



DACOWITS: Articles of Interest 5 June 2015

WELLNESS

[Birth injury lawsuit revives Feres debate](#)

(28 May) *Military Times*, By Patricia Kime

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(30 May) *Navy Times*, By Mark D. Faram

Navy leaders want women to make up a quarter of the force within a decade. They say reaching that "critical mass" will improve the Navy's talent base and aid in countering problems like workplace harassment, and they are laying out an slew of deals to entice more women to sign up and stay in. But a sea change is needed to come anywhere near this ambitious milestone, with women leaving at a much higher rate.

[Navy to expand spots for sailors to take 3 years off](#)

(1 Jun) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

The program started small, with 20 billets each for officers and enlisted, but a new proposal on Capitol Hill would expand the program by 10 times.

[It's Very Hard To Prosecute Rape In The Military — Trust Me, I Know](#)

(1 Jun) *Task & Purpose*, By Anonymous

A soldier shares her observations of prosecuting rape cases in the Army both as a victim and an attorney

[4th sub Wyoming sailor gets prison in shower recordings case](#)

(2 Jun) *Associate Press*, By Russ Bynum

A Navy sailor pleaded guilty Tuesday to secretly videotaping female trainees as they undressed for showers aboard a submarine, becoming the fourth crew member of the USS Wyoming to be sentenced to prison in a case that has tarnished the U.S. military's integration of women into its submarine fleet.

ASSIGNMENTS

[More women may go to Ranger School, Army chief says](#)

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

The Army is looking at allowing female soldiers to attend "a couple more" cycles of Ranger School as part of its ongoing effort to open combat arms jobs to women, the service's top officer said Thursday.

[All 8 women fail Ranger School: Some Rangers say standards should change](#)

(29 May) *Christian Science Monitor*, By Anna Mulrine

On Friday, the Army announced that all the women who had attempted to graduate from Ranger School had officially failed to meet the standards, according to a military source.

[5 women cut from Ranger School after second try](#)

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

After a second attempt at the first phase of Ranger School, none of the eight female students will be moving forward to the mountain phase of the course, officials from Fort Benning, Georgia, said Friday.

[Women's AF history expands with new four-star](#)

(1 Jun) *Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Command Information*, By Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie

Lt. Gen. Ellen Pawlikowski, the assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition, military deputy, was promoted to the rank of general, effective June 8. She is now the third female four-star general in Air Force history, following in the footsteps of remarkable women who paved the way.

[Three women recycled again in Ranger School](#)

(1 Jun) *Army News Service*, By C. Todd Lopez

Despite setbacks, three female Soldiers continue the challenge to make it through Army Ranger School.

[First female Old Guard commander](#)

(2 June) ABC7 News

<Video Clip>

[Mabus: I'd like to do better than 1-in-4 female recruiting goal](#)

(2 Jun) *Marine Corps Times*, By Hope Hedge Seck

His strategy to have women make up at least 25 percent of all new Marine Corps and Navy enlisted recruits may seem ambitious, but Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said he considers that just a starting point as the sea services move to become more female friendly.

[Wright-Patterson's top general retiring, new commander to start](#)

(3 Jun) *Dayton Daily News*, By Barrie Barber

The transition will mark the first time a female four-star general is replaced by a female four-star general at a major command in the Air Force.

EXTRA

[First female West Point graduate reflects on historic anniversary](#)

(28 May) *CBS News*, By Rachid Haoues

They wouldn't make it, the men said; the math and science wouldn't interest them, the physical routine would be too tough and the opposition would drive them out. On May 28, 1980 -- 35 years ago Thursday -- the men behind those words were proven wrong as dozens of women tossed their caps alongside men at America's prestigious military academies.

[Women in combat, immigration profiled in reservist's film](#)

(1 Jun) *Military Times*, By Oriana Pawlyk

For Army Reserve Capt. Rebecca Murga, telling the story of women in combat ranks in significance just below the privilege of actually donning a military uniform. Murga, a filmmaker, photographer and writer, is working on her latest short film, "American Girl," which follows a young woman's experience in becoming a soldier who eventually serves in Afghanistan.

[Group looks to honor Female Civil War soldiers with monument](#)

(2 Jun) *The Winchester Star*, By Onofrio Castiglia

When considering the millions of men who fought in the American Civil War, one local group highlights the fact that some of them were not men at all—but women, in disguise.

[New Documentary Sheds Light On Struggles Of Deployed Servicewomen Returning Home](#)

(3 Jun) *CBS News*, By Rick Dayton

Transitioning from military life to civilian life can be tough for any veteran. Now, we're learning more about the struggle for female veterans in particular.

[Let Transgender Troops Serve Openly](#)

(4 June) *New York Times Editorial*

Early this year, Senior Airman Logan Ireland feared he might face a similar fate when he disclosed to his commanders during a recent deployment in Afghanistan that he transitioned from female to male. Yet, his supervisors have been supportive, allowing him to wear male uniforms and adhere to male grooming standards even though Air Force records continue to label him as female.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Sweet Georgia Brown: Brown Bag Lunch & Film Screening \(12 June, 1100-1330\)](#)

-- Impact, Courage, Sacrifice and Will is Lawrence Walker's second documentary to focus on the African-American servicewomen of World War II. With this important film, Walker examines the changes and consequences in race and gender policies and the impact on the nation, the military and African-American women. Skillfully addressing the pertinent issues of the time, Sweet Georgia Brown introduces the viewer to these unsung heroes and trailblazers while speaking to the expanding opportunities; the social, political and organizational factors of the time; racial and gender policies; and the unique factors associated with being African-American women in the Armed Forces during WWII. In her book, *One Woman's Army: A Black Officer Remembers the WAC*, Charity Adams Early, one of those trailblazers, wrote, "In another generation, young black women who join the military will have scant record of their predecessors who fought on the two fronts of discrimination—segregation and reluctant acceptance by males." Thanks to Walker, Sweet Georgia Brown, brings to life and assures we remember this extraordinary legacy of 'impact, courage, sacrifice and will.' The screening is free and open to the public. Guests are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch. To reserve a seat, call 703-533-1155 or e-mail hq@womensmemorial.org

