



DACOWITS: Articles of Interest 22 May 2015

WELLNESS

[Twice as many sex assault victims opting out](#)

(12 May) *Air Force Times*, By Stephen Losey

The number of Air Force sexual assault victims who declined to participate in the military justice process doubled last year.

[7 sailors headed to trial for sub Wyoming shower videos](#)

(12 May) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

Out of a dozen submariners originally suspected of trading videos of their female shipmates in a shower changing area last year, seven are headed to court-martial, according to charge sheets recently provided to Navy Times.

[Navy secretary proposes doubling maternity leave](#)

(13 May) *Associate Press*, By Brock Vergakis

In an effort to retain and recruit more talented women, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus unveiled a proposal Wednesday that calls for doubling to 12 weeks the amount of paid maternity leave that sailors and Marines can take.

[Military sexual assault claims: 1 in 20 lead to jail time](#)

(13 May) *Military Times*, By Andrew Tilghman

Last year, 6,131 service members reported a sexual assault. But only about 317 service members were court-martialed and sentenced to confinement as a result of a reported sexual assault. The dizzying details underlying that roughly 1-in-20 conviction-and-incarceration rate were buried in the latest annual military sexual assault report released May 1, which reveals how sexual assault complaints were handled by criminal investigators and commanders.

[April courts-martial results announced](#)

(14 May) *Navy Times*

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

[Alleged Female Airman Goes Off in Scathing Letter About Sexual Harassment Training](#)

(15 May) *The Blaze*, By Jonathon M. Seidl

The letter, posted on the blog John Q. Public under the pen name Kayce Hagen, excoriates the idea behind the training (known as the Sexual Assault Response Coordination program): “You made me a victim today, and I am nobody’s victim. I am an American Airman in the most powerful Air Force in the world, and you made me into a helpless whore.”

[Pentagon Faulted in Assault Cases](#) *(Link Requires Membership)*

(18 May) *The Wall Street Journal*, By Felicia Schwartz

Human Rights Watch finds reprisals common after reporting a sexual assault.

[Report: Retaliation against sex assault victims rampant](#)

(18 May) *Military Times*, By Stephen Losey

Human Rights Watch conducted interviews with sexual assault survivors across the military since October 2013. Many survivors said the retaliation they suffered — including bullying, isolation and damage to their careers — was actually worse than the assaults.

[Lawmakers Back Broader Access to Contraceptives for Women in the Military](#)

(19 May) *The New York Times*, By Robert Pear

“Reproductive health care is critical to the wellness and readiness of military women and therefore the overall force,” said the panel, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services.

[SECNAV: Different uniform styles segregate women](#)

(20 May) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has spent years ordering the Navy and Marine Corps to jettison female specific uniform styles as a way to ensure women don't feel apart from their male peers.

[Army releases results of April courts-martial](#)

(21 May) Army Times Staff Report

The Army on Monday released a summary report of 71 verdicts from April courts-martial.

[Birth Control Options May Expand Under Defense Bills](#)

(21 May) Military Times, By Patricia Kime

House and Senate legislators are moving toward widening contraception options available to service members and their families.

ASSIGNMENTS

[All-female Marine grunt team gets innovative during combat tests \(Part I\)](#)

(13 May) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hodge Seck

This is part one in a series on the Marine Corps' integrated task force.

[Mabus to push big changes to PT, career opportunities](#)

(13 May) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

[Navy Secretary Ray] Mabus plans to ease body fat restrictions, boost career flexibility, and push to recruit more women in the Navy and Marine Corps, while opening up the last billets that remain closed to them. Mabus has dedicated a big part of his tenure as secretary to integrating women into the fleet, from opening once closed billets to outfitting men and women in the same styles of uniforms.

[19 women washed out of Army Ranger School. That's actually a good thing.](#)

(13 May) The Washington Post, By Gayle Tzemach Lemmon

It means the Army stood by what Ranger School graduates and women soldiers alike have demanded: No one wanted any slack cut, and it wasn't.

[Marines take coed living in stride during experiment](#)

(14 May) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

Marines assigned to the task force's infantry and weapons elements lived side-by-side in one- and two-man tents — regardless of gender — the way a future integrated unit might expect to live during field training or downrange on a deployment.

[Flag Officer Assignment.](#) The Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert announced today the following assignment: Capt. Danelle M. Barrett, selected for the rank of rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as deputy director, operations, J-3, U.S. Cyber Command, Fort Meade, Maryland. Barrett is currently serving as chief of staff, Navy Cyber Force, Suffolk, Virginia.

[Admiral Says Navy's Goal is 25 Percent Women in Each Ship, Squadron](#)

(15 May) Stars and Stripes, By Wyatt Olson

The Navy is proceeding with its plan to increase the number of women in the service to 25 percent with a similar goal of attaining that ratio in each ship and squadron, the vice chief of naval operations said Thursday.

[Wanted: Tough, feminine soldiers](#)

(15 May) CNN, By Carol Costello

The Army is trying hard to recruit more women and potentially open all jobs to women.

[In Marines' gender study, discoveries but no decisions \(Part II\)](#)

(18 May) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

This is the second in a three-part series on the Marine Corps' gender integrated task force.

[The Army's all-women special ops teams show us how we'll win tomorrow's wars](#)

(19 May) The Washington Post, By Gayle Tzemach Lemmon

The military's Cultural Support Teams cemented the importance of putting women in forward-deployed military roles.

[379th ESFS female Airmen lend skills to SOCCENT](#)

(21 May) DVIDS

USSOCOM has recently been developing Female Engagement Teams (FETs) across the Middle East. When looking at the country of Qatar, they determined the 379th ESFS was a valuable and untapped resource.

EXTRA

[Navy Nurse Corps' Celebrates 107th Anniversary](#)

(12 May) *Pensacola News Journal*, By Marketta Davis

The Navy Nurse Corps has come a long way from the "Sacred Twenty" and today the Corps celebrates its 107th anniversary.

[Female veterans face woefully inadequate care](#)

(13 May) *The San Diego Union Tribune*, By Paul D. Eaton

Female veterans suffer post-traumatic stress disorder at twice the rate as male soldiers, and endure higher rates of joblessness and homelessness. And, because women tend to be caregivers themselves, they tend to postpone their own care in deference to the care they provide husbands, children and parents. Further complicating the female soldier's return from combat to civilian life is that an estimated one in five have suffered sexual trauma.

[Stop Calling Servicewomen Girls](#)

(14 May) *Task and Purpose*, By Ellen Haring

The way we refer to women matters, even if we don't realize it.

[Female aviator breaking ground in Afghanistan](#)

(16 May) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

When Capt. Lisa Becker deployed to Afghanistan, she didn't expect to fly Mi-17 helicopters alongside Afghan pilots.

[First female 4-star shares lessons in 'A Higher Standard'](#)

(19 May) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

Even though she came from a family with four generations of military service, retired Gen. Ann Dunwoody had no plans to put on the uniform. Dunwoody would end up serving almost 38 years as an Army officer and become the first woman to earn the rank of general in the U.S. military. In a new book, released April 28, Dunwoody chronicles her life, service and the leadership strategies she learned along the way.

Twice as many sex assault victims opting out

(12 May) *Air Force Times*, By Stephen Losey

The number of Air Force sexual assault victims who declined to participate in the military justice process doubled last year.

According to Air Force statistics in the Defense Department-wide Fiscal 2014 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, which was released May 1, 24 sexual assault victims opted out of the military justice process in fiscal 2012, and 23 declined in fiscal 2013. But that number shot up to 47 in fiscal 2014.

The number of Air Force victims who were eligible to participate in the military justice process last year — meaning their cases closed in 2014 and the military had jurisdiction over them — also increased, but not enough to completely account for the growth in victims declining to participate. The percentage of victims declining to participate was 6.7 percent in 2012, dropped to 5.6 percent in 2013, and spiked to 10.7 percent last year.

Sexual assault victims in the military have several options when they report what has happened to them. They can file a restricted report, where they choose to remain anonymous and to not launch an investigation at that time, but get access to medical and mental health care. Or they can file an unrestricted report, which launches an investigation and makes it possible to hold an offender accountable.

But after beginning the unrestricted process, victims can later decide to drop out of the military justice process. They may have several reasons for doing so. Some may have grown tired

of pursuing the case after it dragged on. Some may have feared or experienced retaliation. Some may have found closure in other ways.

Maj. Gen. Gina Grosso, director of the Air Force's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, said in a May 5 interview that she is not sure why more victims opted out.

"It's hard to know if that's good or bad," Grosso said. "Victims have choice all along the way, and we want to be respectful of that choice. I don't think it's a measure of success or failure."

Grosso said she doesn't think that the increasing number shows victims' trust in the system is declining.

But retired Col. Don Christensen, a former Air Force chief prosecutor, thinks the swelling numbers of victims opting out is a cause for concern and shows victims may be losing confidence. Christensen, who is now president of Protect our Defenders, a group that advocates for survivors of sexual assault in the military, says the length of time it takes to resolve a sexual assault case, as well as the retaliation sexual assault victims sometimes suffer after they come forward, is discouraging some victims from continuing with their cases.

"As time drags on and they start to see how they're being treated throughout the process, it becomes a disincentive for them to keep going forward," Christensen said.

Grosso said the statistic could show that the newly established special victims' counsels, who advocate on behalf of sexual assault victims, are increasingly helping those victims remove themselves from a process they no longer wish to be a part of.

"They may be less afraid to voice that option," Grosso said. "A guess on my part is that this is something they've always wanted. They've just never had that advocate to help them extricate themselves out of the military justice process."

But Christensen doubts the creation of the special victims' counsels can explain the increase in 2014. That program was established in January 2013, yet there was a decline in both the number and rate of victims opting out that year.

Christensen also recalled that when retired Judge Advocate General Lt. Gen. Richard Harding set up the special victims' counsel program, Harding was concerned about the high rate of sexual assault victims who initially agreed to participate in their cases then changed their minds before court-martial in fiscal 2011. According to the Defense Department's 2011 sexual assault report, 65 victims declined to participate in the military justice system that year.

"[Grosso's supposition] would be inconsistent with what Gen. Harding said in the past," Christensen said. "One of the things he said the special victims' counsel was doing was getting more survivors through the process, getting them to turn restricted reports to unrestricted, and getting them to go from start to finish."

Grosso said it's hard to say whether the victims in these cases opted out because they were not prepared for the stress that comes from moving forward with a case beyond a restricted report.

"It takes great courage to come forward," Grosso said. "You cannot underestimate the difficulty it is to report this horrible trauma. We understand the brain's response to trauma. Every time you tell the story, you experience the trauma all over again. And every individual has a different threshold for what they feel is justice in their own mind."

But Grosso doesn't think the numbers suggest Air Force officials are pushing victims to go unrestricted and move forward when the victims are not comfortable.

"I've seen no evidence that we push victims one way or the other," Grosso said. "Our whole desire is to have an individual come forward and get the care they need, and give them complete control throughout the process."

Sometimes, she said, a victim may decide that it's not necessary to see the assaulter court-martialed or in prison for

them to find closure and move on. She said one victim told her she was satisfied that she was heard at an Article 32 hearing — which is similar to a civilian grand jury — and that people believed her.

"For her, that was enough," Grosso said. "She wanted to just go on with her life. It felt like it wasn't in her best interest to keep going, because it was setting her back."

Grosso said that a victim choosing not to participate does not always mean the end of the prosecution. The Air Force can still continue to pursue charges against the alleged assaulter if it has enough evidence, she said. But that does not happen very often, the Air Force said.

The Air Force's numbers are at odds with broader trends in the military.

The percentage of victims declining to participate in the overall military dropped from 11 percent in 2012 to 9 percent in 2013 before ticking up slightly to 10 percent last year, according to the DoD report. And the Army's percentages dropped from 7 percent to 6 percent to 4 percent over the same time period.

The Navy's section said 16 percent of victims declined to participate last year, but did not say what the previous years' percentages were. The report also said that in the Marine Corps, the percentage dropped from 16 percent in 2011 to 9 percent last year, but did not say what it was in 2012 and 2013.

Christensen said the Air Force needs to ask the victims who decline to participate why they have chosen not to, and do more to study this issue.

And to rebuild victims' confidence in the system, Christensen said senior Air Force leadership needs to come out more strongly against sexual assault and in support of victims.

High-profile cases like those of Lt. Gen. Susan Helms and Lt. Gen. Craig Franklin — who were heavily criticized and retired after overturning officers' sexual assault convictions — have undermined victims' confidence, Christensen said.

Also demoralizing for victims, Christensen said: Air Force Inspector General Lt. Gen. Stephen Mueller wrote in a Facebook comment on an Air Force Times story that he was "heart broken" and "bitter" about Franklin's retirement.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/05/12/twice-as-many-sex-assault-victims-opting-out/70880492/>

7 sailors headed to trial for sub Wyoming shower videos

(12 May) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

Out of a dozen submariners originally suspected of trading videos of their female shipmates in a shower changing area

last year, seven are headed to court-martial, according to charge sheets recently provided to Navy Times.

Six missile technicians and one electronics technician face criminal charges ranging from failure to report the videos to recording and conspiring to distribute the videos of female officers and midshipmen changing outside the showers aboard the Kings Bay, Georgia-based sub Wyoming for a period as long as 10 months.

Their charges:

- Missile Technician 2nd Class Charles Greaves: Two counts conspiracy for trading videos to a sailor for two energy drinks, and distributing recordings to a sailor who then passed them on; one count of disrespecting a superior officer by referring to the video trade as "like Pokemon, gotta catch them all"; one count of using a camera underway; four counts each of viewing a recording of a shipmate's private areas; and three counts of distributing the videos.
- MT2 Ryan Secrest: One count of conspiracy for using a camera phone underway; two counts of making a false official statement, for lying about being in the shower area during the midshipmen's designated shower time and lying about recording videos; one charge of recording female midshipmen.
- MT2 Jonathan Ashby: One count of conspiracy for giving Greaves his phone to transfer the videos and three counts of distributing the videos.
- MT3 Samuel Buchner: Two counts of conspiracy for coordinating distribution of videos among sailors and three counts of distributing videos.
- MT3 Cody Shoemaker: One count of conspiracy for paying Greaves for videos with energy drinks; one count of using a camera underway; one count each of viewing and recording female midshipmen.

Navy secretary proposes doubling maternity leave

(13 May) Associate Press, By Brock Vergakis

In an effort to retain and recruit more talented women, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus unveiled a proposal Wednesday that calls for doubling to 12 weeks the amount of paid maternity leave that sailors and Marines can take.

Mabus detailed the proposal during a speech at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Extending paid maternity leave would require legislative approval, which if Congress agrees to, would ultimately be extended to members of all military branches. There were more than 200,000 active-duty women in the military as of January, according to the Defense Department. It wasn't immediately clear how much Mabus' proposal would cost, but Navy officials believe it's a wise investment because women in the early part of their careers in that service are retained at half the rate as men.

To help keep top performers, the Navy wants to become more family friendly. As part of Mabus' proposals, child care hours around the world would be extended each day by two hours in the morning and two hours each evening.

For those who want to take time off to raise a family or to take a step away to keep from burning out, Mabus wants as many

- MT3 Brandon McGarity: Two counts of failing to report the videos and one count of making a false official statement, saying he was not aware of the videos.
- ET2 Joseph Bradley: One count of conspiracy for coordinating transfer of the videos; three counts of distributing videos; one count of obstructing justice by destroying copies of the videos.

No sailors were charged with distributing videos of the mids because, unlike the female officers, no evidence of them being recorded has been found, a service official told Navy Times.

Dozens of women could have been recorded, said another Navy official familiar with the investigation, given the number of mids on summer cruises and female officers from other crews who were aboard during the 10 months from 2013 to 2014 during which recordings were allegedly taken.

Late last year, midshipmen who were aboard Wyoming at the time the recordings were made were notified that they may have been video recorded, the official said, and were offered victims' services.

