



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

**AUG 29 2022**

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department's response to section 1631 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 (Public Law 111-383), as amended by section 537 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry NDAA for FY 2021, which requires the Secretary of Defense to submit to the Committees on the Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives an annual report on sexual assaults involving members of the Armed Forces during the preceding year, including reports from each of the Military Departments, is enclosed.

*The Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military* presents statistics and analysis of reports of sexual assault during FY 2021 and discusses policy and program improvements to the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program. The numerical data and statistics contained in this report respond to reporting requirements outlined in the NDAAs for FYs 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2021.

The results from this year's report highlight critical challenges the Department continues to address. An estimated 8.4 percent of active duty women and 1.5 percent of active duty men indicated experiencing an incident of unwanted sexual contact in the year prior to being surveyed. In addition, rates of sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and workplace hostility increased for women throughout the Active force.

As you know, the Secretary of Defense did not wait to fundamentally change how the Department addresses sexual assault and other readiness impacting behaviors. This year's report also illustrates our collective efforts to resource and implement the Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Sexual Assault in the Military's recommendations as approved by the Secretary of Defense, as well as execute the immediate actions the Secretary directed within his first 90 days in office.

We will not be deterred from our mission to eliminate sexual assault from the military, and we remain committed to implementing reforms informed by the work of the IRC. The solutions to address the problems highlighted in this year's report are already being funded and implemented across the Department.

Thank you for your continued strong support for our Service members. I am sending similar letters to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.

Enclosure:

As stated

cc:

The Honorable James M. Inhofe  
Ranking Member



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**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

**AUG 29 2022**

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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cc:  
The Honorable Mike D. Rogers  
Ranking Member



**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

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READINESS

**AUG 29 2022**

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.

Enclosure:

As stated

cc:

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member



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**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

**AUG 29 2022**

The Honorable Mark Takano  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.

Enclosure:

As stated

cc:

The Honorable Mike Bost  
Ranking Member





# Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military

Fiscal Year 2021





*Department of Defense  
Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military  
Fiscal Year 2021*

The estimated cost of this report for the Department of Defense is approximately \$3,642,000 for the 2021 Fiscal Year. This includes \$2,946,000 in expenses and \$695,000 in DoD labor.

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#### REPORTING REQUIREMENT:

- Congress requires the Department to provide an annual report on sexual assault involving members of the United States Armed Forces. This report satisfies that requirement.
- The Department uses the term “sexual assault” to refer to a range of crimes, including rape, sexual assault, forcible sodomy, aggravated sexual contact, abusive sexual contact, and attempts to commit these offenses, as defined in military law.

#### THIS YEAR’S FINDINGS:

- Sexual assault is a persistent challenge across all Military Services—results from this report highlight critical challenges the Department continues to address.
- In the survey conducted for Fiscal Year 2021, 8.4 percent of active duty women and 1.5 percent of active duty men indicated experiencing unwanted sexual contact in the year prior to being surveyed.
- The Department received a total of 8,866 reports of sexual assault, which is an increase of 1,050 reports over the 7,816 received in Fiscal Year 2020. Of the 8,866 reports, 7,260 were from active duty members making an Unrestricted or Restricted Report of sexual assault.

**(Continued on the next page)**

## Executive Summary

This year’s Annual Report provides an update on the Department of Defense’s efforts to counter sexual assault<sup>1</sup> and sexual harassment in the military, includes sexual assault and sexual harassment reporting data, and details efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment in Fiscal Year 2021. The Department strives to develop and maintain a military culture free from sexual assault and sexual harassment.

### Background

Sexual assault and sexual harassment remain persistent and corrosive problems across the military. After a decade of decreasing sexual assault prevalence and increasing reporting rates, the Department found that estimated rates of sexual assault began to increase in Fiscal Year 2018 for active duty women. In addition, both active duty men and women indicated experiencing greater rates of sexual harassment and gender discrimination in Fiscal Year 2018 than in Fiscal Year 2016. In 2020, the murder of Army Specialist Vanessa Guillen near Fort Hood, Texas led to the establishment of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee, which reviewed issues of climate, culture, and safety at the post. Upon conclusion of its three-month review in December 2020, the Committee made a number of recommendations to improve criminal investigation, personnel accountability, victim assistance, and climate and culture, not only at Fort Hood but also within the Army writ large. In response, Army leadership accepted the recommendations and established a task force to address and implement the recommendations of the Committee.

### Secretary of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Initiatives

Upon being confirmed by the Senate and approved by the President in January 2021, Secretary of

<sup>1</sup> DoDI 6495.02 defines sexual assault as: “Intentional sexual contact characterized by the use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent. As used in this Instruction, the term includes a broad category of sexual offenses consisting of the following specific Uniform Code of Military Justice offenses: rape, sexual assault, aggravated sexual contact, abusive sexual contact, forcible sodomy (forced oral or anal sex), or attempts to commit these offenses.”



- Survey and reporting data indicate that about 20 percent of Service members who indicated experiencing unwanted sexual contact reported their incident to a Department of Defense authority.
- The Department had sufficient evidence to take disciplinary action in 2,683 cases completed in Fiscal Year 2021.

### **WAY FORWARD**

Solutions to address the problems highlighted in this report are already being implemented and funded:

- The Secretary of Defense directed that the recommendations issued by the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military for the Department of Defense be implemented wherever possible.
- Congressional action has supported and funded implementation of the approved recommendations, allowing the Department to jump start implementation of impactful initiatives.
- President Biden's January 2022 Executive Order made sexual harassment a named military offense.
- Each of the Military Departments has at least one Office of Special Trial Counsel to prosecute alleged covered offenses occurring after December 27, 2023, and to restore trust in the military justice system.
- The Department's new prevention workforce will work with leaders throughout the military to implement initiatives to reduce experiences of sexual assault, domestic violence, self-harm, and sexual harassment.

**The full report is available online at [SAPR.mil](https://sapr.mil).**

Defense Lloyd Austin reviewed the Department's past approaches and subsequently directed a number of immediate actions in February 2021 to drive meaningful change in how the Armed Forces prevent, respond to, and ensure accountability for sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Throughout the remainder of Fiscal Year 2021, the Department and Military Services executed the following Secretary of Defense-directed actions:

- Assessed compliance with sexual assault and sexual harassment policies and accelerated violence prevention activities;
- Conducted onsite installation evaluations at 20 military installations of greatest concern, as well as showing promise;
- Directed the first steps toward the creation of a violence prevention workforce to build and prepare a Department-wide violence prevention community of practice; and
- Established a 90-day Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military to improve accountability, prevention, climate and culture, and victim care and support.

### **The Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military**

On March 24, 2021, the Commission began its "independent, impartial assessment" of the military's current treatment of sexual assault and sexual harassment. To accomplish the goals outlined in its charter, the Commission recruited 12 highly qualified experts from outside the Department and the Services, with experience in the fields of civilian criminal justice, victim advocacy, policy, and program development for sexual violence prevention and response, public health, and research. In July 2021, the Commission published its report, making 82 recommendations to improve climate and culture, prevent sexual assault and sexual

harassment, better care for victims, and hold perpetrators appropriately accountable.<sup>2</sup>

On July 2, 2021, Secretary of Defense Austin directed Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks to develop an Implementation Roadmap with a strong bias towards accepting all recommendations where possible. On September 22, 2021, Secretary of Defense Austin approved the Implementation Roadmap, which organized the Commission's recommendations, as approved by the Secretary of Defense, into four tiers to enable implementation across a phased approach for continuous evaluation of effectiveness, progress, and modification.

## Summary of 2021 Data

The Department assesses progress with sexual assault via two primary metrics:

- **Prevalence** (i.e., estimated total of Service members experiencing sexual assault, as measured by scientific surveys – desired state is *decrease*)
- **Reporting rate** (i.e., percentage of victimized Service members making Restricted and Unrestricted Reports – desired state is *increase*)

It should be noted that the 2021 *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Military Members* (from the Active and Reserve components) was fielded from December 2021 to March 2022. Survey fielding was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic and government-wide changes in the survey approval process. Significantly, in order to reduce survey burden (e.g., length, time required to complete, and emotional impact of questions), the Office of Management and Budget directed changes to the metric used to estimate prevalence of sexual assault for the Fiscal Year 2021 survey. In a departure from prior surveys, which used a 41-item measure of specific behaviors, intent, and mechanisms aligned with the elements of the Uniform Code of Military Justice offenses listed in footnote 1, this survey used a five-item measure of unwanted sexual contact, an umbrella term for a range of behaviors which constitute certain elements of these offenses.<sup>3</sup>

This change<sup>4</sup> disrupted the Department's ability to scientifically trend to prior years' sexual assault prevalence estimates, but did not affect its analysis of sexual harassment, gender discrimination, workplace hostility, and other problematic behaviors linked to risk of sexual assault.

