



DACOWITS: Articles of Interest

WELLNESS

[Army NCO Acclaimed for SHARP Work](#)

(17 Apr.) DoD News, By Army Master Sgt. Kap Kim

Army Sgt. 1st Class Chylciale M. Washington was one of the first three enlisted division-level Sexual Assault Response Coordinators at the 10th Mountain Division in 2012. This year, she was named one of U.S. Army Forces Command's best sexual assault response coordinators during the selection process for the Department of Defense's Exceptional Sexual Assault Response Coordinator awards.

[Fort Bragg: Sexual-assault reports increase 4 percent](#)

(19 Apr.) Fay Observer, By Amanda Dolasinski

The number of sexual assaults reported at Fort Bragg increased about 4 percent from 2012 to 2013, which mirrors a national trend. Those are the most recent years for which complete data was available from Fort Bragg.

[Officials: Progress seen in Navy sex assault reporting](#)

(20 Apr.) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

The Navy is out to dispel myths about what sexual assault is and who it affects, while encouraging sailors to treat each other with respect in general, the Navy's top sexual assault prevention officer told Navy Times.

[Carter: Women in combat could be more vulnerable to sexual predators](#)

(22 Apr.) Stars & Stripes, By Jon Harper

Allowing women to serve in ground combat positions could make them more vulnerable to sexual predators, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter told Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets Wednesday.

ASSIGNMENTS

[Flag Officer Announcement.](#) Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced today that the president has made the following nomination: Navy Vice Adm. Nora W. Tyson has been nominated for reappointment to the rank of vice admiral and for assignment as commander, Third Fleet, San Diego, California. Tyson is currently serving as deputy commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia.

[DoD Announces Recruiting and Retention Numbers for Fiscal 2015, Through February 2015](#)

(17 Apr.) DoD News

The Department of Defense announced today recruiting and retention statistics for the active and reserve components for fiscal 2015, through February 2015.

[Women in combat: Army vs. Marines](#)

(18 Apr.) San Diego Union Tribune, By Gretel C. Kovach

A Pentagon push to expand job opportunities for military women has brought the Army and Marine Corps into closer alignment, but stark differences remain between the two major ground-combat forces.

[20 female soldiers expected to begin Ranger course Monday](#)

(18 Apr.) Ledger-Enquirer, By Ben Wright

Nearly three months after Army Secretary John McHugh approved the first integrated Ranger training for women and men at Fort Benning, 20 women are expected to tackle the grueling, nine-week course starting Monday at Fort Benning.

[Enlisted Women In Submarines Application Package Milestone Achieved](#)

(20 Apr.) Navy Live Blog, By Rear Adm. Chas Richard

The more than 100 applications received matched the strong support we received as we visited fleet concentration areas to share this opportunity with Sailors across the Navy.

[**Air Force to begin tests to open combat jobs to women**](#)

(21 Apr.) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

The Air Force this month will take a big step toward possibly opening up the last male-only combat jobs to women.

[**Only 3 women fail Ranger School PT test, 16 remain**](#)

(21 Apr.) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

Three women and 78 men have washed out of Ranger School after Monday morning's physical fitness test.

[**3-star to be first female fleet commander of ships**](#)

(21 Apr.) Navy Times

The president has nominated Vice Adm. Nora Tyson to lead the San Diego-based 3rd Fleet, one of three flag moves announced Tuesday.

[**First Female Blue Angel Pilot Taking Flight**](#)

(22 Apr.) Christian Science Monitor, By Alexander LaCasse

The first woman who to hold the distinction as a United States Navy pilot with the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, better known as the Blue Angels, will have an opportunity to fly in front of friends and family at home in June.

[**8 women, 184 men remain in Ranger School assessment**](#)

(23 Apr.) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

Eight women and 184 men have successfully completed the first four days of Ranger School, officials at Fort Benning, Georgia, announced Thursday.

[**In major step, eight women make it through Ranger School's grueling 'RAP Week'**](#)

(23 Apr.) The Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

Eight women have made it through the initial, grueling four-day assessment at Ranger School, Army officials said Thursday, raising the prospect that female soldiers could graduate from the elite course for the first time ever.

EXTRA

[**Overlooked female veterans highlighted by state legislation**](#)

(18 Apr.) Associated Press, By Ken Dixon

Overlooked for decades, women military veterans like these would be encouraged to seek benefits and services that they earned under legislation approved unanimously in the state Senate on Wednesday.

[**Enlisted jobs rank among worst in new career report**](#)

(18 Apr.) Military Times, By Jon R. Anderson

If you're enlisted military, a new career report says you've got one of the very worst jobs on the planet. But at least you're a not a lumberjack or a newspaper reporter.

[**Children's Program Aims to Curb Obesity, Boost Nutrition**](#)

(22 Apr.) DoD News, By Amaani Lyle

"We have a moral imperative ... and a national security imperative to make sure our children are healthy and active...less than 25 percent of our youth age 17 to 24 can enter the military, primarily due to physical requirements," stated Barbara Thompson, Director of DoD's Office of Family Readiness Policy.

[**A Sailor's Experience With Career Intermission Program**](#)

(23 Apr.) Navy Live Blog, By Lt. Michael Fonbuena

The Career Intermission Program, which originally began as a small-scale pilot, has afforded me the opportunity to seek out an advanced degree at a prestigious university of my choosing while also allowing me the ability to continue my career in the naval service. Overall, I have had an extremely positive experience with CIP and feel that the Navy should strongly advertise this program to junior officers as an alternative means of obtaining graduate education.

Army NCO Acclaimed for SHARP Work

(17 Apr.) DoD News, By Army Master Sgt. Kap Kim

FORT DRUM, N.Y., April 17, 2015 – Being the best at whatever she does is nothing new for Army Sgt. 1st Class Chylciale M. Washington -- she's made a career of it. Among her many accolades, Washington was recently named one of U.S. Army Forces Command's best sexual assault response coordinators during the selection for the Department of Defense's Exceptional Sexual Assault Response Coordinator awards.

However proud she is of that distinction, Washington said she's prouder of the 10th Mountain Division's Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response and Prevention program that she and her original four-member team built from the ground up and ultimately cultivated into one of the Army's best.

"Winning is important to me, but I think it's more important for the 10th Mountain Division as a whole," Washington said about the nomination. "It sets a tone and lets 'big Army' know that 10th Mountain has a great program."

Army Maj. Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, former Fort Drum and 10th Mountain Division commander, nominated Washington from the field of Fort Drum SARCs, in large part, because of the job she did during last year's deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. She was one of six SARCs named as the best throughout FORSCOM.

Leading by Example

"Sgt. 1st Class Washington leads by example, and many people find her enthusiasm and dedication both inspiring and motivating," Townsend wrote in his recommendation. "She has been the driving force behind several policies and programs that have been instrumental toward increasing SHARP awareness [and] victim services and improving incident response coordination between the numerous Sexual Assault Response Team agencies."

This was Washington's first nomination since starting as a SARC in 2010, when she was fresh off the trail as a drill sergeant from Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. She was assigned to the 7th Engineer Battalion as a firefighter, and she helped to raise the division's SHARP program from its infancy.

"Basically, we started from scratch," she recalled. Through months of the growing pains of taking over programs from responsibilities shared by both the Equal Opportunity and the Family Advocacy programs, Washington said she is really happy to look back and see the progress they've made together to meet the Department of Defense's directives.

"It's come a long way from where it began," she said. "In the beginning, we started doing these classes and we just patiently waited for things to kick off."

Educating Soldiers to End Sexual Harassment

Earlier in her career, as an equal opportunity representative, Washington worked to both educate soldiers and end sexual harassment within her unit. Through her time as a firefighter and a drill sergeant, she witnessed things that troubled her. She wanted to be the person who would let others know that certain behavior was not OK and there was something that could be done about it -- that it needed to be dealt with appropriately -- at all levels.

As the program evolved into the SHARP program it would later become in 2012, Washington proudly accepted the appointment as one of the three original enlisted SARCs. And though she never really needed the title to do what she had always done as a leader, it would become increasingly important for the rest of the division throughout the last couple of years.

For Army Maj. Charity O'Dell, former 10th Mountain Division SHARP director, Washington was a "trusted adviser" to the program managers and division leadership.

"She is a game-changer," O'Dell said of Washington. "Her tactful and diligent navigation of a very sensitive program -- to focus on the positive, empower soldiers and commanders with resources and make lasting partnerships with SHARP partners -- has built a strong foundation for the future."

In her two years as a division SARC, Washington helped to educate and train advocates at every level. She helped to establish the installation's SHARP Resource Center and helped to build the bench of SHARP advisers from two dedicated civilian advocates into more than 600 credentialed soldier-advocates stationed at Fort Drum and Fort Polk, Louisiana.

