



# Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services

## Articles of Interest

November 2024



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### Recruitment & Retention

1. [\*\*The Rise of Soldier-Influencers: Army Eyes Policy for Troops with Millions of Online Followers\*\*](#)  
*(30 Oct) Military.com, By Steve Beynon*  
The Army is now eyeing influencers to help shape its digital presence, but it aims to do so with a notably hands-off approach. Service planners are working on a policy for influencers they aim to be as flexible as possible.
2. [\*\*Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Recruiting Media Roundtable With Service Leaders\*\*](#)  
*(30 Oct) DoD Transcript*  
The US military is the strongest fighting force on Earth. For more than 50 years, our all volunteer force has been sustained by qualified patriots who stand up to serve and keep our republic secure. As Secretary of Defense Austin has said, our greatest strategic asset is our people. We must continue to recruit and retain the best that our country has to offer. The department remains deeply committed to ensuring that every qualified patriot has the opportunity to answer the call.
3. [\*\*Pentagon drops 51 disqualifying conditions as part of recruiting push\*\*](#)  
*(31 Oct) Military Times, By Todd South*  
The Pentagon is using a pilot program to shed a longstanding list of medical conditions that have prevented individuals from joining the military for decades.
4. [\*\*Recruitment Rises 12.5% Despite Ongoing Challenges\*\*](#)  
*(31 Oct) DoD News, By Matthew Olay*  
The Defense Department's armed services branches recruited 12.5% more people in fiscal year 2024 than in the year prior despite a challenging and disinterested recruiting market.
5. [\*\*Army brings bigger events, new skills to JROTC\*\*](#)  
*(4 Nov) Military Times, By Todd South*  
As the Army recalibrates its recruiting efforts, one long-standing program holds the potential to attract new recruits and educate the civilian public about the military: Junior Reserve Officer Training.
6. [\*\*Here's how many new sailors the Navy wants to recruit this year\*\*](#)  
*(4 Nov) Military Times, By Diana Stancy*  
The Navy is seeking to recruit 40,600 new sailors in fiscal year 2025 after exceeding its recruitment goals last year, the service announced.
7. [\*\*California police arrest Marine recruiter for alleged sexual assault of 17-year-old\*\*](#)  
*(4 Nov) Military.com, By Drew F. Lawrence*  
An active-duty Marine Corps recruiter was arrested last week for allegedly sexually assaulting a 17-year-old girl at a recruiting center in California, according to the service and local law enforcement. Sgt. Jorge Larapedroza met the victim at a recruiting event at her school roughly a week prior to the reported assault.
8. [\*\*Marine recruiter arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting minor\*\*](#)  
*(6 Nov) Military Times, By Riley Ceder*  
A Marine Corps recruiter is in custody after allegedly sexually assaulting a 17-year-old who he met at a recruiting event, according to authorities.



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9. [Good Army recruiters won't have to carry weight of 'ineffective' ones under new policy](#)  
*(8 Nov) Task & Purpose, By Patty Nieberg*  
The Army is putting more accountability measures in place to ensure that good recruiters are not pulling the weight for an entire recruiting station and that "ineffective" ones are reassigned to make sure local offices are helping with service-wide recruitment goals, according to a policy memo obtained by Task & Purpose.
10. [The Army's answer to a lack of recruits is a prep course to boost low scores. It's working.](#)  
*(10 Nov) The Associated Press, By Lolita C. Baldor*  
Index cards taped to a large board on the wall at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, reveal the sometimes blunt and gritty reasons that new recruits took a chance at a last-ditch program to get into the Army.
11. [Army recruiters in Miami will pass off paperwork duties as service tests new strategy to boost enlistment](#)  
*(11 Nov) Military.com, By Steve Beynon*  
The Army is set to launch a pilot program in January at two recruiting stations in the Miami area designed to cut through the red tape bogging down military recruitment.
12. [Camp Pendleton Marine recruiter arrested after allegedly contacting minors for sex](#)  
*(18 Nov) Military.com, By Drew F. Lawrence*  
A Camp Pendleton Marine was arrested last week by authorities after he allegedly contacted minors for sex and had child sexual abuse material while working as a recruiter in California, according to local law enforcement.
13. [We showed the new Marine Corps recruiting ad to some teenagers. Here's what they thought of it.](#)  
*(19 Nov) Task & Purpose, By Matt White*  
If you're reading this, the analytics behind this website tell me there's a good chance you've served in the military, read a lot about the military and may even be in the military right now.
14. [ROTC-Like Recruitment Program Helping Space Force Find Civilian 'Guardians'](#)  
*(20 Nov) DoD News, By C. Todd Lopez*  
Like its sister services, the Space Force has officer, enlisted and civilian members -- all called "guardians." But the Space Force is looking for new ways to recruit civilian employees, which right now make up about 50 percent of the service.
15. [Before there are part-time guardians, USSF needs to figure out promotions, HR and more](#)  
*(20 Nov) Air & Space Forces Magazine, By Greg Hadley*  
Scores of different HR systems, a new model for how to handle promotions, and protections against conflicts of interest are all challenges the Space Force will have to resolve as it tries to bring part-time Guardians into the fold instead of a traditional Reserve component.
16. [Coast Guard establishes first Hawaii-based JROTC program](#)  
*(22 Nov) The Honolulu Star-Advertiser, By Kevin Knodell*  
Kalani High School officially activated its newly formed Coast Guard Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program, the first of its kind in Hawaii.
17. [Space Force plans to award 20 contracts for commercial reserve by 2026](#)  
*(22 Nov) Defense News, By Courtney Albon*  
The Space Force expects to award as many as 20 contracts over the next two years for private companies to join its Commercial Augmentation Space Reserve, which will create a mechanism for the military to better leverage commercial capabilities both in peacetime and during a conflict.



