



DACOWITS: Articles of Interest

WELLNESS

[Female midshipmen among victims in shower-video ring](#)

(25 Mar.) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

As two sailors head to court-martial for their involvement in a ring that allegedly swapped videos of female officers undressing, allegations are emerging that female midshipmen were also recorded in a shower changing area aboard the submarine.

[Navy Releases More Details In Case Of Sailors Videotaping Women Showering On Sub](#)

(25 Mar.) *Stars & Stripes*, By Steven Beardsley

A sailor likened his recording of female officers showering aboard the submarine USS Wyoming to “catching Pokemon” and traded several of the videos to one crewmembers for energy drinks, according to documents released by the Navy on Wednesday.

[7 sailors charged in video scandal on sub Wyoming](#)

(26 Mar.) *Hampton Roads Pilot*, By Russ Bynum

The Navy has charged seven sailors in connection with the recording and sharing of videos that showed female officers and student trainees in stages of undress aboard a U.S. submarine.

[Sexual Assault Prevention Chief Notes Progress, Need for More](#)

(26 Mar.) *DoD News*, By Jim Garamone

There has been progress in the Defense Department’s efforts against sexual assault in the military, “but we have to keep hammering away at the problem,” said Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Snow. “This is going to take time.”

ASSIGNMENTS

[Female Soldier Attends Pre-Ranger Training](#)

(20 Mar.) *DoD News*, By Walter T. Ham IV

An Army chemical corps officer assigned to the 20th CBRNE Command here has played a pioneering role in gender integration in the U.S. military.

[Fleet master chief in Europe retires after 33 years](#)

(23 Mar.) *Stars and Stripes*

The Navy’s most senior active-duty enlisted female sailor retired during a ceremony Friday at the Navy base here.

[How Serious Is The Army About Fostering A Mentoring Culture Within The Ranks?](#)

(23 Mar.) *Task & Purpose*, By Brad Hardy

The Army seems to want mentorship to flourish among the ranks, but it’s struggling with fostering a culture that encourages the process organically.

[Can Female Marines Carry The Load And Kill The Enemy?](#)

(25 Mar.) NPR, By Tom Bowman

The Marine Corps is trying to determine whether women can serve in ground combat jobs: artillery, armor and infantry. But the number of women is dwindling...about one-third of the nearly 30 women dropped out.

EXTRA

[What Percentage of Americans have Served in the Military?](#)

(19 Mar.) *FiveThirtyEight*, By Mona Chalabi

But since only 2 million veterans and about 200,000 current personnel are women, that overall percentage varies a lot by gender — 1.4 percent of all female Americans have ever served in the armed services, compared to 13.4 percent of all male Americans.

[Local History: Women veterans started female-only American Legion Post](#)

(22 Mar.) *The Times Tribune*, By Erin Nissley

Nearly a century ago, a group met at Moses Taylor Hospital to set up a club for World War I veterans. But they didn't allow just anyone who served during the war to join their group. Instead, the American Legion post set up in the spring of 1920 was meant solely for female nurses who had served in the armed forces during WW I.

[Concerns over easing military transgender ban](#)

(25 Mar.) *Military Times*, By Lolita C. Baldor

Defense Secretary Ash Carter has gotten pushback from senior military leaders on whether the Pentagon should lift its ban on transgender people serving in the armed forces, according to U.S. officials familiar with the discussions.

[109 years young, Army veteran celebrates a special birthday](#)

(26 Mar.) *Stars and Stripes*, By Barbara O'Brien

Those gathered for her birthday said they believe Thompson is the oldest World War II veteran in the United States. They noted that she is a month and a half older than a Texas woman who was believed to be the oldest female American veteran. That woman, Lucy Coffey, died last week.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Celebrating 85 Amazing Years](#): Brigadier General Wilma Vaught, the Women's Memorial founding President, is celebrating her 85th birthday! There is still time to pay tribute to her with a "Star Greeting" and to RSVP for the open house scheduled for 2-4 p.m., on Sunday, March 29, at the Women's Memorial.

Female midshipmen among victims in shower-video ring

(25 Mar.) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

As two sailors head to court-martial for their involvement in a ring that allegedly swapped videos of female officers undressing, allegations are emerging that female midshipmen were also recorded in a shower changing area aboard the submarine.

Three sailors have been charged with filming officers and female mids, who were temporarily aboard the ballistic missile submarine Wyoming, according to charge sheets obtained by Navy Times through the Freedom of Information Act. Previous accounts have only stated that female officers were filmed.

The students were allegedly recorded between March and June 2014, though charges show two sailors were allegedly using their cell phone cameras on board as early as August 2013.

The charges do not specify how many female mids or officers may have been recorded. This number could range into dozens of women, according to a Navy official familiar with the investigation, given the number of mids on summer cruises and female officers from other crews that were aboard during the 10 months during which recordings are alleged to have been taken.

Late last year, midshipmen who were aboard Wyoming at the time were notified that they had potentially been video recorded, the official said, and were offered victims' services. No evidence of the recordings has emerged in the course of the investigation, according to another Navy official.

Electronics Technician 2nd Class Joseph Bradley, 25, is charged with distributing videos and destroying evidence. And Missile Technician 3rd Class Brandon McGarity, 25, is

charged with failing to report the videos and making a false official statement, according to charge sheets.

Bradley and McGarity are the first of seven sailors charged to be referred to court-martial for recording, distributing, or failing to report the illicit videos of several female officers, some of the first to serve in submarine crews.

According to his charges, Bradley asked an unnamed MT3 to send him recordings of the women while at the sub's Kings Bay, Georgia, home port.

He is charged with three counts of distributing the recordings, as well as obstructing the investigation by destroying the recordings after the case was opened.

Bradley joined the Navy in 2010 and has been attached to Wyoming's blue crew since summer 2011.

McGarity faces two counts of failing to report the videos, as well as making a false official statement to a senior chief about whether he was aware of the videos.

He joined the Navy in 2011 and has been attached to Wyoming's gold crew since March 2013.

