



## DACOWITS: Articles of Interest

### WELLNESS

#### [Inside Fort Hood's Prostitution Ring](#)

(13 Mar.) *The Daily Beast*, By M. L. Nestel

An Army sergeant pimped cash-strapped female soldiers under his command to higher-ups. How did this happen?

#### [Army releases verdicts of February courts-martial](#)

(13 Mar.) *Army Times*

The Army released a summary report of 56 courts-martial verdicts from February.

#### [February courts-martial results announced](#)

(17 Mar.) *Navy Times*

The Navy has released the results of special and general courts-martial held in February. The cases are listed by the Navy region in which they were tried.

#### [6 Sailors Charged, More Expected, In Sub Video Cases](#)

(18 Mar.) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

Six sailors face criminal charges for their involvement in the shower video scandal that rocked the silent service late last year.

### ASSIGNMENTS

#### [With personable style, new general takes over the National Guard](#)

(26 Feb.) *The Baltimore Sun*, By Ian Duncan

First African-American and first woman takes over two-century old Maryland National Guard.

#### [Services on track to open all military jobs to women](#)

(17 Mar.) *Military Times*, By Leo Shane III

Pentagon officials say all four of the services are on track to open all military jobs to women by next year, and expect rules for those changes to be in place by this fall.

#### [VCNO: Continue To Reach For Equality And Inclusiveness In All Rights](#)

(18 Mar.) *Navy Live Blog*, By Admiral Michelle Howard

"I recently had an opportunity to speak at the Royal United Services Institute in London in honor of International Women's Day. As it is also Women's History Month, I wanted to share my comments with all of you."

#### [Testing A Few Good Women For Combat](#)

(19 Mar.) *New York Times*, By Teresa Fazio

This month, the Marine Corps began a historic experiment at its base in Twentynine Palms, Calif., to test women's performance in combat arms.

#### [As Women Try Out For Armor Units, 'If You Can Hack It, You Can Hack It'](#)

(19 Mar.) *NPR*, By Tow Bowman

Lance Cpl. Brittany Dunklee talks with her fellow Marines.

### EXTRA

#### [Why homecoming can be particularly hard for female veterans](#)

(4 Mar.) *PBS News Hour* <video>

In the return to civilian life, many women find that veteran services fall short of their needs. Unemployment rates for female veterans are higher than for other women, as well as for male veterans. Female veterans are at least twice as likely to be homeless than women who haven't worn a uniform. Special correspondent Gayle Tzemach Lemmon reports on the challenges they face.

### [Female exec to working moms: 'I'm sorry'](#)

(7 Mar.) CNN, By Stephanie Gallman

As a manager at several prominent media outlets, Katharine Zaleski did not understand the demands on working moms and often belittled their work ethic.

### [Emma Watson: Don't let anyone tell you what you can or cannot achieve](#)

(9 Mar.) CNN, By Sheena McKenzie and Phoebe Parke

The British actress discussed gender equality before a select audience in London, March 8, to celebrate International Women's Day.

### [Trailblazer Allison Hickey faces her toughest battle: Veterans Affairs](#)

(15 Mar.) *The Washington Post*, By Emily Wax-Thibodeaux

Allison Hickey, 57, now a retired brigadier general and one of the highest-ranking women at the Department of Veterans Affairs, was in the first class of female cadets to graduate in 1980. As she deals with the fallout of the worst scandal in VA history — concerning the falsification of patient wait times — Hickey also is confronting another troubled legacy: the double standard and, at times, hostility that many female veterans say they face inside the VA system.

### [Book chronicles female Ind. Guard members](#)

(15 Mar.) *The Courier-Journal*, By Maureen Groppe

One woman joined the Indiana National Guard to pay for college, never expecting a terrorist attack on the United States while she was still in training would result in her deployment to Afghanistan.

### [Oldest woman veteran dies at 108 in San Antonio](#)

(19 Mar.) *Stars and Stripes*, By Sig Christenson

The nation's oldest woman veteran, Lucy Coffey, died Thursday in San Antonio. She was 108. A World War II veteran, Coffey met Vice President Joe Biden and President Barack Obama last summer in the White House as part of a final visit she wanted to make to Washington, D.C.

### [Forget Your Team: Your Online Violence Toward Girls and Women Is What Can Kiss My...](#)

(19 Mar.) *Pass the Mic*, By Ashley Judd

The "Pass the Mic" series showcases unique voices, perspectives and ideas. This op-ed was written by Ashley Judd, an actress and advocate for women's rights.

### [Military children more likely to have a history of suicide attempts](#)

(19 Mar.) *Los Angeles Times*, By Alan Zarembo

The stresses of more than a decade of war appear to have trickled down to children in military families. Nearly 12% of students with a parent in the military said they had attempted suicide in the previous year.

### **Inside Fort Hood's Prostitution Ring**

(13 Mar.) *The Daily Beast*, By M. L. Nestel

It was supposed to be the Army private's first—and only—time.

The cash-strapped, divorced mother—who *The Daily Beast* will call Jane—wore the uniform, claimed she needed groceries, and soon met sugar-daddy Sergeant 1st Class Gregory McQueen. The hulking, noncommissioned officer must have seemed trustworthy: He was his battalion's point man preventing sexual assaults as part of the U.S. Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention unit (SHARP) at Fort Hood, Texas, and he played the sax in a gospel band. He was even the vice president of a motorcycle club, Tru Ryderz. McQueen was all those things and he convinced the struggling soldier there was a way out.

The way out was to prostitute herself.

McQueen offered the female soldier "easy money." McQueen then photographed Jane naked and exhibited her assets to higher-ups posted at Fort Hood. With Jane in his stable, McQueen launched his career as a hustling pimp.

On a Sunday night in February two years ago—Jane was given instructions by McQueen to meet in Room 339 at the La Quinta Inns & Suites right next to the Popeye's in Killeen, Texas, at 10 p.m. Jane, who was also posted at Fort Hood, said "Brian" arrived at the hotel driving a yellow Hummer with Department of Defense decals on his license plate.

After 10 to 15 minutes of sex, Jane told investigators, she collected \$200 and left. "When I got home I felt disgusting," she told Army investigators. "But at least I could buy food and diapers for my household."

Jane was one of at least two subordinate soldiers that McQueen folded into his prostitution ring, according a lengthy investigation by the U.S. Army's Criminal Investigation Command. Their report concluded that among a barrage of sexploits pinned to McQueen, he was pimping subordinate soldiers and offering them up as a la carte flesh for higher-ranking officers who attended his sex parties.

20 March 2015

They would be paraded at McQueen's parties attended by senior officers as part of a wink-wink agreement that there would be booze and women for their enjoyment.

This week, McQueen, 39, already copped to 15 of 21 charges that included pandering, which is to recruit prostitutes. Yesterday, a judge in McQueen's court-martial demoted him and sentenced him to two years in prison along with a dishonorable discharge.

With McQueen's plea deal, he managed to avoid six other charges, including sexual assault that could have landed him in a military prison for 40 years. He was found guilty on one charge of battery. The judge agreed McQueen aggressively kissed a female soldier against her will, but didn't cross into full-blown sexual assault.

Those charges stem from a 2013 incident where McQueen tried to convince another female soldier, who we'll call Sarah, to turn tricks.

According to the official Army criminal investigation documents The Daily Beast acquired, McQueen and his wife, Sherita, who he called "Rita Rita Pumkin Eater," were struggling financially.

McQueen's wife expressed "issues with [McQueen] prioritizing pleasure over financial priorities," according to the investigation documents. On March 8, 2013, McQueen's wife "criticizes him for not paying bills and that they are financially strapped."

The noncommissioned officer tried to settle his wife's concerns by informing her he was "working two jobs."

Indeed, McQueen had started selling suits at the local Killeen Mall. The Daily Beast spoke with a manager at Suits America. The manager, who requested anonymity, said he remembered McQueen lasting no longer than a week but couldn't recall "why he didn't stick around."

It appears McQueen was transparent with his wife when he texted her about "clients," the official investigative reports confirmed. In one text between the couple, McQueen sent a photo of a female soldier from the Bronx to his wife and pejoratively described her as a "Hood Chick."

But even before pimping out soldiers, McQueen organized kinky, Fort Hood sexcapades with a married woman.

In text messages to that woman, McQueen asked her if she would be willing to engage in "Choking" "Biting" "Spanking" "Ruff fucking" and insists "U will get dominated."

She responded in kind: "I want u... and I want a gang bang."

The woman was willing to pleasure four fellow military higher-ups while her husband watched and photographed.

The "fellas," as McQueen referred to them, wanted in, but refused to be videotaped. "They are cool with the gang bang and [your husband] watching but they are all seniors in the military and worried about video and pics," McQueen wrote.

The woman texted back, "No pics then."

Meanwhile, McQueen branched out into his pimping career.

He thought he had found the perfect private in Sarah (another pseudonym). She was a female soldier who worked at a base parking lot under his command.

In the official investigation by the Army's CID, Sarah said McQueen invited her to one of his shindigs. "He mentioned to me that he throws parties and a lot of high-ranking people attend them," she told investigators. But these parties often turned into sex-fueled ragers. "He told me the parties get crazy and don't be surprised if I was to ever get approached by a male," she said.

Sarah was creeped out by McQueen's overtures, but didn't think parties with military superiors spelled trouble.

That's when McQueen informed her he was aware she'd been sexually assaulted a year before. "I heard about your situation in [Advanced Individual Training] when you were assaulted by your 1st sergeant," he told her.

Sarah told investigators she told McQueen that as long as "nobody assaults me and I feel comfortable than I'm fine."

Then McQueen showed Sarah pics of Fort Hood revelers at his parties on his phone and on his Facebook page where his handle was "Greg Mac."

McQueen informed Sarah there was an interview process. The potential recruit would "meet somebody who attends these parties and she'll be able to tell if you're cool to come."

After that conversation, McQueen let her off post early one day to meet him at a friend's house. The friend turned out to be Jane, the same soldier who had agreed to sleep with "Brian" at the La Quinta earlier that month. Not only was that night not her first time, she actually made \$100, not \$200, and when pressed by investigators admitted she slept with McQueen "on two occasions." She was now helping her sergeant recruit other women.

At Jane's home, McQueen slipped into pimp mode.

Jane and Sarah talked money, and Sarah was already convinced. "I'm always down to make money," she said. McQueen asked her how much. Sarah randomly tossed out: "\$100."

McQueen and Jane both laughed. "You can make \$100 just for showing up," he reportedly said.

20 March 2015

He then asked Sarah to “show me what you would do.”

Then and there Sarah realized a McQueen “party” meant whoring herself.

Before she could answer McQueen’s question, Jane asked her: “What are your limitations? Because sucking dick is the money-maker.”

Sarah shrieked: “No! That’s not me.”

According to the investigation documents, McQueen pressed her, asking her to role-play as if she were propositioned at his party. Sarah was a hard sell, telling McQueen the parties amounted to prostitution. McQueen told Jane: “You need to loosen her up,” and then disappeared. Fifteen minutes later McQueen returned with a handle of Everclear and apple juice. Sarah had changed into a pair of shorts and her tan Army-issued T-shirt.

After downing a glass of the mixed drink, Sarah was asked by McQueen to prove she could pleasure a stranger. “OK, so you got your alcohol, now show me what you would do,” he reportedly said, demanding she act it out.

Sarah voiced her concerns that this all added up to prostitution and said, “You can’t sugarcoat it to make it sound good.”

McQueen told Sarah, “Relax,” and ordered Jane to take their new recruit’s hand to help herself “squirt,” meaning to orgasm.

Then Jane left McQueen and Sarah alone. That’s when McQueen started kissing Sarah. “He tried to kiss me on the lips and I backed up,” Sarah told authorities in a sworn statement. “He again told me to relax and tried to kiss me again and I said, ‘Sergeant, I’m not comfortable.’”

McQueen laughed off her reservations and went for the kill. After a few more pecks he got on his knees and “kissed me on my neck, my thigh, and between my legs.”

Sarah told McQueen, “Sergeant, stop!”

A snickering McQueen backed off, saying, “OK.”

McQueen failed to snare Sarah, but he continued his predatory ways. He tried, and failed, to recruit another female soldier we’ll call Diane, who was stripping at a joint called The Bunny Club. McQueen again sicced his one, part-time escort Jane to scout out Diane.

The two started chatting about secret “grown woman stuff.” Since Jane was the sole talent of McQueen’s illicit enterprise she admitted to Diane, “they need more girls.”

