



Formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund

## The Facts on the Military and Violence Against Women

Evidence shows that violence against women is a pervasive problem within the military, just as it is in among civilians. However, women in the military are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to geographical isolation from family and friends, and the potential for social isolation within the military culture.

Recently, a series of high-profile reports, articles and documentaries have raised public awareness about the true nature of violence against women in the military. Academy Award-nominated documentary *The Invisible War* distilled the sea of information and highlighted some of the most egregious problems:

- The Department of Defense (DoD) estimates more than 19,000 military sexual assaults occurred in 2010, yet less than 14% were reported.<sup>i</sup>
- Of the 19,000 estimated military sexual assaults, the 3,192 reports only led to 191 convictions at courts-martial.<sup>ii</sup>
- 1 in 3 convicted military sex offenders remain in the military.<sup>iii</sup>
- In 2011 alone, the Veterans Administration spent close to \$900 million, or \$10,880 per military sexual assault survivor, on health services related to sexual assault.<sup>iv</sup>

### In addition:

- The victim of domestic violence in the military is predominantly the female, civilian spouse of active duty personnel. Victims normally have children and more than half have been married two years or less.<sup>v</sup>
- Substantiated spousal abuse involving members of the military is predominantly perpetrated by male, active duty personnel.<sup>vi</sup>
- Among the Services, the Army consistently has shown the highest rates of domestic violence, followed by the Marines, Navy, and Air Force.<sup>vii</sup>
- Abused women in military communities are often fearful of reporting incidents due to the lack of confidentiality and privacy as well as limited victim services.<sup>viii</sup>
- In the sample of active duty military women from the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area, 29.9 percent reported adult lifetime intimate partner violence, defined as physical and/or sexual assault from a current or former intimate partner. African American women were significantly less likely to be abused during military service than were white women, but ethnic group membership was not a risk factor for lifetime abuse.<sup>ix</sup>

<sup>i</sup> *The Invisible War Discussion and Resource Guide*. 2012. The Invisible War Movie. Accessed 11 February 2013. <http://www.filmsprout.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/TIW-Discussion-Guide.pdf>



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<sup>ii</sup> *The Invisible War Discussion and Resource Guide*. 2012. The Invisible War Movie. Accessed 11 February 2013. <http://www.filmsprout.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/TIW-Discussion-Guide.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> *Rape, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the Military*. 2012. Service Women's Action Network: New York, NY. Accessed 11 February 2013. <http://servicewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Final-RSASH-10.8.2012.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> *The Invisible War Discussion and Resource Guide*. 2012. The Invisible War Movie. Accessed 11 February 2013. <http://www.filmsprout.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/TIW-Discussion-Guide.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Hansen, Christine. 2001. "A Considerable Service: An Advocates Introduction to Domestic Violence and the Military." Domestic Violence Report.

<sup>vi</sup> The Final Report on the Study of Spousal Abuse in the Armed Forces. 1996. Caliber Associates for the Department of Defense: Washington, DC.

<sup>vii</sup> *The Final Report on the Study of Spousal Abuse in the Armed Forces*. 1996. Caliber Associates for the Department of Defense: Washington, DC.

<sup>viii</sup> Hansen, Christine. 2001. "A Considerable Service: An Advocates Introduction to Domestic Violence and the Military." *Domestic Violence Report*.

<sup>ix</sup> Campbell, Jacquelyn C. and Wolf, Anna D. 2002. *Intimate Partner Violence and Physical and Mental Health Consequences among Active Duty Military Women*.

