



## DACOWITS: Articles of Interest

### WELLNESS

#### [Two academy cadets face sexual assault hearings](#)

(13 Apr.) *Air Force Times*, By Stephen Losey

UPDATE: The Air Force Academy said April 13 that Cadet 3rd Class Zachery L. Chubb's Article 32 hearing has been postponed. A new date has not been set.

#### [4 Reasons I Am Resigning My Commission As A Naval Officer](#)

(13 Apr.) *Task & Purpose*, By Anna Granville

There are four major, tangible, common reasons I am resigning that I did not include in the letter. I share them for the following reasons: I love the Navy, it has been an honor to serve, and I want this incredible organization to be better. 1. Promotions are based more on "hitting the wickets" than exemplary performance. 2. Unsustainable strain on your personal relationships. 3. The military is a homogeneous, anti-intellectual organization. 4. Ownership of self.

#### [Witness refuses to testify in alleged sex assault case at Air Force Academy](#)

(14 Apr.) *Colorado Springs Gazette*, By Tom Roeder

Defense attorneys for cadet Phillip Hendrix IV say the two-hour hearing Monday - brief by military standards - shows there is not enough evidence to merit his court-martial.

#### [Local Officials Sign Sexual Assault Proclamation](#)

(14 Apr.) *Pensacola News Journal*, By Marketta Davis

Local officials gathered to sign a joint proclamation in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Prevention Month.

#### [4 Reasons Not To Resign Your Commission As A Naval Officer](#)

(14 Apr.) *U.S. Naval Institute*, By LT Roger Misso

While there is no blanket explanation that can cover every departing, high-performing junior officer, we do have statistics from the 2014 Navy Retention Study and a number of competing anecdotes that suggest the Navy is losing some of its best officers too soon.

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

(16 Apr.) *Navy Times*

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

#### [Former Fort Drum commander named in West Point sexual hostility case](#)

(15 Apr.) *Watertown Daily News*, By Gordon Block

A former commander of Fort Drum, retired Lt. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck, is one of two people named in a suit claiming officials knowingly permitted rampant sexual hostility toward women at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

#### [New Parent Program Supports Child Development Needs](#)

(15 Apr.) *DoD News*, By Amaani Lyle

For many new or expecting parents, the stress of navigating the needs and developmental milestones of an infant or toddler can rival that of deployments.

#### [U.S. Navy Command Culture Builds Respect And Trust To Lead The Way In Sexual Assault Prevention](#)

(15 Apr.) *Navy Live Blog*, By Capt. Karl O. Thomas

Over my 29 years in our Navy, I've experienced several major cultural shifts to include women's roles and responsibilities, a focus on fitness, smoking cessation, widespread acceptance of sexual orientation and most recently sexual assault awareness and prevention.

[Army morale low despite 6-year, \\$287M optimism program](#)

(16 Apr.) *Military Times*, By Gregg Zoroya

More than half of some 770,000 soldiers are pessimistic about their future in the military and nearly as many are unhappy in their jobs, despite a six-year, \$287 million campaign to make troops more optimistic and resilient, findings obtained by USA TODAY show.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

[Flag Officer Announcements.](#)

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced today that the president has made the following nominations:

- CAPT Danelle M. Barrett has been nominated for appointment to the rank of rear admiral (lower half). Barrett is currently serving as chief of staff, Navy Cyber Force, Suffolk, Virginia.
- CAPT Ann M. Burkhardt has been nominated for appointment to the rank of rear admiral (lower half). Burkhardt is currently serving as Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group fellow, Newport, Rhode Island.
- CAPT Anne M. Swap has been nominated for appointment to the rank of rear admiral (lower half). Swap is currently serving as commanding officer, Naval Hospital, Okinawa, Japan.

[Blue Angels' first female pilot takes flight](#)

(10 Apr.) *ABC News* <video>

When military aviation buffs pack into the Marine Corps Beaufort Air Show in South Carolina, they'll be wowed by the Navy's Blue Angels. But a new kind of history will also take flight in the team: a woman in the cockpit. U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Katie Higgins is the first female pilot in the team's 69-year history. Michelle Miller took to the sky to see how Higgins got her wings.

[Sisters make it through enlisted Marine infantry training](#)

(11 Apr.) *Marine Corps Times*, By Hope Hodge Seck

Sgt. Zonell Westfield, a Marine recruiter, prided himself on being able to find future Marines everywhere, and when he saw 18-year-old Kendra Hazelwood working behind the counter on a fall day in 2013, he couldn't resist handing her a business card.

[VCNO Michelle Howard pushes for cyber vigilance, more women in the ranks](#)

(12 Apr.) *Navy Times*, By Sam Fellman

The Navy's No. 2 officer is leading a push to get more women into commands across the service. "Forty-six percent of the labor workforce is female in this country, and we make up fifty-one percent of the population."

[Inside the Army's effort to train and assess women for Ranger School](#)

(13 Apr.) *The Washington Post*, By Dan Lamothe

Forty-four U.S. soldiers lined up here in formation before dawn Saturday with one more major requirement left before they could attend the Army's elite Ranger School: A six-mile road march while hauling a rifle and 45 pounds of combat gear. It was one last test of wills through the winding hills and humidity of western Georgia.

[Meet the women helping the Army as Ranger School takes on female soldiers](#)

(14 Apr.) *The Washington Post*, By Dan Lamothe

Before the Army announced it would take female students at Ranger School this spring, it sent an invitation to about 60 female soldiers. The offer: Come to this massive Army base in western Georgia and be part of the service's research into which combat assignments should be opened to women.

[It's Time To Reevaluate Standards For Women In The Military](#)

(16 Apr.) *Checkpoint Washington Post Blog*, By Dave Kelm, Jayne Lawlor and Nicole Martin

Last week, the Marine Corps announced the scheduled end of an 18-month experiment to vet females through its Infantry Officer Course. The results were bleak: 0 of 29 women made it past the three-month course. On April 20, the first females will attempt the Army's elite Ranger training, and other combat schools are also now open to women on trial bases.

**EXTRA**

[Women veterans only need apply for this Honor Flight](#)

(8 Apr.) *Cincinnati.com*, By Sheila Vilvens

For the past eight years, Honor Flight Tri-State has flown hundreds of male military veterans to visit Washington, D.C. memorials free of charge. On September 22, the Cincinnati-based nonprofit is lifting off with the first ever all women veterans' flight, marking its own historic event.

### [Call Center in Canandaigua Marks Two Years of Helping Women Veterans](#)

(13 Apr.) *Time Warner Cable News Buffalo*, By *Jamiese Price*

"Every single one of our contact representatives are women. We received an authorization from the Office of Personnel Management to hire only women telephone agents, so we have women helping women," said Krista Stephenson, who serves as director of the call center.

### [Sister soldiers show their strength with historic jump at JBER](#)

(13 Apr.) *KTVA Alaska*, By *Bonney Bowman*

Sister soldiers took part in a historic jump at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Monday. For the first time, the 4/25 Airborne Brigade Combat Team Spartan "Sisters in Arms" jumped as one.

## UPCOMING EVENT

**[Women in Combat -- Where They Stand](#)**: On Monday, 27 April 2015, Women in International Security, Alliance for National Defense, the Reserve Officer's Association and No Exceptions will host a half day event to examine what has changed for US servicewomen since the 2013 rescission of the Department of Defense ground combat exclusion policy. A light lunch will be served at 12:00 p.m. and a networking reception will follow at 5:00 p.m. For more information visit: [www.wiisglobal.org](http://www.wiisglobal.org).

### **Two academy cadets face sexual assault hearings**

(13 Apr.) *Air Force Times*, By *Stephen Losey*

*UPDATE: The Air Force Academy said April 13 that Cadet 3rd Class Zachery L. Chubb's Article 32 hearing has been postponed. A new date has not been set.*

ORIGINAL STORY: Two Air Force Academy cadets – a freshman and a sophomore – face Article 32 hearings on sexual assault charges next week.

The academy said Friday that an Article 32 hearing – similar to a civilian grand jury – is set for April 13 for Cadet 4th Class Phillip L. Hendrix IV, and another is set for April 15 for Cadet 3rd Class Zachery L. Chubb. Their cases are unrelated.

Hendrix was charged March 12 with two counts of abusive sexual contact in violation of Article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the academy said. Chubb was charged March 16 with one count of sexual assault and one count of abusive sexual contact in violation of Article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

According to the charge sheets provided by the academy, Hendrix allegedly placed a woman's hand on his penis without

her consent on Sept. 1. He also allegedly touched and kissed her breasts without her consent.

Chubb allegedly penetrated a woman with his finger and touched her buttocks without her consent.

The charge sheets said both alleged crimes happened at or near the academy in Colorado Springs.

The academy said preliminary hearing officers will preside over the hearings, and then submit reports of the proceedings with recommendations to the commandant of cadets. The commandant, serving as the Special Court Martial Convening Authority, will then decide whether to dismiss the case, refer it to a general court-martial, or dispose of it through other disciplinary or administrative action.

The academy stressed that the charges are accusations and that the cadets are innocent until proven guilty.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/04/10/two-academy-cadets-face-hearings-on-sexual-assault/25583365/>

### **4 Reasons I Am Resigning My Commission As A Naval Officer**

(13 Apr.) *Task & Purpose*, By *Anna Granville*

I have resigned my active-duty commission, which means I have exactly a year left on active duty in the Navy.

Here is an excerpt from the "Reason for Submission of Request:"

I am resigning my commission in order to pursue full-time graduate studies, having completed multiple deployments on both land and sea. I value the leadership responsibilities with which I have been entrusted. I am grateful for the rare opportunities that I have enjoyed, and I am tremendously proud to have served in the U.S. Navy. I will carry my experiences with me as a veteran, as a student, and as I continue to serve in the public sector.

