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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF**

**KATHERINE ROBERTSON**  
**COUNSELING, ADVOCACY AND PREVENTION PROGRAM**  
**COMMANDER, NAVY INSTALLATIONS COMMAND**

**BEFORE THE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL**  
**OF THE**  
**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE ARMED FORCES**  
**6 MARCH 2009**

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**Commander, Navy Installations Command**

Katherine Robertson serves as the Deputy Manager for the Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP) responsible for the Counseling, Advocacy and Prevention (CAP) Programs (N911B). CAP Programs include the Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) Program, Family Advocacy Program, New Parent Support Home Visitation Program and Clinical Counseling. In this capacity, she is responsible for the delivery of both the Department of the Navy and congressionally mandated services at Navy installations world wide. She and her CAP team are responsible for prevention, education, intervention, counseling and delivery of vital programs that support commands, Sailors and family members.

Ms. Robertson is a distinguished career public servant with 30 years of experience working in management and clinical services in military family programs (Army, OSD, and Navy). Ms. Robertson has worked for the OSD Office of Family Policy in two positions and worked for Office of Reserve Affairs developing the Guard and Reserve Family Toolkit. Ms. Robertson has a broad background in military family programs to include Child & Youth Program Management, Family Advocacy Program, Clinical Case Management Supervisor, Regional QA Coordinator, SAVI/Clinical Program Manager, and now as the Commander, Navy Installations Command CAP Manager. Highlights of her career are the understanding and working joint service issues in areas of sexual assault, family violence and military family programs. She started working for the Navy in 2001 in Norfolk, Virginia supporting CAP programs.

Ms Robertson is the spouse of a retired service member (AD Army 27 years). She has a son serving in the Air Force currently deployed to Djibouti and a son serving in the Army awaiting deployment to Afghanistan within the year. Ms. Robertson holds a Masters Degree in Education with a certification in Counseling from the University of Southern California and a Master of Social Work (MSW) from the University of South Carolina. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in North Carolina and Virginia.

**Introduction:**

Chairman Davis, Representative Wilson and subcommittee members, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to share with you my perspective on the Navy's efforts to prevent sexual assault. I thank you for your leadership and attention to this vital issue and for your support to our Sailors and families and to the survivors of sexual assault in the military.

It has been my privilege for the past 30 years to work for the Navy, Army and the Department of Defense, and to witness their efforts in preventing and responding to sexual assault and domestic abuse as well as other difficult challenges that impact military families. And although we have not been successful yet in eliminating these challenges, the commitment and will to do so is evident every day, as I will share in my testimony today.

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and I have devoted much of my professional career to understanding and working in the fields of sexual assault, family violence, and military family programs. In my present position, I serve as the Deputy Manager for Fleet and Family Support Program with Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC). CNIC resources, oversees and executes the Navy Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) program. The SAVI program is one of many critical Fleet and Family Readiness programs serving the Fleet, Fighter, and Family. SAVI Headquarters Program staff is responsible for overall management, oversight and implementation of the SAVI Program by promulgating implementation guidance to regional and installation commands, distributing fiscal, personnel, marketing, training and program resources to Navy Regions, and ensuring a coordinated approach with military & civilian resources.

I am responsible for all of the Navy Counseling, Advocacy and Prevention Programs to include SAVI, Family Advocacy Program (FAP - domestic abuse and child abuse), New Parent Support Program, and Clinical Counseling. Paul Finch is our SAVI Program Manager. He brings a wealth of clinical and program management expertise as well as the directly-relevant experience of being a former Air Force Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC). Implementing a responsive and effective SAVI program is our top priority.

**Background:**

*"I want to reinforce the message that sexual assault is a criminal act that is absolutely incompatible with the Department of Navy core values, high standards of professionalism and personal discipline. The goal is zero tolerance for Sailors and officers who perpetuate this violence and an effective 24/7 response capability for victims of sexual assault."*

**– Vice Adm. Robert T. Conway, Jr., former Commander, Navy Installations Command**

Navy senior leadership is committed to preventing sexual assault and ensuring the goals of the SAVI program are met by all commands. The Navy SAVI program, established in 1994 and fully implemented in 1996, provides a standardized, comprehensive, victim-sensitive system that effectively prevents and responds to sexual assaults Navy-wide. Navy was the first service to have a dedicated program for sexual assault response and served as a role model for Department of Defense (DoD) and the other military services since the 2004 "Care for Victims

Task Force” was established and resulting DoD policy was implemented. DoD established the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), issued DoD policy, and established a Department-wide program to address sexual assaults in the military in 2005. The initial DoD Directive Type Memoranda, Commander’s Checklist, utilization of trained active duty Victim Advocates, and the standardized SARC positions model the Navy SAVI program. The SAVI program name has been retained in the Navy because it has fleet wide recognition and support in the Navy.

