



Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services Articles of Interest: 27 Feb – 4 March 2016

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

1. James considers 6,300-airman boost to ease strain on Air Force

(26 Feb) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

To alleviate the strain on an overburdened Air Force, Secretary Deborah Lee James is considering boosting its end strength by as many as 6,340 airmen next year.

2. What every Marine needs to know about the end of the drawdown

(28 Feb) Military Times, By Matthew L. Schehl

As the Marine Corps closes in on the end of a years-long drawdown that involved shedding thousands of troops annually, there aren't as many leathernecks to fill some of the most vital roles in the service.

3. Air Force SMSgt promotion rates spike to 12 percent

(2 Mar) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

The selection rate for senior master sergeant promotions greatly increased this year, to 12.32 percent of eligible airmen.

4. Military beginning to recruit women for combat jobs

(3 Mar) Washington Examiner, By The Associated Press

The military services are already beginning to recruit women for combat jobs, including as Navy SEALs, and could see them serving in previously male-only Army and Marine Corps infantry units by this fall, according to new plans endorsed by Defense Secretary Ash Carter and obtained by The Associated Press.

5. Navy personnel chief: 6,300 sailor cuts won't come from force-outs

(3 Mar) Navy Times, By David Larter and Mark D. Faram

The majority of the cuts stem from shutting down an air wing and laying-up 11 cruisers, with the rest coming from speeding up training and changing how the Navy counts its billets, the chief of naval personnel said in an exclusive interview.

EMPLOYMENT & INTEGRATION

6. New DoD Link: [Women in Service Studies](#)

7. She's Got Grit: Early woman Coast Guard rescue swimmer makes waves

(15 Feb) The Grit Project Blog

Sara Faulkner's stunning accomplishment of being the first woman to graduate from the Coast Guard's grueling sixteen-week training program and then work as a rescue swimmer came about partly by coincidence.

8. Female flight officer surpasses 1,000 flight hours in combat mission against ISIS

(27 Feb) Air Force Times, By Oriana Pawlyk

Jennifer, whose last name was withheld for operational security reasons, hit her 1,000 combat flight-hour milestone in the Strike Eagle on Feb. 13 while flying missions against the Islamic State group, the Air Force said.

9. This is the Navy fitness test that MCPON wants

(28 Feb) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

The best fitness test should measure a sailor's ability to perform his or her job, from navigating a shipboard environment in heavy firefighting gear to carrying a lame shipmate out of a danger zone.

10. Rubio and Cruz Wade Into Long History of Whether to Draft Women

(29 Feb) Time, By Lily Rothman

Late last week, Utah Sen. Mike Lee introduced a bill that at first looks like a straightforward matter of Congressional logistics. Under his plan, any potential future change to the requirements for registering for the military draft would have to go through Congress.

11. Occupational fitness: Navy can look to other services' tests

(29 Feb) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

Now the service is interested in ways to measure sailor's physical aptitude for their job.

12. Female recruits, Marines excel at Parris Island amid calls for integration

(1 Mar) Marine Corps Times, By Brig. Gen. Stephen A. Cheney (ret.) and Col. Michael A. Malachowsky (ret.)

There has been considerable publicity about the supposed failings of the Marine Corps when it comes to how the service trains women. Sadly, the positive side of this argument doesn't generate the kind of attention that the accusations have.

13. 'No Date' Set for Updating Army's Tape Test for Body Fat: Official

(1 Mar) Military.com, By Matthew Cox

The U.S. Army's top enlisted soldier is calling a review of the service's long-criticized tape-test policy to measure body fat.

14. Fixing Navy fitness: 8 ways sailors want it improved

(1 Mar) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

It's fair to say that the decades-old Physical Readiness Test isn't a hit with sailors.

15. 40 Years of Women at the Naval Academy – “Ability, not gender”

(1 Mar) Navy Live, By Vice Admiral Walter E. “Ted” Carter Jr.

More women have applied for admission than ever before (over 4,300 applications!) for the soon to be inducted Class of 2020.

16. Ted Cruz’s off-base claim that having women in combat leads to increased casualties

(2 Mar) The Washington Post, By Michelle Ye Hee Lee

Combat integration is a controversial topic that has come up regularly on the campaign trail. During a recent forum, Cruz cited a United States Marine Corps study examining the issue.

17. Special Operations: Norway Creates Female Commandos

(2 Mar) StrategyPage

Norwegian special operations have expanded a bit by adding a dozen female operators. This group, called the Jegertroppen (Hunter Troop), was created to serve in situations where women are more effective.

18. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus to Beaufort Marines: Diverse force a stronger force

(3 Mar) The Beaufort Gazette, By Stephen Fastenau

At the town-hall style talk, Mabus sparred with retired Col. Pat Garrett, who told Mabus a woman could have not fought alongside Garrett in Vietnam.

WELL-BEING & TREATMENT

19. Enlisted chiefs tell Congress pay fears are hurting morale

(26 Feb) Military Times, By Karen Jowers

The military services' top enlisted leaders pointed out retirement confusion, housing deterioration and slow growth in overall compensation among top quality-of-life concerns for troops and families at a congressional hearing Friday, where a California Democrat on the panel of lawmakers described his own expected \$60,000 federal retirement as "not a lot" and said it's "unfair for people to say" military compensation is "just not enough."

20. [Pentagon cuts Marine maternity leave by 6 weeks](#)

(26 Feb) Marine Corps Times, By Lance M. Bacon

The Pentagon has cut Marines' maternity leave by one-third, but women who become pregnant by March 3 are still eligible for the full 18 weeks of leave.

21. [Mom-to-Mom Guide: Health and education in a mobile military household](#)

(28 Feb) Military Times, By Amanda Miller

Mom-to-Mom Guide for Military Families: Military Times is starting a collection of Q&A contributions from military moms in 2016.

22. [Colorado Springs conference finds military ethics woes hinge on trust](#)

(28 Feb) The Gazette, By Tom Roeder

The Pentagon's newest effort to clean up misconduct in the ranks started with a simple question last week at the Air Force Academy.

23. [New military hazing rules could be part of annual defense bill](#)

(1 Mar) Military Times, By Leo Shane III

Rep. Judy Chu wants the military to finally get serious about ending hazing in the ranks.

24. [Army's new maternity leave policy is now official](#)

(1 Mar) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

It's official: Soldiers will now receive up to 12 weeks of maternity leave after giving birth.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH / WOMEN VETERANS

Each March the Defense Department [highlights the accomplishments and contributions of women to the nation](#). In proclaiming Women's History Month, President Barack Obama urged Americans to remember the trailblazers and to "honor their legacies by carrying forward the valuable lessons learned from the powerful examples they set."

25. [Presidential Proclamation:](#) "During Women's History Month, we remember the trailblazers of the past, including the women who are not recorded in our history books, and we honor their legacies by carrying forward the valuable lessons learned from the powerful examples they set." - President Barack Obama

26. [Navy Celebrates 2016 Women's History Month](#)

(29 Feb) Navy News, From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

Today, women comprise 18 percent of the Navy and are indispensable to the national security mission. There are more than 59,000 active duty women serving in the Navy and more than 9,000 female Reservists. Thousands of women have served alongside men in Iraq, Afghanistan and at sea, and their record of performance has been nothing less than outstanding.

27. [First Lady to Women Veterans: 'Tell Your Story'](#)

(2 Mar) DoD News, By Karen Parrish

First Lady Michelle Obama had a message for women veterans today: "Tell your story."

28. [Female World War II Pilot Proud to be a WASP](#)

(2 Mar) DoD News, By Shannon Collins

For one Larned, Kansas, native, Women's History Month means more than just honoring the many women in science and the military who set the stage for the women of today and in the future.

29. [WASPs Were Pioneers for Female Pilots of Today, Tomorrow](#)

(2 Mar) DoD News, By Shannon Collins

Before there could be a first female Thunderbird pilot or women flying combat missions into Iraq and Afghanistan, there were the pioneers: the Women's Airforce Service Pilots of World War II.

30. [Women's Military History 'a Revolution,' General Says](#)

(3 Mar) DoD News, By Karen Parrish

Comic timing is not a skill always associated with military officers, but retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Wilma L. Vaught can make the history of women in the U.S. armed forces sound both compelling and absurdly funny.

1. James considers 6,300-airman boost to ease strain on Air Force

(26 Feb) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

To alleviate the strain on an overburdened Air Force, Secretary Deborah Lee James is considering boosting its end strength by as many as 6,340 airmen next year.

The Air Force expects to grow from its current level of about 311,000 to 317,000 active duty airmen by the end of fiscal 2016, James said Friday at the Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium in Orlando.

But although the service's 2017 budget proposal earlier this month called for end strength to remain flat next year, "In reality, I think that mission demands will indicate that we need even more growth in FY17," James said. James said her top priority is to beef up crucial career fields, such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, cyber, maintenance, and battlefield airmen.

To do that, James could rely on an already-existing but rarely-used authority that allows the Air Force secretary to go as much as 2 percent over end strength limits.

"I believe the demands on the force are such, given world conditions, I believe more than 317,000 is likely to be prudent," James said in a roundtable briefing with reporters.

But it is far from certain James will use that authority to get the Air Force up to as much as roughly 323,340 active duty airmen. It will first depend on whether the Air Force can find enough qualified people to fill the necessary jobs, James said.

And while James already has the authority to exceed end strength limits, she would have to ask Congress for authority to reprogram funds to pay for those additional airmen.

The Air Force is trying to rebuild its force after the steep force management drawdowns of 2014, which cut about 19,300 airmen voluntarily and involuntarily. The Air Force started fiscal 2014 with an active-duty end strength of about 330,700 airmen, and dropped to about 311,000 by the end of fiscal 2015.

"We have been downsizing for a long time in our Air Force, and this simply must stop," James said. "It is stopping. And now, we're in an era of a modest upsize."

James also said the Air Force is trying to make better use of its Guard and Reserve forces to help ease the burden on active duty airmen in areas like cyber and ISR.

And the Air Force hopes to increase its use of paid retention bonuses to hold on to valuable airmen in targeted fields, such as those in the remotely-piloted aircraft jobs, James said.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2016/02/26/james-considers-6300-airman-boost-ease-strain-air-force/81005122/>

2. What every Marine needs to know about the end of the drawdown

(28 Feb) Military Times, By Matthew L. Schehl

As the Marine Corps closes in on the end of a years-long drawdown that involved shedding thousands of troops annually, there aren't as many leathernecks to fill some of the most vital roles in the service. That means leaders will have to take a more active role in helping the Corps retain the best and brightest Marines.

The Marine Corps will reach its end goal of 182,000 active-duty personnel by October, marking the first time in years the service hasn't had to make significant cuts since hitting its wartime peak of 202,000 Marines in 2009.

As the talent pool gets leaner and more competitive, manpower officials need to work harder to ensure the right Marines are in the right jobs in the right numbers.

On Feb. 23, Manpower and Reserve Affairs identified these specific jobs in Marine administrative message [100/16](#), which provided a mid-year assessment of its efforts to retain first- and subsequent-term Marines. Although the First Term Alignment Plan met 91 percent of its target thus far, a dwindling number of first-term Marines re-enlisting has made it challenging to fill some of the Corps'

more technical positions.

“You no longer have this large mass of people that lines up against your retention requirement, so you have to pay more attention to how you’re going about this,” said Col. Rudy Janiczek, the head of M&RA's enlisted assignments branch. “It happens in the command because that is the level at which someone looks out and says ‘We’re the keepers.’”

First-term Marines have been slower to sign on for another term in fiscal 2016 than in years past. In October, only 33 percent of targeted first-term boat spaces were filled, compared with 53 percent during the same time period the year before. That prompted manpower officials to task commanders with redoubling their efforts to encourage young enlisted Marines to stay in uniform.

Now commanders are again being pushed to identify first-term Marines who might be a good fit for some of the Corps' harder-to-fill or high-demand military occupational specialties, like critical skills operators and explosive ordnance disposal technicians.

Commandant Gen. Robert Neller is leading the charge. In January, he made retention of high-performing Marines a top priority when he released a [fragmentary order](#) to the 2015 planning guidance of his predecessor, Gen. Joseph Dunford.

“We’re going to put a bit more pressure on commanders to be involved in the retention process at all levels,” Neller told Marine Corps Times in a January interview. “We’re all recruiters; we’re all career planners.”

Realignment plans

As the Marine Corps gets closer to reaching its post-war end strength, manpower officials have highlighted about three dozen MOSs that need Marines now. The changes to the First- and Subsequent-Term Alignment plans inform commanders about Corps-wide retention needs.

Manpower officials are stressing that opportunities still exist for Marines interested in staying in the Corps despite the drawdown creating a smaller, more competitive force.

“Any Marine wanting to be retained, any Marine wanting to re-enlist, those opportunities weren’t taken away,” Janiczek said.

There are still 35 MOSs that remain “under-executed,” though, meaning not enough Marines have submitted packets to meet the number of billets. These jobs are from across the Marine air-ground task force, to include combat arms, support and aviation roles, said Lt. Col. Michael Motley, who heads retention for the enlisted assignments branch.

“It’s everything; you have counterintelligence, grunts, data communications, artillery, linguists, communications electronics for aviation and then aviation” he said. “So, it’s every facet of all three elements of the Marine Corps.”

From July 5 to Feb. 17, the Marine Corps hit 91 percent of its first-term re-enlistment target when 4,497 of 23,948 Marines approaching the end of their first term signed on for another contract.

While only about 460 boat spaces still need to be filled by Sept. 30 — with 566 requests still pending — in order to meet 2016 FTAP goals, leaders must continue trying to convince young Marines who might be on the fence about re-enlisting to either make a lateral move or stay in jobs where they’re needed.

“We need [these Marines], so we’re balancing the needs of the force with the needs and desires of the Marines who are seeking retention,” Motley said. “This is the ongoing saga where you’re trying to look at all things in balance and make policy and end strength work.”

The STAP targets Marines re-enlisting for a third or higher term. As of Feb. 17, some 5,599 out of 6,193 re-enlistment packets were approved; the other 601 either need more information or higher-level adjudication. Officials anticipate completing these by Feb. 29.

Several of the in-demand MOSs also offer good opportunities for Marines looking to make a lateral move. Since some of those jobs tend to be highly specialized, more time and resources are required to train Marines up for them. For Marines in slower-to-promote fields, lat moves can be career enhancers.

Manpower officials are pressing commanders to encourage talented and eligible Marines who didn't receive a boat space in their primary MOS to consider fields like counterintelligence, reconnaissance or explosive ordnance disposal. Some of those specialties come with re-enlistment bonuses, and Janiczek said Marines shouldn't be hesitant to submit a packet because they think they're lacking the proper qualifications.

"They don't submit because they think they're not qualified, but the reality is they don't know until they submit," he said.

Sgt. Tony Garcia, an infantry squad leader with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, made such a late move.