[Women at War: Brown Bag Lunch & Book Talk \(17 June, 1130-1300\)](#)

-- With more than 300,000 women deployed since September 11, 2001, the Department of Defense is facing new challenges in addressing service in austere environments and women's health. Join Army Dr. (COL) Anne L. Naclerio and retired Army Dr. (COL) Elspeth Cameron Ritchie for a brown bag lunch discussion of their new book, *Women at War*. In the very first text of its kind, *Women at War* bring together all available information and experience on women's physical and mental health in deployment. Guests will learn how the military is addressing reproductive

and urogenital health, mental health issues, the psychological effects of war, intimate-partner violence, sexual assault and suicide, as well as the veteran experience. The book talk is free and open to the public. Guests are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch. To reserve a seat, call 703-533-1155 or e-mail hq@womensmemorial.org

Birth injury lawsuit revives Feres debate

(28 May) Military Times, By Patricia Kime

Air Force Capt. Heather Ortiz arrived at Evans Army Community Hospital in Fort Carson, Colorado, on March 16, 2009, to welcome her baby girl to the world via a scheduled cesarean section.

Things progressed smoothly until Ortiz was given Zantac, a common heartburn medication, to ward off gastrointestinal issues that could lead to surgical complications.

But Ortiz is allergic to Zantac, and her medical records say as much. So she was given Benadryl as a counter. But that medication caused a precipitous drop in her blood pressure — which would not affect Ortiz long-term but carried catastrophic consequences for the baby.

The hypotension, combined with an erratic heartbeat and the attending staff's inattention to monitoring the baby's vital signs, deprived the child of oxygen for an extended period, leading to brain damage and severe disabilities, including cerebral palsy, court documents say.

The baby, identified as I.O. in documents, requires around-the-clock medical care and supervision, likely for the rest of her life.

Jorge Ortiz, Heather's husband and the baby's father, sued the government on behalf of the child, seeking financial support to help pay for that lifetime of care.

The case initially was dismissed by a district court, which cited the Feres doctrine, a law that prevents active-duty service members from suing the government for injuries incurred in the line of duty.

Jorge Ortiz appealed. But on May 15, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals weighed in, ruling in favor of the federal government.

Because the baby's injuries were related to an injury caused to an active-duty captain, the government cannot be held accountable, the circuit court judges wrote — with some reluctance — in their decision.

"Under [Feres], federal courts lose their subject matter jurisdiction over claims like this because we conclude the injured child's in utero injuries are unmistakably derivative of an injury to her mother," Judge Timothy Tymkovich wrote. "To be sure, the facts here exemplify the overbreadth (and unfairness) of the doctrine, but Feres is not ours to overrule."

If Jorge Ortiz was the active-duty member and his wife a military dependent delivering their baby in a military hospital, the Ortizes very likely would have won the case or received a settlement, said their attorney, Laurie Higginbotham.

But the mother's active-duty status and the judges' decision to apply what is known as the "genesis test" for Feres, which asks whether a civilian injury is related to an injury to a service member, led to a ruling that Higginbotham plans to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court as the latest challenge to Feres.

According to court documents, the judges decided that although Ortiz suffered no long-term consequences of the drop in blood pressure she experienced, it was an event — an injury — that caused her daughter's permanent disabilities.

"At bottom, the source of (Infant Ortiz's) ultimate injury was her servicewoman mother's blood pressure problems," the judges wrote.

Higginbotham called the decision a "tremendous injustice," citing cases in which other appeals courts ruled in favor of the military child injured during childbirth.

"We don't think 'genesis' applies. We don't believe the mom was 'injured.' There was a temporary drop in blood pressure and a drop in heart rate. The baby was showing signs of fetal distress and the providers did not respond," Higginbotham said.

The family did not respond to a request for an interview. Heather Ortiz is a nurse assigned to the 711th Human Performance Wing at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

A Pentagon review of the military health system released last year showed that from 2010 to 2013, the average rate of injuries to babies during delivery in military hospitals was twice the national average.

Nearly 49,000 babies were born in military facilities in the U.S. and overseas in 2013.

Retired Navy Capt. Kathy Beasley, a former Nurse Corps officer who now works in government relations for the Military Officers Association of America, said the complex Ortiz case revives a debate over the extent of the Feres doctrine and its applicability.

"This pathetic situation brings attention back to the Feres doctrine itself. I think, based on what I read in the case, that a re-examination of Feres could be in order." Beasley said.

The Ortiz's baby girl recently celebrated her sixth birthday. Higginbotham said she lives at home but will never recover from the extensive brain injury she received during childbirth.

"I've represented a lot of military families in cases of brain injury and it's a tremendous burden," she said. "Tricare pays for a lot but it doesn't cover everything. This family is

Better benefits aim to persuade more women to stay in

(30 May) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

Navy leaders want women to make up a quarter of the force within a decade.

They say reaching that "critical mass" will improve the Navy's talent base and aid in countering problems like workplace harassment, and they are laying out an slew of deals to entice more women to sign up and stay in. But a sea change is needed to come anywhere near this ambitious milestone, with women leaving at a much higher rate.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has now lent his support to what Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michelle Howard has been saying for the past few months — the Navy needs to needs to raise the number of women in the ranks, ensuring that a quarter of every ship, squadron or wardroom is women.

The 25 percent figure is important, Howard told Navy Times in March, because it is the tipping point for women to be fully accepted into the workforce and not feel isolated.

It's a road the Navy must go down, leaders say, if the service hopes to recruit the best people. Women constitute nearly half of the U.S. workforce, and outnumber men at U.S. universities.

Officials say the Navy would be selling itself short if it didn't expand opportunities for women to serve, which has been a hallmark of Mabus' six-year tenure.

"We need more women in the Navy and Marine Corps, not simply to have more women, but because a more diverse force is a stronger force," Mabus told Naval Academy midshipmen May 13. "We need educated officers, and women represent 57 percent of college graduates in America."

