



Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services Articles of Interest for the Week of 4 September 2015

GENDER INTEGRATION

[1. Third female Ranger student moves on to Swamp Phase](#)

(28 Aug) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

A third female soldier is now one step closer to earning the coveted Ranger Tab.

[2. Air Force close to decisions on standards for elite combat jobs, female integration](#)

(28 Aug) *The Washington Post*, By Dan Lamothe

Air Force Secretary Deborah James addressed the issue Monday, telling reporters at the Pentagon that she and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh have not yet received recommendations from her commanders about how they should proceed. She anticipates making her recommendations to Carter by October 1.

[3. Second Application Window Open For Women In Submarines](#)

(31 Aug) *Navy Live Blog*, By Rear Adm. Randy Crites

History continues to be made in the submarine force as the first enlisted female Sailors have begun the submarine training pipeline AND we are taking a second round of applications from Sailors who are interested in serving aboard submarines.

[4. Women in Combat: Silver Stars, Combat Action Badges and Casualties](#)

(31 Aug) *Military.com*, By Richard Sisk

More than 9,000 female troops have earned Combat Action Badges during modern combat operations, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan, and hundreds more have earned valor awards, including the Silver Star, the Army's third-highest valor award.

[5. Equity Over Equality: The Importance Of Gear That Fits](#)

(31 Aug) *U.S. Naval Institute Blog*, By Tenley Lozano

I was strong enough and fit enough to do the job of a Coast Guard Diver, and often my background as a shipboard engineer put me in a unique position of knowledge when working underneath CG cutters. However, my ability to work underwater was often hampered by ill-fitting gear.

[6. Carter: Military Should Let Women Meet Standards for Combat Jobs](#)

(1 Sep) *Military.com*, By Richard Sisk

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter on Tuesday gave the clearest signal yet that he was preparing to lift restrictions on women in combat jobs and open up all military occupational specialties to those who can meet the standards.

[7. Marine women look back on historic combat experiment](#)

(1 Sep) *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, By Gretel C. Kovach

Will the Marine Corps fight to keep women out of the infantry? Female Marines who volunteered for research to help the commandant decide that question are eager to find out, along with many others tracking the contentious debate over women in combat.

[8. Navy secretary wants Marine Corps infantry open to women](#)

(1 Sep) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

Marine infantry and special operations specialties will soon open to women, if the head of the Navy Department gets his way.

[9. Army officially opens Ranger School to female soldiers](#)

(2 Sep) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

The Army's elite Ranger School is now open to all qualified soldiers regardless of gender, the service announced Wednesday.

10. Female Air Force commandos could see combat by 2018

(2 Sep) USA Today, By Tom Vanden Brook

The Air Force could field its first female commandos by 2018 after a months-long review of physical standards required for its 4,000 special operators, according to military officials.

11. After Historic Graduation, Army Removes All Restrictions On Women Attending Ranger School

(2 Sep) The Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

The graduation of Griest and Haver has increased pressure on the military to integrate women into more jobs that are still closed, such as infantryman. Pentagon leaders made a landmark decision in January 2013 to open all jobs in the military to women, but gave the services until this fall to make recommendations on whether some jobs should remain closed.

12. A soldier changes gender: From Edward to Jennifer, with stops in Gitmo, Iraq and Afghanistan [video]

(30 Aug) NorthJersey.Com, By Todd South

Jennifer Long of Kearny, a veteran with 29 years and 6 months service in the U.S. Army, recently had new military discharge documents (DD214) issued to her reflecting a name change due to gender change.

13. Dismantling Military's Transgender Ban To Begin Monday

(3 Sep) USA Today, By Tom Vanden Brook

Top Pentagon officials plan to meet Monday to lay out the road map for allowing transgender troops to serve openly in the military, a Defense Department official said Wednesday.

CAREER PROGRESSION

14. 'Force of the Future': career flexibility, fewer moves

(30 Aug) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman

The dozens of recommendations from the Pentagon's top personnel officials would fundamentally change how the military recruits, pays, promotes and manages the active-duty force of 1.3 million troops, according to a draft copy of the report obtained by Military Times.

15. Top junior officers picked for new grad school program

(31 Aug) Navy Times, Mark D. Faram

This past May, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said the service needed to expand offerings of full-time graduate education at top graduate schools, something many corporations already do. The service has sent officers to school full-time for years at the Naval War College, Naval Postgraduate School and through fellowships at many top schools — but it hasn't been enough and officials say they are bleeding talent to the private sector because of it.

16. 'Force of the Future': career flexibility, fewer moves

(1 Sep) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman

The so-called "Force of the Future" reform package aims to yank the Pentagon's longstanding one-size-fits-all personnel system into the Information Age by sweeping away many laws, policies and traditions that date back as far as World War II.

17. Leaning in Together

(1 Sep) USNI Blog, By Susannah Rose Stokes

These women desire one thing in their personal and professional lives: equal opportunity to show their talents and pursue their goals.

18. Navy's First Female F-14 Fighter Pilot Urges Women To 'Stay Focused' In Career Objectives

(2 Sep) Attleboro Sun Chronicle, By Paige Allen

Carey Lohrenz, the Navy's first female F-14 Tomcat fighter pilot, delivered the [Executive Women's Day] keynote address, detailing the obstacles she encountered in her flight to the top, and urging women to take the next step in their careers – even if it seems scary or uncomfortable.

PREGNANCY & PARENTHOOD

19. DoD's 'Future' Vision Doesn't Overlook Families

(30 Aug) Military Times, By Karen Jowers

Among the family provisions in the latest report draft: longer tours at permanent duty stations of choice; expand parental leave for all military and civilian workers to 18 weeks per child during a career; extend hours of child development centers; limit deployments for new mothers; install "mother's rooms" throughout all installations; and Improve fertility services for troops.

[20. The number of child abuse cases in the military hits a decade high](#)

(2 Sep) *The Washington Post*, By Missy Ryan

Confirmed cases of abuse and neglect of military children increased markedly in 2014, Defense Department data showed on Wednesday, prompting concerns among Pentagon about efforts to safeguard the nation's over 1 million military children.

[21. MCPOCG: Coast Guard eyes expanded maternity leave](#)

(2 Sep) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

The Coast Guard is seriously eyeing expanding its maternity leave and wants to boost incentives to keep service members on national security cutters, the top-of-the-line ships that are at the forefront of missions like counter-drug operations.

1. Third female Ranger student moves on to Swamp Phase

(28 Aug) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

A third female soldier is now one step closer to earning the coveted Ranger Tab.

The Army on Friday announced one woman and 103 men met the standards of Ranger School's Mountain Phase. They will now move on to the third and final phase, known as the Swamp Phase, at Camp Rudder, Florida.

Forty-five other students, all men, will be recycled. Another 16 will be dropped from the course.

[Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver](#) on Aug. 21 became the first women to earn the distinctive black and gold tab when they [graduated from Ranger School](#).

The woman who's still a Ranger student went through much of the grueling course with Griest and Haver until she was required to recycle – or try for a second time – the Mountain Phase, which takes place in Dahlonga, Georgia.

The women are part of the Army's [gender-integrated assessment](#) of Ranger School. In all, 19 women started Ranger School in April. Griest, Haver and the third woman, who has not been publicly identified by the Army, were the only ones who remained.

The assessment has drawn a high level of scrutiny, with many questioning whether the Army is lowering its standards for the elite school, which until now has been open only to men, while many others have cheered on the female students.

Army officials have long insisted that the standards have not been changed in any way.

A second integrated assessment is scheduled for November.

Nineteen female and 381 male soldiers started Ranger School on April 20, the start of the Army's first integrated assessment of the course.

Eight of the women made it through RAP week, or the Ranger Assessment Phase.

None of the eight women made it past the Darby Phase on the first try and were recycled, along with 101 of their male classmates, on May 8.

After the second attempt at the Darby Phase, three female and two male students on May 29 were given the option of a Day One Recycle, which is a normal course procedure that's used when students struggle with one aspect of the course and excel at others, said officials at Fort Benning, Georgia.

The two male students declined to recycle, officials said.

The remaining five women returned to their units and were not recycled again. A total of 29 students were dropped from the course for failing to meet the standards of the Darby Phase.

These students did not meet the standard for a number of reasons, including leading patrols, poor peer evaluations, too many negative spot reports, or a combination of all three.

In the end, Griest and Haver completed Ranger School after three tries at the Darby Phase and one attempt each at the Mountain and Swamp Phases.

This third woman so far has completed three attempts at the Darby Phase and two at the Mountain Phase.

Ranger School's Swamp Phase is located in the coastal swamp environment near Valparaiso, Florida, according to the Army. It consists of two jumps for airborne qualified personnel, four days of waterborne operations, small boat movements and stream crossings, and a 10-day field training exercise with student led patrols.

Soldiers who successfully complete this iteration of the Swamp Phase will graduate Sept. 18 at Victory Pond, Fort Benning.

What remains to be seen is whether the Army will open its infantry, armor and special operations ranks to women.

That decision isn't expected until the end of the year.

The Army has already opened its combat engineer and field artillery military occupational specialties to women.

Ranger School is the Army's premier combat leadership course, teaching students how to overcome fatigue, hunger and stress to lead soldiers in small-unit combat operations. It is separate from the 75th Ranger Regiment.

Soldiers who have earned Ranger Tabs, male or female, are not automatically part of the regiment, which has its own requirements and assessment process.

2. Air Force close to decisions on standards for elite combat jobs, female integration

(28 Aug) *The Washington Post*, By Dan Lamothe

The Air Force is close to deciding how it will alter the physical requirements for its most grueling combat jobs at the same time that it considers how to integrate women into them, Air Force officials said.

The work comes following a landmark January 2013 decision by the Pentagon to open all jobs to women in coming years. The services have until this fall to petition Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter to keep certain jobs closed and hand over research backing the request, but the bar is expected to be set high for Carter to grant any exception to the new policy favoring gender integration. Carter will rule on each request by January.

Air Force Secretary Deborah James addressed the issue Monday, telling reporters at the Pentagon that she and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh have not yet received recommendations from her commanders about how they should proceed. She anticipates making her recommendations to Carter by October 1.

"The key thing is we don't want to lower standards," she said.

But the Air Force is looking at changing physical standards, drawing concern from those who believe that it leaves the door open to access to the elite jobs being granted more easily in the name of being more inclusive. The current standards include push-ups, sit-ups, running, swimming and other exercises required to show fitness for combat. James said in a statement to *The Washington Post* that the service took the research called for by the Pentagon in 2013 — known as the Women in Service Review — as an opportunity to do make sure it has the right standards in place for both men and women.

"I look at this matter in this way: What I want to know is, are you capable of doing the job laid out by the standards and are you living the core values?" she said. "At the end of the day, that's what counts."

Numerous defense officials suggest they are willing to open virtually all jobs to women, including in Special Operations units. Retiring Navy Adm. Jonathan Greenert was among the latest to signal a willingness to do so, telling [the independent Navy Times and Defense News newspapers](#) in a joint interview last week that he and Rear Adm. Brian Losey, the top officer in Naval Special Warfare Command, are open to letting women serve in Navy SEAL teams if they can meet the requirements.

"We owe soldiers the opportunity to serve successfully in any position where they are qualified and capable, and we continue to look for ways to select, train, and retain the best soldiers to meet our nation's needs," Army Secretary John McHugh said previously, when Army announced the Aug. 21 Ranger School graduation.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/2015/08/28/third-female-ranger-student-moves-swamp-phase/71312614/>

Research carried out by the Air Force at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas this summer concluded at the beginning of August, and is currently under review by Air Force officials, Capt. Brooke Brzozowska, an Air Force spokeswoman, said Thursday. Recommendations will be submitted to James, who will in turn make recommendations to Carter. James will coordinate with U.S. Special Operations Command and the other services before making her recommendations to Carter, Brzozowska said.

More than 99 percent of all Air Force jobs already are open to women, but seven job fields with a combined 4,300 positions remain closed, service officials said. They include pararescueman, special tactics officer, tactical air control party, combat rescue officer, combat control team, Special Operations weather officer and Special Operations weather team specialist.

Some of those jobs, such as pararescueman, exist in both the conventional Air Force and in Special Operations Command. [James has signaled for more than a year](#) that she intended to open all positions to women, but it remains to be seen what requirements men and women alike will have to meet if gender integration in them occurs.

The research into the physical standards was led by Neil Baumgartner, an exercise physiologist and retired Air Force major. To determine what physical skills are needed to do the jobs closed, he and his colleagues met with airmen serving in them, eventually developing a battery of tests that nearly 200 elite service members and regular airmen underwent earlier this year at Lackland, he said.

Baumgartner said the research will provide a better understanding and rationale for what is needed. The new standards will amount to a "paradigm shift" in the discussion about what is needed to carry out the missions required, he said. Critics have questioned if the requirements will be made easier in order to allow women to serve in the closed positions, but the service hasn't said yet what could change — and is considering broadening what is required to include other exercises.

"There's nothing wrong with the run and swimming and calisthenics, but what about leg strength?" Baumgartner said of existing requirements. "What about leg endurance? What about core strength and core endurance? What about rotational motion and twisting?"

The existing standards are rigorous. Combat rescue officers, for example, are [required to complete](#) a three-mile run in less than 24 minutes, eight pull-ups in less than a minute, 50 sit-ups in less than two minutes, 45 push-ups in less than two minutes and a 1,500-meter swim in less than 34 minutes. Those are the minimum standards, with many elite airmen doing far better.

The service already was investigating whether to alter its standards for the jobs before the Pentagon leaders decided to rescind the ban on women serving in ground combat jobs in 2013, said Col. Matthew “Wolfe” Davidson, commander of the 24th Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field in Florida. Elite units provided feedback on what is needed, and participated in the research at Lackland.

Davidson said the service has historically struggled to find enough airmen who are able to not only meet the physical requirements of the elite jobs, but carry out the complicated work involved in integrating air power into ground Special Operations on the fly as situations develop. The service incorporated physical therapists and strength coaches in the last decade to keep more airmen ready to fight when needed, he said.

3. Second Application Window Open For Women In Submarines

(31 Aug) Navy Live Blog, By Rear Adm. Randy Crites

History continues to be made in the submarine force as the first enlisted female Sailors have begun the submarine training pipeline AND we are taking a second round of applications from Sailors who are interested in serving aboard submarines.

[NAVADMIN 186/15](#), which came out mid-August, announced the second round of applications. As the Enlisted Women in Submarines Task Force Commander, I look forward to seeing all of the competitive applications from a pool of highly qualified Sailors.

When we opened up the first application window back in January of this year, we received an overwhelming [response](#) from women currently serving across the fleet in a variety of concentration areas, from the surface fleet, to our aviation community, to Seabees, to Sailors in the Fleet Reserve.