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<sup>2</sup> As mentioned in the grey call out box on page 4, each of the Military Departments has at least one Office of Special Trial Counsel to prosecute alleged covered offenses occurring after December 27, 2023, and restore trust in the military justice system. Covered offenses include wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images, murder, manslaughter, rape, and sexual assault generally or where the victim is a child, other sexual misconduct, kidnapping, domestic violence, stalking, retaliation, and the Article 134, Uniform Code of Military Justice offenses of child pornography, and conspiracy, solicitation and attempts to commit any of these offenses.

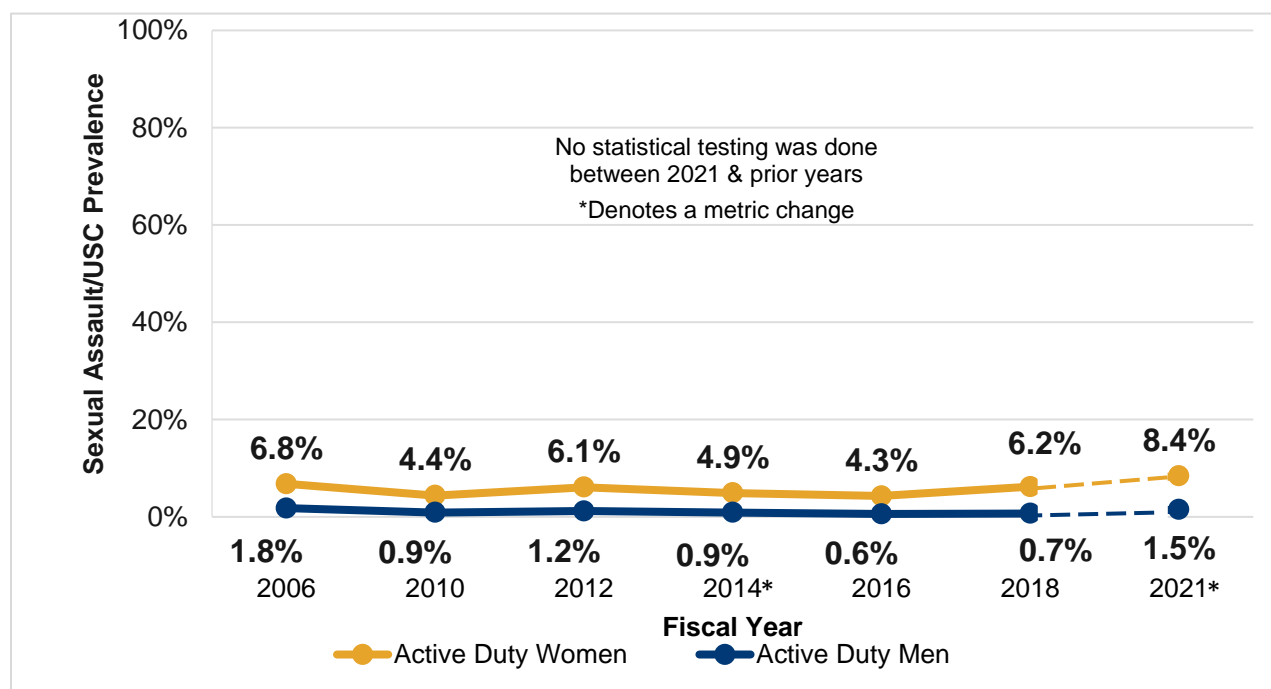
<sup>3</sup> The unwanted sexual contact metric addresses the following behaviors: nonconsensual sexual touching, attempted nonconsensual sexual intercourse, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, attempted nonconsensual sodomy, and nonconsensual sodomy.

<sup>4</sup> Between 2006 and 2012, the *Workplace and Gender Relations* surveys used a single-item unwanted sexual contact measure to estimate the prevalence of sexual assault. Beginning in 2014 and through 2019, the survey used a RAND-recommended 41-item measure of specific behaviors, intent, and mechanisms, aligned with elements of criminal offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. It is unknown whether the 2021 adoption of the five-item measure of unwanted sexual contact behaviors produces statistically comparable estimates of the prevalence of sexual assault. Accordingly, the Department cautions against making such comparisons.

## Survey and Reporting Data

- 8.4 percent of active duty women and 1.5 percent of active duty men indicated experiencing unwanted sexual contact in the 12 months prior to being surveyed.**
  - Based on these rates, the Department estimates that 35,875 active duty Service members experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact in the year prior to being surveyed. Figure 1 presents these and past year prevalence estimates for active duty Service members.
  - The Department cannot scientifically determine if there was a true increase in prevalence of unwanted sexual contact for Fiscal Year 2021 due to the change in the metric used to measure sexual assault. However, estimated rates of other misconduct highly correlated with unwanted sexual contact (i.e., sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and workplace hostility) also increased for women, compared to Fiscal Year 2018 rates, suggesting an overall growth in unhealthy military climate since that time.
- Reports of sexual assault increased in Fiscal Year 2021.** In Fiscal Year 2021, the Military Services received 8,866 reports of sexual assault involving Service members as either victims or subjects, which is a 13 percent increase from reports made in Fiscal Year 2020. Of the 8,866 reports, 7,249 were from active duty members making an Unrestricted or Restricted Report of sexual assault for an incident they experienced during military service. While all Services received more reports in 2021 compared to 2020, the Army experienced the largest increase in reporting.

**Figure 1. Sexual Assault/Unwanted Sexual Contact Past Year Prevalence Estimates**



- However, the rate of reporting appeared to decrease compared to Fiscal Year 2018.** The Department not only counts the number of reports received, but also uses survey data to estimate the percentage of Service members who decide to report their incident of sexual assault to the Department. In 2021, about **1 in 5** Service members reported their sexual assault to a Department authority. This estimate is down from the **1 in 3** Service members

reporting rate in Fiscal Year 2016 and 2018. In 2021, women reported their sexual assault at about three times the rate that men did.

- **About a fifth of Service members making Restricted Reports converted to Unrestricted Reports and participated in the military justice process.** The Department offers Service members the opportunity to make an Unrestricted or a Restricted Report of sexual assault. When victims convert their Restricted Report to an Unrestricted Report, they choose to participate in justice system efforts to hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable. The Military Services initially received 3,098 Restricted Reports from Service members in Fiscal Year 2021. Of the 3,098 Service members who made initial Restricted Reports, 588 (19 percent) chose to convert to an Unrestricted Report in Fiscal Year 2021. These 588 converted Restricted Reports are now counted in the 6,356 Unrestricted Reports received in Fiscal Year 2021. The other 2,510 reports remained Restricted at the end of the year.
- **Commanders had sufficient evidence to take disciplinary action in 67 percent of accused members' cases.** Every decision to take disciplinary action is based on evidence gathered during an independent investigation by a Military Criminal Investigative Organization and with due regard to the preferences of the victim, including the willingness of the victim to participate in the legal process. This year, the Department had sufficient evidence to take disciplinary action in 2,683 cases. Data from the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database indicated that disciplinary action was not pursued in 1,263 cases due to insufficient evidence of an offense to prosecute. About two percent of subject cases were unfounded, meaning evidence existed to find that the crime did not occur or that the accused did not commit the crime.
- **Rates of sexual harassment increased for women.** This year's survey found that an estimated 29 percent of active duty women experienced an incident of sexual harassment in 2021, up from the 24 percent estimated for 2018. Rates for men stayed statistically the same between 2018 and 2021. Reports of sexual harassment also increased. In 2021, the Department received 3,174 sexual harassment reports, up from 1,781 in 2020.


## Way Forward

Sexual assault and sexual harassment remain persistent challenges across all Military Services. It is for this reason the Secretary of Defense did not wait to take action: Secretary Austin has made addressing the scourge of sexual assault a priority since Day 1 on the job. Multiple indicators foreshadowed the conditions captured in this report, including the environment documented at Fort Hood, the findings and 82 recommendations of the Secretary's Independent Review Commission, and the challenges and command climate areas of concern identified during 20 onsite installation evaluations conducted world-wide.

Results in this year's report highlight critical challenges the Department will continue to address to eliminate sexual assault and sexual harassment. Solutions to address the problems highlighted in this year's report are already being funded and implemented across the Department and Military Services. These include the proactive steps the Secretary directed this year, to include immediate actions to enhance leaders' visibility of emerging, problematic climates, as well as preventive initiatives that provided leaders with needed staff and tools to promote safer military environments. Consistent with his intent to accept the Independent Review Commission recommendations wherever possible, the Secretary put into place the means to produce the massive cultural and organizational change required to improve accountability, prevention, culture and climate, and victim care and support.



The Department will continue its efforts to field a prevention workforce, and further support command's ability to identify and reduce factors that increase risk for sexual assault and other readiness impacting behaviors. The Services continue to ready their Offices of Special Trial Counsel to take over prosecutorial decisions for certain alleged offenses that occur after December 27, 2023, to restore Service member trust in the military justice process. The Department is also reconfiguring the sexual assault response workforce to provide them with the enhanced skills and independence required to better assist victim recovery. While cultural change of this magnitude takes time, the Department is building accountability and transparency into this process to ensure that the reforms are enduring. Taken together, the efforts summarized in this report will set the right conditions to reduce and eliminate sexual assault and sexual harassment in the United States Armed Forces.