"In the fleet, this year, we are also increasing female enlisted accessions, emphasizing those ratings in which women are underrepresented."

The retention battle for female sailors will be crucial. To that end, the service has spent a good deal of time and money trying to come up with solutions. They include expanding the Career Intermission Program, improving the availability of child care programs on base, and providing more flexibility for dual military couple assignments.

CIP will increase spots and eligibility. Child care hours will be extended by four hours, two in the morning and two in the evening, to help working parents. And women will be eligible for twice as much paid maternity leave, 12 weeks instead of six.

basically looking to meet their minimal financial needs, looking for a way to survive."

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/health-care/2015/05/28/feres-doctrine-dependent-child/28070399/>

As of March 31, women comprised about 18 percent of the Navy's active-duty workforce — 18 percent in the enlisted ranks and 17 percent in the officer corps.

The greatest numbers of women are in the junior enlisted and officer ranks, which tend to drop off sharply by the E-5 and O-4 paygrades, according to official figures provided by Navy Personnel Command. If the brass hopes to have any success, they will need to keep more women in for careers.

For example, the force currently boasts 25 percent women among seamen recruits. That drops to around 20 percent through E-4, then 17 percent at E-5. Women represent 12 percent of chief petty officers and 7 percent of master chiefs.

Similarly, about 21 percent of O-1s and O-2s are women, but only 12 percent of Navy captains.

One success story: women account for many more admirals in 2015 than they did only a few years ago. They represent 12 percent of vice admirals, up from 3 percent only four years earlier.

Women tend to concentrate in a handful of ratings and are vastly underrepresented in others, the figures show.

Female sailors are concentrated in the administrative and supply communities, at 31 percent and 25 percent, respectively. About 21 percent of surface operations and cyber, 19 percent of aviation and 17 percent of the surface engineering communities are women.

On the other hand, few women serve in the Seabees and even fewer as Navy divers or explosive ordnance disposal technicians, where they represent less than 1 percent.

Women are underrepresented at sea, too. As of May 8, women filled 16 percent of sea duty billets, and 22 percent of shore duty billets. They account for 9 percent of chiefs on sea duty.

Officials are hoping to boost the number of women at sea, noting there are fewer impediments for women to find sea duty billets than a few years ago. The situation will only get better as older ships like frigates and attack subs are decommissioned and new ships are built from the keel up to accommodate women.

"With the exception of [no] enlisted female berthing on [coastal patrol ships], [mine countermeasures ships] and [frigates], it was found that more women can be accommodated at sea because all new construction since 1994 has been completed to a gender-neutral standard, and most ships built prior to 1994 have had berthing modifications for

women," said Cmdr. Renee Squier, head of enlisted plans and policy for the chief of naval personnel.

Raising the number of women in the force is a two-pronged battle being waged by recruiters and fleet Navy counselors — a rating that's nearly 46 percent women.

On the recruiting side, officials say they're making progress. In fiscal 2014, the Navy brought in 23 percent women and has upped that to 25 percent this year. Next fiscal year, it's slated to increase slightly.

The goal is to ramp up officer and enlisted accessions to reach a goal of somewhere between 25 and 30 percent women by fiscal 2025.

As part of the push, recruiters are concentrating on sending more of these female recruits into women in what, in the past, have been called non-traditional ratings, an effort that personnel officials say is key to increasing overall female representation.

"The initial increases were primarily taken in 24 of the 47 sea-centric and sea-intensive ratings, based on female manning, recruitability, and lifecycle retainability," Squier said. "A Female Rating Accessions Strategy Working Group has been

Navy to expand spots for sailors to take 3 years off

(1 Jun) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

It's a common refrain among sailors contemplating leaving the Navy: They're burned out, they don't have time to finish college, they want to raise a family.

But the Navy doesn't want to lose their talent and now plans to expand the number of slots for those who want to take up to three years off.

The Career Intermission Program offers sailors a small portion of their base pay every month for up to 36 months. They can then return seamlessly to duty with no consequences for promotions.

The program started small, with 20 billets each for officers and enlisted, but a new proposal on Capitol Hill would expand the program by 10 times.

Now in its seventh year, 82 sailors have been accepted to CIP so far. The program has grown from one male officer and two enlisted men in 2009 to 13 participants in 2015, 10 of whom are enlisted and 85 percent women. But that's still only about a third of the available billets.

Now, the Navy is asking Congress to increase the billets to 400, widen eligibility and make participation more flexible and, in some cases, better paid.

If approved, there will be a new menu of options, for example, letting participants, take a shorter break with more pay in return for a longer service obligation after they return.

stood up to examine additional factors such as: rating desirability, civilian counterpart data, retention, and attrition data on all 84 of the Navy ratings to further examine which ratings would be favorable for greater female numbers."

In the four ratings initially targeted, the numbers of women have climbed steadily. They now make up 23 percent of aviation ordnancemen, 24 percent of operations specialists and 19 percent of gas turbine systems technicians (mechanical).

The toughest battle for the Navy has been in retaining women beyond their first and second enlistments. Another challenge has come in the chiefs ranks, officials say. Female chiefs retire right at 20 years at a higher rate than their male counterparts.

Simply raising the number of women in the ranks could convince more women to stay, officials say.

"While a concrete critical mass percentage has not been determined," Squier said, "studies have shown roughly 25 to 30 percent female representation may positively influence retention."

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/05/30/25-percent-recruiting-women-goal-secnav-navy/27751907/>

Currently, sailors receive 1/15 of their base pay — roughly \$100 after taxes on an E-5's salary — and owe twice as much time as they took off once they return, in addition to whatever was left on their enlistment or contract. So that would be a minimum of six additional years for a sailor who spent three years off duty.

There are now some eligibility disqualifiers that the Navy is trying to dump.

Going forward, sailors earning critical skills retention bonuses or selective re-enlistment bonuses would be eligible for the program, though they wouldn't earn the extra money during their time off. That means more than 24,000 SRB sailors and 2,550 CSRB sailors could apply.