Neither sailor's attorney was immediately reachable Tuesday.

As of Tuesday, five more sailors — one from Trident Training Facility Kings Bay and the rest from the Wyoming crew — have been charged. Navy officials removed their names from their charge sheets, saying that the names of those accused would only be released for charges referred to court-martial.

An article 32 is a preliminary hearing similar to a grand jury hearing, after which a convening official can decide whether to refer the case to court-martial.

"Each of the Sailors accused in the USS Wyoming case are in different stages of the adjudication process," said Submarine Force Atlantic spokesman Cmdr. Tommy Crosby. "Of the Sailors that have charges pending against them, currently five of them are in a preferred status and two are in a referred status. In conjunction with JAG instruction 5800.7E, the names and other personal identifiable information is being withheld for those who are still in the preferred status, until at such time their adjudication status changes."

Bradley and McGarity are two of three charged sailors who waived their right to an Article 32 hearing, Crosby said.

The remaining SUBGRU 10 sailors charged are:

- An MT2 charged with one count conspiracy and three counts of distributing videos. He received videos from a fellow MT2, then transferred them to an MT3.
- An MT2 charged with using a personal electronic device underway, filming female midshipmen and making two false official statements.

Navy Releases More Details In Case Of Sailors Videotaping Women Showering On Sub

(25 Mar.) *Stars & Stripes*, By Steven Beardsley

NAPLES, Italy — A sailor likened his recording of female officers showering aboard the submarine USS Wyoming to "catching Pokemon" and traded several of the videos to one crewmembers for energy drinks, according to documents released by the Navy on Wednesday.

The seven charge sheets are the latest from a Navy investigation into 12 sailors accused of making and sharing the cellphone videos while aboard the ballistic-missile submarine between August 2013 and June 2014.

All seven sailors named in the documents face sexual misconduct charges. Two so far have been referred for court-martial, while the other five are awaiting their command decisions on discipline, which could range from referral for court-martial to nonjudicial punishment.

Decisions on whether to charge four additional sailors are still pending, and another sailor will not face charges because of a lack of evidence, according to Lt. Cmdr. Tommy Crosby of U.S. Submarine Force Atlantic.

The episode has been an embarrassment for the Navy as it continues integrating female officers aboard its submarines and plans to bring enlisted females aboard beginning next year. The service has described the process as going smoothly since it began in 2011.

Ballistic missile submarines are capable of carrying intercontinental ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads and are considered the most reliable leg of the nation's nuclear

- An MT3 charged with two counts of conspiracy and three counts of distributing videos. He noticed an exchange of videos between two MT2s and asked to receive them as well.
- An MT3 charged with one count conspiracy, one count using a [personal electronic device] underway, one count viewing a private area and one count filming a private area. In addition to filming midshipmen, he is also accused of receiving videos of female officers from an MT2 in exchange for two energy drinks.

Two more missile technicians went through an Article 32 hearing in Mayport, Florida, on March 12. SUBGRU 10 boss Rear Adm. Charles Richard has not decided whether to send them to trial, Crosby confirmed.

The sailor assigned to TTF Kings Bay faces an Article 32 hearing on March 27 in Mayport, and is accused of two counts of conspiracy, disrespecting a superior commissioned officer, violating a lawful general regulation, four counts of recording a private area, four counts of viewing a private area, and three counts of distributing recordings of a private area. <http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/03/24/submarine-wyoming-shower-videos-court-martial-navy/70376548/>

triad. As of December, there were 57 female officers serving on ballistic missile submarine crews.

The Wyoming, part of Submarine Group 10, is stationed in Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, Ga. According to the redacted charge sheets, the ship was often underway when the videos were taken, and in some cases female Midshipmen from the Naval Academy were on board and possibly filmed.

Two of the sailors charged so far are accused of taking the videos with their cellphones. One, a petty officer second class missile technician, is also accused of lying to investigators about his role.

Another sailor, with the same rank and job, accepted the two energy drinks in exchange for some of the videos. Comparing the illicit recordings to Pokemon, he joked with others that "like Pokemon, gotta catch them all."

The two sailors facing court martial are Petty Officer 2nd Class Joseph A. Bradley, an electronics technician, and Petty Officer Brandon S. McGarity, a missile technician. Bradley is also accused of trying to destroy the video evidence; McGarity is accused of lying to a senior chief petty officer when confronted about the allegations. Both men waived their rights to an Article 32 hearing, an investigative hearing meant to determine whether a court-martial is required.

Two other sailors also waived the right for hearing, and another two are awaiting the outcome of their hearings, which were held earlier this month.

The sailor behind the alleged Pokemon comparison is scheduled for an Article 32 hearing on March 27, said a spokesman for his current command, Lt. Cmdr. Kate Meadows of the Naval Education and Training Command.

Exactly how the videos were taken remains unclear, and the Navy has not publicly released a copy of the investigation that led to charges. Berthing for female officers is segregated, but women use common shower facilities at designated times.

7 sailors charged in video scandal on sub Wyoming

(26 Mar.) *Hampton Roads Pilot*, By Russ Bynum

The Navy has charged seven sailors in connection with the recording and sharing of videos that showed female officers and student trainees in stages of undress aboard a U.S. submarine.

The Navy announced last year that it was investigating allegations that women were secretly recorded aboard the USS Wyoming nuclear submarine by male sailors stationed at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base on the Georgia coast. On Wednesday it released charging documents in the case.

The records show that three sailors were charged last month with making the video recordings and trading them with three other sailors, who are charged with distribution of illicit files. Another was charged with knowing about the videos and failing to report them to superiors.

The Navy documents also state for the first time that women who were recorded included midshipmen — students from the U.S. Naval Academy or college Navy ROTCS programs — temporarily assigned to the ballistic missile submarine between March and June 2014.

Cmdr. Tommy Crosby, a spokesman for the Navy's submarine fleet command, declined Wednesday to say how many videos were made or give the number of women recorded, noting that prosecutions are still pending.

"The videos are still considered pre-evidentiary and therefore it is inappropriate to comment at this time," Crosby said.