## Introduction

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The Department of Defense (DoD) is required by Section 1631 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, as amended, to submit a yearly Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military to the Committees on Armed Services and Veterans Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives.

### Report Focus Areas

This report summarizes key data and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) efforts by the Department, Military Services, and National Guard Bureau (NGB). This year's report provides updates on actions the Department has taken in the following focus areas:

- Prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment in FY21;
- Preventing sexual assault;
- Providing a quality response; and,
- Executing previous Secretary of Defense SAPR initiatives.

### Report Appendices

This is the Department's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military. It covers sexual assault allegations made during Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) (October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021). The SAPR program addresses contact and penetrating sexual crimes by adults against adults, as defined in Articles 80, 120, and 125 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

Detailed statistical data and analysis for FY21 can be found in Appendices A, B, and C. A summary of data from the Department's Safe Helpline (SHL) can be found in Appendix D. Sexual harassment falls under the purview of the DoD Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI). Appendix E contains data concerning formal, informal, and anonymous sexual harassment complaints collected by ODEI in FY21. Sexual assault of a spouse or intimate partner and child sexual abuse falls under the purview of the Family Advocacy Program (FAP). Appendices F and G contain data collected by FAP in FY21. A list of acronyms used in this report is in Appendix H.

### Report Enclosures

Enclosed with this report are concurrent reports from the Department of the Army (Enclosure 1), Department of the Navy (Enclosure 2), Department of the Air Force (Enclosure 3), and the NGB (Enclosure 4). This report covers sexual assault allegations made during FY21 and serves as the Department's assessment of the Military Services' prevention and response efforts from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021.

### Report Annexes

#### Metrics and Surveys

Section 481 of title 10, United States Code, requires the Department to conduct the *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Service Members (WGRA)* every two years. The Office of People Analytics (OPA) administers the survey to estimate past-year sexual assault and sexual harassment prevalence in the active force. Similarly, the Department conducts the *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Reserve Component Members (WGRR)* every two years. Military members complete the survey online or on paper. In 2021, survey questions asked respondents about their experience of unwanted sexual contact (USC), outcomes

associated with reporting an incident of USC, and gender-related Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) violations. The 2021 *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Military Members* (2021 *WGR*): Overview Report, which describes the survey methodology, identifies notable changes to the survey in 2021, and presents prevalence data for both active duty and Reserve Component members, can be found at Annex 1 of this report.

The 2021 *QuickCompass of Sexual Assault Response Personnel* (2021 *QSAR*) assesses the opinions, self-reported experiences, and perceived program effectiveness of frontline staff executing SAPR programs within the Military Services (including the Reserve Components). The 2021 *QSAR* can be found at Annex 2 of this report.

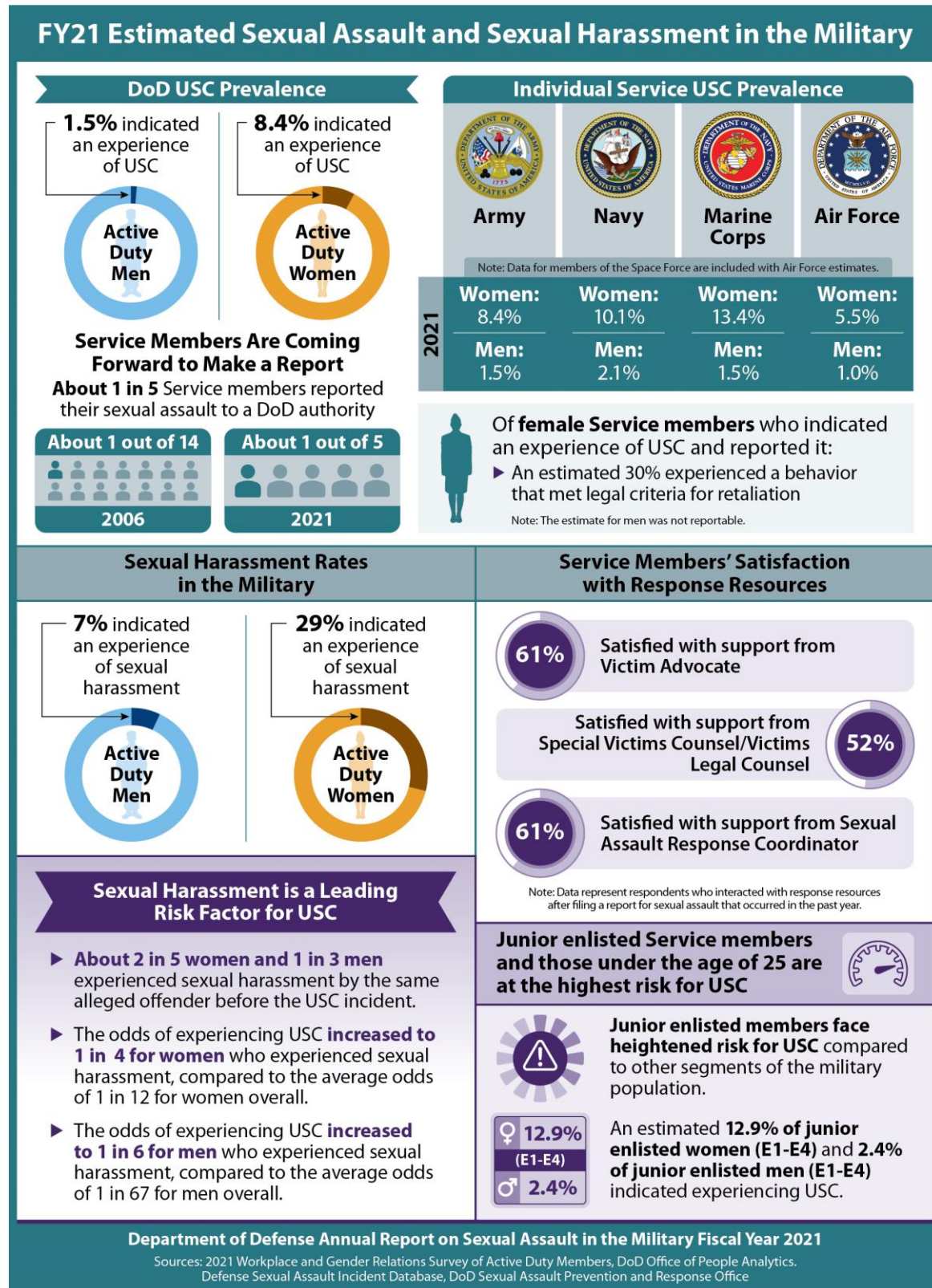
### **Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military: Implementation Overview**

DoD is implementing historic reforms to fundamentally change how sexual assault is addressed in the military. In February 2021, at the direction of President Joseph Biden, Secretary of Defense Austin launched an independent review commission to recommend new approaches to prevent and respond to sexual assault in the military. The Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC) published its findings on July 2, 2021, providing DoD with 82 recommendations. Following the report's release, Secretary Austin indicated his intent to accept the recommendations wherever possible and directed Deputy Secretary Kathleen Hicks to develop an implementation roadmap. The Secretary of Defense approved this roadmap on September 22, 2021.

Since the end of FY21 (i.e., September 30, 2021) and the publication of this year's Annual Report, DoD has remained committed to implementing reforms informed by the work of the IRC. A summary of DoD's actions to date to implement approved recommendations from the IRC is at Annex 3.

# Spotlight: FY21 Data

Below is key data concerning estimated sexual assault (as measured through the USC metric) and sexual harassment from FY21.



### Sexual Harassment is a Leading Risk Factor for USC

- ▶ About 2 in 5 women and 1 in 3 men experienced sexual harassment by the same alleged offender before the USC incident.
- ▶ The odds of experiencing USC **increased to 1 in 4 for women** who experienced sexual harassment, compared to the average odds of 1 in 12 for women overall.
- ▶ The odds of experiencing USC **increased to 1 in 6 for men** who experienced sexual harassment, compared to the average odds of 1 in 67 for men overall.

### Junior enlisted Service members and those under the age of 25 are at the highest risk for USC



**Junior enlisted members face heightened risk for USC** compared to other segments of the military population.

♀

**12.9%**

(E1-E4)

♂

**2.4%**

An estimated **12.9% of junior enlisted women (E1-E4)** and **2.4% of junior enlisted men (E1-E4)** indicated experiencing USC.

**Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military Fiscal Year 2021**

Sources: 2021 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members, DoD Office of People Analytics, Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database, DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office

# Prevalence of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in FY21

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Research shows that reports to police and other authorities underestimate the extent of sexual assault in U.S. civilian and military populations because many cases go unreported. Individuals who experience sexual assault often do not report an incident because they want to forget about it and move on, do not want more people to know, think they might get into trouble for something they did, or be labeled as a “troublemaker.” The Department conducts the confidential *WGR* survey so that it can better understand the scope of sexual assault in the military population. The survey results are weighted to be representative of the entire active duty force. This scientific approach allows the Department to estimate the number of active duty Service members who experienced sexual assault (as measured through the five-item metric of USC) in FY21.

