



Commanding Officer's Sexual Assault Statement



Sexual assault is a crime. Any attack on the dignity of another Marine, Sailor or Civilian will not be tolerated in this Command.

Sexual assault is defined as intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, physical threat of force, or abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent. "Consent" shall not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the victim to offer physical resistance. Consent is not given when a person uses force, threat of force, coercion or when the victim is asleep, unconscious or incompetent. Consent may also be withdrawn at any time.

Sexual assault is prejudicial to good order and discipline, leaves a blemish on our proud reputation and tears at the very fabric of our Corps. It erodes unity, trust, teamwork and undermines unit cohesion, Esprit de Corps, readiness, and our ability to fight. Leadership is our greatest weapon in combatting sexual assault, but it takes a concerted effort by all personnel to stop this issue. Every individual has a responsibility to step up and protect our brothers and sisters, and those who commit sexual assaults will be held accountable. Sexual assault can happen to anyone, regardless of age, rank, gender, race or sexual orientation...with excessive alcohol consumption and isolation often being tools perpetrators exploit. All leaders shall emphasize responsible behavior both on and off base, and maintaining an awareness of one's surroundings at all times.

I am committed to the total eradication of sexual assault within the Marine Corps. If you feel you have been the victim of sexual assault, please utilize all options available to get the help you need immediately. At your disposal are Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Uniformed and Civilian Victim Advocates, medical personnel, and chaplains for reporting, providing access to the care you need while maintaining privacy and confidentiality. You may elect a Restricted or Unrestricted report, and my focus is on ensuring we provide the care and support you need while extinguishing this criminal behavior from our ranks. I want you to come forward to get the help you need and deserve – *and I will ensure that you will be treated with dignity and respect.*

The SAPR Program provides comprehensive services that center on awareness and prevention, training and education, victim advocacy, and serves as an overall response to those who are victims. If you or someone you know is sexually assaulted, the **Camp Lejeune-New River 24/7 Sexual Assault Support Line** is available to provide crisis intervention and support services at **910-750-5852**, as well as the **Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247**.

Failure to act to prevent a known sexual assault is an act of cowardice and completely contrary to our warrior ethos. Furthermore, reprisal in any form against a victim or witness who reports sexual assault will be dealt with swiftly and severely. Even one sexual assault in our Corps is too many. Treat everyone as your brothers and sisters, or sons and daughters, and together we can stop sexual assault.

Semper Fidelis,

G. W. BURNETT
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding Officer
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