

SEXUAL ASSAULT SUMMIT SPEECH

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Good morning everyone. Thank you all for attending the first-ever Coast Guard Sexual Assault Summit and for giving this important issue the attention it deserves. In a few minutes, we have a video message from our Commandant, who truly wanted to be here... but is traveling overseas on urgent business.

Let me assure you...Admiral Papp, Vice Admiral Currier and all of the Coast Guard's senior leadership are passionate about eradicating sexual assault from our Service. Holding this summit today shows how serious the Coast Guard takes sexual assault and how important it is that we face this crime head on. This is a crime that hurts our people...a hurt that never goes away...it also degrades our readiness.

Eliminating sexual assault from our Service requires the courage to step forward. We need engaged and involved leadership and when need be, we need to be intrusive if we are to stop sexual assault.

Leaders...as Coast Guardsmen, we cannot walk by this issue. We need to hold our Shipmates accountable for their actions... both on and off duty. We need to create a Service culture intolerant of sexual assault... a culture that understands the signs of risky behavior... a culture that instills trust inside and outside of our service.

As you participate this week, I ask each of you to fully engage in addressing the issue of sexual assault. As you tackle these tough questions, ask yourself:

1. How can we stop sexual assault?
2. Where do we all fit in and how can we help?
3. How do we instill trust up and down the chain of command in a military culture?
4. What are the behaviors that are contrary to our core values? And more...

Eliminating sexual assault in the Coast Guard and creating cultural change will require leaders to lead at all levels and that starts with us... right here... right now. This is a leadership issue...

I thank all of those who put this summit together and I thank all of those in attendance today.

So now it is a great honor to introduce a video....by a man that I highly respect... he is our 13th Gold Ancient Mariner and our 24th Commandant: Admiral Bob Papp.