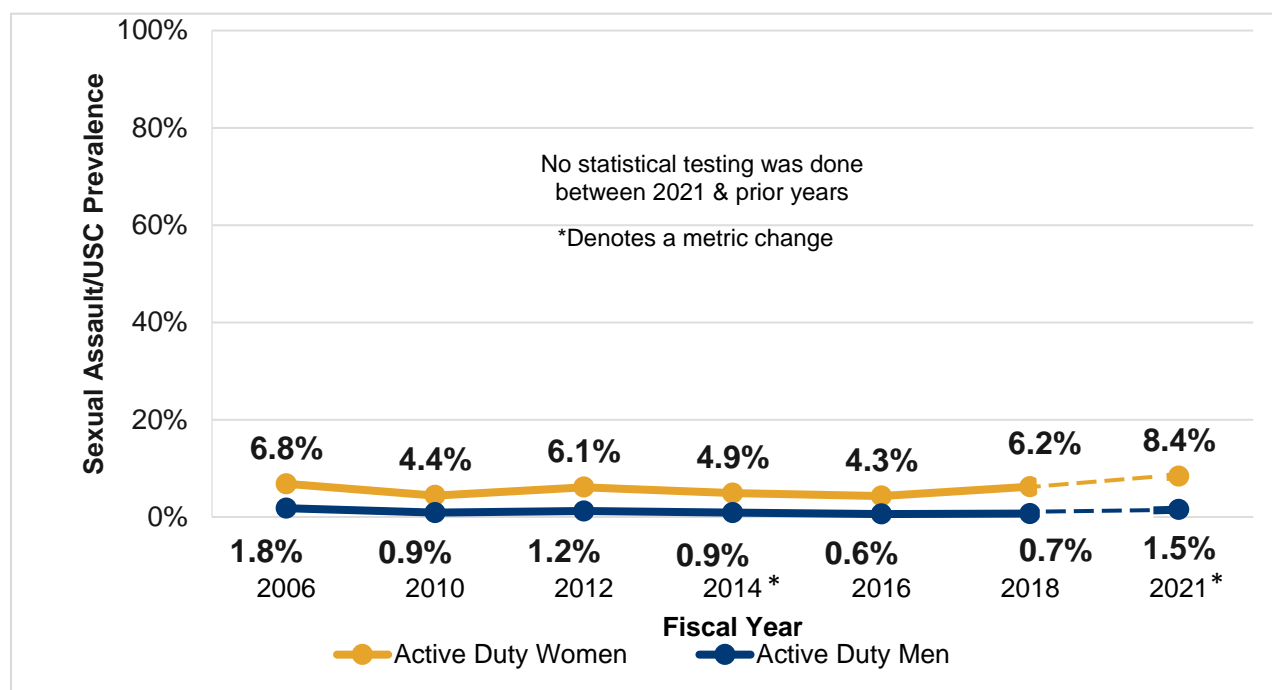
A change in survey administration requirements caused the Department to delay fielding the *WGR* survey until December 2021, a five month shift from the survey’s usual fielding period. As a result, the Department notified Congress in early 2022 that the release of this year’s Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military would be delayed from April to September 2022. The government also directed the Department to use a different metric to estimate sexual assault prevalence than in years past. Accordingly, no scientific testing was conducted between rates measured in 2018 and 2021.

## Prevalence of Sexual Assault in FY21 in the Active Duty Population

The Department’s estimates of the number of Service members who experienced USC is reflected in Figure 2. About 8.4 percent of active duty women and 1.5 percent of active duty men indicated experiencing USC in the year prior to being surveyed. Based on these rates, the Department estimates 35,875 active duty Service members experienced sexual assault in FY21 (about 19,255 women and 16,620 men).

Due to the change in the metric the Department used to estimate prevalence of sexual assault for FY21, no scientific testing was conducted between rates measured in 2021 and prior years.

**Figure 2. Sexual Assault/USC Past Year Prevalence Estimates**



### 2021 WGR Reveals Characteristics of Victims and Alleged Offenders in the Active Duty

Service members at highest risk for experiencing USC behaviors are junior enlisted Service members and those under the age of 25. Junior enlisted members face heightened risk of experiencing USC compared to other segments of the military population. An estimated 12.9 percent of junior enlisted women (E1-E4) and 2.4 percent of junior enlisted men (E1-E4) experienced USC in FY21.

Women overwhelmingly identified their alleged offenders as male (91 percent). Less than half of men (46 percent) identified their alleged offenders as male, while one-third (30 percent) of men identified the alleged offender as female, and roughly 16 percent of men identified their alleged offender as a mix of men and women acting together. This stands to contrast the 6 percent of women who identified their alleged offender as a mix of men and women acting together.

The majority of incidents involved someone from work and often a friend or acquaintance. Around 9 percent of women and 10 percent of men indicated at least one alleged offender was an intimate partner.<sup>5</sup> Consistent with an approved IRC recommendation, survey data concerning incident rates in relation to demographic categories are further described in the WGR Survey: Overview Report in Appendix 1.

### Command Climate Indicators for Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Active Duty

In FY21, rates of estimated misconduct highly correlated with sexual assault (i.e., sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and workplace hostility) increased compared to FY18, suggesting an overall growth in unhealthy military climate. When Service members experience

<sup>5</sup> An intimate partner refers to current and former spouses, someone with whom the victim shares a child, or a current or former significant other.



sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and/or workplace hostility, their odds for also experiencing sexual assault significantly increase. Further detail is provided below.

### Sexual Harassment

In FY21, 29 percent of women and 7 percent of men indicated experiencing sexual harassment. For women, the 29 percent is an increase in prevalence and appears to be driven by experiences of enlisted women and those under the age of 25. The prevalence rate of sexual harassment did not increase for men overall. However, the prevalence rate did increase for junior enlisted men (from 7.3 percent in FY18 to 8.8 percent in FY21). Most Service members identified the alleged offenders as men, in their unit, who are the same rank as the victim. However, nearly one-quarter of women (24 percent) and 19 percent of men identified at least one alleged offender as someone in their chain of command.

About 40 percent of women and nearly one-third of men experienced sexual harassment by the same alleged offender before their experience of sexual assault. Among those who were sexually harassed prior to the incident of USC, 8 percent of women and 5 percent of men made a sexual harassment complaint before the alleged incident occurred.

In line with findings from prior research, the odds of experiencing sexual assault increase when command climate is unhealthy. In fact, the odds of experiencing sexual assault increase **threefold for women** and **tenfold for men** who also indicated experiencing sexual harassment in the past year.

### Gender Discrimination

Regarding gender discrimination, the 2021 *WGR* found that 16 percent of women and 1 percent of men indicated experiencing gender discrimination in the year prior to being surveyed. There was an increase in the prevalence of gender discrimination for female Service members serving in junior enlisted grades, as well as female Service members under the age of 25. However, senior enlisted women were significantly more likely than women in other ranks to experience gender discrimination. Most women identified the alleged offender as higher ranking men serving in their unit. For men, the alleged offenders typically included a mix of men and women serving in their unit. About two-thirds of women and men (65 percent and 67 percent, respectively) identified at least one alleged offender as someone in their chain of command.

For women and men who experience gender discrimination in the past year, the odds of also experiencing sexual assault **double for women** and **increase tenfold for men**.

### Workplace Hostility

In FY21, 19 percent of women and 13 percent of men indicated experiencing workplace hostility, a significant increase from estimates measured in FY18. For women and men who experience workplace hostility, the odds of also experiencing sexual assault about **double for women** and **men**.

### Response to Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination Complaints

Leaders' actions or inactions have direct consequences that impact risk of sexual assault and unit climate. In FY21, the majority of Service members (87 percent of men and 73 percent of women) reported that sexual harassment was not tolerated in the current military workplace.

However, less than half of women perceived their leaders as acting in a fully supportive manner after they reported. An estimated seven percent of men and 21 percent of women believed filing a sexual harassment complaint would be "too risky."

## **Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Military**

Results from the 2021 *WGR* found that Service members were personally affected by one or more pandemic related restrictions (i.e., restrictions in attending social gatherings, visiting off-base establishments, and social distancing requirements in the workplace). Women who were personally affected by a decision to avoid social gatherings because of the pandemic were significantly less likely to experience an incident of sexual assault (5.6 percent), compared to those who were less personally affected or not at all affected.

Similarly, the coronavirus pandemic impacted sexual harassment in the military. Results from the 2021 *WGR* found that active duty Service members who experienced restrictions from leaving military installations, visiting off-base establishments, and attending social gatherings were more likely to experience sexual harassment compared with those who had less restrictions or no restrictions.

### **2021 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of the Reserve Component (WGRR)**

Results from the 2021 *WGR* also provided prevalence estimates for members of the Reserve component. An estimated 4.6 percent of Reserve Component women and 0.7 percent of Reserve Component men experienced some form of USC in FY21.

