

The issue of sexual misconduct in the military and the Department of Defense’s response to it has evolved over the last 15 years. 1988 was the first year the Department of Defense conducted an in-depth survey on sexual harassment across the Services. Over the years, additional studies, reviews, and surveys indicate the following major findings:

- ❑ Sexual misconduct has been viewed through the lens of sexual discrimination, which has continuously evolved as women increasingly expanded their integration and roles in the U.S. Armed Forces. Many of the reports and hearings in this digest address the prevailing challenges of integrating women into the predominantly male military workforce: e.g., effect on unit cohesion, perceived inequity of fitness and weight standards for women, discrimination against women for promotions, etc.
- ❑ Despite exhaustive reviews of the Tailhook and Aberdeen incidents, sexual assault as a crime *distinct* from sexual harassment and discrimination was not addressed by the Department of Defense previous to this Task Force report. Sexual assault, when addressed, is under an umbrella of “and other matters.”
- ❑ Some of the various findings and recommendations of this report have been examined previously, but in the context of preventing and reducing sexual harassment, not assault. The need for better reporting mechanisms (see Congress, *Sexual Harassment of Military Women and Improving the Military Complaint System*, March 9, 1994), victim advocacy, leadership training, and data tracking, are recommendations that appear repeatedly, but in the context of improving the climate and reducing adverse conditions for women operating in the military environment.
- ❑ Finally, it is clear from a review of the hearings, reports, and surveys that have been issued that the military, often with the support and direct assistance of Congress, is very adept at planning and implementing programs designed to effectively, if not immediately, address long-standing cultural issues that challenge both the civilian and military population. This is evidenced by the Department’s notable but continuously evolving success in executing programs which have significantly reduced race and sex discrimination within its ranks.

1988

- ❑ The Office of the Secretary of Defense conducted the first DoD-wide survey on sexual harassment. This produced the first baseline data on sexual harassment in the active-duty Services.

Department of Defense. *Sexual Harassment in the Military: 1988*.^{*f}

* Referenced in the April 15, 2004 letter from Congress to the SECDEF.

^f Sources for this Chronology: The Women’s Research and Education Institute, *Bibliography of Women in the Military*; and the Pentagon Library.

1990

An Update Report on the Progress of Women in the Navy. Woman's Study Group, 1990.

1991

- The Tailhook Association loses Navy sponsorship after widely reported incidents of alcohol abuse, destruction of private property, and sexual assault at the association's annual convention.

Strategies to Eradicate Sexual Harassment in the Military and Civilian Environment. U.S. Department of Defense. 1991.*

Congress, Senate. *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993.*

Congressional Record. July 31, 1991 S11412-S11437. (Discussion on combat exclusion laws.)

1992

- The House Armed Service Committee conducts a hearing on gender discrimination in the military on July 29-30, 1992.

Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. Report to the President. November 15, 1992.

Roper Organization, Inc. *Attitudes Regarding the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces: The Military Perspective.* Conducted for the Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. September 1992.

Operation Desert Storm: *War Highlights Need to Address Problem of Non-Deployable Personnel.* GAO/NSIAD 92-208, August 1992.

Women in the Military: Deployment in the Persian Gulf War. GAO/NSIAD 93-93, August 1992.

Congress, House, House Armed Service Committee, Subcommittee on Personnel and Readiness, and the Defense Policy Panel. *Hearings into Gender Discrimination in the Military.* 102nd cong. 2nd sess. July 29–30, 1992.*

Congress, House, House Armed Services Committee. *Women in the Military: The Tailhook Affair and the Problem of Sexual Harassment.* Draft report prepared by Les Aspin and Beverly B. Byron, September 14, 1992.

1993

Inspector General, Department of Defense. *The Tailhook Report: The Official Inquiry into the Events of Tailhook '91.* February 1993.*

Culbertson, Amy L., Paul Rosenfeld, and Carol Newell. *Sexual Harassment in the Active Duty Navy: Findings from the 1991 Navy-Wide Survey.* Naval Personnel Research and Development Center. December 1993.*

1994

- The Senate Armed Services Committee holds hearings on “Honor Systems and Sexual Harassment at the Service Academies” on February 3.

- The House Armed Services Committee conducts hearings on sexual harassment and specifically examines how to improve the military complaint system on March 9. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee. *Honor Systems and Sexual Harassment at the Service Academies*. 103rd Congress. Second session. February 3, 1994.
- Congress, House of Representatives Armed Services Committee. *Sexual Harassment of Military Women and Improving the Military Complaint System*. 103rd Congress. Second session. March 9, 1994.
- DOD Service Academies: More Actions Needed to Eliminate Sexual Harassment*. GAO/NSIAD 94-6, January 1994.*
- Abuse Victims Study Final Report*. Department of Defense. 1994.*

1995

- The DoD Task Force on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment convenes.
- The DoD conducts its second Sexual Harassment Survey.
- Defense Equal Opportunity Council. *Report of the Task Force on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, vols. I and II*, May 1995.*
- Thomas, Patricia J., Carol E. Newel, and Dawn M. Eliassen. *Sexual Harassment of Navy Personnel: Results of a 1993 Survey*. Naval Personnel Research and Development Center, November 1995.*
- GAO. *DoD Service Academies. Update on Extent of Sexual Harassment*. March 1995.