Continues SHARP Duties in Afghanistan

During 10th Mountain Division's deployment to Afghanistan, she continued her duties. As the director this time, she was alone for several months. She spearheaded the first SHARP consultation during command inspector general inspections of deployed units. During her journeys throughout eastern Afghanistan, Washington gathered troop concerns to provide advice to the commander. She gathered the deployed SHARP partners together to form a seamless program for all service members.

Washington, with her tall frame and seemingly stern look, can't hide her drill sergeant past. Yet, she knows her success was, in large part, due to the tools she learned at Fort Leonard Wood in training those rough-around-the-edges civilians into soldiers she would eventually train for combat.

"It was challenging at times, but I was always honest with all my soldiers," she said. "I'd tell them, 'Six months after [advanced individual training], you could be on the first plane going to wherever necessary.' For a lot of them, it wasn't what they wanted to hear, but I told them what they needed to know."

Deployment to Iraq

During her time at the 7th Engineer Battalion at Fort Drum, Washington deployed to Iraq, where she ran into many of her former recruits.

"I saw so many of them and they'd tell me, 'You told us,'" she recalled.

Throughout her time as a SARC, Washington would draw on the qualities she had through her time as a drill sergeant during the Iraqi surge: compassion, understanding and dedication. And those qualities would become paramount to her duties as a SARC.

"We have to be dedicated to what this program stands for, and we need compassion for any soldier, civilian or family member who comes through that door all the time," she said.

"It's those qualities, but the biggest is being yourself -- that strong leader."

Despite plenty of earned admiration, Washington said she always understood that her ego had to be subordinate to the mission and those she was put there to help.

"Nothing that we get in that office is ever the same -- everything is always different and there may be different circumstances," she said. "There are many times you may need assistance and you have to swallow your pride, pick up the phone, and call someone for help."

And she did on many different occasions. Yet, it would be those times when she would admit to learning the most from the many different SHARP partners she has met.

'Really Happy' With Program

Washington finished her time as the 10th Mountain Division's SARC shortly after her redeployment from Afghanistan, leaving a job she said she had grown to love. Although the SHARP program was stressful with a demanding work schedule, Washington said she enjoyed it from the moment she started.

Fort Bragg: Sexual-assault reports increase 4 percent

(19 Apr.) Fay Observer, By Amanda Dolasinski

The Halloween party was supposed to be a night of fun, to let off steam with her colleagues.

She had been looking forward to it all week, and even picked out a new costume - a patent leather Batgirl dress with a cape - to celebrate.

The first lieutenant arrived at the party just minutes from Fort Polk, Louisiana, where she and two other women were outnumbered 50 to 3 by men. Nonetheless, these were her colleagues, men she worked alongside and trusted to look after her.

That Friday night, Nov. 1, 2013, blurred as the first lieutenant enjoyed Steele Reserve beers. She decided to sleep it off in a bedroom before heading home.

She was startled awake with a sharp pain on her back.

"When I wake up, I'm in a room full of guys and I'm being gang-raped," the 31-year-old Army first lieutenant said. "I can't believe it."

The Fayetteville Observer does not identify alleged victims of sexual assault.

Sexual assault in the military has garnered national attention in recent years as high-profile cases have emerged, heightening scrutiny on how the military handles sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Advocates say efforts from the Department of Defense fall short, and Congress has pushed for an overhaul of the military

As a SHARP pioneer, Washington said she is "really happy" with where the program is today, but admitted that there is still more that she wants to see.

"I think our training and facilitation is getting better, and we need to continue to work harder on it because we have gotten to the point where PowerPoint is not it," she said. "We need more vignette-based training, and we need to be able to tell soldiers what happens to these harassers, these assaulters -- that's what soldiers need to know."

Her recent move to Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, will take her back to her firefighting roots. It's something that Washington said she's excited about, but she also will continue to take her vast SHARP program knowledge and experience wherever she goes.

"This move is not going to change anything that I do because I've always been the type of person who listens to a soldier -- always," she said. "As far as the SHARP program, I'm going to continue to be proactive in the program."

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=128607&source=GovDelivery>

justice system to change the way sexual assault cases are handled.

Military officials, however, say they have beefed up awareness and training to handle alleged assaults, citing data that more victims are reporting assaults.

The number of sexual assaults reported at Fort Bragg increased about 4 percent from 2012 to 2013, which mirrors a national trend. Those are the most recent years for which complete data was available from Fort Bragg.

Over the past two years, two high ranking people were convicted of sexual assault charges at Fort Bragg.

Maj. Erik J. Burris, former chief of justice for the 82nd Airborne Division, was convicted of rape, forcible sodomy and four specifications of assault. He was sentenced in January to 20 years in prison, was dismissed from service and will forfeit all pay and allowances. He denied all of the charges.

In 2014, Fort Bragg Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair pleaded guilty to an affair and other wrongdoing, but denied an allegation he assaulted the woman. That charge was dropped in his plea bargain.

Sinclair was accused of sexually assaulting a female captain who served with him in Iraq, the United States and Afghanistan.

He paid \$24,160 in a fine and restitution to the Army, and he was reprimanded and demoted two ranks to lieutenant colonel upon his retirement in the summer.

The first lieutenant who awoke to being sexually assaulted said she was attacked by her colleagues.

"All I remember is seeing skin. I don't remember faces," she said. "It's like it was a bad dream."

The alleged attackers took the woman to her home on post, she said. She remembers dialing 911, but said she was so in shock she couldn't make herself say she had been raped.

When she returned to work that week, she reported the rape to the post's office of Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention, commonly known as SHARP. To be transferred to another post away from her alleged attackers, she said, she had to file a report that triggered a formal investigation.

She left Fort Polk the following week, but the assault was never far from her mind. In fact it would spiral, contributing to numerous behavioral problems, she said. Her career has been derailed, and she worries she will be kicked out of the Army, she said.

"I would never have thought ... ," she said, trailing off in her thoughts. She took a deep breath. "This has become my life."

Her career aspirations to become a judge advocate have been put on hold while she deals with being moved to a desk job irrelevant to her occupation, as well as accusations that she's mentally unstable and numerous counseling statements from her commanders about her behavior. She has filed several federal whistleblower reprisal lawsuits in her defense.

Despite her efforts, the ordeal hardly seems worth it, she said.

The commander at Fort Polk ruled the sexual assault allegations were unfounded and closed her case in April 2014, the woman said.

"It would have been a better course of action not to report it," she said. "No one has been charged with rape. The only one who suffered is me."

But she's not alone.

Last year, about 20,000 active-duty service members reported they were sexually assaulted in the past year, according to preliminary estimates in an anonymous survey conducted by the National Defense Research Institute for the Department of Defense.

Of those, about 60 percent of the alleged victims said they experienced some type of retaliation, according to the survey.

The survey was ordered in early 2014 by the secretary of defense - specifically, its Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office - as an independent assessment of sexual

assault, sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the military. Participants were all active-duty women and 25 percent of all men in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

About 145,300 of the invited 560,000 respondents participated in the survey.

The preliminary estimates were given to the White House in December. The full report will be released this spring.

At Fort Bragg, the number of sexual assault and harassment reports increased from 103 in 2012 to 107 in 2013. Those numbers mean a report was filed that year. It does not necessarily mean the assault occurred that year. Alleged assaults can be decades old, said Lt. Col. Curby Graham, commander of Fort Bragg's SHARP office.

The trend for 2014 also appears to be increasing, but Fort Bragg officials refused to turn over complete data for the year. For the first nine months of the year, there were 96 reports, according to data from Fort Bragg's SHARP office.

Fort Bragg officials said they mistakenly turned over data about sexual assaults reported on post and refused to release the last three months of 2014. Officials referred requests to the Department of the Army.

The Department of the Army refused multiple requests to release the data.

In comparison, 70 reports of rape were filed in Fayetteville in 2013. That's up from 56 reports of rape in 2012, according to crime statistics filed with the State Bureau of Investigation.

The military's increase in reports is a sign its justice system is working, Graham said.

Graham left military intelligence to run the SHARP office about two years ago. When he took over, he said he analyzed reported sexual assaults on Fort Bragg. He saw a bell curve, just as he expected, he said.

"I'd say it's awareness of the problems," Graham said. "When this first started getting all this attention, some of us were saying, 'Look, we expect to see an increase in cases.' Don't read that as, 'Oh, my God, it's getting worse.' No, it's actually better because people are identifying there's a problem here."

At Fort Bragg, sexual assaults include rape, abusive sexual contact, indecent act on a child or forced sodomy. The assaults can be categorized as service member on service member, service member on civilian or civilian on service member.

Most of the alleged assaults occurred off post in 2012 and 2013, according to statistics.