Of the remaining five sailors originally suspected, one is no longer under suspicion.

Four more are under review but have not been charged, Submarine Forces Atlantic spokesman Cmdr. Tommy Crosby confirmed Tuesday.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/05/12/seven-sailors-court-martial-submarine-wyoming-shower-videos/27114443/>

as 400 slots available for people to take up to three years off from service before returning to duty. Those who are part of the program would be expected to provide two years of service for each year they take off.

"We must take a holistic approach to supporting families," Mabus said.

Mabus also wants more sailors and Marines to go to civilian graduate schools full time and for other higher performing officers to be embedded at top corporations for about two years.

Mabus referred specifically to one officer – Top Gun graduate Lt. Joel Jacobs, who deployed multiple times to Afghanistan and during the current fight against Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria and who was named Naval Officer of the Year. Jacobs had been accepted to Harvard, Tufts and Johns Hopkins but limited Navy billets for graduate school had precluded him from going.

Starting in October, Mabus said, he is opening 30 new billets for fully-funded, in-resident graduate programs at civilian institutions for Navy personnel. "By the way, Lt. Jacobs, let

me be the first to congratulate you, you earned one of those billets and you are going to Harvard.”

Mabus also voiced his support for opening all jobs - including special forces - to women, as long as standards are the same for each gender.

By January, the military must open all combat jobs to women or explain why any must remain closed. The Pentagon lifted its ban on women in combat jobs in 2012, but gave the military services time to gradually and systematically integrate women into the male-only front-line positions.

Special operations jobs are some of the last to be addressed, as commanders review the qualifications needed and assess the impact of bringing women in.

Military sexual assault claims: 1 in 20 lead to jail time

(13 May) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman

Last year, 6,131 service members reported a sexual assault.

But only about 317 service members were court-martialed and sentenced to confinement as a result of a reported sexual assault.

The dizzying details underlying that roughly 1-in-20 conviction-and-incarceration rate were buried in the latest annual military sexual assault report released May 1, which reveals how sexual assault complaints were handled by criminal investigators and commanders.

Of those 6,131 reported sexual assaults, about 1,471 were "restricted reports," meaning the victim stepped forward and reported the assault for the purposes of receiving counseling but declined to identify the attacker or participate in any criminal investigation.

Of the remaining 4,660 "unrestricted reports," about 135 were alleged sex assaults that occurred before the victim entered military service, placing the perpetrator beyond the reach of the criminal justice system.

Of the remaining 4,525 reported sexual assaults, military criminal justice agencies initiated investigations in 3,934 of those cases. The difference of 591 is due to the fact that in some cases, multiple victim reports are consolidated into a single investigation or a report was filed late in 2014 and the investigation did not begin until early 2015, a defense official said.

Comprehensively tracking the outcome for every report for an individual year is difficult because many investigations extend into the following year and are mixed into that year's data.

This year's report says the military completed investigations targeting 3,648 alleged perpetrators in 2014. Hundreds of investigations from 2014 remained open at the start of 2015.

Of those 3,648 investigations that were closed, lawyers determined that 528 cases were "unfounded" because they were "baseless," constituted a "non-sexual assault offense" or

“I personally believe we ought to have one standard for both sexes, a standard that matches the demands of the job and if you pass, you pass,” he said.

Other proposals Mabus wants to implement include improving physical fitness by expanding gym hours and providing more nutritional meals on shore and at sea. Mabus also wants the Navy and Marines to focus more on the overall health of their sailors and Marines instead of numeric metrics when measuring body fat. Some physically fit, muscular sailors and Marines weren't meeting the required standards because of their body shapes.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2015/05/navy-secretary-propose-doubling-maternity-leave>

stemmed from "allegations misinterpreted by a third party," the Defense Department report said.

Of the remaining 3,120 investigations, 252 were dismissed because investigators were unable to identify the perpetrator.

An additional 231 cases were dropped because the alleged perpetrator was either a civilian or foreign national who was outside the military's legal jurisdiction.

In nine cases, the target of the investigation died; in three others, the accused perpetrator deserted the military, the report said.

Commanders ultimately received 2,625 cases to consider for court-martial or other legal action. But when those cases were reviewed, 628 were dismissed outright for reasons including: insufficient evidence to prosecute (323); victim declined to participate in the command investigation (248); a command-level legal review said the allegations were legally "unfounded" (48); or the statute of limitations expired (9).

Of the 1,997 accused perpetrators against whom commanders substantiated charges, 477 were downgraded to non-sexual assault-related offenses.

Of the 1,550 perpetrators against whom charges were substantiated, commanders decided not to prefer court-martial charges for 552, opting instead for nonjudicial punishment (318), administrative discharge (111) or other "adverse administrative actions" (123).

After commanders preferred court-martial charges against the remaining 998 service members, 273 never made it to trial because either the commander later decided to dismiss the charges (176) or because the accused perpetrator was discharged in lieu of a court-martial (97).

Some 137 court-martial charges remained pending at the end of fiscal 2014.

Of the 588 sexual assault cases that went to trial, 154 alleged perpetrators were acquitted of all charges.

Of the 434 alleged sexual assault perpetrators who were convicted, about 117 were sentenced to punishments other than prison confinement, which may have included punitive discharges, reduction in rank, fines, restrictions or hard labor.

April courts-martial results announced

(14 May) Navy Times

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

NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON

General court-martial

- In Washington, D.C., Lt. Cmdr. James Remington pleaded guilty to conduct unbecoming an officer. On April 10, the military judge sentenced him to a reprimand, forfeiture of \$1,000 in pay a month for 14 months and confinement for 30 days.

NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC

General courts-martial

- In Groton, Conn., Cmdr. Sidney Hall was tried for rape, aggravated assault, indecent liberties with a child and false official statements. On April 15, a panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to false official statements and sentenced him to a reprimand and forfeiture of \$2,500 in pay a month for 12 months.
- In Norfolk, Va., an E-5 was tried for sexual assault, abusive sexual contact and assault consummated by a battery. On April 16, a panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST

Special courts-martial

- In Jacksonville, Fla., yeoman Seaman Recruit Paul Cooper pleaded guilty to unauthorized absence and wrongful use of marijuana. On April 7, the military judge sentenced him to a bad-conduct discharge and confinement for eight months.
- In Pensacola, Fla., Chief Legalman Scott Lorenson pleaded guilty to sexual harassment and misuse of position. On April 29, the military judge sentenced him to a reprimand, reduction in rank to paygrade E-6 and forfeiture of \$1,000 in pay a month for two months.

In the final tally, that left 317 service members who were convicted on any sexual assault charge and received a sentence that included jail time.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/05/13/sex-assault-numbers/26723265/>

NAVY REGION NORTHWEST

General courts-martial

- In Bremerton, Wash., Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Nathaniel Rodriguez was tried for maiming, aggravated assault on a child and assaults consummated by battery. On April 17, a panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to aggravated assault of a child and assaults consummated by battery, and sentenced him to a bad-conduct discharge and confinement for two years.
- In Bremerton, Lt. Jonathan Jones pleaded guilty to sexual assault, abusive sexual contact of a child and indecent liberties with a child. On April 24, the military judge sentenced him to dismissal from service, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for 21 years.

Special courts-martial

- In Bremerton, Master-at-Arms Seaman Ariel Gough pleaded guilty to conspiracy and willfully damaging property. On April 21, the military judge sentenced her to forfeit \$1,000 in pay a month for six months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 32 days.
- In Bremerton, Marine Lance Cpl. David Wood pleaded guilty to larceny, false official statements and obstruction of justice. On April 22, the military judge sentenced him to a bad-conduct discharge and confinement for 70 days.
- In Bremerton, Chief Hull Maintenance Technician Anthony Fiederer II pleaded guilty to false official statements and wrongful use of a controlled substance. On April 29, the military judge sentenced him to a reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, forfeiture of \$1,000 in pay a month for three months and confinement for three months.

NAVY REGION NORTHWEST

Special courts-martial

- In San Diego, Fire Control Technician Seaman Apprentice Joseph Lopez pleaded guilty to unauthorized absence, failure to obey general orders,

damaging military property and breaking restriction. On April 23, the military judge sentenced him to a fine of \$4,000 and confinement for 95 days.

- In San Diego, Logistics Specialist 3rd Class Samson Geberegeorgis was tried for wrongful use of marijuana. On April 27, the military judge returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced him to a reduction in rank to paygrade E-3 and confinement for 30 days.
- In San Diego, Culinary Specialist Seaman Richard Moore pleaded guilty to wrongful use and distribution of a controlled substance. On April 28, the military judge sentenced him to a bad-conduct discharge and confinement for nine months.

NAVY REGION JAPAN

Special courts-martial

- In Yokosuka, an E-7 was tried for sexual harassment and abusive sexual contact. On April 9, a military judge returned a verdict of not guilty.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/05/14/special-general-courts-martial-results-april/27311867/>

Alleged Female Airman Goes Off in Scathing Letter About Sexual Harassment Training

(15 May) *The Blaze*, By Jonathon M. Seidl

“You disgust me.”

“You turned me into a helpless whore.”

Those are just some of the scathing words allegedly written by a female Air Force airman who had to sit through mandatory sexual harassment training recently.

The letter, posted on the blog John Q. Public under the pen name Kayce Hagen, excoriates the idea behind the training (known as the Sexual Assault Response Coordination program): “You made me a victim today, and I am nobody’s victim. I am an American Airman in the most powerful Air Force in the world, and you made me into a helpless whore.”

Read the full letter below:

Dear SARC,

I got up this morning as an Airman in the United States Air Force. I got up and I put on my uniform, I pulled back my hair, I looked in the mirror and an Airman looked back. A strong, confident military professional stared out of my bathroom mirror, and I met her eyes with pride. Then I came to your briefing. I came to your briefing and I listened to you talk to me, at times it seemed directly to me, about sexual assault. You talked about a lot of things, about rivers and bridges, you talked about saving people and victimization. In fact you talked for almost a full ninety minutes, and you disgusted me.

You made me a victim today, and I am nobody’s victim. I am an American Airman in the most powerful Air Force in the world, and you made me into a helpless whore. A sensitive, defenseless woman who has no power to protect herself, who has nothing in common with the men she works with. You made me untouchable, and by doing that you made me a target. You gave me a transparent parasol, called it an umbrella and told me to stand idly by while you placed everything from rape to inappropriate shoulder brushes in a crowded hallway underneath it. You put my face up on your slides; my face, my uniform, my honor, and you made me hold this ridiculous contraption of your own devising and

called me empowered. You called me strong. You told me, and everyone else who was listening to you this morning that I had a right to dictate what they said. That I had a right to dictate what they looked at. That I had a right to dictate what they listened to. That somehow, in my shop, I was the only person who mattered. That they can’t listen to the radio because they might play the Beatles, or Sir Mix-A-Lot, and that I might be offended. That if someone plays a Katy Perry song, I might have flashbacks to a night where I made a bad decision. I might be hurt, and I’m fragile right? Of course I am, you made me that way.

You are the reason I room alone when I deploy. You are the reason that wives are terrified that their husbands are cheating on them when they leave, and I leave with them. When I walk into a room and people are laughing and having a good time, you are the reason they take one look at me and either stop talking or leave. They’re afraid. They’re afraid of me, and it’s because of you. They are afraid that with all of this “power” I have, I can destroy them. They will never respect me or the power and the authority I have as a person, or the power I have as an Airman, because I am nothing more than a victim. That I as a victim, somehow I control their fate. With one sentence, I can destroy the rest of their lives.

“He sexually assaulted me.”

I say enough. He didn’t assault me, you did; and I say enough is enough. If you want to help me, you need to stop calling me a victim. If you want to save me, you need to help me to be equal in the eyes of the people I work with. If you want to change a culture, you need to lessen the gap between men and women, not widen it. Women don’t need their own set of rules: physical training scores, buildings, rooms, raters, sponsors, deployment buddies. When I can only deploy with another woman ‘buddy’ you are telling me and the people around me that I can’t take care of myself. When you forbid me from going into my male friends room to play X-Box on a deployment with the other people on my shift, you isolate me. When you isolate me, you make me a target. When you make me a target, you make me a victim. You don’t make me equal, you make me hated. If I am going to be hated, it *will* be because of who I am, not because of who you have made

me. I am not a victim. I am an American Airman, I am a Warrior, and I have answered my nation's call.

Help me be what I am, or be quiet and get out of my way.

Report: Retaliation against sex assault victims rampant

(18 May) Military Times, By Stephen Losey

For a soldier identified only as "Roy Carter," the attacks didn't stop after he was sexually assaulted by a male soldier in another platoon in 2012.

After "Carter" reported his assault, he was attacked twice more within six months.

He was mocked and belittled by at least six senior non-commissioned officers and other soldiers in his platoon.

A sergeant in his platoon threatened to kill him if they ever went to Afghanistan because, as "Carter," a pseudonym, said, the sergeant told him, "friendly fire is a tragic accident that happens."

He began drinking heavily, failing his physical fitness tests and even started carrying a knife to protect himself from his fellow soldiers.

Carter is one of 150 sexual assault survivors interviewed about retaliation for reporting sexual assaults for a [113-page report](#) issued May 18 by Human Rights Watch, an international nongovernmental organization that focuses on defending human rights around the world.

Human Rights Watch conducted interviews with sexual assault survivors across the military since October 2013. Many survivors said the retaliation they suffered — including bullying, isolation and damage to their careers — was actually worse than the assaults.

Echoes of Carter's story appear throughout the report, from the testimony of women, and some other men, of many ranks in all services. And many of them end as Carter's does: The attacks never stopped. About a year after his sexual assault, Carter told investigators that someone tried to stab him in a bar while repeatedly screaming for him to die and calling him a homophobic slur.

"That was when I told my captain that I wanted a discharge before I ended up dead on the evening news," Carter is quoted as saying in the Human Rights Watch report.

The report, "Embattled: Retaliation against Sexual Assault Survivors in the U.S. Military," found that sexual assault victims who report what happened to them often face retaliation — both professional and social. That retaliation can end careers, lead to the victims themselves being prosecuted for offenses such as underage drinking or adultery, result in ostracism that makes it difficult for victims to heal and lead some to attempt suicide, the report said.

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/05/15/alleged-female-airman-goes-off-in-scathing-letter-about-sexual-harassment-training-you-disgust-me-and-made-me-into-a-helpless-whore/>

The pervasive retaliation "has a significant chilling effect on survivors' willingness to come forward to report sexual assault in the military," the report said.

"The U.S. military's progress in getting people to report sexual assaults isn't going to continue as long as retaliation for making a report goes unpunished," said Sara Darehshori, a senior U.S. counsel at Human Rights Watch and co-author of the report. "Ending retaliation is critical to addressing the problem of sexual assault in the military."

In a written statement to Military Times, Defense Department spokeswoman Laura Seal said Pentagon officials appreciate the research done by Human Rights Watch, are very concerned about retaliation and agree that "ending retaliation is critical to effectively addressing sexual assault in the military."

"Truly understanding the stressors our survivors face is the only way we can provide them with adequate support and responsive care," Seal said. "Supporting our survivors not only ensures that we are upholding our commitment to them, but also makes it more likely that others will come forward with unrestricted reports — the only way we can hold perpetrators appropriately accountable."

The Pentagon's latest report on sexual assault earlier this month found there were about 18,900 sexual assaults in the military last year, 6,131 of which were reported.

A 2014 survey conducted by the think tank Rand as part of that study found that 62 percent of women who reported unwanted sexual contact to military authorities experienced some form of retaliation. More than half of those women said they were retaliated against socially.

The Rand study also found 35 percent of women reporting sexual assault suffered an adverse administrative action, 32 percent suffered professional retaliation and 11 percent were punished for infractions after reporting. Similar statistics for male sexual assault victims were not available.

The retaliation sometimes severely damaged victims' careers. Several said that after they reported their assaults, they received poor performance evaluations, punishments for petty infractions, were assigned to demeaning jobs such as picking up garbage and lost opportunities for promising assignments.