And the program would also open up to those in their first enlistment, which would help solve the problem the service has retaining sailors after their initial obligation because participation would require a mandatory extension.

Similarly, officers still serving their minimum service requirement, typically three to five years, would be eligible, as would those receiving retention bonuses.

Plan ahead

Want time off to raise a family, finish school or care for a sick relative? Need to stagger sea tours for dual military spouses or

to launch that Mount Kilimanjaro expedition? CIP might be your ticket.

Among enlisted members, one of the most popular reasons for taking time off is to earn an undergraduate degree.

Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Amara Timberlake, 25, joined the Navy in 2007 with the specific goal of using tuition assistance to get a degree.

But after a demanding tour aboard the aircraft carrier Nimitz and another high op tempo duty station, Defense Media Activity at Fort Meade, Maryland, she was feeling burned out and not much closer to graduation, she said.

"I was at a point where I was kind of fantasizing about taking a break from the Navy," she told Navy Times in an April 14 phone interview. "If I could just have two more years to finish my degree, or two years at a shore command where I could really study — that was my ideal."

Now she's in school, and planning to apply for Officer Candidate School when she returns to become a public affairs officer, she said.

The break is welcome, she said, but she wasn't expecting how tough it would be to leave the military.

"It's hard to expect people [in class] to be on top of their work, be organized," she said. "I think I really, really took that for granted when I was in the Navy. I'm really looking forward to getting back to that."

Then there's the absence of her salary and the hefty Washington, D.C.-area basic allowance for housing.

She made a plan to use her GI Bill benefits at Broward College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and then transfer to Florida Atlantic University to study communications.

She's been in Florida since December and she's making it work, she said, but the financial burden is tough.

Her wife is trying to sell their house in Baltimore while she pays the rent on a place in Florida, but work-study is offsetting some of her school expenses.

"I thought I was financially prepared, and I really wasn't," she said.

Missing the Navy

The financial hurdles are a common concern for CIP participants, so the re-vamped program's bigger stipend would be a welcome change.

Yeoman 1st Class (SW) Tamoris Gordon, 27, sat down with his chief at the Office of the Chief of Naval Personnel to lay out a financial plan before starting the program last year.

He had started going to school part-time at George Mason University, down the road in northern Virginia, but he decided to take a year off to focus on school full-time and finish his criminology degree.

He joined the Navy right out of high school in 2006, he said, and "all I knew was work."

But with hopes to earn his commission and become an intelligence officer, he decided a break was the right plan, though it was jarring at first to be out in the civilian world. That, and the money, are why he worked check-out at PetSmart on the side.

"It was actually kind of weird, to be honest," Gordon said. "At first I was actually completely bored out of my mind, hence why I got a part-time job."

But the time off has reinforced his commitment to a Navy career, which is CIP's main goal — giving those who want to remain in uniform some time off so they return with undivided focus.

"To be honest, being outside the Navy, it makes you kind of think about how important the Navy is and how much stability you have when you're in the Navy," he said.

For newly commissioned Ensign Manaia Alaimalo, CIP had a couple extra perks: Three years in which he was able to live in his own house and put his kids to bed every night.

Alaimalo, 32, was a Fleet Marine Force hospital corpsman 1st class when he started his career intermission in 2011.

He had two deployments to Iraq with the 1st Marine Division out of Camp Pendleton, California, when he was working at his command's career counseling office, watching other troops transition out of the military without a back-up plan.

"I would ask them, 'What are you going to do afterward?' and they would say, 'Oh, I'm networking,'" Alaimalo recalled. "That's when I knew for sure I did not want to exit the military like that."

So he decided to take his combat medicine experience and parlay it into a nursing degree and a commission, opting for Grand Canyon University near a house he owns outside Phoenix.

He funded school with his GI Bill, like Gordon and Timberlake, and supplemented it with student loans while his wife worked extra shifts.

"We planned for it, but it was much more intense than what we planned for," he said.

Now he's assigned to the post-anesthesia care unit at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda,

Maryland, fulfilling a goal to become a health care professional, which he'd had since before he enlisted in 2000.

"I joined when I was young. I had just turned 17, pretty much your typical story," he said. "You start to grow as a person, and a man, and you start to see what the Navy really has to offer."

All three participants said they were eager to restart their Navy careers, and that a solid financial plan is a must for anyone contemplating CIP.

There's also the matter of getting benefits while technically separated. Outside of a fleet or military concentration area, where you can get Tricare, it can be harder to get health care.

It's Very Hard To Prosecute Rape In The Military — Trust Me, I Know

(1 Jun) Task & Purpose, By Anonymous

A soldier shares her observations of prosecuting rape cases in the Army both as a victim and an attorney.

Editor's Note: The following article was published on the condition of anonymity. The author's identity and background was vetted and verified by Task & Purpose.

Rape is hard. It's a hard thing to endure and it's a hard thing to prosecute. I say this from two perspectives: From my own experiences as a victim, and from my experience as a military prosecutor. I will be the first to say that the military has a lot to answer for when it comes to failing to protect its members from this heinous, unspeakable crime. At the same time, having experienced the difficulties of prosecuting sexual assault crimes in general, I think at times victims advocacy groups turn a blind eye to some of the systematic compromises we make for the good of our justice system as a whole, and that's not necessarily the military's fault.

Here is what no spokesman for the military will ever admit, even though it's widely acknowledged to be the case within the military prosecution community: Rape cases are difficult to prove. In the U.S. criminal justice system, the standard is beyond a reasonable doubt. This standard means no other logical explanation can be derived from the facts except the defendant committed the crime, thereby overcoming the presumption a person is innocent until proven guilty. Too often, juries look at two competing narratives between two individuals and come to the conclusion what happened is what usually happens: Two consenting adults had sex. In jury members' minds, it's the logical explanation. Jury members do not believe rapists can be our family members and friends, and even if they do, they want to see bruises or some other kinds of evidence the victim resisted.