The alleged assaults took place in barracks, work areas, on-post housing, training areas and in deployed areas, according to statistics.

Overwhelmingly, reports at Fort Bragg in 2012 were of rape - 60 reports, which is about 58 percent of all sexual assault reports. The following year, the number of alleged rapes increased to 72, or about 67 percent of all reports, according to statistics.

In both years, about half of the victims were low-ranking enlisted soldiers, at E-4 or below, according to statistics.

The alleged attackers also were mostly low-ranking enlisted soldiers, according to statistics. In both years, about 50 percent of the alleged attackers ranked E-4 or below.

Officers, including warrant officers, were accused of sexual assault in fewer than 5 percent of all cases involving Fort Bragg soldiers in 2012 and 2013, according to statistics.

That mirrors the national trend, which shows an increase in the number of reports filed for sexual assault.

In a report conducted by the Department of Defense, reports of sexual assault in the four branches and Coast Guard increased from 3,374 in 2012 to 5,061 in 2013. That report is different than the survey because it is based on reports that have been filed.

Fort Bragg officials refused to release statistics on the disposition of cases.

Sexual assault cases can either move forward with enough evidence to support action, or end without action.

If the commander deems there is enough evidence to proceed, the case can go to a court-martial, Article 15, administrative discharge or other administrative action. A case would end because of insufficient evidence, if the alleged victim declined to participate, if allegations were unfounded by command, if there was probable cause for a non-sexual assault, if the commander declined action, if either the alleged attacker or victim died or if the statute of limitations expired.

Dispositions of cases across the Department of Defense mostly ended with court-martial charges, according to statistics.

In 2012, commanders found 1,714 of the subjects investigated for sexual assault could be considered for possible action. Of those, commanders took action against 880 people on sexual assault charges, according to Department of Defense statistics. Charges for other types of misconduct were brought against 244 people.

In the cases against people accused of sexual assault, about 50 percent ended with a court-martial charge, about 18 percent ended with a nonjudicial punishment, about 7 percent ended with an administrative discharge and about 7 percent ended with other adverse administrative action.

The following year, more cases ended with court-martial charges, according to statistics.

In 2013, commanders found 2,149 of the subjects investigated for sexual assault could be considered for possible action. Of those, commanders took action against 1,187 people on sexual assault charges. Charges for other types of misconduct were brought against 382 people.

In the cases against people accused of sexual assault, about 71 percent ended with a court-martial charge, about 18 percent ended with nonjudicial punishments, about 5 percent ended with administrative discharges and about 7 percent ended with other adverse administrative action.

The increase of reports of sexual assault in the military doesn't surprise retired Col. Don Christensen, who spent 23 years as a prosecutor in the Air Force.

Christensen was named president of the human rights organization Protect Our Defenders last year.

"The only thing we know for sure is that the number of reported sexual assaults goes up," he said. "I think that's been a trend for quite some time."

The nonprofit organization researches sexual assault in the military, connects survivors with support networks and collaborates with Burke PLLC to provide free legal counsel for survivors of sexual assault.

But progress to address sexual assault will likely be stagnate until the military changes how it handles alleged sexual assault cases, Christensen said.

An overhaul supported by Christensen and led by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., would strip the power to prosecute from commanders and place it with trained military lawyers.

"I believe the No. 1 way to make progress is to change the justice system," he said. "It is unlike any other justice system in the country."

Overhauling the system would be an uphill battle, he said.

"There are so many that view the USMJ as though Moses brought it down," he said. "I don't understand the resistance to allowing people who are experts to make these decisions. Commanders like to have lots of powers. They have

responsibilities of ensuring health and welfare of troops, but that doesn't mean they perform surgery."

Rep. Renee Ellmers, a North Carolina Republican, said she supports changes in how the military handles sexual assault cases. She and Rep. Jackie Walorski, who represents the 2nd District of Indiana, are co-sponsoring legislation that addresses support services available to survivors, she said.

"Those of us in Congress are speaking openly about this issue and the need for reform," she said.

Ellmers said her office has received requests for help from survivors of sexual assault.

Officials: Progress seen in Navy sex assault reporting

(20 Apr.) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

For this year's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Awareness Month, the Navy is asking sailors to help eliminate sexual assault by stepping up to protect themselves and their shipmates.

The Navy is out to dispel myths about what sexual assault is and who it affects, while encouraging sailors to treat each other with respect in general, the Navy's top sexual assault prevention officer told Navy Times.

"Know that having sex with someone without their consent could be sexual assault," Rear Adm. Rick Snyder, head of the 21st Century Sailor Office, said in an April 16 phone interview. "You've got to know your part in not being an alleged offender."

And likewise, he added, potential survivors should know that if they haven't given consent, they can come forward.

"You need to know that these activities that happen to you, that you may not have thought were sexual assault, may in fact be sexual assault, and we need you to come forward so that we can get you the help you need and we can hold the offenders appropriately accountable," he said.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is marked by community events like picnics and 5K runs, Snyder said, but the idea is to restart the conversation each year so that it continues in the following months.

"The more often we have the discussion, the more normal it will seem as something that we talk about," he said.

Statistics from the chief of naval personnel's office show that the Navy had a 10 percent jump in reported sexual assault from fiscal year 2013 to 2014.

"Whether we're talking about the military or civilians, people just don't know where to turn for help," she said. "We're very happy to be helping them."

In December, then-Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said there's still work to be done, but efforts to prevent sexual assault in the military are having an impact.

"Eradicating sexual assault from our ranks is not only essential to the long-term health and readiness of the force, it is also about honoring our highest commitments to protect our fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines," Hagel said.

http://m.fayobserver.com/news/local/military-sexual-assault-reports-on-rise/article_b1bb9275-060d-5999-8dec-b1aff8d7550c.html?mode=jqm

It's a significant increase, Snyder said, but it's considerably less than the 53 percent increase between 2012 and 2013.

His focus is on closing the gap between official reports and total incidents of unwanted sexual contact.

Extrapolated results from a 2014 survey by the RAND Corporation estimated 5,600 instances of unwanted sexual contact, which is sharply down from 10,600 in fiscal year 2012.

"The surveys are showing us that the prevalence has come down, and clearly the number of reports have gone up," Snyder said. "It indicates we've made some progress, the effort we put forward the past several years has paid off."

Those numbers mean that about one out of three women didn't report the assaults, which is up from one in six in 2012.

Additionally, half of those 5,600 victims are male, Snyder said, and only one in 12 of them is reporting.

"We need to continue to address that as an issue, to make sure that we understand for males, the definition of sexual assault is the same," he said. "Whether it happens as part of hazing or something else, it's sexual assault."

There are services for those who choose not report, like the Defense Department's Safe Help Line and civilian organizations, but Snyder said his office wants more survivors to report.

One of the biggest barriers to reporting, survivors have said, is the invasive legal process and the low number of prosecutions that result from it.

Snyder acknowledged that the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the judge advocate corps have some work to do in handling sexual assault cases, and that meetings are going on with representatives from the victims' legal counsel to improve the process.

"Whether it's the timing of interviews, the content of interviews," he said. "NCIS wants to do a thorough and complete investigation, victim's legal counsel wants best interests of victim. They're working together to find a common ground."

While the Navy is taking steps to better support survivors and prevent assault in the first place, they're not looking into more strident measures, like so-called "enthusiastic consent" laws that are now in effect on California college campuses.

Carter: Women in combat could be more vulnerable to sexual predators

(22 Apr.) *Stars & Stripes*, By Jon Harper

WASHINGTON — Allowing women to serve in ground combat positions could make them more vulnerable to sexual predators, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter told Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets Wednesday.

At least 18,900 Service members experienced unwanted sexual contact last year, according to Defense Department estimates. As DOD takes steps to address the epidemic, the services are also studying the implications of opening ground combat positions to female Service members.

In 2013, the Pentagon lifted the blanket ban on women serving in ground combat roles. By the end of this year, the services have to petition the secretary of defense if they want to keep certain military occupational specialties, such as special operations forces, open to men only.

Carter spoke to ROTC cadets at Georgetown University on Wednesday. During a question and answer session afterward, the leader of DOD was asked if opening ground combat positions to women could worsen the problem of military sexual assault.

"Obviously, as we get women into more unaccustomed positions, maybe dangerous isolated positions, maybe

The laws raise the threshold for sexual assault from the commonly used standard of, "Did she say no?" to put the responsibility on the other party to assure that she says an enthusiastic 'yes.'

In 2014, a private sexual assault training course called "Can I Kiss You?" visited several bases to promote the idea of asking for permission, but Snyder said the Navy isn't looking into making that a regulation.

"I would broaden that discussion into one of treating one another with dignity and respect," he said. "And that would encompass that, if you are going to have some sort of sexual interaction or relationship, that it's done with dignity and respect on both sides."