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18. [To improve recruiting, make medical standards match retention ones](#)  
(22 Nov) *Defense One*, By Lt. Col. Kareen Hart and Taren Sylvester  
It's harder to get into the military than stay there — at least by the different medical standards set by the Defense Department. By making them match, the Pentagon could widen its recruiting pool without undermining the force.
19. [Moscow offers debt forgiveness to new recruits](#)  
(24 Nov) *The Associated Press*, By Samya Kullab and Elise Morton  
Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law granting debt forgiveness to new army recruits who enlist to fight in Ukraine.
20. [Army to put one-star recruiting hubs in Los Angeles, Atlanta](#)  
(26 Nov) *Military Times*, By Todd South  
As the Army overhauls its recruiting structure, jobs and approaches to bringing in new talent, the service is injecting resources into areas that have previously been underserved — cities.
21. [Does the military need social media influencers?](#)  
(26 Nov) *Military.com*, By Jennifer Barnhill  
In January 2020, the U.S. Army and Navy banned the Chinese-owned TikTok app on government devices after the Defense Department labeled it a security risk. The ban has since been extended to all branches of service and includes DOD contractors. But despite this legitimate security threat, is TikTok still the military's best recruiting tool?

### Employment & Integration

22. [PACAF launches Iron Athena program to address female readiness, retention barriers](#)  
(31 Oct) *Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs*, By Senior Master Sgt. Robert Webb  
The Pacific Air Forces commander signed an organizational charter Oct. 30 marking the start of a focused initiative to address readiness and retention barriers faced by female Airmen and their families.
23. [Naval reactors: Virginia-class will extend to Block VIII, SSN\(X\) start in 2040s](#)  
(13 Nov) *USNI News*, By Sam LaGrone  
The Virginia-class attack submarine program will extend to an eighth block before the Navy transitions to the next generation of attack submarines, the director of Naval Reactors said Wednesday.
24. [Trump's defense secretary pick said women shouldn't be in combat roles. These female veterans fear what comes next.](#)  
(14 Nov) *CNN*, By Emma Tucker  
The ban on women serving in ground combat units was lifted in 2013 and, in 2016, all US military combat positions were opened to them, allowing women to fill about 220,000 jobs that were previously limited to men – including infantry, armor, reconnaissance and some special operations units.
25. [Grassroots Iron Athena initiative tackles barriers faced by female airmen](#)  
(14 Nov) *Stars & Stripes*, By Wyatt Olson  
Pacific Air Forces is recruiting volunteers for Iron Athena, a fledgling initiative focused on addressing readiness and retention barriers faced by female airmen and their families.