## **Preventing Sexual Assault**

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Preventing sexual assault remains one of the Department's top priorities. When instances of sexual assault occur, they leave lasting, harmful effects on Service members, erode unit cohesion, and undermine mission readiness. The goal of sexual assault prevention is to stop it from happening in the first place. The Department works to reduce, with the goal to eliminate, sexual assault in the military.

### **FY21 Actions to Prevent Sexual Assault**

#### **DoD Prevention Plan of Action**

Since 2019, the Prevention Plan of Action, 2019 – 2023 (PPoA) has provided a framework for the Department's advancement of primary prevention and reduction of sexual assault in the military. In 2019 and 2020, the Department completed Phase I (self-assessments) and Phase II (development of Plans of Action and Milestones (POAMs)).

In FY21, the Military Services continued with execution of items outlined in their POAMs so that they could meet the objectives of the PPoA. The DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Violence Prevention Technical Assistance Center held a meeting to discuss and provide guidance on the reporting requirements associated with Phases III (execution) and IV (evaluation) of PPoA implementation. The two phases of PPoA implementation are occurring simultaneously to ensure assessment and evaluation findings inform execution efforts. In FY21, the Military Services and SAPRO provided interim progress reports outlining these efforts.

#### **DoD SPARX Knowledge Training**

In support of Secretary of Defense immediate action 3, which calls for the establishment of a violence prevention workforce, SAPRO offered 24 SPARX Knowledge trainings for the prevention workforce through the end of May 2022, with an additional 10 trainings dates offered through the end of the current fiscal year. As part of the training, each participant completed 64 hours of training, and, as of March 2022, approximately 800 personnel have been trained.



## FY22 Actions to Prevent Sexual Assault

### Updates to the PPOA

The Department recognizes that the PPOA laid a solid foundation for its prevention work; however, more can be done to advance sexual assault prevention in the military.

To that end, the Department updated the PPOA (“PPOA 2.0,” published May 27, 2022) to align prevention requirements with the approved IRC recommendations by:

- Reflecting the Department’s focus on integrated primary prevention; and,
- Outlining the necessary steps for preventing the occurrence of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other harmful behaviors.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), in consultation with the uniformed and civilian leadership of the Department, will assess the implementation of PPOA 2.0 through the IRC tracking process twice annually and will recommend any adjustments to senior DoD leaders, as necessary. To assess improvements and support implementation of PPOA 2.0, the Military Services and NGB have been directed to submit a self-assessment of prevention capabilities to USD(P&R) by December 31, 2022.

### Continued Implementation of Approved IRC Recommendations

In FY22, the Department either completed or will initiate implementation of the following IRC recommendations:

- **IRC recommendation 2.1a (completed October 2021):** USD(P&R) defined competencies leaders must have to oversee prevention.
- **IRC recommendation 2.1b (in progress):** The Military Services and NGB will develop and hold leaders appropriately accountable for prevention.
- **IRC recommendation 2.1c (in progress):** The Military Services and NGB will equip all leaders to develop and deliver informed prevention messages in formal and informal settings.
- **IRC recommendation 2.2a (completed October 2021):** USD(P&R) developed a model for a dedicated and capable prevention workforce.
- **IRC recommendation 2.2b (in progress):** USD(P&R) will develop a professional credential for the prevention workforce.
- **IRC recommendation 2.2c (in progress):** The Military Services will determine the optimum full-time prevention workforce and equip all echelons of active duty, reserve, and guard organizations.
- **IRC recommendation 2.8 (completed May 2022):** USD(P&R) updated the Department's prevention strategy, including the DoD PPOA, to incorporate approved IRC recommendations.

## Promoting a Quality Response

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When Service members report a sexual assault, the Department strives to provide trauma-informed, gender-responsive recovery services. DoD seeks to provide Service members reporting instances of sexual assault with a quality response that includes crisis intervention, reporting options, and recovery services. This section summarizes past-year reporting data, response activities, and FY22 initiatives underway to further a quality response.

## FY21 Reporting Data

DoD encourages greater reporting to promote help-seeking among Service members and to hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable. An estimated 1 in 5 Service members (29 percent of women and 10 percent of men) reported their experience of sexual assault to DoD authorities. Reports of sexual assault increased in FY21. The Department received 8,866 reports of sexual assault involving Service members as either victims or subjects, which is a 13 percent increase from reports made in FY20.

Reports of sexual assault are categorized as either Restricted or Unrestricted. Of the 8,866 reports received in FY21, 2,510 reports remained Restricted at the end of the year, approximately a 15 percent increase from the number remaining Restricted in FY20. Of these, 392 reports (16 percent) involved incidents that occurred prior to Service members' military service. Of the 8,866 reports, 6,356 reports were Unrestricted, a 13 percent increase from the number of Unrestricted Reports in FY20. Of these, 275 reports (4 percent) involved incidents prior to military service. Figure 3 displays the trend in Unrestricted and Restricted Reporting from FY10 to FY21.

**Figure 3. Reports of Sexual Assault Made to DoD, FY10 – FY21**

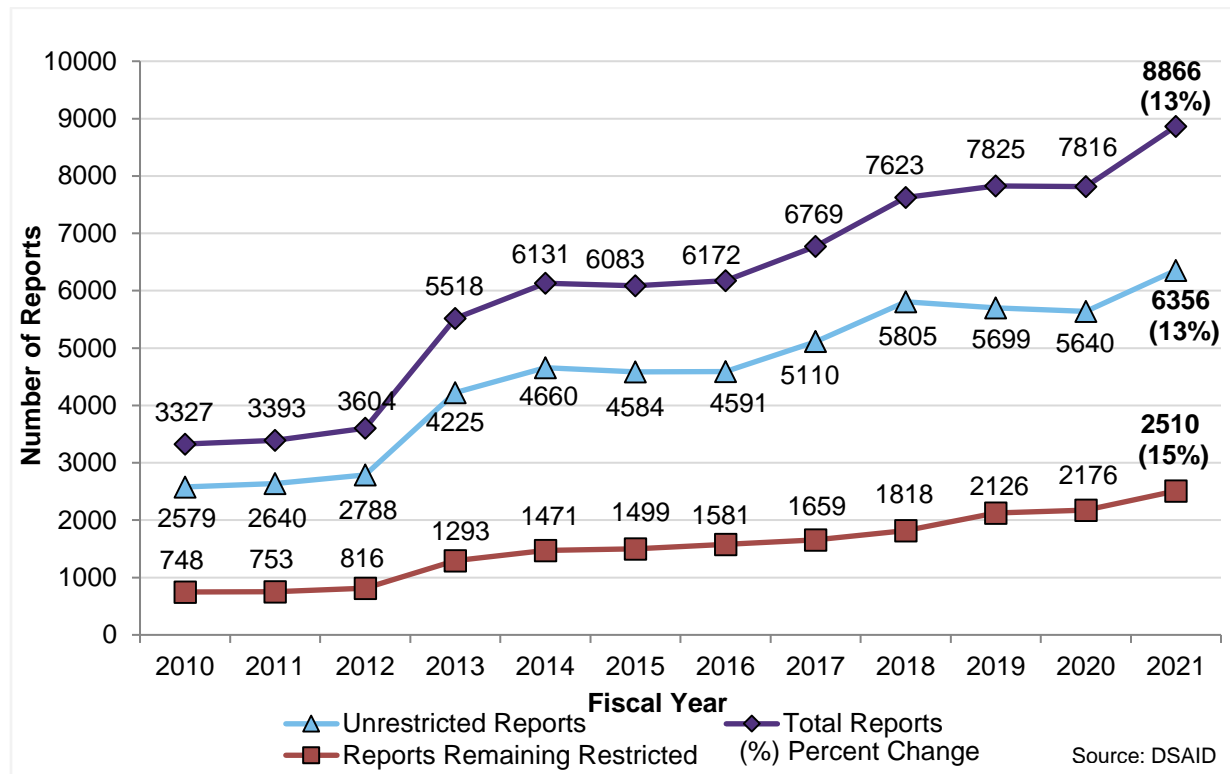


Table 1 provides a breakdown of reports by who reported, type of report, and whether the report was for an event that occurred prior to military service. Equivalent tables by Service can be found in Appendix A: Statistical Data on Sexual Assault.

**Table 1. Sexual Assault Reports by Victim and Military Status, FY21**

	Unrestricted Reports	Restricted Reports	Total Reports
<b>Total Reports of Sexual Assault</b>	<b>6,356</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>8,866</b>
Reports Made by Service Members	5,443	2,473	7,916
<i>Service Member Reports for Incidents that Occurred <b>Prior</b> to Military Service</i>	275	392	667
<i>Service Member Reports for Incidents that Occurred <b>During</b> Military Service</i>	5,168	2,081	7,249
Reports Made by Non-Service Members	908	27	935
<i>DoD Civilian</i>	37	5	42
<i>DoD Contractor</i>	10	0	10
<i>Other U.S. Civilian</i>	805	22	827
<i>Foreign National/Military</i>	56	0	56
Relevant Data Not Available	5	10	15

About a fifth of Service members making Restricted Reports converted to Unrestricted Reports and participated in the military justice process. The Department offers Service members the opportunity to make an Unrestricted or a Restricted Report of sexual assault. The Military Services initially received 3,098 Restricted Reports from Service members in FY21. Of the 3,098 Service members who made initial Restricted Reports, 588 (19 percent) chose to convert to an Unrestricted Report in FY21. These 588 converted Restricted Reports are now counted in the 6,356 Unrestricted Reports received in FY21. The other 2,510 reports remained Restricted at the end of the year. Reasons for converting a Restricted Report to an Unrestricted Report include having more confidence to holding their alleged offender accountable or learning that there are other victims willing to come forward thereby making the victim more likely to be believed.