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/04/18/navy-21st-century-sailor-sexual-assault-awareness-month-april/25902969/>

positions where they are fewer in relation to the number of men, it opens up opportunities for predators," Carter said.

But gender integration could also have a positive effect, he told the cadets.

"I can't help but believe for many people, they'll learn better how to conduct themselves, how to interact across gender lines and so forth. And that will contribute to prevention and eventually eradication of sexual assaults," he said, and "we get the benefit of more talented people eligible to serve in certain military roles."

Carter said he wants to open as many positions as possible without jeopardizing military effectiveness.

He said he thought most would be opened and "maybe all will."

Carter told the cadets that the services are looking at the practicality of integrating some of the most difficult specialties "from the point of view of reconciling traditional, at least, gender roles with combat effectiveness, unit cohesion and those kinds of things."

<http://www.stripes.com/carter-women-in-combat-could-be-more-vulnerable-to-sexual-predators-1.341632>

DoD Announces Recruiting and Retention Numbers for Fiscal 2015, Through February 2015

(17 Apr.) *DoD News*

The Department of Defense announced today recruiting and retention statistics for the active and reserve components for fiscal 2015, through February 2015.

Active Component

• **Recruiting** All four active services met or exceeded their numerical accession goals for fiscal 2015, through February.

- Army – 22,035 accessions, with a goal of 21,720; 101.5 percent.

- Navy – 13,311 accessions, with a goal of 13,311; 100.0 percent.
- Marine Corps – 10,072 accessions, with a goal of 10,067; 100.0 percent.
- Air Force – 9,062 accessions, with a goal of 9,062; 100.0 percent.

• **Retention** The Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps exhibited strong retention numbers for the fifth month of fiscal 2015.

Reserve Component

• **Recruiting** Five of the six reserve components met or exceeded their fiscal-year-to-date 2015 numerical accession goals through February 2015. All six reserve components also met or exceeded the DoD quality benchmarks.

- Army National Guard – 17,734 accessions, with a goal of 20,197; 87.8 percent.
- Army Reserve – 11,857 accessions, with a goal of 10,932; 108.5 percent.
- Navy Reserve – 2,217 accessions, with a goal of 2,217; 100.0 percent.

Women in combat: Army vs. Marines

(18 Apr.) *San Diego Union Tribune*, By Gretel C. Kovach

A Pentagon push to expand job opportunities for military women has brought the Army and Marine Corps into closer alignment, but stark differences remain between the two major ground-combat forces.

When the defense secretary jettisoned the last vestiges of the ground combat exclusion ban for female troops in January 2013, he and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff gave the services three years to open all occupations and units to women who meet gender-neutral performance standards. The defense leaders offered the services an escape hatch, however, if they could present “rigorous analysis of factual data” to prove why an exception to the new all-in policy should be granted.

Since then, the Army and Marine Corps have tacked in different directions with unit assignments and gender integration research.

Long before the ban was lifted, the Army chief of staff, Gen. Raymond Odierno, had publicly spoken of the value he saw in opening ground combat jobs to women. “This is about managing talent,” Odierno has said on several occasions, citing the track record of the more than 280,000 military women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the Jan. 1 deadline approaches, the Army has focused its “Soldier 2020” gender integration program on scientific testing of its current performance standards to ensure they are valid. It also is creating a physical screening test for jobs now closed to women.

“This is all about matching the right soldier to the right job ... regardless of gender,” said Maj. Alison Hamilton, a planner for Army Training and Doctrine Command.

Infantry divide

- Marine Corps Reserve – 3,183 accessions, with a goal of 3,080; 103.3 percent.
- Air National Guard – 3,811 accessions, with a goal of 3,811, 100.0 percent.
- Air Force Reserve – 2,834 accessions, with a goal of 2,834; 100.0 percent.

• **Attrition** - Each of the six reserve components met their attrition goals or were within the allowed variance. Current trends are expected to continue. (This indicator lags due to data availability.)

Detailed information on specific recruiting data can be obtained by contacting the individual military recruiting commands at 502-626-0164 for Army, 210-565-4678 for Air Force, 703-784-9454 for Marine Corps, and 901-874-9048 for Navy. The reserve components can be reached at the following numbers: National Guard Bureau 703-601-6767, Army Reserve 910-570-8330, Air Force Reserve 703-697-1761, Navy Reserve 757-322-5652, and Marine Corps Reserve 504-678-6535.

<http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=17230&source=GovDelivery>

In recent years, both services have opened occupations and positions in ground combat units formerly closed to women, while keeping the main war-fighting jobs such as infantry rifleman all-male.

Since 2012, more than 55,000 Army positions have been opened and six occupations. Fourteen Army occupations outside of special operations remain closed and about 166,000 positions. In the Marine Corps, 20 occupations remain closed to women and nearly 60,000 positions.

Differences run deep, however, in the two services. The Army is about three times the size of the Marine Corps, which is the smallest defense department force. The Army also has a much larger proportion of women, over 16 percent, compared to 7 percent of the Marine Corps.

The Corps is the only military service to segregate basic training recruits by gender.

Unlike the Army, the Marines also prohibited women until recently from serving as ground intelligence officers. In October 2013, the Corps opened that occupation to women, albeit with restrictions keeping them out of infantry billets. “The Marines and the Army operate differently,” said Col. Linda Sheimo, chief of command policy in the office of the deputy chief of staff for Army manpower and personnel planning.

In the past, “they’ve kept their ground combat element closed to women, as opposed to we have had a structure where women have been more integrated,” Sheimo said.

The most notable disparity between Army and Marine Corps assignment policies for women involves infantry units.

In recent years, the Army has begun formally integrating women into smaller infantry units in support jobs already open to them such as intelligence, administration and supply.

The Marine Corps, meanwhile, has kept its infantry and reconnaissance units all-male, even as it began to add female troops on staff all other ground combat units such as tanks and artillery.

Why the discrepancy? Headquarters staff might have to fill in as provisional infantrymen, said Capt. Maureen Krebs, public affairs officer for the Marine Corps Force Integration Plan.

“The headquarters company of an infantry battalion is expected to do nearly the exact same tasks as the regular line platoons and companies,” Krebs said. “Before assigning women to those headquarters, we need to ensure we have the standards right ... and we set all Marines up for success when joining a ground combat arms unit.”

The Army requested a waiver in May 2012 before the combat ban was repealed so it could formalize its long-standing practice of “attaching” female troops to small infantry units. Under a former Pentagon co-location restriction, women were supposed to be protected from the risk of direct ground combat if they were barred from ground combat units smaller than a brigade.

The problem was, there were no clear front lines for troops fighting insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. And the Army and Marine Corps were scraping at the height of the conflicts for enough personnel in an all-volunteer force.

The Army change regarding its infantry and other ground combat units was a nod to war-zone realities, because “women had already been serving alongside male soldiers throughout the duration of our operations in Iraq and Afghanistan ... with many of those units in an attached status,” Sheimo said.

Sgt. 1st Class Julie Cobian, for instance, is an administration clerk who deployed to Iraq in 2006 for a yearlong tour with an infantry company. The 46-year-old San Diegan, who works on staff with the National Guard’s 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, was one of seven women with the group of about 150 men.

During six months of full-time pre-deployment combat training, Cobian grappled at Fort Dix, N.J., in hand-to-hand-combat with male soldiers. She practiced clearing buildings of enemy fighters and fired live ammunition from pistols, rifles, machine guns and grenade launchers.

It was several months before the men stopped grumbling about her presence, Cobian recalled. Their initial reaction was: “We don’t have females in the infantry, what the hell?! I was like ‘live with it, we’re here now. Suck it up,’” she said.

Cobian said she is competitive and felt the need to work twice as hard to prove herself as a woman in their ranks. If the infantrymen were ordered to stand formation at 3 a.m., she was ready at 2:30 a.m.

In Basra, Iraq, the infantry company was assigned as a security force to protect the roads surrounding Camp Bucca and its detainee facility. Improvised explosive devices and firefights were a constant threat as Cobian patrolled daily from the driver seat or .50-caliber machine-gun station on a Humvee.

She was in the third truck when a car bomber attacked her security patrol. A soldier in the first vehicle was killed.

Cobian, who also deployed to Afghanistan, said she will raise her hand if the Army opens the infantry to women.

“It’s the heart of the Army. It is what makes the Army great, being able to be the ground fighting force, the boot on the ground. For me that is a lot of pride to serve the country in that manner.

“And I’ve been there and done that,” she said, referring to her Iraq tour in an infantry unit.

Research

The Army and Marine Corps approach to gender research also differs.

One of the initial studies the Marines conducted involved opening their Infantry Officer Course at Quantico, Va., to female research subjects. Twenty-nine women attempted the course since 2012 and none passed before the experiment ended recently.