According to the report, some troops said they were threatened by their fellow service members after coming forward about their assaults. One female airman said she was called a

"bitch," told that she got what she deserved and that she "better sleep light," the report said.

A female Marine's name and photo was posted on a Facebook page that other Marines commented on. "Find her, tag her, haze her, make her life a living hell," someone wrote on the page, the report said, and another said she should be silenced "before she lied about another rape."

A Navy petty officer told Human Rights Watch she was assaulted by a cook during a deployment in 2011. The cook's colleagues harassed her so much that she couldn't eat in the mess hall, and she said her commanding officers did nothing even after she complained several times.

"For seven months while on deployment, she ended up buying her own food when she was in ports and 'living off cans of tuna,' " the report said.

A DoD panel on sexual assault response last year found that some troops may lash out at those who report sexual assaults because they feel the victims are dividing the unit.

That also may be why leaders often ignored complaints about retaliation, the report said, and in some cases also retaliated against those reporting their assaults.

"The shunning spanned the ranks," one anonymous Air Force senior master sergeant told Human Rights Watch. "Peers, supervisors, officers and enlisted. If you made waves, rocked the boat, you were an issue and [someone who] threatened mission success and accomplishment."

The report quotes a Marine lance corporal who said her friends were told they would receive non-judicial punishments if they continued associating with her. As a result of her ostracism, she told investigators, "I was alone all the way until the end."

"She was discharged in June 2012 after being charged with 'destruction of government property' for hurting herself after attempting suicide," the report said.

The career consequences of those who report assaults can be severe. A senior airman identified as "Beth Robinson" reported a sexual assault in late 2013 and cried during a meeting about her concerns regarding living directly across from her alleged perpetrator.

Robinson, who was a security forces officer, had her weapon taken from her "because she was considered 'emotional,' " the report said.

But because she was in security forces, not being allowed a weapon meant she couldn't do her job. While the investigation into her assault was ongoing, the report said, Robinson received what she called her "dream deployment" — which she could not go on because she wasn't allowed to carry a gun.

Her commander told Robinson she would get her arms back when her case was finished, so she decided to withdraw her participation in the case. That didn't work, according to the report: Robinson said her squadron commander told her she was "unable to get off the train" and could not get back her weapons and deploy.

In another case, a technical sergeant in the Air National Guard, "Brenda Phillips," received national recognition for her work designing training programs and received awards for doing extra work.

After she reported her assault while up for promotion in 2010, the report said, Phillips was moved to a different area and lost her promotion. According to Phillips, a colleague overheard her wing commander say, "Over my dead body will she get promoted now." Phillips lost her training job and was demoted twice before retiring in April 2013.

Other troops said they received letters of reprimand or counseling — which can severely damage service members' chances of future promotions — for minor infractions such as wearing the wrong socks or being on crutches due to an injury.

Sometimes the act of reporting sexual assaults opened the victims themselves to prosecution. An Air Force officer identified as "Erica Smith" reported being sexually assaulted by a civilian contractor while serving abroad. She had just ended an extramarital relationship with that contractor when she was assaulted, and admitted that to investigators.

Her squadron commander started the process for giving her an Article 15 nonjudicial punishment for adultery, before her Special Victims Counsel convinced the commander to reduce it to a letter of reprimand.

Other assault victims have been punished because they admitted to underage drinking or drunk driving when reporting their assault, the report said.

Troops who suffer sexual assault have complications civilian survivors do not, the report said: Service members commit to the military for several years and cannot simply quit their jobs to get away from their perpetrators or co-workers who harass them.

And because troops pride themselves on looking out for one another, the trauma that comes from a sexual assault is compounded, the report said.

"Everyone is told from day one that the military is your family," an unnamed Navy officer said in the report. "We've got your back. You can trust these people. If you are sexually assaulted, it takes on an incestuous dynamic. It is that level of betrayal. Then it goes to your command. If the command handles it badly, that's another level of betrayal. Every time the system fails, another layer of betrayal."

Human Rights Watch recommended that Congress overhaul the Military Whistleblower Protection Act to provide service

members the same level of protection provided to civilians when reporting sexual assault, and that Congress prohibit criminal charges or disciplinary actions against survivors for minor misconduct — such as underage drinking — that would not have come to light if the victim hadn't reported the assault.

The group also recommended that DoD department expand initiatives such as the Special Victims Counsel program — which it lauded as "a singularly powerful reform" — as well as expedite transfers and develop non-military options for mental health care.

The report also said systems and individuals in the military that take retaliation seriously should be rewarded, and anyone who retaliates against victims or turns a blind eye to retaliation should be punished.

Seal, the DoD spokeswoman, said the department already is taking steps to address the issue of retaliation, noting that the military asks survivors about negative consequences they face after reporting an assault.

Commanders are also holding monthly meetings at installations to monitor cases for retaliation and forward allegations to the proper authorities for investigation and follow-up, she said.

DoD is developing a department-wide strategy to prevent retaliation in reporting of all crimes, conducting training for first-line supervisors to lead sexual assault and prevention programs, conducting a comprehensive review of policies and procedures on retaliation, and expanding the military's awareness campaign on reporting options for those who experience retaliation after reporting assault, she said.

DoD is also changing the questions it will ask on future surveys to better collect information on retaliation.

Lawmakers Back Broader Access to Contraceptives for Women in the Military

(19 May) The New York Times, By Robert Pear

WASHINGTON — Both houses of Congress are moving to guarantee greater access to contraceptives for women in the military, actions that lawmakers say are prompted in part by concern about unplanned pregnancies in the armed forces.

The annual defense policy bill, passed on Friday by the House, says military clinics and hospitals must be able to dispense any method of contraception approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Women have complained that they are sometimes unable to obtain contraceptives prescribed by their doctors, especially when they are deployed overseas.

The House bill also says women should, whenever possible, have access to "a sufficient supply" that will last for their entire deployment. Women who are overseas for long periods sometimes report that they have difficulty refilling prescriptions because military clinics run out of specific contraceptives and resupply shipments can be slow to arrive.

"As Human Rights Watch notes in their report, department reforms to protect the rights of sexual assault victims show promise and have only begun to demonstrate their potential," Seal said. "The department will continue to engage survivors, as well as outside experts, to facilitate recovery for victims of this crime."

Human Rights Watch said whistleblower protections aren't working because service members aren't sufficiently aware that inspector general protections are available to them, or they don't want to tell their story again.

The report said many troops tend to view IG offices as "toothless and ineffective," or not impartial because it is not independent enough from their parent commands. Some service members told Human Rights Watch that they experienced negative consequences after going to the IG.

Bridget Serchak, spokeswoman for the DoD Office of Inspector General, said that takes its lead role in whistleblower protection very seriously.

"In addition to conducting and oversighting whistleblower reprisal and restriction investigations, we conduct outreach about whistleblower protections across the department, including in-person training events and webinars, and we maintain a robust online presence," Serchak said in an email.

"We look forward to redoubling our outreach efforts to most effectively reach sexual assault victims, their advocates, and the broader community about their rights under the Military Whistleblower Protection Act."

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/05/18/report-retaliation-against-sexual-assault-victims-rampant/27368747/>

Representative Jackie Speier, Democrat of California, said she had pushed for the changes because recent studies had shown that women in the military had a higher rate of unplanned pregnancy than the general population.

"Servicewomen deserve access to the same array of contraceptive methods available to civilians," Ms. Speier said. "My amendment would ensure that military bases stock a broad range of contraceptive options, so a trip to the pharmacy isn't a game of chance."

The Senate Armed Services Committee approved a companion bill last week after adopting amendments proposed by Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Democrat of New Hampshire, to increase access to birth control for women in the military and others covered by military health programs.

"Almost 15 percent of our military are now women," she said. "But the military has not developed a comprehensive program

to make sure they have access to family planning, contraception and counseling.”

Mrs. Shaheen’s proposal would require the Defense Department to give women the most up-to-date “standard of care,” reflected in clinical guidelines on contraception and counseling issued by groups like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Under her proposal, the defense secretary must also develop “a uniform standard curriculum to be used in education programs on family planning for all members of the armed forces, including both men and women.” The proposal says that the Pentagon, as part of its regular health surveys, should collect data on the use of different family planning techniques and the rate of unintended pregnancy among active-duty military personnel. Mrs. Shaheen said the Defense Department had objected to parts of her proposal, contending that elements were unnecessary.

In written comments, the department said that Congress should not “mandate incorporation of specific questions into required surveys” and should not legislate clinical practice guidelines or education programs. The Pentagon said it needed “maximum flexibility” to address the needs of service members.

But a federal advisory committee appointed by the defense secretary has recommended many of the steps being taken by Congress. In a report issued in December, the panel said that women faced “barriers, both informal and formal, to access family planning” and some types of contraception.

“Reproductive health care is critical to the wellness and readiness of military women and therefore the overall force,” said the panel, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services.

SECNAV: Different uniform styles segregate women

(20 May) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has spent years ordering the Navy and Marine Corps to jettison female specific uniform styles as a way to ensure women don't feel apart from their male peers.

As part of this, women are now set to wear service dress blue jumpers, the Dixie cup, choker whites and much else instead of the separate styles that women have worn for decades. But some have questioned the top-down push, which has received a mixture of reactions.

At a public appearance Wednesday, Mabus defended this push in a response to a female officer, who asked him what he was trying to accomplish.

"I think wearing different uniforms has segregated women, sometimes in not good ways," Mabus said. "If we ask any other group to wear a different uniform, can you imagine the outcry?"

Matthew R. Allen, a Defense Department spokesman, said that active-duty servicewomen had coverage for contraceptives without co-payments through the military health program known as Tricare. Family members who are not on active duty have access to the same products at no charge in military pharmacies and may have minimal co-payments when they buy contraceptives at retail outlets or by mail order, he said.

Advocates for women’s health care pointed to Navy policies as a model. The Navy has instructed doctors to “screen female sailors for contraceptive needs” before they go to sea.

Still, on its website, the public health center for the Navy and the Marine Corps says that among enlisted women ages 21 to 25, one in four reported having an unplanned pregnancy in the past 12 months.

Dr. Daniel Grossman, an expert on military health care, said the government could better meet the needs of female service members by making greater use of long-acting contraceptives like hormonal implants and intrauterine devices. This would reduce the need for issuing refills or changing methods of contraception when women are deployed, he said.

In a recent report, the Center for American Progress, a research and advocacy group with close ties to the Obama administration, noted that 97 percent of women in the military were of reproductive age.

“We have had an incredible increase in women service members in recent years,” said Donna J. Barry, a co-author of the report, “but reproductive and sexual health care has not kept up.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/20/us/lawmakers-back-broader-access-to-contraceptives-for-women-in-the-military.html?_r=1

In fact, he added, the female dress uniforms are "sort of a historical accident" dating back to World War II.

"When women first came in as WAVES [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service], they were given different uniforms because they were not part of the Navy," Mabus said at the public forum, hosted by the media outlet Defense One.

The uniforms — and that sense of separateness — have stuck around, he said.

Mabus has made the uniform standardization a signature issue, in tandem with his yearslong initiative that's opened new communities for female enlisted and officers, such as the submarine force and the riverines.

In her question, Lt. Cmdr. Rosie Goscinski praised Mabus for his efforts to diversify the Navy by recruiting and retaining more women, but asked how the uniform fit into that plan.

"We as a population are a little bit confused about the unification versus the diversity aspect," she said.

Goscinski argued that many of the new uniforms, which are cut to fit women but mimic the style of the men's uniforms, have been wear tested on 18- to 21-year-olds, not taking into account how they might fit more mature women.

Goscinski is the chief of Senate congressional affairs for the head of U.S. European Command, Air Force Gen. Phillip Breedlove. She's also president of the Sea Service Leadership Association, a nonprofit for the professional development of women in the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

She cited hundreds of notes from her fellow female officers who are concerned about the new uniforms fitting properly and looking professional while maintaining their femininity. Enlisted women, similarly, have been concerned the Dixie cup doesn't sit well for those who wear a hair bun.

Mabus agreed that uniforms in general need some work.

"Part of that is, we haven't done a very good job making sure uniforms fit either men or women," he said.

That extends to covers, he added. The Navy and Marine Corps are moving toward the men's style combination cover for both genders, but the round band needs an update; very few individuals have a round head, Mabus said.

Army releases results of April courts-martial

(21 May) Army Times Staff Report

The Army on Monday released a summary report of 71 verdicts from April courts-martial. The list, sorted by judicial circuit:

First judicial circuit

- On April 1 at a general court-martial at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Sgt. Tyran M. Alexander was convicted by a military panel consisting of officers and enlisted members, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of sexual assault and one specification of rape. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 10 years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 14 at a general court-martial at Fort Campbell, Pfc. Matthew M. Smith was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his plea, of one specification of rape. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 3 years and to a bad conduct discharge.
- On April 15 at a special court-martial at Fort Drum, New York, Sgt. 1st Class Todd M. Spencer was convicted by a military judge of one specification of wrongful appropriation. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-6 and to be reprimanded.
- On April 22 at a special court-martial at Fort Drum, Staff Sgt. James A. Dinola was convicted by a military judge of

The goal, Mabus said, is to integrate the general look of a sailor.

Mabus was met with a similar question last week after a speech at the Naval Academy, when a graduating midshipman asked why — if he was trying to standardize uniforms — the Navy isn't making men wear female-style covers and dress whites.

In both cases, he argued that the choker whites, for instance, are an iconic U.S. sailor's uniform, and that's why they were chosen as the standard.

"I'll work with you in terms of making sure they fit, in terms of making sure they're tailored," he told Goscinski.

Female graduating midshipmen at the Naval Academy will be the first to test the new women's choker whites at their commissioning ceremony Friday.

The next wear test will begin soon after, involving 20 female flag officers at commands spread around the country.

Uniforms are expected to be for sale online and in exchanges in the fall of 2016, Cmdr. Chris Servello, a spokesman for the chief of naval personnel, told Navy Times.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/05/20/navy-secretary-ray-mabus-dress-uniforms-women/27643839/>

one specification of wrongful appropriation. The military judge sentenced the accused to perform 15 days of hard labor without confinement and to be reprimanded.

- On April 30 at a general court-martial at Fort Drum, Sgt. Eric A. Ramos-Cruz was convicted by a military judge of one specification of maltreatment, three specifications of abusive sexual contact, one specification of forcible sodomy, six specifications of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of assault with an unloaded firearm. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 12 years and to a bad-conduct discharge.

Second judicial circuit

- On April 1 at a general court-martial at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Spc. Herman D. Wakefield was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of violating a lawful general order, two specifications of assault and one specification of communicating a threat. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1 and to be confined for 30 months.
- On April 7 at a general court-martial at Fort Benning, Georgia, Spc. Steven A. Farley was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of absence without leave, one specification of wrongful disposition of military property of the U.S., one specification of larceny

of military property and one specification of housebreaking. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 10 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On April 9 at a general court-martial at Fort Stewart, Georgia, a private first class was acquitted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of two specifications of sexual assault.
- On April 11 at a general court-martial at Fort Bragg, a staff sergeant was acquitted by a military judge of two specifications of sexual assault.
- On April 13 at a general court-martial at Fort Benning, a sergeant was acquitted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of rape and forcible sodomy.
- On April 13 at a general court-martial at Fort Bragg, Pvt. Tyler H. Wise was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of conspiracy and six specifications of larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 24 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 17 at a general court-martial at Fort Benning, Staff Sgt. Ricardo E. Chinchilla was convicted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of one specification of sexual assault. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for two years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 17 at a special court-martial at Fort Stewart, Spc. Erroll R. Strickland was convicted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The accused was acquitted of three specifications of abusive sexual contact and one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The members sentenced the accused to be reprimanded.
- On April 21 at a general court-martial at Fort Benning, Sgt. 1st Class Manuel Ortiz III was convicted by a military judge of one specification of absence without leave, four specifications of sexual assault of a child and two specifications of furnishing alcohol to a minor. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 45 years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 30 at a special court-martial at Fort Bragg, Spc. Joseph M. Biffle was convicted by a military judge of one specification of absence without leave and two specifications of wrongful use of a controlled substance. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for eight months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

Third judicial circuit

- On April 1 at a special court-martial at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Command Sgt. Maj. Perry T. McNeill was convicted by a military judge of one specification of false official statement and eight specifications of wearing unauthorized badges. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-7, to forfeit \$500 pay per month for 10 months, and to be reprimanded.