Now on his third enlistment — he late moved to the squad leader MOS from being a rifleman — Garcia said he wasn't thinking about re-enlistment until he was approached by his command and encouraged to submit his packet.

"I felt like I wasn't finished with the Marine Corps, or the Marine Corps wasn't finished with me," he said. "I felt I had a lot more to offer, and also I felt I had a lot to offer the Marines under me."

For exceptional Marines who find their MOS already filled, their commanders can also request an exception through the Qualified Marine Identification program.

Retention and the drawdown

The end of the drawdown is changing the way service leaders look to retain first-term Marines.

At the height of sustained combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, manpower officials did not hurry for bodies in filling boat spaces. With the drawdown almost complete, though, Marines accustomed to the constant force reductions over the past several years now face a new normal that resembles life in the Corps before the 2006 manpower surge, said Master Gunnery Sgt. Donald Bird, operations chief for enlisted assignments.

"We know where we're at now, where our end state is," he said. "We need to redefine how we keep and retain Marines, get re-engaged and back to active retention — that's a key thing: It's about talking to Marines again and going back to the basics."

A 2015 Marine Corps retention survey found that 38 percent of 4,200 Marines polled who were up for re-enlistment said they were unlikely to sign on for another term. That percentage was up from 33 percent in fiscal 2014 and 31 percent in fiscal 2013. Respondents cited stagnating pay, a decline in job satisfaction and a desire to attend college as reasons for wanting to leave the service.

With fewer Marines submitting for re-enlistment, encouraging more Marines to think about staying has become crucial in the ongoing battle to ensure that the most talented and qualified Marines are where they need to be, Motley said.

That's why the FTAP and STAP mid-year updates come. Only about 25 percent of first-term Marines, for example, stay in the Corps. But getting more of them attempting to re-enlist would give manpower officials a better pool from which to choose.

"As we get closer to the end of the [fiscal] year, the cohort shrinks," Motley said. "Marines get out, and unless they submit we can't assess them."

Calling on more Marines to re-enlist is not just an issue for the current fiscal year, however; adjusting fire now is crucial in setting the standard for 2017 and beyond.

The 2017 FTAP begins in July, and even if the boat spaces in a Marine's MOS change, the timeline to secure an open spot will be the same, Motley said.

"If the young [Marine] is a '17 guy, he's looking to re-enlist in '16," he said. "...To get ahead of the game, you have to start looking now at your MOS."

'The business of commanders'

With fewer Marines to choose from as the drawdown winds down, leaders are in the best position to identify the people who have the

right leadership traits, talent and skills to move the Corps forward, Janiczek said.

“It’s the business of commanders ... they know Marines,” he said. “Certainly, we see it on paper, but the real story is the people who work with that Marine every day.”

During the drawdown, Janiczek said, commanders had to make difficult decisions about who should remain in the Corps. Now that there are fewer Marines all around, leaders need to be far more proactive in recognizing the strongest Marines in their units, and take steps to ensure they stay in uniform.

"Even before they are due to be retained, [commanders need to] go and say, 'Hey, I know you don't re-enlist until next year ... but I've got to tell you, I've seen what you do on the gun line or in the squad or wherever, and I think you should very seriously consider making this a career,'" he said.

The call for commanders' to get more involved in retaining good Marines is not only coming from manpower officials.

The commandant announced in his FRAGO that lance corporals and corporals up for promotion would soon be facing new review boards. These panels will allow units to have a chance to speak to every Marine up for promotion from across their command.

“The goal is not to deny people a promotion, but just to make sure everybody understands we all have equities in this,” Neller said. “I think everybody wins.”

Such engagement by commanders with their Marines has a direct impact on retention: Leaders are able to encourage the strongest troops to re-enlist.

When first-term Marines then enter the re-enlistment process, commanders' input goes a long way in ensuring their success when manpower officials evaluate submission packages, Bird said.

“The individual Marine’s record sells him, but the commander can sell him, too,” he said. “It’s the comments [the commanding officer] puts in there, small or in-depth, that help or break the Marine. The CO’s comments are the biggest piece and give us a better picture to assess the Marine.”

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/28/what-every-marine-needs-know-end-drawdown/80790008/>

3. Air Force SMSgt promotion rates spike to 12 percent

(2 Mar) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

The selection rate for senior master sergeant promotions greatly increased this year, to 12.32 percent of eligible airmen.

That selection rate is a significant increase from the 8.75 percent E-8 selection rate last year, and far higher than the 6.74 percent selection rate in 2014.

In all, the Air Force selected 1,467 master sergeants for promotion to E-8 out of 11,904 airmen eligible, the Air Force Personnel Center said in a Facebook post Tuesday. AFPC plans to release the names of selectees Thursday morning.

The E-8 promotions are the first to be released this calendar year, and suggest the trend of increasing selection rates may continue in 2016.

Promotion selection rates for enlisted airmen hit their lowest point in years in 2013 and 2014. This was largely due to the high retention rates in the Air Force, and the service's push to steeply cut its ranks through measures such as the 2014 force management programs. As the Air Force tightened its belt, the competition to get promoted grew even steeper.

But now, the Air Force is trying to grow again, if slowly. The Air Force is hoping to grow to about 317,000 this year. And Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said she could use her authority to add as much as another 6,300 in 2017 to beef up key career fields.

The end of drawdowns and the slight increase in end strength is creating more space for additional promotions today. Not only is the selection rate increasing, but so is the number of actual senior master sergeant promotions. Last year, 1,257 were selected for E-8, and

999 were promoted in 2014.

The unofficial Facebook page [Air Force amn/nco/snco](#) on Tuesday posted slides from an AFPC webcast to test control officers and military personnel section promotion offices, which referred to "1,036 missing tests" and "97 missing EPRs," or enlisted performance reports, for the E-8 promotion cycle.

But in an email and follow-up phone call, AFPC officials said that no tests or EPRs have been lost. The vast majority of those "missing" airmen referred to in the slide are airmen who did not test because they were deployed, AFPC said. The remaining airmen either separated or were on terminal leave, or had declined testing, or in a handful of cases, may have incorrectly filled out tests.

"It's very easy to misunderstand" the reference to missing tests, AFPC spokesman Mike Dickerson said. "This was personnellists, talking to personnellists."

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2016/03/02/air-force-smsgt-promotion-rates-spike-12-percent/81207700/>

4. Military beginning to recruit women for combat jobs

(3 Mar) Washington Examiner, By The Associated Press

The military services are already beginning to recruit women for combat jobs, including as Navy SEALs, and could see them serving in previously male-only Army and Marine Corps infantry units by this fall, according to new plans endorsed by Defense Secretary Ash Carter and obtained by The Associated Press.

Some of the services predict that only small numbers of women will volunteer or get through training courses, details of the plans show. The Marine Corps estimates 200 women a year will move into ground combat jobs. And U.S. Special Operations Command said it anticipates a "small number" of volunteers for its commando jobs.

The Navy said it is already collecting submission packages from prospective SEAL candidates and could see women in entry-level enlisted and officer training in September and October. The Navy started collecting the packages last month.

All of the services say they have made required changes to base bathrooms and other facilities to accommodate women, and they will monitor training, injury assessments, and possible sexual harassment or assault problems.

The plans have been under review by senior Pentagon leaders and have not been made public.

Carter said Thursday that he accepted the services' implementation recommendations, but provided no details. He is expected to sign a memo in the coming days telling the military to begin executing the plans next month.

The top Army and Marine Corps generals told senators last month that it will take up to three years to fully integrate women into all combat jobs. And they have insisted they will not lower standards for the combat posts or bow to pressure or quotas to get more women into the grueling frontline jobs.

After a lengthy review by the services and the Pentagon, Carter in December ordered all combat jobs open to women. The Marine Corps initially sought to keep certain infantry and combat jobs closed, citing studies showing combined-gender units are not as effective as male-only units. But Carter and Navy Secretary Ray Mabus rejected that proposal.

Since then, the military services have put together plans outlining exactly how they will incorporate women into the male-only units.

The Marine Corps said that having about 200 women moving into combat jobs each year would mean that they would make up less than 2 percent of the Marines in those occupations. The Corps would use what it called a "teaming concept" that would try to assign two or more junior enlisted women to the same unit.

The plan notes that so far no women have made it through the Marine infantry officer course, and added that, "we recognize there may be small numbers, and the Services are prepared to handle this."

Last year several hundred female Marines participated in a task force studying the impact of allowing women to compete for combat jobs. The enlisted women who were in the program are eligible to transfer immediately into combat jobs since they already completed the training. Although some have expressed interest in the jobs, none have formally requested a transfer.

The Army intends to first assign female officers to jobs in the infantry and armor units, and then gradually bring in female enlisted

soldiers. And it plans to also assign more than one woman in a unit.

The first officers will start training in June, and could graduate in October. The first female enlisted soldiers wouldn't begin moving into ground combat units until May 2017.

Unlike the Army and Marine Corps, the Air Force said it will not assign women in groups to units, and will instead follow routine assignment procedures.

The bulk of the male-only units are in the Army and Marine Corps. Only a few of the Navy and Air Force units excluded women, and those were largely special operations-related jobs and assignments on ships that do not have adequate berthing to accommodate women.

The military services said they plan to carefully evaluate recruits, including new types of testing that helps predict whether the person — either man or woman — has the ability to meet the difficult physical demands of the combat jobs. The services plan to conduct regular review and collect injury data that will help guide training and other changes that might be needed.

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/military-beginning-to-recruit-women-for-combat-jobs/article/2584904>

5. Navy personnel chief: 6,300 sailor cuts won't come from force-outs

(3 Mar) Navy Times, By David Larter and Mark D. Faram

Relax sailors, no one is getting fired.

That's the message from the Navy's top personnel officer as the service pushes its plan to shave 6,300 billets from end strength in 2017, a deeper-than-expected cut that has alarmed some in the ranks.

The majority of the cuts stem from shutting down an air wing and laying-up 11 cruisers, with the rest coming from speeding up training and changing how the Navy counts its billets, the chief of naval personnel said in an exclusive interview.

Vice Adm. Bill Moran said the downsizing proposed in the 2017 budget will be managed by tweaking the number of sailors coming into the Navy and managing the number leaving. For years, officials have called this "natural attrition" tens of thousands both join up and leave the service every year. In addition, he said, there will be no early outs offered in relation to these cuts — nor a repeat of the deeply unpopular 2011 enlisted retention board.

"Nobody is losing their jobs," Moran said in a Feb. 22 interview. "There is absolutely no reason on Earth to do any force-outs. We can modulate both the intake in accessions and the output on re-enlistments and retirements to easily deal with this difference in end strength."

The cuts to end-strength will not have an impact on the manning levels in the fleet because the Navy isn't changing the number of billets on the waterfront, Moran said.

"End strength comes in many forms: Billets that are real in the fleet, jobs in the fleet, none of that is affected," Moran said. "None of that is changing."

Accelerating "A" schools and "C" schools for initial entry sailors will also eliminate billets, Moran said.

It's part of a program officials are calling "ready, relevant learning" and it's causing a reorganization the Navy's training system for every rating.

The idea is to cut up front training time by focusing "A" schools and initial training pipeline "C" schools on what sailors need for their first tours. Follow-on training will be built into career paths during and between sea tours.

Officials say the training will benefit from new virtual reality tools to give sailors more hands-on experience before getting to the fleet, and matching the interactive experiences with classroom instruction by qualified instructors.

"Because of ready, relevant learning we see a real opportunity to reduce the time sailors are in 'A' schools and 'C' schools and get

them to the fleet sooner,” Moran said. “There is a corresponding way we account for people in student billets.”

All told, speeding up training will save the Navy about 2,700 billets, Moran said. Laying up the cruisers — docking the ships indefinitely, with stripped down crews while they wait to be modernized — will save 2,000 billets. Cutting Carrier Air Wing 14, based out of Naval Air Station Lemoore, California, will save another 1,400 billets.

CVW-14 hasn't deployed since 2011 or been fully staffed since 2013.

Many are skeptical that the training overhaul will work as planned, with some saying that the training pipeline is already challenged.

"Speeding up sailors training pipeline.' Do we really want to do that?" wrote one reader on Navy Times' Facebook. "Last new trained Aviation Machinist's Mate I asked to bring me a Phillips screwdriver had no idea what I was talking about."

The last big chunk of billets will come from the “transient, patient, prisoner, hold” account, with a one-time reduction of 1,700 billets in 2017, Moran said, adding that there was some risk in creating gaps at sea if the Navy draws from this pool too often.

Personnel officials estimate the service can early absorb a reduction of up to 10,000 without causing problems in the personnel system or hurting fleet manning. That number was arrived at when sequestration planning a few years ago forced the service to see just what they could do without. Before this year, the service had planned to grow the force to 330,000 and hold it steady.

As for retention and advancement, Moran said he did not expect the cuts to impact those areas. He also said he was unwilling to cut recruiting too much because it would create problems in the personnel system down the line with advancement.

“You always have the option to bring fewer people in,” Moran said. “But I won’t go there in any significant way because it creates a burble in the system you have to live with three to five years down the line.”

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/03/03/cnp-bill-moran-force-out-boards-no-reason-end-strength-cuts/81165632/>

6. Women in Service Studies

- [Army - Gender Integration Study3.pdf](#)
- [Army - MEDCOM Injury and Attrition Rates Working Group.pdf](#)
- [Army - MEDCOM USARIEM Task Assessment3.pdf](#)
- [Army - Ranger Assessment Study Executive Report2.pdf](#)
- [Navy - SEAL and SWCC Physical Standards Validation Report2.pdf](#)
- [Navy Enlisted Women in Submarines Task Force.pdf](#)
- [OUSDPR - Defining and Establishing Gender-Neutral Standards for Closed Occupations-A Review of Methods.pdf](#)
- [OUSDPR - Defining and Establishing Gender-Neutral Standards for Closed Occupations-A Review of the Services Efforts to Date.pdf](#)
- [SOCOM - Appendices - Considerations for Integrating Women into Closed Occupations in the US Special Operations Forces2.pdf](#)
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<http://www.defense.gov/News/Publications/WISR-Studies>

7. She's Got Grit: Early woman Coast Guard rescue swimmer makes waves

(15 Feb) The Grit Project Blog

Sara Faulkner’s stunning accomplishment of being the first woman to graduate from the Coast Guard's grueling sixteen-week training program and then work as a rescue swimmer came about partly by coincidence. (Two women, Kelly Mogk '86 and Jody Vander Hyden '89, were graduates and swimmers following the Navy's course in earlier years.)

“I’m an actual valley girl,” says Sara Faulkner early on in our conversation. “I grew up in LA, but I was really disenchanted by all that LA represented. I knew by junior high that I wouldn’t stick around.”

Sara grew up with three siblings, two older sisters and a twin brother. Living in LA, she says her swimming came naturally with a pool in the backyard and endless days at the beach.