Commanders had sufficient evidence to take disciplinary action in 67 percent of accused members' cases. Every decision to take disciplinary action is based on evidence gathered during an independent investigation by a Military Criminal Investigative Organization (MCIO) with due regard to the preferences of the victim to include willingness to participate in the legal process. This year, the Department had sufficient evidence to take disciplinary action in 2,683 cases. Disciplinary action was not pursued in 1,263 cases due to factors such as insufficient evidence of victim preferences. About two percent of subject cases were unfounded, meaning evidence existed to find that a crime did not occur or that the accused did not commit the crime.

## **Sexual Assault Response-Related 2021 WGR Results for the Active Duty**

### **Service Members Value the Restricted Reporting Option**

Service members value the restricted reporting option. Forty-two percent of women who filed a Restricted Report of sexual assault in the past year indicated in the 2021 WGR that they would not have reported their incident at all if the Restricted Report option did not exist. In addition, only 9 percent of women who filed a Restricted Report would be willing to seek confidential civilian resources if making a Restricted Report was not an option.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Estimates for men were not reportable due to the small number of men who indicated both experiencing USC and making an Unrestricted Report on the 2021 WGRA.

## **Service Members' Reasons for Not Reporting**

Reasons for not reporting sexual assault remained similar for men and women. For both men and women, the top two survey-indicated responses on why they did not report their incident included: thinking it was not serious enough to report and thinking no action would be taken. Additionally, 47 percent of women cited worrying about potential negative consequences from co-workers or peers as a reason for not reporting, while 32 percent of men cited some other reason for not reporting their incident of USC.

## **Service Members Indicated Less Satisfaction with Support Services this Year**

The Department aims to provide responsive, culturally sensitive support and care to Service members reporting an incident of sexual assault. In FY21, 61 percent of active duty women who experienced sexual assault in the past year and reported it indicated satisfaction with support provided by SAPR Victim Advocates (SAPR VA)/Unit Victim Advocates (UVA). Moreover, 52 percent said they were satisfied with support provided by Special Victims Counsel (SVC)/Victims Legal Counsel (VLC), and 61 percent indicated satisfaction with support provided by Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC). Although utilization rates remained similar, overall rates of measured satisfaction with support services among those who reported an incident to military authorities appeared to be lower in FY21 than in FY18. It should be noted that numbers of reports increased significantly in FY21 and that unlike FY18, face-to-face support options were limited by the coronavirus pandemic force health protection measures in FY21.

## **2021 QuickCompass Survey of Sexual Assault Response Personnel (QSAR) Findings**

The 2021 QSAR assesses the opinions, self-reported experiences, and perceived program effectiveness of frontline staff executing SAPR programs within the Military Services and Reserve Components. All SARCs and SAPR VAs certified through the Department's Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program were invited to take the survey. In addition, all SVCs (Army), VCs (Air Force), and VLCs (Navy and Marine Corps) were invited to take the survey. Results from the 2021 QSAR provided three key findings:

### **Finding 1: SARCs and SAPR VAs Provide Significant Levels of Support to Command Leadership**

Collaborative working relationships between commanders and SAPR personnel play an important role in responding to sexual assault. When asked to identify the tasks that consumed the majority of their time, over half of SARCs, those who implement and manage the SAPR program and serve as the main point of contact for reporting, response, and victim advocacy, indicated engaging in the following tasks "very often" or "often:" providing technical assistance (73 percent), facilitating annual training (72 percent), and attending training (60 percent). Conversely, only 44 percent of SARCs who responded to the same question indicated that they frequently spent time "providing direct victim assistance services related to sexual assault."

Similar to SARCs, SAPR VAs and UVAs reported spending a notable amount of time attending or facilitating trainings, rather than providing direct outreach and survivor support. Despite these shortcomings, the majority of response personnel (87 percent of SARCs, 66 percent of VAs/UVAs, and 70 percent of SVCs/VLCs) reported having "direct and unimpeded access to local commanders." Additionally, 84 percent of SARCs and 74 percent of VAs and UVAs (down from 81 percent in 2018) reported feeling supported by their local commanders. A similar portion also felt that command leadership viewed their positions as an important role within the organizational structure. The frequent contact and perceived support seem to indicate that,

even though SARCs spend a large portion of their time assisting commanders, their unimpeded access to leadership helps to develop trust and effective working relationships.

### Finding 2: Better Preparation of First Responders Needed

The Department strives to provide high quality direct victim care to those who experience instances of sexual assault. Results from the 2021 QSAR found that SARCs were less likely than VAs/UVAs, SVCs, VLCs, and Special Victims' Paralegals (SVP) to report that their initial training prepared them for victim care procedures. The data also suggests the existing training does not equally prepare SAPR personnel to support vulnerable populations, in particular military men. However, the majority of respondents reported that their duties are clearly communicated, which may indicate that, despite program shortcomings, the SAPR workforce has a clear understanding of its role in responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment.

### Finding 3: First Responders Report Increased Job Stress

The IRC identified a need to increase the SAPR workforce and incentivize and retain seasoned SARCs and VAs. The 2021 QSAR findings echo the need to increase the number of individuals providing care to victims and the IRC's suggestion to address workforce burnout. The 2021 QSAR findings indicate job stressors were generally highest for SVC/VLC/SVPs followed by SARCs, who were both more likely to endorse job stressors than VA/UVAs. The greatest stressors for SVC/VLC/SVPs were their caseload (61 percent) and the subject matter of their work (56 percent), while for SARCs the greatest stressors were the administrative requirements of their position (41 percent, up from 34 percent in 2018) and the increasing complexity of the program (39 percent). While job stressors remained lowest for VA/UVAs (all under 15 percent), there were notable increases in stressors compared to 2018.

Detailed below, sexual assault responders indicated significantly higher rates of burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma compared to 2018, with SVC/VLC/SVPs experiencing the highest levels and VA/UVAs the lowest:

- Burnout: SARCs (51 percent, up from 32 percent), VA/UVAs (40 percent, up from 26 percent), and SVC/VLC/SVPs (62 percent, unchanged)
- Compassion Fatigue: SARCs (32 percent, up from 23 percent), VA/UVAs (21 percent, up from 13 percent), and SVC/VLC/SVPs (75 percent, up from 54 percent)
- Vicarious Trauma: SARCs (23 percent, up from 14 percent), VA/UVAs (10 percent, up from 5 percent), and SVC/VLC/SVPs (36 percent, up from 27 percent)

Compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma may impact program quality and service delivery. Due to this, the Department, in collaboration with the Military Services, is taking steps to address workforce challenges and stress. Consistent with the approved IRC recommendations, there are policies and plans in place to increase the size and capability of the SAPR workforce. By reducing caseload burden, improving role definition, and providing more training and resources, the wellbeing of the workforce will likely improve.

## FY21 Actions to Promote a Quality Response

### Men's SAPR Working Group

Previous research documents the barriers to reporting sexual assault in the military community, particularly among male Service members.<sup>7</sup> Men choose not to seek assistance after experiencing a sexual assault for a variety of reasons, including wanting to forget about it; fears surrounding perceptions of masculinity; negative career outcomes; concerns about privacy; shame or embarrassment; not wanting to show weakness; fear of retaliation; and other negative consequences. In FY21, 10 percent of men who experienced USC reported it to a DoD authority, compared to 29 percent of women.

Existing research has also documented differing risk factors associated with male versus female sexual assault. For example, male-on-male assault occurs more often in the context of bullying or hazing compared to male-on-female sexual assault. Men in these circumstances may perceive their experience as non-sexual misconduct and choose not to seek assistance from SAPR resources.

In light of these challenges, in FY21, the Department held several Men's SAPR Working Group sessions with representatives from DoD agencies, Military Services, and NGB to provide an update on the Evaluation Plan for the Department's Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault of Military Men. The sessions previewed the 2022 DoD Men's SAPR Campaign, which addresses the personal and negative effects on readiness and unit cohesion when military men experience sexual assault and discussed best practices in prevention and response efforts for military men who experience sexual assault.