- On April 1 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Texas, Master Sgt. Rodney N. Valentine was convicted by a military panel consisting of officer members of one specification of failure to obey a lawful order. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-7, to forfeit \$448 pay per month for three months, and to be reprimanded.
- On April 2 at a special court-martial at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, a sergeant was acquitted by a military judge of one specification of wrongful sexual contact.
- On April 2 at a general court-martial at Fort Sill, Spc. Jose J. Flores was convicted by a military judge of one specification of sexual assault, one specification of abusive sexual contact and one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 36 months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 2 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Spc. Tariq I. Khan was convicted by a military judge of one specification of aggravated assault, one specification of negligent discharge of a firearm and one specification of obstruction of justice. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for five years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 8 at a general court-martial at Fort Leavenworth, Sgt. Andrew R. Buczkowski was convicted by a military judge of one specification of abusive sexual contact and one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-4, to be confined for six months and to be reprimanded.
- On April 8 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Pvt. Phillip C. Faustman was convicted by a military judge of one specification of attempted assault, two specifications of absence without leave, two specifications of false official statements and five specifications of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 13 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 9 at a special court-martial at Fort Hood, a staff sergeant was acquitted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of one specification of cruelty and maltreatment, one specification of abusive sexual contact and one specification of assault.
- On April 15 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Pfc. Karena A. Dupree was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to her pleas, of one specification of failure to obey a lawful order, one specification of maiming, one specification of aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon, one specification of simple assault, one specification of assault consummated by a battery, two specifications of communicating a threat and one specification of obstruction of justice. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 13 months, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 15 at a general court-martial at Fort Riley, Kansas, a staff sergeant was acquitted by a military judge of one specification of failure to obey a lawful general regulation, one specification of cruelty and maltreatment and one specification of a sex-related offense.

- On April 16 at a general court-martial at Fort Polk, Louisiana, Spc. Taylor A. Layton was convicted by a military judge of one specification of disobeying a lawful general order, two specifications of possessing child pornography and one specification of viewing child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 36 months, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 21 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Spc. Dallas R. Sutton was convicted by a military judge of one specification of failure to obey a lawful general regulation, one specification of fleeing apprehension, one specification of resisting apprehension, one specification of the drunken operation of a vehicle and one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 7 months, and to be discharged from the service with a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 23 at a special court-martial at Fort Riley, Spc. Courtney A. Craig was convicted by a military judge of one specification of attempting to photograph the private area of another soldier without consent. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 20 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 23 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Pvt. Christopher D. Hillian was convicted by military judge of one specification of disrespect toward a senior noncommissioned officer, two specifications of wrongful use of MDA and marijuana, one specification of provoking speech and two specifications of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 195 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 23 at a general court-martial at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, a specialist was acquitted by a military judge of two specifications of sexual assault and two specifications of abusive sexual contact.
- On April 24 at a general court-martial at Fort Sam Houston, Staff Sgt. David J. Singley was convicted by a military judge of six specifications of false official statements and eight specifications of wearing unauthorized insignia, decorations, badges or ribbons. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 27 at a general court-martial at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Pfc. Alexeiv A. Perez-Vazquez was convicted by military judge of one specification of making an indecent visual recording. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1 and to be confined for 4 months.
- On April 28 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, a sergeant was acquitted by a military panel consisting of officer members of one specification of sexual assault by impairment.
- On April 28 at a general court-martial at Fort Riley, Spc. James R. Reed was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer, one specification of willfully destroying nonmilitary property, two specifications of aggravated assault with the means likely to produce death or grievous bodily harm, one specification of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of kidnapping. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for eight years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 28 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, a captain was acquitted by a military panel consisting of officer members of one specification of indecent liberty with a child, one specification abusive sexual contact with a child and one specification of an indecent act.
- On April 29 at a general court-martial at Fort Leonard Wood, Sgt. 1st Class Alvin Lunceford Jr. was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of making an indecent visual recording. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-6 and to be confined for four months.
- On April 30 at a general court-martial at Fort Polk, Pvt. Tyler J. Christie was convicted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of one specification of desertion and one specification of absence without leave. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 30 days and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 30 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Pfc. Marc Anthony R. St. Hilaire was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 60 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 30 at a special court-martial at Fort Polk, Pfc. Channing J. Tisdale was convicted by a military judge of one specification of desertion and one specification of absence without leave. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for seven months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

Fourth judicial circuit

- On April 1 at a special court-martial at Fort Carson, Colorado, Pvt. Anthony V. Colombo was convicted by a military judge of one specification of wrongful use of cocaine and one specification of wrongful distribution of Percocet. The military judge sentenced the accused to forfeit \$200 pay per month for one month, to be restricted to the limits of Fort Carson for one month and to perform hard labor without confinement for three months.
- On April 1 at a general court-martial at Fort Bliss, Texas, Pfc. Adam G. Koenig was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of rape of a child under 12 years old, three specifications of sexual abuse of a child under 12, one specification of aggravated sexual contact of a child under 12 and one specification of production of child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for life with the possibility of parole and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 1 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, Pfc. Brandon J. Sharp was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of rape. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the

grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for nine years and to a dishonorable discharge.

- On April 2 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, Master Sgt. Jesse P. Gatlin was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of assault with a firearm and one specification of wrongfully and willfully discharging a firearm. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-5 and to be confined for 180 days.
- On April 2 at a special court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Sgt. Jonathon A. Jonguitud was convicted by a military judge of one specification of child endangerment. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit \$1,031 pay per month for 12 months, to be confined for one year, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 2 at a general court-martial at Camp Casey, South Korea, Staff Sgt. Steve R. Wolaver was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of adultery. The military judge sentenced the accused to forfeit \$1,200 pay per month for three months and to perform hard labor without confinement for three months.
- On April 3 at a general court-martial at Camp Casey, Pvt. Calvin J. Coler was convicted by a military judge of one specification of aggravated assault and one specification of assault consummated by a battery in violation. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 10 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 7 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Spc. Juventino Tovar-Chavez was convicted by a military panel of one specification of sexual assault. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for two years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 7 at a general court-martial at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, Staff Sgt. Ramon L. Pantojas Jr. was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of communicating indecent language. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 10 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 8 at a general court-martial at Fort Bliss, Sgt. Francis A. Carista was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of sexual abuse of a child. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for eight years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 13 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, a private first class was acquitted by a military judge of one specification of sexual assault of a child.
- On April 14 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Spc. David R. Sanders was convicted by a military judge of one specification of desertion, one specification of willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer, two specifications of sexual assault, one specification of stalking, one specification of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of indecent language. The military judge sentenced the

accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for five years and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On April 15 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Pfc. Cedarium L. Johnson was convicted by a military judge of one specification of obstruction of justice. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1 and to be confined for nine months.
- On April 17 at a general court-martial at Camp Henry, a specialist was acquitted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of two specifications of attempted sex-related offenses, three specifications of sex-related offenses, one specification of forcible sodomy and two specifications of assault consummated by a battery.
- On April 17 at a general court-martial at Fort Carson, Sgt. Richard L. Young was convicted by a military judge of one specification of attempted communication of indecent language to a child, one specification of attempted abusive sexual contact of a child, one specification of attempt to commit a lewd act upon a child, one specification of possession of child pornography and one specification of adultery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for three years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 20 at a special court-martial at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Pvt. David G. Crowley III was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of four specifications of absence without leave, one specification of failure to obey a lawful general order and three specifications of wrongful use of a controlled substance. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 120 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 20 at a general court-martial at Army Garrison Yongsan, South Korea, Pfc. Lawan D. Williams was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of attempted sexual assault and one specification of sexual assault. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 28 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 21 at a general court-martial at Fort Bliss, Sgt. 1st Class Paul E. Thomas was convicted by a military judge of one specification of disobeying a lawful order from a superior commissioned officer, four specifications of fraternization, one specification of false official statement and two specifications of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for six months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 22 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Pvt. Jeremiah D. Hill was convicted by a military panel of one specification of unpremeditated murder. The members sentenced the accused to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 45 years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 23 at a general court-martial at Camp Casey, Pvt. Craig M. Collins was convicted by a military judge of one specification of false official statement and three specifications of assault consummated by a battery. The

military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for six months, and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On April 23 at a general court-martial at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, Spc. James W. Hughes was convicted by a military judge of thirty-one specifications of larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for eight months, to pay a fine of \$9,834, to serve additional confinement of four months if the fine is not paid, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 24 at a general court-martial at Fort Bliss, Sgt. Stephen Ayala was convicted by a military judge of one specification of cruelty toward a subordinate and one specification of adultery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-3 and to be confined for five months.
- On April 24 at a general court-martial at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, Pfc. Pho Y. Truong was convicted by a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of aggravated sexual assault and one specification of abusive sexual contact. The accused was acquitted of two specifications of aggravated sexual contact. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade E-1, to be confined for nine months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 25 at a special court-martial at Fort Irwin, California, Pfc. Dustyn R. Kidd was convicted by a military judge of five specifications of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of drunk and disorderly conduct. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for six months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 27 at a special court-martial at Fort Carson, Sgt. Jonathan W. Hairston Sr. was convicted by a military judge of one specification of larceny of nonmilitary property worth more than \$500 and one specification of a false official statement. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-3, to be confined for six months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 28 at a general court-martial at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Presidio of Monterey, California, Pvt. Zachary Carroll was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of failure to report, one specification of violating a lawful general order, one specification of dereliction of duty and one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to no punishment.
- On April 29 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, a sergeant was acquitted by a military panel

consisting of officer and enlisted members of six specifications of child endangerment.

- On April 29 at a general court-martial at Army Garrison Yongsan, Sgt. 1st Class Brian L. Todd was convicted by a military panel of two specifications of failure to obey a lawful general order or regulation and one specification of adultery. The members sentenced the accused to be confined for 90 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.

Fifth judicial circuit

- On March 31 at a general court-martial at Kaiserslautern, Germany, Pfc. Terrance L. Gaddy was convicted by a military judge of one specification of rape, seven specifications of sexual assault and one specification of indecent exposure. On April 1, the military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 14 years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On April 2 at a general court-martial at Vilseck, Germany, Pfc. Leroy A. Greene was convicted by military panel of one specification of sexual assault, two specifications of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of drunk and disorderly conduct. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 18 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On April 24 at a special court-martial at Vilseck, Pfc. Terrance J. Mcgee was convicted by military judge of one specification of violating a general regulation, one specification of wrongful introduction of a Schedule I controlled substance and one specification of wrongful distribution of a Schedule I controlled substance. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit \$500 pay per month for six months, to be confined for six months and to be reprimanded.
- On April 30 at a general court-martial at Kaiserslautern, Sgt. Raymond L. Moore was convicted by a military panel consisting of officer and enlisted members of one specification of failure to obey an order or regulation, one specification of assault consummated by a battery and two specifications of communicating a threat. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-3, to forfeit \$1,370 pay per month for three months, to be restricted for 60 days to the limits of the company area and barracks, to perform hard labor without confinement for 90 days and to be reprimanded.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/05/21/military-justice-ucmj-verdicts-april-2015/27710337/>

Birth Control Options May Expand Under Defense Bills

(21 May) Military Times, By Patricia Kime

House and Senate legislators are moving toward widening contraception options available to service members and their families.

Draft versions of each chamber's 2016 defense authorization bill include provisions related to birth control and contraception available through the military health system. The House bill would expand options available at military treatment facilities, while the Senate bill calls for increased

family planning counseling and updates to the military health system's clinical guidelines on birth control.

Military pharmacies stock many contraceptive prescriptions or devices, but not all methods approved by the Food and Drug Administration are listed in the Defense Department's basic formulary, the list of medications that military treatment facilities are required to stock.

The House bill would ensure that MTFs offer methods such as Depo-Provera injections, contraceptive rings and intra-uterine devices in addition to the birth control pills and contraceptive patches that are frequently prescribed. The bill also would require military health officials to provide enough medication to female troops to cover the length of an entire deployment. Lawmakers say the unavailability of long-term birth control methods, or the standard practice of dissuading troops from using methods such as IUDs if they have not had children, represent an obstacle to care that can negatively affect their health and careers.

According to a report released in February by the Center For American Progress, one-third of women in uniform say they were unable to receive a preferred birth control method before deploying, while 41 percent had problems refilling their prescriptions once deployed.

"Not all contraceptive methods are equal, and some women can only tolerate certain types," said Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., who pressed for inclusion of the provision in the House bill. "Service women deserve access to the same array of contraceptive methods available to the civilians they fight to protect."

The Senate bill, which has been approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee but not officially released, does not go as far as mandating expansion of the basic formulary.

All-female Marine grunt team gets innovative during combat tests

(13 May) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hodge Seck

TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIF. — It's a hot, dry desert morning in April. At Range 107, a Marine anti-armor team carrying individual 31-pound packs, a pair of 16-pound shoulder-launched multipurpose assault weapons, and four 13-pound rockets hikes up a rocky path into view.

In the four-woman team of a corporal and three sergeants, no member stands taller than 5 feet 4 inches. When they approach an 8-foot obstacle made out of a shipping container, it looms over them. But their movements are practiced.

Without wasting a motion, three Marines approach the wall and hunch down, allowing a teammate to scramble over them to the top. They then repeat the process with two women at the wall's base. Then one Marine boosts her teammate up. When the last Marine remains at the base of the wall, the three at the top lower down a stirrup made of three Marine Corps Martial Arts Program belts buckled into loops and linked together. The Marine at the wall settles her boot inside the belt contraction and gains a few feet on the vertical obstacle, reaching the waiting hands of her teammates, who pull her the rest of the way over.

The whole process takes just minutes. Then the Marines gather their weapons and push on, further up the hill, where the remainder of the day's tasks await.

At the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force — the only place to find an all-female anti-armor team in the Marine Corps — size matters, but so does ingenuity. The unit, which now includes roughly 200 male and 75 female volunteers distributed across a span of ground combat arms specialties, is

Rather, it would require DoD to update its clinical practice guidelines for physicians on birth control and provide contraception counseling to female troops.

In a bill introduced last year, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., had pressed to expand the basic formulary to include all FDA-approved birth control prescriptions, a Shaheen spokesman said Thursday, adding that the senator planned to offer an amendment including such a provision when the defense bill is considered by the full Senate.

"Providing complete and current information on contraception will allow active service members — especially the more than 350,000 women in uniform — to make more informed family planning decisions," Shaheen said.

The House bill also contains a provision that would expand reproductive counseling and fertility services for troops and their family members, a benefit now available at a cost to a limited number of personnel at a handful of military hospitals. The bill provides few details on what services would be covered, but said coverage would be "pursuant" to the findings of a report required under the 2015 Defense Authorization Act on the subject.

The Senate version contains no similar provision.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/health-care/2015/05/21/birth-control-options-may-expand-under-defense-bills/27723995/>

winding down a period of combat assessments that began in early March.

Strapped with GPS and heart rate monitors and surrounded by research observers who record the speed and scope of each task into smartbooks, the volunteers live in a repetitive research cycle reminiscent of "Groundhog Day," a movie about a weatherman who kept reliving the same day.

For infantry and weapons Marines, the task is to assault the same hill every two or three days, completing a specific set of physical and live-fire tasks over a span of a few kilometers. Special devices on their rifles capture every round's impact to measure accuracy, while the heart rate monitors and surveys administered after each assessment capture individual physical exertion levels.

