Yokosuka Site Visit Notes
DON-SAPRO
July 25, 2013

1. INTRODUCTION.

a. At the invitation of Commander Navy Region Japan (CNRJ), a three-person team from the Department of the Navy Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (DON-SAPRO) visited Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) during June 3-7, 2013 to review and offer advice on strategies to prevent sexual assaults involving Sailors. We met with senior leaders and local commanders, including those from three ships (USS MUSTIN, USS LASSEN, and USS GEORGE WASHINGTON); we toured facilities and the local community; and we held discussions with stakeholders including groups of Sailors.

b. Since our visit to Japan, we have re-visited Great Lakes, met with academic experts, and discussed prevention strategies with counterparts at the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. There remains no documented precedent of achieving sexual assault prevention on any meaningful scale, and certainly none comparable to a military community. Academic experts look now to the military to break new ground.

2. BACKGROUND.

a. TSC GREAT LAKES. Experience at Training Support Command (TSC) Great Lakes since 2011 suggests it is possible to achieve sustained reductions in sexual assault among young Sailors in a highly controlled and relatively isolated Navy environment. Nobody anywhere else has accomplished that.

1) In general, key features of the efforts at TSC Great Lakes include the following:

- active, visible engagement of the most-senior leadership
- consistent, repeated, top-down message of intolerance for sexual assault
- multiple "doses" of varied, refined, age-tailored, SAPR training
- aggressive, multi-dimensional, anti-alcohol efforts
- visible discipline, NJP consequences, NCIS investigations, and criminal convictions
- expanded "deck plate" leadership presence, Sailor mentoring, and CSADD

2) Within each category, it's hard to assess the relative value of any specific item. The major areas of activity seem to overlap and synergize, and no one area is probably adequate alone. Downward trends in sexual assault cases began well before the two biggest outside-sponsored programs began (Bystander Intervention and Sex-Signals/Afterburners). They may be having additive effects, and are probably important to maintaining gains, but were not in themselves the critical initial factors.

3) The most useful metrics at Great Lakes have been trends in victim reports and subjective inputs from stakeholders and Sailors. Attached separate notes summarize thoughts on key sexual assault assessment tools.

a) Restricted and unrestricted reports to the SARC, from students at TSC Great Lakes only, and for both genders combined, are represented by the month of alleged assault (not reporting date) and by two subjective categories of severity. "Rape/Sodomy" includes descriptions of assaults involving vaginal penetration (including by a finger or object), sodomy, or forced oral sex. All other reports of sexual assault, including all reports of attempted but uncompleted penetrating assault, are categorized as "Other Assaults." Tracking is based on initial information available to SARCs with no attempt to interrogate victims or investigate reports. For this purpose, reports are assumed to be true and are represented in tracking, except rarely in the most obvious cases of false or recanted reports. Data available since October 2005 demonstrate a substantial and sustained decrease in reported sexual assaults since multiple simultaneous efforts began in February 2011.

b) Periodic site visits, multiple stakeholder interviews, and meetings with Sailors (including focus groups conducted by DON-SAPRO) give a subjective but consistent impression of multiple-level engagement in a positive command climate.

c) We undertook paper-based anonymous sexual assault surveys of departing TSC students on nine occasions from January 2011 through October 2012. The initial experience and results were encouraging, but the process became logistically difficult as Navy got better at moving graduates more quickly to follow-on assignments, leaving fewer available at any one time to take a survey. We are working with Naval Education and Training Command to soon implement continuous application of a brief web-based sexual assault survey targeting (voluntarily) all departing A-school students at Pensacola, Great Lakes, and the Norfolk area.

d) Although DON-SAPRO has not verified the data, we are told that positive (downward) trends in Alcohol Related Incidents among TSC students paralleled reductions in reported sexual assaults, but that a similar correlation was not seen for various other forms of student misconduct.

4) Numerous questions and unknowns remain.

a) Is the impact at TSC Great Lakes sustainable across changes in key leadership?

b) How does the now-reduced incidence of sexual assault at TSC Great Lakes compare with that elsewhere? Did we set new standards, or just bring it in line with other comparable settings?

c) Would the same activities have benefit elsewhere – especially in lower-risk populations? Older Sailors may not have exactly the same risk factors or respond to the same approaches as the young cohort at TSC-GLAKES.

b. SERVICE-LEVEL INSIGHTS. Navy service-level sexual assault data is complicated. Key insights are summarized below.