“She told me she was having sex with chiefs [sic] for money,” Diane told investigators. “I asked her how much money and she said \$400 to \$500 a person.”

Jane also told Diane that McQueen’s show had gone on the road before to Austin where she says she had sex with “Army members and non-Army members.”

She had already been paid a visit at the strip club by two of her superiors, warning her to stop dancing, according to her sworn testimony. But before Diane could decide on McQueen’s offer, she was summoned to her superior’s office, she told investigators, and again told she wasn’t “allowed to dance and to not get caught up in anything else.”

While Jane pitched the girls on the money they could make, McQueen’s sales pitch to johns was also cheap and direct. In March 2013, he allegedly pitched sex to a fellow sergeant who was a recruiter at Fort Hood, offering him a good time on the cheap. “I have a female that will do anything you want for \$75,” McQueen told him. “I know you are single so I wouldn’t need to find a place for you. If you are interested, let me know.”

After her encounter with McQueen, Sarah initially told a fellow female soldier, who knew all about McQueen, about the incident. Sarah’s confidant told investigators how he “preys on young females who are in bad financial situations and that he keeps their pictures on his cellphone.”

A pair of Army soldiers at Fort Hood wanted to report McQueen, to “end what was going on.” But they had to be careful. Gregory McQueen was a representative for his battalion’s Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) unit. So one of the concerned friends of Jane decided to take the complaint straight to “CID instead of my SHARP office because I was nervous about SFC McQueen finding out.”

On March 26, 2013, McQueen was probed by military investigators. He denied knowing anything about a prostitution ring and lawyered up. Multiple cellphones and his computer were confiscated as evidence. A year later formal charges were brought against McQueen for sexual abuse and conspiracy.

In May, McQueen’s record as a SHARP rep was vetted. He made no reports and was forced out of the role not because he was a sexual predator but because he was described as “inadequate” by a fellow sergeant and also “unorganized” and “did not seem to care about the mission of training Soldiers on SHARP issues.”

McQueen, a 20-year veteran who served in Afghanistan, is the second soldier to be brought to trial. Master Sergeant Brad Grimes, 37, who was a married, explosives disarming expert, had been caught attempting to sleep with one of McQueen’s prostitutes. But before he went through the act at a Killeen, Texas, hotel room, he went to buy condoms at nearby gas

20 March 2015

station, lost his nerve and booked it home. In March 2014, a jury at Fort Hood found Grimes guilty of attempted adultery. He lost a stripe and was subsequently reprimanded. Grimes told jurors, "I had a moment of weakness."

After his arrest, McQueen denied he knew anything about a prostitution ring and even volunteered to take a polygraph. Prosecutors convinced Jane to wear a wire in an attempt to get Grimes to sing about their paid sex. He never did.

On Wednesday, McQueen took his guilty plea and avoided 40 years in prison. For the women he preyed on, however, their ordeal isn't over yet.

## Army releases verdicts of February courts-martial

(13 Mar.) *Army Times*

The Army on Friday released a summary report of 56 courts-martial verdicts from February:

### First Judicial Circuit

- On Feb. 10 at a general court-martial at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Staff Sgt. Thomas J. Kelly was acquitted by a military judge of one specification of cruelty and maltreatment, one specification of aggravated sexual assault and one specification of wrongful sexual contact.
- On Feb. 11 at a general court-martial at Fort Drum, New York, Pvt. Adam L. Fowler was convicted by a military judge of one specification of disobeying a lawful order from a commissioned officer, one specification of false official statement, one specification of destroying or damaging \$500 or less of nonmilitary property and two specifications of assault consummated by battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 180 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 24 at a general court-martial at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., Sgt. 1st Class Mathew T. Whitney was convicted by a military judge of one specification of assault consummated by battery of a child under the age of 16, one specification of possession of child pornography and one specification of photographing the private area of a female while she slept. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for six years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On Feb. 24 at a general court-martial at Fort Campbell, Pfc. Shaquel R. Washington was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of four specifications of wrongful distribution of a controlled substance and two specifications of wrongful use of a controlled substance. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 12 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 26 at a general court-martial convened at Fort Knox, Kentucky, Spc. Javier A. Martinez-Rodriguez was convicted by a military judge of

Sarah said McQueen's physical attempts to assault her left her scarred. "I've had dreams of the sexual assault that happened to me," she said, referring to her graduation day on July 2012 where she was sexually assaulted. But, she added, "Instead of it being my 1st Sergeant it was SFC McQueen.

"It makes me feel like I had been sexually assaulted again."  
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/03/13/inside-ft-hood-s-prostitution-ring.html?source=TDB&via=FB>

disobeying a superior commissioned officer, four specifications of other sexual misconduct, drunk and disorderly conduct, and soliciting another to commit an offense. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for two years and to a bad-conduct discharge.

### Second Judicial Circuit

- On Feb. 9 at a general court-martial at Fort Stewart, Georgia, Spc. Jefferson C. Washington was convicted by a military judge of one specification of the wrongful sale or disposition of military property and two specifications of larceny of military property. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 15 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 10 at a special court-martial at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Pfc. Rashad M. Porter was convicted by a military judge of one specification of abusive sexual contact and one specification of assault. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1 and to serve 45 days of hard labor without confinement.
- On Feb. 12 at a general court-martial at Fort Stewart, Pfc. Peter Gonzalez was convicted by a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members of two specifications of abusive sexual contact. The members sentenced the accused to be confined for 90 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 18 at a general court-martial at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Staff Sgt. Sacorah Tillman was convicted by military judge of three specifications of sexual assault of a child under the age of 12. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 28 years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On Feb. 19 at a special court-martial at Fort Bragg, Master Sgt. Jereme N. Ayers was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of fraternization and one specification of adultery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-4 and to be reprimanded.

- On Feb. 23 at a general court-martial at Fort Stewart, Sgt. Frank Medina was acquitted by a military judge of two specifications of sexual assault.
- On Feb. 25 at a general court-martial at Fort Benning, Georgia, Staff Sgt. Vincent R. Felin was acquitted by a military judge of one specification of wrongful disposition of military property of the U.S. and one specification of larceny of military property of the U.S.
- On Feb. 26 at a special court-martial at Fort Bragg, Pvt. Michael B. Pleasant was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his plea, of one specification of absence without leave. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for four months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

### Third Judicial Circuit

- On Feb. 10 at a general court-martial at Fort Polk, Louisiana, Pvt. Corey J. Robinson was convicted by a military judge of 18 specifications of attempt to commit larceny, one specification of conspiracy to commit larceny, 11 specifications of larceny and 10 specifications of engaging in conduct that was to the prejudice of good order and discipline in the armed forces and was of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for five years and four months, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 10 at a general court-martial at Fort Riley, Kansas, Sgt. Stephen A. Sandoval was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of sexual assault, one specification of sexual assault of a child, and two specifications of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for six months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 11 at a general court-martial at Fort Polk, Spc. Terry L. Dobbins Jr. was convicted by a military judge of one specification of failure to obey an order or regulation and four specifications of wrongful distribution of a controlled substance. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 13 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 11 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Texas, Sgt. 1st Class Donnell M. Spriggs was convicted by a military judge of one specification of attempting to violate a lawful order, six specifications of violating a lawful order and two specifications of assault. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1 and to be confined for 14 months.
- On Feb. 13 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Staff Sgt. Marcus V. Davis was convicted by a military panel consisting of officer members of two specifications of aggravated sexual assault, one specification of abusive sexual contact and one specification of an indecent act. The members sentenced the accused to be confined for 180 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 17 at a special-court martial at Fort Riley, Pvt. Jamaul K. Beckford was convicted by a military judge of four specifications of wrongful use of marijuana, two specifications of larceny and two specifications of housebreaking. The military judge sentenced the accused to forfeit \$521 in pay per month for three months, to be confined for six months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 18 at a general court-martial at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Staff Sgt. Nathan J. Kovacs was convicted by a military judge of sexual assault of a child. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 30 months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On Feb. 18 at a general court-martial convened at Fort Hood, Pfc. Carlton D. Sharpe was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer, two specifications of engaging in insubordinate conduct toward a noncommissioned officer, two specifications of failing to obey a general regulation, one specification of rape, one specification of assault and one specification of communicating a threat. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 55 months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On Feb. 19 at a general court-martial at Fort Leonard Wood, Sgt. Craig A. Mathis was convicted by military judge of four specifications of knowingly executing a scheme or artifice to defraud a financial institution by wrongfully providing soldiers' personal identifying information to financial institutions to receive a financial benefit. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-4, to forfeit \$500 in pay per month for three months, to be restricted for 60 days to the limits of Fort Leonard Wood and to perform hard labor without confinement for 90 days.
- On Feb. 20 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Spc. Macke L. Bertha was convicted by a military judge of four specifications of false official statements and three specifications of larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1 and to be confined for 179 days.
- On Feb. 23 at a general court-martial at Fort Riley, Pfc. Matthew D. Dressler was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of sexual assault of a child. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1 and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On Feb. 23 at a special court-martial convened at Fort Hood, Pvt. Monte P. Whitford was convicted by a military judge of one specification of absence without leave terminated by apprehension. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 120 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 24 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Spc. David C. Robinson was convicted by a military

judge, contrary to his pleas, of two specifications of sexual assault. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 30 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On Feb. 26 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Spc. Donovan Scott was convicted by a military judge of multiple specifications of assault and one specification of communicating a threat. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 42 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 27 at a general court-martial convened at Fort Hood, Pvt. Joshua T. Blazer was convicted by a military judge of one specification of violating a lawful order, one specification of sexual assault and one specification of broadcasting sexual images without consent. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 30 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

#### Fourth Judicial Circuit

- On Feb. 9 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, Pvt. Harley J. Alexander was convicted of one specification of conspiracy to commit larceny, two specifications of desertion, four specifications of wrongful use or distribution of marijuana, and one specification of larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for one year and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 9 at a general court-martial at Fort Bliss, Texas, Spc. Jesse A. Browder was convicted by a military judge of contempt toward a noncommissioned officer and possession of child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 13 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 11 at a general court-martial at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center at the Presidio of Monterey, California, Staff Sgt. Jorge F. Acevedo was convicted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of one specification of willfully and wrongfully inveigling and holding a person against her will. The accused was acquitted of five specifications of sexual assault, two specifications of forcible sodomy and one specification of assault. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for one year and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 11 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Sgt. Christopher R. Calma was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of absence without leave, one specification of dereliction of duty, one specification of failure to obey a general order and seven specifications of wrongful use or possession of a controlled substance. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 15 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 11 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Pfc. Alexander E. Denson was convicted by military judge of one specification of false official statement, four specifications of aggravated sexual assault, one specification of assault with force likely to produce death or grievous bodily harm, seven specifications of simple assault and two specifications of communicating a threat. The accused was acquitted of one specification of aggravated sexual assault and one specification of assault with force likely to produce death or grievous bodily harm. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 68 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 11 at a special court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, Sgt. 1st Class Keith L. Shell was convicted by a military panel of one specification of false official statement and one specification of larceny. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-5 and to forfeit \$2,083 in pay per month for 12 months.
- On Feb. 12 at a special court-martial at Fort Bliss, Pfc. Jarrett S. Best was convicted by a military judge of absence without leave, larceny and forgery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 12 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 12 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Sgt. Michael A. Covey was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer, one specification of the drunken operation of a vehicle, one specification of assault by means likely to produce death or grievous bodily harm, one specification of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of communicating a threat. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 25 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 12 at a special court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Staff Sgt. Christopher M. Erickson was convicted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of two specifications of selling military property of the U.S. and two specifications of larceny. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-4, to forfeit \$850 in pay per month for one year and to be confined for 120 days.
- On Feb. 12 at a general court-martial at Fort Carson, Colorado, Staff Sgt. John W. Pfeffer was convicted by a military judge of false official statements and larceny of military property of more than \$500. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-4, to be restricted for two months and to perform hard labor without confinement for three months.
- On Feb. 13 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Staff Sgt. Shareef S. Abdullah was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of sexual assault and one specification

of abusive sexual contact. The accused was acquitted of four specifications of abusive sexual contact. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for six years and to a dishonorable discharge.