On alternating days, they hike nearly five miles with their weapons and packs weighing just shy of 60 pounds, then spend two hours digging fighting holes that will later be filled back in with earth movers.

The goal of the task force is to develop gender-blind job-specific standards for each ground combat arms military occupational specialty that remains closed to female Marines. But there's a broader underlying question: Can female Marines do the job at all?

The Marine Corps' answer to that question is likely to be a nuanced one.

Anatomy of an assessment

Crafting the Marine Corps' first large-scale human research study was the task of Paul Johnson, a former Navy corpsman who now serves in Marine Corps Operational Test Evaluation Activity as a civilian. In a trailer complex that houses offices for the unit's headquarters element, Johnson quickly steers the conversation to size, a factor that continually asserts itself during the combat arms assessments.

In a practiced presentation, Johnson uses large and small dice to illustrate the difference between the average male and female Marines as they compose rifle squads and other units. A chart on the wall gets specific: The average male Marine weighs around 180 pounds, while the average female Marine is closer to 135. When it comes to hauling a wounded comrade out of the combat zone — simulated in the assessment by Cpl. Carl, a dummy that weighs 214 pounds fully loaded with gear — the heft can make a difference.

"But don't fall in love with the average," Johnson warns, noting that the Marine Corps has its share of smaller, slighter men and tall, muscular women.

Certain size-related challenges, such as female Marines driving the Corps' decades-old light armored vehicles, designed for men between the 5th and 95th percentile in height, proved not as daunting as expected. Early on, evaluating officials brought in shorter Marines to attempt the task and found they could do it without a problem.

Another concern for researchers was that of loading and repetition, and the delicate balance of ensuring daily tasks were challenging but not cycled in such a way that lack of recovery time would leave volunteers injured. During dry-run tests at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where the task force trained for months before "deploying" to the West Coast, researchers ruled out weeklong assessment cycles in favor of schedules that would give Marines a break every three to four days.

Guaranteed rest time isn't a luxury that Marines in combat zones, or even the Corps' infantry schools, can count on. But it made sense, Johnson said, given the months of assessments necessary to complete the study.

"Over the course of the experiment, an individual in the rifle squad will do about 140 kilometers, which is quite a bit," Johnson said. "We had to look at the total accumulated mileage ... to make sure that we were in a window that was sustainable."

For each new assessment, the staff assigned Marines their roles at random, populating three separate groups: all-male, low-density female and high-density female. Whether on a howitzer crew or rifle squad, the Marine volunteers then ran the day's tasks as observers logged speed, accuracy, exertion level and even the Marines' feelings at the end of the run.

But for a service that is just 7 percent women between its officer and enlisted population, a "high-density female" team should match that ratio. In the assessment, a high-density rifle

squad has just two female Marines out of its 12 members. A low-density squad has just one.

"When you do a probabilistic estimate of how likely you are to see a rifle squad that has a female in it or even two females in it, that's about as high as you're going to see, unless we dramatically increase the recruiting of females into the Marine Corps," Johnson said. "In theory you could create an all-female rifle squad, but one would really never come about through the manpower and assignment process, so you'd be spending a lot of money experimenting with something you'd probably never see in nature."

The tasks themselves are taken directly from the training and readiness manuals for each combat specialty, with an emphasis on repetitive tasks that require elements of physical exertion and teamwork. The six-Marine howitzer crews, for example, must set up their M777 155mm weapons and execute a series of challenging live-fire missions. Then individual crew members each shoulder a 105-pound howitzer round and carry it for two laps of 100 meters each. The mechanized crews, including LAVs, assault amphibious vehicles and tanks, do a day of live fire followed by a day of maintenance tasks, including changing a 175-pound tire and "evacuating" a fully loaded dummy from inside the vehicle to a recovery spot a set distance away.

"We didn't pick the sexiest [Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command] standards for a task. What we tried to do is pick the core tasks that require a high physical component," Johnson said. "There are many cognitive tasks that these MOSs perform, but we're not studying cognitive aspects of individual Marines. In fact we hold an assumption going in that men and women cognitively are equivalent. And so we didn't spend our experimental resources looking at that."

Getting creative

Despite the emphasis on physicality, the experiment's designers welcomed creative workarounds that allowed female Marines to compensate for their smaller height and build.

During a maintenance tasks cycle at the LAV section, a three-Marine team changed one of the massive vehicle tires. Two men loosened the bolts from the front while a female Marine, Lance Cpl. Julia Carroll, lay prone underneath the vehicle, applying pressure to ease the tire off. When they re-fitted the LAV, a male Marine lay on his back and supported the tire with his leg muscles while Carroll and another Marine stood at either side to position it.

With these unwieldy vehicles, on which many parts outweigh the typical female Marine, a little ingenuity is necessary, said Lance Cpl. Brittany Dunklee, a 19-year-old volunteer from Gwinn, Michigan.

Early on in the assessment, Dunklee, a trained motor transport Marine, learned to manipulate the 175-pound tires by using another tire for leverage, to roll it up the treads and into place. Other Marines had their own tricks: standing on bench seats to open vehicle top hatches, compensating for shorter stature,

and using leg strength instead of arm strength to apply extra force.

"I don't like to be told what I can't do, and this is one of those things," Dunklee said. "This paves the road for the rest of the females who want to do this."

For the all-female anti-armor team in Weapons Company, the belt loop device was born of necessity. The shortest member of the team is about 5 feet 1 inch tall, making the obstacle especially daunting.

Cpl. Janelle Lopez, 23, developed the technique with two lance corporals during an early trial run.

"Even though we might have the strength, sometimes our height does play a factor in some situations," she said. "So we tried it as a female team, and it works."

"Even though we might have the strength, sometimes our height does play a factor in some situations," she said. "So we tried it as a female team, and it works."

Volunteers were quick to point out, too, that mechanical aids only take you so far.

"It comes down to the pack," said Sgt. Kelly Brown, an infantry volunteer. "It's not like anybody's going to be able to carry it for you, so you're on your own."

Injury and the physical toll

The most significant way female Marines' slight stature and smaller, lighter frames present concerns for task force researchers regarding the injuries they may be more likely to sustain.

Task force and Pentagon officials have carefully guarded early data from the unit and declined to provide specialty-specific information about Marines who had been dropped due to injuries. But patterns are emerging, according to sources connected with the task force.

As of mid-April, the number of male volunteers had dropped from about 300 to 200, sources said, and the number of female volunteers was down from about 100 to 75. Because this is a human research experiment, Marine volunteers are allowed to drop on request from the unit for any reason. Those requests are included in the total drops.

While most male volunteers have dropped due to non-injury related reasons, most female volunteers have been dropped due to injuries.

And the injuries follow intuitive patterns. Staff with the task force's artillery element, in which Marines do not carry a combat load and operate in brief, intense bursts of effort, said they saw only a few men and woman drop. Female drops due to injury had largely been the result of pre-existing physical

issues, and knee and ankle injuries were the most common, said Capt. Andrew Miller, commander of Alpha Battery.

Injuries were more prevalent in the unit's infantry and weapons companies, where Marines carry between 30 and 60 pounds daily in addition to their weapons.

Even some of those who remained in the unit were recovering from knee and hip strain.

"I was on light duty for basically three cycles because of a hip injury that I received. I'm actually just coming back now, and it's been a struggle for me," said Lopez, the anti-armor team member. "[The sergeants with the unit are] understanding of my situation, and they push me when they know that I know my limits as well. It hasn't been easy but I'm thankful that I'm here."

All injuries are closely monitored and treated by the unit's medical staff, said task force officials. Samarov, the innovation plans officer, said certain controls were in place to make sure no element of the task force dropped too many Marines. If unit drops fell below a certain level for any specialty, he said, the research would have to be curtailed for lack of an adequate sample size. So far, that hasn't happened, he said.

Still, there are data points related to the physical toll on female Marines' bodies that will remain elusive, even after task force research concludes.

"Anything that requires a long period of time to know is very difficult to identify inside a relatively fixed study, even a long study like this one," Samarov said. "So we know, for example, that a 20-year career as an infantry Marine takes a toll on you. There's no way we can identify what female Marines in combat arms, what the toll of a 20-year career would be on their bodies. Would it be the same as their male counterparts?"

Task force Marines are now concluding the assessment here and traveling to Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport and Camp Pendleton, California, to begin a set of geography-specific tasks. Infantry Marines and combat engineers will participate in mountain warfare assessments at Bridgeport, while some of the mechanized units will perform amphibious landings at Pendleton.

The assessments will wrap up in mid-July, when all task force Marines are due back to Camp Lejeune to regroup for a final time.

Johnson, the experiment's principal investigator, will then have several months to prepare a detailed report on the unit's findings, which will be sent to the commandant this fall. <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/05/12/gceitf-inside-the-assessment/26590797/>

Mabus to push big changes to PT, career opportunities

(13 May) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

Fair fitness standards, less online training, more educational opportunities and a better balance of work and family life. Those hot button issues for sailors and Marines are now at the forefront of a new campaign by the Navy's top civilian to boost quality of life and recruit more women into the ranks.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus is set to unveil a host of far-reaching initiatives and policy changes Wednesday, aimed at improving quality of life and careers for sailors and Marines, many which came directly from the deckplates, a senior Navy official has confirmed to Navy Times.

Mabus plans to ease body fat restrictions, boost career flexibility, and push to recruit more women in the Navy and Marine Corps, while opening up the last billets that remain closed to them.

The initiatives have been in the works for some time. Mabus has publicly voiced support for increasing the number of women and the jobs open to them, while Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Bill Moran's office has been collecting fleet feedback on everything from revamping Navy Knowledge Online and the PFA to beefing up education and civilian training opportunities. Mabus is also expected to highlight recent moves to accelerate promotions for top performing corporals.

All of the initiatives are on a timeline to be completed from as early as this year for many of them to 2018 for some of the fitness updates.

Rethinking body fat

The Chief of Naval Personnel's Office has been working since late last year on an overhaul to the twice-yearly body composition assessment for sailors.

It's too early to tell whether the service will abandon the much maligned tape test all together, but leadership is taking a close look at how to measure sailors' health and help them improve it where necessary.

With an eye toward the Defense Department's more lenient body fat standards than the Navy's, officials are looking at increasing the body fat limits for being able to take the physical readiness test portion of the PFA.

That would mean that sailors who are over the Navy's body fat limit would still be able to take their PRT, as long as they're within DoD standards.

"We'd like to decouple BCA from the pass/fail of PFA," the official said, making the body fat test more about health.

From there, the official said, medical professionals could address body fat issues non-punitively.

The initiative would also institute non-punitive spot checks in between PFA tests, to give sailors and their commands an idea of how they're taking care of themselves in between testing periods, where three failures in four years will get a sailor booted.

The Navy wants to "break the idea that the PFA is about a two-times-a-year test," said the official, who wasn't authorized to speak publicly before the SECNAV's speech.

Recruiting and retaining women

Mabus has dedicated a big part of his tenure as secretary to integrating women into the fleet, from opening once closed billets to outfitting men and women in the same styles of uniforms.

He wants to take that a step further, the official said, by opening the last remaining closed billets and increasing recruiting of women to 25 percent, up from the current 18 percent figure for the Navy and about 5 percent for the Marines.

"When you look at the number of [female] graduates from high school, number of graduated from college, from [science, technology, engineering and math], they far surpass what we see in the Navy and Marine Corps," the official said.

To help the Navy Department better reflect American society, the services are looking at not only increasing recruitment of women, but making recruits aware of all of the jobs they can do in the Navy and Marine Corps.

"What we're doing now is, people come in the door and maybe they don't know that those tech opportunities exist," the official said. "Maybe they don't know that they're qualified for those technical opportunities."

If a female recruit wants to be yeoman, he said, the Navy will give them that job without many questions asked.

The new approach, however, would be to make sure that recruit knows she is also qualified to work as a missile technician, for instance.

A slew of other initiatives are aimed at retaining women, including increased maternity leave, longer child-care hours, an updated co-location policy for dual military couples and opportunities like the career intermission program, which allows sailors to take time off to pursue educational or other personal goals.

The secretary is also set to talk about updates to officer and enlisted advancements, bonuses, the command advancement program and a revamp of the general military training system.

19 women washed out of Army Ranger School. That's actually a good thing.

(13 May) The Washington Post, By Gayle Tzemach Lemmon

Last week, eight women washed out of the Army's prestigious Ranger School after 11 others didn't make it past the first cut, and none of them will earn the vaunted black and gold Ranger "tab."

Yet. And that's actually a good thing.

No, they didn't get a chance to move on to face the grueling demands of the leadership school's mountain phase, and for the moment, at least, they've paused this first experiment to open Ranger School to women for the first time.

But some headlines are declaring this a failure, which—intended or not—suggests it's a sign that women can't handle close-quarters combat or some of the military's other highly demanding tests. This groundbreaking co-ed class, though, was far from a failure.

In fact, women made it past some of the physical hurdles at nearly the same rates as men. And the fact that no women candidates moved forward this time doesn't spell the end of women tackling the Army's toughest leadership course, which spans two months, three phases and endless physical obstacles, including sleep and food deprivation. The last eight women standing this time around will attempt the first phase of Ranger School once again on May 14 and they'll be in good company—with 101 men who also didn't finish this time, but earned the right to try once more.

Most importantly, what the result so far demonstrates is that the Army has stood by what Ranger School graduates and women soldiers alike have demanded: maintaining the incredibly high standard of what senior military leaders call the "Army's most physically and mentally-demanding course" while making room for women who could handle the test and sought the chance to meet that bar. No one wanted any slack cut, and none was.

When I went to Fort Benning in April to report on the last of the pre-Ranger School courses in which women and men prepared for the rigors of Ranger School, over and over again women soldiers involved in the opening of Ranger School told me they did not want a lowered standard. In fact, they were fine if only one woman finished the course this time. Or none. They felt confident that eventually women would make it through if given the chance. And now, they said, for the first time ever, women soldiers knew the standard from first-hand experience, so that the fittest and most committed could train to it with the knowledge that they could enter and potentially graduate from Ranger School.

And the women aren't all that different from the men, many of whom didn't make it on their first try at Ranger School or didn't make it past the first set of exercises.

Indeed, when women started the opening phase of Ranger School for the first time in April, alongside them were 71 men who had already entered the course, hadn't made it through, and had the strength, guts and determination to return to try once more. More than a third of all soldiers who finish Ranger School "recycle" through at least one of the phases, so the women who didn't make it to the end this time are in solid statistical company. About 35 men who started alongside these women won't receive the chance to start again. Instead, they will return to their units now without having another shot.

The reality is that eight of the 19 women who began Ranger School on April 20 have already met some of the course's most intense physical demands. They made it through the muscle-crushing first four days, known as Ranger Assessment Phase, in which soldiers confront a series of tests, from swimming, push-ups and sit-ups to land navigation and finishing a 12-mile march with 35 pounds on their backs in less than three hours. "As many as 60 percent" of all Ranger School dropouts occur in these first four days. Nineteen women and 381 men began Ranger School last month and at the finish of those initial 96 hours, eight women and 184 men remained—meaning just 42 percent of all women and 48 percent of men succeeded in passing those first days.

So it's not a case of "oh, well, we tried." It's more like "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again." As so many men already have and many women hope to.

"All women won't be able to do it, your average female won't be able to handle Ranger School, but women that train, that are in great shape, not just good shape, they will have a good chance at completing Ranger School," said Sgt. 1st Class Tiffany Myrick, a military police non-commissioned officer now serving as an observer and adviser at Ranger School. Senior officers note that most men couldn't handle it, either. Not even 4 percent of the Army has earned the designation.

"The women made it through RAP week, which is the one that put the most people out of Ranger School," said Myrick. "It is tough, but it is definitely doable."