Even when rapists leave bruises, the natural desire of the victim is to repress what happened and move on with her life. To fight the instinct to rid herself of her rapist's bodily fluids; to fight the soldier's mantra to "suck it up and drive on" she's been indoctrinated with since day one of basic training; to fight the desire to prove oneself unchanged in spite of the way

Timberlake suggested the updated instruction include more guidance for sailors on how to navigate their military status during CIP, because participants receive a discharge paper DD-214 and are part of the Individual Ready Reserve.

And a pay bump would be much appreciated.

"I think that financially, if they offered more — like half your base pay — I think that would really help," she said.

A new compensation scheme hasn't been settled on, a Navy official confirmed, but the details will be announced if the proposal passes with the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/careers/navy/2015/05/31/navy-career-intermission-expansion-coming-soon-congress/28033943/>

he changed her requires superhuman strength and a presence of mind very few human beings possess, particularly when they are 19 or 20 or 21.

When her mind goes blank after having been assaulted, she reverts to routine: showering, going to bed, getting up, and doing physical training. She replies "hooah" when her sergeants ask how she's doing. Because that's what a good soldier does. We ignore our individual desires for the good of the organization. We do what we know, because we know not what else to do.

And though this attitude might get a soldier who's been victimized through the next day, or the next week, or the next month, until she finally confides in a friend or her squad leader or the sexual assault response coordinator, from a prosecutorial standpoint, this natural reaction makes for a very difficult case to try. Even with physical evidence, the government is faced with the burden of proving the sex was nonconsensual. Very many happy, healthy adults partaking in consensual acts end up with contusions afterward. More often than not in rape cases, there is no physical evidence — not a blemish, not a scrape, not a tear. Often the victim was intoxicated when the assault takes place, and she can't remember what happened. Sometimes it's just a hangover, a fuzzy memory and a feeling something is wrong.

Upon entering a courtroom, the deck is stacked against the victim. The victim, behaving as she has been taught from day one to be the type of soldier who shows up to the right place at the right time in the right uniform, is held to be disingenuous because she doesn't "act like a victim." The soldier whose life is falling apart, who can't force herself to get out of bed because of crushing depression, the one who develops a drinking problem in order to erase the memories of her assault, is accused of trying to "get over" on the system by "crying rape" when she gets in trouble.

When a victim looks at a jury, she will see that's mostly senior-ranking officers and noncommissioned officers, male, and more often than not, the same age as the victim's father. In the rare instance there is a female panel member, more

often than not, women are harder on their fellow females than men. They think they would know how they would react if they were raped. They are wrong.

The panel members have seen CSI. They want hard evidence, not words.

During trial, the victim's behavior is held against her. All of the fibers and hairs and semen washed down the drain in her attempt to feel clean again. Blankets and covers, stained with vomit — thereby proving there was probably little to no desire to have sex — bundled and tossed hurriedly in the washing machine. The soldier's desire to get back to soldiering so she can once again be part of her Army family compels her to destroy physical evidence in a Faustian bargain to regain control.

The jury is left with the statements of the victim. Sometimes there are witnesses at the club, the ones who saw her dancing with her attacker. "She seemed like she was really into him," they might say. "They talked/danced from the moment we walked in the door." But anyone who has been in a mature adult relationship with mutual respect between partners knows it's a long way between dancing and talking to consenting to sexual intercourse. Or maybe not. It just depends.

Her alleged attacker is not obligated to speak in his own defense, protected by the Fifth Amendment. He is assumed to be innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. It's the same standard for rape as it is for murder. I believe in the greater good of this system; it should protect the rights of the accused. The government has the monopoly on the legal use of force; it has the ability to lock him up for the rest of his life or at the very least label him as a sex offender. The greater resources of the government should be balanced out by a thumb on the scale of the defense until the government meets its burden. Due process is a good thing.

However, with rape, a crime committed in private, without witnesses, a crime where the victim's determination to reclaim her bodily autonomy can undermine the need for the government to meet its burden of proof, the wonders of the Fifth Amendment can make it very hard to get a conviction. Even when model soldiers are victimized by crime, the jury wants more than one person's statement before convicting another soldier.

The government attempts to educate panel members on counterintuitive behaviors. We try to show them that their preconceived notion of what they would do if they were a 19-year-old female private as opposed to a 40-something, white male with the resources and power of an Army battalion at his fingertips is not necessarily what is typical or even desirable for victims of sexual assault. We call in experts: sexual assault nurse examiners, psychologists, and psychiatrists.

Unsurprisingly, a lot of times one cannot change an opinion formed by 30 or 40 years experience with an hour or even a day or two's worth of testimony. It just doesn't happen.

This does not even scratch the surface of what the victim experiences. Having gone through this myself, I can honestly say there is nothing more intrusive, nothing more

simultaneously humiliating, painful, and soul searing as being the victim of a sexual assault preparing for trial. It's a wonder why anyone comes forward at all.

It begins with the decision to come forward: Do you come forward? Do you rip apart the bonds of comradeship and trust, forged by training and battle, with allegations one among you is a traitor? Do you expose yourself to shame and ignominy of having to speak of your deepest, most intimate violation to your (usually male) team leader/squad leader/platoon sergeant, knowing that it will ultimately be passed among your peers and leaders like so much juicy gossip? Do you subject yourself to the urging of the sexual assault response coordinator or your first sergeant or company commander or battalion commander or CID to prosecute even if you are not mentally or physically prepared to do so? Do you not wash yourself, even with the smoke still in your hair and his semen inside you, even though that is the one thing you desperately want to do more than anything in the world?

Do you subject yourself to the rape examination, the clipping and the combing and the invasive internal examination? The shots: Hepatitis B, Penicillin? The drawing of blood for an AIDS test? Do you go to a therapist, knowing whatever you say to him or her could be open for viewing by the defense attorney; his client, twisted, sharpened, and used like a knife against your most deepest and darkest vulnerabilities?

If you do decide to tell, do you ask for a transfer? Would you rather look your rapist in the eye every day at morning formation or lose every friend you've spent making over the past year, friends you'd die for?