There are four major, tangible, common reasons I am resigning that I did not include in the letter. I share them for the following reasons: I love the Navy, it has been an honor to serve, and I want this incredible organization to be better.

#### 1. **Promotions are based more on "hitting the wickets" than exemplary performance.**

Officer promotions are not, at least for the foreseeable part of a junior officer's career, based on performance, but rather on "hitting the wickets," meaning that you are judged by how closely you followed a highly-scripted career path, not necessarily how you performed at those jobs. As long as you

don't get fired, don't fail a physical fitness test, don't get a DUI, nor get caught fraternizing, you can probably get promoted to at least lieutenant commander. Furthermore, how you are ranked against your peers at a particular command – of the paramount importance to promotion – is based more on seniority than performance. This model is widely accepted as the norm in the Navy. This means that if you are a brand new lieutenant and outperform all the lieutenants at your command, you will really be ranked against the lieutenants with the same level of seniority as you; a lieutenant who is eligible to board for lieutenant commander will always be ranked ahead, even if that officer is incompetent. There is a wide reluctance to give lackluster officers poor performance reviews, and instead it's much easier to wait for mediocre officers to transfer out of the command and become someone else's problem. There is a reason people joke that anyone who "fogs a mirror" can make lieutenant commander.

This encourages mediocrity and almost guarantees that the best, most energetic junior officers to leave active duty. I've worked for some absolutely incredible leaders and mentors, but I've worked for or with three times as many bad or mediocre leaders. It's certainly a leadership lesson, but it's incredibly demotivating to know that your peers who are putting in half the effort at a less challenging assignment will likely get promoted at the same rate as you. This begs many to ask, What's the point?

While it may be true that those who outperform their peers are promoted first for commander or captain, does it really make sense to tell junior officers, "Don't worry, your efforts will be rewarded in about 15 to 20 years?" when their efforts can result in more responsibility at a much younger age, whether or in the public or private sector? Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, was elected to Congress at age 31. Yet, despite being a nationally elected leader, she remains only a captain (the Army equivalent of a Navy lieutenant) in the Hawaii National Guard. Here on Task & Purpose, there are daily stories of entrepreneurial and visionary veterans who have started successful businesses or nonprofits.

And for the junior officers who find themselves filling big shoes early on, where is there to go? Many of my peers, myself included, have found ourselves filling the shoes of a field-grade officer for months on end, with measured success and no extra pay. Others have been assigned to units with exciting, unconventional missions. It's very difficult to go to a watch floor or staff job after that.

## 2. **Unsustainable strain on your personal relationships.**

The first guy I ever dated in the military deployed six weeks after we met, and I received orders and transferred across the country before he got back. If you are fortunate enough to date or marry a civilian who is willing to move his or her career and life around for you, you're one of the lucky ones, but you're still going to be involuntarily separated for six months to a year every deployment cycle. The military still largely is stuck in its 1950s model of a man working as a single provider for a wife who stays at home. Heaven forbid you are a dual-military couple and get stuck on back-to-back deployments.

This has happened to literally every single long-term, dual-military couple I know, even the ones who get married and geographically co-located for their "homeport." I have endured it myself, and it's awful.

This is also to say nothing of the strain on other important relationships – I see my parents for a few days a year, and I see them more than many who live thousands of miles away from home.

## 3. **The military is a homogeneous, anti-intellectual organization.**

Finally, the factor that I found most frustrating is the toxicity of a perpetually anti-intellectual, change-resistant organization. My given reasons for resigning are extremely common among junior officers – both men and women – and have been recently quantified by the 2014 Navy Retention Study. Yet many senior leaders would look at my reasons for resigning and find a way to discredit them because they do not like what they say, possibly because they feel these motives question their own career choices.

When I was a week into my first deployment, I was preparing my slides for a watch turnover brief as the assistant chiefs of staff all filed in. A fellow junior officer, whose watch station was adjacent to mine, muttered, "Man, the Navy has a never-ending supply of middle-aged white men."

And she was absolutely right. The majority of senior military leaders are white, Christian, conservative men with engineering degrees from a service academy, masters' degrees from a war college, who grew up middle-class or privileged and whose wives do not have a career outside the home. There is nothing wrong with any of this – indeed, this is probably the profile of most executives in America. But this also means there's a lack of diversity of ideas, a resistance to alternative ways of thinking, and the lethality of group think.

Unfortunately, this is also the profile of the same kind of individual who will wax on about how the military should not be a vehicle of social change – something that is very easy for someone in a position of privilege to say. Yet the American military has been a vehicle of social change since its inception; that is something to be proud of.

In order to succeed as an organization that is in the business of outsmarting and out-maneuvering an adversary who wants to kill us and our allies, shouldn't we encourage diversity of thought in the force, and strive to recruit and retain leaders who think differently, rather than writing them off as disruptive?

## 4. **Ownership of self.**

Above all, my decision to resign came down to ownership over my own life. There is little in life that we can control. When you volunteer to join the armed forces, you make a conscious choice to surrender much of your own agency. You live in the temporary and transient, you are never anywhere for long. For six years, I have been very happy to live this way. But it is for this reason, and a desire to explore other personal and professional opportunities, that I am looking to the next step.

I have been asked by mentors, Do you really want to leave all this? How did we fail you?

Nobody failed me, least of all the leaders who took a special interest in my growth as an officer. I was one of the lucky ones. I had a number of good leaders at critical points in my brief Navy career who helped me succeed, often by doing nothing more than putting me in a leadership role and empowering me to run with it. To them, and the sailors who let me think I was in charge, I am perpetually grateful. The most important lesson I could have possibly learned was that

as leaders, it is our job to right the wrongs, and help putting our best people in positions where they will succeed. My work in public service is far from over; it is only the uniformed days that are numbered. It is merely my time, time to find a breath of permanence.

<http://taskandpurpose.com/4-reasons-i-am-resigning-my-commission-as-a-naval-officer/>

## **Witness refuses to testify in alleged sex assault case at Air Force Academy**

(14 Apr.) *Colorado Springs Gazette*, By Tom Roeder

It didn't take long to air the evidence against an Air Force Academy freshman accused of sexual assault.

Defense attorneys for cadet Phillip Hendrix IV say the two-hour hearing Monday - brief by military standards - shows there is not enough evidence to merit his court-martial.

"The bottom line is there is no probable cause," defense attorney Capt. Diane Ingram said in closing remarks.

Hendrix is charged with forcing a female classmate to touch his genitals and groping her during a September incident in her dorm room.

The alleged victim declined to testify at Monday's hearing, which will be used to gauge whether to send Hendrix to trial. The Gazette typically does not identify accusers in sexual assault cases.

The Hendrix case is one of two sexual assault incidents announced by academy leaders last week.

On Monday, the academy said a planned hearing in the other case, against sophomore cadet Zachery L. Chubb, has been postponed. Chubb was charged last month with abusive sexual contact and sexual assault on allegations that he fondled a female cadet.

Witnesses Monday testified that Hendrix and the woman lounged together on a dormitory bed before the alleged incident. Two others were in the room, but had fallen asleep when the alleged incident took place, witnesses said.

"I remember waking up to hear her crying," testified witness Anne Marie Acevedo, a freshman cadet.

## **Local Officials Sign Sexual Assault Proclamation**

(14 Apr.) *Pensacola News Journal*, By Marketta Davis

The Plaza de Luna fountain glowed teal green Thursday as local officials gathered to sign a joint proclamation in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Prevention Month. Community leaders' mutual participation in the ceremony emphasized community involvement and support of the nationwide recognition of the month.

"I think so many women, and men, out of fear don't report what's going on a lot of the time," Hayward said.

It's because of this fear, he explained, that it's so important for local officials to step forward and let citizens know their community leaders are here for any support they need.

Acevedo said Hendrix was no longer in the room when the woman recounted what had happened.

"She said Cadet Hendrix had touched her," Acevedo testified.

Hendrix didn't testify Monday, but a friend who was in the room with him that night did.

Freshman cadet Andrew Kwateng said Hendrix and the woman seemed to be having a good time and were snuggling on her bed under a blanket. Kwateng also awoke to find Hendrix gone and the woman crying. Romance in the dormitories and sleeping in the dorm rooms of others are forbidden by academy regulations.

Determining whether there's evidence of a crime is up to Maj. Michael Thieme, who will have more than Monday's sparse testimony to draw from. Thieme, who will issue a recommendation to academy leaders on how to proceed with the case, will review case reports and witness statements gathered by the Air Force Office of Special Investigation as well as a lengthy video recording of Hendrix's interview with OSI agents.

Prosecutors said Thieme has ample evidence to render a decision.

But defense attorneys, who argued that the woman consented to Hendrix, say "There are obvious holes, even at this early stage," Ingram said.

<http://gazette.com/witness-refuses-to-testify-in-alleged-sex-assault-case-at-air-force-academy/article/1549615>

"We're just trying to be proactive as leaders and not reactive," Hayward said. "And to let victims know it's OK to tell somebody."

Hayward said while more women are reported as being sexually abused than men, sexual assault happens to everyone. Today more than ever in 2015, he said, people aren't as afraid to go out and speak about what's happened to them.

"I think when leaders come together, we genuinely mean it - we want you to come out and tell people what's going on because people need to be heard," Hayward said. "And I think most importantly: (they need to know) they're not alone. I think once a victim knows they're not alone, that it's happened

to people they know personally, that makes it that much easier to deal with."

Also included in the proclamation signing was Escambia District 3 County Commissioner Lumon May, Pensacola Police Chief Chip Simmons, Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan and Pensacola Naval Air Station Commanding Officer Capt. Keith Hoskins.

Hoskins said Pensacola NAS officials had a Sexual Assault Awareness Prevention Month joint proclamation signing last week on the base, including leadership from all military branches and to have another signing for everyone, military and civilian alike, was just as special.

"We in the military have made great strides in addressing the issue of sexual assault," Hoskins said.