If the Army had offered different standards for the women who wanted to face its toughest test—and if women completed Ranger School under that different standard—it would've been that much harder for women to prove they're up to the challenge, or that they truly deserve to wear the Ranger tab. A single standard and the chance to meet it while doing something meaningful on America's behalf is all these soldiers, who happen to be women, seek.

Marines take coed living in stride during experiment

(14 May) *Marine Corps Times*, By Hope Hedge Seck

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — It's a warm and dusty afternoon, and the infantrymen have completed their assessments for the day. Marines are beating the heat in whatever way seems best to them. A female Marine sprawls underneath a tarp with boots off and a book; a few male Marines have set up a sandwich station outside a bloc of tents, layering meat and mayonnaise on whole-grain bread. A Marine makes a loud observation that he believes gender doesn't matter if you can get the job done — but it turns out the job he's talking about is president of the United States.

This was home life for many Marines of the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, who wrapped up a series of combat arms assessments at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms in May before splitting off to Bridgeport and Camp Pendleton for further testing. Marines assigned to the task force's infantry and weapons elements lived side-by-side in one- and two-man tents — regardless of gender — the way a future integrated unit might expect to live during field training or downrange on a deployment. Despite the close quarters and privacy challenges, Marines said they settled easily into the arrangement.

"Everyone's pretty professional about it," said Cpl. Carolina Ortiz, 27, a member of the task force's artillery assessment. "Nothing less than green-on-green [respect] and everyone's comfortable following the rules, so nobody sees anything they don't want to see."

Most female Marines chose female tent mates for their weeks of living in the field, Ortiz said, but they had the option of rooming with a male Marine if they preferred. The Marines had access to separate shower facilities, but Ortiz admitted she had taken a few "field showers," out of necessity.

"I just go out into the wilderness, shower real fast and then come back," she said.

For some male combat arms Marines, it was their first time living and working in close quarters with female counterparts. The situation provided ample opportunity for pointing out the differences between the genders, and a fair share of teasing as well.

During a break between live-fire tasks at an M777 155mm howitzer assessment, Cpl. Taylor Roepke needled Cpl. Allison Devries about her lack of mussed-up helmet hair. She cocked an eyebrow and playfully flipped a lock of hair out of place.

"I washed it yesterday, that's why," she replied. "I brought shampoo, the good stuff."

Roepke nodded.

"I got a travel bottle," he said, "and it exploded all over the place."

In more serious moments, some male volunteers told *Marine Corps Times* that adjusting to integrated life was awkward initially, but grew more comfortable as the unit spent time together.

"It was really strange for some people at first," said Cpl. Kevin Rodriguez, 22, who was directly assigned to a staff position at the artillery unit. "But now it's like we're brothers and sisters. It happened really fast; I was pretty surprised. Now we're sleeping together on the ground, on the back of the trucks, like it's normal."

Sgt. Ryan McCauley, a 28-year-old direct-assignment ammunition bearer assigned to the task force's weapons company, said he found living and working with female troops made him a better-rounded person.

"I've gotten better social skills, actually, working with females," McCauley said. "A lot of guys lose their heads, actually, in an all-male atmosphere and verbiage slips. Here, you have to be professional at all times. If anything, it sharpened my social skills for when I do get out."

Regarding privacy, McCauley said basic respect helped him avoid any uncomfortable situations.

"It's kind of like moving in with a roommate," he said. "You've got to respect their needs and how they want to live. For hygiene, we go to our separate end and they go to their separate end and that's how we live."

Marine volunteers are able to offer feedback about integrated unit cohesion in two ways, officials overseeing the task force said. After each assessment cycle, Marines take a short survey that gauges their feedback on how the unit worked together. Another study, to be published by the Center for Naval Analyses, will analyze Marines' perception of the unit as a whole, taken from interviews at the start and end of the experiment.

Neither tool is intended to zero in on challenges associated with ground combat element living conditions.

That's intentional, said Paul Johnson, the architect of the task force.

"So the men and women live and work together during the course of the experiment. The purpose of the experiment is not to measure how well men and women live and work together," he said. "So we didn't design the experiment to answer questions that the Marine Corps already knows the answer to, which is how well do men and women live and work together. We kind of already know that because the Marine Corps has been integrated for years in a multitude of professions."

Col. Matthew St. Clair, the task force commanding officer, said having an integrated ground unit didn't change the realities of work in the field and downrange, where Marines

can expect to work in close physical proximity with members of their unit, whether in an armored Humvee or on radio watch.

"Marines have to get comfortable and used to being side by side and working in close quarters," he said. "And most are comfortable with that, because that's what we do."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/05/14/itf-gender-mixed-living-in-stride/70948542/>

Admiral Says Navy's Goal is 25 Percent Women in Each Ship, Squadron

(15 May) Stars and Stripes, By Wyatt Olson

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — The Navy is proceeding with its plan to increase the number of women in the service to 25 percent with a similar goal of attaining that ratio in each ship and squadron, the vice chief of naval operations said Thursday.

Women currently make up about 17 percent of the Navy, said Adm. Michelle Howard, who made a stop in Honolulu on her way to the International Maritime Defense Exhibition in Singapore, where she will meet with her counterparts from other nations in the region.

Howard, who became vice chief last year, told an all-hands call that women made up only 5 percent of the Navy when she joined in 1978.

"The reason women were such a small percentage of the Navy was that up until 1967, women could only be 2 percent of the armed forces; it was the law," Howard said. "And up until 1967, women could only be the rank of captain or colonel, and there could only be one of them at a time. That was the law."

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said last fall during a stop at Pearl Harbor that the Air Force is made up of about 20 percent women but said she wanted to increase that number, possibly to 30 percent.

Howard said women make up about 46 percent of the civilian workforce, and studies by the Department of Labor have found that an organization achieves optimal performance when its workforce maintains at least 25 percent of whatever the minority sex might be.

Without that, there "are always accusations of tokenism" and "stereotyping," she said.

For that reason, Howard proposed to the secretary of navy that the service "ought to be shooting for a Navy that's about 25 percent women," she said. At that level "workplace relationships get normalized," she said.

Howard's plan, however, goes beyond an overall number and seeks to specifically increase the number of women serving on each ship and squadron.

Because the Navy is globally distributed, a higher percentage of women is needed overall if they are to be represented in greater numbers in ships around the world, she said.

"We're going back and looking at the ships — all of them — and what percentage of women are on the ships. Over time we'll modernize them to make sure we get to about 25 percent on each ship."

Alluding to the general problem of sexual assault in the military and Navy ship commanders routinely relieved of duty for inappropriate conduct, Howard said "we have pockets where people are isolated" and "sometimes their behavior isn't so good."

Historically, women in the service have filled more positions in particular occupations than others, she said.

"So, for example, if you look at the nurse corps officer community, it's the men who are a minority in that community," she said.

"What we want to do is make sure women are aware that there's more out there than traditional jobs. There's growth and opportunity across all the communities.

"We need women leadership just as we need male leadership in some of these communities."

During a question-and-answer session later with reporters, Howard said the Navy is still hashing out the future role for women in one of the service's most elite communities, Naval Special Warfare. Women are barred from serving in the NSW, which includes the SEALs, but possible integration is under review.

U.S. Special Operations Command has the lead in that review but is not scheduled to provide recommendations until the end of the year, Howard said.

She said her sense was that the command was grappling with what "occupational" physical fitness standards would be used if the NSW is opened to women.

"In the end, it might be we can open [NSW slots] up but the occupational standards stand, but if [women] can meet those occupational standards, they should be able to come in.

"What I think will happen is that we won't change those occupational standards," she said.

Asked about overcoming a belief among some men that women aren't physically up to the task of filling these elite

combat positions, Howard said, "I can't speak to the male perspective. I'm not a guy."

After a pause she added: "I've served at sea for 30 years. I've been in command of a ship, know my community. I've been their leader, and my sailors have responded to that. And I

Wanted: Tough, feminine soldiers

(15 May) CNN, By Carol Costello

Army Sgt. Corrin Campbell is a chameleon. Tough combat U.S. Army veteran. Buttoned up officer. And that female singer with the pink hair and the red lips, on a high school stage, belting out Taylor Swift's "Blank Space."

The image is far different from the hardy venerable alpha-male soldier in "American Sniper," which is just fine with Campbell.

Her goal is to convince young women to join the service. Yes, this dynamic, decidedly feminine woman is a force for U.S. Army Recruiting.

Some call her the "Singing Sergeant" because part of her job is to use music and, from what I can see, a bit of a sexy edge, to captivate young audiences.

"I think it kind of blows their mind a little bit that I'm a combat veteran of the 1st Cavalry Division and now they are seeing me on stage at their school," Campbell told me. "They are surprised that I have a job that makes me look like a normal person, (yet) associated with something that makes them think I'm not normal."

There is no question that part of what Campbell does is not normal. Think about it. The military signs up people and trains them to do, without question, the most abnormal thing in the world -- run toward danger, not away from it -- to justifiably kill without question.

It's not that women aren't capable of that -- they certainly are. Just ask 1st Lt. Ashley White's family. Their daughter was part of an elite Army unit that supported the Green Berets and the Army Rangers in Afghanistan. White died fighting for her country. She was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

In fact, the Army is now studying whether to open all jobs to women, even elite combat jobs like the Army Rangers. Strangely, Campbell plays a role in convincing teenage girls they can be tough fighting machines -- an MP, a pilot, or a doctor -- and still be feminine.

"I think that it's a common idea," she said, "that you don't get to be a girl or be a woman in the Army because it's seen as a masculine place to be and that's another perception I'm trying to shake up."

It's a sentiment that frankly surprises me. And I've heard it more than once -- not just from Campbell, but from Ann Dunwoody, America's first four-star female general.

believe I and my team have been successful in every mission we've been given."

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/05/15/admiral-says-navys-goal-is-25-percent-women-in-each-ship-squad.html>

Dunwoody even wrote about it in her book, "A Higher Standard." "We did not have to act like a macho man to be successful. We did not have to forsake our femininity."

I recently sat down with Dunwoody to ask her why femininity is a concern for women entering the service.

"I think sometimes women think when they are in an all-male environment that they have to act like the male," the general told me. "They have to start cursing or smoking or drinking sixpacks or be real rough. And I didn't find that the case at all. I didn't have to curse and swear. It doesn't mean I never did it, but you just try to be who you are. And you can be. You can be confident, demonstrate that you are capable and you have credibility."

It's a sentiment the Army fears isn't getting through to potential female recruits. Last year, out of 195,000 applicants who signed up for the Army, just 25% were women. Of course, the reason for that low number could be that women -- and their femininity -- are not valued by their fellow soldiers.

The number of sexual harassment and sexual assault cases are alarmingly high. According to Defense Secretary Ash Carter, 22% of active-duty women experienced some form of sexual harassment last year.

It's a fact that's not lost on Campbell. "I have not experienced any kind of sexual harassment or assault and I feel very happy and fortunate for that. You're going to have outliers in every population." Still, she adds, being around so many men can be uncomfortable. "The girls ask me what it's like to be surrounded by men all the time. And sometimes it can be intimidating if you let it be, but I think that we need to find women that are confident, and happy to be women, to not compare themselves to the men as much as to find their strength in their own identity."

As for Dunwoody? She experienced what she calls "subtle" forms of discrimination in the service, but is quick to credit a male sergeant for her success in the U.S. Army. He, she says, recognized her talent from that first day, and the need for a diverse military.

"What I've realized is how important diversity is to solving complex and challenging problems that we have today," she told me. "If we are sitting with all men that look alike and trained alike they tend to come out with similar solutions. The power of diversifying ... makes any organization better. Even on the battlefield. Particularly on the battlefield."

The Singing Sergeant is on board. "We're a minority and we're awesome ... I think there are many ways to be feminine. Femininity is strong!" It's the new message the Army is sending to teenage girls nationwide. Will it work? Campbell -- the combat soldier one day, the sexy singer the next -- is

hopeful. I am, too, although it makes me wonder why it took so long for the Army to realize how vital women are to our national security.

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/15/opinions/costello-women-soldiers/>

In Marines' gender study, discoveries but no decisions (Part II)

(18 May) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

Fastest on the gunline

Gun four was on the clock. The M777 howitzer's six crew members shouldered rounds from the 155mm gun, each weighing around 105 pounds. Test observers watched as the Marines trudged or loped 100 meters carrying the unwieldy cylindrical weights, then paused with an unweighted lap before completing the same trip again.

Several of the male Marines completed the task at a light jog, though their pace flagged noticeably on the second lap. Cpl. Allison Devries was not far behind, completing her circuits at a determined trot. Cpl. Carolina Ortiz, the gun's other female crew member, took a different approach. Eyes fixed straight ahead, cannon round supported on her left shoulder with both hands, she finished the task at a paced walk, without faltering or attempting to speed up. Since this was a team activity, the clock stopped only when Ortiz, the last crew member, crossed the finish.

"I'm conserving my energy," she explained later as she sat by the gun, where that day her job involved cranking up the barrel to set the quadrant of fire and pulling the lanyard trigger to fire it on command. "I try to do a pace that's still challenging, because it's really soft sand and it swallows your feet, almost. I just go so that I'm not tired when I have to do my job. When we do the high-altitude [live-fire shoot], I've got to go as fast as I can. So that's when I'll bust out the guns."

At 5-feet 3-inches, Ortiz, 27, was the crew's shortest member. Her strategy, she said, involved channeling her strength into tight bursts, allowing her to respond rapidly to commands as they came over the radio, turning the heavy crank to swing the gun into place. And the strategy worked: With all crew members swinging into action the moment the radio crackled to life, the "high-density female" howitzer, out of the six cannons in the day's assessment, was the fastest on the gun line all day long.

Within the Marine Corps' Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, strategy becomes key when raw strength gets pushed to its limits. During an April embed with the unit, which was completing a series of combat arms assessments as part of the Pentagon's broader effort to open more career fields to women, it became clear there are no simple answers to gender integration. The task force, which activated last fall and now has roughly 200 male and 75 female volunteers organized into subordinate ground combat specialties, set out to determine gender-neutral physical standards for each specialty currently open only to men.

But the unit's findings also will inform recommendations the Marine Corps' commandant must make to the secretary of defense early next year. If he determines it's necessary, the commandant may recommend that certain specialties remain closed to women, even as others open.

As the Marines edge closer to a decision point, it's evident many task force volunteers, particularly the females, are fighting to make a point about women's abilities and to make more options available for those who will come after them.

"This paves the road for the rest of the females who want to do this," said Lance Cpl. Brittany Dunklee, a volunteer in the light armored vehicle specialty, currently restricted to men only. "If you think you can do it, you can do it, male or female."

Devries, 21, also acknowledged she had come to the unit with "a passion and a belief" about the opportunities that should be available to female Marines.

But Ortiz, who was formerly a field radio operator stationed in Okinawa, admitted she came to the unit more out of curiosity: to see if a typical female Marine, like herself, had what it took to hold her own in combat arms.

"I wanted to know, if they took the average Joe — which is kind of my position, I'm not really an athlete or anything — I wanted to see if I could do it," she said.

After six months training with the task force and another month of assessments, Ortiz feels that she has her answer.

"It's really challenging; I've never worked so hard in my life," she said. "It's not going to be easy, but if the will's there, I'm pretty sure [female Marines] can hack it."

New challenges in every field

The challenge for decision-makers lies in how different each of the closed combat arms fields are, from engineers to weapons to mechanized units. Each field is physically demanding, but some appear to be more easily within reach of the "average Joe" female Marine, as Ortiz put it.

At the task force's mechanized company, certain apparent obstacles specific to the size of the vehicles seemed to diminish as female volunteers began to work with the units. In the light armored vehicle platoon, in which crew members must work together to change 175-pound tires and haul a 200-pound simulated crewman casualty out of the vehicle to an

evacuation point a distance away, volunteers acknowledged there was a learning curve.

Lance Cpl. Christopher Augello, 23, said he had devised a new method for using leverage to move the heavy tires after being assigned to an assessment with a shorter female volunteer several times in a row.