1996

1995 Sexual Harassment Survey. Department of Defense, 1996.*

1997

- Incidents of rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment occurring at the Army's Aberdeen (Maryland) Proving Grounds are revealed. In the aftermath, several drill sergeants are convicted by courts-martial of rape or charges related to sexual harassment. As a result of the problems found at Aberdeen, the Army convenes a Senior Review Panel to look at the problem of sexual harassment Army-wide.
 - In February the Senate Armed Services Committee conducts a hearing on Aberdeen.
 - The Army's top enlisted man, the Sergeant Major of the Army, is charged with sexual harassment.
 - In October the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Military Personnel conducts hearings on "Department of the Army Reports on and Corrective Actions Related to Recent Cases of Sexual Misconduct and Related Matters."
 - As a result of the incidents at Aberdeen, the Secretary of Defense appoints the Federal Advisory Committee on Gender-Integrated Training and Related Issues with former Senator Nancy Kassebaum-Baker as chair. The committee's report is issued in December 1997.
- Department of Defense. *Report of the Federal Advisory Commission on Gender-Integrated Training and Related Issues to the Secretary of Defense*. Kassebaum Report. December 16, 1997.*

Department of the Army Inspector General. *Special Investigation of Initial Entry Training, Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policies and Procedures December 1996–April 1997*, 22 July 1997.*

Human Relations Action Plan: *The Human Dimensions of Combat Readiness*. Department of the Army, July 1997.

Secretary of the Army. *Senior Review Panel Report on Sexual Harassment*. vols. I and II, July 1997.*

Naval Inspector General. *Report of Investigation of Integration of Women into Carrier Air Wing Eleven*, February 10, 1997.

Thomas, Patricia J., and Zanette Uriells. *Pregnancy and Single Parenthood: Results of a 1997 Survey*.

Harrell, Margaret and Laura C. Miller. *New Opportunities for Military Women: Effects Upon Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale*. Rand Corporation MR-896, October 2, 1997.

1998

- ❑ The Sergeant Major of the Army is court-martialed on five charges springing from the accusations of sexual harassment lodged against him. He is acquitted of all charges related to sexual harassment, but convicted of one charge of obstruction of justice.
- ❑ In response to the incidents at Aberdeen, Congress orders its own commission—The Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues—to review matters.

Analysis of Methodologies in Reports to Secretaries of Defense and Army. Army Senior Review Panel. GAO/NSIAD-98-125, March 1998.

Analysis of Promotion and Career Opportunity Data. GAO/NSIAD 98-157, May 1998.

Changes Would Be Needed to Expand Selective Service Regulations to Women. GAO/NSAID 98-99, June 1998.

Improved Guidance and Oversight are Needed to Ensure Validity and Equity of Fitness Standards. GAO/NSIAD-99-9, November 1998.

Information on DoD's Assignment Policy and Direct Combat Definition. GAO/NSIAD 99-7, October 1998.

Information to Assess Servicemembers Perception of Gender Inequities is Incomplete. GAO/NSIAD, November 1998.

Burelli, David. *Women in the Armed Forces*. Congressional Research Service, November 18, 1998.

1999

- ❑ The Report of the Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues is released.

Congress. *Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues—Final Report*. Blair Commission, vols. I-IV, July 1999.*

Department of Defense. *Adapting Military Sex Crime Investigations to Changing Times: Summary Report*. National Academy of Public Administration, June 1999.*

DoD Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, August 1999.

Scarville, Jacquelyn and Scott B. Button, Jack E. Edwards, Anita R. Lancaster and Timothy W. Elig. *Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey.* Defense Manpower Data Center, August 1999.

Naval Personnel Research and Development Center, TR-98-6, September 1998. *Women at Sea: Unplanned Losses and Accession Planning.* Center for Naval Analysis, CRM-98, March 1999.

Costs of Separate Barracks for Male and Female Recruits in Basic Training. GAO/NSIAD 99-75, March 1999.

Medical Support for Female Soldiers Deployed to Bosnia. GAO/NSIAD 99-58.

Perceptions of Readiness in Various Units. GAO/NSIAD 99-120, May, 1999.

Trends in Occupational Distribution of Military Women. GAO/NSIAD, September 1999.

2003

- Investigations into charges of sexual assault at the Air Force Academy and retaliation against women cadets who report it are initiated by the Air Force and the DoD Inspector General. Congress also sponsors its own investigative panel.

Report of the Working Group Concerning the Deterrence and Response to Incidents of Sexual Assault at the U.S. Air Force Academy, HQ USAF, June 2003.*

Fowler, Tillie K. *Report of the Panel to Review Sexual Misconduct Allegations at the U.S. Air Force Academy.* September 2003.*