

Rod Rodriguez ([00:00](#)):

The last couple of years have been historical for women in the military. Across the different branches. Women have become part of combat jobs, integrated into coed basic training and women leaders have taken on new levels of responsibility and authority previously held only by men. But women have also found themselves at the center of a controversial Army PT test, their role in the armed services brought into question by television pundits and in the wake of Vanessa Guillen's death women have become the central figures in the military's challenge to address sexual harassment and sexual assault. In this episode, we explore those efforts by the DOD and with the Fort hood independent review says about the effectiveness of those efforts, I talk with Facebook, celebrity and Army Sgt. 1st Class Astin Muse about the video she made in response to a Marine TikTok video and how she feels about the state of our military's sexual assault and response readiness. Then Jack Murphy takes us into the nightmare of one service member's own sexual assault, and the bizarre story that unfolded from it. I'm Rod Rodriguez. I'm Jack Murphy. This is Military Matters.

Rod Rodriguez ([01:17](#)):

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Rod Rodriguez ([01:48](#)):

On February 18th, a female Marine posted a TikTok video that would elicit a lot of emotion and get the attention of the military and civilian population alike.

Marine on TikTok video ([01:59](#)):

This morning, I posted a TikTok about how unfair it is that I've dedicated my life to the military and the Marine Corps and everything that I've done. And that I was able to see my perpetrator in court and how much it sucked that he was being forced out of the military, that he would be getting an honorable discharge. Well, not even 10 minutes ago I just got word that this will be getting retained because they went all the way up across the board. Everybody said that they would not retain him and the head honcho the CG with all of the proof and a admission to guilt decided that they will retain him. And this is exactly why females in the military kill themselves. This is exactly why nobody takes us seriously. Yo, what the ----?

Rod Rodriguez ([02:54](#)):

That video was brought to the attention of US Army Sgt. 1st Class Aston Muse.

Astin Muse ([03:00](#)):

My dad actually sent me the video. He was like, Hey, watch this.

Rod Rodriguez ([03:04](#)):

If her voice seems familiar, it might be because you've probably seen her Drill Sgt. Muse videos on Facebook and YouTube. As an active duty senior NCO and social media personality, Sgt. Muse understands firsthand the impact social media can have, especially when it comes to something as

serious as talking out your sexual harassment case on TikTok. So when she saw this Marine's video, there was a lot that ran through her mind.

Astin Muse ([03:30](#)):

Is she going for attention or is this something, Oh, this is something real. OK. And I'm listening to it. And I'm like, uh, wait, that will no, no, that doesn't make any sense. That that makes no sense whatsoever because why would they say he could stay in when his entire chain of command said that he needed to get out? And I went, I actually went to the Marine Times, you know, I was like, well, let me read it because maybe she's angry and she's got something else going and it could be something else.

Rod Rodriguez ([03:57](#)):

The Marine and the video has since made a public statement through protectourdefenders.com and has identified herself only as Dalina. She states that the situation she was talking about in her TikTok video had to do with a sexual misconduct incident in October of 2019. She alleges a former uniform victim advocate, the very person Marines and sailors should turn to in reporting sexual assault and harassment, was her perpetrator.

Astin Muse ([04:24](#)):

All right. So nothing on sexual assault, it's photos.

Rod Rodriguez ([04:30](#)):

According to Capt. Angelica Sposato, a spokeswoman for the II Marine Expeditionary Force, the Marine in question was found guilty of violating Article 117a of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, transferring personal information from Dalina's cell phone to his own device. The article prohibits showing or distributing an intimate or sexually explicit image of another person who is identifiable and did not consent to the image being shown or distributed. The Marine Corps said the Marine had transferred the image from Dalina's phone to his phone and distributed them. The Marine received nonjudicial punishment, a rank reduction and the loss of pay. Dalina goes on to state that she testified at her perpetrator's separation board, but that numerous Marine leaders came forward with letters of recommendation citing the Marine as a hard worker. And that he had "made a mistake and fallen into temptation." Despite the endorsements, the Marine was "forced out," but then Dalina gets word on the same day of the video that a commanding general overturned the ruling and her perpetrator would be retained. The military has a no-tolerance policy, which was echoed by the Defense Department's director of the sexual assault prevention and response office, Army Gen. Clement S. Coward, who said, "It simply must not happen in the profession of arms. Zero tolerance. However, if it does happen, we want everyone to pick the reporting option that is right for them and get the help they need."