"We just found different ways to do things, the fastest and easiest way, so you're not putting so much stress on your body," Augello said. "Everybody's gotten more proficient at their jobs. I know what I have to do, and they know what they have to do."

On the question of whether the field should integrate, Augello said he was "pretty much neutral."

Beyond the learning curve, however, many volunteers felt ready to move into real-world integrated operations with their training.

"Now that we've been out here so long, nothing is much of a challenge anymore," said Pvt. Jordyn Ridgeway, 20, a volunteer with the amphibious assault vehicle platoon who had completed the day's assessment as a crew chief. "There's a couple different ways to do pretty much anything. You learn the tricks of the trade."

Cpl. Kelsey Darling, 20, another AAV volunteer, said she also believed the average female Marine could do the job.

"Just each person is unique, so it depends on if they want to do it or not," she said.

The breaking point

At the task force's infantry and weapons companies, an answer to the question of integration might be more complex.

Capt. Mark Lenzi, the commanding officer of Weapons Company, contended that the unit, which consists of machine gun, anti-armor and mortar platoons, had the most physically challenging of the ground combat tasks, a role that often required Marines to carry well over 100 pounds in combat gear and weapons, with all the speed and maneuvering capability required of ground troops with a lighter load.

"If you weigh 115 pounds and you're carrying 160 pounds on a regular basis, there's a point at which things start to break down," he said. "We have studies that tell us that."

Lenzi said the assessment was a boon to officers like him in that it would create minimum required standards to enter such a grueling and physically demanding job field. Without them, he said, he sometimes ended up with male Marines who just

weren't up to the task. In that case, he said, a unit had only two options: Give the Marine an administrative or clerking position, or work to move him into another field.

"If you're five-six and 120 pounds, you have virtually no chance of doing this job, whatsoever," Lenzi said.

Left unsaid was the fact that setting minimum height and weight criteria above that threshold would rule out a significant portion of the female Marine population — perhaps a majority.

Among Weapons Company's all-woman anti-armor team, several members of which have fought through injury to remain with the task force, opinions are mixed as to whether the Marines would choose this life for themselves if given the option.

Sgt. Danielle Beck, 29, said it would be difficult to move up into the field as a senior noncommissioned officer, having just learned the basics of training and readiness. But, she said, she knew more senior female Marines would be needed to facilitate the potential integration process.

"I do feel that for the younger generation coming in, they do need a female senior that's been there, just gone through the training, understands where they are mentally and physically," she said.

For Cpl. Janelle Lopez, another member of the four-woman team, the assessment had proved that being able to do the job and wanting to do it might not go hand-in-hand.

"I have a newfound respect for [weapons Marines], but it's not a lifestyle I would choose for myself," she said. "In the beginning, I was all about it, going through the experience. But now, I just don't want it."

DeVries, the female artillery volunteer who entered the assessment with "passion and belief," said she is leaving it with a thoughtful perspective and a nuanced viewpoint.

"I feel that my opinion on females in it is, if they can do it and meet the standards, and standards aren't being lowered, then yes, females should be allowed to [serve in combat units]." she said. "But they also have to have the mental aspects to handle the ground combat side as well as the strength and physical abilities. And ... I feel that there are more that cannot than can."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/longform/military/2015/05/15/marines-gender-task-force-finds-discoveries-no-decisions/26969541/>

The Army's all-women special ops teams show us how we'll win tomorrow's wars

(19 May) *The Washington Post*, By Gayle Tzemach Lemmon

In the early hours of a fall pre-dawn night, Lt. Treadmont — an Army intelligence officer who'd also deployed to Bosnia years earlier as a 19-year-old enlisted soldier — clambered up a mountain in eastern Afghanistan, part of a platoon crossing a dense grove of trees that blocked nearly all moonlight. The Afghan terrain typically resembled a moonscape, but tonight the sightline was obscured by vegetation, complicating the night's mission.

Eventually they reached a tiny village where the men of 75th Ranger Regiment were at work seeking the weapons and insurgent who was the target of their mission. The Rangers' translator summoned the men of one house to come out, and in a matter of minutes the soldiers queried them in hopes of identifying the man they wanted and locating the weapons they suspected.

Then Treadmont heard the Rangers' call over the radio. "CST, get over here."

On arrival, the lieutenant removed her helmet to reveal long hair, tied back in two braids, and show that beneath all the gear — night vision devices, M4 assault rifle and M9 pistol — she was a woman: Amber Treadmont (whose name has been changed here and in my book, "Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield," to protect her identity). Her Cultural Support Team, or "CST," an innocuous name for a groundbreaking concept, was born of a battlefield imperative — gathering intelligence from Afghanistan's women.

CSTs weren't only out there winning "hearts and minds" in the traditional sense. They were on nighttime combat operations, learning what Afghan women knew about what was happening in their communities and keeping them separated from the work Rangers were charged with doing nearby. Their work in Afghanistan is an example, not only of the CST members' front-line courage, but of one of the mission-critical ways forward for our nation's ongoing and, perhaps, future Central Asian and Middle Eastern wars: reaching 50 percent of the citizens — women and girls — in a given town or city as part of America's efforts.

Under Afghanistan's conservative culture, women are frequently viewed as vessels of family honor, and in many instances live separate from men who are unrelated by blood or marriage. Violating this tradition would cause grave offense and alienate the same Afghans the United States was and is so eager to win over. Beginning in 2009, U.S. forces would begin to formally deploy American women to engage half its Afghan constituency. And that reality translated into more opportunities opening up to American servicewomen who wanted to be part of a mission that mattered at the heart of the battle.

As CSTs became a trusted component of these overall operations, some team members took on additional roles and others received commendations for helping to find critical intelligence that would otherwise have gone unfound. CST soldiers were recruited both because they were women *and*

they were able to keep pace on combat operations alongside some of America's most tested fighters.

Treadmont and her teammates carried out their assignment for special operations every night and, in the process, CST became the name to which they answered and the family to which they belonged.

Tens of thousands of women have forward-deployed since 9/11—many logging multiple tours. More than 160 women (pdf) have died serving their country in Afghanistan and Iraq. Women now serve as artillery officers, intelligence officers, combat pilots and, as I learned in the reporting of "Ashley's War," in specific roles within Special Forces.

Along the way, the men who run our military realized that they would never kill their way to the fight's end. And they recruited women to help fill the security gaps they saw. But even as our conversations about women in war still frequently seem to focus on what jobs women are *capable* of doing or should be *allowed* to do, there's been insufficient recognition of what women have already done.

For years, military leaders have put the personnel they need into the roles they required, regardless of restrictions on women's service to the United States, dating back to 1948's Women's Armed Services Integration Act. A decade ago, military leaders began putting women service-members alongside men on the constantly shape-shifting battlefield that was Iraq and, later, Afghanistan. First came the Marines' "Lioness" program in Iraq that took women from all kinds of specialties out of their previous assignments and put them on house-to-house missions and patrol checkpoints, searching women to make certain they weren't concealing weapons or explosives. Then came the Female Engagement Teams in Afghanistan created to meet and listen to Afghan women and gather information about the communities in which NATO troops were operating. Their effectiveness won attention and support among top military brass and within the Afghan government, which sought to replicate the program among its own female forces.

The special operations community built on the idea and made it their own with the 2010 creation of the Cultural Support Teams, the brainchild of Adm. Eric Olson, the Navy SEAL then leading U.S. Special Operations Command. Army special operations recruited and trained women, first from within special operations and then from across the Army, National Guard and Reserves, to deploy alongside Green Berets on Village Stability Operations—then a central part of counterinsurgency efforts — and go out at night on special ops missions with the ground-pounders of Ranger Regiment.

In 2011, the 20 women who became part of Ranger and other special operations "direct action" missions soon joined the kinds of combat operations undertaken by only a small fraction of service-members, regardless of gender. Night after night they served alongside Rangers as well as other elite teams and, as women, were able to speak to and gather

information from Afghan women who had previously remained mostly out of reach.

One night a woman told one of Treadmont's teammates that an insurgent they sought lived two homes away. Another night a woman informed the female soldier speaking with her that an insurgent had burst into her home and threatened to blow up her husband and children unless she gave him refuge. Still another night a woman was found with blasting caps and other explosives-making material.

And with each interaction, CSTs demonstrated to Afghan women that the American presence in their country offered more than just an ongoing fight.

In 2013, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta lifted the ban on women in ground combat. A few months later when the question arose as to whether women would be allowed to become Rangers and SEALs in their own right, special operations leaders cited the example of the Cultural Support Teams. "Quite frankly, I was encouraged by just the physical performance of some of the young girls that aspire to go into the cultural support teams," Maj. Gen. Bennet Sacolick of Special Operations Command said in a June 2013 Pentagon news conference about the opening of combat roles to women. "They very well may provide a foundation for ultimate integration."

As a 2012 citation from Ranger Regiment leaders to one of Treadmont's teammates read, she "displayed initiative and unequalled competence" by finding the weapons the Rangers sought on that night's operation. "Her actions ultimately led to the mission's success."

379th ESFS female Airmen lend skills to SOCCENT

(21 May) DVIDS

AL UDEID AIR BASE, Qatar - USSOCOM has recently been developing Female Engagement Teams (FETs) across the Middle East. When looking at the country of Qatar, they determined the 379th ESFS was a valuable and untapped resource.

USSOCOM has previously conducted an exchange program with the Qatari female officers, utilizing U.S. Marines from the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). This will, however, be the first FET from the 379th ESFS to engage and work with the Host Nation female security forces.

FETs have existed since the early days of the Global War on Terror (GWOT), when U.S. Forces realized the need to operate in societies where men are forbidden to engage with women. In spite of this cultural sensitivity, U.S. Forces realized the risk posed by dismissing the female population, especially against an elusive and asymmetric enemy who exploited this security gap.

As USSOCOM and Partnered Coalition Forces move away from the GWOT and return to normal peacetime/security operations, the FET program is maintaining a steady state of employment to ensure persistent engagement with Host Nation women, continuing to respect their culture and traditions.

By July of this year, Special Operations Command will offer its recommendation to the secretary of defense on which positions now closed to women will open. A Rand Corp. study commissioned by the Special Operations Command to identify and assess possible barriers to integration is due out in coming months. By January 2016 all jobs across the U.S. military must open to women unless commanders provide an explanation provided to the secretary of defense and chairman of the joint chiefs as to why they will remain shut. Doubtless the experiences this past decade of war are playing a part in the discussion of the shape of the future force.

More significant, perhaps, is the recognition— as Olson and other leaders describe, that America wasn't and isn't going to kill its way to the end of its post-9/11 wars. No matter how good our military becomes at targeting insurgents and launching counter-terror missions, understanding, and building trust with, the citizens of the countries in which they're fighting is essential. And we've learned that we can't do that without our women service-members.

It's not the military's version of "women's work." It's about how, going forward, we'll fight wars and who is needed for the mission.

In future conflicts with impossible-to-define front lines, fighting enemies with neither uniforms nor an internationally recognized state, that need is and will remain urgent. And the CST experience illustrates not only what women contribute to some of the most dangerous combat operations, but also the unique skills women bring to the kind of ground-level problem-solving and information-gathering the battlefield requires. This capability shouldn't end when the war in Afghanistan does.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/05/19/the-armys-all-women-special-ops-teams-show-us-how-well-will-tomorrows-wars/?postshare=5681432128180291>

The FET program is being employed across the Middle East, not solely within Qatar, and seeks to engage with Muslim women and security forces to ensure a positive exchange of Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures as well as strengthening cultural bonds with strategic allies across the region.

Within the Qatari culture it is deeply important for a male to maintain their ladies honor and modesty, thus creating strict lines of segregation within their society. However, the Qatari Security Forces continue to strive to be a holistic law enforcement agency and realize the need for female security forces to engage with women within their society; so as to maintain decency and respect for the citizens of Qatar.

"I remember when I first volunteered for FET; I remember thinking 'what did I sign up for?' Once, we started training I wished for more of the training," said Staff Sgt. Kathleen Aea, 379th ESFS Unit Security & Defense Biometric Identification Data System manager. "I'm excited that we're serving a purpose so we can interact with Qatari women and increase cultural awareness with one another."

The 379th Security Forces have a constant rotation of females who are already trained in both law enforcement and security

operations. With a presence 365 days a year, the Air Force is in a perfect position to build a strong relationship with the partner nation, with whom they also share a base.

The women of the 379th ESFS conducted several Periods of Instruction to include a tailored Combatives program, utilizing skills from the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, Air Force Combatives, and the Special Operation Combatives Program.

A medical POI was taught covering care under fire, treatment of combat trauma wounds, patient sustainment and transportation. The Personal Security Detail portion instructed the ladies in the TTP's for escorting a Very Important Person (VIP), both in vehicles as well as on foot.

Air Force FET members continued to refine their combat marksmanship skills on the range as well as receive instruction on foreign weapons that their host nation counterparts utilize.

Navy Nurse Corps' Celebrates 107th Anniversary

(12 May) Pensacola News Journal, By Marketta Davis

The Navy Nurse Corps has come a long way from the "Sacred Twenty" and today the Corps celebrates its 107th anniversary. In commemorating the organization's birthday, nurses at Pensacola Naval Hospital are taking the day to reflect on its history, their reasons for being Navy nurses, and the organization's changes over the past 107 years.

On May 13, 1908, the Sacred Twenty – the Navy's first nurses – made history when President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Naval Appropriations Bill which made the Nurse Corps an official Navy staff corps. Pre-Navy Nurse Corps nurses weren't provided living quarters, had to be females between the ages of 22 and 44, and couldn't be married.

Now, 107 years later, the Corps includes males, nurses of all ages and many who are married. The organization has grown from 20 to more than 4,000.

Lt. Cmdr. Gabrielle Crane, department head of the Naval Hospital's Multi-services Unit, has been in the Navy for 10 years and said she always knew she wanted to be a nurse.

"I just had this inner feeling in my heart that I wanted to do something more and serve," she said.

One patient in particular, an Army Special Forces soldier who was medevaced to her facility and had been blinded along with incurring other injuries, reminded her of why she joined and was proud to wear the uniform.

"He lost it," Crane said. "I remember just being at the bedside crying with him and praying with him."

Today is staff nurse Ensign Sarah York's second day on the floor at the hospital. She just recently graduated from Clayton State University in Georgia and already feels at home working with her peers. From the moment she walked in, the young ensign said everyone has made sure she was alright and had everything she needed.

York said it's that kind of concern from the other nurses and corpsman that reflects in the care they give to their patients. "We make sure they're comfortable," she said. "Not just taking care of what they need, like making sure they get the right medications, but making sure they're OK family-wise and other things, stepping outside of just the nursing field and taking care of the whole patient instead of just their ailment."

"We've been given training that has allowed us to build on existing skills as well as learn new techniques to make us more rounded Security Forces members," said Master Sgt. Patricia Hart, 379th ESFS Check Six non-commissioned officer in charge. "Meeting with our female Host Nation counterparts and building the ground work for future exchanges has been an eye opening and rewarding experience!"

All skills taught and refined during the course of instruction, as well as the continuing sustainment training with USSOCOM personnel, will ensure the Air Force FET members are prepared to work with Qatari female security forces, as well as continue to enhance their primary duties as security personnel.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/164029/379th-esfs-female-airmen-lend-skills-soccent#.VV-RIzYcTZO>

Cmdr. Joe Taylor, Naval Hospital associate director for Medical Services, has more than 20 years experience being in the field and remembers how he felt being on the floor his first day as a nurse.

"It's very daunting coming into the nursing field especially in the military because you have to learn two different professions: you're a nurse and you're an officer," Taylor said. A major change in military nursing he's seen over the years is in the transition from being more clinically-inclined to being more business-inclined.

"We've gone from being very clinically-focused – trying to offer the best healthcare clinically – to being the best business that Navy Medicine can provide as well. So we have to do both: patient safety and quality of care but at an affordable cost. So we're very much business-focused now."

