

STATEMENT OF TERRI YOUNGS, PROTECT OUR DEFENDERS

Response Systems To Adult Sexual Assault Crimes Panel

My name is Terri Youngs and I joined the Navy in 1975. I attended boot camp in Orlando Florida. We later learned that the Military had decided to greatly increase the number of women into the military ranks without giving the women involved any kinds of heads up. In talking with my many sister veterans, I now know that there was no plan in place to protect us from the "Old Boys Club" that was the male dominated military industry. We were like lambs led to slaughter. We should have been warned, and taught to defend ourselves. It was no different than giving black men syphilis without their permission or knowledge. As far as I am concerned this was a crime against women.

Between leaving boot camp and arriving at my first duty station, I was raped. I was raped by a civilian whose name I do not know in North Carolina. I never told anyone except a few very close friends who I knew would not judge me. I was recently told by a Vet Rep that most women who were raped in the military never reported it. Even though being raped was a horrific experience the most hurtful and awful part of my life was still years ahead of me.

In 1982 I was transferred to NAS Memphis Tenn. Shortly thereafter, Warrant Officer [REDACTED] ordered a young female Airman, [REDACTED], to get a driver's license. This woman was working under me and expressed to me that none of the women in her family drive and that she didn't feel she should be compelled to get a driver's license. I took her concerns to W.O. [REDACTED] and he walked me out onto a deserted hangar deck and stated "I am going to see to it that you are administratively discharged from the Navy." For the next year, the harassment continued on a daily basis. He made my life a living hell. He drummed up charges and put me on report twice, he sent me to Captains Mast twice, I was fined a half months pay and he wrote me up 3 times in one day. Every day I had off, I was called as early as 6:00 A.M. to ask me some stupid question. My friend AT2 [REDACTED], who worked in the same work center would tell me that they would come in and decide what excuse they would use for calling me so early in the morning. They even went as far as to tell my friends to stay away from me and not talk to me.

The second time he sent me to Captains Mast, I conferred with a lawyer from the JAG office. He told me that I needed to request a Court Marshal. When I went to my second mast I was told by the XO CDR. [REDACTED] that he was referring me to the CO for Captains

Mast. I then told him that “In that case my lawyer has advised me to request a court martial”. I was told by my layer that as soon as I walked out of the XO’s office that the XO called legal for their advice because he realized that he had made a major mistake in referring me to CO Mast and not dropping the charges. After many months of my command trying to get the charges rolling, the Commanding Officer of the legal department stepped in and once and for all, he told the Commanding Officer that they would not be prosecuting me and they were forced to drop the charges in writing.

All of the above information can be found and validated through the Naval Archives.

I left the Naval service in February 1985 and moved to Hawaii where my husband was stationed. In December of the same year, I decided to re-enter the Navy, feeling like enough time and distance had been put between myself and NAS Memphis. I was stationed to VP-50 at NAS Moffett Field in Sunnyvale California. As soon as reported the harassment started anew. (The past CO of NAS Memphis had transferred to The Naval Personnel Office in D.C., my detailer told me later that when my old CO saw my re-enlistment papers come across he desk, he was livid and immediately called my next command.) My work schedule was changed on a daily basis. One day I would work days, the next, nights, the next mids, the next nights.....I became so sleep deprived that I went to medical and was Dx. with sever jet lag but was told to report back to work as usual. My lack of sleep became such as issue that I felt that driving my car half way around the runway was too dangerous and had my friend drive me. That was just the beginning.

During my stay at VP-50 the commanding officer, CDR. [REDACTED] went on a witch hunt looking for gays. I was once again caught up in this God awful mess and was sent to the psychiatric ward for a 3 day investigation of my sexuality. It didn’t matter that I was married. There is so much more but the events I have listed are a sampling of the way I was treated. When I left VP-50 3 years later the Commanding Officer expressed that I was very unfairly treated during my stay and apologized for the acts of those I had worked for.

I decided to leave the military once and for all when I left VP-50 but realized that after 16 years I needed to finish my 20 years. I then joined the reserves and retired from the Navy in 1998.

Around 2001 I turned to the VA in San Jose, CA and was Dx. with PTSD from the incidents above. I feel so blessed to have found a wonderful PTSD Clinic and Dr. such as [REDACTED] I not only met with her individually but she also made me a part of her women’s therapy group. During the meetings in the women’s group I found that I was not alone, all the women had experienced the same type of indignation and harassment as I had. I soon learned that, even though our services had been different, in different parts of the world and at different times, all of our stories were the same. It was then that I knew that I was not alone and I knew in my heart that every vet, women or men who had suffered the same traumatic events that I had are my brothers and sisters.

3 years after my first meeting with the women's group, we were told that "this would be our last day". All of the funding for the PTSD clinic was being withdrawn. After the great things that were accomplished in the PTSD Clinic, it was being closed down. We were left high and dry. People with PTSD are lonely creatures because we feel like no one can ever understand us or what we have been through. That is why group therapy is so important. Now almost a decade later, my only friends are the 5 women I met in that group. We are divided by distance and don't see each other more than maybe once a year at a Christmas lunch. Once again, I am alone. I have requested mental health treatment only to be given 12 weeks of outside therapy twice. The last time the letter that authorized my therapy was dated 2 weeks before my appointment where my Dr. made the request. I was cheated out of 2 weeks of mental health appointments.

The VA has a horrid habit of authorizing funding for mental health and then finding what a huge amount is being used and then stopping it. It goes in a vicious circle, there is money but then it's found to be too expensive and it is stopped and then the VA is pressured and the funding is open again.

For years I denied that I could possibly have PTSD, what right did I have? I had not been shot at or seen combat. Dr. [REDACTED] was adamant that I submit my claim. When I finally submitted my request for compensation, I was denied because I had no proof. I went to see a VSO and was told that unless I had some kind of proof, such as someone that could witness my change in behavior there was no way that I could get acceptance. Since I did not know any of the people I would be working with, this was an impossible task.

In conclusion, first, where is the punishment for those that commit sexual crimes and harassment? It is appalling to see that there is scant or no accountability to those that viciously prey on others. This is an epidemic that can no longer be swept under the rug. We have found our voice and we will no longer stand on the sidelines and quietly watch the parade go by. There must be justice, commands must be taken out of the loop because even when the command wants to step up to the plate and do the right thing by those that they are expected to protect, they are seen as not worthy of command because they can't control their own troops. This is just dead wrong and until everyone is held accountable we will stand toe to toe and hand in hand, we will not go quietly into the night.