As a result of the first round of applications, we have learned a few lessons. It is very important to me that we provide the Sailors interested in this opportunity the information they are truly seeking and we have a better idea of what that information is. Last time, we placed an emphasis on the application process but it quickly became clear that candidates were more interested in what kinds of jobs are available and what life aboard a submarine is like. As a result, the briefs we provided to command career counselors include that type of information this time around.

Something else I want to point out is that we desire to bring in women even from the most junior paygrades. Previously, I think there was a misconception that we only wanted more seasoned Sailors to apply. In reality, we are hoping to see

Women will be accepted into the new jobs if they’re opened as long as they can meet the physical standards, the colonel added. Women have served in elite Air Force special tactics units for years in other positions, like pilot.

“For us, it really has nothing to do with the integration of females,” Davison said. “It’s about the standards. We want to get better, and we want to make sure that the standards we use to select and maintain standards are absolutely tied to what we are expected to do on the battlefield.”

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III said in a statement that female airmen will be ready if new positions are opened, and are “excited about every future opportunity.

“We’re working hard to put the correct operationally relevant standards in place so we can integrate our few remaining career fields in a responsible way,” he said.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/08/28/air-force-close-to-decisions-on-standards-for-elite-combat-jobs-female-integration/>

applications from all pay grades. The submarine community always seeks high-caliber applicants from all ratings and ranks regardless of race, gender, religion, rank, etc., so I would say the main requirement is that candidates are motivated, technically competent, professional Sailors who are passionate about committing their absolute best toward excellence in the submarine force.

I began this blog by mentioning that history is in the making as the first female Sailors have classed up at submarine school in Groton, Connecticut. Several new accessions arrived in Groton just a week or so ago, and the remainder of the conversion Sailors will arrive there in a staggered manner over the course of the next 12+ months. The task force and submarine force are looking forward to seeing our selected Sailors make their way through the training pipeline and become active and productive members of the submarine force.

As the new Commander for the Enlisted Women in Submarines Task Force, I want to welcome the selected Sailors to our community and also encourage Sailors who are interested in becoming submariners to take the time to submit their applications this time around. I am excited to meet motivated, talented and technically competent female submariners out in the fleet in the future!

Rear Adm. Randy Crites is Commander, Submarine Group Ten; Enlisted Women in Submarines Task Force Commander.

<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2015/08/31/second-application-window-open-for-women-in-submarines/>

4. Women in Combat: Silver Stars, Combat Action Badges and Casualties

(31 Aug) *Military.com*, By Richard Sisk

In the coming weeks, the service chiefs will likely cite reams of data to support their positions on whether to lift restrictions on women serving in combat jobs.

A couple of the statistics will be hard to miss: More than 9,000 female troops have earned Combat Action Badges during modern combat operations, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan, and hundreds more have earned valor awards, including the Silver Star, the Army's third-highest valor award.

Advocates of lifting the restrictions argue that existing data show women are already serving in combat and lifting the restrictions would only be recognizing that reality to allow them to prove they can meet the standards for currently closed billets and receive the training they need.

Opponents argue that imposing major social and cultural changes on the military would be fraught with risk in an era of increasing global threats and cite statistics showing that women suffer injuries at twice the rate of men in training.

At his Aug. 20 Pentagon news conference, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter restated the policy that has been in effect since then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta announced in January 2013 that all military occupational specialties would be open to women unless the services argued for an exception.

"Approximately 110,000 ground combat positions have been opened to women since then, and the Department's policy is that all ground combat positions will be open to women, unless rigorous analysis of factual data shows that the positions must remain closed," Carter said. Some 200,000 combat positions remain closed to female troops.

"On October 1st, the services will provide a report to the Chairman requesting any exception to this policy, and I'll review the services recommendation and make a final determination on that issue by the end of this year."

Carter spoke after placing a congratulatory phone call to the first women to pass the demanding 62-day [Army Ranger School](#) – Army Capt. Kristen Griest and [Army](#) 1st Lt. Shaye Haver.

"I take special satisfaction in the strides like this," Carter said of the two women Ranger School graduates. He stressed that the service chiefs will now have to make the case for a "justification for any -- if there are any -- exceptions" to the general rule to open billets.

More than 214,000 women now serve in the military, account for about 14.5 percent of the force. The [Marine Corps](#) has the lowest percentage – slightly less than 7 percent. More than 280,000 women have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"As of April 2015, 161 women have lost their lives and 1,015 had been wounded in action as part of Global War on Terror

(GWOT) operations" since the 9/11 terror attacks, according to the Congressional Research Service. The [Army](#) alone reported 89 women killed in the line of duty in Iraq and 36 in Afghanistan.

"In addition, in modern combat operations, over 9,000 women have received Army Combat Action Badges for 'actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy,'" the CRS said.

Through 2012, the Army reported that 437 women earned awards for valor to include two Silver Stars, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, 31 Air Medals, and 16 Bronze Stars.

In releasing the report, then-Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno said "It should be clear to all that women are a major force in operations today. We're not starting from the ground up in the assessment period" on whether women should serve in combat. "Women are integral in all theaters of combat as we speak."

In some instances, the women earning awards for valor led men in firefights. Then-Army Capt. Kellie McCoy, a West Point graduate, earned the Bronze Star with "V" device for her actions on Sept. 18, 2003, for leading 11 male paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division in breaking up an enemy ambush between Fallujah and Ramadi in Iraq's Anbar province.

Her citation said that "Capt. McCoy willingly and repeatedly took action to gather up her soldiers under enemy fire and direct fire at the enemy. Her actions inspired her men to accomplish the mission and saved the lives of her fellow soldiers."

In other instances, women have performed valiantly in combat under commanders well aware of the restrictions who had no recourse under fire.

In April 2007 in Afghanistan's Paktika province, then-Pfc. Monica Brown, an 18-year-old Army medic from Lake Jackson, Texas, grabbed her kit and raced through enemy fire to save soldiers trapped in a burning Humvee. She later received the Silver Star, the nation's third-highest award for valor, in a ceremony presided over by then-Vice President Dick Cheney.

"We weren't supposed to take her out" on missions "but we had to because there was no other medic," Lt. Martin Robbins, a platoon leader with Charlie Troop, 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, later told the Washington Post

"By regulations you're not supposed to," Robbins said, but Brown "was one of the guys, mixing it up, clearing rooms, doing everything that anybody else was doing."

Those who oppose lifting the 1994 restrictions on women in the infantry, armor, artillery and [Special Operations](#) cited

statistics showing alarmingly higher injury rates for women, and artillery participating in the tests and assessments currently being conducted by the services.

The Army's Institute of Public Health reported that in basic combat training, approximate average injury rates for women were 114 percent higher than those for men.

In training for engineers and military police, they were 108 percent higher, according to documents obtained by the Center for Military Readiness headed by Elaine Donnelly, a frequent critic of social and cultural changes in the military.

Critics also cite the [recent remarks](#) at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado of retired [Navy](#) Adm. Eric Olson, head of the Special Operations Command from 2007-11 and the former top [SEAL](#).

"I think that we are only having part of the discussion on women in combat," Olson said. "I think that we need to ask ourselves as a society if we are willing to put women in front-line combat units to take the first bullet on target."

Olson continued: "Are we willing to cause every 18-year-old girl to sign up for selective service? Are we willing to cause women to serve in infantry units against their will as we do men?"

The Congressional Research Service summed up the arguments:

"Those in favor of keeping restrictions cite physiological differences between men and women that could potentially affect military readiness and unit effectiveness. Some also argue that social and cultural barriers exist to the successful integration of women into combat occupations and all-male units."

"Those who advocate for opening all military occupations to women emphasize equal rights and arguing it is more difficult for service members to advance to top-ranking positions in the

armed services without combat experience. In their view, modern weapons have equalized the potential for women in combat since wars are less likely to be fought on a hand-to-hand basis."

When the service chiefs send their findings to Carter late next month, [Marine](#) Gen. Joseph Dunford will be the first to report and the most closely watched. The Marines are considered by some the most tradition-bound and resistant to change of the services.

According to Marine officials, Dunford, now the Marine Commandant, has committed to sending the Marines' report to Carter before he is succeeded on Sept. 24 by Marine Gen. Robert Neller. Dunford will take over in October as the new Joint Chiefs Chairman from retiring Army Gen. Martin Dempsey.

As JCS Chairman, Dempsey stood next to then-Defense Secretary Panetta when Panetta announced in January 2013 that the restrictions were being lifted unless the services asked for exceptions.

At the Pentagon news conference, Dempsey cited an anecdote from his own experience in taking over command of the 1st Armored Division in Iraq in 2003 as the insurgency gathered strength.

On a trip outside his headquarters, Dempsey introduced himself to the crew of his Humvee. "I slapped the turret gunner on the leg and I said, 'Who are you?' And she leaned down and said, 'I'm Amanda.' And I said, 'Ah, OK,'" Dempsey said.

"So, female turret-gunner protecting division commander. It's from that point on that I realized something had changed, and it was time to do something about it," Dempsey said.

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/08/31/women-in-combat-silver-stars-combat-action-badges-casualties.html>

5. Equity Over Equality: The Importance Of Gear That Fits

(31 Aug) U.S. Naval Institute Blog, By Tenley Lozano

The day I was issued my first Coast Guard uniform, I learned that I would need to make due with any size that that I was given. I was 17 years old and I had graduated from high school just two weeks before swearing in as swab at the United States Coast Guard Academy. Weighing 103 pounds at a height of 5 feet and 2 inches, I was easily the smallest person in my platoon. The day that we were issued Operational Dress Uniforms, a dark blue cargo pant and long-sleeve blouse, I was informed that they were out of my size and would have to give me a uniform two sizes up. I paid for four sets of ODUs that looked like they were made for my older brother. The pants were a foot too long, and the blouse was baggy and frumpy, the sleeves falling well past my wrists. I just assumed that I would never look professional in a military uniform.

I didn't complain about the oversized garb and learned to love wearing baggy cargo pants, especially underway on a cutter when I would stash snacks and notebooks in the pockets. I believed my small stature was a disadvantage until I started working in an engine room with low-hanging pipes and hard-to-reach valves. I could easily wriggle into tight spaces where most of my male coworkers would have banged their heads or gotten stuck. I worked with a male Damage Control Senior Chief not much taller than myself who was admired by all of the other engineers for his ability to squeeze into the smallest areas to weld, even while the ship was still underway. He was one of the most competent people I ever worked with in the Coast Guard, and he proved that sometimes the smallest person is the best person for the job.

As the Damage Control Assistant aboard a Coast Guard Cutter, I became the maritime law enforcement board team's engineering liaison, leading groups of mechanics and electricians in inspecting the engineering spaces onboard foreign vessels that were suspected of smuggling cocaine. 100 percent space accountability was essential in these searches, and I was often the only person that could fit inside the empty fuel tanks to inspect them. Sometimes the openings would be so tight that I would climb into the compartment wearing only a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) full-face mask, crouch in the opening, and have my air tank and harness slid into the tank after me. Crawling through the slimy fuel tanks with my Gas Free Meter flashing and blaring alarms that the air was toxic, I would hear clean air streaming out of my mask because the equipment didn't fit my face. I relied on the positive pressure of the mask to save me from the lethal gasses that were present in the diesel tanks. No matter how tightly the straps were pulled onto my head, the mask would leak. I knew that I had to share this firefighting equipment with 165 other people on the cutter, and that the ship couldn't afford equipment specifically fitted for me, so I just did my job and didn't complain about it.

I didn't think much about the problem of ill-fitting life support equipment until I became a student at the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (aka Navy Dive School) in Panama City, Florida. By that point, I had put on quite a bit of muscle and weighed a whopping 120 pounds. My dive school class consisted of enlisted Seabees, Coast Guard Officers, Navy Engineering Officers, Army enlisted personnel, and one civilian with a position in Washington DC supporting the Navy Diving Program. For the first time in the history of Navy Dive School, we had three women entering the SCUBA open water phase. After we had proven our strength and composure underwater by passing the notoriously difficult Pool Week, we were excited to hit the open water for some fun SCUBA dives on shipwrecks.

When I tried on the Buoyancy Compensators (BCs) that our class was issued, I realized that I was expected to wear the same gear that fit my 220-pound dive buddy. What was snug on him fit like a trash bag over my body, and without one hand holding my BC vest onto my body, the whole thing floated up around my face. The best the equipment guys could offer was to tighten up the middle section as much as possible on one of the rigs, and the smaller divers would have to rotate, keeping one hand on the BC to steady it from floating off. If this had been a dive off of a civilian vessel, I would never have worn that gear, citing safety concerns because it obviously didn't fit.

6. Carter: Military Should Let Women Meet Standards for Combat Jobs

(1 Sep) Military.com, By Richard Sisk

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter on Tuesday gave the clearest signal yet that he was preparing to lift restrictions on [women in combat jobs](#) and open up all military occupational specialties to those who can meet the standards.

Citing the example of the two female soldiers who recently completed [Army Ranger School](#), Carter said, "When put to the test, not everyone, only a select few, will meet our standards

An even bigger problem arose when I began training with the KM-37 surface supplied diving hard-hats. The neoprene neck sleeves attached to the metal ring that the helmet snapped onto were so stretched out that if I tilted my head downward, giant air bubbles rushed out the back of my neck and water rushed in. It's difficult to do a job underwater when you can't tilt your head. One day, a rushed student helping me with the dive gear above the water accidentally pulled the whole rig off of my head, the still-attached neck ring slid right over me. A watching instructor murmured, "That's not supposed to happen. That's really dangerous. It could come off underwater."

I was told that the school just didn't have the resources to fit minority students with smaller gear. I was dismayed to hear this again and again at my own unit in the Coast Guard, where I continued to wear a full-face mask that leaked on every dive, and BCs that were sized men's medium. The recreational dive gear that I'd bought for weekend fun dives was sized women's small. I was strong enough and fit enough to do the job of a Coast Guard Diver, and often my background as a shipboard engineer put me in a unique position of knowledge when working underneath CG cutters. However, my ability to work underwater was often hampered by ill-fitting gear.

I'm not suggesting that we change standards to accommodate women, far from it. Women should only do these jobs if they meet the same standards that have been upheld by men for decades. However, everyone in a position requiring life support gear should be afforded the same opportunity to wear equipment that fits, and sometimes that will mean buying different gear for smaller faces and frames. The Navy Experimental Dive Unit has already tested and approved smaller versions of the full-facemask that is currently used in the Navy and Coast Guard, as well as smaller BCs. It's not a matter of bending the rules to accommodate women. It's a matter of ensuring that all members of the unit have properly fitting gear. Sometimes the best person for the job is the smallest person; so let's make sure they have the right gear.

