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The Role of the Special Victim Witness Liaison

As of today, the Trial Counsel Assistance Program (TCAP) has hired 19 of USALSA's 24 authorized Special Victim Witness Liaisons (SVWLs). These para-professionals are co-located with Special Victim Prosecutors in the field, supporting the Army's Special Victim Investigation and Prosecution Capability. In the next few months, the remaining five will come on board. TCAP frequently receives questions from the field about the SVWL position. At their simplest, the inquiries stem from one of two basic questions: (1) what is the difference between the Victim Witness Liaison (VWL) and the SVWL; (2) and how to best use the SVWL.

The most significant difference between the two is that, unlike the VWL, the SVWL is part of the special victim prosecution team, working directly for the SVP and alongside the Special Victim non-commissioned officer (SVNCO). The SVWL's primary duty is to support victims and witnesses in cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse/molestation. Ideally, the SVWL is present during all phases of the court-martial to ensure the victim understands the process, and is informed of their rights and resources. Like the VWL, the SVWL provides support to victims in accordance with AR 27-10, Dodi 1030.2, and Dodd 1030.1. It is important to note that the VWL position is still required IAW Chapter 17, AR 27-10.

What constitutes the best use of the SVWL varies by installation. Understanding that the needs of every OSJA differ, the position description for the SVWLs is purposefully broad and serves as a menu of options. Together the SVP, the SVWL, and the OSJA leadership can and should appropriately tailor the duties of their SVWL to support the special victim mission, needs, and caseload of that particular installation.

In December of 2015, Ms. Christa Thompson joined the TCAP team as the Special Victim Witness Liaison Program Manager (SVWLPM). Ms. Thompson, who was previously the VWL for Fort Carson for 20 years, brings with her a wealth of knowledge on how to best support special victims. She is the primary point of contact for any questions or concerns regarding the SVWL program and can be reached at 703-693-0797 or christa.c.thompson.civ@mail.mil.

Check out our updated FY 16 Training Calendar on Page 2!

Updated FY 16 TCAP Training Calendar

APRIL 2016		
Senior Trial Counsel Course	Fort Belvoir	5-7 April
Outreach	Ft Jackson	12-14 April
Outreach	Fort Drum	19-21 April
MAY 2016		
New Prosecutor Course	Kansas City	2-6 May
Outreach	Ft Campbell	10-12 May
Outreach	Germany	17-20 May
JUNE 2016		
Career Prosecutor Course	Charleston	6-16 June
Prosecuting Child Physical and Sexual Abuse Course	TBD	14-17 June
JULY 2016		
SVP Course	Ft Belvoir	12-14 July
SVNCO Course	Ft Belvoir	12-14 July
SVWL Course	Ft Belvoir	12-14 July
Sexual Assault Trial Advocacy Course	TBD	18-28 July
Protecting Children Online for Prosecutors	TBD	25-29 July
AUGUST 2016		
Outreach	Alaska	2-4 August
USACIL Training	Ft Gillem	8-12 August
Child Forensic Interviews	TBD	8-12 August
Military Institute for the Prosecution of Sexual Violence	Ft. Belvoir	15-19 August
SEPTEMBER 2016		
Protecting Children Online for Prosecutors	TBD	12-17 September
Outreach	Korea	13-16 September
New Prosecutor Course	TBD	19-23 September
Outreach	Ft Carson	20-22 September

**All dates and locations are subject to change.*

**Chiefs of Justice will receive solicitation emails approximately 6-8 wks prior to training events.*

**Students will receive welcome letter/registration instructions approximately 4-6 wks prior to training events.*