The military also now teaches bystander invention, according to Hoskins, to engage the strength of numbers by preventing sexual assault from occurring.

"We take care of our victims with a very robust system," he said. "It's a 24/7, 365 capacity of advocacy, also specially trained victim legal counsel members, and investigators and dedicated personnel within each and every command on board NAS Pensacola."

#### 4 Reasons Not To Resign Your Commission As A Naval Officer

(14 Apr.) U.S. Naval Institute, By LT Roger Misso

LT Anna Granville recently wrote what may become the junior officer blog article of the year over at Task and Purpose. Titled, "4 Reasons I Am Resigning My Commission as a Naval Officer," it is succinct and powerful insight into why some high-performing officers decide to leave after their minimum service commitment. And it took some guts to write. Her piece resonates with anyone who has ever been frustrated by the large, immovable object that is the Navy. A one-size-fits-all promotion process, long deployments and frustrating dealings with personnel officers, lack of diversity and lack of control are all enough to make even the most active junior officers (JOs) ask, "Why isn't this changing?" And then, finally, "Why am I still doing this?"

While there is no blanket explanation that can cover every departing, high-performing junior officer, we do have statistics from the 2014 Navy Retention Study and a number of competing anecdotes that suggest the Navy is losing some of its best officers too soon. An improving economy, a perceived erosion of trust, and a bureaucratic bog are tilting the retention seesaw in the wrong direction.

But there is a counter-narrative: *junior officers can build the service we want*. We can only do this, however, by staying in long enough to see real change pushed through. Every officer who can articulate essential changes that must be made to the service, yet leaves that service in disgust, erodes a vibrant young officer corps whose challenge is to prepare to lead a service with common sense and courage. We must achieve critical mass in order to transplant our grassroots dialogue of today into tomorrow's occupants of Tingey House.

Why should we do this? Why stay in the service when the pull to leave is so strong? Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Admiral Bill Moran has been leading the way recently in championing a number of personnel issues and fixes. More work needs to

Each open case on Pensacola NAS is discussed monthly, Hoskins said, to insure the system is working. Officials also keep victims informed of the proceedings of their specific case and remain with them step-by-step throughout the entire process.

Simmons said the proclamation represented the city coming together to collectively promote awareness of sexual assault and make a pledge that it would not be tolerated.

"In law enforcement, we live and breathe statistics, how many cases are reported," Simmons said. "And what's so alarming is that 68 percent of sexual assaults aren't reported. So the numbers we have aren't even half of the problem. So it's important for us to get that message out, to let people know that this is what's taking place, and really to reflect on the impact that it has on, not just the victims, but on every member of our society."

"That's the important part – to stop the silence, to get the information out so that we can have a tomorrow free of sexual assault."

<http://www.pnj.com/story/news/military/2015/04/09/local-officials-sign-sexual-assault-proclamation/25544667/>

be done, but the message is clear: positive, constructive debate can lead to tangible change.

What follows is not a point-for-point refutation of LT Granville's arguments. But for those contemplating life beyond the minimum service requirement, they are four reminders of how to retain your commission without losing your sanity:

##### 1. You can't look to the system for validation.

Should the Navy promote people who are better pilots, better division officers, better platoon leaders, faster? That would be nice. But in as large an institution, would that look more like the Goldwater-Nichols efforts to force attainment of "joint" qualifications? I doubt the service needs more of that. It's true that, sometimes, it will seem like there are few rewards for standing the mid-watch for the umpteenth time or pouring your heart and soul into your job as a division officer or tactical operator. There will always be some who feel like they have been left by the wayside. We all have a story about that guy or girl who got some great ranking or billet; have all rolled our eyes after the millionth time someone has told us "timing is everything;" have all looked at our personnel record on NPC and wondered incredulously, "how long until I make O-4?"

Many of the rewards of hard-work are not tangible, such as the safety of a country that continues to enjoy unadulterated freedom. But there are many ways to get rewarded for other efforts complementary to service. Pilots have it a bit easier with scoring and competition for the "Top Hook" award. But everyone has access to forums such as USNI's Proceedings, which pays authors per publication, and other Naval Institute essay contests which award thousands of dollars for literary achievement. Still others find fulfillment in volunteer work

through the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Semper Fi Fund, or Fisher House.

In the end, Joe Byerly says it best: “[While] I’m extremely passionate about the military profession, it doesn’t define me.” Those who look in the mirror and see only Ensign or Lieutenant or Commander have lost something of themselves. Don’t forget to leave your own mark on the service and live with purpose.

### 2. You’re pretty damn good at your job, right?

Few people join the military to be “just OK” at what they do. At some point, many think, “I’m going to be the best.” Some want to be the best operators, some the best strategists, some the best leaders. If this thought has crossed your mind, and you believe that you are good at what you do, why would you leave the service and allow someone who isn’t the best to take your place? You are part of a profession; you are allowed to take pride in that.

I know a lot of junior officers will roll their eyes here, and that’s fine. A lot of them rolled their eyes before the lead up to moments like Operation Praying Mantis, the terrorist attacks of September 11th, and the recent rapid re-location of the George HW Bush Carrier Strike Group in response to extremists, too. Success in those trying times was due largely to the right people in the right positions. Cynicism may have plenty of reasons to the contrary, but without good people, we are nothing.

Luckily, the Navy is full of incredible officers and operators. Is your departure likely to cause systemic failure? Probably not. But this is the same logic people use when they say, “I won’t vote because I’m just one person, and my vote doesn’t matter.” I’d hate to see what critical mass here looks like.

### 3. Diversity of perspective matters.\*

Certainly, there are those who believe that junior officers are best seen, and not heard; but those people are in the minority. And while it may sometimes feel like a tyranny of the minority, there is absolutely a place for constructive, positive, intellectual work in the Navy. Consider the Naval Institute one of the finest examples; then look to CIMSEC and across the military to The Bridge, War on the Rocks, Task and Purpose

## March courts-martial results announced

(16 Apr.) *Navy Times*

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

### NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON

#### General courts-martial

\* In Washington, D.C., Cryptologic Technician (Interpretive) 2nd Class David Welch was tried for sexual assault and abusive sexual contacts. On March 9 a panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to abusive sexual contacts and

(where Granville’s piece was published), Defense Entrepreneur’s Forum, and so many other places.

James Fallows recently tried to peg the military as “anti-intellectual.” It was naval junior officers who stood up to him and said, “Not so fast.” The Naval War College and Postgraduate School remain highly sought-after institutions around the world. And the emergence of the Military Writers Guild is an encouraging sign that, as you are writing, thinking, and starting to “do,” other people are going to have your back.

### 4. The only way to steer the boat is to keep your hand on the tiller.

Ronald Reagan once said, “When you’re up to your neck in alligators, it’s easy to forget you came here to drain the swamp.” Ultimately, unless you are going to get out and pursue a career in elected office or the policy realm, you cannot effect change on tough issues until you are willing to endure the pain of seeing those changes through.

Too many junior officers depart the service in frustration with specific critiques, only to get lost in a new civilian career that is equally challenging and often stultifying. There are a few who lob in mortars from the valley, but the JO(ret) contingent is largely silent here on this blog and around the naval ‘net. Neale Donald Walsh once wrote, “Whatever you desire for yourself, give to another.” If you love your job – and if you’re good at it – then leaving the service because you’re too frustrated with its policies just means that those policies will likely endure, and the service will suffer. Your departure, while poignant, is not as impactful as your voice and your persistence.

There is no dishonor in changing careers. There is more than one way to serve the nation; we need good people on our warships and airplanes, but also in our hospitals, boardrooms, and classrooms, too. If this is where you find your passion, then that’s where your country needs you.

But the only way for fighting lieutenants to become fighting admirals and generals is to persevere, to recognize the consequences of dissonance, and to continue the fight. You don’t have to fight alone, and the longer we fight together, the better the future will be.

<http://blog.usni.org/2015/04/14/4-reasons-not-to-resign-your-commission-as-a-naval-officer>

sentenced him to a dishonorable discharge and confinement for one year.

\* In Washington, D.C., Cryptologic Technician (Networks) 3rd Class Alexander Knowles was tried for aggravated assaults. On March 19 a panel of members returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge and confinement for three years.

#### Special court-martial

\* In Washington, D.C., an E-6 was tried for absence without leave, disobeying a petty officer, false official statement and

disorderly conduct. On March 12 a panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

## **Navy Region Mid-Atlantic**

### **General courts-martial**

\* In Norfolk, Capt. Richard Frey pleaded guilty to misuse of a government computer. On March 3 the military judge sentenced him to forfeit \$1,500 a month for 12 months and confinement for 30 days.

\* In Norfolk, Electronics Technician 3rd Class Rashad Long pleaded guilty to rape and attempted rape, sexual assault, abusive sexual contact and sexual harassment. On March 6 the military judge sentenced him to a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 19 years.

\* In Norfolk, an E-4 was tried for sexual assault and abusive sexual contact. On March 20 a panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

### **Special courts-martial**

\* In Norfolk, Quartermaster Seaman Matthew Cottom pleaded guilty to wearing unauthorized ribbons, insignia and awards. On March 11 the military judge sentenced him to forfeit one-half month's pay for two months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 45 days.

\* In Norfolk, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Tracey Johns pleaded guilty to unauthorized absence, dereliction of duty and larceny of government property. On March 12 the military judge sentenced her to a bad conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-4 and confinement for 120 days.

\* In Norfolk, Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Launch/Recovery-Equipment) 1st Class Eric Strickland was tried for violation of a general order and abusive sexual contact. On March 18 the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced him to a reprimand, reduction in rank to paygrade E-3 and confinement for 60 days.

\* In Norfolk, an E-5, was tried for wrongful use of a controlled substance. On March 26 a panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

\* In Norfolk, Operations Specialist 3rd Class Dominique Coleman pleaded guilty to assault consummated by a battery. On March 30 the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-3 and confinement for 30 days.