Among enlisted Marines, 358 women attempted the Infantry Training Battalion course and 34 percent graduated. The Army has not opened its basic infantry training to women. But an initial experiment into a gender-integrated Army Ranger course is set to begin Monday. Twenty women passed a two-week pre-qualification course and all but one plan to join the 62-day Ranger course, said Gary Jones, a Fort Benning, Ga., spokesman.

“It’s the same standard for all. From the Army perspective, that’s the important part,” Jones said. Any women who pass the elite course will not be able to serve in the 75th Ranger Regiment, a special operations force, since the military has not yet opened primary special operator jobs to women. But, Jones added, “they will wear the Ranger tab and have the same prestige as the men.”

The conventional Army is focused on an ongoing physical demands study. When testing is finished in June, the Army expects to have run about 700 men and upward of 400 women through a battery of combat skills tests.

“We’re not out to look at a man’s versus a woman’s performance on these tasks. We are establishing the performance criteria for the occupation, period. Regardless of gender. That will help the Army get the right soldier in the right job,” Hamilton said.

Marilyn Sharp, principal investigator of the study, said average performance in women is beside the point. “I don’t think the average woman is going to be capable of doing all of these jobs. It’s like, is the average woman capable of being a fire fighter? No. You have to be strong. You have to be capable of doing some pretty physically demanding things. Maybe the average man is capable of doing that, but is every man capable of doing that? No.”

“What we are trying to decide is who is and who is not capable. And we really don’t care how old you are and we don’t care what sex you are. If you can do the job, then you should be able to have that job,” Sharp said.

In 2012, the Marine Corps developed a series of “proxy tests” for physically demanding jobs that included combat skills tests similar to ones used in the Army physical demands study.

About 400 male Marines and nearly the same number of female Marines were tested on pull-ups, weight-lifting exercises, a 120-mm tank loading drill, a 155-mm artillery round carry and a 7-foot wall-climb while wearing a fighting load of about 30 pounds.

For the 35 Marines deemed best performers, 92 percent were males and 8 percent were females.

The Corps later determined that the proxy tests were not a sufficient measure of the potential impact of integrating women into ground combat units, so it created an experimental task force of men and women assigned to infantry, armor, and artillery units.

The Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force now in testing at Twentynine Palms includes all-male groups of men compared to mixed-gender groups performing combat tasks. Critics accuse the Marines of setting women up to fail by compiling evidence that average female performance is lower. The Corps denies the charge, saying the purpose of the task force research is to study gender integration in a deliberate, rigorous manner with no predetermined outcomes. Its working scientific hypothesis is that adding small numbers of women to ground combat units will have no significant impact on overall combat performance.

Neither the Army nor the Marine Corps will release preliminary data from their combat skills tests. All the services and special operations command have until September to request an exception that would keep women out of an occupation or unit, subject to approval by the secretary of defense.

Unit cohesion

In the interim, the services are sharing information about their research to prevent duplication of efforts, said Sheimo, the Army point woman for gender integration policy.

20 female soldiers expected to begin Ranger course Monday

(18 Apr.) Ledger-Enquirer, By Ben Wright

Nearly three months after Army Secretary John McHugh approved the first integrated Ranger training for women and men at Fort Benning, 20 women are expected to tackle the grueling, nine-week course starting Monday at Fort Benning.

The women successfully completed a two-week Ranger Assessment Training Course to qualify for Ranger School. They join a class of about 400 soldiers trying to earn the coveted Ranger tab with the toughest training in the Army.

As the first phase of training gets underway at Camp Rogers and Camp Darby, instructors at the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade said that, based on history, nearly half of the graduates will repeat portions or get recycled through the course, and that less than half will graduate.

Retired Col. Ralph Puckett, an inaugural inductee of the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame and decorated veteran of the Korean War and Vietnam War, supports the integrated training as long as standards aren't slackened. "I have thought for years that it's OK with me, if they maintain the standards," he said.

Former Ranger instructors said male and female soldiers will be physically and mentally tested in the beginning of the first week called Ranger Assessment Phase or "RAP week," in which 60 percent of soldiers fail in the first four days. The

She spent a day recently at Twentynine Palms observing the Marine task force. "I had an opportunity to see how cohesive an element the men and women have become and their ability to actually execute the collective tasks," Sheimo said.

"That's one of the consistent findings is that the more men work with women, the more accepting they are of their ability to accomplish the task."

Retired Army Capt. Leo Boeche, 61, of San Diego, is a gruff and burly veteran who served with Cobian in Iraq. The former company commander said it takes strong leadership to stamp out problems with fraternization in mixed-gender units. But he believes qualified women should be allowed to be trigger-pullers.

"If they can handle it physically, they should be able to do it. It's that simple," he said.

Many of his peers are skeptical. But seeing was believing for Boeche.

"She can do it," he said, pointing to Cobian. "I've seen her in a gun truck. I've seen her behind a .50-cal..."

Boeche weighs 225 pounds and Cobian is a sturdy 135. "I know that if I got hurt she could probably drag me away. I think that's the biggest fear of most men -- that if I'm next to somebody and I get shot or hurt is that person going to be able to get my back?"

"I know she could."

<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2015/apr/18/army-marine-corps-women-differences/?#article-copy>

physical assessment standards include 49 pushups, 59 situps, a five-mile run in 40 minutes or less and six chinups.

Retired 1st Sgt. David Lockett of Columbus recalled his first day at Ranger School in 1958. "The first thing they asked me was could I run five miles," he said. "I said, 'Yessir, if somebody is after me, I could.' But laying all jokes aside, they were not kidding me."

After the physical assessment, soldiers take part in a Combat Water Survival Assessment at Victory Pond and navigation training. Constantly moving 16 to 18 hours a day with little food and sleep, soldiers continue the second day with night navigation and a 2.1-mile buddy run while carrying an M4 rifle. In a dramatic finish, the run culminates in the infamous "worm pit" at Malvesti Confidence Course.

Soldiers who make it to the fourth day focus on equipment assembly and a rugged 12-mile foot march in three hours while hauling 35 pounds on their backs.

Many tasks are physical in the course, but Lockett said soldiers must also be mentally prepared for the tough training.

"If you don't have the attitude the first day of training, you can wash out," he said. "You've got to have the mental attitude. If

it wasn't hard, everybody in the Department of the Army would have a Ranger tab."

Only about two-thirds of the original class will continue in the 21 days of training at Fort Benning. Days are filled with leading procedures, principles of patrolling, drills and negotiating the Darby Queen, an obstacle course with 20 challenges stretched over a mile of hilly terrain.

Seventy-five percent of those who complete "RAP week" will eventually pass the Darby Phase on post before moving to mountain phase at Camp Merrill in Dahlonega, Ga., and the third and final swamp phase at Camp Rudder at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. To make it through each phase, Ranger students must receive a passing grade in one leadership position during patrol, a positive peer review and no more than three major negative spot reports.

Retired Maj. Bill Spies of Fort Mitchell said the Benning phase is the toughest of the three. "If they make it out of

Enlisted Women In Submarines Application Package Milestone Achieved

(20 Apr.) Navy Live Blog, By Rear Adm. Chas Richard

As the commander for Enlisted Women in Submarines Task Force, I wanted to take the opportunity to thank the entire fleet for your dedication and support of the integration of enlisted women into the submarine service. We've reached a major milestone as the April 15 deadline just passed for the first round of submarine rating conversion applications.

The more than 100 applications received matched the strong support we received as we visited fleet concentration areas to share this opportunity with Sailors across the Navy. Now it is our turn to take the ball and run with it. The Task Force is excited to deep dive into the conversion packages, to review the records of these talented Sailors and to select the initial cohort of enlisted female Sailors to serve alongside the female officers already serving onboard submarines!

Once announced, the first group to be selected will need to complete their medical screening after which they will receive orders for their tailored training pipeline ultimately to report to USS Michigan. This is not the end of the story though. The Navy and the submarine force will continue this process and

Air Force to begin tests to open combat jobs to women

(21 Apr.) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

The Air Force this month will take a big step toward possibly opening up the last male-only combat jobs to women.

In a Tuesday release, the Air Force said it will start conducting physical evaluations to set gender-neutral occupational standards for the jobs, which represent roughly 4,300 special operations positions.

The jobs are 13C special tactics officers, 13D combat rescue officers, 15WXC special operations weather officers, 1WOX2 special operations weather enlisted, 1C2 combat control, 1C4 Tactical Air Control Party, and 1T2 pararescue.

Benning and go to the mountain, they might get recycled, but most are going to fail in the Benning phase," said Spies, who served as an instructor twice at Ranger School. "That's why it is set up the way it is. It is to keep them hungry and tired through the whole course. It's a shock for some of them."