### Coordination between DoD Sexual Assault Response Staff and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Military Sexual Trauma Coordinators

SARCs or UVAs, who receive a report of an instance of sexual trauma,<sup>8</sup> are required to connect the victim to the VA Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator at the facility of that Department nearest to the residence of that survivor if that survivor is a member separating or retiring from the military. In fulfillment of this requirement, DoD Form 2910 (Victim Reporting Preference Statement) now includes a section that provides contact information for the VA Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator closest to their facility. This requirement will be included in advocacy trainings instructing on processes of reporting intake and Encounter Skills.

### DoD *inTransition* Program

In FY21, DoD continued to implement policy to ensure continuity of mental health care when Service members transition between duty stations or separate from military service. A cornerstone component of this policy is the *inTransition* program. This program pairs a licensed, experienced Masters-level mental health clinician, who provides specialized coaching and assistance via telephone or email, with individuals who are:

- Active duty Service members actively engaged in mental health care at the time of their transfer to another duty station;

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<sup>7</sup> See [https://www.sapr.mil/sites/default/files/DoD-Plan-to-Prevent-and-Respond-to-Sexual-Assault-of-Military-Men\\_Approved.pdf](https://www.sapr.mil/sites/default/files/DoD-Plan-to-Prevent-and-Respond-to-Sexual-Assault-of-Military-Men_Approved.pdf) for details

<sup>8</sup> Sexual trauma captures both sexual assault and sexual harassment, and is a term used by the VA to refer to these behaviors.



- National Guard or Reserve Component members who are transferring from or to active duty status or making another transition;
- Active duty Service members, National Guard, or Reserve Component members transitioning from deployment and are seeking care; or,
- Any Service member or Veteran who requests assistance with finding a mental health care provider at any time.

The objectives are to provide a bridge between a Service member's referring and receiving health care systems (within the military, from military to VA, or other civilian provider) and to assist the Service member with staying engaged in their mental health care.

### **Response-Related Policy Update: Development and Coordination of Deputy Secretary of Defense (DSD) Memorandum on DoD Policy and Procedures for the SAPR Program and Adult Sexual Assault Investigations**

In FY21, the Department published the DSD memorandum, "Updates to DoD Policy and Procedures for the SAPR Program and Adult Sexual Assault Investigations." This DSD memo contains policy updates for the SAPR program and for military investigators. Many of the updates in this memo stem from the DoD Report, "DoD Report on Preservation of Restricted Report Option for Adult Sexual Assault Victims," submitted to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives in June 2020, in accordance with section 540K of the NDAA for FY20. The DSD memo is the most comprehensive change to SAPR policy since its inception. Additional [information](#) about the changes is available via this hyperlink.

### **Safe Helpline (SHL) Data**

DoD's SHL is the Department's sole crisis support service specially dedicated to members of the DoD community affected by sexual assault. The service is confidential, anonymous, secure, and available at all hours of the day. The availability of SHL ensures that all victims have a place to safely disclose their assault, express concerns, and obtain information. As such, this resource is often a first step in the reporting process for many victims and a key support for those who might not otherwise reach out for help through face-to-face military channels. The Department leverages SHL as an accessible point-of-entry for the military community that facilitates sexual assault reporting to SARCs and SAPR VAs.

In FY21, 43,430 users (32,796 online users and 10,634 phone users) contacted SHL for services. Of the 1,991 sessions in which an event was discussed and a user-victim relationship was disclosed, 89 percent of users were identified as victims. Some users called on behalf of victims to learn how they could support and help prevent re-victimization. Additional data on SHL can be found in Appendix D.

### **CATCH a Serial Offender Program Update**

The CATCH Program allows eligible adult sexual assault victims to submit an anonymous entry into the CATCH system to discover if the alleged offender may have assaulted another person (i.e., a "match" in the CATCH website). If notified of a potential match, victims may decide whether they want to participate in the investigation. Participation in the CATCH Program is voluntary, and victims may decline to participate even after being notified of a match.

Eligibility was initially limited to adult sexual assault victims who file, or have already filed, a Restricted Report with a DD Form 2910. Recently, eligibility was expanded to include victims who file, or have already filed, an Unrestricted Report with a DD Form 2910 and the identity of

their suspect was not disclosed by the victim or discovered by law enforcement (e.g., third-party report with no suspect identification). Eligibility includes current Service members and their adult dependents, Military Service Academy cadets and midshipmen, and also former Service members and their adult dependents who filed a formal report of sexual assault on DD Form 2910.

In FY21, the CATCH Program received 471 submissions from victims who had previously filed a Restricted Report across the Military Services and NGB. CATCH submissions resulted in 24 matches during FY21. Since its launch in August 2019, the CATCH Program has received 915 total victim submissions resulting in 35 matches as of September 30, 2021.

## **FY22 Actions to Promote a Quality Response**

The Department is actively implementing response reforms informed by the work of the IRC. In addition to those reforms, the following section summarizes the Department's ongoing efforts to promote a quality response for all Service members who experience instances of sexual assault.

### **Published Response-Related Policies**

#### **Safe-to-Report Policy**

In accordance with section 539A of the NDAA for FY21, the USD(P&R) signed the "Safe-to-Report Policy for Service Member Victims of Sexual Assault," on October 25, 2021. The Safe-to-Report guidance established the criteria for the Military Services and NGB to issue their respective policies in FY22. The Military Services' and NGB's Safe-to-Report policies prescribe the handling of alleged minor collateral misconduct involving a Service member who is the victim of a sexual assault and is applicable to all members of the Military Departments (including Reservists and cadets and midshipmen at the Military Service Academies).

Examples of minor collateral misconduct include underage drinking, being in an unprofessional relationship, being out beyond curfew, and/or in off-limits locations—all at the time of the sexual assault.

#### **Assistance for Civilian DoD Employees Who Experience Sexual Assault**

In November 2021, USD(P&R) authorized DoD Components, at their discretion, to provide the advocacy services of SARCs and SAPR VAs to DoD civilian employees who allege a sexual assault. DoD Components exercising this authority may permit DoD civilian employees to file an Unrestricted Report through the SAPR program. This is in addition to the March 2021 USD(P&R) memo that directed DoD Components to implement Component-specific policy that required advocacy, support, and referrals to be available through Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Programs.

#### **Issuance of DSD Memorandum on DoD Policy and Procedures for the SAPR Program and Adult Sexual Assault Investigations**

As described above, this DSD memo, which became effective November 10, 2021, implements policy as outlined in the Department's 540K Report, and consistent with approved IRC recommendations, preserves victims' restricted reporting option and protects a victim's decision not to participate in sexual assault investigations.

Moreover, it expands the eligibility of the CATCH Program to include any victim who files, or already filed, an Unrestricted Report and the name of the alleged perpetrator has not been



disclosed. These policy updates encourage reporting, mandate the posting of resources, and also require the publicizing of available resources outside victims' immediate chain of command.

To facilitate understanding the complexity of changes issued in the DSD memo, DoD SAPRO developed a dedicated webpage ([www.sapr.mil/latest-policy-updates](http://www.sapr.mil/latest-policy-updates)) with 10 individual topic handouts for reference. Additionally, individual trainings for all the Military Services and NGB will be conducted.

## Executing Previous Secretary of Defense SAPR Initiatives

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The Department is dedicated to advancing a military culture free from sexual assault and sexual harassment. All Service members deserve to work and live in a respectful, inclusive environment while serving and defending our Nation. To that end, this section summarizes Department actions in FY21 to support and execute initiatives in the SAPR mission space.

### FY21 Actions to Execute Then-Acting Secretary of Defense Shanahan's Call to Action Memorandum

The Department executed the following action items initially outlined in Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan's May 2019 Call to Action memorandum:

- **Implemented Recommendations from the Sexual Assault Accountability and Investigation Task Force (SAITF):** As of March 2021, eight of the total 22 recommendations were completed, eight were on track for completion, and six were in progress but delayed. However, after the conclusion of the IRC, the Department began consolidating SAITF recommendations, as appropriate, into IRC implementation activity.
- **Provided Commanders with Improved Assessment Tools to Address Risk Factors in Military Units:** The Department's primary assessment tool for assessing unit climate, the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) underwent significant revision in FY21. OPA took action on three lines of effort (LOEs), including developing a new survey platform, creating new survey content, and designing a Unit Commander Dashboard that allows leaders to view survey results or download their units' results into a printable format.
- **Implemented the CATCH Program:** The Department implemented the CATCH Program to help reduce the barriers to reporting sexual assault.
- **Prepared New Leaders and First-Line Supervisors:** The Junior Leader Working Group (JLWG) identified the necessary Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSAs) required of front-line leaders (grades E3-E5 and O1-O3) in the area of sexual assault to include the spectrum of harm leading to sexual assault. The Military Services' leadership approved the KSAs, conducted a gap analysis of their education and training programs, and developed implementation plans to close any gaps.
- **Executed the PPoA:** The IRC recommended updates to the Department's prevention strategy, including the PPoA, to incorporate IRC recommendations and addresses the full spectrum of harmful behaviors.

### FY21 Actions to Support Secretary of Defense Austin's Immediate Actions

In January 2021, President Biden ordered a 90-day commission to pursue solutions to sexual assault in the military. To carry out President Biden's direction, Secretary of Defense Austin ordered the following immediate actions in February 2021 to further address sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military.