Sexual assault is a serious crime incompatible with Navy values and ethos. Our goals are to eliminate sexual assaults perpetrated by Navy personnel and prevent sexual assault incidents that impact our personnel, family members and communities both CONUS and OCONUS. We work toward these goals by sustaining a robust sexual assault prevention and response policy, identifying and eliminating barriers to reporting, ensuring that care is available and accessible to victims of sexual assault, and providing continuous, relevant, and effective training and education to all service members. All Navy Commands have a 24/7 sexual assault response capability focused on victim support. Commanders ensure that sexual assault victims have access to the assistance and resources to meet their needs.

The impact of sexual assault on Navy readiness, including Fleet, Fighter, and Family Readiness, dramatically effects morale and operational readiness. Senior leadership is committed to responding to victims and holding offenders accountable as demonstrated by increasing SARC positions, increased training emphasis, and increased funding every year to support the SAVI program.

**Prevention Efforts:**

Since 1994 the SAVI program has supported victims of sexual assault and sought to prevent sexual assault from occurring by focusing on offender accountability and victim protection. As more effective prevention methods were developed and made available, Navy SAVI incorporated them and continues to evolve to utilize new and effective civilian prevention methods. Past practices focused on risk reduction in training and within commands, emphasized the role of alcohol and date rape drugs in sexual assaults, and directed shipmates to watch out for their fellow shipmates’ safety as part of Operational Risk Management and Safety Training. Interactive Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness training is integrated into Ombudsman training Navy-wide with case scenarios and discussion groups. Ombudsmen are command-appointed spouses who serve as the vital link between Navy families and command leaders.

Annual SAVI training designed to prevent sexual assault and reduce risk is provided to all Navy personnel as is specialized training for all levels of leadership and first responders. The Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) Center for Personal and Professional Development, the Naval Service Training Command, United States Naval Academy, and Naval War College provide state of the art training using media and the latest technology targeted toward prevention and awareness, reporting options, and availability of services to victims with clear messages designed to deter the crime of sexual assault. Annual prevention and awareness training is infused throughout NETC’s multiple training venues with the goal of preventing the long term negative impact on victims and mission readiness. NETC program components

include Pre-Commissioning Training, Initial Entry Training, Professional Military Education, Leadership Development, Annual Refresher Training, and Deployment Training.

A NETC best practice training medium is "Liberty Call," an Interactive Multimedia Instructional (IMI) tool that allows students to make decisions in the "lives" of four Sailors given different scenarios and options, that is presented to students before initial skills training. Another best practice is Prevention, Responsibility, Ethics, and Values Education and Training (PREVENT) for 18 to 26 year-olds in their first enlistment period, and directed at decision-making behaviors.

Prevention and awareness training is provided at every initial accession point, throughout leadership continuum schools, during command indoctrination (Indoc) training, and during Navy-wide annual General Military Training (GMT). Studies and college data on sexual assaults are incorporated into sexual assault prevention and awareness training. The Navy's Senior Enlisted Academy uses actual Navy cases that do not use personal identifying information to enhance lessons and guide discussions. I personally train the senior shore installation commanders, prospective commanding and executive officers, Command Master Chiefs, and other senior enlisted leaders. Sexual assault prevention and awareness training is required training for key stakeholders: Staff Judge Advocates and military prosecutors, Chaplains, Navy medical personnel, and Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) special agents. Key stakeholder training incorporates recognized military and civilian subject matter experts in sexual assault prevention and rape-related trauma, and integrates role-plays and sexual assault scenario case studies.

Navy leadership has sent strong leadership messages through public service announcements and Navy directives and instructions. A strong messaging or media campaign is considered an essential part of an effective sexual assault prevention strategy.

SAVI is a command led program. Commanding Officers of Ships, Squadrons and Installations fill key SAVI positions within their commands with skilled personnel to help ensure the success of their prevention and response efforts. These command positions include: (1) a SARC for each installation; (2) victim advocates for commands afloat and ashore who provide information, emotional support, and guidance to victims throughout the various medical, mental health, legal and investigative processes; (3) a SAVI Command Liaison to act as the single point of contact at the command for victims, victim advocates and their installation SARC; (4) a SAVI Point of Contact (POC) to facilitate awareness and prevention training; and (5) a Data Collection Coordinator to ensure that reporting requirements are met. The trained command SAVI Victim Advocates provide 24/7 response capability for sexual assaults on or off the installation and during deployment.