Tenley Lozano spent five years as an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard. During her tenure, she was stationed in the engineering department. She then attended Navy Dive School and spent two years as a diver.

<http://blog.usni.org/2015/08/31/equity-over-equality-the-importance-of-gear-that-fits>

of combat excellence. But no one needs to be barred from their chance to be tested."

Carter made the remarks at the close of a speech to the American Legion on his "Force of the Future" plan to overhaul the military personnel system and forge closer ties with the business community.

In his speech, the defense secretary appeared to agree with advocates of lifting the restrictions who have argued that all military jobs should be open to those who can meet the standards regardless of gender.

By successfully completing the grueling 62-day [Ranger](#) school, the two Army officers -- Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver -- had become part of a "broader future trend" in the military, he said.

Carter said he was committed to fairness in opportunity, and told the Legion audience that "you've never shied from advocating for what's fair, insisting on something better, and demanding above all that we do right by the people who've stepped forward to defend this great nation."

He noted that last month he congratulated Griest and Haver as the first women to earn the right to wear the Ranger Tab, although they cannot now be accepted into the 75th Ranger Regiment under current restrictions.

"They did what Rangers do -- 'Lead the Way,'" he said, "but these two women are more than a snapshot of the strength of our current force -- they represent a broader future trend."

7. Marine women look back on historic combat experiment

(1 Sep) The San Diego Union-Tribune, By Gretel C. Kovach

Will the Marine Corps fight to keep women out of the infantry? Female Marines who volunteered for research to help the commandant decide that question are eager to find out, along with many others tracking the contentious debate over women in combat.

A landmark policy shift on the horizon could eliminate the last gender restrictions on military employment by year's end, opening many front-line ground combat jobs to women for the first time.

The Pentagon included a loophole, however, when it announced the plan in 2013 to open all jobs to women. The services have until the end of this month to apply for exceptions, presenting recommendations to the defense secretary and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff based on extensive research.

As the Jan. 1 deadline for full integration approaches, more than 245,000 positions remain closed to women, after the opening in recent years of about 91,000 positions.

Only the Marine Corps — the most male-dominated of the conventional forces and one fervently devoted to its traditions — is expected to lobby for the status quo in some all-male combat units. The Corps also was the only service that sought to retain "Don't Ask Don't Tell" restrictions on gays in the military (and experienced relatively few problems when forced to accept the change.)

Final decisions haven't been announced, but the outgoing heads of the Navy and Army spoke in support of expanded combat roles for women. The conventional Air Force has already integrated women into all jobs. And leaders within U.S. Special Operations Command indicated during public remarks in San Diego and elsewhere that they feel women

At a Pentagon news conference last month, Carter noted that Griest and Haver could not now be accepted into the Ranger Regiment under 1994 regulations barring women from the infantry, armor, artillery and [special operations](#).

Several top commanders, including former Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert have indicated that they would support opening up all MOSs to those who can meet the standards -- including special operations.

In January 2013, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta ordered all MOSs opened up to women but withheld implementation to give the services time to conduct studies to determine whether they would seek exemptions.

The services are to report back to Carter on whether they will ask for exemptions from the rule to lift restrictions for certain MOSs later this month. Carter has said that he will decide on the new policy by the end of this year.

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/09/01/carter-military-should-let-women-meet-standards-for-combat-jobs.html>

should be allowed to compete for elite commando jobs like Navy SEAL.

The Aug. 21 graduation of the first two women ever to finish Army Ranger School added momentum to the campaign, demonstrating that some female troops have the mental, physical and tactical strength for one of the military's toughest leadership courses.

The Marine Corps, which is about 93 percent male, has taken a conservative approach to the gender integration program mandated by defense leaders and Congress. The Marines have not added female support staff to infantry units, for example, but the Army has.

Supporters say the Corps is preserving combat effectiveness without regard to politically correct social engineering. Critics say the institution is hobbled by hidebound sexism.

The Marine Corps established the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force at Camp Lejeune, N.C., last year to help gauge the impact of female troops on combat effectiveness. Before the task force deactivated this summer, researchers tracked performance and injury rates among mixed-gender units of infantry, artillery and armored vehicles during an extensive combat assessment at Twentynine Palms and other California bases.

Going into the experiment, the female Marines who served as research subjects had mixed feelings as a group about whether the Corps should accept women in its ground fighting force. Now that their work is done, some are more convinced than ever that it's time to change history.

Gunner

“I definitely hope I contributed to them letting females eventually into the infantry because I worked my ass off for it and I don’t want to see it go to waste,” said Lance Cpl. Ashleigh Howell, who served on a light armored vehicle in the experimental task force.

“Mainly for girls down the road who have dreams... They’re 15- or 16-years old and they want to fight for their country. If I’m the reason they won’t be able to do that just because our trials weren’t good enough, that would make me feel pretty (crappy),” said Howell, 19, of Grand Rapids, Mich.

As far as she knows, there’s no danger of that, however.

The Corps hasn’t released results of the experiment. But it was obvious whose times improved during 10 months of combat drills.

They didn’t need the scorekeeper to tell them who was working harder down range — lazy crews got lapped by Marines who started after them.

“All the females, all of us improved over the entire time,” Howell said.

She applied her competitive streak and work ethic to mastering her favorite task — gunnery. “My goal is to beat you,” she told more experienced comrades the first day they disassembled the main gun.

In time she became faster and more accurate than some of her male counterparts, and Howell was named best female gunner in her platoon at Twentynine Palms.

The real satisfaction was seeing tracers hit the target and hearing “kill-kill-kill” over the radio. “Everyone loves it when you get in the LAV behind the gunner seat. The turret is rotating. Wherever you want it to go, it goes. The three-round burst makes the whole vehicle recoil. It’s an awesome feeling,” Howell said.

The combat trials at Twentynine Palms were grueling and tedious, involving repetitive tasks like take a gun apart and put it back together half a dozen times. Howell’s company got one day off and a shower after each 12-days bivouacked in the desert.

So why does she miss it so? The camaraderie, she said, and the challenge.

Howell was one of seven women in her platoon called “Big Seven.” Their motto was “if you can hack it, you can hack it.” Despite bruises and aching muscles, all the women made it through more than 70 rounds of combat testing.

“The last few trials it was like, okay, this is it. Give it all we got. This is our last chance to make a good impression. To make a good time. No one gave up hope or heart...,” Howell said.

Looking back, Howell feels she left the task force a better Marine, because of the serious approach and knowledge of salty riflemen like her platoon sergeant, a Fallujah veteran.

“It made me realize how different the infantry is compared to the more supporting roles of the units,” she said.

Howell didn’t want the experiment to end. But she stood in formation at a Camp Lejeune field house during the task force’s July 15 deactivation ceremony. Col. Matthew St. Clair, their commanding officer, said “I couldn’t be more proud.”

The Marines rolled out a dolly to show the audience “Cpl. Carl,” the 220-pound dummy used during combat trials. Howell spent three months pulling him in and out of the turret. “You just stare at him with hatred in your eyes,” Howell joked, laughing. “He was heavy. His head fell off. His arms fell off.”

The task force Marines were awarded meritorious unit citation ribbons. Then they folded the colors and marched off to their old jobs.

Howell is back to dispersing ammunition for other Marines doing the shooting. Even the excitement of training for her first overseas deployment next year on a Marine Expeditionary Unit can’t compare.

“It’s definitely bittersweet since we left Twentynine Palms,” Howell said, sighing. “It sucks. I wish... I wish we could transfer already. I’m patiently waiting for the call they’re going to make. I miss it.”

Should women be allowed in the infantry, with “straight leg” forces on foot or traveling in light armored vehicles?

“Yes, of course. One hundred percent,” she said. “If they can excel, if they can look better than their male counterparts and do just as well as them, then why not?”

If the Marine Corps decides otherwise, that will be hard to accept.

“A lot of us want to stay in the full 20 years. But wow, if the Marine Corps doesn’t let us into this MOS (job category) and we’ve done all we could for it...” Howell said.

Artillerywoman

Sgt. Mindy Vuong went from computers to cannons when she joined the task force. The data specialist with the 2nd Marine Division served as an artillerywoman for the research.

Building the strength to lug 90-pound howitzer rounds was the most difficult part for an information technologist. “We were all pretty ripped by the end of that,” said Vuong, 29, of Seattle.

A couple female Marines in the artillery battery had to drop out of the task force because of injury. Vuong started trials at Twentynine Palms sick with a fever and finished while gritting through a toothache, but she put off a root canal and stuck it out.

By the end of the combat assessment, the artillery teams cut hours off their daily regimen, allowing them to finish around lunchtime instead of dinner.

Vuong considered it a privilege to serve in such an important experiment. “This is the kind of thing I have always thought they should do — a scientific study on

whether or not women can handle it. Pretty much every argument I've seen prior to this has been based on personal anecdote.

"I was really excited when I heard about it. I've always thought women can do what they put their minds to," Vuong said.

Did they prove that artillerywomen are capable of serving in combat? "We'll see..." Vuong said.

She might be one of the Marines that recruits yell ditties about someday at boot camp, someone told her.

"I didn't really do it for that," Vuong said. Not for glory. For science.

Father

Vic Brown is still in awe of what his daughter accomplished as an infantry riflewoman. Sgt. Kelly Brown, a 31-year-old bulk fuel specialist, excelled at marksmanship in the task force. She also managed to finish the nearly year-long experiment without injury — a difficult feat for many others assigned to the infantry.

"A lot of women couldn't make it, because of the physical demand. Their bodies just couldn't take it," said the elder Brown, a retired public works technician from Winchester, Va., near the Marine base at Quantico.

Serving in the Corps is tough under any circumstances, especially for a single parent of a toddler like Sgt. Brown. As her parents, "we're just really impressed," Vic Brown said.

Sgt. Brown is preparing to be an instructor, following a rigorous course at Quantico. Her father is conflicted about permanent duty in the infantry if that opportunity arises, because of the danger. "I'm not worried about her physically and mentally doing the job. She's a tough kid," he said.

Brown made his daughter play on the boys' basketball team when she was growing up. She wasn't tall, but she was fast and aggressive, "a bit of a tomboy" with a no-nonsense demeanor. "She actually did really well up until she was about 12 years old. So many parents complained about it I had to take her out," he recalled.

Vic Brown is the son of a career Marine. His younger brother served as well. When his daughter decided to enlist, he was supportive.

"She's always seeking out the tough stuff. The majority of the guys, they kind of frown about women in the Marine Corps.

"There's a reason they call them leathernecks. You've got to have thick skin. She made it all the way through boot

camp without crying. There wasn't too many of them girls who could tell you that," Brown said.

A friend walked into the community recreation center shrugging his shoulders after hearing Sgt. Brown on National Public Radio. The retired Army colonel in his 70s muttered: "I don't know, I don't know..."

Vic Brown knows this: his daughter would make a fine infantrywoman. "Honestly I think there's certain things in the ground combat arms that they can do just as well as men. They are just as good or maybe better under pressure."

At 59, "I've gotten to the age I'm realizing that myself," he said.

Future Corps

The Marines have opened about 6,000 positions in ground combat units to women since the military plan to phase in gender-neutral employment standards was announced in January 2013.

Some 25 percent of the Corps' job slots remain closed to female troops, compared to 18 percent in the Army, 2 percent in the Navy, and 1 percent in the Air Force, according to a July report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Special Operations Command, which draws from all four services, has the largest proportion of male-only positions — 41 percent.

According to the Marine Corps, the service has benefited from its first attempts to integrate women on staff all-male units. Commanders studied biases of all kinds, unit cohesion during personnel turnover, and strengths of a diverse force, gaining insights beyond civil rights or gender equity.

"It's making people realize that everyone is different ... everyone brings something different to the fight," said Capt. Maureen Krebs, who served as the Marine Corps' public affairs officer for the gender integration roll-out.

A training toolkit issued last year encourages Marines to look beyond gender to capability, with the recognition that there is often more than one way to accomplish the mission, whether it's hoisting a tank shell overhead or changing a bulky tire.

"You saw that at the integrated task force and the different ways that people were doing things. Once those units were working together for awhile and they realized (the women) could do the job, they looked at them like Marines."

Not female Marines, Krebs said. Just Marines.

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/sep/01/marine-women-look-back-combat-task-force/>

8. Navy secretary wants Marine Corps infantry open to women

(1 Sep) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

Marine infantry and special operations specialties will soon open to women, if the head of the Navy Department gets his way.

As deadlines loom on decisions about whether to allow women into front-line combat jobs, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus called for opening all billets to female troops who can meet the rigorous standards.

Marine officials will soon offer their recommendations, but Mabus, the civilian secretary who leads the Navy Department — including the Marine Corps — made clear that he must sign off on the decision to seek any exemptions to opening all jobs to women, and he hasn't had a change of heart.

"That's still my call, and I've been very public," Mabus said in an exclusive Sept. 1 interview. "I do not see a reason for an exemption."

Mabus said both sea services should keep physical standards unchanged.

His call for opening all military occupational specialties to women follows Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert's assertion in late August that the Navy would not seek an exemption for its legendary SEAL teams.

All of the services have until Oct. 1 to submit their exemption requests to Defense Secretary Ash Carter, and the Marine Corps has not indicated whether it intends to do so. Mabus, however, signaled that his mind was largely made up.

"My understanding of how the process works is that I'm the one that asks [the Defense Department] for the exemption," he said. "Now, other voices will be heard, the way [former Defense Secretary Leon] Panetta lined it up — I think, the

9. Army officially opens Ranger School to female soldiers

(2 Sep) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

The Army's elite Ranger School is now open to all qualified soldiers regardless of gender, the service announced Wednesday.

The school had been open only to men until April, when the Army ran a [gender-integrated assessment](#) of the course. Nineteen women started the course on April 20.

Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver on Aug. 21 became the [first women](#) to earn the distinctive black and gold tab when they graduated from Ranger School.

[One female soldier](#) from that original group of 19 is still working to earn the tab; she advanced to the Swamp Phase, Ranger School's third and final phase, last weekend.

way I read it — is that if the [Navy] Department doesn't ask for an exemption, they will open."

While Mabus will have the last say for the Marine Corps' own billets, U.S. Special Operations Command must also sign off on the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command troops it oversees, as with the Navy SEALs. If SOCOM does not seek an exemption, MARSOC and SEAL teams will open to women on Jan. 1, 2016, along with any other jobs still closed to women.

Marine brass have stayed tight lipped about whether they'll seek gender exclusions. In a July hearing for his confirmation as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford did not let on whether a decision was in-hand.

