

# Facts and Statistics about Women Veterans

## All Women Veterans

- The current projected percentage of U.S. Veterans who are women is 10 percent. For the most recent projections, visit [VetPOP 2011](#). <sup>1</sup>
- In FY 2009, the average age of women Veterans was 48 years, compared to 63 years for their male counterparts.
- In FY 2009 and FY 2010 PTSD, hypertension, and depression were the top three diagnostic categories for women Veterans treated by VHA. <sup>2</sup>
- PTSD is primarily related to Military Sexual Trauma (MST). If that category is left out, women suffer PTSD at the same rate as men.
- About 1 in 5 women seen in VHA respond "yes" when screened for Military Sexual Trauma (MST). <sup>3</sup>
- Under reported probably more than in the civilian community because it is more like incest and/or perpetrated by someone in their chain of command, and it is usually a career-ender. Women do not have the option of simply quitting like in the civilian world and so often will continue at the same location as the perp. High percentage of time, perp is boss or friend of. Serial rapists not discovered because of reassignment when assaults not reported to civilian community.
- Though rates of MST are higher among women, because of the disproportionate ratio of men to women in the military there are actually only slightly fewer men seen in VA that have experienced MST than there are women. <sup>4</sup>
- It is "unmanly" to report/admit MST so this is only a small percentage of the number assaulted.

## Women Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND)

- ▣ Women make up nearly 11.6 percent of OEF/OIF/OND Veterans.
  - ▶ 57.4 percent of women OEF/OIF/OND Veterans have received VA health care; of these, 89.8 percent have used VA health care more than once. <sup>5</sup>
  - ▶ Nearly 51.3 percent of female OEF/OIF/OND Veterans who used VA care during FY 2002-2011 were born in or after 1970 (aged 43 or younger) compared to nearly 48 percent of male OEF/OIF/OND Veterans. <sup>6</sup>

<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp> talks about Military Sexual assault and has some more statistics.

“Sadly, about 1 in 4 women and 1 in 100 men seen for VA health care report a history of MST when screened by a VA provider. Although the percentage among women is much higher, given the far greater number of men in military service, there are significant numbers of both men and women who have experienced MST. In fact, over 40% of the Veterans seen in VA who disclose MST are men.”

Respectfully submitted by Sheila Laughton, IHOM trained facilitator. Program Manager and spiritual director for the veterans Welcome Home Program at the Loyola Spirituality Center in St Paul, MN. a career staff and intelligence officer for the Air Force, was deployed to Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia, during the Gulf War. She was currently awarded the Veterans' Voices Award at the University of St. Thomas. The awards are given annually by the Minnesota Humanities Center to those who provide exemplary community service on behalf of soldiers and their families.

Sheila founded the Welcome Home Program at the Loyola Spirituality Center, where she provides one-on-one spiritual guidance for veterans and their families. A Park High School graduate, she was the first woman to be commissioned through the University of Minnesota Junior ROTC. A retired officer, married to a veteran, with sons in the Army and Air Force, she has experienced military life from multiple perspectives. She is a director, teacher and group facilitator with 10+ years of experience in these areas plus 25 years in management. Sheila has been a facilitator/trainer with Healing of Memories-MN for 9 years, and is also involved with the Women Veterans Initiative. She holds a MA in Theology, Certificate Of Spiritual Direction, St. Catherine University, and a MS in Guidance and Counselling, Creighton University.

# Debunking Claims of Progress on Military Sexual Assault

## Fact Sheet

The data is clear: despite efforts to argue the contrary, research shows that the military has failed to address the sexual assault crisis.

### Assault Rate Unimproved From 2010

#### **The sexual assault rate remains the same as 2010**

**20,300** service members were sexually assaulted in 2014. 76% of male and 56% of female victims were assaulted at least twice, resulting in over **47,000 assaults** against service members.<sup>1</sup> **1 in 7** victims were assaulted by someone **in their chain of command**.

### Retaliation Remains the Norm

#### **The retaliation rate remains the same as 2012**

**62%** of victims who reported sexual assault still faced retaliation.

### Harassment Cases Often Mishandled

#### **Victims don't trust the system**

**86%** of victims did not report the crime in 2014. **1 in 3** victims still believed that reporting would hurt their career; the process would be unfair; or that nothing would be done. **1 in 4** feared retaliation from their chain of command or coworkers.

### Unit Cohesion is at Risk

#### **Sexual harassment rate is alarmingly high**

**134,500** service members experienced severe and persistent sexual harassment or career-harming gender discrimination.<sup>2</sup> **60%** of these victims were **harassed by someone in their chain of command**.

### Low Trust and Satisfaction

RAND concludes: *"At such high rates, sexual harassment... could affect cohesion within military units [and] degrade mission effectiveness."*

#### **Reliance on unscientific survey**

The DoD says victims are satisfied based on their Survivor Experience Survey, which even the Pentagon admits is **not representative** of all active-duty survivors. **To the contrary:** According to RAND, **nearly half** of survivors (45%) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their treatment by their supervisor or chain of command.

#### **Sexual harassment often mishandled by chain of command**

**44%** of sexual harassment victims were encouraged to drop the issue. **41%** said the person to whom they reported took no action.

Read the full report:  
[http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR870z2.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR870z2.html)

<sup>1</sup> The majority of victims are assaulted more than once over the course of a year. In 2014, there were 3.57 sexual assaults per 100 active-duty service members, out of a total 1,317,561 members. This translates to 47,000 sexual assaults against active-duty service members in 2014.

<sup>2</sup> In 2014, 10.21% of the active-duty population experienced sexual harassment or gender discrimination.