Navy prosecutors have said the videos depict women either undressing or toweling off after showers. They were discovered just a few years after the Navy began switching to coed crews aboard its submarines.

Navy Vice Adm. Michael Connor, commander of the nation's submarine fleet, has characterized the case as a "serious sexual offense, with significant penalties."

Sexual Assault Prevention Chief Notes Progress, Need for More

(26 Mar.) *DoD News*, By Jim Garamone

WASHINGTON, March 26, 2015 – There has been progress in the Defense Department's efforts against sexual assault in the military, "but we have to keep hammering away at the problem," said Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Snow. "This is going to take time."

Snow leads DoD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, and while he said he's encouraged at signs of progress, he's not satisfied.

"This evil undermines the trust that holds our military together," the career infantryman told DoD News. "It is

Also unclear is how many women were recorded and their ranks. The charge sheet variously refers to officers and Midshipmen.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/navy-releases-more-details-in-case-of-sailors-videotaping-women-showering-on-sub-1.336542>

The Navy redacted the names of five of the accused sailors from the charging documents released. Crosby said that's because commanders have not yet decided whether to send their cases to a court-martial.

The records say one missile technician traded two energy drinks for videos of women. Another is accused of "stating that the videos of female officers were 'like Pokémon, gotta catch them all,' or words to that effect," according to one document.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Jason A. Bradley, charged with three counts of distributing illicit video recordings, is one of two accused sailors named in the documents.

Bradley's Navy defense attorney, Lt. Cmdr. Rich Federico, said the electronics technician had been charged only as "a small player" in the video scandal.

"He is not charged with filming any officers onboard the submarine but with passing along videos sent to him by others," Federico said in an emailed statement. He added that Bradley is "confident that the system will produce a fair and just outcome."

The second named suspect, Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandon S. McGarity, is charged with failing to report the videos to superiors even though he knew about them. The Associated Press could not immediately locate an attorney for him.

Bradley and McGarity were named in the Navy documents because their cases have been referred to a court-martial.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2015/03/7-sailors-charged-video-scandal-sub-wyoming>

morally wrong, and instances of sexual assault can also have an impact on readiness -- on individuals, certainly, but also on units."

Snow is monitoring 50 initiatives put in place by past Defense secretaries Leon Panetta and Chuck Hagel. "These initiatives changed how the military prevents, responds to and prosecutes sexual assault crimes," Snow said. "I'm encouraged that Secretary [Ash] Carter has already announced his commitment to keep this program aggressively moving forward."

Progress is undeniable. The most recent data, gathered last year, shows the past-year prevalence of sexual assault is down significantly, Snow said. Estimates indicate there were 6,000 to 7,000 fewer sexual assaults in 2014 than in 2012.

Encouraging Trends

While there were fewer sexual assaults, more of them were reported. "There was an unprecedented 50 percent increase in victims choosing to report the crime in 2013," he said. "Last year ... even more chose to report." This means authorities received reports from one in four victims in 2014 -- up from 1 in 10 in 2012.

Changes in the military justice system give commanders the tools they need to fight the crime. They also expand legal representation and protections for victims' interests, rights and privacy, Snow said.

Overall, he said, 10 of 12 DoD-charted metrics demonstrate progress in sexual assault prevention and response.

The department-wide climate survey conducted by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute found that most service members highly rate their commanders' efforts to promote a healthy climate and discourage inappropriate gender-based behavior.

"We need to continue training efforts, information campaigns, whatever it takes to continue making progress," Snow said.

'Troubling' Figures on Male-victim Assaults

Addressing sexual assaults against men is particularly challenging, he said. Given the preponderance of males in the military, the estimated number of men experiencing a sexual assault is actually higher than the estimated number of women -- roughly 10,000 to 8,000, respectively. However, reporting of the crime shows an even greater disparity. Officials estimate about 10 percent of victimized military men report their assault, while roughly 40 percent of victimized military women report.

The department is developing new ways to reach out to men who have been sexually assaulted, Snow said. Officials are looking at special information campaigns and special training for police, prosecutors and medical personnel, so they can recognize the signs of assault and act upon them, the general explained.

Driving Forward Against Sexual Assault

It is the department's goal to encourage greater reporting, as a way to provide victims with assistance and to hold offenders

Female Soldier Attends Pre-Ranger Training

(20 Mar.) DoD News, By Walter T. Ham IV

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md., March 20, 2015 -- An Army chemical corps officer assigned to the 20th CBRNE Command here has played a pioneering role in gender integration in the U.S. military. Maj. Angela Scott, from Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives Coordination Element 5, was one of 26 females to take part in the second Ranger Training Assessment Course to accept women.

Scott completed the first eight days of the course before joining roughly half of the attendees who couldn't finish the entire course. Only 58 of the original 122 graduated from the pre-selection course, held at the Ranger School on Fort Benning, Georgia, including five female soldiers.

No Stranger to Trailblazing

appropriately accountable, Snow said. An unrestricted report allows a victim to get help and participate in the military justice process. Restricted reports do not trigger a criminal investigation or command notification, but do allow victims to confidentially get help, Snow said.

"Our response system is designed to build a victim's trust in the system and deliver immediate care while assisting with restoring resiliency after a sexual assault," he said.

An outgrowth of the increased emphasis on the crime is an increased focus on combating retaliation, Snow said.

"Our victim and population-based surveys look to capture the kinds of stressors military members experience so that responders throughout the department can better meet their needs," he said. "But we have more to do if we are going to keep people reporting this crime. We've found that service members can often perceive 'social retaliation' from peers after reporting."

While these acts aren't always criminal, Snow said, "they certainly can add to a victim's feelings of alienation and complicate someone's recovery."

Sexual assault prevention and response officials will continue to drive forward, Snow said. "We will keep working with people inside and out of the military to take on this problem," he added.

