

To purchase your tickets, please contact Linda Fair at lfair@ubalt.edu



2014 RVAAM Academy

June 2nd-6th, 2014, Bon Secours Spiritual Center, Marriottsville, MD

Although we just wrapped up this year's Academy, we already have next year's dates reserved!! So mark it on your calendars and start recruiting!! Additional notifications will go out when the application is posted on the RVAAM website - so stay tuned! Go to www.rvaam.org



It seems like only yesterday when we were all together at the Academy. But in a blink of an eye another year has passed us by. Here's just a snapshot of some of the special events and milestones our alums have experienced since we last met...

Look at Our Movers & Shakers!

Debbie Bradley (Class of 2005) - Debbie has been blessed with her third granddaughter, Ava Elizabeth, who was born on October 9th. Congratulations Debbie!

Diane Charles (formerly Diane Wilkins, Class of 2007) - Diane celebrated her 50th birthday on August 5th, and she and her husband, Laurent Charles, celebrated their 2nd wedding anniversary on July 29th. Congratulations Diane and Charles, you had lots of celebrating to do!

Best Practices

Aberdeen Proving Ground Military Base - Providing Resources for Domestic Violence Victims

All branches of the Department of Defense observe Domestic Violence Awareness Month throughout October. This year's theme is "End Domestic Violence-Recognize It, Report It, Prevent It." The focus of the campaign is to raise awareness of the problem, inform victims that help is available, and emphasize the negative impact it has on family readiness. At Aberdeen Proving Ground, victims of domestic violence can seek help through Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic and Army Community Service [KUSAHC].

KUSAHC's Behavioral Health Care Services offers a variety of counseling serv-

ices, crisis intervention and referral assistance to soldiers, family members, and military retirees, as well as screens and refers contractors and DOD personnel to community resources. Furthermore the KUSAHC's Family Advocacy Program works closely with the APG's Directorate of Emergency Services, local police and agencies off post, such as the Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center [SARC], a non-profit agency serving victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, and child abuse in Harford County.

The Army provides two types of reporting options, restricted and unrestricted. Restricted reporting does not involve a military chain of command or law enforcement; unrestricted reporting involves some type of investigation by a command or law enforcement. All victims are eligible for services, including a medical evaluation and counseling, regardless of which of these two options they pursue. Social worker Margo Digan, from the KUSAHC Family Advocacy Program, said there are some exceptions to restricted reporting. For example, if there is child abuse or the victim is in immediate danger. In those instances the Family Advocacy Victim Advocate must report the incident.

Digan notes that domestic violence affects males and females from all walks of life. However male victims typically are more reluctant to report such incidents because they do not want to be perceived as 'weak.' But Digan stated, "we want them to know that we are here for them [and that] it is okay to come forward and get help."

ACS Director Janice Downey said the ACS Family Advocacy Program provides one-on-one support, and the advocates are there to help victims come up with a safety plan, find emergency shelter and other resources in the community, as well as offer moral support. If necessary, the Family Victim Advocate can also serve as a liaison, accompanying the victim to meetings with lawyers and/or to court. Ms. Downey noted "this is needed be-

cause soldiers and their families members often live far away from their extended families and close friends, and they need to feel a sense of safety in the community they have now made their home.”

KUSAHC and ACS also provide free preventative programs like anger management classes and conflict containment classes by referral. Ms. Digan said these classes can teach couples how to deal with conflict and communicate more effectively. Chaplains on post also provide free marriage counseling.

APG Victim Advocates can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on the Domestic Violence Hotline (410) 652-6048 or the Sexual Assault Hotline (410) 322-7515. For KUSAHC Family Advocacy appointments, please call (410) 278-1768.

* *Essay contributed by Rachel Ponder, APG News.*

News From the Field

Everyone knows that the field of victim services is always evolving. The challenge is to find a way to keep on top of all the changes ... we're here to help!

* **Putting Teeth Into Victims Rights - House Bill 250, Chapter 363: Criminal Procedure - Victims' Rights - Remedy and Priority of Restitution** - This bill, effective June 1st of this year, is one of the most significant pieces of legislation ever passed in the State of Maryland. For many years, Maryland law has provided crime victims the right to file an application for leave to the Court of Special Appeals if their victim rights were not considered. But through court decisions, that right to file an application for leave to appeal was made meaningless as the appellate courts found that there was *no ability to remedy that violation of the victim's right.*

This law now provides an express remedy of a violation of a victim's right. This means that the trial court (District, Circuit, or Juvenile) and the appellate court (Court of Special Appeals and Court of Appeals) can order a redoing of the proceeding where the victim's rights will be enforced - as long as the result does not violate double jeopardy. Also, victims can file direct appeals from *final orders* (e.g., sentences, restitution), rather than applications for leave to appeal. This means the Court of Special Appeals must consider and determine the appeals and therefore will not have the discretion to ignore the victim's appeal.