1) Both restricted and unrestricted reports of sexual assault to SARCs and SAPR-VAs have generally increased since 2005, with a 17% increase from FY11-FY12 after little change during FY09-FY11. The vast majority of reports are from females, and most allege completed "penetrating" assaults, rather than less egregious acts. Multiple sources say that people are now more comfortable reporting sexual assaults, and this impression seems partially validated by an increasing trend in victims reporting sexual assaults in their more distant past. About 16% of all reports are restricted reports. The events & circumstances reported via restricted reporting look similar to those reported via unrestricted reporting.

2) Survey data suggests the risk of sexual assault is closely linked to age. The annual risk of penetrating sexual assault is MUCH higher for females aged 17-19, 20-22, and 23-25 (in declining order) than for older groups. This is equally true for survey estimates of all forms of "unwanted sexual contact" and for survey estimates of "penetrating" assaults, although the total magnitude of all forms of unwanted sexual contact is much higher than for its sub-component of penetrating assaults. By comparing the survey estimates of penetrating assaults with the number of actual NCIS cases for rape, sodomy, and aggravated sexual assault, we roughly estimate the Navy-wide reporting rate for penetrating sexual assaults may be as high as 27% for female Sailor victims but only 1.4% for males. In some places, the largest concentration of young and at-risk female Sailors is corpsmen at the Naval Hospital.

3) It is hard to assess Navy trends in the true incidence of sexual assault. Data from five different surveys spanning 2006-2012 shows a confusing down and up pattern for all forms of "unwanted sexual assault" (combined) among female Sailors. However, component data from those same five surveys shows a much smoother pattern for penetrating assaults experienced by female Sailors, with a substantial progressive increase in those penetrating assaults from 2010-2011-2012. Some sources suggest this apparent survey trend reflects changes after training in how survey participants interpret language about "against my will and without my consent" in pertinent survey questions. Across numerous site visits, most Sailors and SARCs tell us they believe the underlying overall problem of sexual assault in the Navy has not changed much in recent years – an obviously different picture than the survey data, but still not good news in view of our emphasis on reducing sexual assault. One obvious but often-missed realization is that the typical activities of the SAVI/SAPR program since 2005 have made important improvements in victim care, but they have not reduced the number of sexual assaults.

4) Our reviews of many-hundred NCIS case synopses suggest that most known cases involve junior enlisted women who allege sexual assault by another enlisted person – usually of the same rank or 1-2 enlisted ranks senior. Most assaults occur in off-duty settings among peers or acquaintances. Alcohol is a common co-factor, but it is unclear whether the assaults occur after two people both drink irresponsibly, or from alcohol being used as a weapon by a predator. On-base and off-base scenarios are both common. The common image of violent assault by a stranger is actually rare. We believe the highest risk groups are young Sailors newly arrived from recruit training or A-school. While the Navy's SAPR victim-support infrastructure is

mostly shore-based, SARCs consistently tell us that most victims belong to deployable commands.

5) Our experience with intensive Bystander Intervention and other SAPR training is revealing a surprising number of young Sailors (as high as 25%) who have experienced previous sexual assault or severe emotional trauma, and experts believe these individuals are at especially high risk for re-victimization. We also know that some Sailors are unrecognized prior perpetrators of sexual assault. Experts believe that serial perpetrators account for the vast majority of penetrating sexual assaults, although the picture we get from known Navy cases is less clear.

6) According to research by the Centers for Disease Control, the risk of sexual assault for females in uniform may be no different than for civilians of the same age. That's partially encouraging, but not really the point. Every level of national leadership expects that Sailors and Marines should be more protected from sexual assault than their civilian counterparts. Nobody thinks we have achieved that yet.

7) Survey data suggests that many males are also victims of sexual assault. Their risk of sexual assault is lower than for females, but most people in uniform are male, so the individual number of male victims may be similar or even greater. Males are much less likely to report sexual assaults, and we know less about their circumstances.

3. SITE OBSERVATIONS AT YOKOSUKA.

a. Several organizational structures already exist at different levels to address sexual assault at Yokosuka. These include a Flag-level oversight group, an installation commander committee, and a mixed-gender working group of 11 Sailors and 6 civilians. The newly-arrived Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) at Yokosuka is assigned as the primary coordinator of sexual assault prevention efforts and liaison with leadership.

b. We heard frequent mention of a bottom-up approach ("Sailors are the solution") emphasizing the role of junior Sailors in the working group to develop relevant sexual assault prevention strategies. Much (not all) of their work thus far has focused on sexual assault general awareness and victim support processes, including a widely-distributed SAPR contact information card.

c. Available data on sexual assaults among Navy personnel in Japan mostly confirms general trends seen elsewhere. Most Sailor victims allege assault by another Sailor; alcohol is a common but not universal co-factor; the specific locations of alleged assaults are diverse (though mostly on-base or aboard ship in this instance); most victims are young and junior-ranking females (E3-4); most alleged offenders are slightly older and more senior (E4-5). About 26% of reported assaults are "penetrating," a lower proportion than we have seen elsewhere thus far, but probably reflecting changes in Navy-wide investigation practices.