- On Feb. 17 at a general court-martial at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, Spc. Casey J. Canfield was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of failure to obey a lawful order, one specification of assault consummated by a battery, one specification of assault consummated by a battery upon a child under the age of 16, one specification of aggravated assault upon a child under the age of 16 and two specifications of aggravated assault. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 30 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 17 at a general court-martial at Camp Henry, South Korea, Spc. Nicholas J. Majetich was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his plea, of one specification of sexual abuse of a child under the age of 16. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 15 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 17 at a special court-martial at Fort Huachuca, Pvt. Christian R. Reeves was convicted by a military judge of one specification of conspiracy to commit larceny, one specification of absence without leave, one specification of failure to obey a lawful order, one specification of wrongful use of marijuana and one specification of larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 10 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 18 at a general court-martial at Army Garrison Yongsan, South Korea, Spc. Steven V. Dang was convicted by a military judge of one specification of possession of child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 20 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 19 at a general court-martial at Fort Bliss, Sgt. Garrett B. Singleton was convicted by a military judge of violating a general regulation, two specifications of maltreatment and two specifications of assault consummated by battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 15 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 19 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Master Sgt. Jeremiah K. Smith was convicted by military judge of one specification of failure to obey a regulation and one specification of false official statement. The accused was acquitted of one specification of failure to obey a regulation, two specifications of maltreatment and four specifications of abusive sexual contact. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-7.
- On Feb. 23 at a general court-martial at Camp Casey, South Korea, Spc. Joseph A. Warren was convicted by a military judge of one specification of false official statement, one specification of the wrongful use of a controlled substance, one specification of aggravated assault, one specification of assault consummated by battery and one specification of communicating a threat. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 17 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 24 at a special court-martial at Fort Irwin, California, Sgt. Nicholas J. Patenaude was convicted by a military judge of one specification of frauds against the U.S. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to pay a fine of \$5,000 and to be confined for 90 days.
- On Feb. 25 at a general court-martial convened at Fort Bliss, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason E. French was convicted by a military judge of disobeying an order, wrongful possession of a controlled substance and larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for six months and to be dismissed from the service.
- On Feb. 25 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Staff Sgt. Timothy D. Worlds was convicted by a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of aggravated assault and five specifications of assault consummated by a battery. The accused was acquitted of three specifications of sexual assault and one specification of maiming. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 23 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 26 at a general court-martial at Fort Carson, Warrant Officer 1 Daniel A. Romero was convicted by a military judge of false official statement, aggravated sexual assault and adultery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for seven months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On Feb. 26 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Spc. Dakota S. Simmons was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer and four specifications of assault consummated by a battery upon a child under the age of 16. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 34 months and 15 days, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 27 at a general court-martial at Army Garrison Yongsan, Pvt. Jauvier V. Davis was convicted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of one specification of assault. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit \$1,546 in pay per month for two months, to be restricted for 60 days to the garrison limits, to perform hard labor without confinement for 60 days and to be reprimanded.
- On Feb. 28 at a general court-martial at Fort Carson, Sgt. 1st Class Edgar A. Alvarado was convicted by a military judge of adultery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be restricted for two months, to forfeit \$500 in pay per month for two

months and to perform hard labor without confinement for two months.

### **Fifth Judicial Circuit**

- On Feb. 11 at a general court-martial at Vilseck, Germany, Pvt. Timothy Leybovsky was convicted by military judge of one specification of wrongful distribution of heroin and one specification of wrongful introduction of heroin onto an installation used by the armed forces. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 11 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On Feb. 21 at a general court-martial at Vilseck, Pvt. Pierre C. Scott was convicted by military judge of one specification of fraudulent enlistment, one specification of desertion, one specification of fleeing apprehension, one specification of sexual assault and

one specification of resisting apprehension. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for nine years and to a dishonorable discharge.

- On Feb. 26 at a general court-martial at Vilseck, Spc. Joshua L. Ray was convicted by military judge of one specification of wrongful use of heroin, one specification of wrongful use of opium while receiving special pay, one specification of wrongful distribution of heroin, one specification of wrongful introduction of heroin onto an installation used by the armed forces and one specification of wrongfully impeding an investigation. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 191 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/03/13/military-justice-ucmj-trial/70276320/>

## **February courts-martial results announced**

*(17 Mar.) Navy Times*

The Navy has released the results of special and general courts-martial held in February. The cases are listed by the Navy region in which they were tried.

verdict of guilty to sexual harassment and sentenced him to forfeit \$2,062 a month for three months, a reduction to paygrade E-5, and confinement for 89 days.

### **NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC**

#### **General courts-martial**

\* In Norfolk, Virginia, an E-5 was tried for sexual assault. On Feb. 12, a military judge returned a verdict of not guilty.

\* In Great Lakes, Illinois, an E-3 was tried for hazing, abusive sexual contact and assault consummated by a battery. On Feb. 27, a panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

\* In Norfolk, ABF1 David Vinarao pleaded guilty to sexual assault of a child. On Feb. 19, a military judge sentenced him to a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, a reduction to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 90 months.

### **NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST**

#### **General courts-martial**

\* In Jacksonville, Florida, LS2 Marvin Dias pleaded guilty to conspiracy, wrongful sale of military property, larceny of military property, willfully disobeying an order from a superior noncommissioned officer, willfully disobeying an order from a superior commissioned officer, disrespect toward a superior commissioned officer, assault consummated by a battery, and sexual harassment. He was tried for sexual assault, aggravated sexual contact, sexual harassment, indecent exposure, indecent language, threatening a superior commissioned officer, maltreatment, and assault consummated by a battery. On Feb. 18, a military judge returned a verdict of guilty to sexual assault, abusive sexual contact, sexual harassment, indecent language and battery. On Feb. 19, a military judge sentenced him to a dishonorable discharge, a reduction to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 50 months.

#### **Special courts-martial**

\* In Norfolk, STG2 William Nemeth pleaded guilty to arson, damaging property and assault consummated by a battery. On Feb. 12, a military judge sentenced him to a reduction to paygrade E-3 and confinement for five months.

\* In Jacksonville, OS3 Mitchell Wolfe pleaded guilty to attempted receipt of child pornography. On Feb. 24, a military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, a reduction to paygrade E-3 and confinement for 190 days.

\* In Norfolk, BM2 Ashleigh Phifer pleaded guilty to larceny and forgery. On Feb. 20, a military judge sentenced her to a bad conduct discharge, forfeiture of two-thirds pay a month for 11 months, a reduction to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 11 months.

\* In Norfolk, ENC Brandon Mills was tried for fraternization. On Feb. 20, a panel of members returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced him to a reduction to paygrade E-6 and restriction for 10 days.

\* In Jacksonville, AZ2 Matthew Hill pleaded guilty to stalking, assault, assault consummated by a battery, animal abuse, domestic abuse and communicating a threat. On Feb. 27, a military judge sentenced him to a dishonorable discharge, a reduction to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 32 months.

\* In Norfolk, ABCM Sylvester Campbell was tried for sexual harassment, fraternization, abusive sexual contact, stalking and extortion. On Feb. 27, a panel of members returned a

20 March 2015

### Special court-martial

\* In Jacksonville, IS3 Benjamin Darby pleaded guilty to unauthorized absence and wrongful use of a controlled substance. On Feb. 11, a military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, a reduction to paygrade E-2 and confinement for 115 days.

### NAVY REGION NORTHWEST

#### General courts-martial

\* In Bremerton, Washington, Marine Lance Cpl. Jose Caudillo was tried for abusive sexual contact. On Feb. 11, a panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to the lesser included offense of assault consummated by a battery and sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge.

\* In Bremerton, BU2 Kyle Kennison pleaded guilty to aggravated assaults. On Feb. 12, a military judge sentenced him to a reduction to paygrade E-3 and confinement for 120 days.

\* In Bremerton, an O-6 was tried for sexual assault. On Feb. 25, a panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

#### Special courts-martial

\* In Bremerton, AO1 Antonio Navarro pleaded guilty to sexual harassment. On Feb. 11, a military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, a reduction to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 100 days.

\* In Bremerton, RP3 Emmanuel Covian pleaded guilty to making a false official statement. On Feb. 12, a military judge sentenced him to a reduction to paygrade E-2 and confinement for 89 days.

### NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST

#### General courts-martial

\* In San Diego, an E-3 was tried for sexual assault. On Feb. 26, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

### 6 Sailors Charged, More Expected, In Sub Video Cases

*(18 Mar.) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers*

Six sailors face criminal charges for their involvement in the shower video scandal that rocked the silent service late last year.

Several female officers, among the first women to serve aboard submarines, were video recorded in a shower changing area over a period of more than a year.

Five more sailors are implicated and could be charged for using their cell phones to secretly record, trade or view and not report the videos of their female shipmates undressing.

\* In San Diego, Lt. Cmdr. Andrew Sholtes was tried for indecent liberty with a child and conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman. On Feb. 27, the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced him to a dismissal and confinement for 44 months.

#### Special courts-martial

\* In San Diego, CS3 James Hibbard pleaded guilty to sexual abuse of a child. On Feb. 10, a military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, a reduction to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 120 days.

\* In San Diego, ET2 Jarrod Long pleaded guilty to wrongful appropriation. On Feb. 10, a military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, a reprimand and confinement for 60 days.

\* In San Diego, UTCN Brian Gagnon pleaded guilty to willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer and assault. On Feb. 12, a military judge sentenced him to a reduction to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 110 days.

### NAVY REGION JAPAN

#### General court-martial

\* In Yokosuka, Japan, CMDCM Jesus Galura pleaded guilty to conspiracy, disobeying a lawful general order and false official statement, and was tried for sexual assault and sexual harassment. On Feb. 25, a military judge returned a verdict of guilty to sexual harassment and sentenced him to a reprimand, a reduction to paygrade E-7 and a fine of \$10,000.

#### Special court-martial

\* In Yokosuka, SH2 Arthur Robertson pleaded guilty to false official statement and larceny. On Feb. 27, a military judge sentenced him to a reprimand, a fine of \$24,000 and confinement for 89 days.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/03/17/special-general-courts-martial-results-february/24908157/>

Prosecutors have alleged these Wyoming crew members shared the illicit videos like Pokemon cards by "bumping" their smart phones.

The Navy is prosecuting sailors in the scandal, which began in March with an Article 32 hearing in Mayport, Florida. All eleven of those implicated are assigned to the Trident Training Facility or Submarine Group 10 – after having been removed from the Wyoming when the scandal broke – in Kings Bay, Georgia, said Submarine Force Atlantic spokesman Cmdr. Tommy Crosby.

20 March 2015

Officials decided against charging one sailor in connection with the videos, Crosby said Monday.

According to the Navy Region Southeast court docket, three sailors have been charged with recording, while the other three are charged with distribution.

The first batch of hearings was scheduled for March 11 and 12, against three E-5s and two E-4s at Naval Station Mayport, Florida. The defense argued that prosecutors overstated how graphic and invasive these videos were.

Two sailors went through the process, while three waived their right to an Article 32, Crosby said.

The hearings are equivalent to a civilian grand jury, in which both sides present evidence and the convening authority decides whether to pursue a court-martial.

SUBGRU 10 and TTF Kings Bay were unable to provide charge sheets by Tuesday, but the five sailors' charges ranged from conspiracy, making false official statements, violating a general lawful order and multiple counts of recording videos, distributing videos and viewing videos, all separate crimes. Those charged, according to the docket:

- E-5: Violating a lawful regulation; two counts of making a false official statement, knowingly and wrongfully recording the private area of another person.
- E-5: Conspiracy; three counts of knowingly and wrongfully distributing a recording of the private area of another person.
- E-5: Conspiracy; three counts of knowingly and wrongfully distributing a recording of the private area of another person; obstruction of justice.
- E-4: Conspiracy; knowingly and wrongfully viewing the private area of another person; knowingly and wrongfully recording the private area of another person.
- E-4: Two counts of conspiracy; three counts of knowingly and wrongfully recording the private area of another person.

Another Article 32 hearing is scheduled for March 27 in Mayport against an E-5 accused of two counts of conspiracy, disrespecting a superior commissioned officer, violating a lawful general regulation, four counts of recording a private area, four counts of viewing a private area, and three counts of distributing recordings of a private area.

### 'Significant Penalties'

## With personable style, new general takes over the National Guard

(26 Feb.) *The Baltimore Sun*, By Ian Duncan

Somewhere over Afghanistan, an A-10 plunged toward the earth, a two-star general at the controls.

Fortunately for the general and the aircraft, it was a simulation. As the uprushing ground filled the viewing screen

The story came to light just more than two years after the first women joined submarines, highlighting the challenges of integrating traditionally male commands. Indeed, some of the women taped were among the first cadre to report to the sub force.

