

Naval Base Coronado employee levels sexual-harassment claim

A 15-year civilian employee at Naval Base Coronado is suing the U.S. Navy, claiming her supervisors tolerated long-running sexual-harassment and then demoted her instead of the alleged harasser.

Debora Allen said her supervisor and others failed to respond appropriately to harassment that began five years ago.

According to the U.S. District Court complaint, a manager at North Island Naval Air Station repeatedly stared at her breasts and made moaning sounds and sexual comments even though she directed him to stop.

When Allen, 47, confronted the manager, 66, he responded by saying, "Oops! I'm lonely; it's been a while for me and my wife," the lawsuit states.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in San Diego, which is defending the lawsuit, said it could not comment on the allegations.

The legal complaint alleges that the manager's behavior escalated in recent years.

In April 2017, he allegedly "pushed his entire body and genitals against plaintiff," the suit states, adding that he "paired this unwanted touching with sexually harassing statements including 'Oh yes, keep pushing me' or words to that effect."

Allen reported the allegations to the Navy Region Southwest and Coronado police departments, the lawsuit said, but the situation was not resolved.

The suit accuses two supervisors of failing to intervene to stop the harassment, saying they continued to allow the manager's access to Allen's workspace, which caused her severe anxiety and stress and prompted her to seek treatment.

Allen was an operations assistant on the base beginning in early 2003. Last year one of the supervisors offered Allen a position in dining services that would limit her contact with the manager but she rejected the offer because it was two levels below her operations position, the lawsuit says.

In March, Allen was told she was being transferred to the job anyway.

“She can’t afford to quit so she’s still there,” said attorney Joshua Gruenberg, who represents Allen. “She has done nothing wrong.”

The complaint names Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer and the U.S. Navy as defendants.

<https://www.latimes.com/sd-me-north-island-harassment-lawsuit-20181114-story.html>