"We have looked at this issue pretty hard," he told the Senate committee. "I expect the data that we've collected over the past 18 months in a very deliberate, responsible way to be available to me in the August-September timeframe. And we'll meet the timeline established by Secretary [Leon] Panetta and General [Martin] Dempsey in the letter from 2012."

Dunford is on track to send his recommendations to Mabus in the next few weeks, his spokesman Lt. Col. Eric Dent told *Marine Corps Times* in late August.

Though Dunford is scheduled to assume the top Joint Chiefs role next month, officials said Dunford plans to make the recommendations regarding women in combat roles before Gen. (sel.) Robert Neller takes over as commandant.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/09/01/secnav-no-reason-not-open-marine-infantry-women/71529246/>

In its announcement Wednesday, the Army said "qualified personnel will be able to attend all future classes" of Ranger School "regardless of gender."

"We must ensure that this training opportunity is available to all soldiers who are qualified and capable, and we continue to look for ways to select, train, and retain the best soldiers to meet our nation's needs," Army Secretary John McHugh said in a statement.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley said: "The Army's number one priority is combat readiness, and leader development is a function of combat readiness. Giving every qualified soldier the opportunity to attend the Ranger Course, the Army's premier small unit leadership school, ensures we are maintaining our combat readiness today, tomorrow and for future generations."

The prerequisites for students attending Ranger School remain in effect, including the standards of medical fitness, the Army said in its announcement.

The decision to open Ranger School comes as the services approach the deadline to request exemptions for some of its all-male military occupational specialties.

What remains to be seen is whether the Army will open its infantry, armor and special operations ranks to women.

That decision isn't expected until the end of the year.

The Army has already opened its combat engineer and field artillery military occupational specialties to women.

Top Navy leaders recently said the service plans to open its [elite SEAL teams](#) to women who can pass the grueling Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus also has called for [Marine infantry and special operations](#) specialties to open to women.

10. Female Air Force commandos could see combat by 2018

(2 Sep) USA Today, By Tom Vanden Brook

The Air Force could field its first female commandos by 2018 after a months-long review of physical standards required for its 4,000 special operators, according to military officials.

The military services have until the end of this month to petition Defense Secretary Ash Carter for an exception to allowing women into ground combat roles. By Jan. 1, all of the military's jobs, including special operations, will be open to women unless Carter grants an exception.

"My best bet is if the secretary of Defense opens up the career field in January, two-plus years from then we'll see Air Force women in (special operations) career fields," said Brig. Gen. Brian Kelly, a top Air Force official for personnel.

Barriers to women in combat have been toppling in recent weeks. Two female soldiers graduated from the Army's demanding Ranger school. Adm. Jonathan Greenert, the chief of naval operations, also said his service plans to accept women who can complete the Navy's grueling training to become SEALs. And a Defense official, familiar with the issue but who was not authorized to speak publicly, told USA TODAY that it is unlikely that any of the services will be granted an exception.

The 4,097 Air Force positions in six fields closed to women represent a fraction of the 240,000 male-only military jobs in all the services. But they have outsize significance because if women meet the demands for the highly selective commando units, they'll likely pass muster for the infantry, armor and artillery units. Those fields hold the vast majority of jobs off limits to women.

The Army's integrated Ranger School assessment has received a high level of scrutiny, with many questioning whether the Army is lowering its standards for the elite school, while many others have cheered on the female students.

Army officials have long insisted that the standards have not been changed in any way.

Ranger School is the Army's premier combat leadership course, teaching students how to overcome fatigue, hunger and stress to lead soldiers in small-unit combat operations. It is separate from the 75th Ranger Regiment.

Soldiers who have earned Ranger Tabs, male or female, are not automatically part of the regiment, which has its own requirements and assessment process.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/09/02/army-officially-opens-ranger-school-female-soldiers/71580180/>

Air Force officials, commandos and scientists will develop recommendations for new standards based on 39 physical tests that reflect the tasks demanded of its special operators, including pararescue jumpers, highly trained airmen who retrieve troops trapped behind enemy lines, Kelly said.

Currently, pararescue jumpers must meet standards that include timed tests for running 1.5 miles, swimming on and under water, 10 pull-ups in one minute, 54 sit-ups in two minutes, and 52 push-ups in two minutes, according to an Air Force fact sheet.

Thus far 71 women airmen have taken the new tests and many have performed well, leading Kelly to predict women special operators could begin performing missions as soon as 2018. It would take up to two years additional because the training to become an Air Force special operator, including emergency medicine, is extensive.

Kelly was quick to note that the recommended new tests will not diminish the standards demanded of Air Force special operators. The testing is based on "what's required on battlefield." All told about 200 airmen took part in the testing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

"Are you lowering standards? No," Kelly said. "The standards are tied to the operation."

Lt. Col. Travis Woodworth, an Air Force special operations officer who worked on the study to develop the standards, said the commandos who took part demanded tough training requirements.

"From an operational perspective, our bottom line is not to decrease the standards as they currently exist," he said.

One of the tests requires an airman to lift and carry 110 pounds as part of two-person team to mimic evacuating a wounded 220-pound service member. That has to be accomplished while wearing up to 60 pounds of protective gear, including vest, rifle and helmet, and additional gear weighing up to 80 pounds. The weight has to be hauled up the ramp of cargo plane or helicopter.

"That's a pretty good replication of what we have downrange," Woodworth said.

A female Air Force captain who took part in the study predicted women would be able to qualify to become special

operators. She spoke on condition of anonymity because she was not authorized to speak about the tests publicly.

She's 6-foot-1, fit and athletic. Runs carrying weight and climbing over obstacles were not a problem, she said, adding some of the tasks "any girl could do." More problematic for her were tests that required pull-ups.

"If I really had my heart set on it, I'd go out and train and I'd make sure I could do all those tests," she said. "It's not impossible. If you wanted to do it, I think you could train to do any of these tasks."

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/09/01/women-combat-special-operations/71524922/>

11. After Historic Graduation, Army Removes All Restrictions On Women Attending Ranger School

(2 Sep) The Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

The Army announced Wednesday that it is opening its legendary Ranger School to women on a full-time basis, following the historic graduation last month of two female soldiers.

The school, with headquarters at Fort Benning, Ga., has been a centerpiece of the military's ongoing research on integrating women into more jobs in combat units. Capt. Kristen Griest, 26, a military policy officer, and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver, 25, an Apache helicopter pilot, became the first women to graduate from school Aug. 21, after spending months alongside men enduring the grueling training.

Army Secretary John McHugh said in a statement that the service must ensure that the opportunity afforded to Griest and Haver is available to "all soldiers who are qualified and capable," and that the Army is continuing to assess how to select, train and retain its best soldiers. Gen. Mark A. Milley, the service's top officer, added in the same statement that combat readiness remains the Army's top priority.

"Giving every qualified soldier the opportunity to attend the Ranger Course, the Army's premier small unit leadership school, ensures we are maintaining our combat readiness today, tomorrow and for future generations," Milley said.

Behind the scenes with the first two women to graduate from Army Ranger School

The course lasts a minimum of 61 days, and can take substantially longer for anyone who is allowed to "recycle," or try one of the school's phases more than once. Many Ranger students are recycled several times.

The graduation of Griest and Haver has increased pressure on the military to integrate women into more jobs that are still closed, such as infantryman. Pentagon leaders made a landmark decision in January 2013 to open all jobs in the military to women, but gave the services until this fall to make recommendations on whether some jobs should remain closed.

Ranger School opened to women for the first time in April, with 20 women qualifying for the course and 19 electing to attempt it. Griest and Haver are the only ones to graduate, although a third woman has advanced to the school's third and final phase at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and could graduate as soon as Sept. 18. Like Griest and Haver, she is an officer and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

The Army will remove one requirement that Griest, Haver and their female contemporaries in Ranger School had this year: passing a preliminary 17-day Ranger Training and Assessment Course (RTAC) at Fort Benning prior to attending Ranger School. The service required it for women trying out this year, but will not do so in the future. Instead, it will be strongly recommended to prepare for Ranger School, as it is for male service members.

Ranger School has faced scrutiny from some veterans and active-duty troops who are opposed to further integrating women into the military, but its leaders have insisted that they did not lower the standards to allow Griest and Haver to pass.

"We could have invited each of you to guest walk the entire course, and you would still not believe," wrote Maj. Jim Hathaway, the second in command at the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade that oversees the school in a Facebook post that went viral last month. "We could have video recorded every patrol and you would still say that we 'gave' it away. Nothing we say will change your opinion."

The service chiefs are expected to make their recommendations on what units to keep closed to women in coming days. Milley has not signaled whether he will integrate Special Forces and other elite units, but the bar to get approval to do so is expected to be high.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/09/02/after-historic-graduation-army-removes-all-restrictions-on-women-attending-ranger-school/>

12. A soldier changes gender: From Edward to Jennifer, with stops in Gitmo, Iraq and Afghanistan

(30 Aug) *NorthJersey.Com*, By Todd South

Edward Long was a career Army National Guardsman, a fiery sergeant major who guarded suspected terrorists in overseas prisons and guided young soldiers through brutal 12-hour days in some of the most dangerous places on Earth. A model commander, rock-steady, fearless, driven by a spirit of duty.

“A very serious, strict, gung-ho first sergeant,” said one of his former colleagues. “A very squared-away soldier,” said another.

But Edward — married and the seeming personification of the Army’s hyper-masculine culture — harbored a secret.

A few times, shopping with his wife, he would glance at women’s clothing and imagine how the fabrics would feel on his skin. He’d look down at his hairy chest with disgust. After struggling mightily to tamp down those confusing impulses, he eventually acknowledged, to himself, that he’d had them all his life, dating from his childhood in Jersey City.

It wasn’t until 2005, at the age of 40, divorced for a second time and grappling with the depression that had started to consume him, that Edward began to confront his secret feelings and imagine a different future. He also discovered that many others shared those feelings. “It wasn’t something I made up,” he said. “I realized that I wasn’t broken.”

And he decided to find out, at last, what it would be like to release his female self.

The most terrifying moment in Edward Long’s life — a life that had already included time guarding prisoners in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and would later include tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan — came when he walked to the front door of his Kearny apartment in a black skirt, a white-and-black print blouse and a shoulder-length brunette wig. As his hand met the doorknob, he knew there would be no turning back.

Jennifer Long was about to make her entrance into the world.

“It was easier to jump out of an airplane,” she said in an expansive interview earlier this year.

Now, a decade after her debut, Jennifer has made history as a pioneer of another sort: She, along with another transgender veteran from New Jersey, persuaded the Army to change the names on their discharge papers to reflect their transition. And that victory — a clear break from the military’s outright denial of such requests — could leave a legacy for the thousands of Army veterans who have made the same transition.

But nothing is certain.

The deputy assistant secretary in the Army assigned to Jennifer’s case decided to overrule the original denial of her request. Another deputy, hearing a similar case, would be free to issue a starkly different judgment.

Essentially, a Department of Defense discharge paper — the innocuous-sounding Form 214 — is a lifeline for military veterans who have returned to civilian life. The form must be produced every time a veteran seeks any government benefit, from health care to college tuition to a housing subsidy. Proof of military service also is frequently requested when veterans apply for everything from a job to a mortgage to a business loan. It is even used as the official record for burials in military cemeteries.

Said D’Arcy Kemnitz, executive director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Bar Association, referring to another transgender veteran who is trying to get her Form 214 changed with the group’s help: “She could die tomorrow and have the wrong name on her tombstone at Arlington.”

Jennifer Long’s breakthrough comes at a time when America’s armed services are reexamining the role of transgender people in the military. Just last month, four years after the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell,” the ban on openly gay military service, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced a six-month plan for the branches to prepare to lift their ban on transgender soldiers. The plan includes a review of what it would take to implement open transgender service.

It also comes at a time of sweeping changes for the transgender community at large, when celebrities like Caitlyn Jenner and people in general — in every profession, age group, race and religion — are stepping up, identifying themselves and demanding their place in society.

Jennifer’s story offers a gripping account of one person’s struggle, under the most rigorous and unusual of circumstances, to transform her life.

Feelings versus image

After joining the Guard in 1983, Edward Long steadily climbed the ranks and worked as a welder when he wasn’t in uniform.

But there was always an inner tug at his outwardly rugged, macho image, a veneer that was on full view for the hundreds of soldiers whom he supervised.

His first overseas assignment was Cuba in 2004. Edward was sent to Guantánamo Bay to direct a unit in charge of guarding prisoners and moving them to and from interrogations at a particularly sensitive time, when photographs of abuse by U.S. soldiers at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq had shocked the nation and sparked condemnation overseas. It was, he said, a “pressure cooker” of a job.

But the months after his return were much tougher — the darkest time of Edward’s life, Jennifer says now. His second marriage had crumbled, he was struggling with post-deployment stress and, try as he might, he couldn’t escape his

perpetual yearning for a new life as a woman. “It was just there, and it was just gnawing at me,” she said recently.

At his lowest point, he contemplated suicide.

“Let’s just say this, I know what the end of a pistol tastes like,” she said.

Eventually, though, he sought the help of a counselor and managed to pull himself out of his despondency. And he began to connect online with a world he had avoided his whole life. He browsed through clothing websites, learning about women’s sizes and imagining himself wearing some of the fashions he found.

Finally, he decided to find out what it would be like to let Jennifer out into the world.

On a chilly spring day, he put on his new outfit and, heart pounding, walked to his car and drove into Manhattan. At 20th Street and Park Avenue, as the city buzzed around him, Edward felt Jennifer come alive.

He entered the Silver Swan — a bar he discovered through Internet chat rooms — that hosted Saturday night transgender parties. There, for the first time, he met people like him. Some were open about themselves, others were just beginning to explore new identities, still others were hiding from family and friends.

“I looked around and realized I was out,” Jennifer said. “It was sensory overload. It was just like one of those ‘Wow! Pinch me!’ moments.”

At first, he confined his visits to clubs to Saturday nights. But soon he was going out, in wigs and women’s clothing, on weeknights — and then nearly every free moment. Sipping drinks in Manhattan or shopping for dresses at Westfield Garden State Plaza made him happy.

Little things tripped Edward up occasionally, like navigating the snow- and ice-covered steps outside his small apartment building in heels. He fell a few times.

But the changes, being able to shake someone’s hand and introduce himself as Jennifer, made it worthwhile.

“It was magical almost,” Jennifer recalled in the interview.

Morning struggle

Yet the reality of Edward — of his cherished career as a guardsman — always loomed, shattering the fragile new identity that Jennifer was building for herself. That tug of war played out nearly every morning at the kitchen sink as Jennifer, now dressed in camouflage and getting ready for another day as an Army recruiter, would rub off her nail polish, the cotton balls piling up and the tears flowing.

