



Fort Riley Consolidates Sexual Assault Resources in Response, Prevention Center

By J. Parker Roberts

To better aid victims at Fort Riley, the 1st Infantry Division Sexual Assault Response Team has centralized support and advocacy services into the Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Center.

Maj. Gen. Paul E. Funk II, commanding general, 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley, visited the center during its opening April 9, to tour the facility and learn from staff members how the SARP Center will aid victims of sexual assault.

“The Army’s about people, and it’s about putting the best responses to any kind of situation we have and putting the experts in the right place so that Soldiers have access,” Funk said at the opening of the center. “It’s one place ... where a victim can come and know they’re going to get the services they need.”

Located inside Adams Hall, Building 8071 on Custer Hill, the center will maintain an on-site staff of three victim advocates, a sexual assault care coordinator, Criminal Investigation Division special agent assigned to the Special Victim Unit, special victim counsel, paralegal noncommissioned officer and a trial counsel. The center will be open to the public from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each duty day. Staff also will be available as necessary outside of these hours.

“I wish it wasn’t needed; I really do. I wish this wasn’t an issue. I wish we treated each other with dignity and respect all the time,” Funk said. “Now, the vast majority of our Soldiers do that, but we do have problems. And when we do, we’ve got to address them. This is a critical resource for the victims and the victims’ families.”

Those needing assistance can always call the Sexual Assault Hotline at 785-307-9338.

“To make a one-stop shop makes it a lot easier on the individual,” said Sgt. 1st Class Aiden Hinkley, 1st Inf. Div. sexual assault response coordinator. Furthermore, “our sexual assault care provider and care coordinator are right across the street in the Farrelly (Health) Clinic as well.”

Hinkley said the SARP Center makes the process of reporting easier, but it is far from the only way to get help.

“The way the system works, as long as somebody is credentialed, they can report to them whether restricted or unrestricted,” he said.

Those utilizing the restricted reporting option have access to medical treatment, a forensic exam, counseling and advocacy. The unrestricted option additionally allows for command intervention and an official investigation.

“That starts down at the company level,” Hinkley said. “There’s a company alternate and primary at every single company in FORSCOM.”

The sexual assault resource coordinator said victims also can report to their chain of command, although that automatically classifies the reporting as unrestricted because leaders are required to report incidents up their chain of command.

“There shouldn’t be a Soldier who doesn’t know who they can go to to file a report,” Hinkley said.

The center and SHARP professionals across Fort Riley take additional steps to help prevent sexual assault and harassment.

“Prevention efforts start with training,” Hinkley said. “One of the things we’re doing at Fort Riley to make a difference is, instead of it just being an annual training requirement, which is what’s required by the Department of the Army and the Department of Defense, we’ve gone to a quarterly training so that we break up, and we make sure that just because you got here the day after SHARP training doesn’t mean you’re not going to get it for a year.”

He said some brigades and battalions within the division even conduct monthly SHARP training.

“It starts with the language that we use toward each other,” Hinkley said. “Harassment – dirty jokes – lead to full-on sexual harassment, sexual harassment will lead to sexual assault because of improper attitudes that people have toward each other and the

dehumanizing effect that they have.”

Sexual assault is a longstanding concern for the 1st Inf. Div. To better understand the issue, 1st Inf. Div. Command Sgt. Maj. Michael A. Grinston, the division’s senior enlisted officer, and the commanding general traveled to Washington in January to attend the Army’s SHARP, or Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention and Response Program, conference.

“The SHARP conference was very informative,” Grinston said. “Gen. (Raymond) Odierno, the chief of staff of the Army, said that we have made progress, but we are still not there yet.”

Grinston said leaders at the conference encouraged divisions to get away from conducting large slide-based classes, and, instead, make use of small unit training and vignettes.

“The Chief of Staff of the Army and Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond Chandler have challenged us to fix this issue,” Grinston said. “The commanding general and I call out to all ‘Big Red One’ Leaders to attack this issue like an insurgency and act accordingly. Sexual assault has no place in our Army, our division or our communities.”

Funk echoed Grinston’s sentiments.

“We have got to take this issue and eliminate it from the services,” the commanding general said. “But right now, while we have this issue, we will always have this resource.” ■



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