



## Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services Articles of Interest: 20-26 Feb 2016

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### RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

#### 1. [Applications accepted for special ops master's program](#)

(19 Feb) *Army Times*, By Jim Tice

Applications are being accepted for a 10-month master's degree program offered by the National Defense University for special operations officers, warrant officers and noncommissioned officers.

#### 2. [Warrant officer forecast: What's in store for the Army's technical experts](#)

(21 Feb) *Army Times*, By Kevin Lilley

The service's top warrant officer can condense his cohort's job description into six words: "A technical expert who can lead."

#### 3. [This Woman Might Not Get Into The Marines Because Of A Discriminatory Tattoo Policy](#)

(22 Feb) *Huffington Post*, By Amanda Terkel

Rep. Chellie Pingree says the rules shouldn't differ for women and men.

#### 4. [Senior NCOs to face May retention screening](#)

(23 Feb) *Army Times*, By Jim Tice

Senior noncommissioned officers in select military occupational specialties will be considered for possible separation from active duty by a retention board that meets in mid-May.

#### 5. [Army recruiting market tightens but service expects to make 2016 goal](#)

(23 Feb) *Army Times*, By Jim Tice

The Army expects to make its recruiting goal of 62,000 soldiers annually in 2016 and 2017, but recruiters will face "significant challenges due to lower entry pools and a more competitive recruiting environment," according to budget materials submitted to Congress in early February.

#### 6. [Marines' early out options dwindle as the drawdown ends](#)

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

Marines hoping to take advantage of early exit opportunities this year had better act fast.

#### 7. [Bigger budget, more personnel ahead for Coast Guard](#)

(24 Feb) *Military Times*, By Meghann Myers

More than any other military branch, the Coast Guard has a reputation for having to do more with less — 11 statutory missions from search and rescue to fishing inspection, with a fleet of more than 40-year-old ships, about 40,000 active-duty personnel and just above \$10 billion. That's about 6 percent of the Navy Department's 2017 budget request.

#### 8. [Funded law school available to lieutenants, captains](#)

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A scholarship program that allows up to 25 junior officers to attend law school on the Army's dime is available to qualified applicants this year.

## EMPLOYMENT & INTEGRATION

### **9. Judge in 9/11 case receives new motion regarding female guards**

*(22 Feb) Military Times, By Celena Chong*

A defense lawyer for the self-proclaimed architect of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. urged a military judge on Monday to allow testimony by a witness who will say that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and other alleged ringleaders were subjected to handling by female guards that caused psychological trauma and violated their Muslim beliefs.

### **10. Why We Still Need the Draft**

*(23 Feb) War on the Rocks, By David Barno and Nora Bensahel*

The recent political fracas over women and the draft is making headlines around the country and has become a campaign issue in the Republican presidential primaries. But this debate raises even more profound questions about the need for — and value of — the draft more broadly.

### **11. Trainers hope for revisions to Army fitness test**

*(24 Feb) Stars and Stripes, By Seth Robson*

Strength, power and agility drills will be part of revised Army physical fitness tests if the service's top trainers get their way.

### **12. No more skirts: Female midshipmen to wear trousers at Naval Academy graduation**

*(24 Feb) Capital Gazette, By Christina Jedra*

Commandant Stephen Liszewski announced the policy change Monday to midshipmen graduating this May, said academy spokesman Cmdr. John Schofield. The decision was made by academy leadership in coordination with the Department of the Navy.

### **13. Marines roll out tougher initial strength test for poolees**

*(24 Feb) Marine Corps Times, By Jeff Schogol*

Male and female poolees interested in taking combat-related jobs face a tougher initial strength test.

### **14. Minneapolis woman becomes first female general in Minnesota National Guard**

*(24 Feb) Fox 9 News*

Minneapolis native Air Force Col. Sandra L. Best will become the first female general in the Minnesota National Guard when she receives her promotion Thursday.

### **15. Army to roll out better body armor, combat shirt in 2019**

*(25 Feb) Army Times, By Kyle Jahner*

In 2019 the Army expects to roll out a new, lighter body armor system. The armor will provide at least as much protection as today's system, but with more comfort, and greater flexibility to adjust based on the mission, Army officials said.

### **16. Marine Corps promotes female officer's 'no nonsense' pullup plan**

*(25 Feb) Marine Corps Times, By Jeff Schogol*

Marine Maj. Misty Posey is confident that she has a fitness training plan that can help everyone in the Corps master pullups.

### **17. Updated Department of the Navy Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement Released**

*(25 Feb) DoD Live, By Navy News*

Today, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus released an update to the Department of the Navy Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement, which is below. In this video, SECNAV discusses how the updated policy statement makes the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps a more effective warfighting force.

## WELL-BEING & TREATMENT

### **18. The Pentagon's 'Force of the Future' plan just got trashed in Congress**

*(25 Feb) Military Times, By Leo Shane III*

Defense officials' hopes for sweeping personnel reforms were crushed by Senate Republicans on Thursday who attacked the ideas as “an outrageous waste of time” and the Pentagon's pick to implement them as unfit to serve.

### **19. Navy rolls back maternity leave from 18 to 12 weeks**

*(25 Feb) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers*

The Navy may be cutting six weeks from its maternity leave policy, but women who were pregnant by July or become pregnant by March 3 are still eligible for 18 weeks of leave, the service announced Thursday.

## **WOMEN VETERANS**

### **20. Hawaii bills push for help for female veterans**

*(24 Feb) Associated Press*

Female veterans are one of the fastest growing homeless populations the nation, and state officials say it's no different in Hawaii.

### **1. Applications accepted for special ops master's program**

*(19 Feb) Army Times, By Jim Tice*

Applications are being accepted for a 10-month master's degree program offered by the National Defense University for special operations officers, warrant officers and noncommissioned officers.

The fully accredited degree program will be conducted at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, beginning in August 2017.

The Master of Arts in Strategic Security Studies program mirrors the Joint Special Operations Master of Arts course offered by NDU's College of International Security Affairs.

The degree curriculum includes a combination of theoretical and practical learning sessions, including seminar participation, independent study and research, and the writing of a thesis.

Officers who complete the program earn equivalent credit for Phase II (Advanced Operations Course) of Intermediate Level Education. To receive full credit for ILE, and the award of Military Education Level 4, officers must complete the common core phase of Intermediate Level Education.

The deadline for submitting applications to the Special Warfare Center and School is Nov. 4. Application procedures are described in [MilPer Message 16-040](#), issued by Human Resources Command Feb. 4.

The basic zones of eligibility include soldiers who have an accredited undergraduate degree, and who are:

- Special Forces (AOC 18A) commissioned officers in year groups 2001-2007.
- Special Forces warrant officers (MOS 180A) in the ranks of promotable CW2 through CW4 who will have less than two years in grade when classes begin 2017.
- Civil affairs (AOC 38A) and psychological operations (AOC 37A) commissioned officers in year groups 2001-2007.
- Special operations (CMF 18, 37 and 38) NCOs in the ranks of staff sergeant and above who have completed the required military education courses for their grade and years of service, and who will have no more than 22 years of active federal service as August 2017.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/19/applications-accepted-special-ops-masters-program/80606904/>

### **2. Warrant officer forecast: What's in store for the Army's technical experts**

*(21 Feb) Army Times, By Kevin Lilley*

The service's top warrant officer can condense his cohort's job description into six words: "A technical expert who can lead."

Molding warrant officers who can live up to that definition can be more complex.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Williams, selected nearly two years ago as the first Army Staff senior warrant officer, discussed both short- and long-term plans for the cohort with Army Times in a recent interview, as did Gen. David Perkins, head of Army Training and Doctrine Command, and several participants in January's Warrant Officer Solarium event, hosted by the Center for Army Leadership at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Some highlights from those discussions:

**1. Maintaining expertise.** Plans to increase technical training are in place, Perkins said, but it's not enough to keep up with the speed of technology.

