

University student appears on 'Primetime'

MEDFORD (AP) — An Oregon woman who served in the Air Force near the end of the Vietnam War is among a dozen women appearing on a national television show to say they were sexually harassed and even raped on duty.

The woman, identified only as "Janet," was the only female crew chief among 300 men on the flight line at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico.

She said she had to leave the military after she was denied promotions, harassed and raped by officers.

"I didn't have the emotional stamina to fight this by myself," said the woman. "They made me believe I was the problem and I had to leave."

Janet is among the female veterans interviewed for a Thursday night edition of *PrimeTime Live*, hosted by Sam Donaldson and Diane Sawyer. The women were approached for the interviews after attending sexual assault workshops held last spring at women veterans' conferences.

"I'm on the forefront of a whole flood of women that will come forward," Janet said. "We're survivors. We're not asking for pity, but for equal treatment of women veterans."

The University student joined the military in 1973 and graduated with honors from technical school before being assigned to Holloman. Crew

chiefs were responsible for preparing fighter planes and starting the engines before the mission.

"I would rate her one of the best I have seen male or female. She knew her procedures cold and clearly knows the aircraft in general," wrote a fighter pilot in March 1975.

He was one of seven pilots who recommended Janet be recognized as crew chief of the month, an honor that went to a man who received only three recommendation letters, she said.

When she submitted a 13-page report detailing sexual harassment and rapes by high-

er-ranking men, an officer tossed it in the waste basket, strongly advised her not to press charges and offered her an honorable discharge, which she accepted.

"The hardest thing for me to understand was why these men never gave me any support," she said. "If I had a problem, I was all alone in it and the easiest thing to do was drop it."

Janet plans to join some of the more than 8,400 women veterans in Oregon to file a collective lawsuit against the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve the agency's handling of women's health issues.

CAMPERS

Continued from Page 1

a court order yesterday to evict the campers. Steve Purchase, the assistant director of the lands division, said the county sheriff will be doing the evicting as soon as they receive the court order.

"In the meantime, a cleanup is under way in an effort to get the site back up to day use," Purchase said.

A vigil took place Thursday at noon for those showing their support for the homeless campers. Community members and the campers stood side-by-side holding signs that read, "Hell no, we won't go" and "Where are we supposed to go?"

In response to Rust's question of where they are headed now that the site is closed, most said they didn't know. Some said they were staying to defend their home no matter what. Many of those with children have already fled, fearing they'd be arrested if they stayed, they said.

Several campers pointed out that all of the federally owned campgrounds are either closed for the winter or too far away to get back into town. Most said they were likely going to be forced to stay in their cars — until fined — or hit the streets of Eugene.

Responding to their comment that most are likely going to stay and fight for their home, Rust told them as long as they remained non-violent, he didn't have a problem with civil disobedience.

"Do what you need to do," he said. "You have a right to shelter, and if the state or government doesn't make available a place for you, I respect you for fighting for it."

ROCKLINE

Continued from Page 1

and she asked Clinton if vacant government barracks could be used to house the homeless.

About 150 people assembled at Pegasus Pizza Thursday evening, although it is unclear how many attended for the event or just for dinner.

Volunteers approached viewers with forms and asked them if they are already registered to vote.

Tiffany Verge, a recent graduate from the University, said she attended to learn how Ross Perot's re-entry into the presidential race will impact the Clinton/Gore campaign.

"I'd just like to hear what (Clinton's) going to do or if he's got a strategy, or if he's just scared," Verge said.

Elisabeth Boonin, a mathematics graduate teaching fellow, said she wanted to find out about the environmental programs Clinton

and Gore intend to implement.

"I'd like to see a balance between environmental and economic concerns," Boonin said. "Short-term concerns have been the only concerns under Bush."

Henry Poldman, a nine-year-old Edison Elementary School student, attended the gathering to hear Clinton and Gore's views on disadvantaged children.

"I was thinking of what they're going to do for the poor children of the country — if they're going to give any more government money for the schools," Poldman said.

Mimi Poldman, Henry's mother, said they learned of the event through friends.

"He really wanted to know what Clinton and Gore will do. (Attending) was basically his idea," she said.

Michele Fox, a University senior in theater arts, said she was satisfied with most of what she heard from both candidates on the program.

"I like everything they're saying about the women's issues and AIDS and what they

said about subsidizing business in other countries — it takes jobs away from Americans," Fox said.

The University was the only Oregon college or university to televise the event.

Rich Bernstein, vice-president of the University College Democrats, said the organization notified students of the event on short notice.

"Basically, we coordinated it in the last 48 hours," Bernstein said. "People from the Portland office contacted us."

The candidates' appearance on the program is consistent with the appeals to young people they have made throughout the campaign. Both stressed the importance of registering to vote.

John Pollock of the College Democrats said he and his colleagues will encourage students to register and vote in the weeks before the election.

"(Clinton and Gore) have acknowledged that we're important in this campaign," Pollock said.

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