Astin Muse ([06:00](#)):

That's not supposed to be accepted in the military. You keep saying zero tolerance. And I don't think you know what that means. Like it's just crazy to me.

Rod Rodriguez ([06:10](#)):

The Marine TikTok video gained a lot of attention and other social media personalities, like Sgt. Muse, chimed in with their support and criticism of the decision to retain the Marine. Others though were less supportive and more critical of the Marine in the TikTok video, whose username is "gwotthot," that

being a slang term for that ho over there. Critics of the video, mostly anonymous on message boards and forums such as Reddit, have argued that the Marine wasn't professional to begin with that her username and provocative video content almost negated her outrage and that making her case public on social media in uniform was further proof of that. A lot of those comments came dangerously close to saying she had it coming. I asked Sgt. Muse whether or not the Marine's username or content should play a role in what her perpetrator had done.

Astin Muse ([07:05](#)):

It shouldn't, it shouldn't affect it at all. As far as, you know, maybe you having like a personal brand or something online, and then, you know what you actually do like, um, I'm AMuse right. That's my brand. I've built it like since 2016, that's been who I am online. But you better believe when I'm at work, there is no, you know, I might laugh and joke. Ha ha. But when it's time to get serious, you're going to catch a whole nother level. Like it's not drill Sergeant muse. It's actual Sgt. 1st Class Muse telling you, Hey, you need to get your ---- together. I don't know what you're doing, but this is not it. Or Hey, we gotta be here at this time. Like get, get everything lined up, get your ducks in a row because I don't play. Online, you know, it's Oh, ha ha.

Astin Muse ([07:55](#)):

So if you choose to look at me like that, through that lens, on the professional side, you're going to get -- up. Like there's, there's no ifs, ands or buts about it. So, because she chose or is choosing to do her sexy, whatever it is that she's doing on the side, and then, you know, her doing whatever she did with this guy and then this guy going and sharing it, which is considered porn because he shared it. Like once you do something like that. That should not, that that shouldn't have anything to do with how they view her going forward as far as like professionalism. Of course we know it is, because you're always, you're going to have guys in the bag, like, yeah. So did you see them? The videos or photos or whatever the ---- it was? Yeah. It's all them, you know, there are going to be comments made. There are going to be little side snips and bits made, you know, no one is going to look at her the same. Anyone that's seen that they're not going to look at her the same because I can almost guarantee you whatever he shared it's probably the same as what she's splitting off post.

Rod Rodriguez ([08:56](#)):

Suppose I put up a picture of myself on Facebook, wearing swimming trunks at the beach. And suddenly people in my unit are sharing it. Perhaps they're making fun of my body or purposely trying to hurt my feelings or degrade me. There's a point where even the most thick skinned person has to say enough is enough. This is now harassment. The sexual element to that scenario makes it even worse. So even if the Marine had publicly provocative pictures, it doesn't give other Marines the right to harass her with or because of those pictures, much less the unit's victim advocate. And since the UCMJ article that the perpetrator was found guilty of states that images were shared without the victim's consent. And Dalina herself alleges the pictures were photographed from her phone, it's very unlikely. This was about her public persona and more about a breach of privacy.

Rod Rodriguez ([09:49](#)):

Again by a victim advocate. The rate of sexual assault and harassment reporting in the military continues to climb with every new DOD annual report. The last one for fiscal year 2019 reported a 3% increase in reporting. That doesn't necessarily mean that it's happening more frequently, but that it's being reported more. On the other hand, take those numbers and put them against the Fort Hood

independent review findings and what you have is a different story entirely. The very first of the nine findings from the Fort Hood report is all about the failed state and inadequacy of the Army's SHARP program, which is overseen by the Department of Defense's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, or SAPRO. Each branch has its own program it runs for its service members based on the guidance and policies outlined by the DOD SAPRO. Now this doesn't necessarily mean that what the reviewers saw at Fort Hood reflects the entire military. But considering this review was the first of its kind and the high profile nature of Fort Hood, one of the largest military installations, it's not far-fetched to think that the problems plaguing Hood could very well be a DOD-wide problem.