"You have to realize that the Army is going to field new systems before we get you back into the school system again," he said. "We just can't bring you back every time a new system comes in."

One solution: Increased efforts to push updated maintenance tutorials and requirements into the field alongside the new gear. That could be as simple as ensuring technical specifications and requirements for new systems are available as downloadable documents for tablets and cellphones, giving warrant officers instant access to critical updates.

**2. Contractor conundrum.** "If the contractors bring it to the Army," Williams said about any new system or program, "the contractors won't go away. That's one of the concerns, that the contractors are doing the job of some of the warrant officers, and that could erode some of our technical skills."

Over-reliance on contractors also deprives the Army of the mentorship and leadership skills warrant officers possess, Perkins said, while a contractor's contribution generally begins and ends with subject-matter expertise.

They also cost the Army money, and moving warrant officers back into such roles will become even more important as budgets shrink, Perkins said.

**3. Be a part of the plan.** One way to help stave off the need for contractors, according to one of the Solarium presentation slides, would be to "embed a trained warrant officer into the acquisition process at the procurement level," giving the cohort a chance to raise concerns at an earlier stage of product development. It's an idea Perkins endorsed.

"Let's get the warrant officers in the requirements process earlier, so that as we're developing a piece of gear, the warrant officer can say, 'You know what, that's going to be really hard to maintain,'" he said.

Such a setup also could help with the simultaneous development of maintenance protocol for the system – a new vehicle, for instance – so such training tools could roll out as the equipment entered the field.

#### **4. Plotting a career path.**

Training for the cohort goes beyond technical skills. As Solarium participant CW3 Heath Stamm put it, when warrant officers advance beyond the battalion level, "You're no longer being trained in a technical specialty. They're teaching you how to be a better officer."

Perkins said the Army must work to ensure warrant officers "are seen as they are, subject-matter experts, but not at the expense of their leadership development."

Solarium presentations included proposals to make leadership training available earlier in a warrant officer's career, and to better standardize such training across the many technical specialties.

**5. How best to broaden.** Broadening assignments are frequent discussion topics for young and mid-level warrant officers, Williams said, but the discussion doesn't always come from a place of knowledge.

"Some people don't really understand the term, and they haven't bothered to look it up," he said. "You can broaden yourself within your [specialty]. ... I try to challenge the group to understand what 'broadening' is."

The problem stretches beyond the warrant officer ranks, Perkins said – people want a checklist of such assignments that will land them

a promotion, but “it all depends on what your background is.”

The short version, per the TRADOC boss: “Don’t keep doing the same thing over and over again.”

**6. A seat at the table.** Solarium participants and others praised the creation of the post Williams now occupies, saying it gives the cohort a much-needed voice at the top of the command chain.

“We pride ourselves on being the ‘quiet professionals,’ but at the same time, there needs to be representation,” said CW4 Christopher Cummings, with the Center for Army Leadership. CW5 Bob Lamphear, command chief warrant officer for the Combined Arms Center, pointed to [Williams’ Facebook page](#), which features overwhelmingly positive feedback from the force, as a way to “see the excitement within the cohort” regarding the position.

Williams, who plans to leave service within two years, said his immediate priority remains the approval of the Warrant Officer 2025 strategy, which will address many of the cohort’s training and talent-management concerns. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley recently signed off on the plan, Williams said, sending to the secretary of the Army’s office for final approval.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/21/warrant-officer-forecast-whats-store-armys-technical-experts/80056360/>

### **3. This Woman Might Not Get Into The Marines Because Of A Discriminatory Tattoo Policy**

*(22 Feb) Huffington Post, By Amanda Terkel*

Kate Pimental really, really wants to join the Marines.

"I love the Marine Corps. I feel like that's where I belong," the 20-year-old from Kennebunk, Maine, told The Huffington Post on Monday.

She said the recruiters declared her a good fit, physically and mentally. But she still may not be able to join because of a tattoo she received when she was 18 years old.

Pimental's tattoo, which is on her chest near her neck, reads, "Let your smile change the world but never let the world change you."

If she were a man, this tattoo would be no problem because the male Marine uniform would conceal it. But the female uniform is different: It would leave Pimental's tattoo exposed, violating the service's rules.

Last week, Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine) [wrote](#) to Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller, drawing attention to Pimental and the "uniform inconsistency."

"As you well know, male Marines are afforded the opportunity to choose between wearing -- or not wearing -- a white crewneck undershirt with both their Service Uniform 'C' or their Dress Uniform 'D.' The only allowable undershirt for female Marines is a v-neck and is not allowed to be visible," Pingree wrote. "That means a tattoo that would be covered by a male Marine's undershirt could be visible and not covered by a female Marine's v-neck undershirt and the result, I believe, is an unintentional act of discrimination."

The Marines do give out waivers for tattoos, and Pimental said her recruiter has been working with her on the matter. But they've been waiting about seven months and still haven't heard whether she qualifies.

"I would like to have it changed," Pimental said of the different rules for women. "That would be nice. I feel like that would be more equal."

About a year ago, the Marines began a review of the service's tattoo policy.

In an interview with the Marine Times this month, Neller said he hoped the revised guidance would provide more "clarity" for service members and recruits.

"Marines have to go look at three or four different documents on the policy. We are going to try to [get it down to one document](#). ... We are not going to approve sleeve tattoos. There will be a little flex on what is an acceptable tattoo. My goal is, in less than thirty days, this thing will be out, and it will include specific rules for Marines who want to do special duty assignments or become warrant or

commissioned officers," he said.

The Marines did not return a request for comment on Pingree's letter.

The Pentagon recently opened all jobs in combat units to women, and Neller said that he is in favor of [requiring women to register for the draft](#).

As for Pimental, this delay hasn't dampened her enthusiasm for joining the Marines. She is still training with the other recruits, an experience she called "fun and intense."

"It's amazing. This is my happy place," Pimental said. "They're family to me. I want the best for everyone there. I go there to escape."

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/marines-tattoo-policy-women\\_us\\_56cb3e22e4b0928f5a6c856f](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/marines-tattoo-policy-women_us_56cb3e22e4b0928f5a6c856f)

#### **4. Senior NCOs to face May retention screening**

*(23 Feb) Army Times, By Jim Tice*

Senior noncommissioned officers in select military occupational specialties will be considered for possible separation from active duty by a retention board that meets in mid-May.

The zone of consideration for the Qualitative Service Program board will include command sergeants major and sergeants major of the Regular Army and Active Guard and Reserve (Army Reserve) who are in specialties that are overstrength as the Army moves deeper into the drawdown.

Soldiers who do not want to risk possible selection by the board should submit a request for voluntary retirement before the board convenes. Such requests must be approved by May 5, and cannot be withdrawn after being approved.

The E-9 QSP board will be held in conjunction with the fiscal 2016 nominative command sergeant major and sergeant major selection board that is scheduled for May 16-20.

The zone of eligibility for the QSP board will include RA and AGR command sergeants major and sergeants major with dates of rank of May 17, 2013, and earlier, and basic active service dates of May 17, 1986, and later, who hold one of the following military occupational specialties:

##### **Regular Army**

15Z (aircraft maintenance senior sergeant), 19Z (armor senior sergeant), 25Z (visual information operations chief), 35Z (signals intelligence senior sergeant), 42A (human resources specialist) and 51C (contracting NCO).

Also, 68Z (chief medical NCO), 88Z (transportation senior sergeant), 89D (explosive ordnance disposal specialist) and 91Z (mechanical maintenance supervisor). All other specialties will not be considered.

##### **Active Guard and Reserve (Army Reserve)**

15Z (aircraft maintenance senior sergeant), 25X (chief signal NCO), 31E (interment and resettlement specialist) and 36B (financial management technician).

Also, 38B (civil affairs specialist), 74D (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialist), 88Z (transportation senior sergeant) and 92F (petroleum supply specialist). All other specialties will not be included.

