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Lancer Brigade's Courageous Conversations About The Impacts of Sexual Violence and How to Prevent It

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Washington – Thomas Tremblay, a retired Chief of Police from Burlington, VT, and the former Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Public Safety is intimately familiar with all types of crime, but one type of crime has him touring and educating professionals across the globe because it can be prevented. That crime is sexual violence.

Tremblay and Soldiers from 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, had courageous conversations about how the perpetrator targets their victim, the trauma sexual violence causes, and the importance leadership plays in the prevention of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence at Joint Base Lewis McChord, April 28, 2018.

“This discussion today is the number one reason I flew back from Korea because what we are talking about today (prevention of sexual assault) is one the most important things as a formation we will do this year and during my tenure as a commander,” said Col. Jay Miseli, commander of 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

According to statistical research presented by Tremblay from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 91% of victims of rape and sexual assault are female, and nine percent are male across society.

“To prevent sexual violence boys and men have to be part of the solution,” said Tremblay. “The military is leading the culture change and while we haven’t solved all our problems yet, we are willing to have courageous conversations about sexual assault,” said Tremblay.

While 95% of men do not sexually assault according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, the remaining 5% have a pattern. The perpetrators target their victim using their positions of power and control to manipulate the situation to include perceptions of co-workers. In many cases, the perpetrator is perceived by co-workers in a positive way and is seen as incapable of such a crime, which is part of the deceit.

Afterwards these attacks result in victim trauma. Actual physical changes occur to the human brain due to chemical and hormonal reactions to the point rational thought becomes impaired and memory becomes fractured.

“The victim’s first impression matters (when reporting sexual violence),” said Tremblay. “Some victims were blamed by their own family, their own friends, by the command, by police and it further impacts the trauma. The way that we respond to the victim matters, which is why the words we use, and leadership matter in helping a victim heal.”

Tremblay and Miseli then concluded with the important role leadership plays in the prevention and proper response to victims of sexual violence.

“We have great Soldiers, great leaders, which are represented here today, but there’s that 1-2% that don’t uphold the values and standards within our own formation and it is alarming and unnerving,” said Miseli. “It is something we as leaders have to own and have to address. It isn’t just about standards and discipline it is about the how.”

“How are we treating each other as leaders and Soldiers? I need everyone here to make sure that how and what we are doing to enforce standards and discipline is on track,” concluded Miseli.

**Story and photos by:
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Thomas Tremblay, a sexual violence prevention consultant, taught Soldiers from 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, about the prevention of sexual assault, domestic violence and dating violence, April 30, 2018 at Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington. Tremblay’s 30 years of policing experience brought to life the trauma victims of sexual violence experience, and the importance leadership plays in the prevention of these crimes.

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Thomas Tremblay, a sexual violence prevention consultant, is recognized by Col. Jay Miseli commander of 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, for sharing his knowledge and experience about the prevention of sexual assault, domestic violence and dating violence, April 30, 2018 at Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington. Tremblay’s 30 years of policing experience brought to life the trauma victims of sexual violence experience, and the importance leadership plays in the prevention of these crimes.

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Capt. David Campbell, intelligence officer, 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division asks Thomas Tremblay, a sexual violence prevention consultant about balancing the right to due process and language that supports the victim's trauma. Tremblay's 30 years of policing experience brought to life the trauma victims of sexual violence experience, and the importance leadership plays in the prevention of these crimes.