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26. [Should women serve in combat? Trump's defense pick reignites debate.](#)  
*(18 Nov) The Associated Press, By Lolita C. Baldor*  
President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, has reignited a debate that many thought had been long settled: Should women be allowed to serve their country by fighting on the front lines?
  27. [OMB proposes alternate funding plan for Virginia-class attack submarines](#)  
*(19 Nov) USNI News, By Sam LaGrone*  
The White House Office of Management and Budget is proposing a \$5 to \$6 billion injection of money into submarine funding to get at least two Virginia-class attack boats under contract and alleviate workforce shortfalls, several sources familiar with the proposal have told USNI News.
  28. [Women in combat 'proficient,' SecDef says, dismissing calls for change](#)  
*(20 Nov) Military Times & Defense News, By Leo Shane III and Noah Robertson*  
Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Wednesday defended women in the military and their eligibility for combat roles, calling them "very courageous and very proficient" in their service to the country.
  29. [Female recruits now shipping equally to MCRDs Parris Island, San Diego](#)  
*(20 Nov) Military Times, By Hope Hodge Seck*  
The Marine Corps has hit its goal of assigning women to its boot camps the same way it assigns men, recruiting and training officials confirmed to Marine Corps Times.
  30. [Canada's top military commander calls out US senator for questioning a woman's role in combat](#)  
*(24 Nov) The Associated Press, By Rob Gillies*  
The first woman to command Canada's military called out a U.S. senator on Saturday for questioning the role of women in combat.
  31. [Trump's pick to lead Pentagon is dangerously wrong about women serving in combat](#)  
*(25 Nov) USA Today, By Marla Bautista*  
For decades, women have fought, bled and died in uniform while defending our nation. Yet, women continue to face systemic barriers and discrimination because of people like Hegseth.
  32. [Guam homeports its first Virginia-class attack submarine as tensions simmer with China](#)  
*(26 Nov) Stars & Stripes, By Wyatt Olson*  
The USS Minnesota arrived Tuesday at Naval Base Guam, the first Virginia-class fast-attack submarine to be homeported in the strategically important U.S. territory.
  33. [Navy updates exercise standards for Fitness Enhancement Program](#)  
*(27 Nov) Military Times, By Diana Stancy*  
The Navy will not require some sailors to undergo the Fitness Enhancement Program if they do not pass the Navy's Body Composition Assessment portion of the Physical Fitness Assessment.

## Well-Being & Treatment

34. [Military Service Members and Abortion Access](#)  
*(25 Oct) C-SPAN Video*  
Military Reporters and Editors, a nonprofit organization for journalists covering the military, national security, and homeland defense, held its 2024 conference in Washington, D.C. In this portion of the event, female service



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members discussed challenges in accessing abortion and other reproductive health services in the military, following the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.

35. [Victims of domestic violence can now get help more easily through top Army nonprofit](#)  
(31 Oct) *Military.com*, By Steve Beynon  
Army Emergency Relief, the primary nonprofit supporting soldiers and their families, announced this month a new policy designed to aid victims of domestic violence.
36. [More former Coast Guard cadets say academy failed to stop sex assault](#)  
(31 Oct) *The Associated Press*, By Susan Haigh  
Nine additional former cadets at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy have formally accused overseers of the prestigious service academy of failing to prevent and properly address sexual violence on campus, while also covering it up.
37. [How the Air Force Reserve is trying to fix its child care access problem](#)  
(4 Nov) *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, By David Roza  
Every drill weekend, Air Force Reservists across the country face the same problem: where to find child care for their kids. Amid a nationwide provider shortage, finding child care for drill weekends is even more difficult than during weekdays.
38. [Soldiers, spouses fleeing domestic violence get faster access to emergency funds](#)  
(6 Nov) *Task & Purpose*, By Patty Nieberg  
Soldiers and spouses who are trying to leave abusive partners can now get away from dangerous situations faster with the help of immediate funds from an Army-affiliated nonprofit.
39. [Could Trump drop the VA and DOD abortion access policies right away?](#)  
(14 Nov) *Military Times*, By Leo Shane III  
Conservative lawmakers hope that scrapping abortion access policies at the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs will be among the first major changes when President-elect Donald Trump takes office in January.
40. [Lawmakers want more flexibility for pregnant troops to change Tricare plans](#)  
(15 Nov) *Military.com*, By Rebecca Kheel  
In an effort to improve prenatal care for troops and family members, a group of lawmakers wants to give Tricare users more flexibility to change their health-care plans when they get pregnant.
41. [Two House Republicans seek to stop IVF expansion in defense bill](#)  
(21 Nov) *The Hill*, By Emily Brooks  
Two House Republicans, Reps. Matt Rosendale (Mont.) and Josh Brecheen (Okla.), are asking the leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services committees to not include provisions in the annual defense authorization bill that expand access to in vitro fertilization (IVF).
42. [Soldier at DOD's Landstuhl hospital gets four-year sentence for sexually assaulting fellow unit member](#)  
(27 Nov) *Stars & Stripes*, By LYDIA GORDON  
Pfc. Shreyan Karki, a U.S. soldier assigned to a military hospital in Germany faces over four years behind bars and must register as a sex offender after being found guilty of sexually assaulting a female fellow soldier in his barracks room.