Soldiers who are in the zone of consideration for QSP can review their official file, the Army Military Human Resources Record, [online](#).

Unlike the Qualitative Management Program, which is triggered by the filing of derogatory material in a soldier's official file, the

QSP is a drawdown tool for culling military occupational specialties that are, or will become, overstrength as the Army gets smaller.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/enlisted/2016/02/23/senior-ncos-face-may-retention-screening/80764136/>

## **5. Army recruiting market tightens but service expects to make 2016 goal**

*(23 Feb) Army Times, By Jim Tice*

The Army expects to make its recruiting goal of 62,000 soldiers annually in 2016 and 2017, but recruiters will face “significant challenges due to lower entry pools and a more competitive recruiting environment,” according to budget materials submitted to Congress in early February.

While the Army achieved its active component accessions mission of 59,000 soldiers for fiscal 2015, it began the annual recruiting campaign with only 16,500 young people under contract, the smallest delayed entry pool in seven years.

The entry pool for fiscal 2016 was even smaller, with only 15,207 people committed to future enlistment on Oct. 1.

As of mid-February, the year-to-date enlistment total for the Regular Army stood at 21,004 soldiers, which is one-third of the annual requirement, according to statistics provided by Recruiting Command.

“Improving economic conditions, reduced incentives and tightened policy restrictions are proving to be significant challenges to meeting mission goals,” the Army cautioned in its budget submission.

Despite those challenges, the quality of the incoming cohorts has been high, with 98 percent of the recruits having earned a traditional high school diploma.

In a further measure of quality, more than 60 percent of non-prior-service young people who enlisted in 2015 scored in the 50th percentile or higher of the Armed Forces Qualification Test, which is a measure of recruit aptitude.

“Nationally, the decline in high graduation rates and increasing obesity levels (among young people) have challenged the Army to strategically deal with the changing societal norms,” according to the budget document.

Service officials also told lawmakers that the implementation of upgraded test score norms “may impact quality achievement in the future as enlistment standards will increase.”

The Army uses enlistment bonuses of up to \$40,000 to attract applicants for specialties that are difficult to fill with qualified recruits, such as intelligence, health services, communications and electronics, administration, air defense and field artillery.

About 44,000 recruits are expected to receive bonuses this year, and another 45,000 in 2017, according to the budget materials. These totals are considerably higher than the 32,000 new bonus contracts issued in 2015 when 15,000 young people enlisted for the Regular Army.

Federal law allows the Army to pay up to \$40,000 for enlistments, with payments spread over the life of the enlistment.

Army policy authorizes up to \$10,000 to be paid initially in a lump sum after a soldier has completed basic training and initial skill training. Soldiers who are eligible for a bonus of more than \$10,000 receive anniversary payments in equal installments over the remaining years of the enlistment.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2016/02/23/army-recruiting-market-tightens-but-service-expects-make-2016-goal/80624982/>



## 6. Marines' early out options dwindle as the drawdown ends

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

Marines hoping to take advantage of early exit opportunities this year had better act fast.

After years of drawing down troop levels, the Marine Corps is on track to meet its authorized end strength of 182,000 by the end of September, about a year sooner than expected. As the service closes in on its goal, the sun is setting on early out programs.

“As a result of achieving our target end strength, the use of many of our force-shaping measures has been suspended,” said Col. Gaines Ward, head of Manpower and Reserve Affairs' plans, programs and budget branch.

Enlisted retention opportunities are increasing, but not everyone is out of the woods. Personnel officials are assessing whether another retention board is needed for staff sergeants twice passed over for promotion to gunny. An annual board was initiated in 2014, and in the past two years, 314 out of 1,061 eligible Marines were denied further service by the board.

Career designation for officers has returned to an optimum 85 percent (from a low of 55 percent). Personnel officials also expect promotion opportunities gradually to increase to desired goals over the next few years.

For officers, the following programs have been suspended:

- Eight-years commissioned service waiver. This 2011 change allowed retirement-eligible, prior enlisted officers to retire after eight, rather than 10, years of commissioned service.
- Time-in-grade waiver. This program allowed selected officers to leave the service prior to fulfilling service obligations incurred when they accepted promotion.
- Company Grade Early Out Program. This allowed company grade officers to end their active service up to one year early in exchange for two years' service in the Reserve.
- Selective Early Retirement Board. The Corps established this board to help correct imbalances and strength overages among regular unrestricted colonels and lieutenant colonels. In recent years, the board forced about two dozen officers at each rank into early retirement.
- Officer Voluntary Early Release Program. Marines approved for this program were allowed to separate up to 180 days early. Though authorized through Sept. 30, 2016, the program was shut down last summer.

Enlisted Marines will have at least one more shot at the Voluntary Enlisted Early Release Program, or VEERP. The Corps will announce details in July or August, Ward said. VEERP does not offer a financial incentive. On average, Marines leave the service about four months early under the program, which is typically used by Marines who do not have enough time left on their contract to deploy and choose not to extend.

The Voluntary Separation Pay Program is suspended for officers and enlisted. This mainstay of the drawdown offered six-digit payouts for Marines with six to 20 years of service. Though the list fluctuated, it usually included about 70 eligible military occupational specialties.

Marines looking for an early out can still get some cash through the Temporary Early Retirement Authority, or TERA. The Corps is mainly using the program for MOS/grade shaping, officials said, so it is restricted to specific grades and MOSs. It also serves as a beneficial tool to offer twice-passed majors and staff sergeants retirement benefits, with a reduced pension based on years of service. The program has congressional approval through 2018.

While the end of the drawdown means Marines who desire to stay in uniform will have an easier time, re-up is no guarantee. Ward encouraged Marines to submit a re-enlistment package for their MOS, or consider a lateral move into a high-demand/low-density MOS.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2016/02/23/marines-early-out-options-dwindle-drawdown-ends/80279848/>



## 7. Bigger budget, more personnel ahead for Coast Guard

(24 Feb) *Military Times*, By *Meghann Myers*

More than any other military branch, the Coast Guard has a reputation for having to do more with less — 11 statutory missions from search and rescue to fishing inspection, with a fleet of more than 40-year-old ships, about 40,000 active-duty personnel and just above \$10 billion. That's about 6 percent of the Navy Department's 2017 budget request.

But the Coast Guard is doing a victory lap this year.

Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft is celebrating this as the service's largest acquisition budget in history, as the service moves to build more ice breakers and the offshore patrol cutter.

"In the past, you have heard the Coast Guard compared to a dull knife," Zukunft said in Tuesday in his annual State of the Coast Guard address, adding that \$1.5 billion in 2016 acquisition funds and the promise of a new heavy icebreaker in the president's 2017 budget will sharpen the edge.

A new maternity leave policy, more career sea pay and a plussed-up force are also on the table this year and next, he said.

"Yes, the state of the Coast Guard remains *Semper Paratus* — always ready to guard the homeland, protect our environment, facilitate maritime commerce, save those in peril on the sea and attack transnational criminal organizations that attempt to exploit the maritime domain," Zukunft said.

Those budget boosts will allow the Coast Guard to continue carrying out the commandant's strategies for the Arctic, Western Hemisphere, cyber and energy security.

Last year, Zukunft said, the service seized more than 190 metric tons of cocaine and detained more than 700 smugglers.

"I was aboard Coast Guard cutter *Stratton* this past August when they offloaded 32 metric tons of cocaine in San Diego," he recalled. "Not to be outdone, her sister ship Coast Guard cutter *Bertholf*, which is deployed again as I speak, interdicted 22 metric tons of cocaine to include an eight metric-ton seizure — the largest ever from a self-propelled, semi-submersible."

In the Arctic, the cutter *Healy* led a North Pole mission for scientific research last summer, the first of its kind for a U.S. ship. Meanwhile, the cutter *Waesche* monitored offshore drilling in the Arctic's Chukchi Sea, and *Polar Star* completed its third consecutive winter in Antarctica for Operation Deep Freeze.