\* In Groton, Connecticut, Information Systems Technician 3rd Class Arthur Perez pleaded guilty to assaults consummated by battery, and adultery. On March 31 the military judge

sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for nine months.

\* In Norfolk, Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Aviation Handling) 2nd Class Raymond Saccoccia pleaded guilty to wrongful use of controlled substances. On March 31 a panel of members sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-4, restriction for two months and hard labor for two months.

## **NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST**

### **Special courts-martial**

\* In Pensacola, Florida, Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 2nd Class Shaneya Acker pleaded guilty to making a false official statement and larceny of government property. On March 24 the military judge sentenced her to a reduction in rank to paygrade E-3, a fine of \$1,000 and restriction for 60 days.

\* In Pensacola, Chief Cryptologic Technician (Collection) Garrick Washington pleaded guilty to fraternization and misuse of a government computer. On March 25 the military judge sentenced him to a reprimand, forfeiture of \$1800 per month for 1 month, reduction in rank to paygrade E-6, and restriction for 30 days.

## **NAVY REGION NORTHWEST**

### **General court-martial**

\* In Bremerton, Washington, an E-3 was tried for sexual assault. On March 25 a panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

### **Special court-martial**

\* In Bremerton, Machinist's Mate 1st Class Jason Jacobi pleaded guilty to assault consummated by a battery. On March 26 the military judge sentenced him to forfeit \$1,000 a month for two months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-5 and confinement for 10 days.

## **NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST**

### **General court-martial**

\* In San Diego, Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Darrius Thomas pleaded guilty to wrongful use of controlled substances and indecent visual recording. On March 23 the military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge and confinement for 25 months.

### **Special courts-martial**



\* In San Diego, Navy Counselor 1st Class Nikki Fellers was tried for drunken operation of vehicle. On March 3 a panel of members returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced her to a reprimand and restriction for 30 days.

\* In San Diego, Engineman 3rd Class Patrick Lowe III pleaded guilty to unauthorized absence. On March 20 the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-2 and confinement for 50 days.

\* In San Diego, Engineman 2nd Class Jason Idanan was tried for abusive sexual contact. On March 31 a panel of members returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 6 months.

\* In San Diego, Electronics Technician 2nd Class Jesse Case pleaded guilty to larceny. On March 31 the military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge and confinement for 40 days.

## NAVY REGION HAWAII

### General court-martial

\* In Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Lt. j.g. Gustavo Hernandez pleaded guilty to fraternization and obstruction of justice. On March 4 the military judge sentenced him to a dismissal, a letter of reprimand and to forfeit all pay and allowances.

## Former Fort Drum commander named in West Point sexual hostility case

*(15 Apr.) Watertown Daily News, By Gordon Block*

A former commander of Fort Drum, retired Lt. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck, is one of two people named in a suit claiming officials knowingly permitted rampant sexual hostility toward women at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

According to a report from Reuters, U.S. District Judge Alvin Hellerstein in Manhattan allowed the case by a former female cadet, anonymously referred to as "Jane Doe," to proceed against Gen. Hagenbeck, the academy's superintendent from 2006 to 2010, and Maj. Gen. William E. Rapp, a former commandant of cadets who now leads the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pa.

The judge dismissed claims against the U.S. government.

## New Parent Program Supports Child Development Needs

*(15 Apr.) DoD News, By Amaani Lyle*

WASHINGTON – For many new or expecting parents, the stress of navigating the needs and developmental milestones of an infant or toddler can rival that of deployments. But a well-established program not only provides many resources to help untangle the parental requirements of understanding the critical first three years of a child's life, but also brings child care experts right into military families'

## Special court-martial

\* In Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Fire Controlman 3rd Class Jeffrey Dawana pleaded guilty to assault consummated by a battery and obstruction of justice. On March 17 the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-2 and confinement for 60 days.

## NAVY REGION JAPAN

### Special court-martial

\* In Yokosuka, Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Zane Bixby pleaded guilty to assault consummated by a battery. On March 6 the military judge sentenced him to a written reprimand, forfeiture of \$1,500 for one month and confinement for 15 days.

## NAVY REGION EUROPE, AFRICA AND SOUTHWEST ASIA

### Special court-martial

\* In Sigonella, Italy, Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Derek Shepler pleaded guilty to adultery. On March 10 the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-3, confinement for 30 days and restriction for 30 days.  
<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/04/15/special-general-courts-martial-results-march/25832281/>

Gen. Hagenbeck led Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division from August 2001 to August 2003.

The case stems from a claim by the cadet that a male cadet had forced, nonconsensual sex with her, and that a culture of sexual violence and gender discrimination was furthered by Gens. Hagenbeck and Rapp.

Representatives for West Point and Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara declined to comment to Reuters about the case.  
<http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/news03/former-fort-drum-commander-named-in-west-point-sexual-hostility-case-20150415>

homes, Barbara Thompson, director of DoD's Office of Family Readiness Policy, said in a recent DoD News interview. April is the Month of the Military Child. Sponsored by the Family Advocacy Program, the New Parent Support Program is DoD's secondary prevention resource designed for Army, Air Force and Navy parents who have a

child under age 3 and Marine Corp parents with a child under age 5.

### **Expert Home Visitors**

The program, Thompson explained, sheds light on fostering healthy child development through scheduled home visitation by licensed, trained child care professionals.

“It’s a special program for military families, because for the most part, they’re away from their extended family and bringing a new child into the world can be scary,” she said.

“We want to make sure they have all the information and resources available to them to make that smooth transition into parenthood and support the child in his or her growth and development.”

The program aims to ensure children have the opportunity for safe and healthy relationship building with their parents.

“We know that attachment is a critical piece of the first year of a child’s development,” Thompson said. “We want to make sure that’s firmly formed, because it has a huge impact on how they build trust with other people.”

Similarly, the program also helps to ensure that parents can leverage its resources on behalf of their children as they prepare them for school, Thompson said.

Qualified nurses and social workers use their extensive understanding of babies and parenting to create stronger relationships between parents and their young children. Word of mouth has helped to increase the program’s popularity, Thompson said.

“Parents who have the support of that home visitor share that opportunity and how that person has [facilitated] their attempts to learn how to read their baby’s cues and to respond to their baby in a positive way,” she added.

### **The First Three Years**

Research has indicated that protective factors are critical in a child’s early development, particularly in the first three years of life, she said.

“We want to make sure that parents are equipped with those skills [and have] the opportunity for a strong attachment,”

## **U.S. Navy Command Culture Builds Respect And Trust To Lead The Way In Sexual Assault Prevention**

*(15 Apr.) Navy Live Blog, By Capt. Karl O. Thomas*

Over my 29 years in our Navy, I’ve experienced several major cultural shifts to include women’s roles and responsibilities, a focus on fitness, smoking cessation, widespread acceptance of sexual orientation and most recently sexual assault awareness and prevention.

These cultural changes in our Navy often preceded societal changes, and typical ingredients to success were awareness, education, standards and enforcement. Underpinning each of these traditional ingredients and their success is positive command culture and climate. In my experience, creating a culture of transparency, open communication, and clear expectations helps build trust.

*Sailors that trust their command to handle issues and discipline fairly and swiftly will be more likely to bring forward and report difficult issues like sexual assault.*

Commands that build trust and respect up and down the chain will have shipmates that have the courage to step up and to intervene. Trust and intervention are key ingredients to

Thompson said, “and that [they’re] aware of child and youth development and the different stages and temperaments that children go through.”

Homes visitors service all components both on and off installations, as long as they’re in a status with access to a military treatment facility, Thompson said. Parents also can seek assistance from family support centers, which facilitate support groups, playgroups, prenatal classes and peer-to-peer exchanges related to children’s growth and development. Home visitors pledge confidentiality, Thompson noted, unless there’s cause for concern pertaining to reportable incidents of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. She acknowledged the range of emotions associated with new parenthood and the virtues of having access to experts who can provide invaluable and preventative advice.

“[They can] listen to your needs, reinforce what’s normal and know that it’s OK to feel certain things,” she said.

### **A Supportive Partnership**

The home visitor program, Thompson said, is a supportive partnership, with appointments parents can schedule at their convenience.

“They’re not there to judge or inspect to make sure your dishes are washed. ... They’re there to help you learn about your baby,” she said.

The New Parent Support Program, the Military OneSource online resource, family support centers and family advocacy programs are fundamental Defense Department investments in enriching the growth of both parents and children, Thompson said.

“Parents are children’s most important teachers,” she added, “so if they’re modeling the right vocabulary, reading to their children and providing healthy snacks for their child -- those things are going to be ingrained in that child for their future.”

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=128590&source=GovDelivery>

preventing sexual assault, and they are cultivated by command culture and climate.

As we continue Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, it is worth reflecting on these ingredients and assessing our success as a command and a Navy.

**Awareness.** Over the past three years, the Navy has dramatically changed awareness of sexual assault and prevention. Whether we like it or not, sexual assaults and inappropriate harassment have always occurred. The major development is that now as a Navy we talk openly about it; we measure it; our Sailors are on the look out for it; and clear lines have been established regarding what is acceptable or consensual, and what is assault. We have made great strides in awareness.

**Education.** Sailors are educated at boot camp and at command indoctrination. Bystander intervention is a term understood by all and is synonymous with being a good shipmate – a shipmate that has the courage to intervene. We

have a strong program to educate our victim advocates so that they can rapidly and effectively assist victims. Over the past three years, we have focused our effort on raising education across the board and our Sailors are much smarter on the topic of sexual assault. Successful commands embrace and nurture this education.

**Standards.** Clear standards have been established across the Department of Defense. The only intangible that often clouds sexual assault is alcohol. Unfortunately, alcohol is an ingredient in too many sexual assaults.