And the questions by the commander: well-meaning, but intrusive, equal parts caring leader and voyeur. Repeating it over and over again, "And then what happened? And then what happened?" and "Why did you do that? Why did you wash yourself? Why did you not tell anyone? Why did you say hi to your rapist?"

The truth is, I don't know what the answer is. I don't know how we prosecute a crime occurring behind closed doors and meet the burden of beyond a reasonable doubt while simultaneously protecting the rights of the victim and the accused. Right now, despite our best intentions, we seem to be failing. We force victims to come forward when they are not ready. We isolate them from their support systems by transferring them with the intention of protecting them from their rapists. We trample on fragile psyches in order to drive all rapists from our ranks and to have enough information to brief at command and staff.

We're the Army. It's what we do: We come in with overwhelming force to annihilate a problem. Our collateral damage is the victims we leave in our wake. Those kids we want so badly to take care of, the ones we are ready to maim, kill, give our own lives for, we are failing them. Even if we win the case, we might lose the soldier. The best we can do for them is to stop it from happening in the first place.

<http://taskandpurpose.com/its-very-hard-to-prosecute-rape-in-the-military-trust-me-i-know/>

4th sub Wyoming sailor gets prison in shower recordings case

(2 Jun) *Associate Press, By Russ Bynum*

MAYPORT NAVAL STATION, Fla. — A Navy sailor pleaded guilty Tuesday to secretly videotaping female trainees as they undressed for showers aboard a submarine, becoming the fourth crew member of the USS Wyoming to be sentenced to prison in a case that has tarnished the U.S. military's integration of women into its submarine fleet.

A court-martial sentenced Petty Officer 3rd Class Cody Shoemaker to 18 months in prison and a bad-conduct discharge. The 22-year-old missile technician told a military judge that twice last spring he used a cellphone to record

female midshipmen from a tight crawlspace that looked into the shower area from beneath a sink.

"The Navy has brought women into the submarine force and the accused has not gotten onboard," Lt. Cmdr. Lee Marsh, a Navy prosecutor, said in asking the judge to "send a message to that submarine force that all sailors, male and female, will be treated with dignity and respect."

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/06/02/4th-uss-wyoming-sailor-faces-court-martial-in-shower-recordings-case/28362337/>

More women may go to Ranger School, Army chief says

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

The Army is looking at allowing female soldiers to attend "a couple more" cycles of Ranger School as part of its ongoing effort to open combat arms jobs to women, the service's top officer said Thursday.

"We'll probably run a couple more pilots," said Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno during a breakfast meeting with reporters. "It's been a real success for us, and we'll see how it goes from there."

Nineteen female soldiers and 381 male soldiers started Ranger School April 20 — it was the first time women were allowed to attend the storied two-month school as part of what initially was a one-time, integrated assessment.

Eight women remained at the end of the first phase, or Darby Phase, but none of them were allowed to move on to the Mountain Phase. The women, along with 101 of their male classmates, were recycled and given the opportunity to attempt the Darby Phase again.

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

On average, more than 37 percent of Ranger School graduates recycle at least one phase of the school. About two-thirds of those who complete RAP week will eventually pass the Darby phase and move on to the mountain phase, according to data on the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade website.

The Darby recycle rate is about 15 percent.

Odierno said the standards for Ranger School will not change.

"We've set standards for Ranger School for a very long time," he said. "I'm adamant about maintaining that. I do believe it's important we maintain the integrity of the Ranger tab."

The women's second iteration of the Darby Phase ends Thursday; officials are expected to provide information Friday on how the students fared.

The ongoing assessment is going well, Odierno said.

"The feedback I'm getting is these females are performing exceedingly well, physically, mentally, and the cadre is very proud of how they've done," he said.

The reason many of the female students failed the Darby Phase was patrolling, Odierno said.

"Patrolling is something you learn from experience, and they just have not had the experience of doing it," he said.

The general added he doesn't "know how it's going to turn out."

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

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/05/28/women-ranger-school-assessments/28070325/>

entered the school's first co-ed class were allowed to recycle through the program after they fell out in their first go-round. The Friday announcement confirmed this happened again. Three of the eight were invited to take the course over again in late June.

To many, this means the system is working as it should.

All 8 women fail Ranger School: Some Rangers say standards should change

(29 May) *Christian Science Monitor, By Anna Mulrine*

Washington — On Friday, the Army announced that all the women who had attempted to graduate from Ranger School had officially failed to meet the standards, according to a military source.

Ranger School, which grooms the Army's most elite special operations fighting force, opened its doors to women for the first time this year. Eight of the 20 women who originally

The Rangers are the best of the best, and being a Ranger means passing a physical test that pushes body and mind to the breaking point. If women can't do it, the argument goes, then they shouldn't be Rangers.

But there is another opinion quietly being voiced as well: that Ranger School is more akin to a rite of passage – an opportunity for men to “thump their chest,” as one Ranger puts it – than a realistic preparation for leading in war. That women can actually make Ranger units more effective. And that the standards that keep them out are outdated.

It is an opinion, perhaps surprisingly, that comes from two current Rangers.

This is the sort of suggestion that has long been guaranteed to create a robust outcry in many soldierly quarters – one that involves, put most politely, the charge that this would amount to lowering standards in order to meet some goal born of political correctness.

It isn't a way of thinking likely to gain great traction anytime soon. Gen. Raymond Odierno, the Army's top officer, made this clear during a breakfast with reporters Thursday. While praising the performance of the women at the Ranger School, he added: “I'm actually fairly adamant about not changing the physical standards.”

But a discussion is percolating.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus told the Navy Times this week that once women start attending SEAL training, it would make sense to examine the standards. “First, we're going to make sure there are standards. Second, that they are gender-neutral, and third, that they have something to do with the job,” he said.

It is increasingly men who are doing the talking about standards because, they say, they've trained in the schools, served in the field, and they believe it's the right thing to do.

“Of course women don't want to change the standard – they don't want to be accused of lowering it,” says Col. Jason Amerine, a Ranger and West Point graduate. “And men don't want to change it either, because it lets us thump our chest.”