"I am grateful for the president's ardent support and his call for heavy icebreakers to ensure the United States maintains year-round access to the strategic polar regions," Zukunft said.

Addressing Coast Guardsmen directly, the commandant listed a series of initiatives aimed at improving morale.

"At the service level, you are already seeing assignment policy changes to improve geographic stability, expanded maternity leave, rebalanced sea pay and a continued emphasis on our sexual assault prevention and response campaign," he said.

In January, the service announced it would double maternity leave from six to 12 weeks.

And next year, a new sea duty pay chart takes effect. These payout rates are divided by type of command, paygrade and time. For example, an E-5 with six years at sea on high endurance cutters will receive \$525 in sea pay.

"And at the individual level, we're going to overhaul tuition assistance, institutionalize a continuum of leadership development among our enlisted, officer and civilian workforce and provide occupational credentialing for our servicemembers that translate to educational and qualification equivalences in the private sector," Zukunft said.

He also hinted that the service, notoriously small and with an unrivaled 90-plus percent retention rate, is looking to beef up. The service's 2015 authorization act requires manpower leadership to formally establish a needed force size, and Zukunft suggested the "Jaws" strategy.

"Looking at the challenges we're facing in the world today: ladies and gentlemen, you're going to need a bigger Coast Guard," he said.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/24/bigger-budget-more-troops-ahead-coast-guard/80846656/>

## **8. Funded law school available to lieutenants, captains**

*(25 Feb) Army Times, By Jim Tice*

A scholarship program that allows up to 25 junior officers to attend law school on the Army's dime is available to qualified applicants this year.

Selections for the 2016 Funded Legal Education Program will be made by a board that meets in early December.

Selected officers will be detailed to the Judge Advocate General's Corps before attending law school, and will remain detailed to the JAGC for a one-year evaluation of qualifications before permanent assignment to the corps.

Officers incur an active-duty service obligation of two years for every year of law school.

The 2016 FLEP is limited to Regular Army lieutenants and captains of the Army Competitive Category and Army Medical Department career branches who:

- Are U.S. citizens, and who hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, and who at the beginning of law school will have at least two, but not more than six, years of active duty, including any time served as a warrant officer or enlisted soldier.
- Have been granted a secret security clearance, or higher.

Application packets should be prepared in accordance with instructions contained in MilPer Message 16-053, dated Feb. 17. Applications must be received at the JAGC personnel office and the Human Resources Command no earlier than Aug. 1, and no later than Nov. 1.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/officer/2016/02/25/funded-law-school-available-lieutenants-captains/80922662/>

## **9. Judge in 9/11 case receives new motion regarding female guards**

*(22 Feb) Military Times, By Celena Chong*

A defense lawyer for the self-proclaimed architect of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. urged a military judge on Monday to allow testimony by a witness who will say that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and other alleged ringleaders were subjected to handling by female guards that caused psychological trauma and violated their Muslim beliefs.

Attorney David Nevin made a motion asking that Army Judge Col. James Pohl allow Dr. Pablo Stewart to testify about the health consequences to Mohammed and the other defendants of "sexualized torture and naked touching by women" at CIA black sites.

At a previous hearing, Pohl had issued a controversial order barring female guards from transporting the suspects. But he had denied testimony from additional witnesses. The defense motion asks him to reconsider that decision.

The U.S. Military Commission pre-trial hearing for the five alleged organizers of the 9/11 attacks, held at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, was simulcast at this Army post outside Washington.

Nevin called the use of female guards at the high security Camp 7 on Guantanamo an unnecessary "intent to punish," not allowed under the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution.

"You want me to restrict a female MP [from her post] simply because she's female?" Pohl asked.

“That’s not my complete or correct statement,” Nevin said.

Bob Swann, the chief prosecutor, opposed Nevin’s motion, saying that the topic has already been discussed extensively.

But Nevin said that a line in the written standard operating procedures — “the close contact with unrelated females is inappropriate” — was deleted right before female guards were used. Nevin wanted an explanation as to why the language was deleted and whether it was lawful.

“I’m not asking for [a procedures] change; I’m trying to get at the fact of why the change was made,” Nevin said.

Other defense team lawyers argued against censoring transcripts of an Oct. 30 open hearing related to the guard situation. Some portions of the transcripts were blacked out after being made public for a short time. In that hearing, some military witnesses testified about forced-cell extraction, a forceful method in which the guards coercively remove detainees from their cells.

More than a dozen media organizations have filed a motion to lift the classified status of the redacted material. Guantanamo prosecutors offered no reason for the redactions or who was responsible for making them.

Walid bin Attash, who last week vowed to skip the proceedings unless his lawyers are removed from the case, was conspicuously absent from the courtroom. The other four defendants, Ramzi bin al Shibh, Ammar al Baluchi, Mustafa al Hawsawi and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, were present.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/22/judge-911-case-receives-new-motion-regarding-female-guards/80774046/>

## **10. Why We Still Need the Draft**

*(23 Feb) War on the Rocks, By David Barno and Nora Bensahel*

The recent political fracas over women and the draft is making headlines around the country and has become a campaign issue in the Republican presidential primaries. But this debate raises even more profound questions about the need for — and value of — the draft more broadly. Put simply, Selective Service is the only remaining thread in American society that ties all U.S. citizens to their military. It links the American people to the nation’s wars, and the risks of military service in those wars, through the fundamental responsibility of defending the country when needed. It also continues to serve an often-overlooked but nevertheless important role in protecting American security.

Many Americans are questioning whether the draft remains relevant in the 21st century. Today’s U.S. military is widely considered the most advanced, the most powerful, the best-led, and the most capable military in the world. The all-volunteer force has proved both successful and resilient since it was established in 1973, to include the harshest test thus far of its capabilities — the last 15 years of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite the stresses of repeated deployments to highly demanding combat environments, it remained largely well disciplined and effective. Some members of Congress believe that this remarkable performance means that the United States should abolish the draft. Rep. Mike Coffman (R-Colo.), who recently co-sponsored a bill that would do exactly that, explained his position by saying that the “all-volunteer military has given us the most elite fighting force in the history of the country.”

But those who see the draft as an ineffective or irrelevant artifact of the past are wrong. Three myths dominate their thinking.

*We will never again need a draft. Why are we even having this conversation?* No one can predict the future of war. As former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates once quipped, since the Vietnam War, the United States has a perfect record of predicting the next war: “we have never once gotten it right.” As we wrote last month, the U.S. military must remain prepared to fight a really big war that might require a much larger force — which could well require a draft. Even though that scenario remains unlikely, the consequences of being unable to wage such a war could prove disastrous. The Selective Service System also helps serve as a deterrent and a symbol of national will. Deterrence is not only a function of current power; it also includes the nation’s potential power when galvanized — military, economic, diplomatic, and even social. Maintaining the mechanism to implement conscription means that in times of crisis, the United States can send an indisputable signal of national resolve by choosing to start a draft, even one of modest size.

*Draftees dilute the quality of the force and diminish military effectiveness.* This inaccurate perspective is a clear legacy of Vietnam. By the end of that war, the U.S. military was plagued by drug abuse, racial tensions, and serious indiscipline. Many military personnel equate these maladies with conscription — despite the fact that as one of us can personally attest, these problems also plagued much of the first decade of the all-volunteer force. The military’s experience with large draft armies in 1917, 1941 and 1953 further

demonstrates that this perspective is simply wrong. Draftees performed remarkably well during those wartime periods, perhaps because they were serving in conflicts widely supported by the American people. We now refer to the draftees who served in World War II as “The Greatest Generation.” There is no reason to expect that would automatically be any different in the future. And even though only 29 percent of those recently surveyed said that the United States should have a military draft, public opinion could shift quickly — especially in the aftermath of an attack on the United States (terrorist or otherwise) that were to kill tens or even hundreds of thousands of Americans (let alone millions).

