

October 12, 2009

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## **PRESS CONFERENCE AND ACTION FOR “RAPE IN THE MILITARY AWARENESS WEEK”**

**Time:** 10:30am, Tuesday, October 13, 2009

**Location:** In front of the Armed Forces Recruiting Station, Times Square, Broadway and 42<sup>nd</sup>, New York City, NY

**Participants:**

Ann Wright, Colonel, 29 year veteran of the US Army and US Army Reserves  
Leah Bolger, retired US Navy Commander and National Vice President of Veterans for Peace  
Sandra Lee, US Army soldier survivor of sexually assault while in the military  
Eve Ensler, author and playwright of the Vagina Monologues and V-Day

Due to the incredible epidemic of rape in the military in which 1 in 3 women in the military have been raped or sexually assaulted, Veterans for Peace, a national veteran’s organization has designated October 12-16 as “Military Rape Awareness Week.” ([http://www.veteransforpeace.org/Email\\_blast\\_september2\\_2009.vp.html](http://www.veteransforpeace.org/Email_blast_september2_2009.vp.html)).

VFP chapters will have actions during that week at Armed Forces Recruiting stations around the country to demand that military recruiters alert women who are thinking about joining the military about the high possibility they will be raped while in the controlled, highly disciplined military environment.

Retired Army Colonel Ann Wright said, “It is a responsibility of us as veterans to warn young women that according to Veterans Administration studies, one in three women are sexually assaulted or raped while they are in the military.”

On Tuesday, October 13 at 10:30am members of Veterans for Peace, Iraq Veterans against the War, Granny Peace Brigade, Codepink: Women for Peace, World Can’t Wait, Artists Response Team and We will not be Silent will warn potential women recruits at the Armed Forces Recruiting Station in Times Square about the alarming rates of sexual assault and rape of women in the military. Several victims of military rape may speak.

Following the press conference, members of Veterans for Peace and other organizations will warn women thinking about joining the military by an act of civil disobedience.

**Background:**

Sexual assault and rape of women and men in the US military increased so dramatically during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that in 2005 then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld formed a task force on sexual assault—however, the task force did not meet until 2008.

Nearly one-third of a nationwide sample of women veterans who sought health care through the Veterans Administration said they experience rape or attempted rape during their service. Of that group, 37 percent said they were raped multiple times and 14 percent reported they were gang-raped. Department of Defense has been reluctant to release statistics on sexual assault of men in the military, but anecdotal evidence indicates that the statistics are alarmingly high.

Over the past 10 years, more than 700 US Army Recruiters have been accused of sexual misconduct or rape.

60 years of US military studies and task forces since women began entering the military in larger numbers have not lessened the incidents of assault and rape.

We call on the Department of Defense and the US Military Recruiting Commands and the Military Entrance Processing Stations to formally notify women and men of the statistics on the incidence of the criminal acts of sexual assault and rape of women and men in the military committed by fellow members of the military, many in their chains of command.

## References:

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Sara Corbett, "The Women's War," New York Times Sunday Magazine, March 18, 2007  
([www.nytimes.com/2007/03/18/magazine/18cover.html?ref=magazine](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/18/magazine/18cover.html?ref=magazine))

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Founded in 1985, Veterans For Peace is a national organization of men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations spanning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts cold or hot. It has chapters in nearly every state in the union and is headquartered in St. Louis, MO. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary. Veterans For Peace is an official Non- Governmental Organization (NGO) represented at the U.N.

Veterans For Peace: [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)