Research indicates that sexual assault happens less often in commands with good climates and low rates of related problems, such as sexual harassment, he noted. Snow added that prevention of sexual assault relies heavily on individuals' efforts to take action if they see a situation at risk for sexual assault or disrespect being shown to a fellow service member. He praised federal lawmakers for all they have done to highlight the crime and for the tools they have given the military to combat it.

Still, he said, the road ahead is not easy and will take time. "It's not successful until that last private in the smallest unit understands that sexual assault is a crime and that he or she will be held accountable for promoting a culture of dignity and respect," Snow said. "We want service members to not only identify risky situations, but also to intervene and demonstrate social courage when they encounter inappropriate behavior."

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=128471&source=GovDelivery>

Also a 2001 graduate of the first gender-integrated class at the Virginia Military Institute, Scott said attending RTAC was an incredible opportunity.

"Since I was a teenager, I've had something inside of me that drives me towards a certain lifestyle and beliefs," said Scott, a native of Quinton, Oklahoma. "I believe in never quitting, the extreme loyalty of always having someone's back and always finding a way to get the mission or job done. This seems to fit into the lifestyle and philosophy of the Rangers, and therefore, I was drawn to attempting to be a part of that community."

Scott said she trained for two months before the course, employing a Ranger-tailored physical training program and practicing the obstacle course, land navigation, combat water survival and long-distance marching with heavy ruck sacks. "I also have two very young children, who are up a lot at night," Scott said. "So this helped out with training for sleep

deprivation and learning how to remain calm in certain situations.”

One Standard

The major said RTAC improved her leadership skills and demonstrated the power of teamwork, adding that the training course gave the soldiers a chance to test their mettle against a rigorous set of standards.

"There should be one standard, and whoever wants to attempt to meet this standard, should be allowed," said Scott, who

Fleet master chief in Europe retires after 33 years

(23 Mar.) *Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — The Navy's most senior active-duty enlisted female sailor retired during a ceremony Friday at the Navy base here.

Fleet Master Chief JoAnn Ortloff of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa formally ended her 33-year Navy career surrounded by friends, family and colleagues at the base theater in Capodichino. Also attending the event was Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Mike Stevens.

Ortloff joined the Navy in 1982 and began her career as an air traffic controller. She was selected to the master chief program

How Serious Is The Army About Fostering A Mentoring Culture Within The Ranks?

(23 Mar.) *Task & Purpose*, By Brad Hardy

A program held at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, called Solarium is an event where selected captains discuss and find solutions to complex problems facing the Army and present their findings to the Army chief of staff at its conclusion. At a recent Solarium event held earlier this year, Gen. Raymond Odierno discussed his views on mentorship:

... while formal counseling is important from an institutional perspective, informal counseling and mentoring are major factors in leader development. And that is something that needs to be fostered in an increasingly complex world, where even junior leaders need to make split-second decisions that have far-reaching impacts.

The Army really wants, or should want, mentorship to flourish among the ranks with some understandable reasons. It may help a leader at any level not only gain been-there-done-that experience, perspective on career ambitions, and informal reviews of performance, but — most importantly — self awareness, all from a concerned, but objective, source. An active mentor sees an outlet to pass on experience, the profession of arms, and even a touch of legacy. Someone who actively seeks mentorship may be someone who appreciates the profession and seeks to deepen it, if only from his or her foxhole.

Unfortunately, although we as Army leaders talk the talk on the importance of mentorship as a program, we struggle on implementation. Mentorships lives and dies on its voluntary nature, but we seem to force the issue and so cripple it.

served in Iraq twice. "If they don't meet the standard, then that's on them."

"America is a place where with hard work, dedication and a dream, you can come from nothing and become someone that greatly contributes to society," Scott said. "The country's military shouldn't be any different."

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=128412&source=GovDelivery>

in 2003 and has served as a command master chief aboard the destroyer USS Milius and at U.S. Naval Hospital Guam. She served as fleet master chief for U.S. 3rd Fleet before being chosen in 2012 to be fleet master chief for NAVEUR-AF, the command said in a news release.

Master Chief Petty Officer Steve Giordano assumed Ortloff's role of senior enlisted leader for the fleet on Friday.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/europe/fleet-master-chief-in-europe-retires-after-33-years-1.336095>

Army Regulation 600-100, Army Leadership explains that:

Mentorship is the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect. The focus of mentorship is voluntary mentoring that extends beyond the scope of chain of command relationships and occurs when a mentor provides the mentee advice and counsel over a period of time.

There's mentorship enconced in Army regulation, almost mandatory, but still voluntary. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, Army Leadership, broadens on the topic. But it's still doctrine — recommended, but still voluntary. We say it's important and acknowledge its value.

But how serious is the Army and its leadership about implementing it? The My Army Benefits website, last updated two years ago, describes the Army's mentorship initiative started in 2005, "...to encourage Soldiers and Department of the Army (DA) Civilians to engage in mentoring activities beyond the chain of command." Trying to find additional information may lead an interested soldier to some disappointment since the link to the program site has a 404 error. Website links break all the time and Army programs come and go with leadership turnover, priority shifts, and funding reallocation. But if mentorship is a necessary, and essentially mandatory, thing for a professional force, the front door to the program is locked and the lights are off.

Within [Army Knowledge Online](#), the branch's knowledge management portal, one may find the Army Career Tracker as an option for official mentorship assistance. The site has some benefits, such as a personalized outline of military training and civilian education completed to date while providing an automated individual development plan for career goals. While the Army has abandoned its mentorship program, it has adopted the career tracker as a venue for facilitating leader development.

This program appears to be a well-intentioned step in the right direction. The problem, however, is that this automated process notifies a potential mentor that there is a mentee out there who seeks guidance without encouraging the relationship beyond an automated email. More importantly, it sterilizes the mentorship process by replacing one-on-one, significant conversation with point-and-click generic timelines and unfocused advice. Digital mentorship isn't exactly the same thing as facetime and legitimate concern for the individual or profession.

If something is important, the Army sends a soldier to a school; if it's a "block check," it makes it an online quiz. If mentorship was an enforced program, the Army Career Tracker, like the [Multi-Source Feedback and Assessment](#) required during annual evaluation time, would become a pencil-whip drill or feedback sink where information and analysis go in and nothing substantial comes out.