**Enforcement.** There is no better way to prevent sexual assault than demonstrating strict adherence to the legal process. The legal process is enhanced when the enforcement is swift and fair. Unfortunately, this is not always achievable due to the strain that has been placed on our investigative and judicial resources. Fortunately, as we add more resources and sexual assault and prevention response education and awareness take hold, we will continue to reduce the time it takes to fairly adjudicate sexual assaults – a benefit to both alleged victims and offenders.

**Trust and Respect.** By our very nature and warfighting ethos, most of us are trusting individuals. Our job and close living conditions demand it. Strong commands have trust up and down the chain. Peers that work hard and play hard together earn each other's trust. Peers that trust and respect one another

will step up and intervene when they see or experience something inappropriate. When this trust is violated and a sexual assault occurs, the trust that has been built within the command will often determine whether a sexual assault is reported (and many sexual assaults unfortunately go unreported).

Although we have received great scrutiny in Congress about our handling of sexual assaults, I contend that the Navy is in front of society on this widespread societal issue. We have the structure and framework for success in place and have educated our work force – a young work force demographic that mimics colleges across America.'

*Just like racism of the 60's, drug abuse of the 70's, women equality of the 80's, tobacco cessation of the 90's, and fitness enhancement of the 00's, we will continue to lead society and make great progress in sexual assault prevention this decade.* We have a leg up on society in that we have an intangible – command culture. Commands that build on a culture of respect and trust will lead the way in sexual assault prevention.

*Capt. Karl O. Thomas is Commanding Officer, USS Carl Vinson. (CVN 70)*

<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2015/04/15/u-s-navy-command-culture-builds-respect-and-trust-to-lead-the-way-in-sexual-assault-prevention/>

## Army morale low despite 6-year, \$287M optimism program

(16 Apr.) *Military Times*, By Gregg Zoroya

More than half of some 770,000 soldiers are pessimistic about their future in the military and nearly as many are unhappy in their jobs, despite a six-year, \$287 million campaign to make troops more optimistic and resilient, findings obtained by USA TODAY show.

Twelve months of data through early 2015 show that 403,564 soldiers, or 52%, scored badly in the area of optimism, agreeing with statements such as "I rarely count on good things happening to me." Forty-eight percent have little satisfaction in or commitment to their jobs.

The results stem from resiliency assessments that soldiers are required to take every year. In 2014, for the first time, the Army pulled data from those assessments to help commanders gauge the psychological and physical health of their troops.

The effort produced startlingly negative results. In addition to low optimism and job satisfaction, more than half reported poor nutrition and sleep, and only 14% said they are eating right and getting enough rest.

The Army began a program of positive psychology in 2009 in the midst of two wars and as suicide and mental illness were on the rise. To measure resiliency the Army created a confidential, online questionnaire that all soldiers, including the National Guard and Reserve, must fill out once a year.

Last year, Army scientists applied formulas to gauge service-wide morale based on the assessments. The results demonstrate that positive psychology "has not had much impact in terms of overall health," says David Rudd, president of the University of Memphis who served on a scientific panel critical of the resiliency program.

The Army offered contradictory responses to the findings obtained by USA TODAY. Sharyn Saunders, chief of the Army Resiliency Directorate that produced the data, initially disavowed the results. "I've sat and looked at your numbers for quite some time and our team can't figure out how your numbers came about," she said in an interview in March.

However, when USA TODAY provided her the supporting Army documents this week, her office acknowledged the data but said the formulas used to produce them were obsolete. "We stand by our previous responses," it said in a statement.

Subsequent to USA TODAY's inquiry, the Army calculated new findings but lowered the threshold for a score to be a positive result. As a consequence, for example, only 9% of 704,000 score poorly in optimism.

The Army said the effort to use the questionnaire results to gauge morale Army-wide is experimental. "We continue to refine our methodologies and threshold values to get the most accurate results possible," it said in the statement.

The Army's effort to use positive psychology to make soldiers more resilient has been controversial since its inception in 2009. A blue-ribbon panel of scientists from the Institute of Medicine, part of the National Academy of Sciences, concluded last year that there is little or no evidence the program prevents mental illness. It argued there was no effort to test its efficacy before the Army embraced it. The panel cited research arguing that, in fact, the program could be harmful if it leaves soldiers with a false sense of resiliency.

The Army disputed the findings, pushing ahead with its positive psychology program that now costs more than \$50 million a year. At least 2.45 million soldiers have taken a self-assessment test that is a crucial part of the resiliency program, and 28,000 GIs have been instructed on how to teach other soldiers the curriculum.

"The Army funds this program because the Army values the lives of soldiers and wants to instill skills and competencies that will enhance their connections, relationships and ability to mitigate stressors and exercise help seeking behaviors through their life," says an Army statement released last month.

But the internal data obtained by USA TODAY shows most soldiers today trending in the wrong direction. Two-thirds were borderline or worse for an area called "catastrophic thinking," where poor scores mean the soldier has trouble adapting to change or dwells on the worst possible things happening.

Other results:

-- Forty-eight percent or about 370,000 soldiers showed a lack of commitment to their job or would have chosen another if

they had it to do over again. Only 28% felt good about what they do.

-- About 300,000 soldiers or nearly 40% didn't trust their immediate supervisor or fellow soldiers in their unit or didn't feel respected or valued. Thirty-two percent felt good about about bosses and peers.

-- In one positive trend, more than 400,000 soldiers or 53% said they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their marriage, personal relationship or family. About 240,000 expressed dissatisfaction.

-- For physical fitness, nearly 40% were in good shape, 28% were borderline, and 33% did poorly.

Retired vice admiral Norb Ryan, head of the Military Officers Association of America, and Joyce Raezer, executive of the National Military Family Association, said the results are not surprising. Fourteen years of war and recent decisions to downsize or cut funding for the military have left morale low, they said.

A recent survey by the *Military Times* and a Navy Retention Study also show troops increasingly unhappy.

Saunders defended the Army resiliency program, known officially as Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness, as an effort that has resonated with soldiers. "When we talk to soldiers, soldiers tell us about the life changes they've had," she says.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/news/nation/2015/04/16/army-survey-morale/24897455/>

## **Sisters make it through enlisted Marine infantry training**

(11 Apr.) *Marine Corps Times*, By Hope Hodge Seck  
It all started with a lucky visit to Smoothie King.

Sgt. Zonell Westfield, a Marine recruiter, prided himself on being able to find future Marines everywhere, and when he saw 18-year-old Kendra Hazelwood working behind the counter on a fall day in 2013, he couldn't resist handing her a business card.

"I've got the eye for a Marine," he told her.

That exchange would set off a chain of events that would result in what appears to be a historic first for the Marine Corps: two sisters successfully completing enlisted infantry training as part of a small group of female volunteers given that opportunity. Kendra accomplished this in the fall of 2014. Her older sister, Chelsa Hazelwood, graduated from Infantry Training Battalion on March 19.

Three weeks after Westfield's visit to Smoothie King, Kendra Hazelwood walked into his recruiting office in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

"I've been looking at your card every day," she said, according to Westfield. "I can't stop thinking about it."

It was those moments that made all the pressures and frustrations of recruiting worthwhile, Westfield said.

"I tell [the recruiters I train], 'You can't be afraid. You've got to go out there, and you've got to ask everybody because you never know,'" he said. "When [Kendra] walked in there that day, just all that hard work and getting turned down, it made up for all that."

A CrossFit athlete in peak physical condition, Kendra, now a lance corporal, said she had always harbored a dream of being a Marine. When she took her Initial Strength Test at the recruiting station, it became clear she wasn't just any recruit.

With an 11-minute mile-and-half run, 85-second flexed-arm hang, and 144 crunches, she was the fittest woman ever to take the test at that station. A year and a half later, her name is still on the station's "hall of fame" board as the women's record holder — in every single fitness category.

Kendra said she was determined to take the toughest route available to her.

"I'd rather be in the suck than sitting back doing nothing," she told Marine Corps Times via email.

During her two months in the Delayed Entry Program, Kendra said she discovered there were still opportunities for women to attend Infantry Training Battalion at Camp Johnson, North Carolina, on a volunteer basis.

"I thought it was awesome to get to train with 0300 combat vets," she said. "They push you 110 percent everyday. We all should train like that."

And while Kendra was getting ready for boot camp, her sister Chelsa, 21, was on her own journey. Chelsa, now a private first class, was a member of the volunteer fire department in Murfreesboro, she said, and expected to make firefighting her career.

"I didn't fully make up my mind to join the military until January of 2014 [when Kendra started recruit training]," she said. "But seeing the transformation in my sister after she graduated boot camp and the camaraderie she had gained with the other Marines, it made my decision to become a Marine very easy."

At the recruiting station, Westfield had already met and chatted with Chelsa during family 'welcome aboard' briefs during Kendra's enlistment. Staff Sgt. Steven Kalchik, the station's manager, told Westfield he could expect to see Chelsa again.

"When Kendra comes back from boot camp graduation, Chelsa is going to want to be a Marine," Kalchik told him.

And she did. Chelsa, who said she and her sister have always been very close and competitive, enlisted in June 2014. It was clear from the outset that she, too, would volunteer for the infantry track.

"I just remember thinking how awesome it would be to train alongside the infantry," she said. "I thought it would be

awesome to shoot mortars, so I put 0341 [mortarman] on my 'wish list' once we started training."

The sisters cycled through infantry training separately. Kendra arrived at ITB in August 2014 and Chelsa in January of this year. For Chelsa, there was an added level of support: Since Kendra had already entered the fleet and was working as a combat engineer at Camp Lejeune's 8th Engineer Support Battalion, she could pick Chelsa up on the weekends after training.

Both sisters faced similar challenges during the strenuous eight-week ITB course, including injuries that threatened their progress along the way. Kendra began the course with a foot injury that made it difficult to run or even stand with a pack. She secured her full-duty chit just an hour before she was due to start with ITB's Bravo Company, she said. The three miles she ran in the course's initial physical fitness test were the first she had been able to run in three months. But she did it.

