

Family Violence Prevention Fund

The Facts on the Military and Violence Against Women

High profile incidents of violence against women in the military, including five domestic homicides at Fort Bragg in 2002 and allegations of sexual assault in the Air Force Academy have led to an increased awareness of the problem of violence against women in the military. 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.

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.ⁱ
- Substantiated spousal abuse involving members of the military is predominantly perpetrated by male, active duty personnel.ⁱⁱ
- Among the Services, the Army consistently has shown the highest rates of domestic violence, followed by the Marines, Navy, and Air Force.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 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.^{iv}
- 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.^v

ⁱ Hansen, Christine. 2001. "A Considerable Service: An Advocates Introduction to Domestic Violence and the Military." *Domestic Violence Report*.

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

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^{iv} Hansen, Christine. 2001. "A Considerable Service: An Advocates Introduction to Domestic Violence and the Military." *Domestic Violence Report*.

^v Campbell, Jacquelyn C. and Wolf, Anna D. 2002. *Intimate Partner Violence and Physical and Mental Health Consequences among Active Duty Military Women*.

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