



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330

14 November 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL COMMANDERS AND COMMAND CHIEFS

FROM: HQ USAF/CC
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

SUBJECT: Combating Sexual Assault in the Air Force

There will be approximately 700 reported sexual assaults in our Air Force this year... 700! You've got to be kidding me!! And we all know the real number of sexual assaults targeting our Airmen is much higher than that. This...is...unacceptable! It's time we all wake up and get mad about it, because the only acceptable number is zero. No one else can fix this. As a commander or command chief at any level, if you're not aggressively working to eliminate this horrible crime in your unit, and ensuring others are doing the same, then you're part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Sexual assault has no place in our Air Force. We live in a culture of respect. We cherish our core values of integrity, service, and excellence. But in order to ensure all Airmen experience and benefit from those values, we must eliminate sexual assault in our ranks. Sexual assault by Airmen, and of Airmen, degrades morale, good order and discipline and, in turn, reduces our combat capability. Just as devastating, sexual assault committed by Airmen erodes the American public's trust and confidence in our Air Force's ability to protect its sons and daughters. Those young men and women selflessly volunteered to serve our great nation. We owe them an environment of trust and the dedicated, caring leadership they deserve.

Sexual assault is a crime. As a commander or command chief, you must talk to your Airmen about it. Tell them we will not tolerate this crime. Explain why it's incompatible with our core values. Tell them about its devastating impact on our people and our mission. Create a command climate of respect, where your Airmen view sexual assault as shameful and unacceptable. Tell them you expect them to intervene when they witness, or suspect, this type of behavior. Equally important, when confronted with a substantiated case of sexual assault, I expect you to hold the offending Airman appropriately accountable.

We have a lot of things to be proud of in our Air Force. This is not one of them. But leading the charge to eliminate this poison could be. I need your help...and our Airmen need you to lead the way.


MARK A. WELSH III
General, USAF
Chief of Staff