*Wars are way too complicated today for anyone but long-serving professionals. Draftees will be useless or worse, disruptive.* Conscription in the future could look very different than the draft calls of Vietnam or Korea, which were designed to provide more infantrymen for the fight. The changing shape of future wars may require conscripting the nation’s best experts at code writing, hacking, and cyber security to rapidly build a world-class cadre of cyber warriors. There might be an immediate need to put financial experts and market analysts into uniform to help protect the nation from potentially disruptive economic warfare. Or the military might need to mobilize social media gurus who can help understand and then undercut the insidious messaging of highly sophisticated adversaries aiming to inflame and radicalize populations at home and abroad. These targeted conscripts might also be drafted to be reservists, splitting time between uniformed and civilian jobs and leveraging skills from both. This 21st-century, cutting-edge human capital is unlikely to be found in today’s military — yet may prove crucial in a future major war.

These points show that the draft has both a current and future practical role in the nation’s defense. Abolishing Selective Service would strip an important arrow from the quiver of American defenses. The prospect of a future draft — even a modest, targeted one — serves as a quiet but important hedge against an unknowable future filled with ever-changing threats to the nation. The United States must always retain an emergency way to respond to existential threats, and if necessary, mobilize parts or all of society in response.

Yet there is an even more profound reason to maintain the Selective Service system: It plays a very important role in linking the American people to military service. Without the possibility of a draft, however remote, the American people will never again have any personal exposure, no intimate skin in the game in the weighty national decision to go to war.

The gap between the American people and their military is growing ever larger, which is the less talked-about downside to the success of the all-volunteer force. Relying on self-selected volunteers to carry the nation’s burden of going to war has slowly become an accepted norm, somewhat like the roles of firefighters and police. Most Americans believe it is perfectly acceptable for those who volunteer to fight for the nation to do so — others need not concern themselves, and don’t. They have effectively outsourced war to others — the sons and daughters of military families, rural youngsters from the south and west, high school students looking toward generous G.I. Bill benefits — all volunteers admirably wanting to serve their country.

But this outlook is deeply unhealthy for the nation. It is morally wrong to shift the nation’s only exposure to large-scale mortal risk in defending our society onto only a handful of fellow citizens. That responsibility belongs to all of us. It is a fundamental tenet of the American experiment in democracy that all citizens share the burdens of defending the nation in times of crisis. We let that long-held touchstone of American citizenship disappear at great risk. Once gone, the will and ability to mobilize the larger nation to fight — even when necessary — would be immensely hard to resurrect, both practically and philosophically.

Selective Service preserves a slender thread connecting the American people to the force of arms, to society’s momentous and always-deadly decision to go to war. Maintaining mechanisms for a draft also provides a strategic “shock absorber” so that the country can mobilize parts or all of society in an existential crisis. Absent the possibility of a draft, Americans will grow ever more distant from the military, from the debates by their elected leaders on the use of force, from the need to think about America’s changing role in a dangerous world, and most importantly, from personally sharing the risks of war. The distance today between those who fight and those who ultimately send them to war has grown substantially in the last decade and a half. Maintaining Selective Service is a small but important way to ensure it grows no wider.

<http://warontherocks.com/2016/02/why-we-still-need-the-draft/>

## **11. Trainers hope for revisions to Army fitness test**

*(24 Feb) Stars and Stripes, By Seth Robson*

Strength, power and agility drills will be part of revised Army physical fitness tests if the service’s top trainers get their way.

New job-specific, gender-neutral fitness tests could be “good to go by June,” acting Army Secretary Patrick Murphy told the Army Times this month, although the Defense Department must approve the changes.

Soldiers must take the test yearly and score at least 60 points out of a possible 100 in each component. Test scores, which take age and gender into account, are awarded based on run times and sit-up and push-up repetitions. Test failures can result in a soldier being discharged from the Army for unsatisfactory performance. Scores can also affect a soldier's promotion chances.

Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Barner, 35, one of four master fitness trainers from Fort Jackson, S.C., came to Japan this month to share his training skills with soldiers here. He said that while endurance is only one component of physical fitness, it is the main focus of the Army Physical Fitness Test, which rates troops based on two-mile run times and the number of sit-ups and **push-ups** they can complete in two minutes.

"Soldiers train for [the test] but don't train for other factors that would help in combat," said Barner, an Erie, Pa., native who deployed multiple times to Iraq and Afghanistan as an aircraft mechanic before becoming a fitness trainer.

"In combat, you need strength because you are wearing a full combat load and possibly a rucksack," he said. "Clearing a room, you might have to get up and down. In a firefight, you might need to sprint. You need a lot of core strength, but you aren't running five miles."

A better test would look at a soldier's power, strength, anaerobic endurance and agility, Barner said. "A lot of people want [a new test] to happen," he said.

If and when change comes, the master fitness trainers plan to be ready.

At Camp Zama, headquarters of U.S. Army Japan, Barner and his team conducted a two-week course, training three dozen soldiers to become master fitness trainers who will be responsible for mentoring their units and advising commanders on physical fitness issues.

The trainers showed the Zama soldiers how to run assessments that are very different from the Army Physical Fitness Test.

"We look at soldiers' 10-rep maxes for bench, squats and deadlift to test strength," Barner said. "We also make them do the broad jump to test power, and we have a 'T-test' where soldiers run forward, backward and side to side between cones to test agility."

They also test soldiers' anaerobic endurance by having them run two 300-yard sprints five minutes apart and calculate their average time. The troops also climb a 30-foot rope — something that every soldier should be able to do in combat, Barner said.

"Most soldiers can do these activities, but not many are maxing them out," he said. "People who get 300 points on the Army Physical Fitness Test only score average on our test."

Strength, power and agility are the sort of things master fitness trainers already incorporate in programs they design to get soldiers in shape for combat tasks, Barner said.

"It's geared towards getting soldiers to their peak fitness right before deployment," he said.

The Zama troops taking the master fitness trainer course this month performed well on the Army Physical Fitness Test. A typical master fitness trainer can run two miles in 15 minutes, complete 60 sit-ups in two minutes and a similar number of **push-ups** in the same time, although female soldiers get a little more leeway on the **push-ups**, Barner said.

Sgt. Andrew Dixon, a Zama soldier from Brooklyn, N.Y., looked like he had pushed himself to his limit during a timed two-lap swim in the base pool last Wednesday.

"I'm not a keen swimmer," he said after emerging from the water exhausted. "I was trying for a good time and didn't use proper form."

Dixon, who installs communications gear for U.S. Army Japan, will head up physical training for a handful of other soldiers in his unit now that he's a master fitness trainer. He said he appreciates the new tools he picked up during the course.

"Plenty of soldiers are focused on getting their physical training out of the way in the morning rather than trying to improve," he said. "If they understand how they can progress by doing things properly, they will be more interested."

Another Zama soldier, Capt. Elizabeth Marlin, 31, of North Little Rock, Ark., said she will help oversee physical training for a dozen soldiers, both enlisted and officers, in the U.S. Army Japan intelligence section.

Marlin said she supports a move away from the focus on endurance in physical training.

"It's not just run, run, run like the old Army, which is why a lot of our senior soldiers are hurt," she said.

Marlin also supports a common standard for male and female soldiers but doesn't think there's too much wrong with the Army Physical Fitness Test as it stands.

"If you can max your run you will do pretty well at other events, but if you can only lift weights and not run, that's going to be a problem," she said.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/trainers-hope-for-revisions-to-army-fitness-test-1.395597>

## **12. No more skirts: Female midshipmen to wear trousers at Naval Academy graduation**

*(24 Feb) Capital Gazette, By Christina Jedra*

Since 1980, the proportion of skirts to trousers at Naval Academy graduations has gradually increased, showing the rising number of female graduates.

This year, there will be no skirts or heeled shoes. Female midshipmen will wear uniforms identical to their male counterparts: slacks, chokers and flat dress shoes.

