

Good Morning. Here Is The Top News Digest For Thursday, July 13, 2000 As Of 0745Hrs. HST.

CORPS-RELATED NEWS Handling Sexual Harassment in the Army (Major Fischer's story) HONOLULU (KGMB)--The Army is making progress with the way it handles sexual harassment cases, but it still has a long way to go. That's the opinion of an Army officer who says she was raped by her commanding officer back in 1993.

Her Army career is far from over, but Major Linda Fischer's story is now in a book she wrote and published with her own money: Ultimate Power:

Enemy Within The Ranks.

"I was in the Republic of Panama. I was a company commander, and I was raped by my battalion commander," she told KGMB-9 News.

It was 1993 and she feared her commander could ruin her career if she told anyone about the assault. But a year later, she reported it and began a process she calls frustrating... with little satisfaction, if any.

"I was never interviewed by the prosecution office that represented my case. I was never interviewed by the commander who took action on the case," Fischer said. Fischer says soldiers who are victims of sexual assault or harassment are often the last to know when it comes to finding out what happened to the person they accused.

In her case, she found out that her former battalion commander had been reprimanded. She was shocked to learn later that, even with the reprimand, he was still recommended for promotion to full colonel. When she filed a complaint about that, Fischer says he retired.

Fischer now spends her free time educating other soldiers about sexual harassment and trying to bring in changes in Army policy. "We need to do a better job in training leaders on how to handle the cases themselves. You just can't put the soldier in the system and think the system is going to do the job."

Now stationed at Fort Shafter, Fischer says the Army is making strides and, working from within. She hopes her story will be seen as valuable lesson on power... and how to use it to make life in the Army even better.

By Jerry Drelling