

**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

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**BEFORE THE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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**HEARING TITLE**

**“THE MILITARY’S ME TOO MOVEMENT: AN EXAMINATION OF SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT AND PERCEIVED RETALIATION IN THE DOD AND AT FORT  
HOOD”**

**JULY 29, 2020**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Madame Chairwoman, Ranking Member Kelly and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me here today. I appreciate the opportunity to share information and insights from our IG inspection of the Fort Hood Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program conducted between June 29<sup>th</sup> to July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

As the Inspector General team for FORSCOM, we serve as the “Eyes and Ears” of the FORSCOM Commanding General, General Michael X. Garrett. To meet these expectations, we interact with the 750,000 Soldiers as well as the Civilians and family members of the FORSCOM community in a variety of ways, at all levels, and on myriad topics. One component of our role, as Inspectors, is to look at Army organizations and programs and to assess them against existing policies and regulations. We also assess organizational climates by gathering and analyzing information to identify trends and systemic factors affecting units, Soldiers, our Department of the Army Civilians, and our Families. We provide our assessments to General Garrett and other FORSCOM leaders to inform leader actions, priorities, resources, and decision making.

On June 27, 2020, General Garrett directed me to lead an inspection of the SHARP program and command climate at Fort Hood. General Garrett’s guidance to me was consistent with these types of short-notice inspections. The guidance was to, as quickly and accurately as possible, identify any critical problems or issues, help the Fort Hood leadership understand the strengths and weaknesses of their SHARP program and the installation environment, and to identify and recommend any immediate actions that could be taken to quickly effect improvements.

Six personnel from the FORSCOM IG Directorate, augmented by a senior trainer and SHARP subject-matter expert from XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg and an experienced Special Victim Counsel from the XVIII Airborne Corps Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, conducted the inspection of the SHARP program and climate at Fort Hood. The inspection objectives were: (1) Assess SHARP program execution; (2) Assess whether the command climate is supportive of Soldiers reporting sexual

harassment and assault incidents; and (3) Identify systemic SHARP program issues and/or resource shortfalls.

The scope and methodology for our inspection included administering a confidential written survey to over 225 randomly-selected Soldiers from across twelve battalions in six brigades at Fort Hood, representing ranks from Private to Major. We also conducted fourteen small group sensing sessions and command team interviews with four battalions in two brigades, gathering inputs and feedback from nearly 200 Soldiers and leaders from the rank of Private through Colonel. Additionally, we conducted sixteen small group sensing sessions and interviews with SHARP program personnel from company to Corps level. In all, our inspection had touch points with approximately 450 Soldiers and civilians from across Fort Hood, representing more than twice the inputs of a typical FORSCOM IG installation inspection.

I want to note that our inspection was not able to fully incorporate Specialist (SPC) Vanessa Guillen's unit, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Regiment (3CR). We did conduct sensing sessions and interviews with the unit's SHARP program personnel on Tuesday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. We were scheduled to conduct surveys, sensing sessions, and command team interviews with 3CR Soldiers and leaders on Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup>. However, developments in the case the evening prior and very early that morning, with local media reporting both the discovery of SPC Guillen's remains, as well as the suicide of an individual believed to be connected to the case, caused us to reconsider our plan. Sensitive to the 3CR Soldiers learning of the loss of two of their unit members, and my concerns about our ability to effectively execute the 3CR inspection, I advised the command, and the command concurred, that we should not complete the inspection of the 3CR as planned.

Though we believe our observations and findings reflect the SHARP program and command climate across Fort Hood, we acknowledge that the SHARP climate and program within the 3CR could differ somewhat from those observed for the remainder of the post. Therefore, the FORSCOM Commander directed that my team return to Fort Hood on July 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> to complete our inspection of the 3CR SHARP program and

command climate. We will include those results in the final Fort Hood inspection report as soon as we are able to complete our analysis.

As Inspectors General, we assess against an established standard and make recommendations to commanders based on regulatory guidance and identified best practices. After analyzing the statistical survey data, as well as the subjective and anecdotal information gathered during our direct engagements with Fort Hood Soldiers, our team determined that, although certainly not perfect and needing to improve in some areas, the inspected units at Fort Hood execute the SHARP program to standard.

At Fort Hood, we observed consistent demonstration of SHARP program knowledge, reporting procedures, and other aspects of program execution. Critically, most Soldiers indicated willingness to report if sexually harassed; most would report if sexually assaulted; and nearly all said that leaders take reports of sexual harassment and assault seriously.

Our team did identify a number of areas in need of improvement in both SHARP program execution and command climate at Fort Hood. A few Soldiers indicated a hesitancy to report Sexual Harassment or Sexual Assault incidents, for a number of disparate reasons. Some Soldiers expressed that junior leaders in particular, though trained in required SHARP subjects, lack practical experience to respond to a sexual harassment or assault incident. Additionally, local background check backlogs and extended vetting and processing timelines for Victim Advocate (VA) and Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) personnel result in some episodically unfilled SHARP personnel positions. Finally, some Soldiers indicated that SHARP training provided to them is repetitious and unimaginative, which risks training effectiveness.

Based on these findings and observations, we developed several recommendations for Fort Hood leaders. We recommended that units should emphasize scenario-based, small-group SHARP training events, led by unit commanders and supervisors and facilitated by SHARP program personnel. Fort Hood leaders should assess and address specific shortfalls in quality leader training to ensure leaders at all levels, and in particular junior leaders who lack both leadership experience and life experience, have the knowledge and skills to prevent and respond to SHARP incidents. These

enhancements to Soldier and leader training should improve both prevention and response capabilities. To remove impediments to incident reporting, whenever possible, and while maintaining appropriate confidentiality, the chain-of command should communicate SHARP incident adjudication and corrective actions to reinforce Soldiers' trust in the process and in the chain-of-command. Finally, challenges or systemic shortfalls at Fort Hood in the vetting and training processes for Victim Advocates should be identified and addressed, including better unit projection of Soldier vetting and training requirements to eliminate gaps.

In conclusion, while no single inspection can be definitive, we believe our assessment accurately captured the SHARP climate at Fort Hood. While differences may exist in individual units, Fort Hood as a whole is meeting the standards prescribed by Army regulations and policies. The deficiencies we noted were provided to the Fort Hood leadership for appropriate action. Those leaders were receptive and committed to making the necessary changes to address any identified shortfalls.

As an additional effort, you may already be aware that Secretary McCarthy has directed that an independent panel conduct an assessment of the Fort Hood command climate and culture, and the impact of that climate, if any, on the safety, welfare, and readiness of our Soldiers and units. This panel will provide recommendations to the Secretary to address any issues identified at Fort Hood and will likely become a model for similar assessments for the Army.

In closing, the FORSCOM Commander and the Inspector General take Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault very seriously. We are committed to ensuring units in the Command have the right systems and processes in place to effectively prevent and respond to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault complaints.

Again, I appreciate the Subcommittee's invitation to appear today, and I look forward to your questions.