Commandant Stephen Liszewski announced the policy change Monday to midshipmen graduating this May, said academy spokesman Cmdr. John Schofield. The decision was made by academy leadership in coordination with the Department of the Navy.

"Uniformity is at the heart of the team concept that we espouse so much," Schofield said.

The policy change affects only graduation; female midshipmen may still wear skirts for other occasions. Schofield said female mids should already have the garments required for this year's ceremony and will not need to buy anything new.

This year — the 40th anniversary of the integration of women at the academy — women make up more than 25 percent of the officers in training, school officials said.

Schofield said the graduation ceremony will be similar to parades in which all midshipmen dress uniformly.

"The graduation ceremony is not about individuals," he said. "The graduation ceremony is about the Naval Academy writ large, the importance of uniformity, the team and our traditions."

This uniform change follows other efforts by the Navy to pursue gender neutrality. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus requested a review last month of title changes throughout the service to make names "gender-integrated." Officials said the rank of midshipman is under review but unlikely to be changed. In October, Mabus announced the introduction of unisex covers, or hats.

Academy-based users of the anonymous commenting app Yik Yak posted mixed feelings about the change.

"I'm a man, and I don't see why women shouldn't be allowed to wear a skirt at graduation," one user posted.

Another commenter wrote that uniform changes happen regularly and are benign.

"Skirts or pants, we are still going to be graduating in 94 days," the person said.

Another said: "Bikinis for graduation!"

One user wrote: "It really isn't just about uniform standards. I want equality of respect for our character. The misconceived notion is

that women must wear a tailored male uniform to receive that respect."

In a Facebook group for academy parents, a meme was posted of a skirt-wearing midshipman's legs, crossed and bare among mids in white slacks. The text reads: SAVE THE SKIRTS.

Regarding pushback to the change, Schofield said it is the duty of service members to follow orders.

"There are uniform policies enforced and employed every day, and it is our job as members of the military to comply with policy," he said.

[http://www.capitalgazette.com/news/naval\\_academy/ph-ac-cn-naval-academy-skirts-0224-20160224-story.html](http://www.capitalgazette.com/news/naval_academy/ph-ac-cn-naval-academy-skirts-0224-20160224-story.html)

### **13. Marines roll out tougher initial strength test for poolees**

*(24 Feb) Marine Corps Times, By Jeff Schogol*

Male and female poolees interested in taking combat-related jobs face a tougher initial strength test.

Since Jan. 1, poolees who have indicated they want to train to become infantrymen, Recon Marines, combat engineers and the Marine Corps' other most demanding military occupational specialties have been required to pass MOS-specific standards.

The new initial strength test requires poolees to complete three pullups, a 1.5-mile run within 13 minutes and 30 seconds, 44 crunches within two minutes and 45 ammo-can lifts within two minutes before they can ship to boot camp.

Poolees not training for load-bearing MOSs have to pass a different initial strength test that requires men to do two pullups and women to hold a flexed-arm hang for at least 12 seconds. Men have to complete a 1.5-mile run in 13 minutes and 30 seconds, women have 15 minutes. Both men and women must do 44 crunches in two minutes.

Most of the poolees eligible for the MOSs that require the new test have been men, but some women have also passed the test to train to for MOSs that now require the tougher test, said Maj. Garron Garn, a spokesman for Marine Corps Recruiting Command.

When Defense Secretary Ashton Carter approves the Marine Corps' gender integration plan, the service can begin contracting women into all of the MOSs that require the new test, Garn said.

One of Marine Corps Recruiting Command's tasks is to make sure all poolees improve their overall body strength while they are in the delayed entry program, regardless of the MOS for which they ultimately train, Garn said.

In order to make sure poolees are ready for recruit training, recruiting station commanders have the authority to require poolees to meet standards even higher than the new initial strength test, said Master Sgt. Bryce Piper, public affairs chief for Marine Corps Recruiting Command.

For example, a recruiting station commander can require poolees to do four pullups before leaving for recruit training in case they have a bad day when they arrive at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island or San Diego, Piper said.

"When newly arrived recruits take their Initial Strength Test at recruit training, they are in a state of culture shock and often still tired from travel," Piper said. "Knowing a recruit can do at least four pull ups helps ensure he or she gets the three required. Commanders cannot lower the standards below the minimum."

Staff Sgt. Diana Wallace is the staff NCO at Recruiting Substation Waldorf, Maryland. She said she has not seen any changes in the success rate for her poolees since the tougher initial strength test was adopted because she has always held all of her poolees to a higher standard.

"We don't just train to the minimum standards," Wallace told Marine Corps Times on Tuesday. "We have to build them up to actually endure the rigorous training of recruit training."

Wallace said she typically gives poolees an initial strength test within 48 hours of them contracting to join the Marine Corps. Then she



develops an individualized exercise and diet program for each poolee. If they want to join a combat arms MOS, she lets them know what progress they need to make in order to train for that job at recruit training.

“We have to make sure that they are physically and mentally prepared,” she said. “They are not going to go to recruit training for a MOS. They have to pass recruit training, go to Marine Corps Combat Training, School of Infantry before they can actually get that job assigned to them. My job is to train them up to that so they can come back a Marine after they’ve done 13 weeks of recruit training.”

Wallace said she makes sure that all of her male poolees and any female poolees assigned to an MOS that requires pullups can exceed the new initial strength training test’s pullup requirement.

“We train them before they leave the recruiting substation to get at least five to six pullups – male or female,” Wallace said. “We train them to push for 100 crunches within a two minute time frame and we train them to get below a 13 minute run time.”

The tougher initial strength test is not the only new hurdle. Recruits training for the most physically demanding MOSs also have to pass an MOS Classification Standard about eight weeks into training, for which they must complete six pullups; a three-mile run within 24 minutes and 51 seconds; 60 ammo-can lifts in two minutes; movement to contact within 3 minutes and 26 seconds; and maneuver under fire within 3 minutes and 12 seconds, officials said.

Both recruit depots expect to implement the MCS by the end of March, said 1st Lt. Matt Rojo, a spokesman for Training and Education Command.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2016/02/23/marines-roll-out-tougher-initial-strength-test-pooles/80810536/>

## **14. Minneapolis woman becomes first female general in Minnesota National Guard**

*(24 Feb) Fox 9 News*

Minneapolis native Air Force Col. Sandra L. Best will become the first female general in the Minnesota National Guard when she receives her promotion Thursday.

Best joined the 133rd Airlift Wing of the Minnesota Air National Guard in 1984 and progressed through the ranks to technical sergeant. She was commissioned in 1991 and was deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2008.

Best will be promoted to brigadier general during a ceremony on Thursday. She will be the first woman to ever achieve that rank in the Minnesota National Guard.

"I congratulate Colonel Sandra L. Best for her well-deserved promotion to the rank of Brigadier General," Governor Mark Dayton said in a statement. "Colonel Best has proven her deep commitment to our state and country through her many years of dedicated service in the Minnesota National Guard. Her accomplishments as a leader in our Armed Forces should be celebrated by all Minnesotans."

With her promotion, Best will serve as the chief of staff for the Minnesota Air National Guard and be responsible for overseeing the 133rd Airlift Wing and 148th Fighter Wing.

<http://www.fox9.com/news/96788774-story>

## **15. Army to roll out better body armor, combat shirt in 2019**

*(25 Feb) Army Times, By Kyle Jahner*

In 2019 the Army expects to roll out a new, lighter body armor system. The armor will provide at least as much protection as today's system, but with more comfort, and greater flexibility to adjust based on the mission, Army officials said.

The Torso and Extremities Protection, or TEP, program cleared the engineering and development phases last summer, and will move into a few years of limited production and testing. During that time and beyond, technology advances may be integrated.

Already, improved ballistics materials have allowed the Army to cut the weight of TEP, when compared to the Army's current heavy-duty option, the Improved Outer Tactical Vest. The IOTV, when loaded with heavy plates, weighs about 31 pounds, while a comparable TEP system checks in at about 23 pounds, or 26 percent lighter.

