



**United States Department of Defense
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness**

PRESS RELEASE

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**Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention Office Observes
April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month**

The month of April is recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), created to raise awareness and promote the prevention of sexual violence in America. Sexual Assault Awareness Month focuses on the achievement of three goals:

- Fostering awareness of the impact that sexual assault has on every community;
- Facilitating awareness of the availability of health services created to offer care and support to victims and survivors of sexual assault; and
- Encouraging community-wide prevention.

In observance of SAAM, the Department of Defense (DoD) Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) will conduct its annual campaign, *Stand Up Against Sexual Assault...Make a Difference*, which promotes a climate of respect intolerant of sexual assault and encourages every service member to join in a cooperative effort to end sexual violence.

“As the Director of SAPRO, I am committed to heightening sexual assault awareness across the Armed Services and implementing prevention policies, training programs, treatment and support of victims, and system accountability,” said Dr. Kaye Whitley.

SAPRO developed the 2007 SAAM campaign in order to highlight DoD and Service programs developed to prevent sexual assault in the military.

The Honorable David S.C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness stated, “SAAM provides a golden opportunity for all commanders to address DoD and Service policies regarding sexual assault prevention and response.”

Throughout the month of April, DoD SAPRO has planned several SAAM engagements. On April 3, 2007, The Honorable, David S.C. Chu, will host SAPRO’s annual sexual assault awareness event at the Women in the Military for America Memorial located at Arlington National Cemetery. Special guests include Katherine H. Koester, the first victim of date rape to speak out nationally against sexual assault.

Additionally, Dr. Kaye Whitley, Director, will speak at the Joint Victim Advocate Refresher Training and a local SAAM event in Monterey, California. Also, in an effort to expand Service outreach, SAPRO will man a booth at the Pentagon providing information on the prevention of sexual assault in the Armed Forces.

SAPRO encourages each military installation to educate Service members about sexual assault, promote sexual awareness month, and participate in local SAAM activities. To further support the needs of each service, SAPRO has designed customizable Service-specific materials in order to garner increased awareness from your command/installation. These materials are available to download from our website at <http://www.sapr.mil> and your local Sexual Assault Response Coordinator.

For additional information on a national level, visit the National Sexual Violence Resource Center at www.nsvrc.org/saam. This site will provide you with successful ideas from other communities and tools for planning for SAAM.

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