### **Immediate Action 1: Assess Compliance with Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policies and Integrated Violence Prevention Efforts**

In June 2021, the Military Departments and NGB completed and submitted compliance assessment summary reports. These reports were synthesized, the data were ingested into the onsite installation Evaluation Dashboard, assessments were validated in onsite installation evaluations (OSIEs), and discussed among senior leaders.

### **Immediate Action 2: Provide Quarterly Climate Reports and Conduct Onsite Installation Evaluations**

Based on results from a force-wide climate survey in FY21, the Department conducted OSIEs at 20 military installations to help leaders improve command climates. The Department conducted 13 OSIEs from July through September 2021, with the remaining 7 OSIEs completed after the close of FY21 (November 21 through January 2022). Evaluation teams assessed compliance with sexual assault, sexual harassment, and integrated violence prevention policies, as well as installations' prevention capabilities and abilities to effectively address risk for harmful behaviors. Specifically, evaluation teams used validated, standardized metrics to review installations' capabilities to create healthy climates, implement integrated prevention activities, and incorporate Service member and other stakeholder voices and needs in prevention efforts.

DoD SAPRO assessed installation compliance with both DoDI 6495.02, Volume 2, SAPR: Education and Training, and the November 2019 USD(P&R) memorandum, "Revisions to Monthly Case Management Group Meetings for Adult Sexual Assault Cases." The purpose of the SAPRO assessment was twofold: (1) determine if responses provided in the self-assessment align with responses provided in onsite interviews and supporting documents submitted with the requests for information; and (2) determine policy compliance with SAPR policies and memoranda. The assessment determined alignment and compliance based upon the following four categories: victim assistance; reporting; program/policy; and training.

Results from the OSIEs (outlined in the report dated 31 March 2022) generally found compliance with sexual assault and sexual harassment reporting and response requirements, but significant gaps were noted in prevention capabilities on the ground. Additional results identified specific site vulnerabilities, namely mission prioritized above and at the expense of people, challenges for accountability, and access to resources in remote locations.

The OSIE Report summarizes findings from the onsite assessments, best practices and lessons learned, and actions the Department should undertake to improve and enhance military environments. The [OSIE Report](#) is available via this hyperlink.

### **Immediate Action 3: Establish a Violence Prevention Workforce**

In FY21, SAPRO offered 24 SPARX Knowledge trainings for the prevention workforce through the end of May 2022, with an additional 10 training dates offered through the end of the current fiscal year. As part of the training, each participant completes 64 hours of training, and, as of March 2022, approximately 800 prevention personnel have been trained. The Services are in the process of hiring additional staff members to comprise the prevention workforce.

### **FY21 Actions to Support the Establishment of the 90-Day IRC**

In January 2021, President Biden directed Secretary of Defense Austin to launch a 90-day commission to investigate how the military addresses sexual assault and sexual harassment. In February 2021, Secretary of Defense Austin launched the IRC to pursue solutions to sexual misconduct in the military. The IRC conducted an impartial assessment of the Department's efforts and made 82 recommendations to improve culture and climate, prevent sexual assault

and sexual harassment, provide better care for victims, and hold perpetrators appropriately accountable, according to the LOEs below:

- **LOE 1: Accountability.** The IRC examined the role of the military justice system, as codified in the UCMJ, in addressing the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment, in building trust and encouraging survivors to report, and its efficacy in bringing alleged perpetrators to justice.
- **LOE 2: Prevention.** The IRC conducted a comprehensive assessment of ongoing prevention efforts to determine where gaps may exist and where additional resources may be needed.
- **LOE 3: Climate and Culture.** The IRC reviewed evidence-based approaches to improve climate and ensure that all Service members are able to serve with dignity and respect, and that all victims feel safe to report instances of sexual assault without fear of reprisal from leadership and peers.
- **LOE 4: Victim Care and Support.** The IRC reviewed clinical and non-clinical services to ensure services are comprehensive, evidence-based, and available to all victims regardless of reporting status

DoD SAPRO supported and advised the Secretary of Defense's IRC through briefings, consultative and research support, coordinating survivor forums and group sessions, and using DoD SHL to gather general themes about victim-related inquiry feedback.

### Development of the IRC Implementation Roadmap

Following the IRC, Secretary of Defense Austin directed Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks to develop an implementation roadmap. On September 22, 2021, Secretary of Defense Austin approved the Implementation Roadmap. The Roadmap serves as the Department's strategic plan to implement IRC recommendations, as approved by the Department, and organizes them into the four tiers to enable implementation across a phased approach, allowing for continuous evaluation of effectiveness, progress, and modification as needed.

### Military Services and NGB Support to the IRC

In FY21, the Military Services and NGB provided support to IRC implementation activities by taking the following actions:

- **Army:** The Army supported IRC efforts by providing subject matter expertise and leadership participation to the IRC-led working groups and consultative teams. The Army fully supported IRC efforts, as it solicited independent findings and recommendations from Sexual Harassment / Assault Response and Prevention Program (SHARP) professionals, victims, and military justice professionals. Additionally, Army SHARP Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for victim support services assisted in coordinating panels and discussions with DoD-wide direct victim service providers, including SVCs and medical personnel. The purpose was to obtain input regarding their experiences with victim care and support and any recommendations.

Since submitting its findings and recommendations to the Secretary of Defense, the Army worked closely with DoD leadership to identify areas where the approved IRC recommendations overlap with recommendations from the Fort Hood Independent Review Commission. The Army plans to start implementing the IRC tier 1 recommendations in FY22, per DoD guidance.

- **Navy:** The Department of the Navy collaborated with Navy and Marine Corps to begin effectively implementing recommendations resulting from both the IRC and the Secretary of Defense's Immediate Actions to Counter Sexual Assault and Harassment.
- **Marine Corps:** The Marine Corps provided SME input and participated in multiple IRC-led working groups. Additionally, the Marine Corps has aligned new and existing initiatives with the approved IRC recommendations and continues to work diligently with invested programs across the Marine Corps and sister Services to address the recommendations.
- **Air Force:** Several members from the Department of the Air Force participated on each of the IRC's four LOEs and worked with the IRC to address all requests for information. The Department of the Air Force assessed its current SAPR and violence prevention programs and data were provided to the IRC for analysis. Additionally, the Department of the Air Force also identified its violence prevention workforce and worked to ensure that the workforce was fully trained by June 2022.
- **NGB:** The NGB provided SMEs to participate in the IRC-led working groups, as well as reviewed the Implementation Roadmap, provided input for each recommendation, and submitted information for resourcing. Additionally, the NGB participated with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Cost Assessment Program Evaluation to address how to resource for the implementation of the approved IRC recommendations.

## FY22 Actions to Execute Secretary of Defense SAPR Initiatives

Transforming the Department's workforce to more comprehensively and holistically address issues as complex as sexual assault and sexual harassment requires sustained attention from Senior leaders. The following section summarizes the Department's plans for furthering initiatives in the SAPR mission space.

### Execution of Then-Acting Secretary of Defense's Call to Action Memorandum

The Department will continue to support and execute actions outlined in then-Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan's May 2019 Call to Action memorandum by consolidating SAAITF recommendations into IRC implementation activities; updating the DEOCS; maintaining the CATCH Program; preparing new leaders and first-line supervisors; and taking steps to implement the PPOA 2.0.

### Execution of the IRC Implementation Roadmap

To implement the Implementation Roadmap, particularly tier 1, the Department has already initiated the following actions in FY22:

- **Issue Overarching Guidance:** USD(P&R) issued enterprise-wide guidance for the implementation of tiers 1 through 4.
- **Develop Service Implementation Plans:** Based on the Implementation Roadmap and USD(P&R) issued guidance, Military Services and relevant Components developed and submitted Service-specific Implementation Plans and mapping across tiers 1 through 4. The Department assessed the quality of these plans and provided improvement feedback between January and March 2022.
- **Assess IRC Implementation Roadmap Progress:** USD(P&R), in consultation with the uniformed and civilian leadership of the Department, will formally review the Implementation Roadmap twice annually and recommend any adjustments to the Deputy Secretary to monitor implementation progress and timelines.

- **Develop the Outcome Metrics Evaluation Report:** Based on the Implementation Plans provided by the Military Services and relevant Components, DoD SAPRO developed and provided an Outcome Metrics Evaluation Report to track the effectiveness of recommendations. The report detailed outcome metrics, to include interim metrics of progress, to ensure recommendation activities are being effectively implemented.

## Way Forward

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The Department continues to address sexual assault and sexual harassment holistically by advancing prevention, addressing problematic culture, improving the skills of leaders at all levels, and evaluating ways to make reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment easier and safer for victims. Sexual assault and sexual harassment are persistent challenges across all Military Services and NGB, and the results from this year's report highlight critical challenges the Department continues to address. Solutions to address problems highlighted in the Annual Report are currently being implemented by the Department of Defense, the Military Services, and NGB and funded by Congress.