Training on Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness is a primary responsibility for Navy SARCs, trained Victim Advocates, and SAVI POC's and they effectively work in partnership with the military and civilian community. Their dedication and passion are powerful. Chief Tonya McKennie, a Navy Victim Advocate from NAS North Island, Navy Region Southwest, testified at the 28 February 2009 HASC hearing on Victim Care and Advocacy. Navy SARCs and our key stakeholders are actively involved in their civilian

communities, serving on Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) and working with community rape crisis centers and other community programs.

### **Prevention Initiatives:**

The Vice Chief of Naval Operations' (VCNO) testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2004 indicated that Leadership needs to better understand Sailors' knowledge and perception of Navy sexual assault prevention and response programs and resources. So, a scientific Navy-wide SAVI Quick Poll was conducted by Navy Personnel, Research, Studies, & Technology (NPRST) in April 2004 to determine baseline awareness and perceptions of sexual assault in the Navy and of the SAVI program. It was conducted again in 2005 and 2008 to track changes. The FY08 SAVI Quick Poll findings, compared to the 2004/5 polls, showed awareness of the SAVI program—including changes such as restricted reporting and services available to victims -- had increased. Positive trends were found for all groups from 2004 to 2008, including junior as well as senior personnel. Gains were also found in the percentage reporting both Sexual Assault Awareness (SAA) training attendance and SAVI training attendance in the last year. 90% or more of enlisted and 80%+ of officers attended SAA training in the last year. All groups reported that training increased their awareness of sexual assault. Most are aware of restricted/unrestricted reporting and 1/3 or more have seen flyers/posters on it at their commands. Two thirds or more know how to report sexual assault without command knowledge—a restricted report. More than 75% indicate that they would report SAA to Navy authorities.

Marketing the SAVI program to increase prevention and awareness was a major focus in FY08. Navy produced a number of Public Service Announcements (PSA) to include one by the Secretary of the Navy and released Navy's production of *Sexual Assault--Megan's Story* which won the Italian Ministry of Defense-sponsored international military production competition. It highlights the role of bystander education, which has been evaluated and found to be an effective prevention method.

The Chief of Naval Information (CHINFO) published two SAVI-related *Rhumb Lines*—leadership newsletters. The Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) addressed Navy SARC's during a SARC training conference in February 2008. A Navy PSA on reporting options was recently finalized and a new PSA focusing on prevention and bystander intervention is in the planning stages. SAVI has leadership support at all levels of command.

The Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Education (SHAPE) program at the Naval Academy began providing progressive developmental sexual assault training throughout the four years of education to ensure graduates and our future Navy leaders are mentors to prevent sexual violence as they begin their careers. This program was developed and delivered by civilian subject matter experts in sexual assault prevention. Its effectiveness is being studied and is a model for the Military Services and DoD in many aspects of their prevention strategies.

All of the Navy SARC's assigned to the shore installations' Fleet and Family Support Programs (FFSP) world-wide in over 70 locations extending from Norfolk, VA to San Diego, CA, also Hawaii, Japan, Europe, Diego Garcia, Bahrain and Guam were trained at the OSD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) Conference in 2008. During the Navy Day, participants saw the interactive play, *Sex Signals*, that emphasizes messages of what sexual

assault is, communication, alcohol and consent, as well as presentations by other civilian prevention subject matter experts. Our SARC's in turn trained 2,350 new Victim Advocates; provided refresher training to over 3,200 SAVI Victim Advocates; and trained 6,147 Navy Staff judge advocates including prosecutors, Security/Base Police, Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) agents, Medical personnel, and Chaplains focused on prevention and risk reduction efforts.

Twenty-three new Navy SARC's were trained in FY08 and three Navy SARC's participated in the first joint-service Victim Advocate training developed and conducted by the SARC's who serve in the National Capital Region—a model for both joint basing, pre-BRAC preparation and overseas. Our staff also participates on all four Sexual Assault Advisory Council (SAAC) subcommittees and co-chairs both the Research and Outreach subcommittees. The mission of the SAAC Outreach subcommittee is prevention and sexual assault program messaging for DoD and the Military Services.

### **Challenges:**

The Navy's unique structure and operational employment requires innovation and commitment. Our SAVI program structure is postured to meet prevention, awareness and response whether afloat or ashore.