Chelsa began to feel the physical strain closer to the end of the course, when her company prepared to complete a grueling 20-kilometer hike with packs. She had a twisted ankle, shin splints and hip pain, but she wasn't about to quit.

"I just had to mentally push myself to keep hiking no matter the discomfort," she said.

Despite the pain, both sisters said they enjoyed the challenge of the course and the thrill of doing something only about 240 other female Marines accomplished.

"I would describe it as one of the best times of my life," Kendra said. "Waking up not knowing what kind of hellish PT or training you'll be doing made me eager for the next day. It was as difficult as I'd imagined, but such a wonderful experience made all of the pain worth it."

For Chelsa, ITB taught her to "remember that the suck doesn't last forever, and it makes liberty so much sweeter," she said.

Westfield said he never doubted the sisters would complete the training.

"I knew they were going to make it," he said. "It makes me very proud, even considering that they followed in my footsteps and both became engineers. There aren't words that can really describe it. It shows their upbringing and their character."

And he is still on good terms with the Hazelwoods' parents, he said, who were surprised to have two daughters enlist, but proud to see them make the journey. After Chelsa graduated from ITB last month, she headed to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, to begin engineer equipment operator training.

Both sisters say they would volunteer to serve in ground combat units if they open up to women in the future. But even though they didn't earn an infantry military occupational specialty at the end of their hard work, Kendra and Chelsa said they were grateful for the journey.

Surviving the rigors of boot camp and infantry training has only made the sisters closer, they said.

## **VCNO Michelle Howard pushes for cyber vigilance, more women in the ranks**

*(12 Apr.) Navy Times, By Sam Fellman*

The Navy's No. 2 officer is leading a push to get more women into commands across the service. Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michelle Howard, a surface warfare officer, believes women should make up a quarter of every command, a tipping point where women will be a big enough presence to foster a command that supports women and is resistant to stereotyping.

Howard knows this issue closely. She was in the third co-ed Annapolis class when she graduated in 1982, and had the experience of being one of the few women in the wardroom. She moved up the ranks and became the first black woman to command a U.S. Navy warship. Howard, who is the Navy's first female four-star admiral, wants to ensure the service does everything it can to keep talented, career-focused women in the ranks.

Howard is also working to raise awareness of cyber warfare and the dangers of cyber intrusion that can be only one email away.

Howard spoke to Navy Times in her Pentagon office March 18. Questions and answers have been edited for brevity.

**Q.** Some say the Navy has a problem retaining women, who disproportionately leave mid-career. What do you think about this trend, and what do you tell women who are on the fence about staying in versus family needs or wanting to pursue alternate career and educational paths?

**A.** When you look at patterns for women enlisted, there is a little bit of a drop off after that first enlistment, but then the pattern stays pretty much the same until 20 years. There's a dividing line I think that comes with whatever additional responsibilities officers have.

Forty-six percent of the labor workforce is female in this country, and we make up fifty-one percent of the population. You have parents making these decisions of who's going to be the primary breadwinner, who's going to be the secondary breadwinner, are they going to be co-breadwinners, and then how do you raise these great citizens? They're actually facing the same choices and challenges that their civilian counterparts have. I think where we can be helpful is, if we want to retain folks where that is going to be their focus, a

"We joke around and say that we're double the sisters now," Chelsa said. "Sisters by blood and sisters by Corps. We've definitely grown an awesome bond through us both experiencing ITB and now us both in the engineer field. I'm really happy to have my best friend to look up to and to share this journey with."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/careers/marine-corps/2015/04/11/sisters-make-it-through-marine-infantry-training/25403629/>

primary focus of their life, we've got to make sure that childcare is [more] available for a broader number of hours. We've got to look at career paths that focus less on timing and focus more on milestones. When we have a need, we'll eliminate age caps. If we need you as a healthcare professional, and you're a surgeon with specific skills, we'll say, we're really okay with the fact that you're not 30.

**Q.** What are your priorities as the VCNO?

**A.** I told the CNO there were two things of interest where I thought I could make progress: gender integration and cyber culture.

Gender integration is about, do we have the right policies in place, do we have the right ratio of women for our organization to have normalized command climates?

Some of our ships are modified to have about 10 percent of women on board. Some of them are up to over 50 percent of women on board. But when you think about what's the right percentage you want to have in order to have a command climate that better mimics what you see socially, there's probably a threshold. We probably ought to get to at least 25 percent women on every unit. When we went gender neutral in our detailing, we said, 'You're quartermaster, you go here. There's a billet and bunk for you. You go there.' We still have to pay more attention to the percentage of women we're putting in these units and start working our way to w[here] we don't have units that have very few women. We pay attention to it, so that we don't inadvertently isolate women in some places.

**Q.** In terms of 25 percent at most commands, how many years do you think that would take?

**A.** You don't want to just rip people, men or women, out of sea billets to make this happen. It would probably have to be a four-year to five-year plan to start making sure that all of our ships have the berthing and then start working our way up in percentages. But like any valuable journey, you've just got to start and do it.

**Q.** You were one of the first women in your wardrooms. What do you take from that experience?

A. The numbers matter when you're talking about integration. When you have small numbers, you will always probably be dealing with accusations of tokenism. It's hard to get past stereotype filters because there are not enough for the dominate group to go, 'Oh, everybody is kind of different. I can take each one one-on-one.' You've got to get to some sort of critical mass when you're talking affinity groups and you're talking gender for relationships that are akin to the relationships that you see in your hometown. Really, it's not whether it's the Navy. It could be a research department at a company. If you don't have the right numbers, then you don't get past a lot of these challenging issues for people to be successful.

Q. What are your focuses for cyber?

A. My perspective is that everyone is the cyber, active, reserve, and civilians. We operate and live in this domain. There's not a person in the Department of the Navy who probably doesn't have a desktop, doesn't deal with Microsoft products, Excel spreadsheets, databases, transference of data, email, and so we are all in this domain.

We have within this domain some folks who are key specialists on the hardware side if you're like an IT-man or an information professional. And so we do have cryptologists ... and intelligence folks. Tenth Fleet [U.S. Fleet Cyber Command] says they've got about 5,000 [cyber] folks who work for them. We, like the other services, are growing our cyber-mission teams — about 1,700 folks. In the end, everybody has to understand: They're in this domain. It's like damage control [personnel qualifications] on the ship.

Q. I'd imagine cyber can be a special challenge today, with more sailors having smart phone access aboard ship or at work. How are the Navy's workplace rules catching up to this?

A. Like any other workplace, we have rule sets with which the sailors are supposed to comply. You have a certain rule set,

information that you can't post on social media, you don't expose work. We have certain locations where sailors can leave or go and do that, so we've sort of physically segmented by time and location what and where sailors can do.

We're going to have to start becoming more sophisticated. I'm really excited about MCPON [Mike Stevens'] pilot project, where we're just going to go ahead and issue these tablets to the sailors. We've got to figure out how to leverage the strengths of this domain and start managing opportunity and behavior through software and through apps.

Q. If the pilot program to give tablet computers to recruits works, where do you see this initiative going?

A. We have got to come into the modern world. It's less about what does it mean for the Navy today than the sailors we're going to recruit. I spoke to a seventh-grade science technology engineering math class in Brunswick, Maine. They issue every student a laptop, and then they have a laptop when they go to school. Everything is there, homework, projects, parent's conferences. People can't say, 'I can't afford it.' Their child has a laptop. They live their lives electronically, which probably gives them a leg up for the modern workforce.

We are going to start having young adults grow up like this. Then we want to send them to boot camp in the Navy, where we're going to give them a green book and a pencil and we're going to say something like, 'Please write a letter home to your parents to tell them that you're okay,' when we ought be saying, 'Send an email or text them, and let them know you're okay.' Eventually the up-and-coming, potential sailors are going to look at us and go, 'My goodness. You guys are Fred Flintstone. I don't want to go work for an organization like that.' We have got to integrate ourselves into the way life has become.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/04/12/vcno-michelle-howard-cyber-vigilance-more-women-navy-ranks/70774264/>

## Inside the Army's effort to train and assess women for Ranger School

(13 Apr.) *The Washington Post*, By Dan Lamothe

FORT BENNING, Ga. — Forty-four U.S. soldiers lined up here in formation before dawn Saturday with one more major requirement left before they could attend the Army's elite Ranger School: A six-mile road march while hauling a rifle and 45 pounds of combat gear. It was one last test of wills through the winding hills and humidity of western Georgia. Mixed into the group were nine women who are part of a historic, one-time experiment in which female soldiers will attend Ranger School for the first time beginning April 20. The Army launched the effort to gather research and assess options following a Pentagon directive that requires women be integrated into more jobs in combat units by 2016. Any woman who graduates from Ranger School this spring will wear the service's prestigious Ranger Tab on her uniform, but

will not be assigned to the Ranger Regiment, which remains closed to women.

Before daylight arrived, eight of the nine women — and 31 men — completed the march, with several men and women doubled over in exhaustion by the end. It's all but assured that they will attend the grueling elite leadership course because it was the last event at which students are dropped for not meeting requirements, Army officials said. It means that up to 20 women could be part of the Ranger School class; 12 had previously qualified.

"The amount of genuine admiration and respect for anyone who raises their hand and says 'I want to give this a shot' is unquestioned," said Brig. Gen. James Rainey, the commandant of the Army Infantry School at Fort Benning.

“We all want more Rangers, and we all have a ton of respect for anyone who signs up, because a whole lot of people don’t.”

The Washington Post visited Fort Benning Friday and Saturday for a behind-the-scenes look at how women are being trained and evaluated for Ranger School. Army officials did not allow interviews with male or female students, but allowed The Post to join the march and observe other events.