d. Trends in sexual assault reporting by month during FY13 are difficult to assess and are hard to distinguish from seasonal variation. Anecdotal insight from the SARC suggests that

local cases at Yokosuka may tend to involve relatively more experienced enlisted Sailors allegedly assaulting more junior newcomers, especially from afloat commands.

e. CFAY has experienced an increase in victims utilizing support mechanisms. Within the last year, clinical counselors at Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) Yokosuka have seen an increase in requests for individual counseling by sexual assault victims, while Naval Hospital Yokosuka has recorded a significant increase in overall number of sexual assault forensic exams conducted there.

f. We encountered a number of very positive activities underway at Yokosuka, though mostly on a small scale, and we were impressed by the local presence of resources that might be leveraged and developed in a multi-dimensional SAPR strategy.

1) FFSC Counselors will soon begin using Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) with sexual assault victims at Yokosuka. This is a therapeutic method of addressing acute stress and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The American Psychiatric Association has recognized this method has an effective treatment of trauma.

2) Mental Health offers a sexual assault survivor group facilitated by a Navy Officer who is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

3) RLSO is experiencing improved sexual assault victim coordination and retention as a result of an added VWAP component. Specifically, RLSO uses a civilian paralegal to contact victims, lend support during interviews, and coordination witness logistics.

4) Similar to our recent San Diego Assist Visit, NCIS resources are overwhelmed by new NDAA-imposed demands for formal criminal investigations of all unrestricted reports of sexual assault, regardless of severity.

5) There have been multiple, small-scale, sexual assault prevention initiatives in the area. Most take the form of small gender-specific mentoring groups that discuss individual risk-reduction and responsibilities associated with sexual activity, alcohol use, and protecting your fellow sailor. The prevention entity with the most potential appears to be the locally created theatrical production known as SCREAM which engages audience with a series of skits focused on raising awareness and offering prevention strategies. The performance reaches about 600 sailors a year.

g. Junior Sailors appear to be highly engaged in local SAPR initiatives via CSADD, SAPWG, SCREAM production, and gender-specific mentoring groups found aboard multiple ships. These committed Junior Sailors efforts would have the highest impact on preventing and reducing incidents of sexual assault with coordinated concentrated support from the highest level of CFAY leadership.

h. Command Fleet Activities Yokosuka has a multitude of resources for sexual assault victims. The range of services doesn't appear to be common knowledge by the CFAY community. It is possible that those being victimized by sexual assault are not aware of the

spectrum of services available to them. Improve upon outreach efforts by marketing the full capacity of victim support mechanisms.

5. SUGGESTIONS.

a. Assign a military officer who reports directly to CFAY as the local and/or regional POC for coordinating sexual assault prevention efforts. The SARC is a key resource, but not a substitute for direct leadership engagement and ownership of sexual assault prevention.

b. Engage key stakeholders (including mid-level leadership) in a structured process to summarize local known information, discuss known high risk-groups and behaviors, and identify multiple potential strategies to intervene. While we endorse the concept of engaging junior Sailors as important resources in parts of the process, they are no substitute for direct leadership engagement in problem definition, information gathering, the development of feasible strategies, and assessment of progress.

c. Use the SARC to summarize key insights and incidence trends about reported cases (both restricted and unrestricted) without compromising individual victim privacy. We have found SARCs to have extremely valuable summary insights. Separately, would engage Sailors in building subjective perspectives on command climate and actual progress (or lack thereof) in preventing sexual assault. For the moment, local surveys directly addressing actual sexual assault experiences are not advised – the restrictions on "human subject research" are real and detailed, and you would incur risk by ignoring them. More importantly, they are probably not necessary in the short run. If you are successful in impacting sexual assault, you will know it in other ways.

d. Use a structured process to identify potential efforts to address specific parts of a broader spectrum of issues and target populations. You don't need to solve every possible issue all at once, but the overall strategy most likely to succeed may require multiple simultaneous specific efforts – each tailored to local circumstances and sustainable – that together have an impact and send a leadership message that none would accomplish alone. Potential items or targets might include the following:

1) Potential victims. Where are the largest concentrations of newly-arrived young Sailors? Where are the largest concentrations of female Sailors? What mentoring programs already exist and how are working? How could they be scaled to reach more people? Where could shore and afloat resources be coordinated or combined in new partnerships? Is there specific information on risky locations or behavior that could be shared in a manner that avoids the appearance of victim-blaming?