“That’s the main mantra of this program: to be the next generation of body armor at a lighter weight,” said Lt. Col. Kathy Brown, the product manager for Soldier Protective Equipment at Program Executive Office Soldier.

Brown said the Army pushed with industry to reduce weight while meeting future threats. In addition, the ability to add and subtract different elements and plate inserts in the vest, is a real "highlight," Brown said. In addition to TEP, the Army is developing new body armor plates and a new head protection system.

Soldier feedback has already played a major role in development of TEP, Brown said. Trials by soldiers at three different installation, as well as by Marines and special operations units, provided design advice and feedback. Brown said that ultimately helped produce a system earning a 95 percent positive feedback.

“One great aspect of the Soldier Protection System is we really listened to the voice of the customer, the soldier,” Brown said. “Based on feedback from the soldier we were able to make design changes.”

**Ballistic Combat Shirt:** Designed to be worn with a ballistic vest, the shirt consists of protection on the upper back, upper chest and neck, while completely covering the arms with ballistic-protective sleeves. The material has a similar feel to the Army combat shirt, but is more comfortable and offers ballistic fragmentation protection, Brown said. It also eliminates the need for the Deltoid Auxiliary Protector, an add-on to the IOTV which has driven soldier complaints for being bulky and obstructive. The shirt is moisture-wicking and has a degree of breathability, Brown said, adding to comfort.

“Soldiers really liked the Ballistic Combat Shirt because they felt they had the full range of motion to be able to get into a shooters stance, and also to be able to fit their weapon in the shoulder area,” said Brown. “The biggest revolutionary change (in the system) is with the Ballistic Combat Shirt which provides the same level of protection as the DAP and the yoke and collar (of the IOTV).”

**Modular Scalable Vest:** The Army developed a Soldier Plate Carrier System during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to offer a nimbler alternative to IOTV. The MSV is similar to the SPCS: old plates will work, as will new plates being developed to offer a variety of levels of protection and fits. It features a quick-release system for easy removal. And again, the MSV’s ballistic material offers similar protection at a lighter weight, as do the various optional plate inserts. In addition, the design is now a fully-government-owned program of record, whereas the SPCS was generated by an operational needs statement (a quick fix to address a newly-emerged need). That matters because future technology advancements can be more easily incorporated by the Army as production continues, Brown said.

**Blast Pelvic Protector:** The new protection for the pelvis and femoral arteries will replace two current protective items: an undergarment and an over-garment. Brown said soldiers like how the simplified protector connects to the system and fits the body’s form, and she said feedback also indicated improved mobility.

**Load Distribution System:** With weight cut by advanced materials, Brown said, the Army managed to add a new element while cutting weight overall – one that distributes remaining weight more comfortably. The LDS consists of a ballistic combat belt that flows underneath the vest and a load-bearing spine that distributes weight to the waist rather than putting it all on the shoulders.

**Plates:** The Army is developing new inserts in parallel with TEP, and have also been cleared for development. The hard plates are coming in at about 7 percent lighter than their current protection equivalents, Brown said. The options provide modularity in strength and weight for different missions and fit for different bodies, including two new plates tailored to female body types. As with the ballistic material on the vest and shirt, Brown said the Army didn’t want to get specific on the threshold of munitions that each plate protects against. She did say that, fully loaded, the plates and vest “are able to defeat the most prevalent threats on the battlefield” and compared to IOTV offered “no degradation of performance, only enhancement.”

**Integrated Head Protection System:** The new helmet the Army has been working on for about three years will not clear the research and development milestone until late 2016. The PEO Soldier portfolio outlines objectives including protection against rifle threats and improved impact/blast protection over the current helmet at a slightly lighter weight. It should also be modular for possible add-ons like night vision, eye and mandibular (jaw) protection and an additional layer of armor for even more blast/ballistic resistance, among other attachments.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/tech/2016/02/23/army-roll-out-better-body-armor-combat-shirt-2019/80579300/>

## 16. Marine Corps promotes female officer's 'no nonsense' pullup plan

(25 Feb) Marine Corps Times, By Jeff Schogol

Marine Maj. Misty Posey is confident that she has a fitness training plan that can help everyone in the Corps master pullups.

The Marine Corps released Posey's tips — coined "zero to 20-plus" — in a Thursday service-wide message.

"It does not take months and months and months to learn a pullup; it does not take a year or two to learn a pullup — it's nonsense," Posey said in a [video](#) posted on the Marine Corps' official website. "I haven't met someone yet that I haven't been able to train to do a pullup."

Posey developed the plan to show female Marines the right way to train for the upper-body exercise. It caught the attention of Commandant Gen. Robert Neller during a Feb. 12 town hall with Marines in Virginia when a woman shared her pullups success story after trying the plan.

Posey has written several how-to guides on pullup training that are now online: [The secret to pull-ups: How to go from 0 to 20](#); [Pull-up training program novice](#); [Pull-up Workouts](#); and [Pull-up Training Guide](#).

"If you are struggling with either learning or improving your pullups, the main takeaway would be that you're stronger than you think," Posey said in the video. "You can absolutely learn and improve pullups in a relatively short period of time. You just need the right tools."

Posey advises both male and female Marines to practice doing pullups between three and five times per day, no less than three times each week. Rather than maxing out each set, Posey does "ladders," each of which are one-third of the maximum number of pullups she can do.

"The way you get good at pullups is to do a lot of pullups — you don't have to tear your muscles down, make them sore and make them bigger to get pullups," Posey told Marine Corps Times after the commandant's town hall. "You just have to train the motor patterns. Your central nervous system needs that constant repetition."

At 4 feet, 10 inches tall, Posey learned how to do pullups so she could hoist herself over obstacles while training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego as part of her university's Reserve Officer Training Corps program, she said.

As things now stand, the Marine Corps expects that at least those women who want to train for the service's most physically demanding military occupational specialties will be required to do pullups — first as poolees, then at recruit training and beyond.

The Marine Corps expects Defense Secretary Ashton Carter to approve the service's gender integration plan by April 1, said Lt. Col. Eric Dent, a spokesman for Neller.

Once that plan is approved, Marine Corps Recruiting Command is prepared to contract and ship women to boot camp for training in MOSs that had been restricted to men only, said MCRC spokesman Maj. Garron Garn.

Meanwhile, Neller has ordered a review of physical fitness and body composition standards that is due to be complete by July 1. The review will look at a wide variety of issues, including whether both male and female Marines are doing the right exercises and how body fat is measured.

The review was prompted in part by discussions Neller had with female Marines about height and weight standards, Neller told Marine Corps Times.

"They were saying, 'Hey I have been working out and doing pullups and I am over my weight for my height; when are you going to make a decision on whether women do pullups or not?' Or, 'I can get this [physical fitness test] score, but I am still above my weight for height,'" Neller said in a Jan. 20 interview.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2016/02/25/marines-share-pullup-advice-helps-women-succeed/80957304/>

## 17. Updated Department of the Navy Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement Released

(25 Feb) DoD Live, By Navy News

A diverse and inclusive workforce has never been more important to the Department of the Navy's success. We are stronger, more effective, and more innovative when our workforce reflects our Nation's rich diversity and our workplace environment fosters respect, dignity, and equal opportunity.

Our Nation always faces new challenges and threats in an increasingly complex world. We must attract the best people from the full spectrum of talent our Nation has to offer in order to remain the finest fighting force the world has ever known. Recruiting, retaining, and promoting top performers is a readiness imperative. Organizations that embrace myriad backgrounds and perspectives will attract the best talent and remain ready.

A diverse Department fosters creativity and fuels innovation. Since 2010, we've removed restrictions under Don't Ask, Don't Tell and the Combat Exclusion Policy for Women that unduly limited service. Additionally, we continue to lean forward as we review policy options to maximize the opportunity for all who desire to serve our Nation.

