

60° F
HI:67 LO:49

FortStewart Patch



Like

77

Nearby

Norma



Editor [Ryan Smith](#)

Fort Stewart Patch is neither endorsed nor sponsored by the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense.

[Home](#)

[News](#)

[Events](#)

[Places](#)

[Traffic & Gas](#)

[Gallery](#)

[More](#)

Search

[Awareness](#)

Human Trafficking on the Rise

The Defense Department hopes to counter human trafficking with more awareness and putting training and measures in place to aid soldiers in reporting the growing problem.

By [Kelly Twedell](#) [Email the author](#) 12:00 am

Recommend

Tweet 3

[Email](#)

[Print](#)

[Comment](#)

Related Topics: [Army](#), [Awareness](#), [Human Trafficking](#), and [Military](#)



In light of recent activity and a heightened awareness on the issue to counter human trafficking, Defense Department officials are warning military members and civilians to keep possible victims of human trafficking on their radar according to an [American Forces Press Service report](#).

Having spent time in South Korea for my spouse's military assignment in 2001, the issue of human trafficking was evident outside the gates of Camp Casey. Many of the nightclub waitresses were lured to Korea with false ads for lucrative work and other promises.

Upon their entry into the country, their passports were taken up and the girls were forced to stack up in a tiny apartment with six or seven other girls working as waitresses in scantily clad outfits in the clubs outside the U.S. military bases. The females were forced to remain in the country and many had to buy back their passports. Some were often mistreated if they did not bring in enough money or repeat customers on the weekends.

While many of the young ladies were not actually 'prostituting' themselves, there was the promise of companionship and lascivious talk with the servicemembers to keep them buying alcohol. Most married soldiers were on unaccompanied assignments to Korea lasting for one year in duration.

"I had my masters degree in Engineering, but there was no work in my country," said Natalia, a woman from Russia who claimed she knew what she was getting into from the start. "I was looking to pay for my mother's house and I had five siblings at home to support."

The issue of human trafficking is increasing in stature because it is an easy opportunity and is hard to prove in order to bring to full prosecution. It's estimated that 2 million children move through the global sex trade each year, according to the State Department's annual assessment on human trafficking.

Servicemembers stationed or traveling abroad are encouraged to become more aware of the problem and to report it when they recognize suspicious activity.

While human trafficking is mostly thought to occur in other countries, it has reared its ugly head within the United States and is more prevalent in the news recently, including outside of U.S. military installations.

“We don’t want our service members to be inadvertent supporters of trafficking,” John Awtrey said. “It’s a crime; it’s a criminal business enterprise. And the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who say, ‘Well, I just go there to get some drinks,’ if it’s a place where the women working in there have been trafficked and are being held against their will, then you’re supporting that business.”

Awtrey is DOD’s director of law enforcement policy and support, part of the department’s personnel and readiness office.

In 2004 the involvement in human trafficking came to light after U.S. servicemembers and civilian personnel became involved with girls flowing into the country from both the Phillipines and Russia. As a result, the Defense Department initiated training to help combat the issue.

According to an interview with Awtrey on Jan. 31 with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Services, human trafficking is a worldwide phenomenon -- number three behind drugs and weapons related crimes.

While many of the brothels or regions, known as the red light district, in South Korea are off limits to military and civilian personnel, military servicemembers are still a prime target because they have money. According to the Armed Foreces Press Services [report](#), other businesses common to human trafficking are nightclubs and bars, restaurants, spas, nail salons and dry cleaners, as well as domestic work in people’s homes.

Suspected human trafficking should be reported up the military chain of command, to local authorities, or to the nonprofit National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-3737-888.

Got something to say about this story? Tell us in the comments, and feel free to write a letter to the editor by sending it to ryan.smith@patch.com. Please keep it under 500 words, include your name and city of residence.

Follow Fort Stewart Patch on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Add your photos to the [Neighborhood Gallery](#).

Email me updates about this story.

Keep me posted

Recommend

Tweet 3

Email

Print

Follow comments

Submit tip

Comment

Leave a comment

[Empty comment box]

Send me email updates for this article

Submit