The head of SUBFOR has called the videos a violation of trust and vowed action in cases where the allegations are proven.

"What some people thought was a high-schoolish prank was a serious sexual offense, with significant penalties," Vice Adm. Michael Connor said in January.

Those disciplinary moves began at the March 12 Article 32 hearing, when prosecutors opened their case against two missile technicians. Navy prosecutor Lt. Cmdr. Lee Marsh said the men were part of a ring that traded the videos among themselves like Pokemon cards, according to the Associated Press.

The videos, Marsh said, were recorded while underway, and once the sailor who recorded them came ashore, he shared them with others by "bumping" smartphones.

Defense attorney Navy Lt. Paul Hochmuth argued that his client didn't know what he was receiving when the sailor offered him a "gift."

Hochmuth said that it was unfair of the Navy to characterize the videos as illicit, because they were of poor quality and showed only partial nudity.

"At no point can you ever see a full length view of the person ... You might see a face ... then a leg ... or a butt ... but there is no full length view," Hochmuth said.

Those two missile technicians are assigned to Submarine Group 10, whose commanding officer, Rear Adm. Charles Richard, will decide whether to send them to court-martial.

The videos are believed to show at least three women undressing.

They were allegedly taken by a fellow crew member, or crew members, for periods ranging upwards of a year and were widely distributed. The illicit videos are believed to have been reported only after they were sent to a male officer on another submarine.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/03/18/article-32-submarine-wyoming-shower-video-scandal/24894497/>

before Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh, a pilot reached into the cockpit to hit pause.

"I think I just crashed," said Singh, still in the seat at Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River. "Sorry."

Adjusting to life after the A-10 is retired is just one of the challenges that will confront Singh when she assumes control of the Maryland National Guard during a change-of-command ceremony scheduled for Saturday in Baltimore.

The 6,000-member state guard, like the rest of the U.S. military, is emerging from more than a dozen years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, where many members made multiple deployments. While military leaders labor to pare down the postwar force, the rise of the self-declared Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the conflict in Ukraine, and Russian provocations around Europe are drawing attention back to old battlefields.

Meanwhile, the guard has struggled with the Army and the Air Force in recent years over funding, personnel numbers and equipment. There's also the constant demand of the guard's domestic mission, responding to natural disasters and other emergencies in Maryland and beyond.

The 50-year-old Singh, who lives in Prince George's County, is the 29th adjutant general of Maryland but the first African-American and the first woman to hold the post. She brings command experience from Kosovo and Afghanistan — where she earned a Bronze Star — executive experience from a multinational federal contractor, and a low-key personal style to the job.

"She's so genuinely authentic," said Marty Rodgers, a longtime colleague at the consulting firm Accenture. "She's so comfortable in who she is."

As a teenager in rural Frederick County in the 1970s, Singh had a clear idea of what she wanted out of her life.

At Linganore High School, the self-described tomboy discovered a love of electrical engineering. She figured on joining the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at the University of Maryland, earning a degree and maybe getting a job as a lineman with a power company.

But home life got in the way. When Singh was in 10th grade, she says, she told her parents that she had been sexually abused by a relative. That triggered a dispute that ended with her running away from home.

Her high school basketball coach, Robert Dawson, provided some help. He said he did not realize how serious her personal troubles were.

"She didn't display it out on the basketball court," he said. "She was always at practice. She wasn't any problem at all."

Eventually, Singh dropped out of high school and started working full time at a mall pretzel stand. Sometimes she slept in a back office and scavenged meals.

Then, one day, she saw a National Guard recruiting stand in the mall. She decided to enlist.

"For the longest time it was the military that was carrying me forward," she said.

Singh decided to train as a radar repairer. It was a way she could use her electronics skills, and she was intrigued by the danger.

Enemies "look to blow up the radars," Singh said. "That's like the first thing they look to blow up." She was told her life expectancy in a war would be "about 10 seconds."

But while she was training, Singh married her first husband and became pregnant with her first child. She shifted from the risky repair career track over to personnel.

The marriage didn't work out, but her former mother-in-law had convinced Singh to finish her high school education, and she began to find her place in the military. Some of Singh's superiors urged her to consider becoming an officer.

One sergeant put the issue bluntly: "He told me that I was too bossy to stay enlisted."

Singh earned her commission in 1991. Her officer class included eight women of about 20 candidates, Singh said — an above-average percentage. But she was conscious that there were few female senior commanders in the military.

Singh was determined to prove that she could work just as hard as any male soldier.

"That was a big deal for me," she said. "I needed to be able to pull my own weight."

As an African-American woman, Singh said, she was used occasionally to tout the military's diversity. But she said it's good if she can serve as a model for others.

Singh was also building her civilian career, gaining experience with government contractors in the Washington area and landing eventually at Accenture.

Rodgers, her colleague, said Singh brought a principled style of leadership to her work, and her experience as a military leader gave her insight into clients' needs.

Rodgers said overcoming adversity in her youth gave Singh a self-assurance that shined through and made it easy for her to relate to the most junior new hire or the most senior executive.

Singh moved up the ranks in the National Guard fairly briskly. She said she never had her eyes on being a general — she got a bit star-struck when she encountered one, even — but thought that being a colonel, the next-highest rank, would be "cool."

20 March 2015

"I was really a hard charger," Singh said. "I never stayed in the same job. ... I strategically looked at trying to build my portfolio of skills. That was important to me."

Having achieved her aim of earning a colonel's eagle, Singh was sent to Afghanistan in late 2011. Although she spent her career in logistics and support roles, Singh's commanders assigned her to work in operations, coordinating between Western forces and the Afghan military and police.

"I was dreading it going in," she said.

Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins, Singh's predecessor as adjutant general, said the move was intended to expose Singh to new experiences and help position her for the military's highest ranks.

"I can remember sitting in the meeting with her and emphasizing that she really should go on this deployment," Adkins said. "No matter where we get in our career, we still need mentors."

The deployment also exposed Singh to real danger, despite her senior rank. Her job involved regular travel around Kabul with limited security. In February 2012, Maryland National Guard Maj. Robert Marchanti II, a former teacher from Baltimore County, was shot to death inside a supposedly secure ministry building in the Afghan capital.

"There's no clear lines of battle," Singh said. "Anything can happen at any given time and you never know when it's your day."

The closest Singh came to outright violence, she said, was during a conference at which she had been invited to speak. Security teams assigned to different Afghan generals got into a dispute over who was in charge and drew their guns.

"You heard weapons go 'chk chk,'" Singh said. Eventually things calmed enough for her to deliver a few remarks before making a swift exit.

## Services on track to open all military jobs to women

(17 Mar.) *Military Times*, By Leo Shane III

Pentagon officials say all four of the services are on track to open all military jobs to women by next year, and expect rules for those changes to be in place by this fall.

In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on Tuesday, defense officials said each of the services are reviewing the final male-only occupations within their ranks, to see what accommodations, if any, will need to be made in coming months.

Under current law, Pentagon officials have until the end of September to develop gender-neutral standards for all military occupations and until the end of December to finalize plans to allow women to compete for those jobs.

"That was a tense one," Singh said. "What we call the pucker factor — I was pretty tense that whole time."

Soon after she returned from Afghanistan, Singh was promoted to brigadier general and named commander of the Maryland Army National Guard.

In December, then-Gov.-elect Larry Hogan announced that she would be Maryland's next adjutant general. That puts her in command of both the Army and the Air National Guard.

"What better way to end a career than the way I started it: In the Maryland Guard," Singh said chuckling to herself. "That's pretty cool."

Her public information officer pointed out that she was not just in the guard, but leading it. Singh burst out laughing.

"I forget that simple thing," she said. "Sorry."

That self-effacing style was on display last week at the air base, home to the 175th Wing of the Maryland Air National Guard. There was a bustle of excitement before Singh entered a briefing room. Someone called out, "Gentleman! Stand by."

She acknowledged that she had much to learn about the Air Force but said she is committed to finding an aircraft to fly once the A-10 is retired, and said she would be open about her progress.

"A wing has to fly," she told the airmen.

But Singh did not come off as a haughty, intimidating officer. She wandered through the offices and chatted with the guardsmen she encountered. At one point she stopped at the desk of a pregnant woman, and got into an extended discussion of the limited mobility that comes with carrying a baby in one's belly.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-md-general-singh-profile-20150226-story.html#page=2>

Service officials can request a hardship waiver for certain specialties, but officials from the four services offered no indication Tuesday that they expect to do that. Army and Navy officials said reviewing the requirements for some posts within special operations forces may stretch into the late fall.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said his service is facing a different problem when it comes to female service members: recruiting.

"We don't have enough women in our service," he told lawmakers. "One of the reasons we're having problems is that

we do not have enough flexibility in how we manage our force."

Mabus and other service secretaries said they will submit legislative proposals for targeted recruiting of women and transfer of women to newly opened specialties in the upcoming defense authorization bill debate.

Women comprise roughly 15 percent of the current active-duty force. In recent years, Congress has made eliminating

male-only rules in the services a priority, noting the combat service of many women in the recent Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Earlier this month, Army officials announced plans to open more than 4,100 officer and enlisted positions in special operations units that had been male-only.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/03/17/women-military-jobs-deadline/24912351/>

## VCNO: Continue To Reach For Equality And Inclusiveness In All Rights

(18 Mar.) Navy Live Blog, By Admiral Michelle Howard  
Shipmates, I recently had an opportunity to speak at the Royal United Services Institute in London in honor of International Women's Day. As it is also Women's History Month, I wanted to share my comments with all of you.

I thought it would be appropriate to open with discussion of the celebrated British philosopher, John Stuart Mill. Among his many distinctions and accomplishments, he is referred to as a "proto-feminist" for his advocacy of equal rights between men and women. In 1865 he was elected to Parliament, where he served only one term – perhaps an indication of the perils of a progressive platform.

In the controversial work he published a year after leaving office, "The Subjection of Women" he wrote, "...*The principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to the other – is wrong in itself. [It is] one of the chief hindrances to human improvement ... It ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality...*" [1]

When his work was released one hundred and forty-six years ago, women in several countries were already challenging the social relations. In the United States, in 1848, the Seneca Falls Convention marked the beginning of the women's equality movement. In 1890, Wyoming became the first state to grant women the right to vote. By 1908, the same year 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay, and voting rights. In the military, the United States Navy introduced its first full-time female members as part of the Nursing Corps.

In 1909, the Socialist Party of America declared National Women's Day on February 28. International Women's Day, observed annually on March 8<sup>th</sup>, developed out of that proud tradition. The first International Women's Day recognized by multiple countries, in 1911, predated women's suffrage in almost every sovereign nation. International Women's Day has been recognized ever since.

The theme for this year's International Women's Day is "Make It Happen." Making it happen is a great lens to consider the role of women in defense, diplomacy and security. But not all countries are at the same place with regard to gender integration. In the U.S., we have been working at integrating our Armed forces for over a century now. Those first few women in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps paved the way for our fore-mothers who participated as

Reservists in the First and Second World Wars. Women became full-time active military members after World War Two. The women of the two global wars are foundational examples for those of us serving in this country when the Combat Exclusion Law was lifted in 1993, allowing women to fly combat aircraft and serve at sea in combat ships. We pay them tribute now as we work towards integrating all of our military units.

We celebrate the idea that women and men should share the burden of citizenship on the battlefield as well as have equal rights to vote, to run for public office, to shape the direction and laws of our countries. We are afforded the opportunity to make our visions happen and our voices heard with matched enthusiasm. We are granted uniform expectations. Equality and civic engagement are germane to our role and entitlement as citizens.

However, equality and gender integration are areas where numbers and percentages matter. Sheer numbers of women can mean all the difference between a culture of acceptance or an environment of prejudice. The magnitude and impact of what you can "make happen" becomes mightily constrained if your voice is lost because it is the sole feminine sound in the office, in the government or in leadership.

Once you attain a certain size of cohort, you reach a point where challenges diminish. Some refer to this threshold of presence as critical mass. Once you reach this level, issues like tokenism and stereotypes, that are filters for communication and understanding, start to fall away. There are enough women to build shared and common experiences with men. Both sexes become accustomed to working as a team and equally depending upon each other. Our natural contexts make significant differences in how women can contribute to security in their communities or defense. What remains constant is that women are *capable* of greatness. Women have the same obligations to employ their talents for the good of mankind.