Rod Rodriguez ([10:54](#)):

Some of those findings include there was a widespread lack of knowledge of basic SHARP reporting methods and the right to special victims counsel. There was universal fear, retaliation exposure and ostracism for reporting SHARP violations. Review and analysis of the mandate at sexual assault review boards revealed an emphasis on form over substance. The SHARP program was understaffed undertrained and under-resourced during most of the review period. It was the prevailing view of SHARP victim advocates and sexual assault response coordinators that the SHARP program at Fort Hood was ineffective. There was a pervasive lack of confidence in the SHARP program among soldiers. And there is a relationship between the lack of confidence and under-reporting SHARP violations. So in summary, "The end result has been a SHARP program that appeared to be compliant on the surface, but was hollow and lacking in leadership attention. "

Astin Muse ([11:57](#)):

And they came up with the report and I'm thinking, I'm going to look at this report and it's going to be like the creme de la creme. This is about to be some, some ---- that I've never seen before. Like they have found the problem, and it's going to be magically fixed. Like we have laid out everything. And I'm looking at the report and it's the same stuff that I've been seeing since 2002, like when I first came in.

Rod Rodriguez ([12:23](#)):

One of the most startling things about the Fort Hood report, as it pertains to the SHARP program, shouldn't have been the findings but the reaction from everyone that wasn't a senior leader. Over and over again, I've heard soldiers say, well, duh, I could have told you that. No one, and I mean, absolutely no one seemed surprised by the findings, except it seems the SHARP and SAPRO folks, who seemed genuinely surprised and disturbed to hear the service members had little faith in the program that was supposed to protect them. The 2019 DOD annual report on sexual assault in the military includes self-assessments by every branch on their strengths but oddly enough seems to be missing real challenges or deficiencies. The ones that are mentioned read more like a job interview answer when asked about your weaknesses and you answer, well, I work too hard sometimes. The report as a whole provides the results of focus groups mixed with the year's statistics wrapped and it could be described as a compliment sandwich beginning and ending on positives with any of the negatives tucked away neatly in the center.

Rod Rodriguez ([13:28](#)):

The question has to be asked, how does an annual report with feedback from 61 focus groups conducted with 493 active duty members and first responders held at eight installations, measures the effectiveness of a program, and gets it so wrong compared to the independent perspective at just one installation. Perhaps the answer lies in the report itself that clearly states "focus group results provided

in the report are not generalizable to the full population of the military. Themes should be considered. The opinions of focus group participants only, and not those of all service members." The report also States several times and in bold that a sexual assault prevalence survey, a survey to determine literally how prevalent sexual assault is in the military, was neither conducted nor required by congressional mandate. Basically we weren't required to do one, we weren't told to do one, so we didn't do one. I asked Sgt. Muse, who is herself a SHARP-trained advocate and victim of sexual harassment, what we should do about the current state of SHARP, sexual assault and harassment across the DOD.

Astin Muse ([14:41](#)):

You know what, you know, how they can fix it, take military personnel out of it altogether, give it to like a civilian entity and let them do it. Someone who's not biased, not someone's, who's going to come in a battle real quick. So you know, that soldier over there was saying that you were doing such and such. I don't know what it is that you got going on, but you know, you need to cut that --- out before something happens. Like it's, it's, it's never really, you know, like a solid thing. take it out of the hands in the military, take it out of the hands of their battle buddies, their friends, the people they drink with on the weekend and give it to an actual department or create one, you know, don't allow it to be military folk. And if you are, you know, make sure it's someone who's going to carry that out. Like someone send them to the school, get them professionally trained on, on how to do it. And then, you know, don't send them back to their unit. They know those people. Send them somewhere with, with folks. They don't know, maybe folks, they can learn that to get to know, you know, you make your friends and whatnot. Ha ha. But when like ---- goes down, Hey, this is what I was told. You know,

Rod Rodriguez ([15:43](#)):

