



DACOWITS: Articles of Interest

WELLNESS

[Career Intermission Program](#) (10 July)

"Since the Navy's Career Intermission Program inception in 2009, 70 Sailors, men and women, officers and enlisted, across a variety of communities have taken advantage of the program to pursue personal and professional goals."

[Sailor under investigation in Facebook rape threat](#) (11 July)

"Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Nicholas Lord is under investigation by Navy officials for allegedly threatening via Facebook to rape a Navy recruit."

[Agency toughens protections for pregnant workers](#) (15 July)

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has updated 30-year-old guidelines to make clear that any form of workplace discrimination or harassment against pregnant workers by employers is a form of sex discrimination and illegal."

[Navy Releases Results of June Courts-Martial](#) (16 July)

[Improve Sexual Assault Response Advocate Training](#) (17 July)

"The Defense Department teamed up with the Justice Department to produce an advanced training program for advocates who provide support to military victims of sexual assault."

ASSIGNMENTS

[Marine Corps Dilemma With Women Prompts Change At Infantry School](#) (10 July)

"The Marine Corps initially opened the Infantry Officer Course to women coming out of introductory officer training at The Basic School at Quantico. The results thus far: Only 20 women have attempted it, and none have completed it."

[Face of Defense: Woman Leads Bradley Crew to 'Top Gun' Status](#) (11 July)

"Army Maj. Chrissy Cook made history in the 1st Cavalry Division last month when she led her Bradley fighting vehicle crew to "Top Gun" status during gunnery exercise, making her the first female Bradley commander to do so."

[A Four-Star Female Admiral Makes History for the Navy](#) (11 July)

"Last week Admiral Howard, the vice chief of naval operations, became the first female four-star in the 239-year history of the Navy. She is also the highest-ranking African-American woman in a male-dominated military that did not even allow the promotion of women to general or admiral until 1967."

[Bradenton Sailor Aboard Historic USS Bataan](#) (13 July)

"Petty Officer Kayla Green...made her mother cry when she revealed her post-graduation plans."

[General Officer Announcements](#) (15 July)

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced the following nomination: Air Force Lt. Gen. Lori J. Robinson has been nominated for appointment to the rank of general and for assignment as commander, Pacific Air Forces; air component commander for U.S. Pacific Command; and executive director, Pacific Air Combat Operations Staff, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. Robinson is currently serving as vice commander, Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Virginia.

[The Changing Face of the Military](#) (15 July)

To get a sense of how much the military has changed under President Barack Obama, consider this: Within a week, his defense secretary did a couple of things that would have been impossible not so long ago.

On July 4, Chuck Hagel dialed up a small number of troops around the world to wish them a happy Independence Day. One call was to Senior Airman Ashley Walton, a drone sensor operator stationed at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. The Defense Department described her this way in its announcement:

"Ashley was recently named one of the Henry E. 'Red' Erwin Outstanding Career Enlisted Aviators of the year," it said. "She and her wife, Mackenzie, live in Northern California."

The next week, Hagel flew down to the Navy's submarine base at Kings Bay, Georgia, to meet with the members of the first group of women serving aboard its nuclear submarines. Defense officials were eager to point out their addition to the ballistic and guided-missile subs has sparked neither scandal nor headlines.

"There's no news here," Navy Secretary Ray Mabus likes to say - as he did this month when he recognized Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michelle Howard, the Navy's first woman to pin on four stars.

These women are not quota placements, the Pentagon insists, or sympathy cases. They're taking their places based on merit, just as men would, now that some barriers have been removed.

"I qualified the same as my male counterparts and do the same job," Navy Lt. Marquette Leveque said in an official DoD TV report. "As long as I do that, it's been equal all the way around."

Leveque is one of three women assigned to the nuclear ballistic missile submarine USS Wyoming and among 26 overall posted to three ships based at Kings Bay. The Navy also has 35 female officers posted to its West Coast ballistic missile sub base in Bangor, Washington.

There are still more milestones ahead, officials say. Female officers will join the crews of the smaller Virginia-class fast attack submarines for the first time in October, based at Groton, Connecticut. The Navy has also established a "task force" to determine how it will add enlisted women to submarine crews.

Meanwhile, the Air Force has opened up virtually every job it can to women, says Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James - the second woman to hold her job and the only woman among the three military secretaries. Along the way, James has become something of an in-demand speaker inside the defense and aerospace world, such as delivering the opening keynote address at this spring's Women In Aerospace forum outside Washington.

It all adds up to a sea change, defense officials say, inside what was one of the most infamous and intransigent boys' clubs in America.

"It's a priority of mine. It's a priority of the president's," Hagel told sailors at Kings Bay. "In all of our leaders in our institution - quality people always make a difference. And if you don't have quality people, you won't have the kind of leadership, institutions you require; you won't have the confidence that the men and women who serve this country must have in their leaders. You won't have confidence in each other."

For Pentagon skeptics in Congress and elsewhere, however, the military still has much further to go.

One of the biggest ongoing issues is sexual assault, a problem that for now has rotated off Washington's front burner but will reappear with the next scandal or the next time the Pentagon must make another of its regular reports about sexual assault. Obama gave the military services about a year to get control of the problem and supported them as they successfully repulsed an attempt in Congress to change the way units must handle sexual assault allegations.

But the White House has made clear that cracking down on sexual violence will remain a top priority. And if Hagel and the military brass can't show progress in a report they owe Obama this December, that could create another uneasy standoff between the president and his commanders.

Another area in which advocates want progress is integrating women into front-line units. Greg Jacob, a former Marine officer who now serves as policy director for the Service Women's Action Network, acknowledged the services are moving ahead - but without much rhyme, reason or transparency.

"I liken it to the Pentagon asking for a pasta dinner," Jacob said. "Hagel says, 'I want you to cook me a pasta dinner,' so the Air Force makes lasagna; the Army makes spaghetti; and the Marines make mac and cheese. They're all pasta dinners - but they look different. They taste different. And maybe, I don't even like mac and cheese."

The worst cook of the group is the Marine Corps, Jacob says. It has been the least transparent about its efforts to add women to front-line units, he said, and he questioned the overall approach that it has followed.

The Army, for example, hasn't yet decided whether women will join the crews of its Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, Jacob said. But female soldiers are becoming qualified to repair them. The Marines, however, want to decide about the combat jobs before the close support jobs, and that could mean final decisions will take longer.

Another question mark is Special Operations Command, which could have a major say about whether - or how women - would join special operations units such as the 75th Ranger Regiment or the Navy SEALs. Jacob said SOCOM wants to defer to the military services, which "own" the units, but service leaders have said they have authorization from SOCOM to integrate them. It's a classic Pentagon conundrum.

Some of the progress on service equality should take the form of legislation, backers say. Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.), for example, is sponsoring a bill that she says would right an enduring wrong associated with the "don't ask, don't tell" ban on open service by gays and lesbians. About 14,000 service members were discharged under that policy from 1993 to 2010, she says, but they only received half their separation pay.

Her bill would restore the other half, plus interest, for troops who'd served six years or more.

"First, we unjustly kicked them out of the military and then, they received just half of their separation pay," Speier said in a statement. "It's deplorable that this discrimination has been allowed to continue."