*"Inherent in our Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment is the fact that we embrace diversity. As we build our force, we must continue to cultivate an engaged, inclusive, and innovative work environment guided by our Core Values. This environment will empower and encourage each of our Sailors, Marines, Civilians, and Contractor personnel and will ensure that the Department of the Navy continues to grow ever stronger."*

*"We are one Navy Team – comprised of a diverse mix of active duty and reserve Sailors, Navy civilians, and our families – with a history of service, sacrifice and success. We will build on this history to create a climate of operational excellence that will keep us ready to prevail in all future challenges."*

[Adm. John M. Richardson](#)  
Chief of Naval Operations

*"The Marines of our Corps represent the American people who we have sworn to defend and protect. Through our recruiting, training, education, and retention of superb, talented, and committed men and women, we will enhance the quality and diversity of our Corps, and ensure that we maintain our ability to remain the Nation's pre-eminent force-in-readiness. We will achieve the right balance across our Operating Forces, headquarters structures, key enablers, external assignments, and supporting establishment to generate a force capable of warfighting across all five domains."*

[General Robert B. Neller](#)  
37th Commandant of the Marine Corps

<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2016/02/25/updated-department-of-the-navy-diversity-and-inclusion-policy-statement-released/>

## 18. The Pentagon's 'Force of the Future' plan just got trashed in Congress

(25 Feb) Military Times, By Leo Shane III

Defense officials' hopes for sweeping personnel reforms were crushed by Senate Republicans on Thursday who attacked the ideas as "an outrageous waste of time" and the Pentagon's pick to implement them as unfit to serve.

Brad Carson, the nominee to serve as undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness for nearly 11 months, received blistering criticism from members of the Senate Armed Services Committee for his work over the past year on the Force of the Future plan, work aimed at updating the military's personnel system to better compete with civilian business benefits.

The 49-year-old former congressman and Iraq War veteran worked as the personnel office's acting head for most of 2015, becoming the public face for the reform plans. But senators accused him of presuming confirmation and failing to inform them about the proposed historic changes, many of which would require dramatic legislative changes.

"I find it deeply disturbing that you are proposing to add expensive fringe benefits allegedly aimed at retention during a time when we are asking 3,000 excellent Army captains to leave the service who would have otherwise chosen to remain on active duty," said Senate

Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz.

“This initiative has been an outrageous waste of official time and resources during a period of severe fiscal constraints. It illustrates the worst aspects of a bloated and inefficient defense organization.”

The Force of the Future plans initially included major changes to military pay, benefits and promotion schedules, with suggestions of midcareer sabbaticals and elimination of the up-or-out rank advancement rules.

But the ideas — championed by Defense Secretary Ash Carter over the last year — have been met with resistance among defense officials and lawmakers.

Carter last fall offered a watered-down version of the plan as a starting point, starting new personnel management systems to better match troops with desired job assignments and the creating of a new office to oversee efforts to attract top talent to the ranks.

He has promised to build on that work, and was across Capitol Hill on Thursday defending the Pentagon’s fiscal 2017 budget request as senators tore apart his longer-term defense proposals.

Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, questioned whether civilian corporation tactics can work in an environment where national security issues are paramount. Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, criticized efforts to make the military more “progressive” as off-base and unproductive.

For his part, Carson defended the proposals as an ongoing effort to prepare the military for the future, and to keep top talent from fleeing the services for higher-paying, more comfortable civilian posts.

But advancing that work will require his official confirmation into the personnel post, an assignment that appeared very much in doubt by the end of Thursday’s hearing.

McCain accused Carson of lying on several occasions in the hearing, and suggested his actions over the last year disqualified him for the post. Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., asked for a command climate assessment report of his office before any Senate action is taken, due to leadership complaints forwarded to his office.

No timeline has been offered for a full committee vote on Carson’s confirmation.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/25/senators-blast-personnel-reforms-nominee/80924888/>

## **19. Navy rolls back maternity leave from 18 to 12 weeks**

*(25 Feb) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers*

The Navy may be cutting six weeks from its maternity leave policy, but women who were pregnant by July or become pregnant by March 3 are still eligible for 18 weeks of leave, the service announced Thursday.

The Navy has put its new 12-week maternity leave policy into effect, slashing a third of the time allowed for women after an August policy change that had expanded the service’s policy to 18 weeks, DoD’s most generous. But Defense Secretary Ash Carter ordered all the services to adopt a standard 12-week policy in January.

Carter’s decision brings the military’s policy in line with private industry, where a paid three months off is standard after giving birth.

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.

Both policy changes are aimed at retaining women in their late-20s to mid-30s, who leave the Navy twice as often as their male peers.

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

The Air Force and Army had also been considering expanding their policies to 18 weeks.

As far as expanding paternity leave or time off for adoptive parents, the services continue to discuss the idea, which has to be approved by Congress.

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

Mabus' policy also would have allowed new mothers to spread their time off over the year following their child's birth, allowing more flexibility to switch off with a spouse's parental leave, for instance. The new rules require women to take all 12 weeks of maternity at once.

Women who become pregnant after March, according to [NAVADMIN 046/16](#), will be eligible for 84 working days of leave to be taken consecutively and immediately after giving birth.

Reservists may have their active-duty orders extended to cover the leave, as well. The date of pregnancy must be determined by a medical professional.

Women requesting leave should put in for both the maternity leave and additional maternity leave types in the Navy Standard Integration Personnel System, the message said.

While many women lauded the Navy's expansion of maternity leave last year, some pointed out that such a long time away from a command could affect assignment and promotion chances.

"It's nice, but I don't know anybody who could spend four months away from their job and still do well," said a helicopter pilot, who asked not to be named out of concern for her career.

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.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/25/navy-rolls-back-maternity-leave-18-12-weeks/80939818/>

## **20. Hawaii bills push for help for female veterans**

*(24 Feb) Associated Press*

Female veterans are one of the fastest growing homeless populations the nation, and state officials say it's no different in Hawaii.

But homelessness isn't the only issue female veterans are faced with, officials say. They also are confronted with high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, sexual assault and unemployment.

Hawaii lawmakers are pushing a bill to help provide more services to female veterans. The proposed law would create and fund a full-time counselor position in the Hawaii Office of Veterans Services with a focus on female veterans who served in active duty.

Hawaii Office of Veterans Services Director Ronald Han said he asked to fund this position in the division's supplemental budget request, but it wasn't approved.

Nationwide, over half of all female veterans receiving Department of Veteran Affairs health care have a disability or illness that occurred during service, according to the VA. Meanwhile, one in four women receiving VA health care — compared to one in 100 men — reported experiencing sexual assault or harassment during service, known as military assault trauma.

With the recent Department of Defense announcement to allow women in all front-line combat jobs, including infantry and special operations units, advocates say the need for services for female veterans will only grow. National data shows women are more likely to be raped by a male fellow soldier than killed in combat.

"They're a growing minority," said Ann Greenlee, Hawaii State Director for the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and

Training Service. “I would hope that in 10 or 20 years, we wouldn’t need the position because women wouldn’t be considered a minority.”

Greenlee served on the Hawaii Military Women’s Task Force, which found in 2013 that military women in Hawaii are disproportionately affected by sexual assault, unemployment and challenges to access health care and child care. The counselor position would also help inform women of available services and stay on top of national policy changes, she said.

“We found that, in general, female veterans were much less aware of their benefits and services available to them and much less likely to consider themselves eligible for those services,” Greenlee said.

Supporters of the bill say addressing female veterans’ issues in Hawaii is especially important because of the state’s large military population. Every branch of the military is located on the island of Oahu, which is also the headquarters of the United States Pacific Command.

Female veterans make up nearly 15 percent of the United States Armed Forces, and are expected to make up 10 percent of the veteran population by 2020. Nearly 13,000 female veterans live in Hawaii.

<http://www.staradvertiser.com/breaking-news/hawaii-bills-pushes-for-help-for-female-veterans/>