As a result, “women will always fight to meet the male standard, even if it's arbitrary and kind of stupid,” he adds. “I'm often pretty horrified at the adversity they face, while they keep their mouths shut and deal with it.”

Other agree that the time has come for a conversation.

“I think it'll be contentious, but I think it's equitable and sensible to ask the question about what are the [Ranger School] standards that are only related to the fact that only men have ever done it,” says retired Lt. Gen. David Barno, who served as the top commander of United States forces in Afghanistan, as well as three tours in Army Ranger battalions.

What's more, “it needs to be a Ranger qualified leader,” he adds, one with “intestinal fortitude” to ask: “What's the ‘secret

sauce’ of Ranger School? How do you not dilute that, but make sure the standards make sense?”

This argument is less about gender equity than the firm belief that women can make Ranger battalions *better*. In modern warfare, relations with local populations are crucial, and women Rangers would provide unique value added in places such as Afghanistan or Iraq, where cultural norms often prohibit contact between male soldiers and women. Ranger School also showed women were innovative problem-solvers who offered fresh approaches in the field.

On the battlefield itself, they have proven themselves. While at war, Colonel Amerine says, “I was rarely with female soldiers who couldn't hang.”

To him, this raises the question of what Ranger School is actually about. As new technologies potentially make raw physical strength less important, the real challenge, many say, becomes bringing women's leadership skills into the upper echelons of the armed forces.

For Col. Jason Dempsey, a fellow Ranger and West Point graduate, this points to a need for “reassessing what war-fighting is, and what's really important,” he says, rather than “having 100,000 guys who are essentially pack mules.”

Ranger School could be made better, says Amerine, who was awarded a Bronze Star with “Valor” for Special Forces action in Afghanistan in the opening days of the war, and is currently under whistleblower investigation by the Army for criticizing US hostage rescue policy (Amerine has served on special forces hostage rescue missions).

“Nobody is saying, ‘Are the standards kind of stupid?’ ” he adds. “What's interesting is that no one had this much love for the standards when it was only men.”

As it stands today, Ranger School involves, say, “carrying 60 or 70 pounds on your back and walking for 12 miles – it's not brain surgery,” Colonel Dempsey says.

Despite this, “Any effort to change that is ‘changing the standard.’ ”

The question, he adds, is: Are these standards a fair measure of the challenges of combat?

Dempsey recalls being in violent Kunar province in Afghanistan and hiking up to the rugged Pakistan border. Along for the mission was a male first sergeant who was also a Ranger-tapped Golden Gloves boxer. The unit had to stop for the first sergeant because he needed to rest during the strenuous march.

“No one's going to say that the first sergeant is a deadbeat. We need him, and we're just going to take a break.”

On other occasions, he adds, the combat patrols would simply make the decision not to bring along their heavy packs.

“The equipment we carry is just insane,” Amerine says. “We all have back injuries at the end of our careers.”

The No. 1 Department of Veterans Affairs claim – made by 58 percent of all claimants – is muscular-skeletal injuries.

“If we really are serious about integrating the force, the equipment we carry is going to be one of the things we have to have a hard conversation about,” Amerine says. “It’s in our grasp technologically to make things a lot lighter.”

Take away brute strength as one of the pillars of Ranger School, and its purpose begins to preparing Army soldiers to be excellent leaders, which has long been the promise of Ranger School, he adds.

In that context, the Ranger pass-fail rates look different. After West Point invested four years building the men in Amerine’s class into leaders, “All of us were expected to go to Ranger School, and all of us were expected to pass,” he says.

5 women cut from Ranger School after second try

(29 May) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

After a second attempt at the first phase of Ranger School, none of the eight female students will be moving forward to the mountain phase of the course, officials from Fort Benning, Georgia, said Friday.

A total of 195 students from the class – all of them men – will move on to Dahlenega, Georgia, for the mountain phase.

Three women – and two male students – were given the opportunity to start Ranger School all over, officials said. This is referred to as a Day One Recycle and is a normal course procedure that’s used when students struggle with one aspect of the course and excel at others, officials said.

The next Ranger School class begins June 21.

The other five women, who started Ranger School April 20 and were recycled back into the Darby Phase along with 101 of their male classmates on May 8, will return to their units and will not be recycled again. A total of 29 students were dropped from the course for failing to meet the standards of the Darby Phase.

These students did not meet the standard for a number of reasons, including leading patrols, poor peer evaluations, too many negative spot reports, or a combination of all three.

The vast majority, however, were unable to successfully lead a patrol, officials said.

The Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade command team talked to all of the Ranger students this week, said Col. David Fivecoat, the brigade commander, in a statement.

But that’s not true of women, “and I have a problem with that,” he adds. “I think there’s something fundamentally wrong with that structure.”

What he remembers from the six months it took to get his Ranger tab was that “my feet didn’t feel the same for literally two years, ... but I can’t honestly say I learned much.”

“If Ranger School is actually about teaching soldiers how to lead and how to fight, then maybe the rite-of-passage aspect of it needs to be lightened,” he says. It might make more sense to figure out “what is the standard for serving in combat, then deal with the rite of passage.”

For now, there’s no indication that the Army is even considering such a move. But neither is it considering closing off women from trying for their Ranger tab.

“We’ll probably run a couple more pilots,” General Odierno said. “I don’t think we’re going to give up on it.”

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2015/0529/All-8-women-fail-Ranger-School-Some-Rangers-say-standards-should-change-video>

“The group that was unsuccessful was, of course, disappointed in their performance,” he said. “However, each Ranger student, whether successful or unsuccessful, learned more about themselves, leadership, and small unit tactics, and returns to the Army a better trained Soldier and leader.”

A total of 19 female and 381 male soldiers started Ranger School April 20.

The women were part of a one-time, integrated assessment of the storied two-month school. The assessment is part of a wider effort to determine whether and how to open combat arms jobs to women, and it is a first for Ranger School, which until now has been open only to men.