“Then in high school I was running cross-country with a friend, and we were complaining about how hot it was. We decided to join the swim team. I tried out, made it, and I loved it.”

Making the team wasn’t enough though, and the way she attacked the swim team is how she lives her life.

“I started out in the slowest lane, because I hadn’t swum competitively,” she says. She worked hard, moved up to be the fastest in her lane, was moved up to the next fastest lane and started the process over until by the end of the season she made varsity.

She laughs about her drive. “I think it’s because I have a twin brother and I didn’t want him feel like he was better than I was because he was a boy.”

The swim team was just the first step. In high school Faulkner heard about the Sea Cadets, a U.S. Naval Sea Cadet program that drilled at a nearby Naval Base. She signed up. “We were the Betsy Ross division,” she says, “the only all female division. We competed against all the other Sea Cadet units which were all co-ed and we always kicked butt.” On a cadet trip to Seattle on the U.S.S. Kittihawk, Faulkner talked to the Naval rescue swimmers. They advised her against the Navy, saying that they only sat on helicopters flying circles around carriers while the jets flew in case of emergency. “If you want to be a real rescue swimmer,” they said, “join the Coast Guard.”

Faulkner went to the Coast Guard. “They said that there were no female rescue swimmers and alluded to the fact that there never would be, explaining that they had broken away from the Navy rescue swimmers twelve years prior and had higher standards.”

Faulkner was, as she says, “pissed. I immediately envisioned myself as the first woman to make it through.” After waiting four and a half years for a training slot, and extending in the Coast Guard just to keep her name on the list, she was assigned a training slot. She was assigned to work with a group of rescue swimmers before her school began. “Half were cool about me being there, and half weren’t,” she said. “But even the half that were didn’t think I would make it through.”

She started training as one of nine students. By the end of the training only five would remain.

As soon as the sixteen-week course began, both students and instructors started talking. “They’d talk about the girls who had almost made it but failed,” Faulkner says. “Part of me thought that I could see that happening, but part of me doubted it. When you show up, you look around and wonder who will be there at the end, and you just pray you’ll be one of the last ones standing.

I never let them know I knew they were screwing with me. I’d play right back, and just grin. The instructors were like gods...I had to play the game.”

On the final test, the instructors pulled in one swimmer at a time to the pool area for a multiple survivor scenario. “There was a lot of noise, screams and pounding. The test is as much psychological as it is physical.” Then it was over.

“When you pass, they rip off your shirt,” she says. “I was stunned that I’d passed. I didn’t want to make it if I couldn’t do it. I didn’t want any favors, but they’d made it harder for me. After graduation the senior chief pulled me aside and told me all the rumors were right. He wasn’t going to let a female graduate because he didn’t think they could do the job, but I’d changed his mind.”

That was validating to Faulkner, but also a warning she didn’t yet recognize.

Faulkner’s last duty assignment was as a rescue swimmer in Clearwater, Florida, one of the busiest Naval Air Stations in the country.

“We flew a lot there,” Faulkner says. “It was a really serious base. One night we were called out when a 63’ sailing vessel lost its sails in a storm in the Bahamas, and then lost its engine. It was dead in the water. They called for the Coast Guard and only had a little remote radio and even that battery was failing. It was night, and there were fifteen-foot seas with swells to twenty feet, wind gusting to forty-five knots. I dropped into the water, but the waves were pulling the boat away from me. I’ve never swum so hard in my life.

I saw a rope hanging down from the stern and treated for it, but got swept under the hull of the boat. It started coming back down on top of me and I had a very calm thought, that I hope Jimmy would be able to pick up my body with the basket. I knew I was dead.

I forced my body to stay soft, and let myself be pushed down. The next wave pushed me underneath the boat again. I pushed off the port side and swam over to the boat. I have never been so tired.”

Faulkner secured the first passenger in a basket to be pulled into the helicopter, and used the sling augmented double pick-up (SADPU) for the other two. By the time she had brought all three passengers to the helicopter, day was dawning. Her hardest challenge came in another form, and when I talk to her the week after she retires, she is willing to discuss it. “I was sexually harassed in my first unit,” she says. “I didn’t do anything about it. The shop supervisor was a cool guy, and people liked him, but everyone started to get uncomfortable. After a year, I filed a complaint.”

After she filed her complaint, things got worse.

“The command made my life a living hell,” she says. The competitive fighter of a swimmer almost didn’t come into work one day.

“Then he was booked on assault charges,” she says, “and then my own command tried to get me kicked out of the Coast Guard. The reprisals were worse than the assault.

“I was sent against my will to a Navy hospital to be analyzed at a psych ward, and then to my district admiral who tried to bribe me. He told me if I dropped my complaint, he’d reassign me, but was going to send me to a unit without rescue swimmers. I said no; I think he was shocked. I was a rescue swimmer. That’s where I wanted to work.” She went back to

her unit.

After a follow on assignment proved similarly challenging, Faulkner almost left the Coast Guard. “Then another command master chief who came from another aviation specialty talked to me,” she says, “and convinced me to stay. He told me I was a role model for other women.”

But it was the beginning of a career-long struggle.

“Every single station I have had to fight to be treated equally,” Faulkner says, with noticeable emotion.

Still, Faulkner is grateful for many of her experiences. “It’s an awesome job, and adventurous,” she says. “I’ve been to the South Pole, done an important job, but I wouldn’t candy coat it. You have to be aware of the other half of things. I hope things are better now with the new chiefs but...” she pauses. “There are so many cool stories to tell, but I wouldn’t want a daughter of mine to go through what I did. I’d tell anyone who wants it: You go girl...but watch out.”

Faulkner clearly has grit. Here’s her definition: “grit is standing firm in the face of adversity. Persevering. For me, I just wasn’t going to quit.”

She believes grit is inside every person, but that it can be developed, too.

“I kept my eye on the goal,” she says of her own successes. “I knew the requirements, and I made sure I exceeded them every time.”

Faulkner plans to use the G.I. Bill to go back to school to become a wildlife conservation biologist and hopes to use her search and rescue training for anti-poaching work in Africa. “The animals are another kind of survivors,” she says. When Faulkner retired, she took with her 25% of the female Coast Guard rescue swimmers. Only three women serve as rescue swimmers today.

**This post has been corrected from an earlier title of "First" women to "Early" women recognizing the service of two earlier women Coast Guard swimmers who graduated from the program under Navy training. I appreciate the emails from Coast Guard service members who helped me to make this clarification.

<http://aborderlife.com/grit-project-blog/2016/2/15/shes-got-grit-first-woman-coast-guard-rescue-swimmer>

8. Female flight officer surpasses 1,000 flight hours in combat mission against ISIS

(27 Feb) Air Force Times, By Oriana Pawlyk

Women only make up about 10 percent of F-15E pilot and the weapon systems officer community. And "Major Jennifer" is one of them.

Jennifer, whose last name was withheld for operational security reasons, hit her 1,000 combat flight-hour milestone in the Strike Eagle on Feb. 13 while flying missions against the Islamic State group, [the Air Force said](#).

Jennifer is a weapon systems officer with the 391st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. The WSO, often called "wizzos," are the air flight officers who ride behind the pilot, maintain the aircraft's systems and can operate as mission commanders.

“The hour milestones in the jet are big deals,” Capt. Kevin, a 391st EFS pilot, said in the release. "Captain Kevin," whose last name was also withheld, accompanied Jennifer on the mission under Operation Inherent Resolve.

“Our opportunity to accrue hours is finite, and every one of them is special," he said. "To reach 1,000 hours in a category as unique as combat time is pretty special; it means someone has invested a lot of time and effort into their job.”

Kevin said, "it goes to show it doesn't matter what your gender is — the girls can hang with the best of them, and are capable of being the best themselves.”

Jennifer flew her first combat sortie in 2009 during the first of her two tours in Afghanistan, and has compiled more than 1,600 flying hours and 220 combat sorties during her career; she was also a member of the historic Dudette 07 mission in 2011, the first F-15E Air

Force combat mission comprised entirely of female aircrew members, the release said.

Landing at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia after her 1,000th hour, Jennifer said she is "proud to serve and keep the enemy here instead of being back at home."

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/flightlines/2016/02/26/female-pilot-surpasses-1000-flight-hours-combat-mission-against-isis/80984078/>

9. This is the Navy fitness test that MCPON wants

(28 Feb) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

The best fitness test should measure a sailor's ability to perform his or her job, from navigating a shipboard environment in heavy firefighting gear to carrying a lame shipmate out of a danger zone.

That's the thinking of the Navy's top enlisted, who's raising the possibility of a tough new fitness test that could replace or augment the existing physical readiness test.

Firefighting is one of the most high-pressure and physically taxing skills sailors must master, so with that in mind, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens laid out some events similar to a fire department's fitness test.

"A lot of people say every sailor in the Navy is a firefighter, because you can find yourself on board a ship regardless of your source rating, right?" he said. "When you are on that ship, if a fire broke out, for example, everybody would have to be able to fight it. Maybe your test revolves around something like that."

Discussions are in the very early stages and Stevens was speaking hypothetically, he said, about an operational fitness test.

The Marine Corps has required a combat fitness test for years, and the Army is looking at new occupational physical tests for some specialty fields. Meanwhile, the Navy has stuck with its general fitness test for decades.

And there's a reason for that, officials say: Sit-ups, pushups and running are easy to administer, with little space and no equipment required. And Navy officials say these exercises assess whole body fitness — especially the 1.5-mile run that measures cardiovascular health. But the PRT has never been a hit with sailors.

"You have got to find something that is kind of connected to every sailor in the Navy," Stevens said in a January interview.

Like the Marine Corps, he said, this test would work well as a once-a-year supplement to the existing physical readiness.

"Say you do a regular fitness test much like we do today during the first six months of the year," he said. "Then maybe you have a test that better allows us to understand if we are capable of performing our duties."

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson says the concept is worth studying.

"Something for consideration would be, maybe one of those is a pure fitness test like we have right now, and one of them might be more of a shipboard-skill type of a test," Richardson said after a Feb. 24 all-hands call in Norfolk. "Where those things you might have to do in a shipboard casualty — are restricted to those, and how might we evaluate that?"

MCPON's push for a radical new direction in Navy fitness also comes atop calls from some fitness experts for the service to adopt new job-related tasks.

What their new test would look like:

Firemen's carry

While Marine Corps-style ammo lifts and maneuver-under-fire don't directly translate to the vast majority of sailors, serving on ships

and in squadrons, shipboard fires are one of the biggest and most physically-taxing threats sailors face.

"Maybe they need to do something similar to that, because I am sure we all want to make and we all want to better understand if a sailor can do their job or not, right?" Stevens said.

Firefighters do a regular physical fitness test that offers some examples for the Navy.

"Maybe...you have to drag something heavy for a certain distance," Stevens suggested. "Maybe you have to carry a shipmate out of a compartment that is on fire."

How it works. A kneeling sailor swings a shipmate's arm around the back of their head and then stands up using their leg muscles, while holding the carried person's arm and leg tight. Can be performed with combat gear to heighten difficulty and realism. This carry was developed by firemen to carry unconscious and wounded personnel out of hazardous areas.

Fire hose drag

Stopping a fire takes more skills than just carrying out the wounded.

That's why MCPON suggests a task to measure each sailor's firefighting ability.

This test would be to "drag some kind of an object that would simulate a fire hose," MCPON said.

That could be everything from an heavy object that awkward to carry to a charged firehose itself, which would present some feasibility challenges to command fitness leaders who set up the test.

How it works. The fire hose drag would set up a sailor with heavy load to carry a set distance, like 50 yards, and could be performed while wearing firefighting gear to increase the intensity level.

Ladder climb

Time to step it up.

The Marines' combat fitness test features a 300-yard shuttle run that includes events Marines are likely to see on the battlefield, from dragging wounded squadmates to throwing grenades. Think of the ladder climb as the Navy's equivalent.

How it works. A sailor loaded down helmet to boot in a firefighting suit would be tasked with rapidly navigating a ship-like environment, opening hatches and squirming through scuttles while racing to meet a fast time climbing through passageways and a few sets of stairs. The training value could be upped by simulating fire or flooding in some areas that demand they show other skills. MCPON suggested that the sailor could carry a heavy load — such as a weighted vest — in lieu of a firefighting suit.

Meet 'the plank'

Experts, including some who have consulted the Navy, don't have many kind words for the PRT.

The 1.5-mile run is the gold-standard for cardiovascular health, they say, but the Navy could do a lot better measuring strength and muscular endurance.

One of them, Cmdr. David Peterson, a Navy aerospace physiologist who's currently the head of physical fitness at the Naval Academy, has recommended a pared down PFA: a waist measurement, plank and run.

"The Navy obviously would like to have some type of strength for muscular endurance assessment as well, and I think the plank is much more operationally relevant than the push-ups and curl-ups," Peterson said, referring to the exercise's engagement of every major muscle group.

In other words, no more situps.

How it works. To do it, a sailor must keep their body straight between their toes and their forearms, which rest on the ground. This exercise can be held for minutes without risk of injury. The exercise is based on yoga and measures strength in your shoulders, back, abdominals and glutes.

Standing long jump

How far can you jump — without running?

That's one of the preferred tests of occupational fitness test advocates. The standing long jump measures your muscular fitness and is easy to test. This power to jump is the sort of effort needed in combat and was one of the exercises recommended by Peterson.

How it works. Sailor springs from a crouch, swinging their legs forward to maximize their forward momentum. Their leap is measured from launch to landing point.

These exercises could be taught to sailors in boot camp and officer training to familiarize them before they begin taking fitness tests. To add another endurance event, Peterson suggested the kneeling powerball toss, which would require launching a weighted ball from the chest. This assesses your upper body strength.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/28/navy-fitness-test-mcpon-wants/79082266/>

10. Rubio and Cruz Wade Into Long History of Whether to Draft Women

(29 Feb) Time, By Lily Rothman

Late last week, Utah Sen. Mike Lee introduced a [bill](#) that at first looks like a straightforward matter of Congressional logistics. Under his plan, any potential future change to the requirements for registering for the military draft would have to go through Congress. But, though the bill mentions nothing about gender, Lee's office has [said](#) that he hopes through this mechanism to preempt any chance that the recent lifting of the combat ban for women in the U.S. military would lead to a situation in which women are required to register for the draft. The bill has drawn extra attention ever since presidential candidates Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz [announced](#) that they would co-sponsor it, even after Rubio had earlier [expressed](#) his belief that it would make sense for women to register. In doing so, the candidates have entered a debate that has endured for more than half a century.

In 1968, a New York City lawyer arguing on behalf of a draft evader made what was then a surprising argument: that the draft was illegal in the first place, because it discriminated on the basis of sex. It was actually not the first time a draft for women had occurred to U.S. officials—a nurse draft was considered and rejected during World War II—but it was mostly considered a joke at the time. “Now that would put real meaning into Uncle Sam’s saying ‘I Want You,’” TIME [quoted](#) a young Manhattan woman saying. “The old lecher!”

