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Contact: Ed Barker

850.452.4858
(DSN) 922.4858
(FAX) 850.452.4900

CNATTU North Island Hosts SAPR/Denim Day Walk

SAN DIEGO – The Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit (CNATTU) North Island held a campus-to-campus, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Denim Day awareness walk April 29 in order to raise awareness of rape and sexual assault.

Denim Day is a national event that invites people to wear denim jeans in order to raise awareness of rape and sexual assault. According to event organizers, Denim Day began in 1999 as a symbolic gesture after the Italian Supreme Court overturned a rape conviction, ruling that the victim consented to sexual contact because her jeans were too tight for the perpetrator to remove them without her help.

Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class Alexis Suarez, the organizer of CNATTU's Denim Day event, said that all over the world, sexual assault victims continue to be disbelieved and accused of causing the assault due to their behavior or fashion sense.

"I hope Sailors will use Denim Day as the foundation that helps mold a new naval paradigm that puts a stop to sexual assault," he said.

The walk originated at the Support Equipment Learning Site and progressed through six other CNATTU sites, gathering people along the way. The walk came to an end at the CNATTU North Island headquarters building, where

closing remarks were made by the CNATTU Executive Officer, Cmdr. Michelle DeBourge.

"This event was a great success and we can only hope that it grows in the following years and spreads to all activities on the base," said DeBourge. "The Denim Day walk is just one more example of how today's motivated young people are taking this subject seriously and will undoubtedly turn the tide. With continued efforts and pure diligence, the Navy will eventually win this fight against Sexual Assault."

For event participants, Denim Day had a significant and clear message.

"Denim Day doesn't just show awareness; it shows that we are taking a stand against an unacceptable crime," said Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Michael Mitchell, CNATTU instructor.

CNATTU student Aviation Machinist's Mate Airman Kenneth Keesling added that prejudging by clothing is wrong.

"Being judged by one's appearance is unacceptable -- everybody should be free to express themselves without fear of judgment," said Keesling.

CNATT is the largest learning center under the Naval Education and Training Command and is accredited by the Council on Education. Its mission is to develop, deliver, and support the aviation technical training necessary to meet validated fleet requirements through a continuum of professional and personal growth for Sailors and Marines. In the CNATT enterprise, there are 17 subordinate commands across 27 locations around the world, including CNATTU North Island.

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Story by Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Donald Goodman