The research is considered unwelcome and controversial by those who do not want women serving in units that have been all-male for generations. But the Pentagon is requiring the services to study what is possible and present requests for exception to the new policy favoring integration.

The Army announced in January that it was opening Ranger School as part of that research, and required that female volunteers first attend an existing 17-day preparatory course known as the Ranger Training and Assessment Course (RTAC). It’s run by the Army National Guard at Fort Benning, and attended by more than 5,000 prospective Ranger students annually.

Ranger School is not just for those who want to serve in the Army’s elite 75th Ranger Regiment. Its graduates include pilots, armor officers and a variety of other soldiers. The latest course, which began April 3, started with 139 students, including 61 women, said Lt. Col. Edmund “Beau” Riely, the battalion commander that runs the assessment. Of those women, 24 had attended at least one earlier assessment course, including six of the nine women who made it through to Saturday’s road march. Men also can take more than one RTAC, but typically do so in much smaller percentages. The assessment course tests many of the same skills that soldiers will need to get through Ranger School. Among the requirements are a 2.5-mile run on Day 2 that must be completed within 20 minutes, land navigation exercises on Days 3 through 7, and a combat water survival test and the Ranger physical fitness test on Day 8, one day before the road march. The Ranger fitness test demands at least 49 push-ups, 59-sit-ups, a five-mile run in under 40 minutes and six chin-ups.

Data gathered so far show both the strengths and weaknesses for of the women who participated. On average, female soldiers in RTAC have completed 39 push-ups, 10 less than required. But they have shown both competence and confidence in mission planning and while taking turns leading fellow troops, Riely said.

In 2014, about 1,100 soldiers went through RTAC, and 57 percent graduated, Riely said. By comparison, women have attempted an RTAC 138 times since they were opened, and are on pace to graduate 20. That’s just under 15 percent. The point of the assessment course isn’t too burn out the potential Ranger students, however, Riely said. Rest is built in, and these next few days before Ranger School won’t include any events like the march or a long run.

“We can destroy anybody physically, but that’s not why we’re here,” Riely said. “We’re here to get them ready for Ranger School.”

At the march, the soldiers moved out around 5 a.m., humidity hanging in the air following downpours overnight. Within minutes, sweat rolled down the faces of men and women alike, and the weakest performers began falling to the back of the pack, their boots dragging.

“Keep up! Don’t lose the group already!” older soldiers training the potential Rangers urged, marching with them. One of the trainers carried a blinking light on his backpack, serving as a pacing mechanism for those who had to pass. He was walking a brisk 15-minute pace, and anyone falling behind him was in trouble. Medics were positioned at the back of the march in case anyone got hurt.

The student who led the march was a woman. Perhaps 5 foot 3 and 120 pounds, she finished and counted those who remained at the end. After breakfast, the whole group moved on to an obstacle course with a variety of bars, ropes, walls and a 50-foot tower to climb. The soldiers worked in tandem in some events, helping each other climb, and some of the women performed as well as the men.

It will get more difficult in a week when Ranger School begins. The 62-day course is famously grueling, with about a 50 percent graduation rate overall.

More than 60 percent of service members who attempt the school fail in the first four days, during what is known as Ranger Assessment Phase, or “RAP Week.” It includes the same fitness test requirements that soldiers see in RTAC, as well as a 12-mile road march, a land-navigation exercise without GPS and a combat water survival test. One part of it calls for soldiers to climb a 35-foot tower, walk 70 feet across a log, “commando crawl” along a rope, and then drop 35 feet into the water.

About 75 percent of students who make it through RAP week eventually graduate, Ranger School officials say. But it can take months. Students can fail individual portions of Ranger School and get “recycled” into a later group.

The later phases of the course includes mountain warfare training at Camp Merrill, about 65 miles north of Atlanta in Dahlonega, Ga., and swamp training around Eglin Air Force Base on the Florida panhandle. The culminating events for those two phases are a rappel of more than 200 feet down a mountainside at night and a raid using small boats.

Students are evaluated by both peers and Ranger instructors. If an instructor is found to be grading women differently, it will be noticed and addressed, Army officials said.

Retired Col. Ralph Puckett, a legendary Ranger who earned Distinguished Service Crosses for valor in both Korea and Vietnam, said the peer evaluations in particular will be valuable and have been part of the process since the 1950s. “I think the peer report might be the most objective and the most nearly accurate assessment of a person’s leadership, because it comes from the people who are being led and have seen an individual under extreme stress,” Puckett said. Ranger instructors “can’t see everybody on every patrol the entire time, but the students know what is going on.”



<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/04/13/inside-the-armys-effort-to-train-and-assess-women-for->

[ranger-school/](#)

## Meet the women helping the Army as Ranger School takes on female soldiers

(14 Apr.) *The Washington Post*, By Dan Lamothe

FORT BENNING, Ga. — Before the Army announced it would take female students at Ranger School this spring, it sent an invitation to about 60 female soldiers. The offer: Come to this massive Army base in western Georgia and be part of the service’s research into which combat assignments should be opened to women.

They didn’t have a lot of time to decide, three of the 31 “observer-advisers” ultimately selected said in an interview Saturday. There was about a one week window to accept. “At first you had to take a step into the darkness,” said 1st Lt. Alessandra T. Kirby, a member of the Utah National Guard. “You had no idea what you were really applying for.”

The women chosen are now part of the Army’s historic one-time experiment to allow women to attend Ranger School in the course beginning April 20. Up to 20 women are set to qualify, including eight who made it through their last major requirement Saturday in 17-day preparatory course at Fort Benning.

The service launched the effort to research options following a Pentagon directive that requires women to be integrated into more jobs in combat units by 2016. Any woman who graduates from Ranger School this spring will wear the service’s prestigious Ranger Tab on her uniform, but will not be assigned to the Ranger Regiment, which remains closed to women.

The observer-advisers aren’t students in the course, but hand-selected soldiers brought on to offer suggestions to commanders and instructors at Ranger School — all men — on how to make the integration of women as seamless as possible. The service will not drop its standards for the famously grueling 62-day course, but some practical changes needed to be made to include female students, commanders and observer-advisers both said.

Col. David Fivecoat, commander of the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade, said the women were interviewed by Army officials also attempted numerous events involved in Ranger training before their selection. That includes the main events of the initial Ranger Assessment Phase, commonly known as “RAP Week.” It requires 49 push-ups, 59-sit-ups, a five-mile run in under 40 minutes and six chin-ups and other physical

demands, and is the spot at which about 60 percent of Ranger School students wash out.

The observer-advisers selected have a range of experience, they said. For example, Sgt. 1st Class Maria Duncan, a member of the Army Reserve who deployed to Iraq from 2005 to 2006, has served as a drill sergeant. Kirby went to quartermaster’s school and was an enlisted soldier first. First Lt. Tracy Ross is an intelligence analyst, and said she worked previously with Rangers while serving in support of the secretive Joint Special Operations Command based at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Duncan said the observer-advisers have made recommendations on logistical issues, like allowing birth control medications that women were already taking (students are not typically allowed to bring medication).

“When we have females and we have a male drill sergeant, sometimes that drill sergeant may want to back off a little bit and let the female drill sergeant handle it,” Duncan said, reflecting on her past experiences. “In this situation, everyone is the same. There is no male/female. They’re all Ranger students. So we need to make sure we conduct it the same way... So the standards need to remain the same, no matter what.”

The male and female students will sleep in one open barracks room with bunk beds. All men and women must wear a minimum of shorts and T-shirt at all times in the barracks, but the Army decided to keep them together because it wanted to build the same cohesion between male and female soldiers in Ranger School as it typically did in a single-sex environment. The women attempting Ranger School will not be graded by the observer-advisers. That process will remain the same as it has been for generations, with students evaluated by Ranger instructors and each other. Duncan said it was an easy decision to make the leap and join the assessment, though.

“Seeing this is history in the making,” she said of women attending Ranger School. “So why not be a part of that?”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/04/14/meet-the-women-helping-the-army-as-ranger-school-takes-on-female-soldiers/>

## It’s Time To Reevaluate Standards For Women In The Military

(16 Apr.) *Checkpoint Washington Post Blog*, By Dave Kelm, Jayne Lawlor and Nicole Martin

Last week, the Marine Corps announced the scheduled end of an 18-month experiment to vet females through its Infantry Officer Course. The results were bleak: 0 of 29 women made it past the three-month course. On April 20, the first females will attempt the Army’s elite Ranger training, and other combat schools are also now open to women on trial bases. The moves are part of the military’s efforts to comply with the lifting of the Combat Exclusion Policy, but such initiatives have been broadly criticized along the way.

Why the controversy? After all, then Defense Secretary Leon Panetta had the unanimous backing of the Joint Chiefs of Staff when he rescinded the ban in early 2013. Even Gen. James Amos, the former Marine Commandant who opposed the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” responded positively, saying that the Corps selected its warfighters “regardless of gender.”

The fact is that many rank-and-file leaders, both male and female, continue to oppose the change. Some arguments are technical, and focus on physical abilities or provisioning

logistics for two sexes. Other concerns are less tangible, like adverse effects to morale and discipline. Many simply contend that the new policy does not help the military win wars. But at issue here is not a mutiny in the ranks against the defense secretary; in fact, the services have until January 2016 to request exceptions to the policy. The problem is a disconcerting inability or unwillingness of the military's mid-level managers to dispassionately evaluate the subject. Many officers seem to prefer speculation and emotion to scientific research and reason. In a Washington Post op-ed, a proponent hypothesized that simply training men and women to one physical standard will equalize the sexes' physiological disparities – she has no medical background. An opponent countered in the Marine Corps Gazette that farting, burping, and swapping sex stories invaluablely promote infantry unit cohesion – but she never served in the infantry. Hollow analyses like these diminish the officer corps' reputation for pragmatic professionalism.

First, the debate could benefit from sticking to medical research.