The court [agreed](#): “In providing for involuntary service for men and voluntary service for women, Congress followed the teachings of history that if a nation is to survive, men must provide the first line of defense while women keep the home fires burning,” declared a district court judge in response to the filing. “Moreover, Congress recognized that in modern times there are certain duties in the Armed Forces which may be performed by women volunteers. For these reasons, the distinction between men and women with respect to service in the Armed Forces is not arbitrary, unreasonable or capricious.”

A decade later, however, the idea that women should be drafted was no laughing matter.

In [the decade that followed the 1968 case](#), a cap on women in uniform was abolished, legal rulings let women into military from which they'd once been banned and some women-only branches of the armed forces were shut down. Though some worried about the impact of a more mixed military, demographic needs—a declining population of 18-year-old men, post-Baby Boom, and a post-Vietnam need to refresh the forces—counteracted many of those fears.

But the military wasn't the only area in which things were changing that decade. The intervening years had also seen Congress pass the [Equal Rights Amendment](#), the proposed change to the Constitution—which later failed in the states—that would have guaranteed equal rights to women. The Vietnam draft ended shortly after the ERA was passed, but its memory loomed large. So, for opponents of the equality amendment, the threat of a gender-neutral draft—a threat to women and to national security—was a powerful argument against ratification. As Phyllis Schlafly, the most outspoken opponent of the ERA, [put it](#), “America is entitled to better protection than

women's physical strength can give us.”

By 1980, as the ERA continued to move through the ratification process and the Cold War replaced the Vietnam War in the fear centers of many American minds, President Jimmy Carter discussed reinstating the draft. The question of women was, by that point, unavoidable. Many prominent feminists said that they believed that if men should fight, women should too—and in fact Karen DeCrow, one-time president of the National Organization for Women, [told TIME](#) that she thought ratification of the ERA should be a prerequisite for a new draft, as otherwise it would be unfair to men.

Sure enough, that February, when Carter wanted to require young Americans to register for the draft, he sent [two bills](#) to Congress, one of which would require women to register. “There is no distinction possible, on the basis of ability or performance, that would allow me to exclude women,” he said. But the use of two separate bills was not a coincidence: registration (though not active conscription) resumed for men, but the women's registration did not move ahead.

The decision prompted a revival of [the same argument](#) made during Vietnam: that the new draft was discriminatory against men and thus a violation of the Fifth Amendment. In 1981, the Supreme Court [held](#) that a men-only draft was constitutional. Since the point of a draft was to get troops for combat, the argument went, and women were excluded from active combat at the time, the draft system made sense as-is. As for Phyllis Schlafly, she predicted that the decision would mean the failure of ERA, as it was proof that women and men really did not bear the same responsibilities in society.

Whether or not the draft was the cause, she was right about the result. The ratification period for ERA [expired in 1982](#).

It's striking to note that many of the most effective anti-ERA arguments—same-sex marriage and unisex toilets—of the 1970s and '80s have come to pass without the help of the ERA. Though not every American may be happy about them, they're hardly the cultural bugbears they once were, terrifying enough to derail a constitutional amendment. Whether that arc will hold true for a gender-neutral draft remains to be seen (and Lee's bill has been referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee), but the increased presence of women in the military and their admission to combat roles has [already shown](#) that the idea doesn't seem like as much of a threat to femininity or national security as it once did. Even as many Americans continue to disagree about whether a potential draft ought to include women—or whether it should exist in the first place—the nation's women have shown their mettle.

After all, perhaps the most affecting argument is the one expressed by a TIME reader in 1978, during an earlier iteration of this debate.

“Nothing I saw the troops or their officers do during the time I served in Viet Nam could not have been done by a 100-lb. female,” [wrote William D. Watson of Denver](#). “The bleeding is the only hard part, and it requires no special skill.”

<http://time.com/4218367/rubio-cruz-draft-women/>

11. Occupational fitness: Navy can look to other services' tests

(29 Feb) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

Every sailor is familiar with the physical readiness test: pushups, situps, 1.5-mile run. Now the service is interested in ways to measure sailor's physical aptitude for their job.

This is known as an operational fitness test and is a mainstay of the Marine Corps regimen that has been examined by other services. The Corps has long conducted two fitness tests a year, one measuring general physical health and one combat readiness; some experts have proposed a similar model for the Navy. The Army in 2012 scrapped a proposed combat test, but is working on military occupational specialty-specific tests.

A look at operational fitness across the services:

Marine Corps

Marines' once-a-year combat fitness test consists of three events:

1. Movement to contact: A timed, 800-yard course that tests endurance.
2. Ammunition lift: As many times as possible, Marines lift a 30-pound ammo can overhead until their arms give out.
3. Maneuver under fire: A 300-yard shuttle run with combat-related tasks, like crawls, carries, ammunition resupply, grenade

throwing and agility.

All Marines take the test on the opposite cycle from their regular physical fitness test, and men and women are graded differently.

Army

The Army is planning to roll out gender neutral, MOS-specific tests that could start as soon as this summer. The Occupational Physical Assessment Test will evaluate recruits for duty into certain Military Occupational Specialty fields and will feature exercises like:

1. Standing long jump
2. Dead lift
3. Aerobic interval run
4. "Seated power throw," similar to the kneeling powerball toss

Air Force

The Air Force does not have service-wide operational fitness test.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/29/occupational-fitness-navy-can-look-other-services-tests/80570278/>

12. Female recruits, Marines excel at Parris Island amid calls for integration

(1 Mar) Marine Corps Times, By Brig. Gen. Stephen A. Cheney (ret.) and Col. Michael A. Malachowsky (ret.)

Editor's note: The following is an opinion piece. The writers are not employed by Military Times and the views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of Military Times or its editorial staff.

There has been considerable publicity about the supposed failings of the Marine Corps when it comes to how the service trains women.

Sadly, the positive side of this argument doesn't generate the kind of attention that the accusations have. So we'll start with this: Marines of both genders have been extremely successful in transforming recruits — male and female — into Marines at both recruit depots (San Diego and Parris Island, South Carolina) for decades.

While there are no female recruits at San Diego, there are female drill instructors there teaching a variety of classes to the male recruits. The reason there are no female recruits at San Diego is one of finance and efficiency — with only 2,700 women entering the Corps each year on average compared to 40,000 men, having female facilities at both depots is just not cost effective.

It's important to note, however, that both recruit depots have had female commanding generals over the past 10 years.

Every woman who became an enlisted Marine over the past several decades successfully completed all seven graduation requirements — six of which were the same for men. They have never underperformed. They either met the requirements or they didn't graduate.

Now the seventh category — physical and combat fitness testing — has gender-normed requirements. Women do not do pullups as men do. If that requirement is standardized for all, there will be significantly fewer women who can become Marines because they inherently have less upper body strength (just look at almost any Olympic sport for comparison).

If, as some would say, the answer is to recruit those who do have the strength or train those we recruit to do better, then we have significantly narrowed the pool of available women who can meet those requirements — or we have to extend the training significantly for the others. Is that equity?

The Marine Corps has worked hard over the years to afford women equal opportunity in every category, save one: the combat arms, in which women were barred by regulation. With the latest decision to allow women into the combat arms, we're sure the Marine Corps will salute and implement as told. We are not going to argue that point here, except to say the standards for entry into the combat arms must remain the same.

But the latest directives from the Navy secretary, micro-managing how the Marines perform their basic training, are off base, counterproductive, and demeaning to not only the female drill instructors who have performed so well for decades, but also to those wonderful female recruits who volunteered to become Marines and passed all the requirements to be one.

Brig. Gen. Stephen Cheney (ret.) served as the commanding general of Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, starting in 1999. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and spent more than 30 years in uniform. Cheney is now the chief executive officer of the American Security Project and a member of the State Department Foreign Affairs Policy Board.

Col. Michael A. Malachowsky (ret.) served as the commanding officer of Recruit Training Regiment at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina. He has also served as the deputy commander of Marine Forces Korea and as SOCOM's J-7 director. Now the deputy division chief at SOCOM's Doctrine/LL Division, Malachowsky is a graduate of Oklahoma City University and holds a master's degree from California State University-San Bernardino.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/opinion/2016/03/01/female-recruits-marines-excel-parris-island-amid-calls-integration/81157690/>

13. 'No Date' Set for Updating Army's Tape Test for Body Fat: Official

(1 Mar) Military.com, By Matthew Cox

The U.S. Army's top enlisted soldier is calling a review of the service's long-criticized tape-test policy to measure body fat.

Sgt. Major of the [Army](#) Daniel Dailey has requested that the G1 review the method the service uses to determine body-fat composition, commonly known as the tape test policy, according to Master Sgt. Michelle Johnson, a spokeswoman for the SMA. Training and Doctrine Command and Army Medical Command have also been asked to participate in the review.

The policy falls under AR 600-9, the Army's regulation that governs the service's weight control program. Soldiers are screened at least every six months to ensure they meet the prescribed body-fat standard, measured by the circumference-based tape method outlined in the regulation.

"Commanders have the authority to direct a body fat assessment on any soldier that they determine does not present a soldierly appearance, regardless of whether or not the soldier exceeds the screening table weight for his or her measured height," according to the regulation.

Dailey's request for the review, which was previously reported by Army Times, was prompted by soldier complaints that the test is not the most accurate method for measuring fitness, Johnson said.

But so far, it's unclear how extensive this review will be or even when it will occur.

The Army G1 provided the following response to Military.com when asked about the SMA's request:

"Army senior leaders continue to shape, review and implement changes to personnel policies to enhance force readiness and resilience. Army offices responsible for the Army Body Composition Program (AR 600-9) perpetually review the regulation to ensure we have the most relevant guidance that ensures the sustainment of our personnel's individual/collective capacities to accomplish the mission.

"Revisions to this regulation were last published in 2013. As a part of the Army publication process, input from Soldiers and leaders are fully considered. Currently, no date has been set for an updated regulation," according to the statement.

When asked further about the review, Army G1 officials said there is not yet a plan in place for such a review.

"Some type of review will be done -- when, how long or when it will be published, that can vary," said Paul Prince, a spokesman for Army G1.

Typically, the Army will review the entire regulation instead of focusing on one small part of it, such as the tape test, Prince said.

"All of our regulations have multiple layers of policy," Prince said. "Rushing a publication with that one piece of guidance is

something that we don't routinely do."

The Army, however, does not kick soldiers out of the Army because they don't meet the prescribed body-fat standard, Johnson said.

"You cannot just put someone out because fail the tape test," she said.

Soldiers must first be counseled about the problem. Leaders then should be sending them to see a nutritionist as well as a doctor to see if other health problems are to blame, Johnson said.

"A commander can't say 'well you look fat, so you are gone,'" Johnson said "We have a process."

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2016/03/01/no-date-set-for-updating-armys-tape-test-for-body-fat-official.html>

14. Fixing Navy fitness: 8 ways sailors want it improved

(1 Mar) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

It's fair to say that the decades-old Physical Readiness Test isn't a hit with sailors.

With Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens saying it's time for making it more related to sailors' jobs, Navy Times wanted to hear your ideas to improve it. Dozens wrote in with their recommendations and a hundred chimed in with their thoughts online, from calls for more command PT to modeling an occupational fitness test off that taken by the Navy SEALs.

Excerpts from readers' responses:

An obstacle course to be completed in a certain amount of time (age specific).

Honestly, if we're doing job specific, Yoga would be the most reasonable for a CT. Sitting for hours at a computer is nearly mandatory. Yoga and stretching helps. How do you test it? Maybe holding a pose, completing a pose, something along those lines. Weight lifting as well. Squats wouldn't be a bad idea. If they don't want to come up with a system of measurement for that, then basic exercises, like the ones you may have to do in an obstacle course, would be sufficient. Scaling a wall with rope. Fireman carry your buddy. Bear crawl. Over and under logs. Dash at the end. Something like that.

Cryptologic Technician (Interpretive) 3rd Class Anna Vanderstouwe

Being a Master-at-Arms. I have done a lot of physical testing for police departments. I think a good operational physical test for my kind of rating would be an obstacle course. Here in Oregon we have a test known as the [Oregon Physical Abilities Test], which tests the endurance as well as core and upper body strength all into one test. It includes a dummy drag and a push-pull machine. A person has five minutes and 30 seconds to successfully complete this test.

Former Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Micah Ennis

I have always thought the Navy's PRT/Fitness could always become better. First of many things I think needs to change is the Navy guidelines on PT. I was a CFL at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and can remember how bad the PT was. We only had one mandatory day of PT and that was every Friday. This 1 to 2 mile "run" and pushups/jumping jacks/situps/squats is nowhere near enough to get any sailor ready for the PRT. For some sailors this is their only source of PT because they won't go out on their own and PT. For this reason I believe the Navy should actually enforce the "3 days a week" PT [mandate]. I personally love how the Marine Corps does their PT schedule. While being stationed with them, we always have PT every morning for at least one hour. The PT would consist of running some days, weight lifting on another, and a variation of other workouts. This is what gets the Marines ready for their annual PFT/CFT. With our PRT having less running than the United States Marine Corps I believe that if we even only had four days of mandatory PT that Sailors would truly benefit from it and become better at PT, their rate, and life in general. The health of our sailors would greatly increase and we would have more motivated and mentally ready sailors for the jobs the Navy needs. The lack of PT at any Navy command is ridiculous and needs to be changed and enforced by all throughout the ranks.

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class (FMF) Jared Reiber

For corpsmen, a modified Army Combat Field Medical test.

For office personnel, a timed two-man carry or fireman's carry down three flights of stairs.

For quartermasters, information systems technicians, electronics technicians, culinary specialists, electrician's mates and gunner's mates, a timed Stretcher Bearer course resembling a ship's structure.

For commanding officers, executive officers, division officers, a firefighting and damage control exercise aboard a specially constructed ship anchored in port. Scoring to be assessed by damage control specialists not assigned to test takers' commands. Failure to keep ship afloat or to extinguish the fire constitutes a failure.

Retired Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SW) Robert Mason

Would changing the fitness test really change the scores appreciably? Is it worth the bureaucratic headache? The current test is meant to be a measure of general fitness and does a good job at identifying "at risk" individuals. While I've seen some unhealthy folks mysteriously pass, I've NEVER seen a fit person fail. While I'd love to see pullups, 500m swim and the "sit and reach" added to the test, I don't think the Navy stands to gain much from monkeying with it. More effort needs to be spent outside of the tests on increasing our Sailors' physical activity so the PRT becomes less of a readiness issue.