Finally, Edward would straighten up, wipe away the last of those tears, breathe deeply and march back into his old life.

Ironically, his second deployment, this time to Iraq, would provide a strange comfort zone at an unsettling time.

By all accounts, Edward’s time at Camp Bucca, a massive prison compound that warehoused 27,000 inmates at its height in 2007 — including nine men who later would become top ISIS commanders, said the Soufan Group, a terrorism research organization — was backbreaking. He supervised 450 Ugandan army soldiers who were responsible for perimeter security, which entailed searching endless lines of vehicles entering and leaving the compound 24 hours a day.

But it was also in Iraq where Edward said he finally made the decision that he’d been agonizing over: He would retire from the Army, his home since he was 18, and start on the road to a new gender. For him, that would mean extensive hormone treatments. Surgery at his age, he believed, would be too risky and expensive.

In the short term, that meant Edward would embark on a second, very personal mission during his tour: He knew the hormones he would soon take would deplete muscle mass and add fatty tissue, so he resolved to lose enough weight to counteract those effects. He arrived in Iraq with 210 pounds on his 5-foot-8 frame. He left weighing 158.

Back home, in March 2009, Edward visited the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, a Manhattan clinic that treats transgender patients, where he was prescribed estradiol, a form of estrogen, and spironolactone, a drug that suppresses the production of testosterone.

The mix set off a hormonal storm in his nearly 50-year-old body. For every emotional peak there was an equally potent emotional valley. He could be disoriented and exhausted at once.

He also had facial and body hair removed. The pain was so intense — a technician inserted a needle into each follicle, pulsed it with electricity and plucked out the hair — that “you want to tell secrets you didn’t even have,” he said.

At the same time, he began taking classes at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck to prepare for a new career in finance.

It was in one of those accounting classes, in the spring of 2010, that a call to his cellphone broke his concentration: His country needed him again.

This time, in Afghanistan.

It was a jolt to a man who had carefully plotted not only his gender transitioning but also his retirement into civilian life. And it posed a dilemma: Should Edward continue with the body-bending hormones he had been taking for nearly a year or start all over again when he came home? The hormones had

already started to soften his skin, and there were smooth patches on his face intermingled with some remaining stubble.

He decided to cut his dosage in half so the pills would last for the full deployment and he could at least maintain the advances he'd already made. He figured that, since his duties were to advise foreign and Afghan troops, not to haul a gun and heavy equipment, he could handle the job.

But the medications thinned his blood, making a deep cut or a grazing gunshot wound potentially deadly. So Edward folded a piece of paper, with his medications listed on it, and taped it to the backside of his dog tags — just in case.

It turned out his secret wasn't so secret anyway. His hormone meds were actually listed on his chart when he went for a pre-deployment physical — the military has the power to search for all prescribed drugs using a soldier's Social Security number — but no one asked about it. To this day, Jennifer has no idea why the military doctor let it go.

Painful body armor

As he put on his combat gear to ship out, Edward was in agony. The estrogen had caused breasts to begin to develop, and dropping 72 pounds of body armor onto his tender frame, something he'd done effortlessly hundreds of times, set off waves of pain. He let out a short gasp and winced.

"Dude, what's wrong with you?" a soldier asked, looking at him sideways.

"Just adjusting the gear," he said, grimacing as he tucked his thumbs under the shoulder straps and lifted them up to relieve the pressure.

Edward worked for 10 months at Forward Operating Base Kapisa, near the volatile Hindu Kush mountain range at the Pakistan border, as a liaison between the U.S. Army and the French military and Afghan troops. It was the war's deadliest period, when nearly 1,000 U.S. troops were killed.

His body was continuing to change. He lost some muscle and gained some weight, as doctors had warned. His developing breasts would have been noticeable in a T-shirt, but he managed to keep them hidden behind his full uniform and combat gear.

His rank provided some privacy — he didn't have to share a sleeping area and the showers were divided into stalls — so he felt able to keep his secret. And that was critical to him: During his time in the service, the military considered changing genders a form of mental illness, which meant immediate expulsion if detected.

Then, several months into his tour of duty, he met U.S. Air Force Capt. Ann Voght. When she first saw Edward in the dining area, she said recently, she noticed his warm smile and how smooth his cheeks were. Most men shaved daily and, in

the desert conditions, rough skin or razor bumps were common.

A short time later, when Edward went to her office because of a rash on his leg, the two chatted and both felt a connection, they said.

Voght, or "Annie," as Edward would come to call her, was a friendly light in a lonely place. There was something about her he felt he could trust. So before he left the base on a weeklong training mission, he brought his medical records to her and asked her to read them when she had a chance.

Voght gave him a quizzical look but agreed.

When he returned, he went to a makeshift café in the dining area, hoping he might run into Voght. And there she was. She hurried to his table, leaned forward and whispered, "I know."

It was the first time Edward had revealed his secret to anyone outside the transgender community, and he poured out his story. He told her about the years of confusion, his secret life in New York, how he reached his decision to transition. Afterward, Voght introduced him to the people in a small Air Force detachment, made up mostly of women.

One of them was Air Force Master Sgt. Jeannette Williams, who worked in the operations office. As one of the few black women on the base, she, too, felt isolated and could see some of that same pain in Edward.

"We kind of realized that we shared some of the same emotional struggles," Williams recalled in an interview.

Over time, Edward would share his secret with nearly a dozen people.

As the days heated up during that Afghan spring, concealing his changing body in jackets and fleece coats was becoming more of a challenge. One day at the café, the group gave Edward a plain cardboard box. He opened it to find six sand-colored, military-issue sports bras.

In the middle of a combat zone, a world away from home, this symbol of acceptance by his fellow soldiers was overwhelming.

"We were out there in the middle of nowhere and all we had was each other," Williams said.

Edward on Form 214

In May 2012, a year after returning from Afghanistan, Edward Joseph Long walked into a courtroom in Hudson County, swore an oath before a state judge, and walked out as Jennifer Marie Long.

Three months later, the nearly 30-year National Guard veteran, the soldier his colleagues knew as Edward, went to

Fort Dix in earrings, makeup, shoulder-length hair and heels to complete her retirement. She drove away with the Army in her rearviewmirror.

But while the retirement was official, the struggle wasn't over. Jennifer's discharge papers, Form 214, called her Edward.

Her troubles began when she applied for education benefits. The request was delayed because her name didn't match the discharge papers and she had to provide records proving that Edward and Jennifer were the same person.

She soon realized that every time she submitted Form 214 to apply for any kind of benefit, or even for a background check when she sought her first job, she would run into the same kind of scrutiny. She was living openly as Jennifer, but to the Army she would forever be Edward.

That's when a friend introduced her to Barbra Siperstein, herself a transgender Army veteran and a member of the Democratic National Committee, who was working to remove a requirement in New Jersey law that a transgender person must show proof of sex-change surgery before his or her birth certificate can be changed.

Siperstein recruited Jennifer for her campaign. Jennifer testified in Trenton on behalf of the bill — which was passed by the state Legislature but vetoed this month by Governor Christie — and, in talks with advocates, she explained her challenges with her discharge papers.

It turned out that the state ACLU had already begun work on the same issue with a veteran named Nicolas, who was born female and transitioned to male years after leaving the Army. The pair joined forces and, last year, Jennifer and Nicolas formally asked that their discharge records — the all-important Form 214 — be changed.

Form as history

Essentially, Form 214 is viewed by the military as a living piece of history. Any change to it, the thinking goes, would be a breach of historical accuracy, and as such, the branches of the military have rarely — if ever — agreed to change it to reflect a sex change.

Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness, a non-profit advocacy group that opposes open service by transgender soldiers, supports that viewpoint, saying that the purpose of a discharge document is to record a vital fragment of history and to change it retroactively is wrong.

In fact, she said, altering the document, rather than issuing a supplemental one, would deny that Edward Long had ever served in the Army at all.

"That doesn't make sense," Donnelly said. "That's Orwellian, and it's beyond the pale."

On the other side of the debate is Evan Young, president of the Transgender American Veterans Association. Young was born female and is now male.

Through an odd twist, Young's Form 214 actually reflects his identity; he had submitted paperwork with his new name when he transferred to a different command, and the officer there approved the change without challenging the reason behind it. But the Army caught up with it and began an investigation just when Young was preparing for a medical discharge. As a result, someone wrote in the memo section of his discharge papers that Evan previously had a female name, alerting any prospective employer that he'd undergone a sex change.

"For me, it's caused a lot of anxiety, to the point that I don't want to apply for a job because I get outed every time," Young said.

Jennifer and Nicolas, who declined to provide his last name for publication, made their cases with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union. At first, their requests were denied by an Army review board. But then, last November, the deputy assistant secretary charged with signing off on that board's decisions ordered the government to reissue Form 214 to reflect their new names. That secretary, Francine Blackmon, declined interview requests for this article.

The military hasn't offered an explanation as to why those decisions, a clear break from its history on the issue, were made, why at least three other transgender veterans won similar rulings since then — or whether those changes might be part of the government's slow evolution of its view of transgender soldiers.

Army spokesman Wayne Hall could not confirm whether Jennifer and Nicolas were the first to be granted new discharge papers to reflect their change of gender. Online databases for the service branches show at least 54 denials and no approvals of such requests by the Army since 1999, the earliest documented denial listed.

Likewise, the Defense Department office that oversees the boards — whose mission is to "correct errors in or remove injustices from" military records — could not provide the number of denials or confirm whether other name change requests had been granted. The Record found a separate instance in which the Air Force board issued new discharge paperwork in 2008 for one applicant, but the board would provide no further information.

But representatives of the boards said in emails that there has been no change in department policy on the issue.

Kemnitz, the president of the LGBT bar association, said that without an official policy change by the military, there is no guarantee that future veterans will be treated the same.

"It's our job to just keep hammering," she said.

Life is good

Nearly a decade after Edward Long began exploring his feminine identity, and five years after he decided to embark on his transition, Jennifer Long is enjoying her life.

"I am now living as my authentic self, something I thought would never be possible," she wrote in a recent email. "It has given me the confidence to live my life to the fullest."

She commutes from her Hudson County home to her job as a financial representative in Fairfield. In March, she told her boss about her story and was overwhelmed by the support she received. She's taken up backpacking again and started

playing the cello. Last year, she was elected commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1302 in Kearny, where she organizes care packages and homecoming events for members of her old Guard unit.

Her mother visits from Florida and laughs when she sometimes mistakes Jennifer's house slippers for her own.

<http://www.northjersey.com/news/a-soldier-changes-gender-from-edward-to-jennifer-with-stops-in-gitmo-iraq-and-afghanistan-video-1.1400721>

13. Dismantling Military's Transgender Ban To Begin Monday

(3 Sep) USA Today, By Tom Vanden Brook

Top Pentagon officials plan to meet Monday to lay out the road map for allowing transgender troops to serve openly in the military, a Defense Department official said Wednesday.

Meantime, on Tuesday, Defense Secretary Ash Carter sent a memo to top military brass and civilians formally outlining his plan that would protect transgender troops from being discharged and directs officials to develop a plan within six months to incorporate those troops into the ranks.

How transgender troops will be housed, what uniforms they'll be permitted to wear and what medical treatments they'll be entitled to will be among the key issues for the Pentagon to resolve, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss details of the discussions publicly.

"The working group will start with the assumption that transgender persons can serve openly without adverse impact on military effectiveness and readiness unless and except where objective, practical impediments are identified, and shall present its recommendations to me within 180 days," Carter wrote in his memo.

Earlier this month, Carter announced that decisions on discharging transgender troops, who are barred for medical reasons from serving, would be raised to the top levels of the Defense Department. Each of the services in recent months had made it more difficult for commanders to relieve transgender troops from duty by placing the decision in the hands of a senior civilian.

Effective July 13, transgender troops cannot be discharged or denied re-enlistment unless the top Pentagon official for personnel, Brad Carson, gives his "personal approval," the memo says.

A similar directive was issued before the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," the Pentagon's policy that had banned gay and lesbian troops from serving openly. It effectively ended the military's discharge of those troops before the ban was rescinded formally in 2011.

Medical benefits will likely be one of the most vexing issues for repealing the ban on transgender troops, the official said. For instance, will a soldier be allowed to deploy to a forward operating base in a war zone while he or she is undergoing hormone therapy?

The military has already taken a small step in determining who pays for such treatment. In February, USA TODAY reported that the Army had approved hormone therapy for Chelsea Manning, the convicted leaker of national security secrets, for transition to a woman at the Army's Fort Leavenworth prison. Manning is both an inmate and a soldier.

In addition, the Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes that transgender men and women can qualify for medical treatment. The VA pays for hormone treatment and counseling for those who qualify.

A report by former U.S. surgeon general Joycelyn Elders, sponsored by a LGBT advocacy group, noted that denying transgender troops hormone treatment is inconsistent with treatment offered to other troops. The report estimates that there are 15,000 transgender troops in the ranks.

The Pentagon does not track how many troops it has discharged for being transgender.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/07/29/defense-secretary-ashton-carter-chelsea-manning-transgender/30828647/>

14. 'Force of the Future': career flexibility, fewer moves

(30 Aug) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman

A detailed blueprint for how to rebuild the military personnel system has landed on Defense Secretary Ash Carter's desk.

The dozens of recommendations from the Pentagon's top personnel officials would fundamentally change how the military recruits, pays, promotes and manages the active-duty

force of 1.3 million troops, according to a draft copy of the report obtained by Military Times.

The so-called "Force of the Future" reform package aims to yank the Pentagon's longstanding one-size-fits-all personnel system into the Information Age by sweeping away many laws, policies and traditions that date back as far as World War II.

The proposals are designed to address Carter's concerns that the military and its antiquated personnel system will struggle to recruit and retain the kind of high-skilled force needed for the 21st century as the digital revolution continues to gather speed and momentum.

Carter is expected to review the 120-page report and publicly endorse the bulk of the recommendations by the end of September, according to several defense officials.

The proposals will cost money — for targeted pay raises for troops, to build massive new computer systems, to send troops to Ivy League civilian graduate schools and to create new offices with highly skilled employees, among other things. In total, the package of reforms might cost more than \$1 billion a year, according to one defense official familiar with the plan.

In that sense, the proposals hitting Carter's desk signal an abrupt change in the Pentagon leadership's views on military personnel.

Just a couple of years ago, the top concern of the Pentagon brass seemed to be the soaring cost of people and the sense that per-troop spending growth was unsustainable and eating into funds for weapons systems development modernization.

That prompted Congress to cut annual military pay raises to their lowest level in generations.

But the new report includes no major direct cost-cutting measures. Instead, it is threaded with targeted pay raises, added benefits and modernization efforts for the new forcewide personnel system.