We see this borne out. There are some well-established, integrated military communities, like Norway's, while there are others with early and slight exposures to women's presence such as Afghanistan. Last August, Major General Kristin Lund from Norway, made it happen. She became the first woman to serve as a Force Commander in a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation when she assumed command of the Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

General Kristin Lund has more than 34 years of military experience. Her first deployment was to Lebanon in 1986 as a transport officer. She deployed to the Middle East in the First Gulf War. During a deployment to the Balkans in 1992-1993 she felt she gained insight into leading, especially while experiencing the violence inherent in war zones. She explained that as a leader “you have to play like an orchestra”[2] to coordinate the complicated logistics for success.

She points out that in many security situations, being female is actually an advantage. In July of last year she said, “From my recent deployment in Afghanistan, I had access to 100 percent of the population, not only 50 percent.”[3]

In 2009, General Lund became Norway’s first female general. Her career of making it happen is a great example for all peacekeeping forces.

Indeed, in the fifteen years since the United Nations implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the UN has documented lists of reasons that it is vital to have female peacekeepers. They empower women in the host community, they help make the peacekeeping force approachable to women, they are able to interview survivors of gender-based violence, they mentor female cadets at police and military academies, and as Major General Lund stated, they are able to interact with women in societies where women are prohibited from speaking to men.[4]

Some countries with gender-segregated cultures are beginning to realize the benefits to gender integration. In 1988, Colonel Latifa Nabizada was Afghanistan’s first female pilot in the Afghan National Army Air Corps. She and her sister decided that they wanted to be pilots. Despite their initial shock, the girls’ parents were supportive, which was vital for their success at a time when women in Afghanistan didn’t even work outside the home.

The women were accepted to the Afghan military academy in 1989. The two “made it happen” despite having stones thrown at them while they were at school, facing limitations in what missions they were permitted to fly upon graduation, and finally being grounded and fleeing to Pakistan during the Taliban’s reign. As soon as they were able, the sisters returned to Kabul to resume their duties.

In 2006, Colonel Nabizada started a family with the birth of her daughter, Malalai. Within months, Latifa was back in the helicopter. There were no childcare options for her, so she brought her daughter with her. She explained, “Unfortunately,

there was nobody to take care of my daughter at home and there is no kindergarten in the military. So most of the time I took Malalai with me in the helicopter. She has grown up in a helicopter – sometimes I think she’s not my daughter, but the helicopter’s daughter!”[5]

Now Malalai goes to school during the day, but Latifa has asked the military to establish a kindergarten to assist other women in the military with children. Time in the helicopter seems to have made an impression on Malalai, she says she wants to be a pilot like her mother.[6]

Colonel Nabizada is an impressive example of a woman in defense who “made it happen” despite being a sole voice. She serves as an outstanding case of the tenacity and determination with which women have pursued a role in the defense and stability of their own communities. She exemplifies the demand for inclusion and respect that is common to the fight for gender equality.

Major General Lund and Colonel Nabizada, as well as the countless women sister in arms, represent the talent and passion that women bring to any endeavor when they are afforded an opportunity to contribute. The pursuit of peace and security are too important to allow for the waste of human talent because of prejudice and discrimination.

The 146 years since John Stuart Mill’s words have delivered progress for all humanity, as many cultures move towards greater equality and inclusion. We have a responsibility to continue promoting this development. We have to help lift up ourselves, and our partners. We all must see that entire communities benefit when all citizens can shape the world, and when all perspectives are considered. We have to continue to clear Mill’s “hindrances” to human improvement and continue to reach for equality and inclusiveness in all rights.

1. Mill, J.S. 1869 *The Subjection of Women*
2. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48462#.VO0xbFXF-pI>
3. <http://unu.edu/publications/articles/why-un-needs-more-female-peacekeepers.html>
4. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml>
5. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22943454>
6. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22943454>

*Adm. Michelle Howard is Vice Chief of Naval Operations.*

<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2015/03/18/vcno-continue-to-reach-for-equality-and-inclusiveness-in-all-rights/>

## Testing A Few Good Women For Combat

(19 Mar.) *New York Times*, By Teresa Fazio

This month, the Marine Corps began a historic experiment at its base in Twentynine Palms, Calif., to test women’s performance in combat arms. This Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force uses high-tech tools to measure the physical performance of both men and women after a federal mandate to integrate women into all military occupational specialties – or request an exception – by January 2016. This

differs from the past two decades, in which combat performance has only been measured in large-scale desert exercises. As a former Marine who was encouraged by the camaraderie of gender-integrated training, I look forward to this study’s promise to increase force readiness in a corps that is not quite 7 percent female.

As a 19-year-old ROTC midshipman in the summer of 2000, I went to Twentynine Palms for a distant granddaddy of the current experiment: a Combined Arms Exercise, which measured an infantry battalion's combat readiness. A white government school bus delivered two dozen of us midshipmen to the base: eight women and the rest men.

In those weeks, we observed a company closing with its target and calling in mortars on old, bombed-out vehicles. Specially trained senior enlisted personnel and officers – called “coyotes” – monitored fires and kept notes on accuracy and timing. With instincts honed over hundreds of exercises, they evaluated unit performance on tasks such as conducting a raid and conducting a ground attack, standards the corps carefully maintains. Individual performance, however, wasn't measured; platoons were expected to show up already trained. And all the combat arms specialties we encountered – such as firing rockets and roaring through the desert in armored vehicles – were open only to men.

But our instructor, a former Force Reconnaissance captain, made no mention of gender when assigning tasks; we all hiked the same terrain and carried the same supplies in our packs. I tried hard to keep up with one strong midshipman as her calves churned soft sand, knowing I'd see her again the following summer at Officer Candidates School. When we split into four-person fire teams to observe a reserve unit's live-fire exercises, I was the only woman in mine, but we all looked identical in helmets and load-bearing vests.

The differences between the sexes that I experienced were surmountable. One afternoon, while others napped under camouflage netting, heavy with the smell of gear and sweat, I finagled my first taste of “Vitamin M,” the 800 milligram Motrin pill the Marine Corps doles out for pain. I told the doctor I had a stomach ache.

“You're dehydrated,” he said. “What you want to do is drink water, maybe have a little salt tab – – ”

“No, Doc,” I said. “I mean a girl stomach ache. I have cramps.”

He raised his eyebrows but coughed up the Motrin. I downed it and continued training.

The most significant integration came when we bedded down in the field. We split up not by sex, but by fire team. Team by team, we rolled out our sleeping bags on gravel and took turns standing watch. My brothers in arms slept to my left and my right, several feet away.

In the 15 years since then, the Marine Corps' desert combat exercises have evolved to replicate environments found in Iraq and Afghanistan, and for a time incorporated gear for the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System, a military version of laser tag. The training focused on units ranging in size from 30 to 1,000 Marines. Only a few men-only roles now remain, in fields including infantry, artillery, tanks, light armored vehicles and amphibious assault vehicles, or AAVs.

This spring, researchers in the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force are evaluating both men and women in tasks including “marching under loads, fire and movement, providing offensive fires, defensive operations, conducting crew/casualty evacuations ... ammunition resupply and AAV water recovery,” according to Katelyn Allison, a University of Pittsburgh faculty member who is a co-principal investigator for the project.

Squads consist of up to 25 percent women, which means they can range from three women and 10 men one day, to one woman and 12 men the next, to a men-only squad later. This changing composition aims to correct for individual personality differences that can affect the teamwork of any combat unit.

And while my medical care was just Motrin, these Marines are being monitored at a whole new level.

Before even starting, the participants underwent a two-day test battery to gauge their baseline body composition, musculoskeletal strength, aerobic and anaerobic power capacity, balance and flexibility, Dr. Allison explained. They will continue to undergo these tests at different times during and after training.

Over the next three months, trainers will be collecting more data as the Marines run through simulated combat scenarios, including live-fire movement to contact and pulling heavy crash test dummies from vehicles. GPS will track each Marine's position, weapon-mounted sensors will count shots fired, and wired targets will record the timing of each bullet, so that researchers can triangulate who fired where and when. Heart rate monitors will measure individual Marines' physical exertion in real time; subsequent after-action surveys and cortisol swabs will match the Marines' reported efforts to their actual physiological states.

This avalanche of data offers individualized detail, complementary to the gestalt approach of eagle-eyed coyotes scribbling handwritten notes as I watched 15 summers ago. This specificity can help the researchers filter the effects of any one Marine.

The aim, Dr. Allison said, “is to establish gender-neutral characteristics that can predict safe and successful completion of ground combat tactical training and tasks.” If remediation is necessary for subsets of the population, she said, “targeted physical training may aim to increase overall force readiness and resiliency.” In other words, smaller female Marines might need additional physical training to prepare for inclusion into combat arms specialties. But so might short, slender men. Targeted training would increase the probability that more female Marines could fill combat arms roles, and could help the corps comply with federally mandated gender integration.

But Dr. Allison also warned that “the load is the same regardless of the size of the person carrying or moving the load,” and “Marines of smaller stature may find difficulty.”

This is consistent with my experience; I am 5-foot-1 and 118 pounds. Marching 20 miles in 80 pounds of gear was more

20 March 2015

difficult for me than for my bigger comrades, but not impossible. I gained confidence from my stay in Twentynine Palms that carried me through gender-integrated basic officer training. I was encouraged that although the percentage of women was small, we could integrate as much as possible if we performed to the same standards. After all, years later, no one cared that I was a woman when our battalion convoyed from Kuwait into Iraq.

So I'm rooting for the young women of the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force as the Marine Corps takes their measure in this challenge. If in the future, at the end of a day of hoisting ammunition or clambering out of assault vehicles,

## **As Women Try Out For Armor Units, 'If You Can Hack It, You Can Hack It'**

(19 Mar.) NPR, By Tow Bowman

It's a recent morning out in California's Mojave Desert, and Marine Lance Cpls. Paula Pineda and Julia Carroll are struggling to pick up and maneuver Carl. He's a 220-pound dummy, and a stand-in for a wounded Marine.

Carroll's knees buckle for a moment, but as a dusty wind picks up, the two women pull Carl off their light armored vehicle. They carry him to safety, careful not to let his head drag on the rocky ground.

Both women are out of breath.

Pineda is 5 foot 2. On the back of her helmet is a piece of masking tape with the words "Mad Max."

Last summer, the 22-year-old from Los Angeles was driving Marine trucks on Okinawa; now she wants to be a warrior — and to make history. It's something Pineda has always wanted to do.

"Your adrenaline's rushing, you're pumping, trying to save lives, make a difference," she says. "This is bigger than us. It's bigger than us. Right now we can't see the big picture, but in a couple years we'll see the difference on how females can work alongside with males in the, in an infantry unit."

Whether Pineda and the other women will work alongside male Marines in ground combat units is an open question. The Pentagon lifted the ban on women serving in the unforgiving world of ground combat — infantry, armor and artillery units — but gave the armed service's branches until January to ask for exemptions.

Now the Marines and the Army are running the necessary tests to see what female troops can do. Dozens of female Marines are taking part in this experiment at the desert base at Twentynine Palms for the next month.

About a dozen or so — or about half — of the women in Alpha Company, the infantry unit at Twentynine Palms, already have dropped out, mostly because of injuries. But nearly all of the 20 or so women who started out with Bravo

a young Marine shakes out her sleeping bag and rests her head on a rolled-up sweatshirt, and to her left and her right are brothers — and sisters — in arms, it will expand the historical definition of a combat warrior.

*Teresa Fazio was a Marine Corps officer from 2002 to 2006, deploying once to Iraq. She is a member of the Truman National Security Project Defense Council.*

<http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/03/19/testing-a-few-good-women-for-combat/>

Company, a unit of tanks and armored vehicles, are still training.

Capt. Alexander Puraty is a combat veteran who commands Bravo Company. He has a total of about 100 Marines for this experiment.

"From Day One, we just treated everybody like Marines," Puraty says. "It's kind of been the viewpoint that I put out there that 'a Marine's a Marine.'"

So men and women must complete the same exercises, both here and as the company's training continues on the California beaches in May.

Some of the female Marines are struggling — taking longer to pull the dummy Carl to safety, set up a tow line for the armored vehicle or change a tire weighing about 170 pounds.

Puraty knows there are some who say women just don't belong in ground combat. He says he will reserve judgment until he sees the data and how the experiment turns out.

Pineda and Carroll, the two lance corporals, get ready to change one of the massive tires on the eight-wheeled armored vehicle. Cpl. Ryan Donk is part of the team.