It's no panacea to improving mentorship, but the Army Career Tracker is a limited tool to help it along. And it's not the only way the Army encourages mentorship. Sometimes it tries to play matchmaker. Once as a small group leader and instructor of a captains' career course, I experienced how forced Army mentorship can be.

At regular intervals, the schoolhouse hosted the pre-command course for lieutenant colonels and colonels; those selected for battalion and brigade command or key staff positions on general staffs. Interested senior officers from that group would sit in with the class, give a little talk about being a leader (hooah, hooah), and ultimately allow for questions. Most student questions centered on the "What do I need to do to be successful in my next assignment" variety. The senior officers would always answer, generically but earnestly, and then offer up some business cards before they headed for the door.

But the Q & A wasn't the issue. It was the misnomer of calling this activity a mentorship program. Before any Q & A and even before the colonels spoke, as the small group leader, I would introduce the officers to the class: "Okay, folks, we have Colonel So-n-so here who will be your class mentor. Hold your questions until the end."

How can one officer be a mentor to an entire class of 40 captains after a one-time, mostly one-way conversation? I feel guilty that maybe I didn't explain mentorship well enough at that point. But maybe it's taken this long to realize and learn what mentorship is. And what was I going to say? "Colonel

So-n-so will be your mentor for the next hour, then you'll probably never see him again."

Maybe instead of mentorship, we should have labeled the program "Senior Officer Engagement Afternoon." Certainly young captains can pull value out of frank discussion with senior officers, but the nature of this program belies the voluntary, informal nature of mentorship.

Certainly mentorship isn't for everyone. Despite the learning and growing organization the Army tries to be, hardliners who have everything figured out, in their mind, from commissioning to retirement, will never seek mentorship. Mentors may not be inclined to support them either. Some leaders, despite this attribute, are textbook introverts and may not see value in seeking extra professional guidance. As an introvert myself, finding reasons to open up is exhausting; doing so on professional matters is no different. A third group, and probably the largest, just has no interest in the process. Mentorship has a certain twinge of selfishness to it. It places a demand of time and effort on the mentor and focuses solely on the individual mentee. At the heart of the matter, the mentor and mentee may not see any value in the current program for the effort it takes to work.

Further, the existing model of mentorship may not fit how the current crop of young officers think, lead, or operate. Company grade through junior field grade officers are increasingly a part of the millennial generation; those born around the early 1980s and later. These officers may see more value in collaboration and teamwork and less in hierarchy and linear approaches. As [Geil Browning writes in *Inc.*](#):

This generation is all about collaboration; wants to impact the greater good; and is not too interested in how things were done in the past. In fact, the top-down approach that characterizes many companies may be one reason for the high turnover rates associated with Millennials—the square-peg-in-a-round-hole problem.

A lot of good comes out of collaborative efforts to include better, more comprehensive problem solving and greater ideas and thinking. Mentorship should be no different as a team of concerned leaders, concerned for the profession as well as each other. No website necessary and no need to force the issue.

I welcome a new age of mentorship that is less rigid, hierarchical, or even mandated, and more loose, fluid, and interactive. Further, it doesn't need to be a one-on-one experience, but collegial, collaborative environment. [As Nathan Finney raised on his blog, *The Bridge*](#), "...we get our development, support, and direction from peers and seniors in informal settings, across careers and experiences. We learn from everyone and leverage as large a network as we can each individually manage."

This wide-open collaborative environment mirrors with a focused purpose on growth of the individual and the profession has precedent in other areas. An applied example

comes from Steven Johnson and his [TED talk](#) on the origin of good ideas. He offers the coffeehouses of 17th century England as a source of dialogue, shared ideas, insights, and collaboration.

But the other thing that makes the coffeehouse important is the architecture of the space. It was a space where people would get together from different backgrounds, different fields of expertise, and share.....And an astonishing number of innovations from this period have a coffeehouse somewhere in their story.....

Can Female Marines Carry The Load And Kill The Enemy?

(25 Mar.) NPR, By Tom Bowman

More than a dozen Marines from Alpha Company fan out across California's Mojave Desert, far into the distance. Machine-gun fire gives them cover. The small forms dash ahead. Some drop to one knee, others fall on their stomachs, firing at pop-up targets.

Only one woman is part of this group. Until last fall, Sgt. Kelly Brown was fueling helicopters and trucks. Now she's running with an assault rifle.

"Sgt. Brown. She's a good Marine, she's adapted well," says Capt. Ray Kaster, Alpha Company commander, as he walks up a gravel road toward the training range at a Marine base in Twentynine Palms, Calif.

"She's a natural leader. She's been very good for us. Very good to have a positive influence amongst the females," he says.

But the number of women is dwindling. Kaster estimates he's lost about half of them, though Marine officials later say about one-third of the nearly 30 women dropped out.

Kaster says the majority of those dropouts were due to hip and leg fractures, injuries that come from the heavy load an infantry Marine must carry: weapons, ammunition, a pack that can weigh from 50 pounds to more than 100 pounds.

The Marine Corps is trying to determine whether women can serve in ground combat jobs: artillery, armor and infantry. Alpha Company's training out in the Mojave is part of a months-long experiment to figure that out.

After the exercise ends, Brown unloads her weapon, pulls off her helmet and body armor. She's lean and athletic, and played softball at Virginia Tech.

It was her grandfather's service as a Marine in Korea and Vietnam that inspired her and landed her on this desert range with these male and female volunteers.

Her biggest challenge?

We take ideas from other people, from people we've learned from, from people we run into in the coffee shop, and we stitch them together into new forms and we create something new. That's really where innovation happens. And that means that we have to change some of our models of what innovation and deep thinking really looks like, right. I mean, this is one vision of it.