"We should stop thinking about our people as a cost center but rather as a profit center. They're not an expense, they're an investment," Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Brad Carson said in a recent interview with Defense News, a Military Times affiliate.

Carson, who has led the internal reform effort, acknowledged its costs but suggested they are a fraction of the \$500 billion-plus annual defense budget and pale in comparison to many of the Pentagon's other expenses.

"We're talking about something that might be half the cost of an Ohio-class submarine, one-fifth the cost of a new aircraft carrier, the cost of a few fighter planes over time. ... The amount we're really talking about here would hardly supplant any other priority in the department," Carson said.

"It's harder than ever before to maintain a lasting technological superiority over our adversaries. But the thing that has always made us great, and will continue to make us great, is our people. ... That will be our lasting competitive advantage," Carson said.

The fast-tracked reform effort is controversial in some corners of the Pentagon, making it unclear whether the detailed proposals will take effect and have a lasting impact. The report, circulated internally on Aug. 3, is facing some pushback, especially among the military services, according to several defense officials.

A top concern among critics is the feasibility of adding programs that will cost billions of taxpayer dollars at a time when the department continues to face the unforgiving, if arbitrary, budget caps known as sequestration. And the effort to continue scaling back troops' pay and benefits remains official Defense Department policy.

Some of the most far-reaching proposals in the reform package would require action from Congress; others could become reality with a stroke of Carter's pen. And others would require support from the individual services as part of the annual military budget drill.

Defense officials caution that the draft copy still can change and that Carter will ultimately decide which proposals to approve. A final version is likely to emerge this fall.

Here's a rundown of some key proposals outlined in the draft copy of the Force of the Future report obtained by Military Times.

New pay tables

The Pentagon should ask Congress for authority to fundamentally change the military pay system by creating new basic pay tables for high-demand career fields and allowing commanders to dole out merit-based cash bonuses to individual troops.

The aim is to address one of Carter's top concerns — that today's one-size-fits-all personnel system is incapable of competing for the best people in cybersecurity and other high-tech fields where the private sector offers far more lucrative compensation packages.

The specific proposal would create a pilot program allowing the individual services to "amend" the pay tables for five occupational specialties that face particularly intense competition from the private sector.

Moreover, the services should have authority to use some of their existing budgets for special pays and incentive pays to reward individual troops in other career fields for good performance. Current practice is to award such bonuses to entire career fields regardless of individual performance.

Repeal 'up or out'

The Pentagon should ask Congress to suspend the federal law that limits the number of times an officer can be passed over for promotion before being forced to leave service. The aim is to make promotions based on experience and performance rather than time in grade. That means some officers would move up the ranks more quickly, while others may remain at the same paygrade for many years.

Removing those up-or-out caps could encourage officers to pursue nontraditional assignments or develop technical expertise without fear that their career progression will suffer.

Current rules generally give officers only a small window of time to earn promotion and force them to compete against their peers as defined by their "year-group," or time of commissioning. That's why today's officers often hew to a very narrow career path to ensure they complete all tasks and assignments deemed desirable by a promotion board. Those who postpone such traditional requirements in the allotted time can be passed over for promotion and forced to separate.

Removing those time-in-grade caps would also allow officers to have longer careers.

Flexible 'joint' requirements

Officers should spend far less time earning their "Joint Officer Qualified" designation, a key to promotion under the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Current rules force many officers to spend several years in a job specifically tagged as a "joint billet." The policy stems from post-Vietnam era concerns that the individual services fostered a parochial culture that diminished the ability of the services to work together effectively.

But after almost 30 years, the new Pentagon report says it's time to change those rules.

The Pentagon should ask Congress to change the federal law dictating joint requirements by expanding the definition of "joint" and removing minimum assignment tour lengths for such positions. That could lead to replacing the current Joint Duty Assignment List that enumerates thousands of specific jobs fulfilling the requirement and replace it with a system that allows officers to accrue points through a more flexible process in which various military missions technically can be approved as "joint."

Even without congressional approval, the defense secretary could give the services new authority to waive the Joint Officer Qualified requirements for general or flag officers whose "promotion is based primarily on scientific or technical qualifications and for which appropriate joint assignments do not really exist," the report says.

Career intermissions

The military should encourage closer ties with the civilian business community by creating 50 billets for both officers

and senior noncommissioned officers to pursue tours with private-sector companies.

A "tour with industry," or TWI, would be available to those in paygrades E-7 up through O-6. Such tours likely would focus on military career fields with prominent private-sector counterparts, such as logistics, program management or cybersecurity.

Many of those billets would be awarded to the best candidates, regardless of service affiliation. An additional active-duty service obligation of at least 1.5 years would be required for each year assigned to a TWI, a measure that would prevent officers from deciding to separate and immediately go work for that company as a civilian.

In a move designed in part to help retain female service members, the Pentagon recommends lifting the cap on the services' Career Intermission Programs.

Currently existing as service-level pilot programs, these intermissions amount to sabbatical-style leaves of absence that are in many cases used as a form of family leave.

Technical career tracks

The reform plan recognizes that not every service member aspires to command positions; some prefer to hone their skills and practice them in the operational force for many years.

To accommodate those service members, the Pentagon's reform effort calls for the creation of a technical career track. That would allow individuals to remain in their occupational specialty but no longer assume key developmental positions or compete for command. Instead, those troops would spend more time in the operational force or sharing their expertise as instructors at advanced training programs.

This would be less common in combat arms careers but may be widely used for pilots, lawyers, intelligence specialists, cyber warriors or others whose skills grow, rather than atrophy, with age.

These technical track troops would have promotions and pay raises determined through an alternative system. In effect, the report says, the current up-or-out system would be replaced by a "perform-or-out" system.

More civilian schooling

More officers should attend civilian graduate schools, according to the draft proposal.

The goal here is to diversify the officer corps' education and provide the force with more nontraditional expertise in subjects such as technology, business management, public policy and foreign policy.

That would require a policy change to more broadly recognize civilian graduate degrees as fulfilling the "joint professional military education" requirements prioritized by promotion boards.

The draft report suggests a new benchmark that at least 30 percent of the graduate degrees earned by officers each year should be from a civilian institution. The report pencils in \$64 million annually to cover increased tuition costs.

This proposal also suggests that the services offer to send more enlisted troops to receive undergraduate degrees if those service members make additional commitments to return to the enlisted force to take on leadership positions as senior noncommissioned officers.

Fewer moves

Several recommendations in the report would give service members and their families more geographic stability. Today's troops move about once every two and a half years, on average, and some top personnel officials believe that should be more like once every four years.

To that end, the report says, the services should develop options that grant troops their first choice of duty station in exchange for an extended service commitment, according to the report.

The duration of important leadership posts and management positions could extend to reduce turnover and encourage more long-term planning. Fewer joint billet requirements could reduce the need for frequent moves. And allowing highly-skilled troops to opt out of the command-preparation track would reduce their need to leave the operational force.

Culture changes

A key recommendation calls on the Pentagon to attempt a sweeping reevaluation of its own culture and try to shed the constraints of traditional bureaucracy. On a practical level, this would mean more telecommuting, desk "hoteling" and fewer cubicles.

"Increasingly, research shows that employees thrive in a variety of office settings designed to maximize creativity and collaboration, either by creating quiet spaces or open-floor plan meeting places," according to the draft report.

More broadly, the Pentagon should create an internal social network inspired by LinkedIn. Budgets would be adjusted to offer "micro-grants" for local offices or low-level commands to develop new ideas or support new training programs.

The Defense Department headquarters would encourage more "small temporary groups or distributed networks to assemble for high-intensity, short-duration, cross-disciplinary projects to solve a problem collaboratively (e.g., 'hackathon' model), competitively ('innovation contests'), or virtually (e.g., crowdsourcing)," according to the report.

Those efforts would be coordinated by a newly created "Defense Innovation Network" staffed to support the military components.

Broader diversity

The report recommends new ways to improve diversity — not just in terms of gender and race but also professional diversity.

To reduce professional homogeneity, the Defense Department should set a forcewide goal that at least 25 percent of the members sitting on command selection and promotion boards should be from outside the specific competitive category under selection. In other words, officers would be evaluated in part by other officers from outside their immediate branch or career field.

The services also should conduct a series of mock promotion boards that are race- and gender-blind. Stripping all photos, names and pronouns from promotion packets and then analyzing the outcome will help the services identify any subtle biases that might exist in the current system.

New 'people analytics'

A key pillar of the Force of the Future plan is the creation of vast new Pentagon-level central computer system to track detailed information about military personnel. One piece would be a multi-component personnel tracking system that would make it far easier for troops — and all of their records — to transfer between the active and reserve force or serve in nontraditional assignments elsewhere in the Defense Department.

Another part of the data modernization effort would be creation of a new Office of People Analytics to help consolidate and standardize the data currently scattered across a stove-piped, service-level record-keeping system that has changed very little since the 1980s.

Combined with new testing and evaluation methods, the OPA would provide information to help leaders answer important questions such as: Are the best and brightest troops staying in the military or leaving? What are the most effective retention tools? How effective are training programs? What qualities or skills are a predictor of success in a military career?

Refining recruiting

The personnel reform proposals would fundamentally change both how the military finds new entrants and the incentives directed toward street-level recruiters.

The services should launch pilot programs that offer cash rewards for recruiters based exclusively on the number of their recruits who successfully complete the first two years of service. In the same vein, recruiters should receive no credit for recruits who fail to complete initial training.

One option that will be on the table is the creation of an "enterprise recruiting system" that would coordinate all of the military services and the civilian sector, allowing those components to share information and pass along recruits among one another.

The recruiting process also should include a new battery of tests to provide a more complete picture of individual recruits, their existing skills and strengths.

Those tests would go beyond the current Armed Forces Vocation Aptitude Battery, or ASVAB, largely considered a measure of academic-style intelligence, or "cognitive" abilities.

The report says new tests should include "non-cognitive" traits that are more subtle but also contribute to future success, such as motivation, discipline, social skills and resilience, according to the recommendations.

Providing recruiters more special pays and incentives will cost money. But the report suggests that would be offset by savings derived from better recruits who don't wash out at the same rate. A 1 percent reduction in first-term attrition would save the Defense Department close to \$100 million annually, the report says.

'Historic' changes

15. Top junior officers picked for new grad school program

(31 Aug) *Navy Times*, Mark D. Faram

Lt. Keith Hollis was getting out of the Navy.

It wasn't that the 2010 Naval Academy grad disliked the Navy — it was just that the service conflicted with his personal goal of getting a graduate degree. After getting accepted to the prestigious Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College, he examined his options.

"I looked at the options I had at the time with the help of my command," he recalled. "But unfortunately the only thing available to me to pursue this personal goal of mine for the past nine years was to get out of the Navy."

So he submitted his resignation letter, but a chance meeting with his commanding officer, Capt. John F. Meier, changed all that.

"I talked to my captain several times about my situation, most recently in the middle of July," Hollis said. "I told him the only reason I was getting out of the Navy was to pursue this goal, it has nothing to do with my experience."

Meier, the CO of the future carrier Gerald R. Ford, said he was going to find out and get back to him.

Hollis is now one of the first three officers accepted for a plum new program: Going to an elite graduate school on the Navy's dime while still getting their Navy pay. Officials say they plan

Many defense experts express some doubt about the reforms and Carter's ability to get Congress to support them.

While this Congress has backed other reform efforts — for example, significant changes to the military retirement system — this particular effort comes in the lame-duck phase of the Obama administration and lawmakers will soon be anxious about next year's elections, making votes on controversial issues unlikely.

The "Force of the Future" proposals are far more ambitious than any others in recent memory, noted said Richard Kohn, who teaches military history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"It's really its historic," Kohn said in an interview after reviewing the draft copy of the report obtained by *Military Times*.

"It's been almost 25 years since the end of the Cold War and this is the first real attempt by the Defense Department to compete in the labor force for the recruiting, retention and development of people" whom the military needs, he said.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/careers/2015/08/28/force-future-report-ash-carter-review/32476549/>

to select up to 30 officers for this next year, a move intended to keep the best and brightest.

This past May, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said the service needed to expand offerings of full-time graduate education at top graduate schools, something many corporations already do.

The service has sent officers to school full-time for years at the Naval War College, Naval Postgraduate School and through fellowships at many top schools — but it hasn't been enough and officials say they are bleeding talent to the private sector because of it.

"We need more," Mabus told the graduating class at the Naval Academy in a May 13 address.

This year, the Navy is testing this yet-to-be-named program, sending SWO Lt. John Ondik to Yale and Lt. Joel Jacobs to Harvard.

This program is exclusively for officers and there are no plans to offer graduate or undergraduate education to enlisted sailors under this program, Navy officials say.

For now, officials are calling the program CVINS, which simply means "Civilian Institutions." An instruction is being

drafted and is expected on the street sometime soon, personnel officials say.

Next fall, the plan is to send 30 officers to school between their division officer and department head tours.

But unlike other programs, who goes won't be up to a detailer or "big Navy." They'll be chosen from the leadership of the war-fighting communities — including aviation, surface warfare, submarines, naval special warfare, explosive ordnance disposal and information dominance. Many of the details have yet to be worked out, but here's what's been decided so far.

Commands will nominate their best and community leaders will set up a process that selects the overall top performers.

Once offered the program, officers will have to apply to the school of their choice and get accepted. Officials say the Navy is not cutting deals with schools, nor are they streamlining selection for officers behind the scenes.

Once accepted at their school, they'll remain on active-duty with full pay and benefits and will be cut orders to move to the school of their choice.

To take the orders, the officers must agree to a three-year obligation once they complete school, regardless of whether it is a one or two-year course of study.

Meier says that sending junior officers like Hollis to top schools is the right answer.

"If you think about it, the future of our Navy is in the hands of these junior officers who will go on to command ships and squadrons and lead the Navy at the highest levels someday," Meier said.

But in the near-term — especially as the Ford-class carriers come online — preserving the corporate knowledge will benefit the Navy.

"The Ford-class of carrier is a complete revolution in technology and systems — we will really need these sailors and officers to return to this and other ships of this class and re-use the knowledge they are gaining," he said.

16. 'Force of the Future': career flexibility, fewer moves

(1 Sep) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman

A detailed blueprint for how to rebuild the military personnel system has landed on Defense Secretary Ash Carter's desk.

The dozens of recommendations from the Pentagon's top personnel officials would fundamentally change how the military recruits, pays, promotes and manages the active-duty force of 1.3 million troops, according to a draft copy of the report obtained by Military Times.

Lt. Joel Jacobs, a 13-year Navy veteran and naval flight officer, was also ready to leave the Navy to attend Harvard Business School.