Taylor said because of this transition, every day is a challenge.

"We didn't come into this field to balance checkbooks," he said. "We came in to lay our hands on and take care of people. But now if we can't afford that piece of equipment or that gauze pad then we can't take care of our patients."

Another change in the nursing field, specifically in the Navy, is the bigger emphasis in patient safety, mainly in the nurse-to-patient ratio.

Capt. Amy Tarbay, Pensacola Naval Hospital director for Nursing Services, said it wasn't uncommon for two nurses to have 30 patients in the past but now those 30 patients will have six nurses. The current military nurse-to-patient ratio, at five to one, Tarbay said, is something the military is extremely attuned with.

"It's kind of, like, an all-hands revolution," Tarbay said. "That has to, without a doubt, be the biggest change."

In reflecting on the strong relationships the nurses in the Corps form with one another, Tarbay said the bond is instantaneous.

"If you walk into a room filled with military officers, nurses in general, it's just an instant bond, an instant camaraderie," she said.

And that camaraderie is the same when serving patients.

Military nurses are entrusted with the nation's war fighters since they provide care from the battlefield back to the

serviceman's medical facility, Taylor said, which is a large amount of trust placed in military nurses' hands.

"And it's not only for the war fighters but their families," he said. "That's just a huge responsibility."

"And because of that, we have a bond," Crane said. "I think because of that, we're not just nurses. We're military Nurse Corps officers. And so we have that bond, we wear this

Female veterans face woefully inadequate care

(13 May) The San Diego Union Tribune, By Paul D. Eaton

In 2004, then captain – now congresswoman – Tammy Duckworth was piloting a Blackhawk helicopter in Iraq when it was shot down. She survived but lost both of her legs. When she awoke, in only a hospital gown, she was supplied with a “comfort kit,” some basics that are given to wounded troops. Included in the kit, besides slippers that she could no longer use, were a pair of men’s jockey shorts. Comfort kits simply weren’t made for women. Just for men. It is a story that perfectly illustrates the multitude of issues facing our women who serve.

Female veterans suffer post-traumatic stress disorder at twice the rate as male soldiers, and endure higher rates of joblessness and homelessness. And, because women tend to be caregivers themselves, they tend to postpone their own care in deference to the care they provide husbands, children and parents. Further complicating the female soldier’s return from combat to civilian life is that an estimated one in five have suffered sexual trauma.

In September, DAV (Disabled American Veterans) published a study that revealed “America’s nearly 300,000 women Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans are put at risk by a system designed for and dominated by male veterans.”

But the problems go deeper than the men’s comfort kits with which Duckworth was presented. According to DAV, one-third of the VA medical centers don’t have a gynecologist on staff and 90 percent of Community Based Outpatient Clinics lack a designated women’s health provider. Thirty-one percent of VA centers cannot provide adequate services for military sexual trauma, yet one in five women veterans seen at VA screen positive for some form of such trauma.

The VA and the Department of Defense have difficulty providing gender-specific peer support, group therapy and specialized inpatient mental health care designed to meet the needs of women. Further, women who have lost limbs are less likely to have a prosthetic that fits properly. As such, while there are far fewer women veteran amputees, they use health care more often than their male counterparts. Several of these women are also now becoming mothers, further complicating their prosthetic and general care needs.

Stop Calling Servicewomen Girls

(14 May) Task and Purpose, By Ellen Haring

A couple of months ago, I read a prepublication copy of “Ashley’s War,” by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon; the story of a team of female soldiers who were embedded with Army Rangers in 2011. The book, which was released last month, is named in honor of Lt. Ashley White, who was killed in action with two Rangers during a night raid in Afghanistan on Oct. 22, 2011. I wrote the author and asked her if it was possible to replace the word “girl” with “women” throughout the book before it was published. I told her that many of us in the

uniform together for nurses and officers, and share a great camaraderie.”

"There's so much history back from the Sacred Twenty to how far we've come now to more than 4,000," she said. "We have a great bond and that's what we're most proud of."

<http://www.pnj.com/story/news/military/2015/05/12/navy-nurse-corps-celebrates-th-anniversary/27205921/>

It is worth noting that some improvements have been made under the Obama administration, For instance, each veterans care center now has a Women Veterans Program Manager, whose job it is to start bridging the gap. Additionally, the Women Veterans Health Program was placed under the VA’s Office of Patient Care Services, allowing it to have more impact on the patient-specific care that women receive. It’s a great start, but more must be done.

From better collaboration between the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of coordinating care for women veterans, to family counseling for returning women veterans, to providing child care for veterans, we have no shortage of issues to tackle.

On particularly worthwhile idea, backed by DAV and others, is continued and increased congressional funding for a women veterans’ retreat program run by the department’s Readjustment Counseling Service. This program focuses upon stress reduction, improving coping skills and improving women’s sense of psychological well-being and boasts very high participant improvements in these skill sets.

Most of all, our female veterans need the rest of us to advocate alongside them. It is time for each American, whether you have served or not, male or female, to get engaged. Contact your member of Congress and raise the issue again, front and center, and demand that all veterans’ needs be addressed in a more timely and comprehensive manner but with special emphasis on the unmet needs of our female veterans.

It may seem strange having a male, retired major general so concerned about the care our female veterans receive.

But I’m also the husband of a veteran, and the father of a daughter who is a veteran, as well. As I look at them, my heart fills with pride, like so many husbands and fathers, who watch their wives and daughters sacrifice so much for our country.

Like them, I want the very best for those women who give their very best. Sadly, when it comes to female-specific veterans care, we still are woefully behind. That must change.

<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2015/may/13/female-veterans-face-woefully-inadequate-care/2/?#article-copy>

military have worked hard to get men and women to stop calling us girls.

Lemmon thoughtfully responded that she had used the word intentionally because that was the way the women in the story had referred to themselves. She was trying to stay true to their voices. I’m sure she is correct, which raises a couple of important questions. Why would accomplished adult women refer to themselves as girls, and is this indicative of a larger socio-cultural problem in the military?

When men in the military refer to other men as boys it's usually done in a training environment to reinforce a trainee's position as a learner or subordinate who hasn't achieved knowledge or full status. Sometimes men call each other boys in a pejorative way, to chastise each other for foolish, childlike or immature behavior. When women call each other girls, it's rarely done intentionally to reinforce a power relationship or to point out immature behavior. Instead, it is done unwittingly, but with the same unrecognized effect.

All of the women in "Ashley's War" are soldiers and combat veterans. Lemmon speculated that the women referred to themselves as girls intentionally in an effort to reclaim the word much like some minorities use racial slurs non-offensively. I disagree. I think women call themselves girls because we have been socialized to undervalue ourselves and it diminishes us in very subtle but insidious ways.

In 2013, Maj. Gen. Bennet Sacolick, from Special Operations Command, submitted both written and oral statements to the House Armed Services Committee about women serving in ground combat units. During his testimony, he provided some anecdotal stories from his own experience with the women who served on White's team and teams like hers during which he applauded their capabilities. He also repeatedly referred to the soldiers as girls. Although his written statement refers to female soldiers as women, his oral comments present a stark reminder that many senior leaders think of women soldiers as girls. Clearly, whoever prepared his written statement knew the difference.

Female aviator breaking ground in Afghanistan

(16 May) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

When Capt. Lisa Becker deployed to Afghanistan, she didn't expect to fly Mi-17 helicopters alongside Afghan pilots.

"It's an opportunity that I didn't know I'd have," said Becker. "It's very fulfilling to be able to have that mentorship role."

Becker is believed to be the first American female soldier to be rated to fly the Russian-made helicopter. She also is the first female Aviation Foreign Internal Defense/Special Operations Forces aviator to serve with the Special Mission Wing in Afghanistan.

The Special Mission Wing, which has its headquarters in Kabul, is the rotary-wing and fixed-wing intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance component for all Afghan special operations forces.

The wing is home to the Afghans' only night-vision air assault capability and organic ISR capability, with operational reach to put Afghan special operations forces anywhere in the country.

The wing, led by a one-star Afghan general, partners with the Special Operations Aviation Group, which for the last 12 months was led by Col. Don Fallin.

"We're the American advisors, we train, advise and assist the Afghan Special Mission Wing," Fallin said during a phone

In another instance, two weeks ago, retired Adm. Eric Olson, a former SOCOM commander, gave remarks on the Hill about the women who served with White — he never called them girls.

Unfortunately, he made many other remarks about women that demonstrate a paternalistic treatment of servicewomen; most directly, that he does not agree with the integration of women into frontline, close-combat positions. Olson stated that he believes that women should serve in support roles as enablers who help men accomplish their missions and not as primary combatants. Specifically, he said, "I think that men, in virtually every society and every species, are reluctant to trust their lives to women in the same way they do to men." He further went on to refer to women as "too special" to be lost in combat.

His comments about what female soldiers should and shouldn't do are indicative of an attitude that men who are older and wiser must decide what servicewomen are allowed or not allowed to do. Needless to say, the two women, both Army captains, who were on that panel strongly objected to Olson's comments about what they could or should do.

If we are to get past the unequal treatment of servicewomen, we must begin by examining the language that we use. What we call each other matters. Neither men nor women in the military should refer to servicewomen as girls.

<http://taskandpurpose.com/stop-calling-servicewomen-girls/>

interview with Army Times shortly before completing his deployment and returning to the United States.

Fallin, who's an AH-64 Apache pilot, saw Becker's potential.

The young officer was initially deployed in October to work in a non-flying billet on the operations staff at the headquarters, Fallin said.

"She was excelling, so I moved her down to one of the squadrons in a major's position in Kandahar and had one of my instructors do a qualification course," he said.

Becker passed the course, earning the ability to serve as a Mi-17 air mission commander.

Now, Becker and her fellow advisors work with the Afghans on "flight mission planning, operations, the full-spectrum of aviation operations in combat," Fallin said.

Fallin said Becker hasn't had any issues with her Afghan counterparts because of her gender.

"The one thing that's unique about our unit is it's really ethnically color-blind," he said. "My counterpart is an exceptional leader. He is fiercely loyal to his country, and his men are fiercely loyal to him."

The Afghan general also already has women on his staff, including in the personnel and medical sections, Fallin said.

"He's a trendsetter," he said. "He's not the norm."

Becker, who wears a headscarf out of respect for her Afghan colleagues, said she hasn't encountered any issues working with the Afghan aircrews, and she believes her time at the wing headquarters in Kabul helped.

"Because I developed relationships throughout the first four to five months before I started flying, I think they already had some respect for me, so it was a little bit smoother of an adjustment than if I just came in and said 'hey, we're going to fly in the cockpit together,'" she said.

Becker, who typically flies the UH-60 Black Hawk, credits Fallin for the opportunity to fly.

"It was really Col. Fallin who said, 'hey, you're an aviator, let's get you back in the cockpit,'" she said. "This is a unique opportunity."

Learning to fly the Mi-17 was "different," Becker said.

"It really makes you get back to the basics of piloting because it doesn't have the same automation that the Black Hawk does," she said.

Also, everything on the Mi-17's controls is the opposite of the Black Hawk, Becker said, likening it to driving a right-hand drive vehicle.

In addition, Becker's role as an advisor not only has her flying with the Afghans but also providing them mentorship on

First female 4-star shares lessons in 'A Higher Standard'

(19 May) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

Even though she came from a family with four generations of military service, retired Gen. Ann Dunwoody had no plans to put on the uniform.

"I always dreamed that I was going to be a coach and a physical education teacher," she said. "That's what I knew I wanted to be."

Then, as a junior in college, she discovered a program that, in an effort to recruit more women to join the military, paid her \$500 a month during her senior year in college, earned her a commission as a second lieutenant and required just a two-year commitment.

"I had four generations of West Pointers in my family, but I'd never considered the Army," she said. "But when they offered this opportunity, I signed up, and two [years] turned into five, turned into 10, turned into forever."

decision-making, mission execution and how to command an air mission.

Becker said she's learning a lot from the Afghan air crews.

"They've been flying the aircraft a lot longer than I have, so both of us are learning," she said. "I'm probably learning a lot more than they are."

And while there's really no so-called typical day for Becker and her teammates, she said she typically spends two to eight hours a day talking with the Afghan pilots, mentoring them on topics such as aircraft, mission support, and piloting skills.

"It's really building relationships and a rapport with them so if they have an issue they can come to you," Becker said.

Becker, who has a deployment to Iraq under her belt, said she's grateful for the opportunity to fly and work with the Afghans.

"Actually getting to work with the Afghans, you can see the passion they have for their country," she said. "They want to make it a better place. They want their children to grow up in a peaceful environment. It makes the job so much more fulfilling to see there are people who really are passionate about this."

As for the distinction of being the first woman in her role, Becker deflected any credit.

"I'm just doing my job," she said.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/officer/2015/05/16/female-aviator-afghan-special-operations/27309901/>

Dunwoody would end up serving almost 38 years as an Army officer and become the first woman to earn the rank of general in the U.S. military.

In a new book, released April 28, Dunwoody chronicles her life, service and the leadership strategies she learned along the way.

She spoke with Army Times on May 11 about "A Higher Standard: Leadership Strategies from America's First Female Four-Star General."

Q. Why did you write the book?

A. I didn't plan on writing one, but people kept asking me when I was going to, and I thought about it and realized I really have a wonderful story to share. I didn't want it to be a diary or memoir or autobiography, but I wanted to do one on leadership because that's what my journey was about.

Q. What was it like to write the book?

A. It was more work than I thought. I think it was the hardest thing I've ever done, but I've gotten really positive reaction. People just want to know how you did it, and their perception is that you must have had to claw your way to the top in this man's Army. That wasn't the way at all. It was a wonderful journey. Quite frankly, I cared most that my friends and my family, that I made them proud. That's what mattered most, and after that, if people liked it, that's great, too.

Q. What types of leadership strategies did you include in your book?

A. What I tried to do was select leadership lessons and strategies that worked for me but also had the greatest application from second lieutenant to four-star, and also for businesses or girls and boys in elementary school who are still dreaming. The intent of the book is I hope it gets people to dream big and try to make a difference no matter what. It can be as small as what my first platoon sergeant taught me, who taught 2nd Lt. Ann Dunwoody what "right" looked like. It wasn't how to be the best female platoon leader but the best platoon leader. One of his simple but difficult principles is never walk by a mistake. That briefs well, but it's really hard. In the military, we're a self-policing organization. If all of us are making on-the-spot corrections, we keep ourselves policed in the profession we are. In the military, it's a slippery slope. When you slip on standards, discipline and good order, it can have much more serious consequences.

Q. As the first woman to earn the rank of general, you're a role model for many young women in the military. How did you do it?

A. In the military, I had advocates, then there were detractors. They just don't like you, maybe they think it's a man's Army and women don't belong here. The key is how you deal with people. You don't stoop to name-calling. You be professional,

demonstrate you're capable and sometimes you convert people. In the military, people want the best leader on the team. They want the best, and we have a profession that's looking for and rewards that kind of behavior.

Q. What are your thoughts about the ongoing Defense Department effort to integrate women into combat arms jobs?

A. I have strong opinions on this. It takes me back to Airborne School, when they had just started letting women officers go to Airborne School. It wasn't a popular decision. The bottom line for me is if you let others dissuade you from something you want to do, something you believe you can do, something you're passionate about, they win. You have to follow your passion. If I had not been to Airborne School, I couldn't have gone to rigger school. I would never have been in the 82nd Airborne Division. That one door for me was the foundation of many follow-on assignments.

I've watched doors open my entire career. Some are opened for you, some you have to kick down. I believe if someone is qualified, and I mean fully qualified, they should be able to go through that door.

I think it is smart the Army and the military are methodically looking at each one of these branches and career fields to determine what the standard is. They can't lower those standards, once identified, to accommodate women coming into those fields. That would be a failure. We're not a social experiment. We're a war fighting institution, and that's dangerous business.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/officer/2015/05/19/gen-dunwoody-new-leadership-book/27179551/>