Open collaboration in an informal setting may be the source of good thinking that builds on a pool of good ideas and insights. This is the same place mentorship should occur as well. <http://taskandpurpose.com/how-serious-is-the-army-about-fostering-a-mentoring-culture-within-the-ranks/>

"I would say definitely the hiking and being able to carry that amount of weight, because the standard is 114 pounds and that's pretty close to my body weight," she says.

The 30-year-old weighs 130 pounds.

"I'm carrying pretty close to my body weight, but your shoulders get stronger, your back gets stronger," she says.

Brown may be getting stronger, but the load overwhelmed some of the women, she says.

The Marines had no immediate figure for the number of men who dropped out, but say the number is far less.

"Some of the females were great, were doing a great job," Brown says. "It's just some of the stress fractures on the hips."

Brown says female Marines can prevent injuries by shifting the weight of the pack off the hips to the shoulders, and more conditioning.

For Cpl. Jasmine Abrego, it's also attitude.

"Mentally it's just being strong, you just get stronger," she says. "You just push yourself through it, that's what I've been doing."

Abrego is just 5 foot, 1 inch. She left her job as a Marine clerical worker to train for the infantry and, as she puts it, "kick bad guys' butts."

"I've never wanted to quit," she says. "It's like, God this really sucks, but most of the time, I'm still here, I'm still going to do it."

This infantry exercise goes beyond just physical strength. Marines are supposed to fight and win the nation's wars. That's where the targets on this desert range come in.

Brown and the other Marines have sensors on their weapons to determine who hit the targets, which have sensors, too.

Paul Johnson is watching all of this. He's a civilian who designed this and other tests. He monitors the exercise from a small room inside a tower that rises above the range. A computer screen displays the human targets scattered around the range.

Johnson's experiment will show how a Marine attack performs with all men, then with one woman taking part, then two women. The number of women remains low to reflect reality: Women make up just 7 percent of the Marine Corps.

At this point, Johnson says he doesn't know the answer to a key question: How are the women doing at killing the enemy?

At this point, he is looking at the data blind; he doesn't know which squad, or the makeup of the squad.

Johnson will have the results by the summer, when he files a report to the Marine leadership. Based on this and other data,

the Marines will have to decide. Do they open up ground combat to women, or ask for an exception?

Kaster, the Alpha Company commander, says the bottom line in all of this is combat effectiveness. Can women Marines carry the load and kill the enemy?

"That's what this [experiment] will show. Is there a difference? Does having a high or low female concentration in an infantry rifle squad, does that inhibit or complement, enhance the ability of that unit to fight?" he says.

Meanwhile, all the Marines, men and women, continue to train in the desert: shooting at targets, digging in defenses, carrying the load.

Up ahead: a nearly five-mile hike with a fairly light pack — about 55 pounds.

<http://www.npr.org/2015/03/25/395279171/can-female-marines-carry-the-load-and-kill-the-enemy>

What Percentage of Americans have Served in the Military?

(19 Mar.) *FiveThirtyEight*, By Mona Chalabi

As of Jan. 31, there were close to 1.4 million people serving in the U.S. armed forces, according to the latest numbers from the Defense Manpower Data Center, a body of the Department of Defense. That means that 0.4 percent of the American population is active military personnel. That's not your question though, is it? You're interested in the percentage of Americans who have *ever* served — perhaps because as a veteran yourself, you know that former members of the armed services vastly outnumber current personnel. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is interested in a similar question — and to answer it, they use their own data as well as numbers from the Department of Defense, the U.S. Census Bureau, the Internal Revenue Service and the Social Security Administration. As of 2014, the VA estimates there were 22 million military veterans in the U.S. population. If you add their figures on veterans to the active personnel numbers mentioned above, 7.3 percent of all living Americans have served in the military at some point in their lives.

But since only 2 million veterans and about 200,000 current personnel are women, that overall percentage varies a lot by gender — 1.4 percent of all female Americans have ever served in the armed services, compared to 13.4 percent of all male Americans.

Seeing as you mentioned specifically that you served in the Navy, I thought you might be interested in a breakdown by branch of service: 3.1 percent of all living Americans have served in the Army, 1.7 percent in the Navy, 1.4 percent in the Air Force and 0.8 percent in the Marines, while the remaining 0.5 percent served in either non-defense or reserve roles.

So that number you heard looks like a big underestimate. Perhaps the percentage was based on a younger age group rather than *all* living Americans (we know, based on that VA data, that more than half of all veterans are over 60 right now). We also know which conflicts those veterans served in.

There are 5.5 million living U.S. veterans who served during what the VA calls “peacetime,” meaning they didn’t serve at any point during a conflict — 11,213 of them served before World War II had even begun. “Wartime” veterans are a slightly harder to group to categorize because many of them served in more than one conflict. For example, 2.8 million veterans served in only the first Gulf War (defined by the VA as lasting from August 1990 to September 2001), another 2.6 million served in only the second Gulf War (defined as the period from September 2001 to present) but there are another 1.6 million veterans that served in one of those conflicts as well as another (either the other Gulf War or something else).

The VA also calculates the projected population of veterans over the next three decades. Based on its current information (i.e. assuming no future conflicts), the agency expects the number of living veterans to steadily decline to 14.5 million in 2043. Unsurprisingly, the only category of veterans projected to increase are the post-9/11 ones. Their numbers will rise from 3.9 million in 2014 to 6 million in 2043, according to the VA’s projections, meaning that those personnel will go from representing 1 in 6 military veterans to 1 in 2.

<http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/what-percentage-of-americans-have-served-in-the-military/>

Local History: Women veterans started female-only American Legion Post

(22 Mar.) *The Times Tribune*, By Erin Nissley

Nearly a century ago, a group met at Moses Taylor Hospital to set up a club for World War I veterans.

But they didn't allow just anyone who served during the war to join their group. Instead, the American Legion post set up in the spring of 1920 was meant solely for female nurses who had served in the armed forces during WW I.

When World War I began, about 400 women were serving as part of the Army Nurse Corps., according to a website for Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation. By Armistice Day, 21,480 nurses had enlisted; 10,000 had served overseas, according to the same website.