2) Potential offenders. What do we know (in summary only) about alleged offenders in known cases? Could focused leadership training or alcohol prevention or bystander intervention concepts be applied to prevent perpetration?

3) Prior victims. Can we create programs to help prior victims build personal tools to succeed in the Navy and avoid becoming repeat victims? An ideal approach would be voluntary, very confidential, not label participants with medical diagnoses, and not disrupt normal duty performance expectations. The FFSC is probably a key resource in any such effort. How could activity be scaled to reach as many Sailors as possible, and how could partnership be established with Fleet units?

4) Potential bystanders. Every Sailor and Marine is responsible for a command climate that does not tolerate sexual assault, and that is supportive of sexual assault victims. Every Sailor and Marine has an obligation to protect each other from harm. Repeated and consistent leadership messages, in diverse settings, are probably necessary to instill these concepts. What mechanisms and formats are most effective in delivering such messages at CFAY? What visible actions are necessary to underscore their credibility?

5) Alcohol. What is the role of alcohol in known sexual assault cases at CFAY? What strategies are available to combat alcohol abuse?

6) Mentoring. Who do Sailors at CFAY look to as role models and sources of mentoring? How can activities be developed to emphasize consistent messages that reflect our core values and concern for Sailor success? How can efforts be scaled to reach more people? Does anybody do weekly liberty briefs?

7) Accountability. How do we enforce our rules and expectations? What consequences does most misconduct have? How do young Sailors learn about the consequences of misconduct?

8) Training. What training is best conducted in large-group forums? Where do we thing small-group formats might work better? What level of effort and resourcing would be needed to sustain various new training ideas? Who would the most effective target groups be, if it is not feasible to reach everybody? What is the right frequency and format of various training tools? How can we get maximum leverage from SCREAM – how many people can we spare to develop it; how often does it need to be changed; who needs to see it the most; how often should we make them attend?

ADDENDUM – DON-SAPRO GENERAL NOTES ON METRICS

We ultimately seek to eliminate sexual assaults completely. A necessary interim goal in sexual assault prevention is thus to reduce the number of assaults, expressed as the rate of occurrence per person per year, whether they are reported or not. The most important programmatic question is also the hardest to answer. Are current efforts collectively reducing the number of sexual assaults, or must we try something different? Since their origins in 2005, the Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) programs have importantly improved victim support, but their activities do not appear to have reduced the number of sexual assaults. Our experience is hardly unique, as there are no documented precedents elsewhere. Academics now look to the military as the best chance of future success.

We do not immediately need to know the exact number of sexual assaults. Instead, we want methods that are sufficiently valid and repeatable to help us decide if we are having an impact over time. We currently rely on insights from three sources: victim reports (both restricted and unrestricted), survey results, and subjective inputs. Each has limitations, and no one is adequate in itself. There is no perfect answer.

- Trends in victim reporting are useful in well-understood local settings, but hard to interpret across large populations and changing environments. A rising number of individual victim reports could reflect more actual assaults (obviously bad), or improved reporting (good, but not equal to prevention), or just a growing population size (neither good nor bad). Group comparisons are complicated by differences in gender or age. Women are more likely to be sexually assaulted than men, and they are also more likely to report an assault. All else equal, mixed-gender groups with proportionally more women will experience more actual assaults and more victim reports. Similarly, young adults are more likely to be sexually assaulted than their elders. Clues to improved reporting include reports from male victims (who are notoriously reluctant to come forward) and reports from either gender about assaults further in the past. For program trending purposes, we assume victim reports are true, recognizing that restricted reports are not investigated and many unrestricted reports cannot be proven.

- Sexual assault surveys provide a confidential or anonymous mechanism for sharing sensitive personal information. They overcome population differences by generating statistical rates for important subgroups like gender and age. Important caveats apply, however. In most settings, sexual assault surveys are subject to prescriptive safeguards on human subject research. We believe participants are truthful, but their responses cannot be verified or equated with reported assaults. Valid results depend on participation by a representative cross section of the population, which we assess by comparing gender and age responses with manpower data. We do not know if sexual assault victims are more likely than others to participate (thus over-estimating the risk of assault) or less likely to participate (thus under-estimating the risk), but this concern is mitigated by sequentially using the same process to focus on trends. On complex aspects of sexual assault, honest participants may also interpret survey language differently than we presume, leading us to subsequently misinterpret their responses.

• Subjective inputs from site visits are hard to quantify but useful if collected systematically from enough people. We use leadership conversations, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups of Sailors and Marines at locations world-wide to gather insights on sexual assault circumstances, victim reporting, and SAPR training. We ask virtually all whether, from their own perspective, the problem of sexual assault is getting better, or getting worse, or staying about the same.