Cmdr. Andrew Thaeler

1. If an individual scores an outstanding overall they do not have to take another PRT for 1 year.
2. Let individuals decide how they would like to do the cardio with or without a medical waiver such as (use the treadmill, bike, or swim). No limitation on how to pass the cardio portion of the test.
3. No push-up and sit-ups and incorporate. Planks for the push-ups and side planks or leg raises for sit-up portion of the test.
4. The running portion I would like to see go to 2 miles and extend the time to complete, as 1.5-mile run does not test your cardio like it should.
5. Lastly, I would like to see incentives for getting either an excellent or outstanding score on the PRT like 24 hour special liberty for an excellent or a 48 to 72 hour special liberty for an Outstanding score. This will push individuals to score better because they will know if they score good they will get time off, which is a highly motivating thing for Sailors.

Yeoman 1st Class (SW/AW) Jason Kent

Do a non-PRT one time and do the PRT the next time for a one year cycle but if applicable use the Navy SEAL version, called the [physical standards test] which includes: 500-yards swim, Pushups, Sit-ups, 1.5-mile run.

Base it near or around the current standards, but do not keep them so low that it is simple. Make it a challenge. Keep the same weight/height [body composition assessment] standards, I do not agree with raising the ceiling. It only lets someone have that comfort if they are too close.

I am working to get in better shape, but I feel by 2018 these changes should be made. And if [a sailor is] not able to do the swim due to medical reasons or a reasonable waiver, then do the regular PRT.

Operations Specialist 2nd Class Justin Green

While job-specific PRTs would be ideal, how can we go about deciding which job needs more or less physical conditioning than others with regards to shipboard life? In general we can say that a majority of the rates do not need much physical conditioning at all to perform their duties (e.g. culinary specialists, yeoman, personnel specialists, religious programs specialists, operations specialists and so on). What do we do for these sailors, just a baseline PRT like we have now?

That seems reasonable, I suppose. But I do believe that having any shipboard personnel should be capable of performing the equivalent to a firefighters' physical fitness test as the civilians have; after all, "every sailor is a firefighter." But I'd bet most

shipboard personnel couldn't perform a cardio event of carrying a coiled firehose up five decks in [firefighting ensemble] like they may have to do in a real situation.

There isn't an "alternative cardio event" during a shipboard fire or general quarters. People's lives and the ship itself could be at stake! And speaking of "alternative cardio events," I think that the alternative cardio events are absolutely abused and should not be allowed for anyone who doesn't have a documented injury or condition. Everyone in the Navy knows that if you're overweight or out of shape you can jump on the bicycle or elliptical without any training and pass your PRT.

Are we really to believe that someone who can't pass the run time which is a snail's pace magically gets in the equivalent cardiovascular shape when they jump on the bike or elliptical? Not a chance. There's a reason why the alternative cardio events are full of people that can barely pass the BCA. I guarantee the statistics support that.

Another important concern I have with the PRT is that the Navy has essentially allowed their sailors to perform to the minimum standard and said they are "OK" with it. These are pass/fail events. There is no incentive for doing well. A person with no self-motivation that gets one of his friends to lie about his numbers and barely passes the test is essentially an equal sailor to someone who takes the extra time and effort to get an excellent, outstanding, or maximum. How does that make sense in any legitimate company or organization?

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/03/01/fixing-navy-fitness-8-ways-sailors-want-improved/80551248/>

15. 40 Years of Women at the Naval Academy – “Ability, not gender”

(1 Mar) Navy Live, By Vice Admiral Walter E. “Ted” Carter Jr.

The Naval Academy recently hosted its annual Astronaut Convocation, inviting five of our 53 astronaut graduates to the Yard to discuss the future of the space program with the Brigade of Midshipmen. Among them was U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Nicole Aunapu Mann ('99), the most recent [United States Naval Academy \(USNA\)](#) graduate to be selected by [NASA](#).

Mann joins an illustrious line of Naval Academy alumnae who have served in the U.S. space program. One of the academy's earliest woman graduates was retired Capt. Wendy Lawrence, my classmate from the great Class of 1981 and the first woman from USNA to fly in space. Capt. Sunita Williams ('87) is one of four members—and the only woman—on NASA's new commercial spaceflight team, selected to partner with private sector companies developing spacecraft that will fly astronauts to the International Space Station. The Naval Academy's representation in the past and future of space flight is just one example of our graduates' achievements at the highest levels. As we mark the 40th anniversary of the integration of women at the Naval Academy, I'd like to highlight how far we've come and look ahead in anticipation of a bright future. On July 6, 1976, the Class of 1980 arrived on Induction Day. Four years later, 55 women from that class graduated, becoming the plankowners of gender integration at this great institution—an accomplishment that we celebrated last year at the 35th Reunion for the Class of 1980.

Compare that to our most recent graduates—of the 1,070 midshipmen who graduated last May, 204 were women.

And the numbers continue to grow. More women have applied for admission than ever before (over 4,300 applications!) for the soon to be inducted Class of 2020. The current Plebe Class of 2019 boasts the largest number of women in academy history—ANY academy—with 324 inducted last July. In a summer marked by near record-low attrition, every woman completed Plebe Summer.

Women now comprise more than a quarter of the Brigade. Female representation will continue to grow; America's talented youth are clearly attracted to the Naval Academy and the missions of the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps. More importantly, beyond just the numbers, the evolution of gender integration has made significant positive progress over the past four decades. With combat positions being opened to all women starting next year, the attitude and personality of the Brigade has become one of inclusiveness for all, men and women.

Since 1980, more than 4,600 women have graduated from the Naval Academy and have gone on to excel in their military careers and beyond. Adm. Michelle Howard ('82) was the first African-American woman to reach flag rank as well as the first woman to wear four stars. She now serves as our vice chief of naval operations, the second-highest ranking position in the Navy. Rear Adm. Margaret Klein ('81), now senior advisor to the secretary of defense for military professionalism, was the first woman to serve as commandant of midshipmen. Marine Col. Roberta Shea ('91) recently served as the first female deputy commandant, and she is currently serving as the commanding officer of the I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Headquarters Group in Camp Pendleton, California.

Their legacy of leadership continues today within the Brigade. Midshipman 1st Class Jenna Westerberg serves as this semester's Brigade commander, following on the heels of Midshipman 1st Class Margo Darragh's leadership in the same position during the fall semester. This is the first academic year in which women earned the Brigade commander leadership position for both semesters.

The Brigade has a wealth of role models to choose from among their peers, including women who excel morally, mentally and physically. Midshipman 1st Class Megan Musilli is one of only 32 Americans and the only service academy student selected for a 2016 Rhodes Scholarship. She is a mathematics major and is training to become a Navy physician. Midshipman 1st Class Ally Strachan, a weapons and systems engineering major ranked in the top five percent of her class, was selected for the Mitchell Scholarship. Just last month, nuclear engineering major Midshipman 1st Class Megan Hough was selected for a Gates Cambridge Scholarship, one of only 35 nationwide.

Amazingly, a nation-leading 42 percent of women at the Naval Academy compete in Division I NCAA Athletics on 15 different sports teams. Last semester, varsity soccer player Midshipman 3rd Class Meghan Hegarty was named to the Patriot League All-Academic squad and was chosen as a First-Team College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-District honoree. Five members of the Navy volleyball team recently earned placement on the Patriot League Academic Honor Roll. Women's swimming and diving recently dominated the Patriot League Championship, winning the team title and all three individual meet awards (Swimmer, Diver and Rookie of the meet).

In addition to observing Women's History Month throughout March, we will mark the anniversary of the integration of women at USNA with a variety of ceremonies and observances. Our annual Naval Academy Foreign Affairs Conference (NAFAC) in April will focus on "Women and Security: The Implications of Promoting Global Gender Equality." Our Commissioning Week in May and Induction Day later in the summer will allow us the opportunity to welcome back many of our alumnae to impart their experiences on our new graduates and incoming freshman class. Our Naval Academy Museum will also open a new exhibit in July focusing on this anniversary.

As superintendent, and as someone who was a student at USNA in the earliest days of women on the yard, I'm extremely proud of what our graduates and our current midshipmen have accomplished and look forward to what they will achieve in the future as their opportunities to serve expand. For women in the Navy and Marine Corps, the future has never been brighter, and the Naval Academy will continue to develop women of character and consequence to lead our Sailors and Marines.

<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2016/03/01/40-years-of-women-at-the-naval-academy-ability-not-gender/>

16. Ted Cruz's off-base claim that having women in combat leads to increased casualties

(2 Mar) The Washington Post, By Michelle Ye Hee Lee

Combat integration is a controversial topic that has come up regularly on the campaign trail. During a recent forum, Cruz cited a United States Marine Corps study examining the issue.

But did this study find that putting women in previously-closed combat positions would increase casualties among men and women and decrease military effectiveness, as Cruz claimed? No, he's stretching the data. Let's take a look at what the study really said.

The Facts

All combat positions in all military branches have been open to women since Jan. 1, 2016. The Army and Marine Corps has had more gender-restricted positions than other military branches.

The Marine Corps ran a nine-month experiment to find out how the Corps would look with integrated combat units, which included previously-closed positions (infantry, artillery and mechanized units). The units in the study were integrated into ratios that would be expected.

There were two phases of the study: a four-month training period and a five-month "deployment" period to the Mojave Desert in Twentynine Palms, Calif. They simulated a training and warfare cycle [that was common over the past 15 years](#). The result was a [nearly 1,000-page report](#).

Researchers looked at critical components of ground combat: speed, cohesion, lethality (ability to hit the target), survivability (ability

to withstand or avoid enemy gunfire) and readiness (whether you are well enough to do your job when called on to do it).

All-male teams performed better on 69 percent of the tasks compared to integrated units, which finished their tasks at a slower rate and with fewer hits on target (except with the .50 caliber machine gun). But integrated teams had higher unit cohesion.

Women [didn't do as well as men removing wounded bodies](#) from the battlefield. This was done using a 220-pound dummy body, which represents the weight of an average Marine (174 pounds) carrying full combat gear. The average weight of a female volunteer in the study was 142 pounds.

There was no finding that supported Cruz's claim that having an integrated team would increase "casualties" (when a person can no longer can fight because of injury or death). Cruz seems to be referring to the study's findings that relate to injuries and combat readiness. His campaign did not respond to our inquiry.

Women got injured more frequently on the job, while men were more likely to have non-occupational injuries or illnesses. That means integrated units had reduced combat readiness, according to the report, which is a part of combat effectiveness (the broader capability of a unit to perform its mission).

But gender wasn't the only factor that led to more injuries; units tasked with performing certain skills were prone to occupational injuries. Units that operated vehicles were less likely to have occupational injuries than units that marched or operated artillery. And once an injury occurred, males and females recovered at the same pace.

Female Marines "demonstrated that they are capable of performing the physically demanding tasks, but not necessarily at the same level as their male counterparts in terms of performance, fatigue, workload, or cohesion," according to the report.

"We want to select the right human beings for the jobs so they don't get injured as often and can do the job, so the long-term goal is to find out what that [standard] is," said Paul Johnson, lead researcher of the study and scientific adviser for the Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity.

Critics of the study say you can't measure the combat effectiveness of an integrated unit without having occupation-related, gender-neutral standards and training.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus has been critical of the study, saying that the conclusions were based on the average performance of female Marines rather than individual abilities of the female volunteers: "There were — and are — capable women who can meet the arduous standards the Marine Corps set for ground combat arms units," he said in a February 2016 testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Mabus and others have noted that media coverage has focused on women's performance in this specific study, without noting [other research](#). For example, a 2015 [behavioral health assessment](#) showed integrated units had higher morale than all-male units. While physical preparedness was important, so were resourcefulness and creative problem-solving, the report said. Female Marines found creative solutions to compensate for their reduced height and/or strength, the report said.

The Pinocchio Test

Cruz misrepresents the Marines study's findings when saying that putting women in previously-closed combat roles ended up increasing casualties among men and women — and thereby decreasing military effectiveness. The study said nothing about the presence of women in units and the impact on casualties (which, in military terms, include both injuries and deaths) within the unit.

The relation to combat effectiveness was a more nuanced one: that women were prone to more injuries on the job, which reduced their combat readiness (and ultimately, effectiveness). But the type of task the unit was responsible for also led to more injuries among the Marines. Moreover, this argument overlooks findings in other Marines studies, such as women's ability to overcome their reduced height and weight by using creative problem-solving.

Cruz's mischaracterization of the Marines research earns him Three Pinocchios.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2016/03/02/ted-cruzs-off-base-claim-that-having-women-in-combat-leads-to-increased-casualties/>

17. Special Operations: Norway Creates Female Commandos

(2 Mar) StrategyPage

Norwegian special operations have expanded a bit by adding a dozen female operators. This group, called the Jegertroppen (Hunter Troop), was created to serve in situations where women are more effective. The need for a female unit came out of recent Norwegian experience in Afghanistan. As in many Moslem countries male soldiers having anything to do with Moslem women is considered very bad manners. Some foreign forces adapted. The United States quickly trained female soldiers and marines to accompany raids and such to deal with searching or questioning women. This worked but the Norwegians often use their special operations troops for long range patrols and intelligence gathering operations. In some cases having some women along would be useful, but the female operators had to be as capable as the men.

So it was decided to see if some women could be recruited and trained for the jobs. There were 317 women who applied for the special operations course. Only 28 percent made it past the screening test and only 15 percent of these completed the yearlong training. Those percentages are about the same for male candidates. The only accommodation for the women was a 32 percent lighter basic combat load. Otherwise the women had to deal with the same stresses and learn the same combat, tracking, intelligence and other skills as the men.

Female commandos and intelligence field operatives (Jane Bond types) are not unknown, but their existence is generally played down and their identities kept secret. The reason for this is that these highly trained women are few in number and used for situations where a woman is not expected and will make a big difference. Nearly all the major special operations organizations of the 20th century have had some female operators. What was unusual about Norway was that they issued a press release, no information on the women themselves.

Norway only has a population of five million but still has built, since World War II, a highly regarded commando (special operations) force of about 500 personnel. This includes army and navy forces. Norwegian ground forces only have 9,000 active duty troops and the entire armed forces only 24,000.

<http://www.strategypage.com/htm/htsf/20160302.aspx>

18. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus to Beaufort Marines: Diverse force a stronger force

(3 Mar) The Beaufort Gazette, By Stephen Fastenau

A more diverse Marine Corps will be a stronger Marine Corps, the U.S. Navy's top official told Marines on Thursday.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has been at the center of the debate about women in combat. He pushed back against a Marines' study last year that said women performed worse than men in combat roles and supported gender-integrated boot camp and more gender-neutral job titles and uniforms.

At a packed Lasseter Theater on Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, Mabus said those who meet the same set of standards should be able to do the same jobs.

"Stuff like gender and color and who you love shouldn't matter," said Mabus, the former Democratic governor of Mississippi and the longest to lead the Navy in his position since World War I.

Mabus, appointed by President Barack Obama in 2009, told a congressional panel this week [he will step down within a year](#). He offered no date for his departure Thursday, saying only that he was a political appointee and the news shouldn't be a surprise.

He addressed a number of issues, including questions about the Marines' evolving tattoo policy, Navy spending, and maternity and paternity leave for service members.