The issue of sexual assault and harassment reform is not new. Although the death of Vanessa Guillen brought the issue to a head. There have been organizations fighting for this type of reform. Since the 1980s, women have formerly served in the military since 1948. And it wasn't until 1992 that the Women Veterans Health Program Act was passed that provided mental health care for sexual trauma survivors within the VA. That was in 92. For the last 40 years. Sexual assault and harassment reform has been largely ignored in favor of programs from within the DOD and run by the DOD. The #IAmVanessaGuillen bill looks to change that with reforms to make it easier for victims to report sexual assault and harassment, as well as providing third-party investigations of military sexual misconduct claims, essentially removing commanders from having a say as to whether a sexual assault or harassment case proceeds to criminal prosecution. The bill would also make sexual harassment, which is currently just considered misconduct, a separate crime under UCMJ. Perhaps it's a start to enforcing a real zero tolerance policy, one that's enforceable, and doesn't rely on the military investigating its own.

Rod Rodriguez ([16:58](#)):

The issue of sexual assault and harassment is multidimensional and involves more than just revamping one program. It's about revamping culture. It's about changing some pretty dug-in systems. We talked about the CID issue as it pertains to the investigation process and our Fort Hood report episode. And just recently the provost marshal of the US Army Maj. Gen. Donna Martin was grilled by Congress over what they feel are slow improvements being made to the Army CID program in the wake of the Fort Hood report findings. Unfortunately it would seem that our military branches share more than just military heritage and a commitment to defend the Constitution of the United States. But we also seem to share a broken system that was designed to protect both men and women alike from sexual assault and harassment. When we return from the break, Jack Murphy takes us into the real life nightmare of a

service member, a victim of sexual assault and the bizarre series of events that unfolded. When we return.

Rod Rodriguez ([17:59](#)):

If you're an active duty service member, veteran, DOD civilian or military family member, you can join Navy Federal. That means if you served in any branch of the military, doesn't have to just be the Navy, could be the Army, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard. You can join Navy Federal Credit Union. On average Navy Federal members earn and save \$361 more per year. You could pay no fees, get low rates and rate discounts, plus earn cash back and grow your savings. Navy Federal puts members first by helping them save money, make money and enjoy peace of mind and security through personalized around-the-clock service. Plus now is a great time to join. Have a large credit card balance after the holidays? Let Navy Federal Credit Union help you rebalance your priorities. Make a plan to do away with high interest credit card debt by transferring your balance to a Navy Federal credit card. With a low intro APR and no balance transfer fees, you can pick the right card to help you take back control. Visit [navyfederal.org](#). Navy Federal Credit Union. Our members are the mission. And now the fine print: insured by NCUA, dollar value of Navy Federal 2019 member give back study, 5.99 to 18% variable APR based on product testing credit worthiness. Up to \$1 cash advance transaction fee at non Navy federal ATMs.

Jack Murphy ([19:15](#)):

Growing up in a tough neighborhood in Chicago. Raven joined the Army to be a medic, but got hurt in training and had to reclass as a cook. Despite that small hiccup, she was progressing through the Army at her first duty station at Fort Bliss, Texas. The problems began for her when she was assigned to a slightly senior soldier, who is to be a sort of informal mentor for her.

Raven ([19:37](#)):

We had formed a friendship. His wife didn't like that because he felt more comfortable talking to me about their marriage problems than her. I was kind of like the outside source of a lot of different stuff. I'm a very friendly person. So I get along with everyone. And I was with my boyfriend at the time for at least about two years. So I wasn't really looking for anybody else. But he would make like very inappropriate comments. So when we broke up, his first response was, Oh, now you can have fun. Like you're married. Why would you say that to me? It was a lot of red flags in the beginning. I would get singled out a lot. Cause I was the only, the only female that always had to do a problem because all the other females were like, Oh, he's, he's impossible to work with.

Raven ([20:23](#)):

And I'm like, he's not, I'm just used to ignoring people. For me I always felt like race played a big part in it because I'm African-American female, you're Caucasian male. And that was already kind of like a big thing because my mother always taught me to talk educated. So he would make fun of the way I talk as well. Like, Oh, you're trying to talk white. And I'm like, I've heard that my entire life. I don't need you to belittle me because I'm smart. I graduated high school with honors. I went off to college. I dropped out of college due to financial reasons. Not because I couldn't make it successfully. For someone that literally graduated high school barely. And then joined the military. That always was a big, a big thing. I'm also feel like he used to try to bully me in a sense, but I am impossible to bully. Then as time went on, he had like a, like an infatuation with me, and it got to the point, like not only I noticed it, but a lot of

coworkers noticed it. People, other people, that weren't even in our section notice it because we're cooks. Why are you bringing me McDonald's and we work in a kitchen.