Victims of all crime - not just victims of violent crime - will have the opportunity to file applications for leave to appeal and direct appeals of violations of victims rights. The law also provides that victim restitution is a priority for collections. Other than for matters which have priority under federal law (e.g., federal tax liens) and child support, government entities will be required to pay restitution to victims first.

If a victim or victim's representative feels that their rights were not considered or denied, the individual may contact the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. at (877) VICTIM-1 or at <http://www.mdcrimevictims.org> for possible legal assistance.



Certification News

Want to learn more about the certification process and learn how you can be a cut above the rest?

Here's what you need to know!



There are three levels of certification in Maryland, each require a specific set of qualifications and are described in detail below:

* **Level I (VASI)** - a) complete application packet; b) minimum of two years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 40 hours of training (RVAAM, NVAA, or other SVAA); d) multiple choice exam; e) \$50 application processing fee

* **Level II (VASII)** - a) complete application packet; b) minimum of five years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 80 hours of training (40 hours RVAAM, NVAA, SVAA and 40 hours advanced training and/or University level coursework in victim services, including 3 hours of Victims Rights training and 3 hours of Ethics in Victim Services training); d) written essay /short answer exam; e) \$75 application processing fee.

* **Level III (VASIII)** - a) complete application packet; b) minimum eleven years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 120 hours of training (40 hours RVAAM, NVAA, SVAA and 80 hours advanced training and/or University level coursework in victim services, including 3 hours of Victims Rights training and 3 hours of Ethics in Victim Services training); d) oral presentation on approved topic in Victim Assistance; e) \$100 application processing fee.

All application materials and study guides for the written exams are available online at www.rvaam.org (click on the Certification tab at the top of the page). For more information, or if you have any

questions, please contact Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

Congratulations to the following Certified Advocates!

Michele Lee - Level I

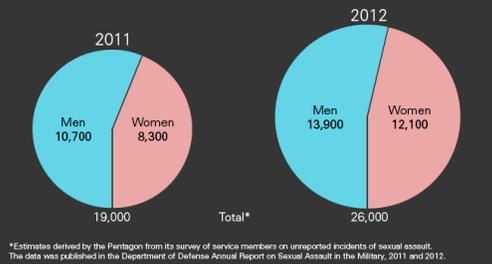
Nora Bowen - Level III

Just a Thought (Cont.)

According to SAPRO's latest report, "most" of the people convicted in FY2011 were reduced in rank or placed into confinement, but fines were more common than discharges. But the punitive measures the military is handing down may not mitigate the risks: Repeat offenders, according to the report, commit 90 percent of all assaults.

Active-duty service members reporting unwanted sexual contact

Defined by the U.S. military as rape, attempted rape, or unwanted sexual touching.



Consequently, the public outcry and political inquiries have military leaders scrambling to address the problem, however determining the scope of the problem and employing the appropriate prevention and intervention methods has been difficult considering the number of victims, security concerns, and competing military interests.

One of the greatest challenges policy-makers have run up against is the military subculture. A key characteristic of any subculture is its members adherence to the norms. In the case of the military, part of its subculture is the strict following of rank and order. Hence it is very likely that the norms of the military sub-

culture restrict true and open reporting of sexual assaults and other crimes. After an incident, whether the individual chooses to report the crime or not, victims are quite often expected to return to work and perform their duties with the same amount of efficiency as they did prior to the incident. This can lead many having to suppress their feelings which may lead to psychological issues, including PTSD, depression, and anxiety. It can even contribute to substance abuse problems. Furthermore, cases involving military victimization contributes to heightened secondary victimization (post-crime victimization) because many of these individuals experience isolation, reprisals, restricted opportunities, and a lack of responsiveness from those charged to help.

As a result of higher levels of scrutiny, the issue of military victimization is something civilian practitioners and advocates should be aware of because:

- * Many members of the military on active duty over the past 12 years are reservists; and we have a significant number of reservists and former active duty personnel assimilating back into the civilian world;
 - * Some are in need of services that are not provided by the military;
 - * Some are now a part of the homeless population; and
 - * Some are being diagnosed with various forms of mental illness not readily linked to their service
- So what can we do to better prepare ourselves to serve this population?
- * Seek training on assisting military victims
 - * Seek opportunities to work collaboratively with the military advocates in your area
 - * Add military resources to your directory
 - * Research or seek training on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- * Establish a relationship with military advocates

Essay contributed by Keith Gethers



THE MASK

Get a grip! I'm expected to succeed, face fear, be strong, and take the lead, not hesitate in thought or deed. My mask must never slip.