The men use their arms to change a tire, but Pineda flops on her back in the dirt, using her stronger leg muscles to push the tire into place.

Women use every advantage that they can, says Cpl. Thomas Debatt, a veteran armor crew member.

"They just have a different technique," he says. "There's no task they can't complete that any man can complete, it's all — it's all pretty much the same."

But Donk, who helped the women change the tire, is more circumspect.

"I mean, they're putting out their best effort," he says. "At the end of this, the data will show what the Marine Corps need to do, to move in whatever direction they choose to."

When asked whether he thinks women can be part of this crew, he declines to answer.

Nearby, Lance Cpl. Brittany Dunklee is trash-talking with the men.

Before volunteering for this experiment, Dunklee was also a Marine truck driver on Okinawa. She says those who oppose women in combat are stuck in the old ways.

"A lot of our men here, they're very supportive — and if you can hack it, you can hack it," she says.

### Why homecoming can be particularly hard for female veterans

(4 Mar.) *PBS News Hour*

#### TRANSCRIPT

**GWEN IFILL:** After serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, many veterans face an uphill battle finding work in civilian life. There's been an increase in efforts to help ease their transition, but one segment of the veteran population is often overlooked.

Special correspondent Gayle Tzemach Lemmon reports.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** Katrina Holley finds satisfaction in bringing order to people's lives.

**KATRINA HOLLEY, Air Force Veteran:** Ever since I was in the fourth grade, I loved cleaning the house. I can remember vacuuming before I would leave for school.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** Her attention to detail is just one of the skills she honed during 11 years in the Air Force. Holley's small business in Hillsborough, North Carolina, cleaning homes calls on some of those skills, but for years she's sought a civilian career that better values her military experience, a background that often catches her clients off guard.

**KATRINA HOLLEY:** Oh, my goodness. Well, I think so often people are surprised because they don't think about female veterans. We are coming more into the light in 2014 and 2015 and after Iraq, of course. But I think that it is interesting, because it adds such diversity to your life. That experience is something that I value, value so highly.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** The transition to a civilian career may be most problematic for female veterans like Holley, who face the greatest challenge in the job market.

Female veteran unemployment rates now are higher than civilian women's, and a full 20 percent above their male veteran counterparts. More than 150,000 women have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, yet veteran services have not fully

Last year, Dunklee says, she could do one pull-up. Now she can knock out seven.

"I know a lot of males that can't do what I can do," she says. "But as long as you can do it, there's no reason why you shouldn't be in combat."

She's just 19, small and wiry, with an intense, dark stare. [As a high school wrestler, she took on the boys.](#)

"I kicked some boys' ass," she says.

Her future? She hopes to be a first sergeant, leading Marines in combat.

<http://www.wbur.org/npr/393871372/as-women-try-out-for-armor-units-if-you-can-hack-it-you-can-hack-it>

caught up with women's needs. Even those vets who do seek help once they return to civilian life often find the support they need is not yet there.

A pilot program here in North Carolina backed by computer maker Lenovo and run by the nonprofit Dress for Success hopes to help change that. It aims to help female veterans look and feel their best in job interviews.

For Holley, Dress for Success is a chance to get a new uniform for a new mission.

**KATRINA HOLLEY:** Yes, I love it.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** Dress for Success launched this program by organizing a roundtable to understand these former service members' needs.

**WOMAN:** The more information you share with us, the better we will be able to develop programs that fit your needs. And that's really what this conversation is all about.

**TENITA SOLANTO, Navy Veteran:** The most difficult was just trying to translate what you did in the military to the English — you would work on all this big equipment, radar, satellites, and then you get out here and everyone is like, what is that? I don't know.

**LAURA PARKINSON, Air Force Veteran:** I did have one person who hired me because when she found out I made bombs, she was like, that is cool.

(LAUGHTER)

**LAURA PARKINSON:** And that is how I got started working as a lobbyist and doing the job I am today. But it was because this one woman thought it was neat.

20 March 2015

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** Some of these veterans who have successfully made the shift to civilian life now help mentor other women. They know the road back can be rough.

**GLENDA CLARE, Navy Veteran:** They are not making enough money. They are not finding the jobs they need. Their skills are not translatable, or they don't know how to translate them. And some of them are kind of shell-shocked.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** At another gathering of female veterans near Washington, D.C., the bond of a sisterhood formed in service is just as strong. But these women have something other than years in uniform in common. All have been homeless after struggling to find work.

**ANNA SALANIKA, Navy Veteran:** That first two to three years after getting out was the worst. I was scared to tell people, yes, I just got out of the military, because I didn't know if it was — that's the reason why they weren't hiring me, because they felt like I probably had, like, PTSD or something. It was just — it was so hard.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** Four years ago, Jas Boothe founded Final Salute, which offers housing and services to women vets. An Army veteran, Boothe lived out of her car after being diagnosed with cancer and losing her home in Hurricane Katrina.

She says America is failing its female veterans.

**JAS BOOTHE, Army veteran:** I raised my right hand and I took an oath to never leave a fallen comrade. This is why I am doing this. There's no celebrity or anything involved in me doing this. But I am doing this in response to the lack of the American people being involved.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** Demand for rooms at Final Salute far outstrips what Boothe can provide. Female veterans are at least twice as likely to be homeless as women who never wore a uniform.

Anna Salanika is a Navy veteran who found herself trapped in a marriage filled with violence and abuse.

**ANNA SALANIKA:** And I tried to hold a lifestyle by myself, tried to handle my apartment, tried to take care of the kids, just tried to do everything independently,

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** She lived out of her car before finding a haven here. Salanika now works full-time and

### **Female exec to working moms: 'I'm sorry'**

(7 Mar.) *CNN*, By Stephanie Gallman

As a manager at several prominent media outlets, Katharine Zaleski did not understand the demands on working moms and often belittled their work ethic.

takes a full college course load as she fights to get back on track.

**ANNA SALANIKA:** Life is good, but if it wasn't for Jas and Final Salute, I don't know where I would be right now.

**WOMAN:** This is the living room we spent our nights in when I moved here, because my room is just back here. She spent a lot of days sitting on this sofa watching cartoons.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** Final Salute was Chiquita's only home before heading to war.

So you deployed to serve America in Afghanistan from a house for homeless veterans?

**WOMAN:** I did.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** So you were homeless the evening before you deployed?

**WOMAN:** Boots on the ground from here to training.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** Boothe says the solution cannot just be left to the military.

**JAS BOOTHE:** It wasn't the military's job to teach me how to be a civilian. America is supposed to welcome me with open arms and help me incorporate back into civilian society. The Army did their part. The Navy did their part. The other services did their part. It's America that is not doing their part.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** In North Carolina, that push to help women veterans succeed in the civilian world continues.

For Holley, who is feeling ready to tackle the challenge of growing her business, a new suit is just part of a new start.

**KATRINA HOLLEY:** And now I just feel part of something bigger, part of something important, part of something that is motivating and supporting and nurturing. And those are important things to me.

**GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON:** For PBS NewsHour, I'm Gayle Tzemach Lemmon in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/homecoming-can-particularly-hard-female-veterans/>

Then she became a mom, and everything changed.

20 March 2015

In a widely shared piece this week for Fortune.com, the journalist-turned-startup executive apologizes for disparaging the mothers she worked with in her 20s at the Huffington Post and Washington Post.

Zaleski said she committed multiple "infractions," against these women, including scheduling late-afternoon meetings or happy hours without considering that mothers with after-work responsibilities wouldn't be able to attend.

She even didn't disagree "when another female editor said we should hurry up and fire another woman before she 'got pregnant.' "

Now a mother to a young daughter, Zaleski said she was wrong to undervalue mothers' contributions by counting hours logged in the office and not the actual work done.

"I wish I had known five years ago, as a young, childless manager, that mothers are the people you need on your team," she wrote. "There's a saying that 'if you want something done then ask a busy person to do it.' That's exactly why I like working with mothers now."

Zaleski's piece has been shared more than 1,000 times and has been hailed on social media by many commenters who applaud her for seeing the error of her ways.

"Your message is so important and it's about time it was addressed," said Heather Bouvier on Twitter.

"THANK YOU for writing this. There are so many people like your then-childless 28-year-old self who need to read it. Seriously, thank you from the bottom of my heart," wrote Alice Gomstyn on Facebook.

Since the essay was published Tuesday, Zaleski told CNN she's received more than 2,000 emails from readers who admit they've committed similar infractions in the workplace.

"I'm so motivated and thrilled," she said. "I couldn't be more psyched for the responses."

But not all the responses have been positive. Some people refuse to accept Zaleski's apology and accuse her of borrowing from similar apologetic essays by other new moms.

"This woman has basically stolen another woman's post about her views on mothers with children in the workforce for her own personal gain!!," wrote one commenter on Zaleski's essay.

Others accuse Zaleski of writing the essay just to promote the new company she co-founded, Power to Fly, an online platform that matches women with technical skills to freelance projects they can do from anywhere.

"This woman & her shameless self-promoting article disgust me. No awareness. No integrity," Kitten Holiday said on Twitter.

Zaleski said that notion is "just silly," and she's taken a huge risk leaving a stable job to start a company that is a part of the solution.

Zaleski said her company, which launched in August, enables women to work from home so that they can "be valued for their productivity and not time spent sitting in an office or at a bar bonding afterwards."

But some critics say encouraging mothers to work from home only perpetuates a problem.

"I like this article a lot, but wish the solution wasn't to have a company that helps mothers find jobs that keep them tucked away at home, but to change the dominant culture to create better, more supportive workplaces where flexible schedules are encouraged," said Suzanne Pekow Carlson on Facebook.

Others say they wish Zaleski went further, and instead of only addressing the challenges of the working mother, wished she'd included other caregivers, like dads.

"I hope the convo ... expands beyond just working moms to working dads, folks taking care of sick parents, etc.," ABC's Karen Travers said on Twitter.

"I don't understand why we still refuse to acknowledge that our society needs to be more flexible for PARENTS. It is not just the woman's burden," said Margaret Weingart Berger on Facebook.

And said another commenter on Zaleski's essay, "If it takes this woman becoming a mother to understand the value of working mothers and have compassion for them, then I guess we can't expect men to understand and have compassion because they will never be able to be mothers themselves."

Zaleski said she finds the criticism "frustrating," but said she refuses to dwell on the negative. She wants to "stay focused on helping women find fulfilling work they can do from home."

She said her essay represents her "own personal experience," which happens to mostly involve working with mothers. But she's glad her piece has opened a dialogue and she hopes the conversation continues.

Women not supporting women "is a systemic problem in our society," Zaleski said.

Serena Markstrom Nugent, posting on Facebook, agreed.

"To the women mad at her (Zaleski) and saying too little too late: She not only had not had kids but was very young and ambitious. In the spirit of not tearing down other women, I

20 March 2015

would say cheer her on for where she is on in the journey," she wrote. "Still young, still learning, and at least at this point, it appears, part of the solution."

Still other critics suggest the issue isn't as simple as parents versus non-parents in the workplace. Instead, they say, it's about the lack of empathy that exists between colleagues whose circumstances are different from their own.

## **Emma Watson: Don't let anyone tell you what you can or cannot achieve**

*(9 Mar.) CNN, By Sheena McKenzie and Phoebe Parke*

British actress Emma Watson made an impassioned plea to women around the world: "Don't let anyone tell you what you can or cannot do, or cannot achieve."

"Just don't allow it. It's wrong. It's so wrong. Be what you want to be -- and prove them wrong."

The emotional Harry Potter star took to the stage at Facebook's headquarters in London on Sunday, March 8, to talk about gender equality as part of International Women's Day celebrations.

CNN was among the live audience of around 150 people -- with millions more watching the live stream across the world -- as the 24-year-old UN Goodwill Ambassador spoke about her own feminist journey.

### **Emma's Facebook moment**

Of the dozens gathered at the event, the majority were bespectacled young men -- not so unlike Harry Potter himself.

Describing the "surreal" moment she gave a speech at U.N. headquarters, later watched by 17 million, Watson said: "Gender equality historically has been a woman's movement."

"And how it's affecting men hasn't been addressed," she told moderator Greg James.

During the hour-long conversation, Watson gave the audience a rare glimpse into her private life -- and the difference between chivalry and sexism.

"I love having the door opened for me, isn't that just polite?" she said. "But I think the key is, would you then mind me opening the door for you?"

"Chivalry should be consensual."

When internet trolls threatened to release naked photos of the actress, following her UN speech, she said it only made her more determined in her campaign.

