



SHARP: U.S. ground forces respond to sexual assaults

military-Earth thinking notebook

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Expériences alliées

The problem of sexual assault and harassment within the French Ministry of Defence made the headlines a few months ago, prompting the Minister to take, or resume, a series of measures to combat this recurring evil. This letter from the DLT within the US Army shows that this problem, despite rigorous responses, also exists among our American friends, a priori in much greater proportions.

For ten years in the United States, April has been designated as Sexual Assault AwarenessMonth (SAAM). Its purpose is to raise public awareness of the problem of sexual violence and to seek to prevent it. It gives the Army an opportunity to remind all Army personnel to focus on efforts to prevent sexual assault and harassment. The theme that the Army has chosen this year is an opportunity to speak out on the subject, whether as a victim or a witness.

This problem, which is of proven magnitude, has apparently become more acute recently despite the means used to prevent it.

The figures show a significant number of incidents (2,558 incidents reported within DoD in 2012) and, above all, a steady increase that seems to run counter to the efforts made. However, one study showed that there was no increase in the number of incidents during deployment times. The overall increase cannot therefore be attributed to the high projection rate. Rather, it appears that the number of reported assaults has increased as the command has become more focused on the problem and as awareness and victim support campaigns have become more effective.

It must be said that in the forces, the issue is taken very seriously and at a very high level....

This comes from a statement by President Obama to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and General Dempsey, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, calling on them to make substantial progress in preventing and responding to sexual crimes. As a result, the prevention of sexual assault is at the top of the Secretary of Defense's ten priorities. At the Pentagon, an office has been created under the command of a Major General: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office - SAPRO . This office is declined by each army staff.

The main measures relate to military justice reforms, prevention programmes and victim support. For the Army, most of these actions are grouped together in the programme: Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program - SHARP. The USMC is conducting a similar program to hold victims accountable, comrades to intervene and commanders to punish, as many cases of "covert" cases have damaged the credibility of the command in this area.

In any case, the communication is massive and well organized.

Every soldier knows about this program and no one can ignore the SHARP hotline number. In the ten years since the problem was identified, U.S. forces have developed and implemented a comprehensive and structured formal program ... but the positive effects are not obvious.

On leaving Saint-Cyr in 1985, Colonel Patrick TEISSERENC chose the armoured cavalry and served in various units. A graduate of the Collège interarmées de Défense and of the École nationale supérieure des techniques avancées, he is a graduate of the École nationale supérieure des techniques avancées. He then turned to information and communication systems, and held important positions in this field within the Ministry of Defence and NATO. A graduate of the US War College, he has been a liaison officer at the US Army's Combined Arms Center in Fort Leavenworth since 2011 and, since 2012, head of the Land Liaison Detachment in the United States.

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