The new American Legion post took its name from a local woman who died while serving overseas in World War I: Gladys Watkins.

Shickshinny native

Ms. Watkins was a Shickshinny native and a graduate of Moses Taylor Hospital's nursing program. She worked in Scranton for several years before enlisting in May 1918, according to a death notice published in *The Republican* on Nov. 13, 1918. She died Oct. 16, 1918, and is buried at St. Mihiel American Cemetery in Thiaucourt, France. She was one of six nurses in Pennsylvania who died while serving in World War I.

Locally, the Gladys Watkins Post was a way for female nursing veterans to gather. But the initial camaraderie was short-lived. According to a handwritten history penned in August of 1955 by Mrs. David Greenberger, the post surrendered its charter in 1923, just three years after it was founded, and became affiliated with the Keystone Post.

Five years later, however, the post reorganized under its original name and members decided to allow women veterans of other branches of the armed forces to join.

The lack of a permanent home didn't seem to hurt membership. A 1981 article in *The Scranton Times* said, "After World War II, in June 1946, a total of 45 women veterans were inducted as members at a session in the Koch-Conley Post Home."

Over the years, Gladys Watkins Post members threw themselves into community service.

Concerns over easing military transgender ban

(25 Mar.) *Military Times*, By Lolita C. Baldor

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Ash Carter has gotten pushback from senior military leaders on whether the Pentagon should lift its ban on transgender people serving in the armed forces, according to U.S. officials familiar with the discussions.

Bake, rummage sales

They held fundraisers, including bake and rummage sales, for child-welfare charities. They presented American Legion scholastic awards and helped at blood drives. They helped with the American Legion's District 11 Parade of Champions. Members decorated the graves of other female veterans each year.

"In 1949, the post organized a surgical dressing unit under the direction of Mrs. Amelia Koch," *The Scranton Times* reported in 1981 in an article detailing the history of the post.

"The organization collected old but useable linens which were converted into surgical dressings. As a result, 3,500 dressings were turned over to the local cancer society."

Flood volunteers

Then, in August 1955, during a flood disaster in the Petersburg section of Scranton, the post sent more than a dozen members to volunteer at the Red Cross Casualty Station at Ash and Union streets, according to a *Scranton Times* article on Aug. 25, 1955. For 12 hours a day, post members treated victims and volunteers working in the affected neighborhoods.

Hired babysitters

According to the same *Scranton Times* article, post commander Betty Greenberger said that many of the casualty station volunteers were mothers who hired babysitters so they could help flooding victims and volunteers. Others were "regular duty nurses, who put in extra hours at the first aid station."

News clippings kept by *The Times-Tribune* include dozens of photos of post installation ceremonies and lists of officers.

The post disbanded in September 1988, according to Janice Gavern, a veteran and member of the American Legion in Montrose who has researched the Gladys Watkins post. <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/local-history-women-veterans-started-female-only-american-legion-post-1.1851501>

Carter initially told troops in Afghanistan that he was open-minded when asked if the Defense Department was planning to remove one of the last gender- or sexuality-based barriers to

military service. But defense officials said members of his top brass told Carter they had serious reservations.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Military officials are reluctant to publicly discuss their opposition, but much of it centers on questions about where transgender troops would be housed, what berthing they would have on ships, which bathrooms they would use, and whether their presence would affect the ability of small units to work well together.

There also are questions about whether the military would conduct or pay for the medical treatment and costs associated with any gender transition, as well as which physical training standards they would be required to meet.

The military has dealt with many similar questions as it integrated the ranks by race, gender and sexual orientation. And in many cases they raised comparable worries about what effect the change would have on the force, including whether it would hinder small units that often have to work together in remote, confined locations for long periods of time.

Transgender people — those who believe their gender identity is different than the one they were born with and sometimes take hormone treatments or have surgery to become their chosen gender — are banned from military service. But studies and other surveys estimate 15,000 transgender people serve in the active-duty military and the reserves, often in secret but in many cases with the knowledge of their unit commander or peers.

Carter, who became Pentagon chief just five weeks ago, told troops in Afghanistan last month that the key question should be "are they going to be excellent service members? And I don't think anything but their suitability for service should preclude them."

What he didn't know at the time was that one of the troops in attendance was a transgender individual who is serving with the full knowledge of that person's commander.

People familiar with the event would not identify the transgender service member or say if that person met or had a photograph taken with the secretary, saying it could put the person's job in jeopardy.

That transgender service member lives in barracks for that person's chosen gender identity, not the one listed on the troop's identification card, said Allyson Robinson, policy director for an association of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender military personnel called Service members, Partners, and Allies for Respect and Tolerance for All, or SPARTA. Robinson said the person is "acknowledged as one of the top performers in the unit," and is known to be a transgender individual by others in the unit.

The transgender issue came to the fore as the military struggled with how to deal with convicted national security leaker Chelsea Manning's request for hormone therapy and other treatment for her gender dysphoria while she's in prison. Manning, arrested as Bradley Manning, is the first transgender military prisoner to request such treatment, and the Army recently approved the hormone therapy, under pressure from a lawsuit.

Manning, like other service members discovered to be transgender, would have been discharged, but she first has to finish serving her 35-year sentence at the military prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

While there are no separate, formal Defense Department studies on the transgender question, there is an ongoing review that looks at the broader issue of Defense Department standards for enlistment, which includes a 40-page list of medical conditions that preclude service.

Recruits must be free of any contagious diseases or medical, physical, mental or psychological conditions that would limit the person's ability to perform, to serve in various places and environments, wear required equipment, and cannot require absences due to needed hospitalization or treatment.

Such conditions include heart problems, cancer, night blindness, sleep apnea, schizophrenia, serious cases of hemorrhoids and eating disorders. It also refers in several places to sexual conditions or disorders, including transgender.

That review, to be completed next year, could provide a mechanism for changing the ban, U.S. officials said.

While the Defense Department has yet to approve any change in regulations, small teams within the military services are gathering information on the issue. And the Army has announced that decisions to discharge transgender service members will now be made at a higher level than unit commander to ensure consistency.