Puckett and Spies plan to observe some training on the first day, and both believe some female Rangers will make it through the process. Lockett said he will wait and see but noted that he wouldn't want his wife, sister or daughter going through the training.

Spies, 80, said he talks to every Ranger class and even walked the course before his knee was replaced. "I will cheer them on -- women, men, every one of them," he said. "It makes me no difference. A Ranger is a Ranger."

http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/2015/04/18/3676644_20-female-soldiers-expected-to.html?rh=1

the next application window to integrate additional crews will be announced at the completion of this selection process. This is the first of many opportunities for enlisted women to become submariners.

The Navy, and especially the submarine community, is dedicated to providing all Sailors the opportunity to serve in the submarine force.

This is an important opportunity for individual Sailors, but also for the submarine force as a whole ... to find new talent ... to grow our skills ... to ensure we remain the premier fighting force for future generations.

Thank you to all those who applied and to the commands who supported their applications. I look forward to reporting out the names of the first enlisted female submariners in the coming weeks.

Rear Adm. Chas Richard is Commander, Submarine Group Ten; Enlisted Women in Submarines Task Force Commander.
<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2015/04/20/enlisted-women-in-submarines-application-package-milestone-achieved/>

"Ultimately, the initiative to eliminate any remaining gender-based assignment restrictions will improve our readiness and the Air Force's ability to recruit and retain the most effective and qualified force," Air Force Sec. Deborah Lee James said in the release.

The Air Force said it will test about 200 male and female volunteers at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas. Airmen from the Lackland area will be the first volunteers chosen.

This testing and evaluation will help the Air Force develop the physical tests that will show which airmen can succeed in these physically demanding jobs, said Brig. Gen. Brian Kelly, director of military force management policy.

"This effort marks the most stringent process yet by which we are developing occupationally specific physical standards, scientifically measured against operational requirements to match mission needs," Kelly said in the release. "All the services and United States Special Operations Command are working with various scientific and research agencies to review occupational standards to ensure they are specific and current, operationally relevant and are gender neutral."

Kelly said that the testing effort "is not about raising or lowering occupational standards."

"The key is to ensure we have set the right standards for the occupation based on mission requirements," Kelly said. "The effort is built upon science and experience, to ensure we continue to maintain our readiness and preserve the quality and capability of our all-volunteer force."

Only 3 women fail Ranger School PT test, 16 remain

(21 Apr.) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

Three women and 78 men have washed out of Ranger School after Monday morning's physical fitness test.

Monday was the first day of a one-time integrated assessment at the Army's famously punishing Ranger School.

The assessment is part of a wider effort to determine whether and how to open combat arms jobs to women, and it is a first for Ranger School, which until now was open only to men.

On Monday morning, 399 soldiers began the course, said Gary Jones, a spokesman for Fort Benning, Georgia, where the first phase of Ranger School takes place.

Of those soldiers, 19 were women.

A total of 81 soldiers did not pass the PT test— 78 were men, three were women.

That leaves 16 female soldiers still in training, Jones said.

The two-month Ranger School begins with the Ranger Physical Assessment. Students must do 49 pushups in two minutes, 59 situps in two minutes, complete a five-mile run in 40 minutes or less, and do six chin-ups.

In fiscal 2014, PT test failures made up the largest number of Ranger School failures.

In a March speech outlining her plans to increase diversity in the Air Force, James reiterated her desire to open up these combat jobs to women.

"And boy, the burden of proof will be heavy on any recommendation to keep any of these positions closed once we have gender-neutral, job-relevant standards in place," James said in March.

The release said the Air Force has already conducted focus groups, assessments and operational observations as part of the process of opening these jobs.

James is expected to send Defense Secretary Ash Carter her recommendations on opening up the remaining male only jobs later this year. Carter is expected to send his recommendations on which jobs should be opened up on or about Jan. 1, which Congress will then choose to act on or not.

Air Force Education and Training Command will release more information on how Lackland-area airmen can volunteer to take part in these tests.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/careers/2015/04/21/air-force-to-begin-tests-to-open-combat-jobs-to-women/26138787/>

On average, about 45 percent of Ranger School students will graduate. As many as 60 percent of all Ranger School failures will occur in the first four days during the Ranger Assessment Phase, commonly known as RAP week.

Twenty women qualified to attend the integrated Ranger School assessment after successfully completing the Army National Guard Ranger Training Assessment Course.

To prepare for the April assessment, the Army required female candidates to attend the two-week RTAC, setting aside seats for female candidates in each iteration of the course between January and April.

RTAC has historically been a strong indicator of whether a candidate will be successful at Ranger School. Data has shown that more than half of the soldiers who complete RTAC will successfully complete Ranger School.

Women who successfully complete Ranger School will receive a certificate and be awarded the coveted Ranger tab. They will not, however, be assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment, which is separate from Ranger School.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/04/20/women-ranger-school-pt-test/26088039/>

3-star to be first female fleet commander of ships

(21 Apr.) *Navy Times*

The president has nominated Vice Adm. Nora Tyson to lead the San Diego-based 3rd Fleet, one of three flag moves announced Tuesday.

If confirmed by the Senate, Tyson will be the Navy's first female numbered fleet commander of ships. (The first female numbered fleet commander is Vice Adm. Jan Tighe, who leads U.S. Fleet Cyber Command, also known as 10th Fleet.)

Tyson, a naval flight officer, joined the service after graduating from Vanderbilt University and has commanded the amphibious assault ship *Bataan*, Logistics Group Western Pacific and led the Bush Carrier Strike Group on its maiden deployment, according to her bio. She has been the No. 2 at Fleet Forces for nearly two years.

First Female Blue Angel Pilot Taking Flight

(22 Apr.) *Christian Science Monitor*, By Alexander LaCasse

The first woman who to hold the distinction as a United States Navy pilot with the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, better known as the Blue Angels, will have an opportunity to fly in front of friends and family at home in June.

Marine Capt. Katie Higgins, of Severna Park, Md., is a third-generation military pilot and a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, according to the *Baltimore Sun*. She received her masters in international security from Georgetown University before starting flight school in Pensacola, Fla, according to *Baltimore's WJZ*.

She was selected to join the Blue Angels in September of 2014 after racking up nearly 400 hours of combat flight, according to *WJZ*. During the weekend of June 13, Capt. Higgins will fly one of three C-130 Hercules, nicknamed "Fat Albert," at the Ocean City Air Show.

"We are excited to welcome Katie to Ocean City and we know all of Maryland is proud of her," Bryan Lilley, President of the OC Air Show, told *WJZ*. "She will add even more excitement to this amazing lineup with the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, the Breitling Jet Team, and the F-22 Raptor Demo Team. Those are three of the biggest acts in the air show industry, all performing in the same year."

Captain Higgins is not the first woman to have been a part of the Blue Angels; she is one of twenty women on the team but she is the first and only female pilot, according to a spokeswoman for the Blue Angels.

Higgins' career path in the armed services represents a shift in the military's policies regarding female troops. Following the

The other flag moves, announced by the Navy:

- Rear Adm. Richard Snyder has been selected for rear admiral and will be assigned as director for plans, policy and strategy at U.S. Northern Command. Snyder is the current director of the 21st Century Sailor office.
- Rear Adm. Richard Williams will be assigned as the commander of Carrier Strike Group 15 based at North Island, Calif.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/04/21/nora-tyson-richard-snyder-navy-nomination/26133963/The>

end of conscription in 1973, and introduction of an all-volunteer force, the number of women serving jumped from 42,000 to 167,000, as of 2011, according to the Pew Research Center.

The Pentagon long held a policy prohibiting women from being tabbed to any "unit below brigade level whose primary mission is direct ground combat." Although this policy could be shifting soon, the *Monitor* reported that after the Dept. of Defense opened combat roles to women in 2013, the armed services have stalled in introducing a plan that would integrate specific branches of the military. The military must have an integration plan in place by January.

This does not mean, however, that women have not been exposed to combat situations. Pew cited that since the 1990s, military policy changes and two near decade-long wars have contributed to an increase in combat exposure among women, from 7 percent among pre-1990 female veterans to 24 percent of post-1990 female veterans, according to Pew Research. There were 723 female pilots in the Air Force as of 2013, according to *Military.com News*.

There is also a rich history of female pilots in World War II. Facing a shortage of pilots the American military turned to Women Airforce Service Pilots or WASP volunteers to ferry aircrafts from manufacturers to air bases, which feed male pilots to fly combat missions overseas, however the program was scrapped shortly after the war ended according to NPR.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2015/0422/First-female-Blue-Angel-pilot-taking-flight>

8 women, 184 men remain in Ranger School assessment

(23 Apr.) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

Eight women and 184 men have successfully completed the first four days of Ranger School, officials at Fort Benning, Georgia, announced Thursday.