His comments on women in fighting roles proved the most lively. At the town-hall style talk, Mabus sparred with retired Col. Pat Garrett, who told Mabus a woman could have not fought alongside Garrett in Vietnam.

A 110-pound woman couldn't pull a 200-pound man from the battlefield, Garrett told Mabus.

"She's going to get killed," said Garrett, who also questioned what women would do in war if they were without access to showers and bathrooms for extended time. "We're going to have to buy a lot more body bags because of this decision."

The woman in Garrett's example would not have met fighting standards and not many can, Mabus said, but the ones who do shouldn't

be kept from combat roles.

Mabus likened Garrett's argument to the debate over African-Americans enlisting in the Marines during the 1940s.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller doesn't agree with Mabus' position on women in combat, the secretary noted. Past commandants didn't agree with lifting the ban on openly gay service members or allowing African-Americans to enlist, he noted.

But in 10 years, people will wonder why this was an issue, Mabus told The Beaufort Gazette and The Island Packet after his talk.

"A more diverse force is a stronger force," Mabus told the Marines, "because of diversity of thought."

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/community/beaufort-news/article63877127.html#storylink=cpy>

19. Enlisted chiefs tell Congress pay fears are hurting morale

(26 Feb) Military Times, By Karen Jowers

The military services' top enlisted leaders pointed out retirement confusion, housing deterioration and slow growth in overall compensation among top quality-of-life concerns for troops and families at a congressional hearing Friday, where a California Democrat on the panel of lawmakers described his own expected \$60,000 federal retirement as "not a lot" and said it's "unfair for people to say" military compensation is "just not enough."

"When you put it in context, I can't believe the private sector can really lure away [military] people. You've got a lot of benefits," said Rep. Sam Farr, D-Calif., during a hearing of the House Appropriations panel on military construction and veterans affairs. He said the private sector doesn't offer benefits comparable to the military's child care, free access to clinics for military members, Tricare for spouses and children, morale, welfare and recreation programs and discounts.

"I'm totally for you, but it's unfair for people to say it's just not enough," Farr told the enlisted leaders. "Congress members have not had a COLA in 10 years. Talk about the morale here. And the retirement. ... I'll retire here after 26 years of federal service, and the retirement is \$60,000," he said. "It's not a lot."

"I think we ought to put this into context. If a soldier comes to me and says 'you guys are shortchanging us' ... you're not going to get a better benefit going to work for IBM," Farr said.

The senior enlisted advisers told lawmakers they're concerned about budget cuts' effects on the morale of troops and families.

"When someone decides to join the military, they know what benefits are available, and they know what they are committing to," said Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody. "Let's have a real conversation and not try to arbitrarily correlate their service, what they do for their nation, compared to what anybody else does for their nation."

Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel Dailey said he's visited dozens of installations in his first year in his position and spoken with thousands of troops and families.

"Fiscal conservation is our duty as leaders in the public sector. But it's hard to explain program and compensation cuts to a young soldier and his or her family," Dailey said. "Whether actual or perceived, these things affect how they view our decisions. ... We have to ask ourselves, is the value of these cuts worth the potential impact on our soldiers and their families? They're still deploying and still separating from their families."

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens said pay and benefits are one of the top concerns he hears in the fleet. Because of the budget discussions that have been going on at senior levels, he said, sailors and families "feel it's a matter of time before it actually occurs. There's the perceived and the actual. It creates a level of anxiety that's not healthy for the force."

He noted that the lawmakers on the committee were among those who helped make significant improvements in benefits, "resulting in quality of life that's commensurate with their service."

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Ronald Green said that service also has had to deal with funding decreases that "continue to eat away at our readiness." The Marine Corps "shouldn't have to make decisions between quality of work and quality of life," he said.

Farr and Cody agreed a national discussion is needed on troops' compensation.

Asked what their top quality-of-life concerns are for their troops, here's what the leaders said:

Air Force's Cody: Troops are worried about the slowing of growth in compensation and their lost buying power. They worry about the impact of budget problems on readiness and whether there will be the resources to accomplish the mission. He listed other issues such as child care.

Marine Corps' Green: Marines don't understand the new blended retirement system, and most current Marines will have choices to make. The Marine Corps is trying to get information out as it is available, and it's important that this process is done right.

Barracks and other buildings on base are also a concern, he said. "The budget we've been handed doesn't support everything in the backpack," he said, and the commandant will have some challenges with quality of life.

Navy's Stevens: In addition to the concerns about actual and potential cuts in pay and compensation, there is concern about having enough resources to get the work done: "We call it quality of work," he said. There's also concern about the deteriorating condition of buildings such as single sailors' housing and work facilities. "Shore infrastructure is not in the spotlight and doesn't get a lot of attention, but one of these days we're going to wake up and realize we've got a disaster out there," he said.

Army's Dailey: Readiness — resources to make sure soldiers are prepared to do the mission; ensuring the force of the future has consistent and reliable resources to stay well above the pace of adversaries; and maintaining resources that families need.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/2016/02/26/enlisted-chiefs-tell-congress-pay-fears-hurting-morale/80997540/>

20. Pentagon cuts Marine maternity leave by 6 weeks

(26 Feb) Marine Corps Times, By Lance M. Bacon

The Pentagon has cut Marines' maternity leave by one-third, but women who become pregnant by March 3 are still eligible for the full 18 weeks of leave.

The new 12-week maternity leave policy was announced Thursday; details can be found in Marine administrative message 102/16. A **privileged** health care provider must determine the estimated date of conception on or before March 3 for a Marine to qualify for 18 weeks of leave. Waivers will not be considered.

The Department of the Navy in August expanded maternity leave to 18 weeks, which was the Defense Department's most generous policy. The Air Force and Army had also been considering expanding their policies to 18 weeks, but Defense Secretary Ash Carter ordered all services to adopt a standard 12-week policy to bring the military in line with private industry. It was a setback to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, who tripled the service's traditional six weeks of paid leave last year to bring it in line with progressive companies like Google.

Mabus' policy allowed new mothers to spread maternity leave over the year following their child's birth, allowing more flexibility to switch off with a spouse's parental leave, for example. The new rules require women to take all 12 weeks of maternity in one block immediately following the birth or the release of the Marine from the hospital, whichever is later. Multiple births from a single pregnancy do not increase the amount of maternity leave.

Rules governing adoption and paternity leave remain unchanged, though the services continue to discuss a possible expansion, which would require congressional approval.

"Besides the changes to maternity leave, DoD is working to expand both paternity leave and adoptive leave for service members," the Navy said in Thursday's release.

Maternity leave was expanded from six weeks in the hopes of retaining women in their late 20s to mid-30s, who are twice as likely to leave military service as their male peers.

"Women at peak ages for starting a family leave the military at the highest rates," Carter said in January.

While many women lauded the expansion of maternity leave last year, some pointed out that women who take such a long time away from a command could see their assignment and promotion chances affected. The new maternity leave policy addresses this issue specifically.

“No member shall be disadvantaged in her career, including limitations in her assignments (except in the case where she voluntarily agrees to accept an assignment limitation), performance appraisals, or selection for professional military education or training, solely because she has taken maternity leave,” according to the message.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/benefits/pay/allowances/2016/02/26/pentagon-cuts-marine-maternity-leave-6-weeks/80981194/>

21. Mom-to-Mom Guide: Health and education in a mobile military household

(28 Feb) Military Times, By Amanda Miller

Mom-to-Mom Guide for Military Families: *Military Times is starting a collection of Q&A contributions from military moms in 2016. This is the first submission. Bookmark MilitaryTimes.com/Family to follow these posts from moms with a message. If you would like to contribute, email family@militarytimes.com.*

Renee Champagne, veteran and military spouse, on health and her children's education:

- Veteran, Air Force Security Forces
- Military spouse, 15 years, married to Air Force Col. Rhett Champagne, 821st Contingency Response Group, Travis Air Force Base, California
- Mom of Savannah, 13, born in Alaska; and Jake, 11, born in Maryland
- Past elementary school teacher
- Pursuing a master's degree at College of William & Mary, Virginia
- Committee member, Military Child Education Coalition
- Advocate for military families since 2003

Q. What made you want to teach?

A. When I got out of the military, I wanted to do something completely different from being a cop. It was also my way of running, and not coping with events that eventually led me down a dark path, but in the end, with help and accepting help, I am overcoming the traumas, and it's an ongoing process.

I chose a college where I could combine camaraderie, outdoor education and elementary education. I found my place at Prescott College in Arizona. I absolutely loved working with children, and I felt elementary school was where it was at because that's when they start to learn to lead, become their own person and learn to really adapt and overcome. I love the outdoors and the challenges that come along with it ... rock climbing, kayaking, backpacking, among other outdoor activities, can challenge us, bring a group together and foster growth.

Q. What has your children's education been like so far?

A. Our family spent a total of eight years overseas and immersed in Greek and German cultures.

Savannah was born in Alaska at Elmendorf Air Force Base. We moved to D.C. for one year of language training, where she attended preschool at Fort Myer, Virginia, then we moved to Greece, where she attended a Greek/British school for two years.

We got orders to Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Rhett and I both see the importance of multicultural education and how this fosters leadership and respect for other cultures, and broadens children's perspectives, so we decided she would attend a German school. This was difficult the first year because the system is completely different. We spoke Greek but not German, so we had to really be active listeners, stay involved, trust and depend on others in our German community. Looking back, this was the best decision we made.

Jake was quickly introduced to Greek. When he was 2, we moved to Germany, and he attended a German kindergarten. By grade school, he was completely fluent in German since he started so young.

Q. What have been the biggest challenges and advantages your kids have experienced?

A. Their biggest advantage is that they are well versed and bilingual. The biggest challenge has been learning to adapt and overcome quickly with little time to process.

Looking back, these experiences have taught them to be leaders, to be more flexible, to adapt and overcome challenges and, most importantly, it taught us all that other people matter and family is important.

Q. What was it like for Savannah and Jake to transition to U.S. schools?

A. We were so excited for our family to have this opportunity overseas that we didn't spend a lot of time worrying about how this would affect them when we returned to the States. For us, it was more important that they learn about other cultures, learn languages and have experiences that would last a lifetime.

Their transition into the American school system was difficult at first, moving to Williamsburg [Virginia]. However, the two schools our children attend were open-minded and willing to help Jake and Savannah have a smooth transition and the support they needed as I was going through treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder.

Having the support of the schools is imperative and I know has helped Savannah and Jake become the leaders they are and excel in school.

Q. What's been your biggest challenge as a parent in your children's education?

A. The Exceptional Family Member Program and the communication gap between the schools. As a parent, we really are the ones who need to ask for help, ask questions, and be involved. We can't expect others to do the work for us, and if something isn't working, find a way to look for the positive.

Our biggest challenge was that the counselors didn't understand PTSD and how that can affect a child's day. This is where organizations like Give an Hour can, and are, raising awareness on mental health with the Change Direction campaign.

Q. What health factors are more likely to affect military kids than others, and how does that affect their education?

A. Multiple deployments, divorce, loss of a parent due to suicide or war, trauma, single parenting, the feeling of loneliness, not fitting in due to multiple moves.

Q. What are some aspects of their children's education that military parents often don't recognize?

A. That eating healthy, exercise, service work, teaching our kids to cope by giving them the skills and to find the positive even if it's the smallest thing will all play a huge role in their growth and ability to become leaders in the future.

Q. What's next for you?

A. I'm currently at College of William & Mary through the Veterans Affairs Department's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, finishing my master's in Clinical Mental Health. The Vocational Rehab program has been a tremendous support in helping me cope with my PTSD, TBI and the educational challenges I've had to overcome.

While one person might take a few hours to write a paper, it could take me two days. Having an adviser who is prior-military and doesn't allow me to use my disability as an excuse has taught me that I can do anything if I really work hard, believe in myself and ask for help.

Q. What are some resources you would recommend to military families?

A. These community resources are just some examples of educating others to lead healthier lifestyles:

- [Military Child Education Coalition](#)
- [Team RWB](#)

- [The Positivity Project](#)
- [Wounded Warrior Project Independence Program](#)

More resources on education:

- ["The Benefits of Learning: The Impact of Education on Health, Family Life and Social Capital"](#)
- ["Post-traumatic Growth in Children: Helping children develop post-traumatic growth can make a difference."](#) Psychology Today

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/family/2016/02/28/mom--mom-guide-health-and-education-mobile-military-household/80800200/>

22. Colorado Springs conference finds military ethics woes hinge on trust

(28 Feb) The Gazette, By Tom Roeder

The Pentagon's newest effort to clean up misconduct in the ranks started with a simple question last week at the Air Force Academy. Ethics officers and others identified a key issue as a lack of trust in leadership.

"How do we get them to trust us?" Navy Capt. Scott Smith asked to kick off the two-day Department of Defense Professionalism Summit.

Rear Adm. Peg Klein said that by bringing 30 leaders from across the military together, the Pentagon wanted to cross-pollinate budding efforts to strengthen ethics from each of the services.

So far, the ethics campaign has resulted in a series of programs, but figuring out what works remains on the to-do list.

"That's really hard to know," she said.

Tackling that question and getting the services to share their best programs was why Klein brought the ethics bosses to Colorado Springs.

"We want you to put your great minds to work," she said.

One of the leaders in attendance was Frank Di Giovanni, the Defense Department's training boss.

"When you look at how you change the culture in an organization as a commander, it's not that easy," he said.

There are signs of progress, though, Klein said. The admiral cited the Army and the Marine Corps for their work. The Army has started an effort to train enlisted leaders to spot and stamp out bad behavior with the online "Not in My Squad" program.

The Army program uses videos and virtual reality to put young leaders in an environment to make tough choices and learn from mistakes.

The Marines got plaudits for making it easier for leaders to assess culture within units with a 37-question survey.

The Colorado Springs conference, the first of its kind, was expected to spawn a wider discussion of issues, too.

Via video, the conference attendees got to hear from Gen. Paul Selva, vice chairman of the joint chiefs, who told them a lot of work remains.

"We need to emphasize among military professionals the concept of trust," Selva said.

<http://gazette.com/colorado-springs-conference-finds-military-ethics-woes-hinge-on-trust/article/1571011>

23. New military hazing rules could be part of annual defense bill

(1 Mar) Military Times, By Leo Shane III

Rep. Judy Chu wants the military to finally get serious about ending hazing in the ranks.

The California Democrat, whose nephew committed suicide in Afghanistan five years ago after a hazing episode by fellow Marines, on Tuesday petitioned House defense leaders to include new anti-hazing initiatives in the upcoming defense authorization bill debate,

saying that Pentagon leaders simply have not done enough to address the issue despite years of focus from Congress.

Her renewed criticism stems from a Government Accountability Office report released last month which found poor oversight and enforcement of those initiatives, and still-scattered data on the frequency of such crimes in the ranks.