Sailors are also deploying as Individual Augmentees (IAs) and serve under the leadership of sister services. The DoD and Service standardized use of Victim Advocates and SARC's assists in meeting the need in these joint missions. Ensuring that our Sailors receive the on-ground sexual assault prevention and awareness training and know how to report sexual assaults in the AOR is crucial. There is effective collaboration and support among all Service SAPR programs that provides seamless services to victims of sexual assault. Representatives from J-1, Joint Chief of Staff, participate in our meetings and planning.

The majority of Navy sexual assaults are blue-on-blue (service member on service member). In FY07, 255 out of 418 sexual assaults were service member on service member. The majority of victims were 20-24 years old. Our prevention efforts need to continue to focus here, within the services.

### **Future Prevention Efforts:**

Training enhancements focusing on prevention will continue in FY09 with NETC's Center for Personal and Professional Development (CPPD) collaboration to further define, develop, and deliver prevention-focused deployment-oriented training. This will be used for typical Navy deployments as well as presented to those active duty Sailors or reservists that are being deployed as IAs to support the other Services in the Global War on Terrorism.

Using top civilian experts, NETC Center for Personal and Professional Development is revising their annual training for Sailors to make it more developmental and effective. The new training program will be similar to the Naval Academy's multi-year, incremental approach. This will continually be reviewed and additional training will be added as expertise in the field of prevention increases.

A media strategy directed to Sailors and other Service members to prevent sexual assault was developed by the non-profit organization "Men Can Stop Rape" as part of the DoD Prevention Strategy. Specific Navy posters will be released in April for Sexual Assault Awareness Month as part of the Navy's social marketing strategy. OSD SAPRO is also coordinating a PSA with a popular sports figure. SAVI Program Management staff and multiple SARC's recently attended a presentation by Men Can Stop Rape, entitled "From Theory to Practice," to learn how to enhance our prevention curriculum and emphasis on Bystander Intervention.

Program enhancements will continue in FY09 with the recently developed Navy Commander's Toolkit for our SARC's to brief all new commanders within 90 days of assuming command. This comprehensive resource tool will help Commanders prevent sexual assaults, respond to victims, hold offenders accountable and effectively utilize the investigative, legal, medical, counseling, advocacy military and civilian resources.

Navy SAVI program will not rest on its history. Increased emphasis and knowledge will direct prevention efforts Navy-wide. A key factor in the success of our far-reaching prevention effort is buy-in and executive direction by senior military leadership. Under development is a Secretary of the Navy and CNO message to each Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Master Chief fleet-wide stressing the importance of a culture change toward sexual assault prevention and explaining how this crime has always been inconsistent with our core values and diminishes morale and readiness. The Navy will also roll out a comprehensive phased prevention strategy for sexual assault with overlapping phases with specific goals to reduce sexual assaults and increase Sailor propensity to report these crimes.

The SAVI prevention strategy will continue to be a collaboration with all key stakeholders (Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP), Commands, Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS), Office of the Judge Advocate General (OJAG), Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), Chaplains, United States Naval Academy, and Naval Education and Training Command (NETC)) and will be consistent with both the DoD Prevention Strategy and the most current knowledge in the field of sexual assault prevention. It will be a phased approach with the goals of influencing policy, changing organizational practices, continued collaboration with state coalitions and networks, training the fleet, first responders and all Navy leadership to include Commanding Officers, promote education and training, and strengthen Sailor, family member and civilian/contract staff knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, behavior, and skills.

Education on sexual assault prevention, awareness and reporting will be enhanced fleet-wide. Civilian experts will be consulted for all curricula. Consistent and powerful key messages will be developed, and revised training will be structured ranging from new accessions to all leadership levels, including civilian supervisors of Sailors, to ensure that training is interactive, scenario driven and embedded in all Navy core values training throughout a Navy career from indoctrination through retirement or separation.

**Summary and Conclusion:**

In reviewing the SAVI program from 1994 to 2009, the level of change and high visibility, increased resources, commitment, and senior leadership emphasis have been breathtaking. Change in our understanding of how to prevent and better target prevention has come from research from experts such as Dr. David Lisak in identifying the modus operandi (MO) of offenders of sexual assault, increased clarity about myths and realities about sexual assault offenders and victims, the use of alcohol as a weapon, and many other breakthroughs in knowledge over the past 10 years. Sailors, according to recent quick polls, know about SAVI and the resources available, and acknowledge that this crime must be prevented. Sexual assault prevention will require a cultural transformation. Over the next 5 years, as we implement our Prevention Strategy in the Navy and as DoD and the other Service SAPR programs continue to move from a reactive to a proactive posture, I truly hope that the military, as it did with racial integration and equality, will lead in this vital cultural transformation to end sexual violence in the military. Thank you.