Jack Murphy ([21:39](#)):

And things only escalated from there.

Raven ([21:42](#)):

Hiking. I had never been hiking a day in my life. I grew up in the city. So I'm like, OK, cool. I can do that. And then we were on this mountain, and it was just like, kind of like a confession type of thing. And I was just like, well, if you're having problems with your marriage, don't include me in it. I was like, I respect your wife and your marriage? Even if you don't. And that was like the first thing. So I remember I came home, and I called my best friend who was stationed in Louisiana. I was like, bro, he just tried to kiss me on a mountain. I really don't like this. And she was like, maybe you should tell this person. So that person is on my bro. It it's nothing. I didn't think nothing of it. I'm like, I didn't even let anything happen at that time.

Jack Murphy ([22:22](#)):

And things only escalated from there.

Raven ([22:25](#)):

Any time he had a field problem. He would, um, it got to the point. I would have like other guys in our unit sleep by my truck because a lot of times I was the only female in the field. So I'm like, I'm going to sleep in the bed of the truck if y'all gonna sit in the back. And I don't want no one coming in my truck, I shouldn't have to say like, I have to lock punch truck at night.

Jack Murphy ([22:47](#)):

Meanwhile, this soldier did things to intentionally make his wife jealous, according to Raven.

Raven ([22:53](#)):

It was always something like always,. It got to the point one time she walked up directly to me at work and was like, are you still sleeping with my husband? And the reason I remember, so it was like 6 in the morning and I was cutting up cake and I literally looked at her. I'm like, no. And then she was like, I think you're lying. I was like, OK, go ask him. And then she like walked away stomping. It was always something, it was more so like a jealousy thing with her. And I really felt like a lot of it was he say, she say. But I didn't act like that. Even though I was yelling, I've never acted like that. I was just like, I don't, I don't even like him like that. I really don't.

Jack Murphy ([23:33](#)):

Raven says it was right about that time that he sexually assaulted her.

Raven ([23:37](#)):

I used to have a very big issue waking up for work. So he would always call and wake me up to make sure I would be awake. This particular time I was woken up completely out of my sleep to him saying, Hey, I'm at the light. I didn't know what time it was until I got up. It was like 2 in the morning. And when he got there, I was like, why are you here this early? Like, I don't have to be at work for like three hours.

Like that doesn't even make sense. I'm going back to sleep, which I did. So, so I woke up to someone over me and like, when I realized what was happening, I pushed him with my other leg and he made a very uncomfortable joke and was like, Oh, if you're strong enough to push me, why can't you pass your PT test? And I'm like, what? I was late to work that day. It was a lot. So in my head all day, I kept saying, I'm like, what just happened?

Jack Murphy ([24:41](#)):

So you pushed him away and managed to stop that from happening.

Raven ([24:45](#)):

It already happened, but I was able to push him to get him off. Completely.

Jack Murphy ([24:52](#)):

You woke up to him, uh, assaulting you. Correct. So you wake up to that, push him off you. He makes this really strange joke.

Raven ([25:02](#)):

Yeah. And then the next day he come in, him and our soldiers were supposed to do something that day. So he didn't know what happened. Cause like normally they always come to my room before they go anywhere. Cause usually I'll go with, but this was the following day. He had knocked on my door and he like gave me a hug and he was like, no, it wasn't your fault. And that's when, like after that I started having dreams, and I was remembering what happened. And then I had to be what? 20. So whoever was 21, I was just like, OK, go get me a bottle of this. They'll give me a bottle of this. They'll give me a bottle of this. So when it came out, my friends are like, like what's going on with you? You're not the same. Like, so I said something, and she was like, I think you need to go to brigade and sergeant, tell them what happened. I was like, they're not going to believe me. It's been too long. I never had a rape kit. It's my word against his.

