

# The Pennsylvania National Guard SAPR Times

## SHARP in the News

### Over 200 Years of Service: The History of Women in the U.S. Military

By Danielle DeSimone

#### The 80s, 90s and Today



At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, there were a lot of “firsts” for women in the military: the first woman to become a Navy fighter pilot; the first female four-star general in the Army; and the first female rescue swimmer in the Coast Guard. There was the first

Silver Star awarded to a female soldier since World War II. Army Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester was awarded the military medal in recognition of her brave actions during an enemy ambush on her supply convoy in Iraq in 2005. She is also the first woman to ever receive the Silver Star for direct combat action. In the Gulf War, more than 40,000 women deployed to combat zones, although they still could not serve in direct combat roles. In 1994, President Bill Clinton rescinded the “Risk Rule,” allowing women to serve in all positions in the military except for direct

ground combat roles. Then, in 2013, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta announced that **the ban on women in combat would be lifted entirely**. In 2015, this was put into action. This historic change

opened up hundreds of thousands of jobs for women in the military and essentially ensured that as long as female service members completed the necessary training and requirements, they could now serve in almost any role in the U.S. Armed Forces. **100 women have graduated from the Army’s Ranger School and others have successfully completed Navy SEAL officer assessment and selection.** More than 300,000 women have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11, more than 9,000 have earned Combat Action Badges and today, women make up 16% of our nation’s Armed Forces.



[Read more here](#)



#### 2024 Miss America

Marsh's Miss America reign is just getting started. She made history as the first active-duty Air Force officer to compete in the pageant, and she'll continue to serve full-time during her reign.

LEARN MORE 

What is...

APRIL 24, 2024

DENIM DAY

#### Join today!

Just three quick steps to join...

- 1 Create an account on DoD's unclassified All Partners Access Network (APAN) at [www.apan.org](http://www.apan.org).
- 2 Go to [www.sapr.mil/valiant](http://www.sapr.mil/valiant) and click the “Request Membership” button.
- 3 Complete the Membership Request Form.



# RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

## SMSgt Jessica Barder, 193 SOW VVA



**Provide a little background about yourself and your career path to becoming a Sexual Assault Response Victim Advocate.** When I joined the guard my goal was always to get my masters degree in social work since my passion has always been to serve others. I worked as a children and youth social worker for 5 years before I decided to take a break after getting my maters degree and deploying to Iraq. I ended up on a temporary AGR order in my previous AFSC and was afforded an opportunity to make it permanent. At the time I was a new mother and financially it just made sense. Plus I have always loved my guard family so it was a no brainer. Although, I am super grateful for the opportunities the guard has given me, I felt there was something missing. That's when I found out about the SAPR program and decided to become a victim advocate in 2012 and continue to be one today. **Personal thoughts when it comes to Sexual Assault Prevention?** Since joining the military in 2000, I have had the opportunity to watch this program grow into what it is now and I'm so proud to be a part of it. It is important to me that everyone plays a part in prevention to create an environment where our Airmen can focus on the mission and feel safe in the workplace. **What is the most challenging aspect of the job?** The most challenging part of this job is feeling powerless when my clients are hurting or when things don't go as planned for them. It hurts me to see them that way but I remind myself that is the reason I became a victim advocate, to be that shoulder that person can lean on at anytime. **What do you do in your spare time/Self-Care?** I am a wife and a mother to 2 very busy teenage girls. In between being their taxi to sports and events, I teach spin classes and hit the gym as much as I can. The gym is my zen. **How long have you been D-SAACP credential/what level?** I have been an advocate since 2012 and a level 1. **Why did you decide to become a Victim Advocate?** I've always been passionate about helping others and since I'm unable to do that in my military career this helps me to continue to work in the social work field in some capacity. **What is the most rewarding aspect of the position you have experienced so far?** The most rewarding is when your client talks you how your support has gotten them through some dark times. Just knowing I'm making a difference in that person life makes my heart full. **What suggestions would you give to others wanting to become Victim Advocate?** You will never truly be prepared for that phone call that you are being assigned a case and you need to meet the victim. It's scary and overwhelming but just remember why you chose to be a victim advocate. Lastly, breathe, the victim needs you in that moment and it's ok to not to know everything, no one does. There is so much support through the SAPR program. You got this for the victim.

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### Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month: April 2024



To find out what events are happening in your area, please see all attached event posters!

Throughout the month of April, the SAPR team will have a diverse range of events all over the Commonwealth! From in-person engagements and competitions, to virtual scavenger hunts. The SAPR team will be promoting awareness of sexual assault and emphasizing prevention tactics through the theme of **“Change through Unity– Power. Protect. Prevent.”** There will be featured guest speakers such as Mr. Rashan Legard, who will share their expertise on various topics.



← DoD SAFE  
Helpline App

PA NG

Sexual Assault 24/7 Hotline

866-922-6275

Want to receive the monthly PA NG SAPR Newsletter? Email Mrs. Beth Lacy at [beth.k.lacy.civ@army.mil](mailto:beth.k.lacy.civ@army.mil)