This period is commonly known as RAP week, with RAP standing for Ranger Assessment Phase.

During those four days, the soldiers were evaluated on a series of punishing physical events. They had to conduct a physical fitness test consisting of 49 push-ups, 59 sit-ups, six chin-ups and a five-mile run in under 40 minutes.

They also underwent a swim test and a land navigation test. The soldiers also had to complete a 12-mile foot march wearing a 35-pound rucksack in under three hours.

A total of 19 female and 381 male soldiers started the two-month Ranger School on Monday.

Three women and 78 men were eliminated from training after the PT test on the first day.

After RAP week, eight women and 184 men remained in training – this represents an overall success rate of 48 percent, according to the statement from Fort Benning.

There was a 42.1 percent success rate for the female soldiers and a 48.3 percent success rate for the male students, according to Fort Benning.

Officials said these numbers are "within historic norms for the Ranger course."

The training that began Monday is a one-time, integrated assessment at the Army's famously punishing Ranger School.

In major step, eight women make it through Ranger School's grueling 'RAP Week'

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

Eight women have made it through the initial, grueling four-day assessment at Ranger School, Army officials said Thursday, raising the prospect that female soldiers could graduate from the elite course for the first time ever.

The women made it through Ranger Assessment Phase, commonly known as "RAP Week," along with 184 men, said officials at Fort Benning, Ga., where Ranger School is held. About 40 percent of students have historically made it through the phase, which includes everything from chin-ups and push-ups to an exhausting 12-mile road march and a water survival test that calls for climbing along a rope that is suspended over water.

Ranger School was opened to women for the first time ever starting Monday as the Pentagon assesses which new combat assignments it should allow women to hold. Army officials

The assessment is part of a wider effort to determine whether and how to open combat arms jobs to women, and it is a first for Ranger School, which until now has been open only to men.

On average, about 45 percent of Ranger School students will graduate. As many as 60 percent of all Ranger School failures will occur in the first four days of RAP week.

In fiscal 2014, PT test failures made up the largest number of Ranger School failures.

Twenty women qualified to attend the integrated Ranger School assessment after successfully completing the Army National Guard Ranger Training Assessment Course.

To prepare for the April assessment, the Army required female candidates to attend the two-week RTAC, setting aside seats for female candidates in each iteration of the course between January and April.

RTAC has historically been a strong indicator of whether a candidate will be successful at Ranger School. Data has shown that more than half of the soldiers who complete RTAC will successfully complete Ranger School.

Women who successfully complete Ranger School will receive a certificate and be awarded the coveted Ranger tab. They will not, however, be assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment, which is separate from Ranger School.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/04/23/integrated-ranger-school-rap-week-update/26260827/>

said 381 men and 19 women started on Day 1, meaning 48.3 percent of men and 42.1 percent of women made it through RAP Week. Both are within historic norms for Ranger School, Army officials said.

RAP Week is seen as the largest hurdle by many to graduating the 62-day Ranger School course. About 75 percent of the students who make it through eventually go on to graduate, Ranger School officials said. It can take months, however: Students can fail individual portions of the the course multiple times, and get "recycled" into a later group.

Any woman who graduates will be allowed to wear the Army's prestigious Ranger tab, but not permitted to served in the 75th Ranger Regiment, the elite force that performs raids and other special operations. But Ranger School graduates

have long served in other parts of the Army, and are considered among the service's best soldiers.

The Army announced in January that it was opening Ranger School as part of a Defense Department directive to research more fully integrating women into the service. It required any woman attending Ranger School to pass an existing 17-day preparatory course known as the Ranger Training and Assessment Course (RTAC). It's run by the Army National Guard at Fort Benning, and attended by more than 5,000 prospective Ranger students annually.

Four RTAC classes integrated with women were conducted this year, with some men and women who failed attending more than one. Twenty women ultimately qualified to take on

Ranger School, with 19 electing to continue and one withdrawing before the course began Monday, Army officials said.

Ranger School — and RAP Week — began Monday with the Ranger physical fitness test, which requires each soldier to complete at least 49 push-ups, 59-sit-ups, six chin-ups and a five-mile run in under 40 minutes. Three women and 78 men in in the class failed it.

The initial phases of Ranger School will continue at Fort Benning. Later parts include mountain warfare training at Camp Merrill, about 65 miles north of Atlanta in Dahlonega, Ga., and swamp training around Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/04/23/in-major-step-eight-women-make-it-through-ranger-schools-grueling-rap-week/?postshare=1491429834158780>

Overlooked female veterans highlighted by state legislation

(18 Apr.) Associated Press, By Ken Dixon

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) - A prospective new law could help Shannon Lyons, a 51-year-old veteran of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, find a job that pays enough to save for a house.

The same goes for Carmen Roldan, 34, who served in Iraq with the Army National Guard in 2003.

Elaine Brown, a 51-year-old Army veteran, says she needs the support to learn more about her eligibility for benefits.

For the first time in her 37 years, Elnora Cochran, an Army veteran, finds herself homeless.

And Angela Ackinson, also 51, hopes for better access to mental health services that could help her overcome grief from her son's death five years ago.

Overlooked for decades, women military veterans like these would be encouraged to seek benefits and services that they earned under legislation approved unanimously in the state Senate on Wednesday.

The bill, which would require additional outreach to thousands of women, now heads to the House for final approval. It's aimed at correcting a gender gap that's focused on male veterans, leaving many women unaware of benefits they have earned.

The state Department of Veterans Affairs would be directed to make efforts to improve housing and job services as well as mental health programs for women veterans. The agency would also review additional programs for the 16,545 women vets in Connecticut, many of whom are still in their prime working years.

During a morning news conference prior to the Senate session, Senate President Pro Tempore Martin M. Looney said that as

women become a larger percentage of the armed services and wars wind down in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are coming home and attempting to adjust to civilian life.

"More than in past military conflicts, many of these returning veterans are women who will need support just like the men they served beside in combat," said Looney, D-New Haven.

Jackie Evonsion, of Canton, outreach coordinator for the American Legion in Connecticut, recalled that when she returned from her Vietnam-era service in 1967, she didn't realize the help she should have gotten. Finally, her World War II veteran uncles persuaded her to sign up for Veterans Administration benefits.

During a conference call from the Nicholas Maderas home in Bridgeport — transitional housing run by the nonprofit Homes for the Brave — Lyons, who now lives in transitional housing in Bridgeport, said she and other female vets need help with housing and employment.

"If people go out and get a job, they're just getting by, but they're spending all their money on rent and cannot hope to save to buy a home," she said.

"When I came back, I thought I was OK, but I was not as OK," Ackinson said. "They train us to be steel, to put our problems aside and focus on our mission."

But since the death of her son, the grief has made her housing and employment problems more acute.

"Right now my big issue has to be housing," said Cochran, who has lived in the Maderas house with her young children for the past year. "They say you have to be chronically homeless, but not all people are chronically homeless. This was the first time ever in my life I was homeless."

Brown, who served in Germany, thought she was adjusting to civilian life.

“Basically I’ve done OK, but I have had some issues lately and lost my job and I couldn’t continue paying rent,” she said. “I feel as females, we don’t have the information we need.”

Roldan said one reason she joined the National Guard was that she was homeless.

“Ever since my term was up, I faced problems trying to find housing and find a job where I could pay my rent, because rent is so outrageous,” she said. “When I went overseas, I saved as much as I could. As far as getting real help from the military, it wasn’t really there when I asked my commanders.”

Enlisted jobs rank among worst in new career report

(18 Apr.) Military Times, By Jon R. Anderson

If you're an enlisted service member, a new career report says you've got one of the very worst jobs on the planet.

But at least you can say you're not a lumberjack or, worst of all, a newspaper reporter.

Those are bottom three, according to CareerCast.com in its latest rankings of best and worst professions.

Jobs involving number crunching, computers and several medical specialties took top spots among the best-rated gigs.

"To quantify the many facets of the 200 jobs included in our report," say the folks at CareerCast.com announcing the results, "we determined and reviewed various critical aspects of all of the jobs, categorizing them into four 'Core Criteria;' that is, the general categories that are inherent to every job: Environment, Income, Outlook, and Stress."

The top 10 jobs earn between \$71,133 and \$124,149 per year on average. The national median wage is \$34,750.

Although enlisted troops do a little better than most Americans when it comes to pay — with an average wage of \$44,283 per year — they took hits on most other fronts, scoring particularly poorly on levels of stress and work environment.

"Enlisting in a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces requires resolve and dedication far beyond that asked in most careers. Becoming enlisted military personnel means facing danger and high stress," notes the report.