Jack Murphy ([26:03](#)):

The entire incident came out almost by accident as Raven was being chaptered out of the Army, over a different matter.

Raven ([26:09](#)):

My orders read back to me to see what type of discharge I was getting everything. And I was signing. And at the very end they ask you, have you been sexually assaulted in the past 24 months? I circled, yes. My commander looked at the paperwork, and he said, has it been reported? And I said, no. So from there I was like, OK, we're going to have to go report it now. And then I did. A week later I'm being arrested and I was like, wow, I'm the victim. I never wanted to say anything in the first place and look what happened. So I felt like that was kind of like a scare tactic in a way to get me not to say anything. So that made me more furious. Cause I'm like I grew up in the roughest neighborhood probably in America. So if I didn't get arrested there, why would I wait to join the Army to get arrested here as an adult.

Jack Murphy ([26:59](#)):

Raven says that after the MPS took her down to jail and placed her in her holding cell, she found out that her alleged rapist's wife had made a false report about Raven threatening her.

Raven ([27:08](#)):

She said, I threatened her when she was pregnant, which I never did. The very last time she said anything to me. Um, she didn't even say it directly to me. She said it to another female that we worked with who was also pregnant. And she told her, Oh, if I wasn't pregnant, I would drag her around the dining facility.

Jack Murphy ([27:28](#)):

At this point, Raven was given an order of protection against the man who sexually assaulted her as well as his wife. And she was moved to another base while the court-martial proceedings began.

Raven ([27:38](#)):

He was administratively separated due to a court-martial. Without my presence being there, all they had was my testimony because at the time I couldn't, um, say what happened without crying or having anxiety attacks. So my health was a big factor at the time when the case first opened. I just found out last month, all like new information. And this has been, this is a very old thing. And that's what all my well that's, this was the case. How come I like, for example, I was never informed when he was kicked out. I was informed once my very first lawyer was PCSing and I was like, Oh, when did he get kicked out? I've been going all over the world. And no one said anything.

Jack Murphy ([28:32](#)):

Raven continues to struggle with her experience. She has trouble sleeping. She has moments where she doesn't feel safe around white men because of the attack on her. However things have gotten better for her. And she intends to stay in the Army and become a nurse. As a final point. Raven has something she wants to say about how the Army currently handles sexual assault cases.

Raven ([28:53](#)):

They preach SHARP so much, but you don't encourage anyone to tell at all. And then when they do, they get victim shamed and victim blamed. Like I know several friends I've had who got out of the military because of their response to it. Um, to this day, she still suffers from a lot of stuff, and her husband is active duty. So it's harder to go from being a active duty soldier, to being a victim, to feeling comfortable and going through the process of having an investigation and basically that person getting a slap on the wrist. That is a slap in the face, that is a complete slap in the face. And, but you keep people in the military like that because that person is now a sergeant and has a daughter and is married to one of my soldiers, one of my old soldiers, and I was just like, that's crazy because they look more so, oh, he was a good soldier, we're just going to do this. A Company Grade Article 15 doesn't do ---- to someone that's demented because you're basically telling them, Oh, it's OK. Continue to do what you did.

Rod Rodriguez ([30:13](#)):

Sexual assault and harassment isn't just something that happens to women. In this episode, we've almost exclusively tied those issues to women. But the fact is that it does happen to men as well. The 2019 DOD annual report on sexual assault in the military states that focus group data revealed that first responders perceived an increase in male victim reporting. They also believed men's sexual assault cases

are taken more seriously now than in the years. Past participants indicated male service members tend to delay reporting their experience and choose the restricted reporting option. First responders thought that men may be grappling with how others might view their masculinity, sexuality and identity as victims. The fact is we have a serious problem that doesn't seem to be going away. In fact, it might be getting worse. Reforms such as the, I am Vanessa Guillen Bill could lead to some serious changes, but not to sound like a cliché, but the change really starts at the individual. It starts with us. Each of us has to look out for one another and encourage those who have been victimized to come forward and report. We also need to be clear that tomorrow's reform is being written by yesterday's victims. We're already too late for them, but we might just get it done in the nick of time for someone else.

Rod Rodriguez ([31:34](#)):

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