“Today we have an independent analysis that found that the Defense Department’s anti-hazing policies are not being implemented, training is unclear and tracking systems are highly divergent and underdeveloped,” she told members of the House Armed Services Committee. “DoD is not aware to the extent of which hazing policies have been implemented.”

To fix that, she wants an annual department wide report on how policies are being implemented, improved anti-hazing training for commanders through the services, and a clearer data collection plan so Congress can see if the actions are working.

If the ideas are included in the House draft of the annual defense policy bill — and committee chairman Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, indicated he was supportive — it would be the fifth consecutive year that anti-hazing language has been highlighted by the House panel.

Earlier provisions included requiring that GAO report, which called current training efforts too broad and watered-down to be effective.

Defense Department officials have struggled to address the problem since details of Chu’s nephew’s death were made public about five years ago.

Three Marines were charged with humiliating and abusing Lance Cpl. Harry Lew as punishment for repeated warnings about falling asleep while on watch. Service officials said they made him perform pointless, repetitive tasks for hours in full battle gear, kicking and taunting him throughout the tasks.

Lew fatally shot himself shortly after the hazing session ended. One of the Marines was convicted in connection with the incident, and he served a month in prison.

As she has almost every year during the committee’s annual policy work discussions, Chu recounted the devastating affects her nephew’s death had on her family and their faith in the military.

“Over the years, I have heard stories of other service members who experienced hazing so arduous it led to their deaths,” she said. “Only when we have these changes in place can we truly begin to eliminate hazing in the military.”

House lawmakers have already begun preliminary work on drafting the annual defense authorization bill, the typical legislative vehicle for setting military policy each year. House officials hope to finish their draft in late spring, while their Senate counterparts are aiming for early summer.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2016/03/01/military-hazing-new-initiatives-chu/81157398/>

24. Army's new maternity leave policy is now official

(1 Mar) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

It’s official: Soldiers will now receive up to 12 weeks of maternity leave after giving birth.

That’s more than double the Army’s previous policy, which gave female soldiers six weeks of post-pregnancy convalescent leave.

What remains unchanged are how much time new mothers have before they are deployable again and the Army's rules for new fathers.

New mothers are still non-deployable for up to six months.

New fathers are allowed a non-chargeable administrative absence of no more than 10 days. That time must be taken consecutively and within 45 days of the child's birth. Deployed soldiers have 60 days after they return from their deployment to use the 10 days of paternity leave; if the leave is not used within the established timeframe, that leave is lost.

In addition, paternity leave is authorized only for a married soldier on active duty, including Title 10 and Title 32 Active Guard and Reserve duty, whose wife gives birth to a child. It cannot be applied to single soldiers fathering a child out of wedlock.

The directive regarding the new maternity leave policy, signed Tuesday by Acting Army Secretary Patrick Murphy, follows a force-wide policy announced Jan. 28 by Defense Secretary Ash Carter. Carter's announcement granted women 12 weeks of maternity leave and created a DoD-wide policy on a matter that was for many years left up to the individual services.

"The Army fully supports DoD's decision to provide women across the joint force up to 12 weeks of fully paid maternity leave," said Paul Prince, an Army spokesman. "This is about taking care of our soldiers and their families. There are important missions to accomplish worldwide, and women soldiers are among those capable to achieve them. We honor their commitment to serve by ensuring they have the resources to be ready and resilient and to take care of their family members."

More than 6,000 active-duty soldiers gave birth in fiscal year 2015, Prince said.

Here's a closer look at the Army's new policy.

- Murphy signed the directive Tuesday, but the policy went into effect Feb. 2.
- Commanders will authorize up to 12 continuous weeks of non-chargeable maternity leave for active Army soldiers as well as reserve component soldiers who are on call or order to active service for a continuous period of at least one year. The 12-week leave period starts immediately after a birth or the mother's release from the hospital, whichever is later.
- Troop Program Unit soldiers in the National Guard and Army Reserve are not eligible for maternity leave. Instead, they are excused from any weekend battle assemblies and annual training that take place within 84 days of giving birth.
- Commanders cannot disapprove maternity leave.
- Soldiers who were already on maternity convalescent leave on Feb. 2 will be given 42 additional days of leave.
- Soldiers who were on regular leave on Feb. 2 in conjunction with maternity leave can convert that time off into non-chargeable maternity leave. They also can extend their maternity leave, but their total time off cannot be more than 84 days.
- Soldiers who were on maternity leave on Feb. 2 but have since returned to duty are authorized to return to a leave status. These soldiers will take the remaining leave as continuous non-chargeable maternity leave. They also are authorized to convert any regular leave they took in conjunction with maternity leave into non-chargeable maternity leave. The total days of leave cannot be more than 84 days.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2016/03/01/armys-new-maternity-leave-policy-now-official/81162166/>

25. Presidential Proclamation -- Women's History Month, 2016

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH, 2016

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Throughout history, women have driven humanity forward on the path to a more equal and just society, contributing in innumerable ways to our character and progress as a people. In the face of discrimination and undue hardship, they have never given up on the promise of America: that with hard work and determination, nothing is out of reach. During Women's History Month, we remember the trailblazers of the past, including the women who are not recorded in our history books, and we honor their legacies by carrying forward the valuable lessons learned from the powerful examples they set.

For too long, women were formally excluded from full participation in our society and our democracy. Because of the courage of so many bold women who dared to transcend preconceived expectations and prove they were capable of doing all that a man could do and more, advances were made, discoveries were revealed, barriers were broken, and progress triumphed. Whether serving in elected positions across America, leading groundbreaking civil rights movements, venturing into unknown frontiers, or programming revolutionary technologies, generations of women that knew their gender was no obstacle to what they could accomplish have long stirred new ideas and opened new doors, having a profound and positive impact on our Nation. Through hardship and strife and in every realm of life, women have spurred change in communities around the world, steadfastly joining together to overcome adversity and lead the charge for a fairer, more inclusive, and more progressive society.

During Women's History Month, we honor the countless women who sacrificed and strived to ensure all people have an equal shot at pursuing the American dream. As President, the first bill I signed into law was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, making it easier for working American women to effectively challenge illegal, unequal pay disparities. Additionally, my Administration proposed collecting pay data from businesses to shine a light on pay discrimination, and I signed an Executive Order to ensure the Federal Government only works with and awards contracts to businesses that follow laws that uphold fair and equal labor practices. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies can no longer charge women more for health insurance simply because of their gender. And last year, we officially opened for women the last jobs left unavailable to them in our military, because one of the best ways to ensure our Armed Forces remains the strongest in the world is to draw on the talents and skills of all Americans.

Though we have made great progress toward achieving gender equality, work remains to be done. Women still earn, on average, less for every dollar made by men, which is why I continue to call on the Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act -- a sensible step to provide women with basic tools to fight pay discrimination. Meanwhile, my Administration has taken steps to support working families by fighting for paid leave for all Americans, providing women with more small business loans and opportunities, and addressing the challenges still faced by women and girls of color, who consistently face wider opportunity gaps and structural barriers -- including greater discrepancies in pay. And although the majority of our Nation's college and graduate students are women, they are still underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, which is why we are encouraging more women and girls to pursue careers in these fields.

This May, the White House will host a summit on "The United State of Women," to highlight the advances we have made in the United States and across the globe and to expand our efforts on helping women confront the challenges they face and reach for their highest aspirations. We must strive to build the future we want our children to inherit -- one in which their dreams are not deferred or denied, but where they are uplifted and praised. We have come far, but there is still far to go in shattering the glass ceiling that holds women back. This month, as we reflect on the marks made by women throughout history, let us uphold the responsibility that falls on all of us -- regardless of gender -- and fight for equal opportunity for our daughters as well as our sons.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2016 as Women's History Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month and to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8, 2016, with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities. I also invite all Americans to visit www.WomensHistoryMonth.gov to learn more about the generations of women who have left enduring imprints on our history.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fortieth.

BARACK OBAMA

26. Navy Celebrates 2016 Women's History Month

(29 Feb) Navy News, From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

The Navy joins the nation in celebrating Women's History Month throughout March.

This year, Navy commands are encouraged to celebrate and reflect on the theme "Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government." Through service and leadership, women have been an integral part of both the Navy's history and its future.

"Women throughout our history have endeavored to serve the flag, not looking for special treatment, prestigious awards or financial wealth, but merely for the opportunity to serve the flag itself and the great nation it represents," said Adm. Michelle Howard, vice chief of naval operations.

Today, women comprise 18 percent of the Navy and are indispensable to the national security mission. There are more than 59,000 active duty women serving in the Navy and more than 9,000 female Reservists. Thousands of women have served alongside men in Iraq, Afghanistan and at sea, and their record of performance has been nothing less than outstanding.

Over the last decade, more than 280,000 women have deployed in support of our operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Women have shown great courage and sacrifice--we simply could not accomplish the mission without them. The diversity of experiences women have had demonstrates both the challenges and the opportunities women have faced.

In March 1917, YNC Loretta Perfectus Walsh became the first female chief petty officer in the United States Navy. In December 1959, Anna Der-Vartanian was promoted to the rank of master chief yeoman, making her the first female master chief in the Navy, as well as the first female E-9 in the entire Armed Services. Fleet Master Chief Jacqueline DiRosa became the first fleet master chief 47 years later.

Over 2,600 Navy women participated in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1991. Navy women served on hospital ships, supply ships, fleet oilers, ammunition ships, repair ships and tenders. Female pilots flew helicopters and reconnaissance aircraft.

Vice Adm. Nora Tyson, then a rear admiral, was the first woman in the Navy to take command of a Carrier Strike Group--George H.W. Bush in 2011.

In 2012, three female officers became the first to receive their submarine "dolphins."

In 2014, Vice Adm. Jan E. Tighe was appointed as head of the U.S. Fleet Cyber Command and the U.S. 10th Fleet, making her the first female commander of a numbered Fleet, and Adm. Howard became the Navy's first female 4-star admiral and vice chief of naval operations.

In January 2016, the armed services opened all military specialties to women, including all combat and Special Forces units.

http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=93362

27. First Lady to Women Veterans: 'Tell Your Story'

(2 Mar) DoD News, By Karen Parrish

First Lady Michelle Obama had a message for women veterans today: "Tell your story."

The first lady and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of vice president Joe Biden, attended an annual Women's History Month reception, honoring women veterans and hosted by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi at the Capitol's National Statuary Hall.

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Wilma L. Vaught was singled out for honors at the reception. The first woman comptroller selected for the rank of brigadier general, Vaught served after her military retirement as president of the board of directors for the Women in

Military Service for America Memorial Foundation Inc. until January of this year.

Women in ‘Just About Every Role and Rank’

Obama called Vaught “one of the most inspiring, trail-blazing women I have ever met.”

“Thanks to brilliant, fearless women like General Vaught, today more than 200,000 women are serving our country in just about every role and rank,” the first lady said. “They are flying fighter jets, training new recruits, they’re graduating Army Ranger School -- and I met those graduates. They are awesome -- fierce. And as you’ve already heard, they will soon be welcome in every combat unit in our armed forces.”

But “the striking reality,” Obama said, is that those women in uniform and three million living women veterans “still face plenty of challenges as they serve this country and then transition back to civilian life.”

Missing Out on Benefits

Many women who have served don’t self-identify as veterans, she said, and they thus miss out on benefits they have earned – only one in 10 take advantage of GI Bill benefits.

“When you meet these women and you hear their stories, you begin to understand why they might be reluctant to tell,” she said. Obama said women veterans she has spoken with have experienced disbelief, outdated assumptions or misguided questions about their service.

“When these women have sacrificed so much and served so bravely, they should never have to hide their accomplishments,” she said. “They should never have to worry about whether their service will be valued equally. And just like every veteran who has served this country, they should be getting every single one of the benefits they’ve earned.”

Taking Action for Veterans

The first lady pointed to improvements in recent years. With Veterans Affairs funding now at “unprecedented levels,” she said, women’s VA health outreach efforts are improving.

“We’ve trained 2,400 veteran health care providers in women’s health, and established a designated women’s health provider at every VA medical center in the country,” she said.

Obama challenged her audience and “folks around the country” to take action on behalf of women veterans: legislate for them, aid in their transition to civilian life, commit to giving them jobs.

To women veterans she said, “I want to ask you to stand tall and share your story.”

Veterans develop skills “that uniquely set you apart,” she said.

“All of you learned how to build a team and lead others under pressure, and complete any mission in front of you no matter what it takes,” she said. “See, that’s why it’s important that you tell your own stories. ... Our girls, our daughters and granddaughters, need to hear them.”

Obama also urged her audience to “use the women’s vets hashtag” to lift up women veterans’ stories on social media platforms.

“If we all keep joining forces, then I am confident that we can serve our men and women in uniform, and our veterans, as well as they have served this country,” she said.

Joining Forces is an initiative Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden launched in 2011. As the White House website states, it is “a nationwide initiative calling all Americans to rally around service members, veterans, and their families and support them through wellness, education, and employment opportunities.”

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/684779/first-lady-to-women-veterans-tell-your-story?source=GovDelivery>

28. Female World War II Pilot Proud to be a WASP

(2 Mar) DoD News, By Shannon Collins

For one Larned, Kansas, native, Women’s History Month means more than just honoring the many women in science and the military who set the stage for the women of today and in the future.

Lucile Doll Wise, a Women’s Airforce Service Pilot, or WASP, during World War II, is one of those pioneers. In September 1942, the Army Air Forces needed pilots, so after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Army Air Forces commander Gen. Henry H. “Hap” Arnold

established the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron, or WAFS, and the Women's Flying Training Detachment, or WFTD.

According to the Air Force Historical Support Division, the WAFS and WFTD merged into a single unit on July 5, 1943. The now-unified group was called the Women's Airforce Service Pilots, or WASP, with its pilots known as WASPs.

"Our mission was to perform flying duties in this country to relieve male pilots for overseas combat service," Wise said.

Call to Serve

Wise joined the WASPs in May 1943, and served until they were disbanded in December 1944. "I was thrilled at the prospect of flying the larger and faster military aircraft and at the opportunity to help in the war effort," she said.

Her younger brother enlisted in the Navy just before he graduated from high school in 1943, and he was permitted to graduate before he headed to serve on a ship in the South Pacific. "Of course we were all worried about him," she said. "He returned safely, but perhaps a bit damaged emotionally."

Wise said she went through the same training as the male cadets, living in barracks under military discipline, learning to march, making beds the Army way and more.

"It was a cultural shock, giving up our comfortable homes, nice clothes and social life but we didn't complain because we were so thrilled to be flying military aircraft," she said.

Mission

After graduation, Wise was assigned to the Army Air Forces Weather Service Region in Kansas City, Missouri.

"Our first and most important job was probably ferrying aircraft from factories to air bases and points of embarkation. There was an alarming shortage of pilots at the beginning of the war, and we delivered more than 12,000 aircraft in the two years we operated," she said. "We also performed many other domestic flying duties."