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43. [Marine Corps says it will reimburse nursing mothers up to \\$1,000 for shipping breast milk during moves](#)  
(27 Nov) *Military.com*, By Drew F. Lawrence  
The Marine Corps will reimburse its troops up to \$1,000 for shipping breast milk during a permanent change of station move, according to a message published Tuesday, echoing a previous Pentagon initiative announced in May.

### Servicewomen in the News

44. [Fort Leonard Wood soldier faces murder charges in sergeant's death](#)  
(31 Oct) *Military Times*, By Todd South  
Army prosecutors have preferred murder charges against a 21-year-old specialist in the death of Army Sgt. Sarah Roque.
45. [Navy fires CO of Naval Information Warfare Training Group San Diego](#)  
(7 Nov) *Military Times*, By Diana Stancy  
Cmdr. Cayanne McFarlane was ousted from her leadership role due to a “loss of confidence in her ability to command,” according to the service. She has been temporarily reassigned to Naval Information Forces.
46. [First woman to head Southcom steps down, passes baton to first African-American commander](#)  
(8 Nov) *Miami Herald*, By Jacqueline Charles  
When four-star Army Gen. Laura Richardson became the first woman to lead the U.S. Southern Command three years ago, she inherited all of the concerns of her most recent predecessors about the region's security and the increasing threats to the United States.
47. ['This battle is different.' First Black female Army Ranger fights new adversary.](#)  
(11 Nov) *USA Today*, By Marla Bautista  
Army Master Sgt. Janina Simmons broke barriers as the first Black woman to successfully complete Ranger School. Now, she's fighting an even tougher battle – cancer.
48. [General Officer Announcement](#)  
(13 Nov) *DoD Immediate Release*  
Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced today that the president has made the following nomination: Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Valerie A. Jackson for appointment to the grade of major general. Jackson is currently serving as commanding general, 4th Marine Logistics Group, New Orleans, Louisiana.
49. [Fort Campbell soldier gets 2 years in prison for taking sexually explicit photos, videos of soldiers, children](#)  
(13 Nov) *Stars & Stripes*, By Rose L. Thayer  
Pfc. Whitney Shepherd photographed other female soldiers. At the time the photos were taken, the women should have had a reasonable expectation of privacy, according to the charge sheet.
50. [General Officer Announcement](#)  
(14 Nov) *DoD Immediate Release*  
Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced today that the president has made the following nomination: Air Force Brig. Gen. Barbra S. Buls for appointment to the grade of major general. Buls is currently serving as commander, Air National Guard Readiness Center, National Guard Bureau, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.





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51. [Flag Officer Announcement](#)  
*(14 Nov) DoD Immediate Release*  
Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced today that the president has made the following nomination: Navy Capt. Erin E. O. Acosta for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Acosta is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, Stennis Space Center, Mississippi.
  52. [General Officer Announcement](#)  
*(15 Nov) DoD Immediate Release*  
Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced today that the president has made the following nominations Army Col. Annemarie R. Wiersgalla for appointment to the grade of brigadier general. Wiersgalla is currently serving as director, J-6/Chief Information Officer, U.S. Southern Command, Miami, Florida.
  53. [Native American Women Take Pride in Their Military Service](#)  
*(15 Nov) DoD News, By Dave Vergun*  
"I take pride in being an American Indian sailor," said Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Trinity Sells. "I will continue my traditional way of life with more determination because living isn't enough for my heritage to survive. It is my time to teach the Navy about the Navajo tribe and its people."
  54. [Air Force captain becomes first woman in service history to receive Silver Star as crews honored for drone fight](#)  
*(15 Nov) Task & Purpose, By Joshua Skovlund*  
On Nov. 12, 30 fighter pilots and airmen were recognized for missions during the largest air-to-air enemy engagement in over 50 years, according to the Air Force. The crew of one F-15E, pilot Maj. Benjamin Coffey and weapon systems officer Capt. Lacie Hester, were awarded the nation's third-highest valor award, the Silver Star.
  55. [General Officer Announcement](#)  
*(19 Nov) DoD Immediate Release*  
Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced today that the president has made the following nomination: Marine Corps Col. Lauren S. Edwards for appointment to the grade of brigadier general. Edwards is currently serving as senior military advisor, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
  56. [Astronaut in Army Reserve awarded wings and space badge for trip to International Space Station](#)  
*(21 Nov) Stars & Stripes, By Patty Nieberg*  
Army Reserve Maj. Kate Rubins was already an astronaut when she joined the Army, but was surprised to find that learning some of the basics of soldiering reminded her of trips to space.
  57. [Army major becomes first reservist to receive rare Astronaut Device](#)  
*(22 Nov) Military Times, By Todd South*  
Kate Rubins was floating in zero gravity miles above Earth in 2020 when she decided to join the Army.
  58. [Yvonne L. Mays makes history as first Black woman to lead NJ National Guard](#)  
*(26 Nov) ABC Video*  
Colonel Yvonne L. Mays, the adjutant general of New Jersey, was promoted to brigadier general at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville.