The policy's critics frequently cite cautionary tales from military women with service-related medical problems as evidence that the female body is not built for combat. The approach is anecdotal, however, and fails to note that females are already serving in other countries' combat specialties. Many of those women work until retirement, while plenty of their male counterparts suffer career-ending injuries. The debate should include facts, like medical findings that show higher rates of injuries among military women than military men. Females generally lack similar upper body strength and are more likely to experience stress fractures, ACL tears, and other overuse injuries.

If women demonstrate higher injury rates, however, they are also more likely to seek help and follow their medical providers' recommendations; men more commonly conceal their injuries. When one study adjusted the numbers to include unreported injuries, the gender gap in injury rates was no longer statistically significant.

Another observation is that baseline fitness, not gender, is likely the best indicator of whether or not a service member will sustain an injury. The services' introductory training courses call for quick ramp-ups of physical training, so recruits are expected to arrive prepared. But trainee injury rates are astronomical – nearly 50 percent – for both sexes. And with 69 percent of the U.S. population now overweight, the military's candidate pool is shrinking, figuratively.

Arbitrarily closing jobs based on gender could soon become untenable from a manpower perspective.

Secondly, U.S. officers should stop speculating in a vacuum about integration's effects. As mentioned previously, America is no pioneer in this field.

## **Women veterans only need apply for this Honor Flight**

(8 Apr.) *Cincinnati.com*, By Sheila Vilvens

For the past eight years, Honor Flight Tri-State has flown hundreds of male military veterans to visit Washington, D.C. memorials free of charge.

Some argue that other countries' experiences with female integration are irrelevant, as only nations threatened with annihilation, like Israel, resort to such desperate measures. In reality, women are serving in the combat forces of many NATO militaries and have for 36 years; the Dutch let women join combat units in 1979. Other unmolested countries to take this step include all in Scandinavia, most British Commonwealth states, and many Western European countries. Females have only served in the Irish Defense Forces since 1980 – 32 years after the U.S. Women's Armed Services Integration Act – but were already in combat roles by 1995. All must pass the same training to serve in combat specialties, and anyone is eligible for assignment to the “full range of operational and administrative duties.” Women have served in combat units alongside men, and as their leaders, during training in Ireland and on operations abroad. Danish females fought in infantry units in Afghanistan. Norway places no restrictions on women's roles and drafts them for mandatory military duty. Canadian women serve in combat units, and physical standards are scientifically correlated to essential combat tasks. In New Zealand, females comprise 6 percent of the officers in combat and operations branches.

We propose that this is not an issue about women, but one of standards. Impartial officers already know this. Few of them, however, question how current guidelines were developed or when they were last re-evaluated; they just maintain that standards should not be lowered. Initiatives like the Marine Corps' Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force might assist such a review by using performance-based data to inform updated, scientific standards.

Available medical research and the experiences of other countries cannot explain why American women are so woefully under-qualified for service in combat specialties. Nor can critics explain why women are found at construction sites, on police forces, or in any occupation where a bigger, stronger man can better perform the physical aspect of the job. Re-evaluate the standard, publish the standard, and hold the standard. For everyone.

*The authors are writing in their private capacities. David Kelm is a former U.S. Marine infantry officer who deployed four times to Iraq and Afghanistan. Jayne Lawlor is an Irish cavalry officer and has deployed to Afghanistan, Kosovo, Lebanon, and Liberia. Nicole Martin is a physical therapist who has treated hundreds of injured U.S. military personnel.*  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/04/16/opinion-its-time-to-reevaluate-standards-for-women-in-the-military/>

On September 22, the Cincinnati-based nonprofit is lifting off with the first ever all women veterans' flight, marking its own historic event.

"Some would say that they wish more women were on the flight," Honor Flight Director Cheryl Popp said. "No one ever really thought about having a flight for just women veterans – until now. The Tri-State flight will be the first of its kind in the nation." News about the flight went out in early April and applications are already being submitted, Popp said.

Founded in 2007, the Honor Flight Tri-State was created to honor America's WW II, Korean and Vietnam Veterans and all veterans over age 65, who served either stateside or overseas, by providing them a free trip to visit their memorials in Washington D.C. It is part of a national network founded in 2005 that shares similar goals.

Senior veterans over age 65 will have top priority on this flight with younger veterans under the age of 40 invited to serve as their guardians, Popp said.

Women have been included in past Honor Flights that were predominantly men, but usually no more than five at a time, Popp said.

One woman eager to be a guardian on the flight is Ashley Brunkel. The Clifton woman is a proud veteran who served nine years with the Army National Guard. Her service included being part of Operation New Dawn pulling the troops out of Iraq. She left the service in 2013 to finish her degree from the University of Cincinnati in criminal justice. Brunkel said she's the first in her family to graduate from college.

The inspiration for all that she's done, from serving her country to pursuing her college degree she attributes to her grandfather, the late Clifford Ireland.

"He was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division in World War II in Normandy," Brunkel said. "He was somebody in the family we all looked up to." Though he died when she was young, between the ages of 5-8, Brunkel recalled her grandfather

inspiring her to play a musical instrument and to get an education.

She's always wanted to go on an honor flight, but has no veterans in her own family with whom she can share the experience. Being a guardian on a flight would give her an opportunity to hear the stories of women who had a very different experience from her own.

"They have stories not everybody hears. To be on this flight and help take care of them would be an honor. I'm an able body. I'm a veteran. I can help with that," Brunkel said.

The memorials in Washington D.C. are often not seen by the very veterans that they honor, Popp said. The Honor Flight trips include visits to the World War II, Korean, Vietnam, Lincoln, and Iwo Jima Marine Memorials and the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. On the September Honor Flight, a special stop and tour of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial and the Vietnam Nurses Memorial will be included.

While the expenses for the senior veterans on the flight are all paid, the guardians must pay their own passage, \$440, unless sponsors are found. Popp said she's actively seeking sponsors to help offset the costs for the guardians.

Regardless of cost, Brunkel said she hopes to be selected for the trip. Already her aunt and uncle, Dan and Kimberly Cronin, who own Tyme Out sports bar in Colerain, have agreed to hold a fundraiser. "Whatever we make, we will donate," she said.

Women veterans, or anyone knowing a woman veteran, interested in the flight can visit [www.honorflighttristate.org](http://www.honorflighttristate.org) or call (513)277-9626.

<http://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/local/community-news/2015/04/08/women-veterans-need-apply-honor-flight/25465981/>

## **Call Center in Canandaigua Marks Two Years of Helping Women Veterans**

*(13 Apr.) Time Warner Cable News Buffalo, By Jamiese Price*  
CANANDAIGUA, N.Y. -- April marks the two-year anniversary of the Women Veteran Call Center inside the Veteran's Affairs Office in Canandaigua. It's the only call center of its kind in the country, devoted solely to helping women veterans.

"Every single one of our contact representatives are women. We received an authorization from the Office of Personnel Management to hire only women telephone agents, so we have women helping women," said Krista Stephenson, who serves as director of the call center.

Fifty percent of the staff are veterans themselves, including Stephenson.

"We have women calling in with very sensitive issues, such as domestic violence and military sexual trauma and it really

helps them talk about their issues with another woman," Stephenson said.

There are over 2 million women veterans in our nation, but fewer than half a million of them are receiving veteran services.

"They don't view themselves as veterans because one, they were not deployed in a combat situation or they are a woman so they don't view themselves as a veteran. We're talking to them and asking them if they served in the military and if they say yes, we're like, you are a veteran and you may be eligible for services and they are surprised by that."

Christina Bakker has been on the other end of some rewarding calls.

"I was doing an outgoing call and I got a World War II vet and she was 92 years old and still teaching at the University of

Oregon and she was so proud of it and she wanted to tell me all about it," said Bakker, a telephone representative at the call center. "She said, 'I still have insurance from my work, I don't need it or anything.' I said, 'ma'am you deserve it.'" Not every call goes as well.

"Sometimes it's overwhelming. You really want to help them and sometimes we even get stumped." On average the call center receives about 80 calls a day. <http://www.twcnews.com/nys/buffalo/news/2015/04/13/women-veteran-call-center.html>

## **Sister soldiers show their strength with historic jump at JBER**

*(13 Apr.) KTVA Alaska, By Bonney Bowman*

JBER – Sister soldiers took part in a historic jump at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Monday. For the first time, the 4/25 Airborne Brigade Combat Team Spartan "Sisters in Arms" jumped as one.

The paratroopers were honoring both Women's History Month and Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Month.

"We're not very many among the Army," said Pfc. Marisa Roney. "So to have a group of all women paratroopers is kind of rare."

Women only make up 5 percent of the brigade — a small but strong group. It shows as they strap on their gear, which weighs just as much as their male counterparts' equipment.

"We can do whatever they can do," Roney said. "We're wearing the same equipment, we're jumping out of the same plane and just the fact that we can do that should empower women all around."

The Sisters in Arms program started in 2012 and has spread throughout the U.S. Army as a way to help female soldiers meet their full potential.

"This is a very young generation that's going to be jumping today," said Chief Warrant Officer Michelle Charge. "So hopefully for them, it's going to give them some mentorship, some females to look up to and hopefully aspire to be like."

"There are a lot of opportunities for women in the military," said 1st Lt. Lauren Hogg after successfully completing her jump. "I think a lot of people have it in their mind that it's a man's world, but I don't think that's necessarily true."

As the Army opens more jobs to women, these soldiers say strong relationships make them more confident to lead the way, even when their numbers are few.

"There's been a couple occasions I've been a jumpmaster for one of the other battalions and I've looked around and realized I'm the only girl out of 300 jumpers," said Hogg. "So it's definitely different to look around and see more female faces than not."

The program also helps women handle gender-specific issues related to service, like family separation during deployment and sexual harassment training.

<http://www.ktva.com/sister-soldiers-show-their-strength-with-historic-jump-at-jber-983/>