Advocates for changing the transgender rule point to 2011 when gays and lesbians were first allowed to serve openly and military leaders predicted a rise in hate crimes and harm to unit cohesion and readiness. But officials across the services say none of that has happened.

"There were no signs of problems with unit cohesion," said David Stacy, government affairs director for Human Rights Campaign. "And, we don't think this is different in any way."

Robinson, of Service members, Partners, and Allies for Respect and Tolerance for All, acknowledged the issue raises challenging questions for the military. But she said other nations, including Australia, Canada and Britain, have found solutions.

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Robinson began her military career as a man, enlisting in the Army at 17, attending West Point and going on to command Patriot missile units in the Middle East and Europe.

After leaving the military in 1999, Robinson became a woman, but said she knew "long before I ever swore my oath or put on my boots that I was different. And I knew that the difference, if people were aware of it, would prevent me from following in my dad's boot-steps, from living out my dream and paying back my country for the freedoms that I enjoy every day."

109 years young, Army veteran celebrates a special birthday

(26 Mar.) *Stars and Stripes*, By Barbara O'Brien

Phyllis Josephine Thompson's story started 109 years ago, when she was born in England.

Her amazing life took her to Hampton Bay on Long Island as a child, nursing school in Brooklyn and halfway around the world during World War II to find her husband, whose ship was sunk by a German submarine.

She nursed soldiers who had been wounded on Iwo Jima during the brutal and bloody battle to capture the island, and eventually settled in Hamburg.

Jo, as she likes to be called, also is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, World War II veteran, male or female, in the country.

Her friends celebrated her birthday Wednesday with a small party at Father Baker Manor, where she has been living since she suffered a broken hip on her birthday last year.

"Someone has gone to a lot of trouble," she said as her friend Karen Best pushed her wheelchair into a conference room and she looked at the balloons and flowers. "I really appreciate it."

Thompson became a registered nurse after studying at Carson Peck Memorial Hospital in Brooklyn. She and her husband, William L. "Billy" Bunker Jr., who was from a wealthy family that owned a large shipping company, were married in 1930 before a justice of the peace and settled in Brooklyn. Bunker joined the Navy in 1940, and was chief engineer on the USS Cythera, a patrol vessel.

The Cythera was on its way to a mission in Hawaii when a German sub 100 miles off Cape Fear, N.C., launched a torpedo shortly after midnight May 2, 1942. All but two of the 71 crew members were lost at sea. The Navy told the families of all the crew that they were missing in action.

Hoping that Bunker was a prisoner of war, Thompson was determined to find him, and she enlisted in the Army in June 1943. The new lieutenant was stationed stateside, but was anxious to be closer to Germany, where she hoped her husband was being held. She ended up traveling to Seattle and then to Hawaii and Saipan by ship.

"All the hard questions have already been answered," she said. "Unless our leaders commit to a real program of answering these questions, then Americans have no way of knowing if what's behind this is truly insurmountable challenges or bias."

Discrimination against transgender people is prohibited under federal law in the civilian population.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/03/25/ap-sources-concerns-over-easing-military-transgender-ban/70418384/>

She and other nurses flew to Iwo Jima in May, 1945, three months after the Marines first invaded the 4-mile-long island south of Tokyo.

Thompson was put in charge of the orthopedic surgery unit, which started out as a tent with volcanic ash floors. The hospital units eventually were replaced with Quonset huts. While the fighting had died down, there was occasional bombing of the island, according to a memoir she wrote. She and other nurses would stay in the unit during bombings, covering the wounded with mattresses.

Casualties for U.S. forces on Iwo Jima were 26,000, including nearly 7,000 killed in action.

She was still on Iwo Jima when she learned that her husband, Billy, had been killed when his ship sank three years earlier.

She returned to the States in the fall of 1945 and was stationed at Valley Forge Hospital in Pennsylvania, where she met her second husband, Robert Thompson. They married in 1949 and moved to Erie County, where she opened an antique store in Boston. The couple eventually moved to Hamburg, where he was an insurance agent and she ran the Old Cider Mill Antique Shop.

As far as her friends know, she never worked as a nurse again.

Thompson, who takes no daily medications and is quite hard of hearing, has not forgotten her experiences during World War II.

"Iwo Jima," she said, "was quite a spot."

Wednesday, she was grateful for the party and gifts, which included lots of her favorite: chocolate. She also received a black and white photo of her late husband, Bob Thompson, with his two malamutes and their sled at Chestnut Ridge Park. He raised the dogs, and the couple used to take people for sled rides. She remarked on her husband, and came up with the name of one of the dogs: Vixen.

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“It has broken the day considerably,” she said of the celebration. “I never thought I would live so long. All my family is gone.”

Those gathered for her birthday said they believe Thompson is the oldest World War II veteran in the United States. They noted that she is a month and a half older than a Texas woman who was believed to be the oldest female American veteran. That woman, Lucy Coffey, died last week.

Thompson, who attributes her longevity to a daily dose of cod liver oil, didn't seem concerned with being the oldest.

Sitting in her wheelchair with a blanket over her legs Wednesday, she was impressed with letters of congratulation and proclamations from President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama, U.S. Sen. Kirsten E. Gillibrand, State Sen. Marc C. Panepinto and Hamburg Town Clerk Catherine A. Rybczynski.

“A senator?” she said in amazement.

Army Master Sgt. William Hight, senior military instructor in the ROTC program at Canisius College, and ROTC Cadet Kyle Zifchock, a student at the University at Buffalo, knelt and thanked Thompson for her service to her country. After most had left, friend and caregiver Lisa Smith said she deserved the appreciation.

“I don't know that I do,” Thompson said.

After about 30 minutes, she was tired, and looking forward to a nap.

“Are you ready to go?” Smith asked.

“Yes!” Thompson said, and she pointed to a piece of chocolate cake: “That's good, save it for me.”

<http://www.stripes.com/news/us/109-years-young-army-veteran-celebrates-a-special-birthday-1.336661>