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### 59. [General Officer Assignments](#)

*(27 Nov) DoD Immediate Release*

The Chief of Staff of the Army announces the following officer assignments:

- Brig. Gen. Marne L. Suttan, special assistant to the deputy chief of staff, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-6, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., to director of Network Command, Control, Cyber Communications Systems Integration, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-6, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C.
- Brig. Gen. Rachel E. Humphrey to deputy commander (Troop Program Unit), 377th Theater Sustainment Command, Belle Chasse, Louisiana. She most recently served as deputy commanding general (Troop Program Unit), 80th Training Command (The Army School System), Richmond, Virginia.
- Brig. Gen. Jennifer A. Marrast-Host to Mobilization and Reserve Affairs, Office of the Surgeon General (Individual Mobilized Augmentee), Falls Church, Virginia; and deputy commanding general, Army Reserve Medical Command, Pinellas Park, Florida. She most recently served as deputy commander (Troop Program Unit), 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support), Saint Charles, Missouri.
- Brig. Gen. Sandra K. Martin to deputy commander - Support (Troop Program Unit), 412th Engineer Command Mission Support, Vicksburg, Mississippi. She most recently served as deputy commander (Troop Program Unit), U.S. Army Reserve Deployment Support Command, Birmingham, Alabama.

## Women Veterans

### 60. [Former VA physician found guilty of sexually assaulting a patient](#)

*(7 Nov) Military Times, By*

A former Department of Veterans Affairs physician was found guilty of sexually assaulting a veteran patient four years ago during a routine physical exam at a department hospital in Georgia, according to the Justice Department. Justice Department officials said that Patel improperly groped female patients' breasts and vaginal areas during multiple routine exams between 2019 and 2020.

### 61. [Next year's Congress will feature the most women vet members ever](#)

*(8 Nov) Military Times, By Leo Shane III*

The next session of Congress will feature the most women veterans ever elected to the House and Senate, with at least eight winning races this year.

### 62. [On Veterans Day, Harriet Tubman gets formal recognition of her military service](#)

*(11 Nov) Military.com, By Patricia Kime*

The state of Maryland marked Veterans Day by commissioning one of its own, Harriet Tubman, as a brigadier general in the Maryland National Guard in recognition for her service to the Union during the Civil War as an operational leader and spy.

### 63. ['Rosie the Riveter' Lucille MacDonald dies at age 98 in Hawaii](#)

*(19 Nov) Stars & Stripes, By Wyatt Olson*

Lucille "Cille" MacDonald, who this spring was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for "Rosie the Riveter" work during World War II, died Friday in Valley Island, Maui. She was 98.

### 64. [Pioneering female Marines' story highlighted by veteran](#)

*(19 Nov) Military Times Video*

In her time at war, Riane Donoho was part of a team of female Marines working with local residents. Now, she looks to highlight the work of her fellow vets.





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65. [What female veterans think of Pete Hegseth's views about combat roles](#)

*(30 Nov) Washington Post, By Emily Wax-Thibodeaux*

Donald Trump's nominee for defense secretary says women shouldn't serve in combat. These vets say his attitude is outdated, uninformed and inaccurate.

### Upcoming Events

- Title:** [DACOWITS Quarterly Business Meeting](#)
- Location:** AUSA Conference Center, Arlington, VA
- Date:** 10-11 December 2024
- Time:** 0800-1200
- Register:** The in-person public portions of the meeting will be streamed live. Anyone who wishes to watch the meeting via ZoomGov must register in advance by sending an email to the DACOWITS Staff: [osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.dacowits@mail.mil](mailto:osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.dacowits@mail.mil) A code will be provide 24-hours prior to the meeting.
- Details:** DACOWITS provides advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to the recruitment, retention, employment, integration, well-being, and treatment of women in the Armed Forces of the United States. The Committee gathers information from multiple sources, to include briefings from Defense Department, Service-level military representatives, and subject matter experts.