

Commentary

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Troop Talk



Sexual assault in the military is of concern to all leaders. It is an insidious and dastardly attack on the unsuspecting victim who could be directly attacked or a more persuasive method of coercion could be used by the perpetrator. This kind of

behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It impacts on readiness, lowers morale within the unit and will psychologically scar the victim for years to come without proper intervention. A major issue was the stigma military members felt overshadowed them when abuse was reported and for this reason, many cases of assault were not reported.

This concern was also shared by senior civilian and military leaders in the Department of Defense. The consensus of senior leaders led to the conclusion that a far reaching and new approach to the issue of sexual harassment needed to be addressed. This led to the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program which is being implemented on all military installations.

Several articles have appeared in *The Monitor* about this initiative, but I want to make sure everyone understands that the SAPR program is here to help the victims and to create an awareness among all Soldier of the options available. The program was initiated here in August and provides active duty servicemembers who are sexually assaulted by an acquaintance or non-family member, with a victim advocate and support services on and off the installation.

The program as conceived is revolutionary as it allows victims to report sexual assault in two ways: restricted or unrestricted. The unrestricted option is recommended for victims of sexual assault who desire medical treatment, counseling

and an official investigation of the crime. This option may cause some victims to be reluctant to report an assault. Therefore, the second option is restricted and is recommended for victims of sexual assault who wish to confidentially disclose the crime to specifically identified individuals (SARC, medical treatment facility, victim advocate, the chaplain) and receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering the official investigative process. The SAPR program also provides annual sexual assault awareness education required by regulation.

The program also provides unit sexual assault victim advocates trained to provide victims with support and services. The SAUVA is an active duty Soldier selected at the battalion level. These soldiers attend a one week training course before taking on the task of a victim advocate. The program has been well received and there are currently 73 SAUVAs in various units trained to provide support services to victims of sexual assault. The SAPR program also has provisions for brigade selected deployable sexual assault response coordinators who will manage the program if a sexual assault occurs in theater. There are selected Soldiers who go through an additional three-days of training. Ten soldiers have been certified as DSARCs.

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program is a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week program. Victims of sexual assault may contact the installation hotline number at any time to report a sexual assault. The 24/7 hotline number is 490-3896. To schedule your unit's annual training call 568-5658 or 569-7755.

Brig. Gen. Robert P. Lennox
Fort Bliss Commanding General

Fort Bliss Noise Control Policy to be enforced

Effective immediately, the Provost Marshal's Office, in an effort to preserve the discipline and good order of our Team Bliss community, will begin enforcing the Fort Bliss Noise Control Policy. Excessively loud, abusive, indecent, profane or vulgar noise or music is disruptive to operations at Fort Bliss and constitutes a nuisance to those who live and work on the installation. Excessively loud noise or music may be deemed unreasonable under the following circumstances:

- When excessively loud, abusive, indecent, profane or vulgar noise or music occurs in a public place or near a private residence.
- When a vehicle emits music or other sounds that can be heard 50 feet or more from it.
- When an open source (outside portable radios, private gatherings, etc.) emits music, vibrations or other sounds that can be heard 50 feet or more from the source.
- When a building occupant emits music, vibrations or other sounds (a Soldier's quarters or billets) that can be heard 50 feet or more from the quarters or billets, or when the emitted sound unreasonably resounds through the walls separating the habitation spaces of the parties concerned.

This policy applies to all servicemembers and civilians assigned to, or visiting, Fort Bliss, Biggs Army Airfield, McGregor Range, WBAMC and all military housing areas. Military violators of this policy are subject to UCMJ actions and civilian violators are subject to prosecution under Texas Penal Code.

1st Lt. Sean M. Joyce
Provost Marshal's Office

Rosa deserved better

MASTER SGT. STEVE MILLER

32nd AAMDC Public Affairs

When Rosa Parks stood up in December 1955 for her right to sit down, she was 42 years old, and when she died Oct. 24 at her home in Detroit, she was 92.

Though the United States has made many human-rights advances in the nearly 50 years between Parks' simple decision that sparked the civil rights movement and her death, it seems the more things change, the more they remain the same.

Admittedly, I don't know the protocol involved, but lowering the U.S. flag to half staff in her honor for only one day should be viewed as a slap in the face by any minority citizen in America. This half-hearted tribute to a woman *Time* magazine called, "one of the 20 most influential heroes and icons of the 20th century," clearly shows those in power are unaware of Parks' impact on our society.

Though two early 21st-century movies – *Rosa Parks* in 2000 and 2002's *The Rosa Parks Story* –

introduced Parks' story to a new generation of Americans. Perhaps a history lesson is in order. Especially after the 2002 comedy *Barbershop* dared to lampoon her, justifiably provoking a national outcry – and her own displeasure.

According to *Time's* 80 Days That Changed the World, on Dec. 1, 1955, Parks had just worked a hard day as a seamstress in the basement of the Montgomery (Ala.) Fair department store. She was to conduct a youth-group meeting that night for her local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which had been trying to find a way to protest the city's segregation laws.

Still, Parks didn't get right on the bus after work that fateful Thursday night. It seems the bus stop was crowded, so she headed to a drugstore for an electric heating pad, thinking she would be able to get a seat if she waited a while. When she finally boarded the bus and deposited her 10-cent fare, she found a seat in the first row of the "colored" section in the back.

After a few stops, however, the

driver ordered her to get up so a white passenger could sit down. Parks refused, and the police were called to take her to jail. Two hours after her arrest, she was released on \$100 bail. Parks' arrest was the latest in a long line of Jim Crow injustices, and by midnight, a plan had been formed for a citywide bus boycott, which a young Baptist minister named Martin Luther King Jr. would later be chosen to lead. The boycott would last 381 days, until the Supreme Court ruled that segregation on buses was illegal – its success ignited the civil rights movement.

"I just wanted to be free, like everybody else," Parks later told biographer Douglas Brinkley. She further set the record straight in her 1991 autobiography, *Rosa Parks: My Story*, saying, "People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. The only tired I was, was tired of giving in."

What might seem these days as a simple gesture of defiance was a dangerous gamble by Parks in 1950s Alabama. She risked legal action and perhaps even physical harm, but she

set in motion something far beyond the control of Montgomery city authorities.

Parks clearly was a woman who helped change a nation and served as the inspiration for the modern civil rights movement. People have also referred to her as "the mother of the civil rights movement," the founding symbol of civil rights and a quiet heroine, which she was, as she was a very private woman who became a reluctant symbol and torchbearer for racial equality and of a movement that became increasingly organized in making demands and, more importantly, getting results.

In terms of impact on a given society, it would not be too much of a stretch to put Parks in the company of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Polish union leader Lech Walesa or Betty Friedan, who in 1966 helped found the National Organization for Women. Although Parks' body did lie in state at the U.S. Capitol rotunda – the first woman so honored – it would have been equally appropriate for the nation's flags to be lowered to half staff for more than a day.

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