"I'd explored all opportunities from the career intermission program to taking my chances on coming back and resigning altogether," he said. His command tried every avenue to keep him in uniform.

Then Jacobs was named Naval Flight Officer of the year by Naval Air Forces.

The fact the Navy's top NFO, a Top Gun graduate, was strongly considering leaving for school made him the de-facto poster child for the new program. When Mabus announced the new program in May, he said Jacobs would be allowed to attend Harvard on active-duty.

Jacobs says his dilemma is one faced by many junior officers.

"Many of us have the dual goals of continuing to serve in the Navy as well as advancing ourselves through graduate education," he said. "And like me, many are willing [to] resign and take their chances on coming back later to meet those goals — being able to do both will definitely keep more of us in the Navy."

Ondik, another SWO, who has served on the cruiser Mobile Bay and the destroyer Wayne E. Meyer, found himself in graduate school by design. He was serving as a Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor at Yale University and was accepted to Yale's School of Management. He says the two years will help him be a better officer.

"This will make me a more effective leader as I go to be a department head, and I'll be the one who the junior officers, the division officers like I was, look to."

"I'll be able to take the street-smart leadership training I got on the job in the Navy and combine it with the book learning that a program like Yale can provide with all the analyzing and critical thinking practical study that goes along with it — and if I can pass that along to my division officers, everybody, including the Navy, wins."

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/08/31/top-junior-officers-picked-new-grad-school-program/71314798/>

The so-called "Force of the Future" reform package aims to yank the Pentagon's longstanding one-size-fits-all personnel system into the Information Age by sweeping away many laws, policies and traditions that date back as far as World War II.

The proposals are designed to address Carter's concerns that the military and its antiquated personnel system will struggle to recruit and retain the kind of high-skilled force needed for

the 21st century as the digital revolution continues to gather speed and momentum.

Carter is expected to review the 120-page report and publicly endorse the bulk of the recommendations by the end of September, according to several defense officials.

The proposals will cost money — for targeted pay raises for troops, to build massive new computer systems, to send troops to Ivy League civilian graduate schools and to create new offices with highly skilled employees, among other things. In total, the package of reforms might cost more than \$1 billion a year, according to one defense official familiar with the plan.

In that sense, the proposals hitting Carter's desk signal an abrupt change in the Pentagon leadership's views on military personnel.

Just a couple of years ago, the top concern of the Pentagon brass seemed to be the soaring cost of people and the sense that per-troop spending growth was unsustainable and eating into funds for weapons systems development modernization.

That prompted Congress to cut annual military pay raises to their lowest level in generations.

But the new report includes no major direct cost-cutting measures. Instead, it is threaded with targeted pay raises, added benefits and modernization efforts for the new forcewide personnel system.

"We should stop thinking about our people as a cost center but rather as a profit center. They're not an expense, they're an investment," Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Brad Carson said in a recent interview with Defense News, a Military Times affiliate.

Carson, who has led the internal reform effort, acknowledged its costs but suggested they are a fraction of the \$500 billion-plus annual defense budget and pale in comparison to many of the Pentagon's other expenses.

"We're talking about something that might be half the cost of an Ohio-class submarine, one-fifth the cost of a new aircraft carrier, the cost of a few fighter planes over time. ... The amount we're really talking about here would hardly supplant any other priority in the department," Carson said.

"It's harder than ever before to maintain a lasting technological superiority over our adversaries. But the thing that has always made us great, and will continue to make us great, is our people. ... That will be our lasting competitive advantage," Carson said.

The fast-tracked reform effort is controversial in some corners of the Pentagon, making it unclear whether the detailed proposals will take effect and have a lasting impact. The report, circulated internally on Aug. 3, is facing some pushback, especially among the military services, according to several defense officials.

A top concern among critics is the feasibility of adding programs that will cost billions of taxpayer dollars at a time when the department continues to face the unforgiving, if arbitrary, budget caps known as sequestration. And the effort to continue scaling back troops' pay and benefits remains official Defense Department policy.

Some of the most far-reaching proposals in the reform package would require action from Congress; others could become reality with a stroke of Carter's pen. And others would require support from the individual services as part of the annual military budget drill.

Defense officials caution that the draft copy still can change and that Carter will ultimately decide which proposals to approve. A final version is likely to emerge this fall.

Here's a rundown of some key proposals outlined in the draft copy of the Force of the Future report obtained by Military Times.

New pay tables

The Pentagon should ask Congress for authority to fundamentally change the military pay system by creating new basic pay tables for high-demand career fields and allowing commanders to dole out merit-based cash bonuses to individual troops.

The aim is to address one of Carter's top concerns — that today's one-size-fits-all personnel system is incapable of competing for the best people in cybersecurity and other high-tech fields where the private sector offers far more lucrative compensation packages.

The specific proposal would create a pilot program allowing the individual services to "amend" the pay tables for five occupational specialties that face particularly intense competition from the private sector.

Moreover, the services should have authority to use some of their existing budgets for special pays and incentive pays to reward individual troops in other career fields for good performance. Current practice is to award such bonuses to entire career fields regardless of individual performance.

Repeal 'up or out'

The Pentagon should ask Congress to suspend the federal law that limits the number of times an officer can be passed over for promotion before being forced to leave service. The aim is to make promotions based on experience and performance rather than time in grade. That means some officers would move up the ranks more quickly, while others may remain at the same paygrade for many years.

Removing those up-or-out caps could encourage officers to pursue nontraditional assignments or develop technical expertise without fear that their career progression will suffer.

Current rules generally give officers only a small window of time to earn promotion and force them to compete against their peers as defined by their "year-group," or time of commissioning. That's why today's officers often hew to a very narrow career path to ensure they complete all tasks and assignments deemed desirable by a promotion board. Those who postpone such traditional requirements in the allotted time can be passed over for promotion and forced to separate.

Removing those time-in-grade caps would also allow officers to have longer careers.

Flexible 'joint' requirements

Officers should spend far less time earning their "Joint Officer Qualified" designation, a key to promotion under the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Current rules force many officers to spend several years in a job specifically tagged as a "joint billet." The policy stems from post-Vietnam era concerns that the individual services fostered a parochial culture that diminished the ability of the services to work together effectively.

But after almost 30 years, the new Pentagon report says it's time to change those rules.

The Pentagon should ask Congress to change the federal law dictating joint requirements by expanding the definition of "joint" and removing minimum assignment tour lengths for such positions. That could lead to replacing the current Joint Duty Assignment List that enumerates thousands of specific jobs fulfilling the requirement and replace it with a system that allows officers to accrue points through a more flexible process in which various military missions technically can be approved as "joint."

Even without congressional approval, the defense secretary could give the services new authority to waive the Joint Officer Qualified requirements for general or flag officers whose "promotion is based primarily on scientific or technical qualifications and for which appropriate joint assignments do not really exist," the report says.

Career intermissions

The military should encourage closer ties with the civilian business community by creating 50 billets for both officers and senior noncommissioned officers to pursue tours with private-sector companies.

A "tour with industry," or TWI, would be available to those in paygrades E-7 up through O-6. Such tours likely would focus on military career fields with prominent private-sector counterparts, such as logistics, program management or cybersecurity.

Many of those billets would be awarded to the best candidates, regardless of service affiliation. An additional active-duty service obligation of at least 1.5 years would be required for

each year assigned to a TWI, a measure that would prevent officers from deciding to separate and immediately go work for that company as a civilian.

In a move designed in part to help retain female service members, the Pentagon recommends lifting the cap on the services' Career Intermission Programs.

Currently existing as service-level pilot programs, these intermissions amount to sabbatical-style leaves of absence that are in many cases used as a form of family leave.

Technical career tracks

The reform plan recognizes that not every service member aspires to command positions; some prefer to hone their skills and practice them in the operational force for many years.

To accommodate those service members, the Pentagon's reform effort calls for the creation of a technical career track. That would allow individuals to remain in their occupational specialty but no longer assume key developmental positions or compete for command. Instead, those troops would spend more time in the operational force or sharing their expertise as instructors at advanced training programs.

This would be less common in combat arms careers but may be widely used for pilots, lawyers, intelligence specialists, cyber warriors or others whose skills grow, rather than atrophy, with age.

These technical track troops would have promotions and pay raises determined through an alternative system. In effect, the report says, the current up-or-out system would be replaced by a "perform-or-out" system.

More civilian schooling

More officers should attend civilian graduate schools, according to the draft proposal.

The goal here is to diversify the officer corps' education and provide the force with more nontraditional expertise in subjects such as technology, business management, public policy and foreign policy.

That would require a policy change to more broadly recognize civilian graduate degrees as fulfilling the "joint professional military education" requirements prioritized by promotion boards.

The draft report suggests a new benchmark that at least 30 percent of the graduate degrees earned by officers each year should be from a civilian institution. The report pencils in \$64 million annually to cover increased tuition costs.

This proposal also suggests that the services offer to send more enlisted troops to receive undergraduate degrees if those service members make additional commitments to

return to the enlisted force to take on leadership positions as senior noncommissioned officers.

Fewer moves

Several recommendations in the report would give service members and their families more geographic stability. Today's troops move about once every two and a half years, on average, and some top personnel officials believe that should be more like once every four years.

To that end, the report says, the services should develop options that grant troops their first choice of duty station in exchange for an extended service commitment, according to the report.

The duration of important leadership posts and management positions could extend to reduce turnover and encourage more long-term planning. Fewer joint billet requirements could reduce the need for frequent moves. And allowing highly-skilled troops to opt out of the command-preparation track would reduce their need to leave the operational force.

Culture changes

A key recommendation calls on the Pentagon to attempt a sweeping reevaluation of its own culture and try to shed the constraints of traditional bureaucracy. On a practical level, this would mean more telecommuting, desk "hoteling" and fewer cubicles.

"Increasingly, research shows that employees thrive in a variety of office settings designed to maximize creativity and collaboration, either by creating quiet spaces or open-floor plan meeting places," according to the draft report.

More broadly, the Pentagon should create an internal social network inspired by LinkedIn. Budgets would be adjusted to offer "micro-grants" for local offices or low-level commands to develop new ideas or support new training programs.

The Defense Department headquarters would encourage more "small temporary groups or distributed networks to assemble for high-intensity, short-duration, cross-disciplinary projects to solve a problem collaboratively (e.g., 'hackathon' model), competitively ('innovation contests'), or virtually (e.g., crowdsourcing)," according to the report.

Those efforts would be coordinated by a newly created "Defense Innovation Network" staffed to support the military components.

Broader diversity

The report recommends new ways to improve diversity — not just in terms of gender and race but also professional diversity.

To reduce professional homogeneity, the Defense Department should set a forcewide goal that at least 25 percent of the

members sitting on command selection and promotion boards should be from outside the specific competitive category under selection. In other words, officers would be evaluated in part by other officers from outside their immediate branch or career field.

The services also should conduct a series of mock promotion boards that are race- and gender-blind. Stripping all photos, names and pronouns from promotion packets and then analyzing the outcome will help the services identify any subtle biases that might exist in the current system.

New 'people analytics'

A key pillar of the Force of the Future plan is the creation of vast new Pentagon-level central computer system to track detailed information about military personnel. One piece would be a multi-component personnel tracking system that would make it far easier for troops — and all of their records — to transfer between the active and reserve force or serve in nontraditional assignments elsewhere in the Defense Department.

Another part of the data modernization effort would be creation of a new Office of People Analytics to help consolidate and standardize the data currently scattered across a stove-piped, service-level record-keeping system that has changed very little since the 1980s.

Combined with new testing and evaluation methods, the OPA would provide information to help leaders answer important questions such as: Are the best and brightest troops staying in the military or leaving? What are the most effective retention tools? How effective are training programs? What qualities or skills are a predictor of success in a military career?

Refining recruiting

The personnel reform proposals would fundamentally change both how the military finds new entrants and the incentives directed toward street-level recruiters.

The services should launch pilot programs that offer cash rewards for recruiters based exclusively on the number of their recruits who successfully complete the first two years of service. In the same vein, recruiters should receive no credit for recruits who fail to complete initial training.

One option that will be on the table is the creation of an "enterprise recruiting system" that would coordinate all of the military services and the civilian sector, allowing those components to share information and pass along recruits among one another.

The recruiting process also should include a new battery of tests to provide a more complete picture of individual recruits, their existing skills and strengths.

Those tests would go beyond the current Armed Forces Vocation Aptitude Battery, or ASVAB, largely considered a measure of academic-style intelligence, or "cognitive" abilities.

The report says new tests should include "non-cognitive" traits that are more subtle but also contribute to future success, such as motivation, discipline, social skills and resilience, according to the recommendations.

Providing recruiters more special pays and incentives will cost money. But the report suggests that would be offset by savings derived from better recruits who don't wash out at the same rate. A 1 percent reduction in first-term attrition would save the Defense Department close to \$100 million annually, the report says.

'Historic' changes

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While this Congress has backed other reform efforts — for example, significant changes to the military retirement system — this particular effort comes in the lame-duck phase of the

17. Leaning in Together

(1 Sep) USNI Blog, By Susannah Rose Stokes
If you look up the word "equalist" in Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, you will not find it. As I write this article, the word is underlined in red squiggles which, interestingly, not only highlights its grammatical inaccuracy, but also its significance on the page. Urban Dictionary defines the word as "one who defends the rights of all, without discriminating against the opposition's rights." I look at myself and see an equalist. I also see a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, a leader in my local community, a lover of people, and a woman.

I do not need to ask my fellow women military personnel – of any rank – if they too describe themselves as equalists. I know the answer. These women desire one thing in their personal and professional lives: equal opportunity to show their talents and pursue their goals. While these goals and talents are as diverse as those of the male military personnel, they also represent the beautiful individuality of the women who make up less than 15% of the armed forces. We do not want to be given a "hand;" we do not want to meet anything less than the standard; and, we do not want to discriminate against anyone else in the pursuit of our own success and happiness. We just want the same chance.

In our effort to succeed in our military work life, Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* has become one of our great guidebooks. Without a hint of feminist rant or cliché, Ms. Sandberg nails it. With intuitive understanding of the way women see themselves generally, she identifies what has held us back from becoming the fine leaders we can be, and then provides a nice roadmap for demolishing our own "glass ceilings" and getting there – even in that tritely termed "man's world."

Obama administration and lawmakers will soon be anxious about next year's elections, making votes on controversial issues unlikely.

The "Force of the Future" proposals are far more ambitious than any others in recent memory, noted said Richard Kohn, who teaches military history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"It's really its historic," Kohn said in an interview after reviewing the draft copy of the report obtained by Military Times.