Man up! and keep my thoughts inside No one can know how much I cried when the rockets came and the fear arrived. My mask must never slip.

Crack on! theres no time to reflect or admit that I did genuflect and prayed to God, me to protect. My mask must never slip.

Chin up! Worry not 'bout how I feel never let them know just how surreal it was. Dark thoughts I cant reveal. My mask must never slip.

** B J Lewis (from *Poems by Soldiers* at <http://www.warpoetry.co.uk/Poems%20by%20soldiers.html>)

The 20 / 20

Each newsletter we pose twenty questions to one of our members to get an inside look at who they are ... this month get to know Amy Jarkiewicz, VSPN President, Class of 2012

My favorite TV show is ...

Last season, "The Voice" - so many talented artists and the judges were funny and entertaining. I also had a personal interest in the show - one of my relatives was a finalist ... Michelle Chamuel! Of course I think she should have been the winner :)

My favorite smell is ...

I can't choose between the fresh smell of dirt (truly earthy), Yankee Candle's Honeydew Melon, and fresh ground coffee

If I were a crayon, the color I would be is..

Aquamarine - whenever I open a box of 64 Crayola Crayons for my daughter, my eye is always drawn to the Aquamarine one

When I was little, I wanted to be a (blank) when I grew up ...

Would you believe I wanted to be a "cash register lady"? Or a gift wrapper at Hecht's or Montgomery Ward

If I could go anywhere in the world, it would be ...

I'd love to go to Israel and see where everything began, my heritage

The best piece of advice I've ever been given is ...

My mother would say, "Grow a backbone, stand up for yourself and what is right!" My father would say, "You can accomplish anything you put your mind to." And my sister wisely told me, "This too shall pass."

Something I think I do well is ...

Sign language is a passion of mine. I also work extremely well under pressure and am a good problem solver.

My favorite book is ...

Right now, I love reading James Patterson's series. But as a child, it was "Madeline" and every Dr. Seuss book I could find at the library

My most memorable birthday in recent years was ...

My 40th - we went to Jellystone Park in Hagerston for the weekend, and on the morning of my birthday Yogi Bear came to my cabin with a hug and a gift. Total surprise and so sweet!

The last thing I did to pamper or treat myself was ...

Spa pedicure - love them!

My favorite movie is ...

I have two: "Arthur" with Dudley Moore, and "Mary Poppins"

My favorite time of the year is ...

Autumn. I just love the gem colors of the leaves, the smell in the air, and Thanksgiving with family and friends

If I could see anyone in concert, it would be ...

Andre Bocelli

The quality I appreciate most in others is...

Compassion

The quality I dislike the most in other is ...

Condescending attitude

My favorite thing to do to help unwind after a rough day is to ...

Goofing off with my 10 year old daughter. She brings so much joy, happiness, and laughter to my world. Children say the funniest things that can make you forget the world for awhile

An occupation I wouldn't mind working in would be ...

A marine biologist

An occupation I'm really glad I'm not working in is ...

A grave digger

My favorite professional sports team is...

The 2012 Super Bowl Champs, our Baltimore Ravens!! Who else!?

One of my goals for 2013 is to ...

Find a job that fits just right, just like Goldilocks. I'm finding out as I get older that being happy and feeling good about where you work is just as important as what you do for a living. Life is too short to be unhappy!

Editorial Board

- Debbie Bradley — Editor**
- Michelle Lee — Assistant Editor**
- Keith Gethers — Assistant Editor**
- Ashley Fundack — Assistant Editor**
- Heather Pfeifer — Managing Editor**

Alumni Directory

The 2013 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members, is available for distribution. However, we still would like your help to keep the Alumni Directory up to date! If any of your personal and/or professional information changes, please contact Debbie Bradley via email at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in January 2014

What do you want to hear? Have any news to share?

Are you itching to learn more about a particular issue in the field of victim services? The Editorial Board is always looking for new topics to profile in the newsletter that would be beneficial for our Alums both personally and professionally. Please send any suggestions you might have about a topic to profile in one of our upcoming newsletters to Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org ... We also are happy to share any information you have about job openings and professional trainings you might think your fellow Alums would benefit from!