As one commenter succinctly put it, enlisting in the military "is not for everybody."

Although enlisted jobs sit in the same third-from-the-last spot the category has commanded since 2012, CareerCast.com

Joy Kiss, a registered nurse who is the CEO and executive director of Homes For the Brave, said the Nicholas Maderas home has 15 beds, nine of which are currently filled. In all, the organization has 37 beds available for women veterans as part of a federal Veterans Administration program with about 170 spots statewide.

“There’s an array of issues facing women when they come back,” Kiss said. “It could be medical, mental health or otherwise re-acclimating. Our case-management staff works with them to provide the services for them to help themselves.”

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/apr/18/overlook-ed-female-veterans-highlighted-by-state-le/>

editor Tony Lee tells Military Times it's actually doing worse than previous years.

"The obvious parts of physical danger, high stress, and lower pay are the same, but there is a new aspect to it that had a more negative effect," Lee says — specifically, cuts in troop strength mean once relatively high levels of job security are tanking.

"It's no longer as secure a career choice. In the past, even if you were a marginal performer, you could still re-enlist. But now, in many cases, you may not be able to re-enlist if you want to."

Oddly, the CareerCast.com assessment does not include a category for military officers, but — stranger still — does rank the job of "generals."

It may be small consolation, but the top brass doesn't fare much better than their enlisted troops, placing in the bottom quarter of the profession barrel, scoring 177th out of the 200 jobs ranked.

Lee explained that the wider officer corps rankings are missing largely because they're not grouped in the Bureau of Labor and Statistics data on which CareerCast.com relies.

"They do not offer anything in between. Those are the two categories — enlisted and the generals," he says.

10 best jobs:

1. Actuary
2. Audiologist
3. Mathematician
4. Statistician
5. Biomedical engineer
6. Data scientist
7. Dental hygienist

8. Software engineer
9. Occupational therapist
10. Computer systems analyst

10 worst jobs:

1. Newspaper reporter
2. Lumberjack
3. Enlisted military personnel
4. Cook

5. Broadcaster
6. Photojournalist
7. Corrections officer
8. Taxi driver
9. Firefighter
10. Mail carrier

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/veterans/careers/civilian/2015/04/18/career-cast-worst-jobs-report/25950233/>

Children's Program Aims to Curb Obesity, Boost Nutrition

(22 Apr.) DoD News, By Amaani Lyle

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2015 – As concerns persist over ever-rising obesity levels among American children, the Defense Department will bolster its Healthy Children programs to weave fitness, nutrition and tobacco-free living into military children's curriculum, a Pentagon official told DoD News.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity rates in the United States have tripled since 1980, and these statistics portend possible jeopardy to the readiness of future service members, said Barbara Thompson, director of DoD's Office of Family Readiness Policy, during a DoD News interview on the observance of April as the Month of the Military Child.

"We have a moral imperative ... and a national security imperative to make sure our children are healthy and active," Thompson said. "We know that many [military family] children -- in fact, over 50 percent -- either enter the military or seriously consider entering the military when they grow up, so we want them to be as healthy and as physically fit as possible."

Awareness of Health Risks

In the face of health risks such as obesity and poor nutrition, building awareness is the first step toward mitigating them, Thompson said.

"We normally see children as being active and eating healthy, but ... through marketing and busy lifestyles, children are not getting the healthy nutrition and opportunities for physical play that they need," she said. "Children are bombarded with messages on foods that are high in fat, high in sugar and [generally] not good for them."

So whether students are in child development or after-school programs, DoD initiatives embed healthy eating, cooking, and daily physical activity tips into the lesson plans in hopes such

behavior will carry over into the home environment, Thompson said.

"Children's parents are their most important teachers and models," she added, "so we don't want to have a different set of rules at home."

Also embedded into the department's military child curriculum is DoD's Operation Live Well, Thompson said, adding that the program examines holistically healthy living through tobacco cessation, nutrition and physical activities.

Eating Healthy

Thompson also cited the nationally recognized "5-2-1-0" child nutrition guideline developed by the "Let's Go!" organization. It calls for five servings of fruits or vegetables every day, two hours or less of computer and television screen time, one hour of physical activity and zero sweetened beverages.

"If we can keep that on our radar screen as a mantra and tailor our lifestyle across the 5-2-1-0 message, our children will be healthy and active," she said.

Thompson referenced the health and wellness coaching element in the popular online resource, Military OneSource. "You actually get somebody who's in your corner, providing the motivation for you to stay in tune with your goals," she said, "whether it's with nutrition or physical activity, so that you're not alone in trying to change your behaviors."

Defense Department officials want to keep military children fit and healthy, Thompson said, both in their own interest and as a concern about potential future service members who may fail to meet required physical fitness standards.

"Less than 25 percent of our youth age 17 to 24 can enter the military, primarily due to physical requirements," Thompson said.

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=128639&source=GovDelivery>

A Sailor's Experience With Career Intermission Program

(23 Apr.) Navy Live Blog, By Lt. Michael Fonbuena

The Career Intermission Program, which originally began as a small-scale pilot, has afforded me the opportunity to seek out an advanced degree at a prestigious university of my choosing while also allowing me the ability to continue my career in the naval service. Overall, I have had an extremely positive experience with CIP and feel that the Navy should strongly advertise this program to junior officers as an alternative means of obtaining graduate education.

As I was midway through my shore tour, I found myself debating a question which many junior officers often find themselves debating: Should I stay in or should I get out? There are many factors which weigh in to such a decision: financial, professional, family, etc. For me, however, the most important factor was the ability to obtain a quality graduate education that aligned with both my academic and professional interests. After researching the options available

to me through the Navy, I became extremely discouraged by the lack of diversity in educational opportunities. (To be fair, I was not ready to sign JCSRBS at the end of my second sea tour which limited my opportunities, but I feel that can be said of many junior officers who need to experience a shore tour before they are ready to make such a critical decision.)

The only option which truly aligned with my interests was the Pol-Mil Master's Program. However, the timing was not likely to work as it would put me at department head school past the seven and a half year mark; also there is only one applicant accepted to a two-year Master's program each year. One applicant – this is a huge disservice to the Naval Officer Corps. Needless to say, I was discouraged at the opportunities available to me. Then, I discovered CIP after many hours of online searching, and it immediately peaked my interest. The main draw was the ability to continue my career as a department head while also being afforded the opportunity to obtain a Master's degree of my choosing at an institution of my choosing.

Overall, I have had an extremely positive experience while participating in this program. I have been able to see what life outside of the military is like, I have been re-invigorated by the educational opportunities which have been presented to me, and I feel I have gained many valuable skills which are not traditionally gained in Navy graduate programs and will serve both myself and the Navy well in the long run. Below are some thoughts on CIP:

Positives:

- Ability to obtain the degree I desired at a university of my choosing
- Obtained diverse skills which will be valuable to myself and the Navy in the long run
- Allowed to use Post 9/11 GI Bill and retained medical/dental benefits
- Eliminates timing issues regarding career progression

Negatives:

- Stipend not substantial enough to make sufficient impact in day-to-day life
- Program not well known to service members
- Unable to collect YCS 6 JCSRBS payment due to program restrictions

Suggestions:

- Heavily advertise CIP to junior officers, particularly as an alternative vehicle to obtain graduate education
- Increase the monthly stipend to approximately 1/5 of base pay to create a larger incentive for participation in CIP
- Develop partnerships with academic institutions to help junior officers get accepted to top-tier Master's programs while participating in CIP
- Remove the restriction that do not allow participants to receive CSRB; at minimum, make it so junior officers could retroactively receive any payments they otherwise would be ineligible for because of the existing clause making it ineligible for individuals to participate in CIP while under CSRB. This might make sense in some context, but not for junior officers, who should be primary target group of CIP
- Work to place members in a position applicable to the Master's Degree they obtain during CIP – for example, if someone goes to Wharton to obtain their M.B.A., place them in a financial position at the Pentagon immediately upon return to active duty; if a person goes to Harvard Kennedy School to obtain their M.P.P., place them in an OLA or Pol-Mil billet. This will not only leverage the ideas obtained during their studies but also advance the service member professionally and validate them academically.

This has been an extremely valuable program, and I feel that it should be largely expanded from its current scope. It provides the Navy the opportunity to tap into a segment of junior officers who would be extremely valuable to the Navy long-term but might otherwise separate due to a lack of educational opportunities. I would further recommend the Navy conduct an extensive survey in order to discover what percentage of junior officers across all levels would be encouraged to stay if given the chance to participate in CIP and what would encourage their participation.

Lt. Michael Fonbuena is currently a Master's of Public Policy candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles and was awarded the Torang Jahan Fellowship for Globalization Studies.

<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2015/04/23/a-sailors-experience-with-career-intermission-program/>