"It's been almost 25 years since the end of the Cold War and this is the first real attempt by the Defense Department to compete in the labor force for the recruiting, retention and development of people" whom the military needs, he said.

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/careers/2015/08/28/force-future-report-ash-carter-review/32476549/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=New%20Campaign&utm_term=%2ASituation%20Report

The phenomenal success of the *Lean In* philosophy has been subsequently embodied in the "Lean In Circle," developed in recognition of the reality that life's challenges are more eagerly and effectively faced when we have support, rather than "going it alone."

The Lean In Circle is becoming an increasingly valuable mentoring program for the military because of the well-known challenges that have faced women in this choice of career. These groups offer young women – and men as well – an opportunity to get together and talk. In these forums, the new generation of women military personnel meet with more senior women that have experienced the same doubts and obstacles. Insecurities can be discussed without fear of judgment, and strategies developed for personal success.

The proof, as they say, is in the pudding. Lean In Circles are popping up on military bases around the world, both in garrison and deployed. Even the academies are getting in on a good thing. My *alma mater*, the U.S. Naval Academy, now has eight Lean In Circles, and circles are in place at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and the U.S. Military Academy.

One of the most notable side effects of leaning in is the way military women are more likely to actively seek and absorb inspiration in our daily lives, even beyond the circle. For example, I recently attended a conference to recognize the "Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California," published by Mount Saint Mary's University. The acclaimed actress, Geena Davis, founder of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in the Media, said something I now try to live by as I lean in: "If you can *see* it, you can *be* it." Applying this model

to the military, I believe that if you can *meet* it, you can *believe* it!

While I know it will not happen overnight, in the short 20-year span that I have experienced the military, first from the perspective of the daughter of a Marine Captain and sister of a Marine mortar man, to my own first-hand experiences as a Marine Officer, I have seen the Marine Corps – and other services as well – make strides toward eliminating gender bias and promoting a more equal playing field. For example, the Marine Corps has indicated its policy commitment to better representation of women among its top leadership – the current number of women Lieutenant Colonels and above is not nearly acceptable, and I am confident that this will one day change.

Thus, it appears to me that, while women in the military are leaning in toward a better future for themselves and their families, the military is making an effort to lean in as well, and needs to continue on this path. If we are going to work toward an environment free of gender bias – where Marines are Marines and not labeled as female or male first – then we junior women must take responsibility to seek mentorship from our leaders. This includes not only our “older and wiser” female leaders, but also our male leaders, whose unique

18. Navy's First Female F-14 Fighter Pilot Urges Women To 'Stay Focused' In Career Objectives

(2 Sep) Attleboro Sun Chronicle, By Paige Allen

The world's top golfers might be in town, but the spotlight was on area women Tuesday at TPC Boston.

Executive Women's Day was held for the fourth time at the Deutsche Bank Championship, bringing professional women from across the region together to connect and network with one another.

Carey Lohrenz, the Navy's first female F-14 Tomcat fighter pilot, delivered the keynote address, detailing the obstacles she encountered in her flight to the top, and urging women to take the next step in their careers – even if it seems scary or uncomfortable.

"Failure will happen. It's what you do with it that defines you," she said. "We all underestimate our ability to recover. Don't be afraid to fail."

Lohrenz recalled how she worked under a drill instructor who had never graduated a woman before – he didn't believe women should be in the military, she said.

She did graduate and went on to flight school, working hard to prove herself, but near the end was told the ban on women serving as combat pilots had not been lifted and the Navy didn't have a place for her.

She could leave the Navy, or find a way to serve in a different capacity.

"I was gutted," she said.

Lohrenz said she took a few minutes to pull herself together – surrounded by men, she didn't want to cry – before realizing

perspective can be most valuable. And, those leaders must feel charged to share their own experiences and advice with the goal of success for *all*.

We know that formal policy changes and implementation of mentoring programs will not alone solve the issue of gender inequality within the armed forces. But, they are a great start. These efforts, coupled with the passionate support of top commanders, down to most junior enlisted, will eventually result in a military culture that recognizes the unique value women bring to the force. Women will then embrace the opportunities they feel they lack now, and women representation in the armed forces will rise.

Imagine what the U.S. military will look like when we all lean in *together*.

First Lieutenant Susannah Stokes is currently the Family Readiness Officer for Marine Air Control Group 38 Headquarters aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego, California. She graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 2011.

<http://blog.usni.org/2015/09/01/leaning-in-together>

she had dared to be different than the others – all men – that had shown up.

"I dared to show up female," she said.

Lohrenz went back to her commanding officer, and said they needed to find a third option. They settled on keeping her on the same track, but as an instructor when she finished.

Then, the ban was lifted and she was able to fly in earnest.

"I just stayed focused on what the path was ahead. Stay focused on what it is you are trying to achieve," she said. "Don't be afraid to find a third way."

Lohrenz also urged women to push themselves, and said being fearless doesn't mean having no fears. It means feeling fear, but going ahead anyway.

"It's very dangerous to stay comfortable for too long," she said. "Don't be afraid to operate with that feeling of discomfort."

Before Lohrenz spoke, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito opened the day with a brief speech and a panel of women spoke about their experiences in the workplaces, how they've balanced having a family with a high-powered career and their advice for women looking to take the next step in their career.

"Be yourself. Figure out your own personal style and stick with it," said Jane Steinmetz, principal in Ernst & Young's financial services tax practice. "I have learned to motivate and influence within my personal style, and I'm doing just fine."

Angella Franklin, strategic account director at CVS/caremark, CVS Health, urged women to connect with mentors and advocates, find networking opportunities and make the effort to reach out, find the next step and go for it.

"If you want to grow in your career, you have to own your development," she said.

http://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/local_news/navy-s-first-female-f-fighter-pilot-urges-women/article_9e5ffa6f-f830-5a2f-99ae-271f6a26aabd.html

19. DoD's 'Future' Vision Doesn't Overlook Families

(30 Aug) *Military Times*, By Karen Jowers

Family advocates are pleased to see that provisions affecting families have been added to the latest drafts of the Defense Department's far-reaching "Force of the Future" plan.

"The first iteration of 'Force of the Future' didn't mention families," said Joyce Raezer, executive director of the National Military Family Association.

Raezer said she and others met with Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Brad Carson and brought up the need to include families.

"I'm pleased to see they're including some of that," she said. "If you're talking about the force of the future and looking at future demographics, women and families are an important part of that discussion."

But it remains to be seen what actually can be done with these ideas, she said, given the current budget environment and the fact that a new administration will be taking over within 16 months.

Among the family provisions in the latest report draft:

- **Longer tours at permanent duty stations of choice.** The services could create an "Additional Duty Service Obligation" authority allowing for longer tours of duty, to give service members better options to support the careers of their spouses or partners. Frequent moves cause disruptions in a variety of ways for military families, whether it's a spouse having to give up a job, or children who have to change schools. "Although other government agencies and many private firms offer alternative 'slow' and 'fast' tracks for partners to trade during their careers, [DoD] makes little effort to do the same," the proposal states. "Staggering milestone tours in order to develop needed skills, independent of time-based promotion management, can help to retain substantial return on investment in training, education and experience." This would require a change in law.
- **Expand parental leave for all military and civilian workers to 18 weeks per child during a career.** That includes adopted children. Under current policy, service members may take six weeks of convalescent

leave after giving birth; by law, married fathers may take only 10 days of paternity leave. Adoption leave maxes out at three weeks. The services have been reviewing their leave policies; for example, the Navy recently began offering 18 weeks of maternity leave for sailors and Marines.

- **Extend hours of child development centers.** The hours would overlap with service members' shifts by at least two hours at each end of the shift.
- **Limit deployments for new mothers.** This proposal would prohibit units from requiring new mothers to deploy within one year of giving birth or adopting a child.
- **Install "mother's rooms" throughout all installations.** This would make it easier for mothers who pump breast milk during the day for their babies. The service secretaries would ensure installation of these rooms to meet requirements of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
- **Improve fertility services for troops.** This could include allowing Tricare to cover advanced reproductive treatments such as in vitro fertilization, intrauterine insemination and freezing and storing of sperm and eggs. Tricare covers diagnoses of illnesses that can cause infertility and correction of any medical issues that may be causing the problem, but it does not cover IVF or artificial insemination. Some advanced procedures are available at cost for eligible patients on- or off-site at seven military treatment facilities across the U.S. Additional services are available at no charge to severely wounded personnel and their spouses as long as the member is on active duty. The report states that this proposal may positively affect retention, especially for female troops who "face demanding schedules during their prime childbearing years."

Staff writer Patricia Kime contributed to this story.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/2015/08/28/dods-future-vision-doesnt-overlook-families/32475523/>

20. The number of child abuse cases in the military hits a decade high

(2 Sep) *The Washington Post*, By Missy Ryan

Confirmed cases of abuse and neglect of military children increased markedly in 2014, Defense Department data showed on Wednesday, prompting concerns among Pentagon about efforts to safeguard the nation's over 1 million military children.

In fiscal year 2014, officials tracking family violence within the military confirmed 7,676 cases of child abuse or neglect, an increase of 10 percent from the previous year, according to annual statistics on child abuse and domestic violence.

Confirmed cases of neglect – which excludes physical and sexual abuse – rose by 14 percent, military officials said. The data, which has not been released publicly and was obtained by the Washington Post, contrasts with a years-long decline in child abuse and neglect among civilian families nationwide.

"It really did get our attention," a Defense Department official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the data. But officials equally acknowledged they don't fully

understand the reasons behind – or the significance of — the increase in 2014 abuse figures.

The number of abused and neglected military children dropped steadily from 2004 until 2008, when it began to rise again.

With only limited ability at the Pentagon to analyze complex social science data, the Pentagon has now hired an external expert in child abuse to scrutinize the worrying increase in instances of neglect.

“We’re hoping to take a deeper dive into the data in the next year,” the official said.

While the government has not yet released 2014 data on child abuse among the general population, the rate of sexual and physical abuse among Americans has [declined significantly](#) since the mid-1990s. Over that period, the number of neglect cases also declined, but at a slower rate.

David Finkelhor, director of the Crimes against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, said the rate of abuse among military families, at 5.6 victims per 1,000 children, remains well below that for the general population, which is around 9 per 1,000 nationally.

“I do think noticing something like that in the data really merits an investigation, to see what could be going on ... especially in something as important as the welfare of children,” Finkelhor said.

Yet he cautioned that the new Pentagon figures may be less indicative of a serious increase in child mistreatment than they appear at first glance.

While the number of cases of abuse and neglect rose in 2014, the actual number of child victims fell slightly to 5,838. Military officials have said such a discrepancy may be caused by the fact that a single child can be the subject of multiple incidents, or that multiple people could be charged in the abuse of a single child.

The data also shows a jump in the share of alleged child abusers who are female rather than male.

Military officials also received reports of 30 fatalities linked to child abuse or neglect in 2014, 18 of which were deaths among children less than 1 year old. There are 1.05 million children in U.S. military families.

21. MCPOCG: Coast Guard eyes expanded maternity leave

(2 Sep) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

The Coast Guard is seriously eyeing expanding its maternity leave and wants to boost incentives to keep service members on national security cutters, the top-of-the-line ships that are at the forefront of missions like counter-drug operations.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Steven Cantrell discussed these topics in a wide-ranging Aug. 12 interview with Navy Times. Questions and answers have been edited for brevity.

Q. The Navy and Marine Corps have tripled their maternity leave to 18 weeks. Is the Coast Guard looking at expanding its parental leave?

The figures come to light as the Pentagon grapples with toll that repeated deployments, combat stress and, now, budget pressures and force reductions have taken on military families over the last decade.

While the winding down of the war of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan has reunited families, the new figures have prompted concern among Pentagon officials about ongoing strains faced by military families.

“The stress on the force doesn’t end when the deployment is going away or slowing down,” said Patricia Barron, an official with the Association of the U.S. Army.

The external child abuse expert will focus on the 14-percent increase in child neglect, a Pentagon spokesman said. Teresa Huizar, executive director of the National Children’s Alliance, said that neglect was the most prevalent form of child abuse, in part because programs to address the phenomenon did not receive enough funding or attention.

Pentagon officials described a number of safeguards the military has put in place to curb domestic violence, including placing family advocacy officials on every military installation and educating military leaders and rank-and-file about how to detect, report and prevent abuse. Cases of abuse or neglect are referred to military or civilian law enforcement.

“Providing resources and engaging with military families is both a national security issue and a moral imperative,” said Rosemary Freitas Williams, a senior Pentagon official responsible for military community and family policy.

The Pentagon is also struggling to end a chronic problem with sexual assault among service members. In May, the Defense Dept. released a report showing that [instances of sexual assault](#) had fallen but that retaliation against those who report such attacks [remains a major problem](#). For the first time, the military is also expanding the scope of its effort to contain sexual assault to include [male-on-male attacks](#).

The family abuse data also shows positive trends, including a 6 percent decrease in spousal abuse in 2014.

Missy Ryan writes about the Pentagon, military issues, and national security for The Washington Post.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/09/02/the-number-of-child-abuse-cases-in-the-military-hits-a-decade-high/>

A. Well, we are looking at the new maternity policy.

Aggressively looking at that right now. We don’t have the bench strength the Navy and Marine Corps have. But we have our duty to people, so we have to look — how do we do this? How do we mitigate the operational impacts? And we only have about 380 births a year in the Coast Guard. It’s manageable, but how do we do that when you have a small unit and you take the sting out of losing that person that is qualified completely? How do we fix that?

Q. The service has busted a lot of drugs this year, thanks to national security cutters. How are you attracting people to those commands?

A. Look, these are very high tech ships. There is a lot of training involved in getting you up and around. We don't want you to bail out of that program. So right now, even as we speak, we are trying to incentivize folks that want to stay in that community. How do we do that, balance all the other human resource stuff? So, geographic stability for some. Some won't want to be in Alameda, [California, where the first NSCs are based]. But if you can do the same job in Charleston, where the other two are, you are still in that community and specialized in training the platform but you aren't stuck in Alameda. Some people want to be there and some don't. Same for the East Coast and probably [eventually] the Hawaii folks too. Now there is going to be an opportunity to move around in that community.

Q. The commandant released a new diversity and inclusion strategy. How are you working to recruit and retain a more culturally diverse force?

A. The heavy focus is, I think, getting away from recruiting. We are doing pretty good there. The retention. Why are people leaving? We need to do better exit interviews and talk about the inclusion piece. We've built in this cultural respect doctrine, or are building it in. Each of our training systems, you go to school for something and there is a culture respect piece in the curriculum, so that we are talking about this stuff openly and not being afraid to have conversations.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/coast-guard/2015/09/02/mcpocg-coast-guard-eyes-expanded-maternity-leave/32331885/>