"If they were trying to put me off -- they did the opposite," she added.

"Why is it necessary to 'walk in someone's shoes' before we understand their perspective?" said Ann O'Connell on Facebook. "Until we strive to have understanding and compassion for people regardless of our personal circumstances or life choices, we will remain selfish and self-centered as a whole."

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/05/living/zaleski-essay-working-mom-apology-feat/>

Almost 230,000 men and boys across the world have since joined the HeForShe campaign, including U.S. President Barack Obama, and actors Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Matt Damon.

"I read a letter of support from a 13-year-old boy that was equally as passionate as a CEO," said Watson, adding that she often read their stories before going to bed at night.

"I asked my younger sister: 'What would be the one thing you'd want from boys in your life?' She said: 'I just want them to play with us.' And I think that really translates at every level. We just want to be included."

Watson also talked about the inspiring influence of her mother, Jacqueline, who was a "single working mother and type one diabetic."

"She wanted me to be my own person and said a bit of rebellion was good," said Watson, adding: "She was actually thrilled when I got my first detention... I think I failed a Latin exam."

Answering questions submitted via Facebook, Watson said the recent lack of female representation at the Academy Awards showed that the fight for gender equality was far from over.

"Why are women not directing their own stories?" she said.

"The human race is a bird -- and it needs both its wings to fly. And at the moment one of its wings is clipped," said Watson, paraphrasing famous American feminist, Gloria Steinem.

"She wanted me to be my own person and said a bit of rebellion was good," said Watson, adding: "She was actually thrilled when I got my first detention... I think I failed a Latin exam."

Answering questions submitted via Facebook, Watson said the recent lack of female representation at the Academy Awards showed that the fight for gender equality was far from over.

"Why are women not directing their own stories?" she said.

"The human race is a bird -- and it needs both its wings to fly. And at the moment one of its wings is clipped," said Watson, paraphrasing famous American feminist, Gloria Steinem.

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/06/europe/emma-watson-he-for-she-international-womens-day/>

## Trailblazer Allison Hickey faces her toughest battle: Veterans Affairs

(15 Mar.) *The Washington Post*, By Emily Wax-Thibodeaux  
 COLORADO SPRINGS — Driving along the winding roads of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Allison Hickey looks out at the snowy forested mountains of the campus, a place she first came to by bus as a teenager almost 40 years ago, and admits it still haunts her.

Hickey, 57, now a retired brigadier general and one of the highest-ranking women at the Department of Veterans Affairs, was in the first class of female cadets to graduate in 1980. They endured frequent threats from male classmates, she recalled. She was once cornered by a male cadet yelling: "If I could take you behind a barn right now and beat the you-know-what out of you, I would."

Her time at the academy made her "very uncomfortable." It was a feeling that would stick throughout her trailblazing career, bedeviling her but making her stronger, a leader.

The feeling grew acute in the past year because, as the undersecretary for benefits, she has been at the center of the storm swirling around VA over the long wait times that veterans face for benefits and treatment. An influential member of Congress has called for her resignation.

As she deals with the fallout of the worst scandal in VA history — concerning [the falsification of](#) patient wait times — Hickey also is confronting another troubled legacy: the double standard and, at times, hostility that many female veterans say they face inside the VA system.

Their population has soared past 2 million, and Hickey has been wrestling with the bureaucracy to make VA more welcoming for them, for instance by getting disability benefits for female veterans who suffered sexual assault in the military.

Earlier this winter, she was in Colorado speaking to about 2,000 cadets about leadership. Nearly a quarter were women.

While she acknowledged some pre-speech nerves, Hickey charged into the cavernous auditorium, dressed in a black skirt and jacket over chunky pearls, her back straight. She stood before the sea of young people dressed in their crisp blues and prepared to warn them about some of the ugly realities they would confront as officers: post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual assault and the suicide of fellow service members.

"In the next few minutes," she started, in her creamy Southern drawl, "I hope to make you very uncomfortable."

Record levels of claims

When Hickey decided to take the VA benefits job in 2011, "every single person asked: 'Are you sure you want to do that job? That's a system that's broken, it's been broken for

decades, and no one has been able to turn that problem around,' " she said.

During her first two years at the agency, the backlog of veterans awaiting benefits continued to grow, peaking at 600,000 cases in 2013. After more than a decade of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, veterans were streaming into the VA system, often with injuries that would have killed them in earlier conflicts, and they were filing claims at record levels. At the same time, new rules were making it easier to get benefits for conditions related to Agent Orange and post-traumatic stress.

And the agency was still using a 1950s-era system for processing paper claims. Some files, Hickey recalled, "were as tall as a young toddler." She embarked on an effort to computerize the claims.

Criticism of her operation continued to mount. VA Assistant Inspector General Linda Halliday found in a report released in July that regional offices in Philadelphia and Baltimore had bins of disability claims that had not been scanned for three years. Halliday also said VA, in a rush to get the backlog claims down, had paid out about \$85 million in unsupported claims.

When Hickey testified at a House hearing last summer that VA had cut the backlog to about 275,000 claims, Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.), chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, said he didn't "believe anybody at the table is telling the truth from the VA."

Miller has recently called for her to resign, saying in a statement this month that "the accuracy and data manipulation problems reinforce my earlier calls for new leadership." But Hickey's supporters say she has survived VA's most difficult period and has made progress in modernizing the claims system.

"She's very passionate, dynamic. But she just faces a huge task, in a huge bureaucracy. Even if everything was going well, it would be a massive task to keep it that at way," said Garry Augustine, executive director of the Disabled American Veterans. "And while there's a way to go, we believe she's going in the right direction."

Old-fashioned cheerleading

"Hi, y'all. Anybody around?" Hickey called out.

It was 8:30 a.m. on a Saturday. Dressed in jeans and a sea-blue fleece, her blond hair well coiffed, she was peering around the cubicles of a Denver claims office, doing one of her "surprise pulse checks." She was checking on the daunting effort to reduce the claims backlog. The local staff members, part of her national team of 21,000, were working "mandatory overtime" to whittle down the backlog.

This morning, Hickey was helping deliver Krispy Kreme doughnuts and doing some old-fashioned cheerleading. (Hickey was a cheerleader for the Air Force football team, "which taught me what to do to keep your people up when they're losing. Or just struggling.")

Claims officers — some of them young, bearded veterans of Afghanistan and Iraq — came out of their cubicles. "Oh,

wow,” said former Staff Sgt. Aaron Beaty, doing a double-take when he saw Hickey.

She moved through the room hugging the employees.

Some say they could use one.

“This job is just so freaking hard,” retired Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Andrew Sermak told Hickey.

Later he said, sighing, “It’s interesting she came by. You can tell she cares. At least that’s something.”

In an agency with a reputation for being closed and aloof, Hickey has become known as far more approachable than her predecessors.

At the end of last year, between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day, about a dozen suicidal veterans e-mailed her, some threatening to take their lives if they did not get their benefits, she recounted. She addressed each one personally, she said, calling in therapists and personally checking on each of the cases.

“Everyone in my inbox is alive today,” she said.

Hickey said she receives hundreds of e-mails a week from veterans and tries to answer all of them, although sometimes this means e-mailing in the middle of the night.

“Many have stories that would make you cringe — I hear them all the time. I am glad they make me uncomfortable, break my heart, keep me awake at night and even, at times, bring me to tears. It has spurred me to action on their behalf,” Hickey told cadets during her speech.

Winning at the academy

When Hickey was a student at the academy, she fought to get female cadets the same uniforms as the men: front-zippered slacks, shirts that could be tucked in gig lines, and precise gig lines. “So the women could feel included, look sharp, like the men, and hold their heads high in the long blue line,” she said. She ended up winning — and not just at the academy. The Air Force brass liked her idea and made the change across the service.

“It felt awesome — for a minute or two — and then uncomfortable for a year or two,” she said. The male cadets

### **Book chronicles female Ind. Guard members**

(15 Mar.) *The Courier-Journal*, By Maureen Groppe

WASHINGTON — One woman joined the Indiana National Guard to pay for college, never expecting a terrorist attack on the United States while she was still in training would result in her deployment to Afghanistan.

Another was one of the longest-serving women in the Indiana National Guard who defied her age, gender and single parent status to serve because she saw the military as her calling.

The third woman profiled in the book “Soldier Girls: The Battles of Three Women at Home and at War” joined the military on a dare and paid the biggest price of the three — getting hit by a roadside bomb in Iraq.

The book, written by journalist Helen Thorpe and published last year, follows the Indiana women through their enlistment, training, deployments and difficult re-entries into civilian lives.

were openly hostile to her class, which was known as the “Legendary ’80s Ladies.”

Hickey was raised in a military family and born on a military base in France. Her father, who always encouraged her to take on tough challenges, called her “my rebel with a cause.” She integrated when “diversity was a few Jewish guys and an African American,” said retired Lt. Col. Ed Herlick, a classmate of Hickey’s who described the atmosphere as “brutal.”

The Class of 1979, the last all-male class, labeled itself the “Last Class With Balls.”

That same male-dominated military culture is often replicated inside VA, female veteran advocates say. But Hickey said that small changes can be powerful “symbols of inclusion,” for instance, revising the look of her new eBenefits Web site to make sure it depicts women veterans. She has also tapped claims officers to work with a Facebook group for female veterans to assist with their claims.

She has made larger changes as well, specifically getting disability benefits for female veterans who had been denied them for post-traumatic stress disorder related to sexual assault in the military. She told veterans who said they had been victims of such assaults to resubmit their claims for a fresh look. Some had been pending for decades.

From 2008 to 2010, the approval rate for PTSD claims related to military sexual trauma was only about one-third. VA had long been dismissive of these claims and resisted calls to revamp the criteria used in awarding benefits. Today, roughly 55 percent of those claims are granted, the agency said.

She is proud of that win. As she told the cadets in her speech: “Push through the uncomfortable feelings and do the right thing anyway . . . even if it gets the ‘you know what’ beat out of you.”

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trailblazer-allison-hickey-faces-her-toughest-battle-veterans-affairs/2015/03/15/906ac978-c1c0-11e4-9ec2-b418f57a4a99\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trailblazer-allison-hickey-faces-her-toughest-battle-veterans-affairs/2015/03/15/906ac978-c1c0-11e4-9ec2-b418f57a4a99_story.html)

“I had one main question in my mind when I began,” Thorpe said. “And that was, ‘Why do veterans sometimes struggle to return home?’ I specifically went looking for people who could help me understand what that struggle was about.”

That struggle, at least for the women profiled, included some unflattering behaviors. There was abuse of alcohol and prescription drugs, as well as extramarital affairs — including with officers.

A spokeswoman for the Indiana National Guard said the experiences portrayed in the book are not typical.

“It is very important to know that this is definitely their personal accounts,” said Lt. Col. Cathy Van Bree. “The account of how they experienced their deployment is not how I believe many others have experienced their deployments.”

Thorpe agrees that her book is not meant as a universal description of military service. But there are a lot of veterans who have had difficulties with their service, as suicide statistics show. In 2012, more members of the military — about 522 — committed suicide than were killed in combat operations. Deaths among Guard and reservists who were not on active duty reached an all-time high in 2013.

The stories told in the book can be helpful in understanding at least some of the general struggles of veterans.

That's particularly important in Indiana, which had more members of its National Guard deployed in 2009 than any other state. The 3,400 Indiana soldiers who went to Iraq in 2008 represented Indiana's largest single deployment since World War II.

Since the book was published, two of the women profiled have spoken to congressional aides about their experiences. One has been invited to address a class at Purdue University and another was asked to speak on a Veterans Affairs Administration panel.

Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin called the book "absolutely terrific and important," and The New York Times listed it as an "Editor's Choice."

The attention has been surprising to the women, who have been contacted by strangers to say they can relate.

"I think there's a whole group of people who were on these deployments, or know people on these deployments, who say, 'Yes, these are the stories that I've glimpsed that need to be told,'" Thorpe said.

She found her subjects after interviewing about a dozen veterans from different branches of the military. The woman in the book identified as Michelle — the only one of the three who wanted to use a pseudonym — jumped out at Thorpe because of her humor, intelligence and the surprising fact that she saw herself not as a soldier, but a "music-loving, pot-smoking, left-leaning hippie."

"I was struck by the idea of her opposing both wars and yet serving in one of them," Thorpe said.