She said they had a Cessna twin engine C-47, a five passenger plane they had flown in training.

"It was slow but dependable," Wise said. "Later, another WASP was assigned there, and we got the larger Beech C-45. Our assignment was to fly the weather officers wherever they needed to go, usually on inspection trips to all of the AF bases in the region and to meetings. My favorite aircraft, and the favorite of most of us, was the AT-6 [Texan], which we flew in advanced training. It was a wonderful plane. I got plenty of flying."

She said when she entered the WASP program, she had 50 hours, and when it disbanded, she had almost 700 flying hours.

"When traveling, I usually stayed on base in the nurse's quarters, although sometimes we stayed in hotels," Wise said. "One base in Nebraska had no women on base, and the small town had no hotels, so I was given a room in the hospital. Our trips often lasted four or five days, leaving on Monday and spending a day at each air base and returning later in the week. It was a large seven-state region with many air bases."

She said she loved her job.

"I loved every minute of it, but it was not easy," Wise said. "It was hard work, and I came back from trips pretty tired."

The Disbandment

Arnold fought to have the WASPs militarized into the Army Air Force, but Congress disbanded them, Wise said, adding that she was disappointed.

"We had a handsome uniform and officer privileges, but I really wanted to be militarized and get a commission," she said. "We were working hard and did not realize that we were making history as the first U.S. women to fly military aircraft."

Recognition at Last

For 33 years, the women weren't allowed to call themselves veterans and their records were classified and sealed from the public. They fought Congress and pushed for publicity. On Nov. 23, 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed a public law granting former WASPs veteran status with limited benefits. The Air Force graduated its first female pilots that same year.

"It was wonderful," Wise said. "I was living in the D.C. area at the time and helped with the lobbying effort. It was a thrill to attend the hearing and have contacts with Congressmen. It was a great help for a few of us who were without health insurance or in financial trouble to be eligible to be treated at military hospitals."

Life after the Serving

Wise said she made great friends and meets up with her fellow WASPs at reunions.

“I made some great friends in the WASP program,” she said. “Some of them were from wealthy families, but I did not realize it at the time. We all looked alike in our ‘zoot suits.’ We met often at reunions and other women’s aeronautical meetings. I am grateful for my opportunity to serve, and I believe we all feel the same way. The WASPs went through a unique experience, and we all have a close bond.”

Wise said she’s happy to have been a pioneer, and she’s happy to meet women who are currently serving and children who may serve in the future.

“I’m so impressed by what women pilots are doing today, especially flying into combat,” she said. “They are doing some great flying and proving once again that women can fly military aircraft as well as men.”

She said she tells young women who may be considering the military that “the military is not for everyone, but it offers a great opportunity to young women.”

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/684660/female-world-war-ii-pilot-proud-to-be-a-wasp?source=GovDelivery>

29. WASPs Were Pioneers for Female Pilots of Today, Tomorrow

(2 Mar) DoD News, By Shannon Collins

Before there could be a first female Thunderbird pilot or women flying combat missions into Iraq and Afghanistan, there were the pioneers: the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots of World War II.

In September 1942, nine months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Army Air Forces commander Gen. Henry H. “Hap” Arnold stood up the Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron, or WAFS, and the Women’s Flying Training Detachment, or WFTD.

According to the Air Force Historical Support Division, On July 5, 1943, the WAFS and WFTD merged into a single unit for all women pilots who were rapidly extending their qualifications to every type of aircraft in service. The new unified group called itself the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots, or WASP, with its pilots known as WASPs.

Training

The women paid their own way to travel to basic training at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas. More than 25,000 women applied, even some from Canada, England and Brazil, said Bernice “Bee” Falk Haydu, a WASP pilot from Montclair, New Jersey, but only 1,830 U.S. women were accepted into the program. Of those, 1,074 earned their wings.

To qualify, applicants had to be at least 5 feet, 4 inches tall, pass Army physicals and have a pilot’s license, Haydu said. Women also had to have at least a high school diploma and be age 18 to 35.

“Most of the women were college graduates, but the toughest part of the training was you started out in a basic aircraft and then you’d go to a medium and then an advanced,” Haydu said.

When she joined the WASP program in 1944, Haydu said training was being accelerated.

“They wanted to experiment with the women to see if they could eliminate one of the phases of training, so we went from the Stearman, which is an open cockpit biplane, in primary [training], and after about 60 to 70 hours of that, we went directly into the advanced, which was the AT-6 [Texan] -- that’s 650 horsepower compared to 220 horsepower,” she said. “It was successful. Most of the washouts were in primary training. The men adapted the same training.”

During training, the women had to pay for their dress uniforms and their room and board, but were issued men’s coveralls that they nicknamed “zoot suits,” Haydu said. There were six women per bay in the barracks, with one latrine, one sink, one shower and one toilet. If the winds kicked up, the women would lie on the bottom wings of the airplanes to help keep them down, she said, “because they needed more weight to keep the airplanes on the ground.”

Missions

After graduating, the women would go to either Ferrying Command or Training Command. Lucile Doll Wise was a pilot at Ferrying Command, and she said she ferried aircraft from factories to air bases and points of embarkation.

“There was an alarming shortage of pilots at the beginning of the war,” Wise said, “and we delivered more than 12,000 aircraft in the two years we operated. We also performed many other domestic flying duties.”

“I loved every minute of it,” she added, “but it was not easy. It was hard work, and I came back from trips pretty tired.”

Haydu served as an engineering test pilot and a utility pilot in the Training Command, where the women’s missions ranged from

towing aerial targets for the infantry, flying tracking missions, smoke-laying, searchlight strafing and simulated bombing, and testing radio-controlled aircraft. The women were also flight instructors, engineering test pilots and utility pilots and performed all stateside flying duties.

“If an engine needed to be flown a certain manner for a certain number hours before it went into regular service, I would do that,” she said. “I also would fly personnel to wherever they had to go.”

Haydu said she was disappointed when the WASPs were disbanded on Dec. 20, 1944, just 11 days before she was to begin training to fly the B-25 Mitchell bomber. The last class graduated Dec. 7, 1944.

Arnold told the last crop of pilots, “We of the [Army Air Forces] are proud of you; we will never forget our debt to you.”

According to the Air Force Historical Support Division, the WASPs ferried more than 50 percent of the combat aircraft within the United States during the war years and flew at 126 bases across the country. Thirty-eight of these women died in their service: 11 in training and 27 during missions.

Doing ‘Everything the Men Did’

“We flew every aircraft manufactured for World War II, and one of the WASPs was sent to Dayton, Ohio, where they did testing and actually flew a prototype jet, so we just did everything the men did,” Haydu said.

For example, Betty Tackaberry Blake, who flew tourists in Hawaii in an open cockpit biplane before World War II, was in the first class of the WFTD. Later, while in the service of the WASPs, she flew all of the fighter aircraft in the U.S. inventory and also the B-25 Mitchell, B-26 Marauder and B-17 Flying Fortress bombers and C-47 Skytrain cargo aircraft, as well as all of the trainers. She also flew four-engine aircraft. After the WASPs were disbanded, she became a Link trainer instructor, where she taught instrument flying on the ground.

The first WASP to be killed in action was Cornelia Fort, 24, of Nashville, Tennessee, who died in a mid-air collision in Texas. In an interview before her death, she said she became a WASP because of her commitment to serving her country and because she was in the attack on Pearl Harbor as a civilian pilot. Her Interstate Cadet was riddled with bullets, though the Japanese invaders missed the gas tank. She said she lost friends that day.

“Delivering a trainer to Texas may be as important as delivering a bomber to Africa if you take the long view,” Fort said. “We are beginning to prove that women can be trusted to deliver airplanes safely and in the doing, serve our country, which is our country too.”

She said she realized the importance of their mission because of an event at her graduation.

“While we were standing at attention, a bomber took off, followed by four fighters. We knew that bomber was headed across the ocean and that the fighters were going to escort it part way. As they circled over us, I could hardly see them for the tears in my eyes,” Fort said.

“It was striking symbolism, and I think all of us felt it. As long as our planes fly overhead, the skies of America are free and that’s what all of us everywhere are fighting for,” she continued. “And that we, in a very small way, are being allowed to help keep that sky free is the most beautiful thing I have ever known. I’m profoundly grateful that my one talent, flying, happens to be of use to my country.”

The Fight for Recognition

The women were initially paid as civil service employees, with the promise that they may be able to join the Army Air Service afterward.

Arnold told the WASPs, “We have not been able to build an airplane that you can’t handle. It is on the record that women can fly as well as men.” He planned to commission the women pilots as second lieutenants within the Army Air Force, but political opposition meant the plan never came to fruition. As a result, the WASPs were left without the benefits to which veteran’s status would have entitled them, and the families of the girls who had been killed in the performance of their duties were denied the gratuities which they would have received as beneficiaries of military personnel.

For 35 years, the women weren’t allowed to call themselves veterans and their records were classified and sealed from the public. They fought Congress and pushed for publicity. Haydu said they didn’t care as much about the benefits as much as for the chance to serve and to be recognized as veterans.

When the first women began to enter the service academies in 1976 and to fly military aircraft, contemporary media reports indicated that it was the first time women could fly for the U.S. military.

Haydu was president of the WASP veterans’ organization at the time, and members lobbied and spoke to the media until their service

was finally recognized by Congress.

The legislation “became the only piece of legislation in history to be co-sponsored by every woman member in Congress,” she said. “One of the long overdue items included in the WASP bill was for the women telephone operators of World War I to be recognized as war veterans. They had never been given this status, in spite of the fact they were stationed in the front line trenches side-by-side with the fighting soldiers.”

Victory at Last

What sealed the deal, Haydu said, was the WASPs in their Santiago blue uniforms descending on Washington after sending letters and telegrams, making telephone calls and pushing publicity in their home towns.

President Jimmy Carter signed Public Law 95-202, Title IV, on Nov. 23, 1977, which granted former WASPs veteran status with limited benefits. The Air Force graduated its first female pilots that same year. In 1984, the WASPs received World War II Victory Medals and, for those who had served more than one year, American Theater Ribbon/ American Campaign Medals.

On March 10, 2010, the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award bestowed by Congress, was presented to the WASPs. Haydu said she was tremendously proud and happy the WASPs finally received their recognition.

Female Pilots of the Future

Haydu said she enjoys sharing her stories with Air Force service members and at Boys and Girls Clubs, and said that during her speeches, her goal is to stress equality.

“It’s not what sex you are,” she said. It’s what you can do, and if you can be successful at something that should be all that should matter. You should pursue whatever it is you want, and you should not allow people to say, ‘Oh, you can’t do that.’ Just do the best you can and I hope you can make it.”

Both Wise and Haydu said they are impressed by the female airmen of today.

“I’m so impressed by what women pilots are doing today, flying combat missions,” Wise said. “The military is not for everyone but it offers a great opportunity to young women.”

“I admire the women who fly today,” Haydu said. “The navigation has changed so much. There have been huge improvements. All-women crews are just fantastic. They do every job, from the loadmaster to the navigator to the pilot, to every job that there is to be done in the aircraft. It just proves that an airplane knows no sex. It doesn’t know whether a man or a woman is flying it.

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/684700/wasps-were-pioneers-for-female-pilots-of-today-tomorrow?source=GovDelivery>

30. Women’s Military History ‘a Revolution,’ General Says

(3 Mar) DoD News, By Karen Parrish

Comic timing is not a skill always associated with military officers, but retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Wilma L. Vaught can make the history of women in the U.S. armed forces sound both compelling and absurdly funny.

An example: Vaught recounted that when rank was denied to female military nurses in 1901, “The male members of Congress said women shouldn’t be ordering men around. Women have been ordering men around since the beginning of time.”

Vaught was guest of honor yesterday at a Women’s History Month reception recognizing women service members and veterans. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi hosted the reception and First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden both delivered rousing remarks about women in the military, but the general stole the show.

Vaught -- who will turn 86 this month and joined the Air Force in 1957 -- spoke about “how history affected my life.”

Achieving General’s Rank

Vaught emphasized some important dates in her own and the military’s history:

-- 1948: the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act allows women to serve as permanent, regular members of the armed forces. Vaught graduates from high school in Illinois the same year, one of 12 young women in a graduating class of 24.

-- 1957: Vaught joins and is commissioned in the Air Force, which offers only one colonel’s position for women: director of women in the Air Force. The law at the time prohibits the promotion of women beyond O-6.

-- 1967: Congress votes to lift the 2-percent cap on women in the military and to allow women to advance to general and admiral

ranks. The following year, Vaught serves a tour of duty in Vietnam.

-- 1980: Vaught is promoted to brigadier [one-star] general, the first woman in the comptroller career field to reach the rank.

Military Women Push for Rights

Around the 1970s, Vaught said, changes in women's military standing arose largely through their own efforts in the courts.

She related that "one of our Air Force first lieutenants" filed a discrimination suit against the defense secretary because, as a woman, she was denied spouse benefits for her husband.

"She lost," Vaught noted. "But that case got picked up by Ruth Bader Ginsberg," who argued it successfully before the Supreme Court in 1973.

Women also sued for admission to ROTC programs and the service academies. The academies admitted their first female students in 1976.

"They sued over women being forced to leave the service on the day they were diagnosed as being pregnant," she said. "They sued over the principle that if women had children in their household, they had to get out [of the service]."

Women won all those lawsuits, the general said, and things changed. Though as an unmarried woman with no children she wasn't affected by many of the policy changes, she said, "I couldn't help but be aware ... of women having greater opportunities."

The story of women in the military "truly has been a revolution, and I don't know that it's finished yet," Vaught noted.

When she retired in 1985 as a brigadier general, she was the senior of the seven women generals or admirals across the services, Vaught said.

"Today, we have three four-star women; two in the Army -- generals -- and one [admiral] in the Navy," she noted.

A Memorial Spotlighting Military Women

After retiring and residing in the Washington area, Vaught said, she got involved in a new project aimed at spotlighting women in uniform. That project led to the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, approved in 1985, dedicated in 1997 and located at the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery.

Vaught served as president of the memorial corporation's board of directors [she said she was first elected during a board meeting she forgot to attend] from 1987 to January of this year, when she retired from the position.

Early in the memorial's development, Vaught said, she asked herself if, in the interest of equality, it was right to build "a memorial that segregated women."

She ultimately decided, "This was something we had to do."

Vaught said the Revolutionary War's troops included about "1.8 million unrecognized women veterans. ... The books were written about the men." Every woman who has served in the U.S. armed forces can register her name at the memorial, Vaught noted.

"Women answered the call because they wanted to do what they could to serve their country. ... They couldn't be thinking about a career in the military until 1948, when women finally became official members of the military," she reminded her audience.

"So women have always been volunteers and I guess we will be until they decide to draft us," Vaught said. "And if they do, we are Americans too, and we will want to serve our country."

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/685650/womens-military-history-a-revolution-general-says?source=GovDelivery>