The daughter of divorced parents without steady incomes, Michelle joined the Indiana National Guard to pay for college. The alternative was earning \$7.62 an hour making disposable

### **Oldest woman veteran dies at 108 in San Antonio**

(19 Mar.) *Stars and Stripes*, By Sig Christenson

The nation's oldest woman veteran, Lucy Coffey, died Thursday in San Antonio. She was 108.

A World War II veteran, Coffey met Vice President Joe Biden and President Barack Obama last summer in the White House as part of a final visit she wanted to make to Washington, D.C.

cups for fast-food restaurants at a plastics plant in southern Indiana.

When Michelle introduced Thorpe to two of her friends from the Guard, Debbie and Desma, Thorpe knew she'd found her subjects.

Debbie, a 52-year-old beauty salon manager who joined the guard at 34, was euphoric when told she would be deployed — and wouldn't miss her chance to show her worth and see the world.

And Desma was particularly interesting to Thorpe as the single mother of three who came back from Iraq with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury after the gun truck she was driving hit a roadside bomb.

"It was a female version of a story I had seen elsewhere, but her particular sacrifices seemed unwritten," Thorpe said. "And I wanted to tell her story."

Despite their different reasons for joining the military, all three women took pride in their accomplishments — getting through basic training, learning new skills and surviving deployment.

The three are divided, however, on whether the Obama administration was right to lift the ban on women serving in combat in 2013. Debbie wished the ban had been lifted when there was still time for her to become a sniper. Michelle opposed the change. And Desma thought it was a change in name only, but might ensure that the women already facing attacks in their combat support positions would be better trained.

Although the book raises the issue of who is carrying the burden for the wars that the country fights — particularly those with few economic options — Thorpe said both Debbie and Desma reject any suggestion of being put upon.

"Desma feels she made the choices she made. She's proud of her military service," Thorpe said. "She knows that she struggles with her second deployment, and hitting the roadside bomb was a terrible experience. But she doesn't in any way see herself as a victim."

<http://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/indiana/2015/03/15/book-chronicles-female-ind-guard-members/24756973/>

"I am so honored to have met this incredible lady," Bexar County veterans service officer Queta Marquez said. "She was truly a pioneer, and full of life and spunk."

Coffey died overnight in her sleep, Marquez said, adding that she had been sick this week and suffered a chronic cough.

20 March 2015

Funeral arrangements were incomplete. A memorial service in San Antonio is planned before Coffey is laid to rest with her family in Indiana.

Only one other veteran, also a Texan, was older than Coffey. Richard Overton, a Bastrop County native, was born three days before her in May 1906.

A small-town girl from a farm in Martinsville, Indiana, Coffey had a sense of adventure. She left the farm for Chicago, then moved to Dallas, where she was working at an A&P supermarket on Dec. 7, 1941 — the day Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

After the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was created, Coffey quit the A&P in 1943 and put on the uniform. The war took her to the Pacific and, in time, Japan, where she spent a decade before moving to San Antonio.

Last summer, fellow veterans in Austin and San Antonio worked to help her make an Honor Flight to Washington. While in the capital, she saw the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. The weekend was capped by a

visit to the White House, where Coffey and Biden spent a half-hour in the West Wing.

Obama also dropped by to meet her.

"We spent some time together and, you know, I know she doesn't speak, but she spoke to me," Biden said.

Coffey also was honored late last year at a Spurs game, getting to meet both coach Gregg Popovich and her favorite player, Tony Parker.

Coffey had a simple reason for joining the Honor Flight, an all-expense paid salute to World War II veterans.

"I'd like to go to see things that are there that were not there before," Coffey explained.

"It's been a long time since I've been in Washington, but I would like to go to see the things that are there."

<http://www.stripes.com/news/veterans/oldest-woman-veteran-dies-at-108-in-san-antonio-1.335590>

## **Forget Your Team: Your Online Violence Toward Girls and Women Is What Can Kiss My...**

*(19 Mar.) Pass the Mic, By Ashley Judd*

During a conference championship game on Sunday, I posted a comment to Twitter that some found unsportsmanlike. I didn't much care for three players bleeding on the court, and I tweeted that the opponent was "playing dirty & can kiss my team's free throw making a—." The volume of hatred that exploded at me in response was staggering.

I routinely cope with tweets that sexualize, objectify, insult, degrade and even physically threaten me. I have already — recently, in fact — looked into what is legally actionable in light of such abuse, and have supplied Twitter with scores of reports about the horrifying content on its platform. But this particular tsunami of gender-based violence and misogyny flooding my Twitter feed was overwhelming.

Tweets rolled in, calling me a cunt, a whore or a bitch, or telling me to suck a two-inch dick. Some even threatened rape, or "anal anal anal."

I deleted my original tweet after the game, before all hell broke loose, to make amends for any genuine offense I may have committed by describing play as "dirty." (Of course, other people, including my uncle who is a chaplain, also expressed fear that the athletes would be hurt badly. But my uncle wasn't told he was a smelly pussy. He wasn't spared because of his profession; being a male sports fan is his immunity from abuse.)

I love March Madness so much that even now, what I really want to talk about is how Sunday's strategy did not, in fact, work. I really want to talk about a deeply distressing dream I recently had that UConn beat us in the finals, in which we

scored a scant 49 points, not to mention the oddity of why my awful dream featured UConn and not Wisconsin.

Instead, I must, as a woman who was once a girl, as someone who uses the Internet, as a citizen of the world, address personally, spiritually, publicly and even legally, the ripe dangers that invariably accompany being a woman and having an opinion about sports or, frankly, anything else.

What happened to me is the devastating social norm experienced by millions of girls and women on the Internet. Online harassers use the slightest excuse (or no excuse at all) to dismember our personhood. My tweet was simply the convenient delivery system for a rage toward women that lurks perpetually. I know this experience is universal, though I'll describe specifically what happened to me.

I read in vivid language the various ways, humiliating and violent, in which my genitals, vaginal and anal, should be violated, shamed, exploited and dominated. Either the writer was going to do these things to me, or they were what I deserved. My intellect was insulted: I was called stupid, an idiot. My age, appearance and body were attacked. Even my family was thrown into the mix: Someone wrote that my "grandmother is creepy."

As I began on Twitter to identify and push back against this toxicity and abuse, I faced the standard bashing anyone (girl or boy, woman or man) experiences when objecting to and taking action against misogyny. For example: *[click on link below]*.

20 March 2015

And last: "I watched *Simon Birch*. Lousy movie, but I got to see Ashley Judd die."

The themes are predictable: I brought it on myself. I deserved it. I'm whiny. I'm no fun. I can't take a joke. There are more serious issues in the world. The Internet space isn't real, and doesn't deserve validity and attention as a place where people are abused and suffer. Grow thicker skin, sweetheart. I'm famous. It's part of my job description.

The themes embedded in this particular incident reflect the universal ways we talk about girls and women. When they are violated, we ask, why was she wearing that? What was she doing in that neighborhood? What time was it? Had she been drinking?

Luckily, others have helped identify and dismantle the twisted logic of this entire incident: [[click on link below](#)].

I'll close with sharing why I had, before this past Sunday, already begun to research what legal actions to take against gender-based violence on Twitter.

I am a survivor of sexual assault, rape and incest. I am greatly blessed that in 2006, other thriving survivors introduced me to recovery. I seized it. My own willingness, partnered with a simple kit of tools, has empowered me to take the essential odyssey from undefended and vulnerable victim to empowered survivor. Today, nine years into my recovery, I can go farther and say my "story" is not "my story." It is something a Higher Power (spirituality, for me, has been vital in this healing) uses to allow me the grace and privilege of helping others who are still hurting, and perhaps to offer a piece of education, awareness and action to our world.

The summer of 1984 was tough for me. I experienced two rapes by an adult and systematic molestation from another adult, who also had another man in the room watching (I now understand this was to ensure he had a witness, in order to undermine me in the event I tried to report the incident). I have done purgative, cathartic work on those particular acts of violence. The nature of recovering from trauma is that it can be ongoing, with deeper levels of healing and freedom coming with indefatigable persistence to keep chipping away at it.

This January, I read three different things that freshly triggered an additional, very specific memory from age 15 — an attempted oral rape by yet another adult man. First, the Vanderbilt rape case conviction was announced, in which certain details mirrored my own experiences, especially the non-intervening bystanders (who, thankfully, in the Vanderbilt

case, were charged with violent crime). Second, I read the Justice for Victims of Sex Trafficking legislation that passed the House of Representatives. Third, I re-read the Department of Justice's legal definition of rape and some of the absurd debates about it. Although I regularly engage with these kinds of issues, after reading these three particular materials, it became very clear that I needed to address my attempted oral rape; the time had arrived for that terrifying moment to be treated as a stand-alone piece of violence from which I was being given the opportunity to heal on a deeper level.

This is one of the many reasons why I believe profound dedication to self-care is essential to feminist social justice work. I knew exactly where to go and what to do. My mentor was available. We immediately scheduled experiential therapy; I thus did not have to go to the sexual assault center for triage. But let me tell you: I am exactly like every other survivor, and the sexual assault centers of our country are for me, just as they are for all of us.

Supported by friends and a brilliant psychologist, my therapy was astonishing, as all such healing work is. I felt like I had the chance to finally speak, fight and grieve, and be consoled and comforted. But then, on literally the very next day, I received a disturbing tweet with a close-up photograph of my face behind text that read, "I can't wait to cum all over your face and in your mouth."

The timing was canny, and I knew it was a crime. It was time to call the police, and to say to the Twittersphere, no more.

I've spent valuable March Madness time writing this. I have 6 versus 11 seed upsets to pick and opponents to scout. So for now, I am handing it back over to those of you who are unafraid to speak out against abuse like I have faced, and those of you who are righteous allies and intervening bystanders. You're on it — on the Internet, at home, at work and in your hearts, where the courage to tackle this may fundamentally lie. We have much to discuss, and much action to take. Join me.

*Ashley Judd is a University of Kentucky and Harvard Kennedy School graduate. Her paper, "Gender Violence: Law and Social Justice" was awarded the Dean's Scholar Award at Harvard Law School. Her schools are seeded 1 and 13 in the NCAA Men's Tournament.*

[http://mic.com/articles/113226/forget-your-team-your-online-violence-toward-girls-and-women-is-what-can-kiss-my-ass?utm\\_source=huffingtonpost.com&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=pubexchange\\_facebook](http://mic.com/articles/113226/forget-your-team-your-online-violence-toward-girls-and-women-is-what-can-kiss-my-ass?utm_source=huffingtonpost.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=pubexchange_facebook)

## **Military children more likely to have a history of suicide attempts**

(19 Mar.) *Los Angeles Times*, By Alan Zarembo

California high school students who have a parent in the military are far more likely than those from civilian families to have recently attempted suicide, according to a new study.

The findings are based on a survey of ninth and 11th graders at 261 schools across the state. The data were collected in 2012 and 2013.

**20 March 2015**

Of 2,409 students with a parent in the military, 11.7% answered yes when asked if they had attempted suicide in the previous year. For the 21,274 students with civilian parents, that figure was 7.3%.

About a third of the suicide attempts in both groups required medical treatment, the survey said.

The study, published Thursday in the journal *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, did not consider completed suicides.

In trying to explain the results, the researchers said the stresses of more than a decade of war — parents away on long deployments or back home dealing with physical and mental health problems — had trickled down to children in military families.

“They’re bearing the burden of our war on terrorism,” said Tamika Gilreath, the USC sociologist who led the research.

The analysis, however, did not include data on deployment histories, war wounds or other details of parents' military service.

Historically, military children have been shown to be more psychologically resilient than civilians.

The same held true for service members, too. But between 2004 and 2009, the military suicide rate nearly doubled, catching up to — and in the Army, surpassing — the civilian

rate. It has remained elevated, with young rank-and-file soldiers facing the greatest risk.

While it is tempting to blame the rise entirely on the wars, the reality is more complicated. More than half of military suicides involved service members who never deployed.

Researchers say the wars have made life more stressful even for those who never left U.S. soil. They have also found elevated rates of preexisting mental health problems among enlistees.

Far less is known about the mental health of military families. The government does not track or analyze data on suicides among children of service members.

The new study relied on data from a statewide survey conducted for the state Department of Education. More than 1,000 high schools participated in the survey, though only a quarter of them opted to include questions on suicide attempts.

All the schools asked their students — more than 27,000 with a parent in the military and more than 280,000 without — if they had contemplated suicide in the previous year.

Among military children, 23.5% said yes, compared to 18.1% for everybody else.

<http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-military-children-suicide-attempts-20150319-story.html>