Initially thought to be a one-time assessment, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno on Thursday said the Army is looking at additional assessments in the future.

“We’ll probably run a couple more pilots,” Odierno said during a breakfast meeting with reporters. “It’s been a real success for us, and we’ll see how it goes from there.”

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

On average, more than 37 percent of Ranger School graduates recycle at least one phase of the school. About two-thirds of those who complete RAP week will eventually pass the Darby Phase and move on to the mountain phase, according to data on the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade website.

Odierno said the standards for Ranger School will not change.

"We've set standards for Ranger School for a very long time," he said. "I'm adamant about maintaining that. I do believe it's important we maintain the integrity of the Ranger tab."

Of the 19 female soldiers who started Ranger School on April 20, eight of them made it through the grueling RAP week. Of the 381 male students, 184 remained after RAP week.

RAP week spans the first four days of Ranger School. During this time, soldiers are evaluated on a series of punishing physical events, including a physical fitness test, a swim test and a land navigation test. Students also must complete a 12-mile foot march wearing a 35-pound rucksack in under three hours.

The Darby Phase of Ranger School is 15 days of intensive squad training and operations in a field environment. It takes place at Fort Benning. It includes airborne training for students who are airborne qualified, the Darby Queen advanced obstacle course, and patrols.

Women's AF history expands with new four-star

(1 Jun) Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Command Information, By Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie

In Air Force history a legacy has been written, by women, for women. The walls of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial are filled with stories of historic and iconic women from all U.S. military services that have served the nation.

History has once again been written. Those halls now hold a new story as Lt. Gen. Ellen Pawlikowski, the assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition, military deputy, was promoted to the rank of general, effective June 8. She is now the third female four-star general in Air Force history, following in the footsteps of remarkable women who paved the way.

"This is a great day for Ellen and (her) family (and) from my perspective it is a great day for the United States Air Force," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III. "(Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James) and I expect an awful lot out of our four-star generals in the Air Force. We expect that they be able to defend the nation. We expect them to protect the institution and we expect them to lead, inspire and nurture the Airmen and families who give our institution life. We are extremely confident that Pawlikowski will do all those things."

Pawlikowski entered the Air Force in 1978 through the ROTC program at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and became the first female officer to receive a commission from that program. She went on to attend the University of California at Berkeley, and received a doctorate in chemical engineering in December 1981, and entered the active-duty Air Force in April 1982.

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

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

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

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

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/05/29/ranger-school-women-cut-from-course/28148523/>

Through the guidance and honorable love of her mother, late husband, family, friends and Airmen she has led, Pawlikowski said there are three statements that define her.

"In the words of my mother, 'Just do the best no matter how hard it is, no matter how menial you think it is, just do the best that you can; and never quit,'" Pawlikowski said. "And from my late husband, the message of 'Do the right thing even when it's hard' resonates within me.

"Madam secretary, (Gen. Welsh,) you know you have my commitment and promise that I guarantee you that I will do the best that I can," Pawlikowski continued. "I will never, ever quit and I will do the right thing even when it's hard, because that's who I am."

The career of Pawlikowski has ranged from a variety of technical management, leadership and staff positions including command at the wing and center levels.

Continuing her career as a leader, Pawlikowski will assume command this summer as the head of Air Force Materiel Command at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

As she stood on the stage of the Woman's Memorial, in the presence of so many men and women who have defined history, Pawlikowski said she truly felt like she was standing on the shoulders of giants.

<http://www.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/590267/womens-af-history-expands-with-new-four-star.aspx>

Three women recycled again in Ranger School

(1 Jun) Army News Service, By C. Todd Lopez

Despite setbacks, three female Soldiers continue the challenge to make it through Army Ranger School.

Those three women were among eight, who were attempting for the second time to pass the first phase of the course, called the "Darby phase." Of those eight, five were dropped and sent back to their units. The three were recycled back to the beginning of Ranger school in what is known as a "Day One Recycle."

Soldiers, subject to a Day One Recycle, will restart the entire Ranger course, to include repeating the four-day Ranger assessment phase week at Camp Rogers.

Of the 19 women, who started Ranger school, April 20, as part of the Ranger Course 06-15, only those three women remain. April 20 was the first time, which women were allowed into the course.

The move, to assess female Soldier performance in the Ranger course, is part of an ongoing Army effort called "Soldier 2020." That effort is meant to allow the Army's best-qualified Soldiers the opportunity to serve in any position, where they are capable of performing to standard.

RANGER STANDARDS WILL REMAIN

During a recent media roundtable with the Defense Writer's Group, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno said he is "adamant" about not changing standards for Ranger school.

"I do believe it's important that we maintain the integrity of the Ranger Tab and what it means," the general said.

A press release from the Ranger school cites multiple reasons why a Soldier might not pass any one of the three phases of the course. Those reasons include poor performance in leading a patrol, which is something Odierno said female Soldiers are not experienced in.

"I think the reason they failed is because of patrolling," he said. "Patrolling is something you learn through experience and they just have not had the experience of doing it. So I am hoping that now as they go through and recycle that they will learn some experience, and go through."

Mabus: I'd like to do better than 1-in-4 female recruiting goal

(2 Jun) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

His strategy to have women make up at least 25 percent of all new Marine Corps and Navy enlisted recruits may seem ambitious, but Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said he considers that just a starting point as the sea services move to become more female friendly.

"I'd like to do better than that," Mabus told reporters Tuesday following an address at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. "I think that one in four is a floor, not a ceiling, and if people keep using one in four, I think it's going to be."

Despite the setbacks, Odierno said both he and the cadre at Ranger school remain impressed with the first group of women, who embarked on the experience

"I have been very proud of a lot of things. One is the way the cadre has set this up," he said. "I am going to tell you the feedback I am getting is these females, who have gone through Ranger school, are performing exceedingly well - physically, mentally. And actually, the cadre is very proud of how they have done."

MORE EVALUATIONS POSSIBLE

Ranger Course 06-15 was called a "Ranger course assessment" because it included both male and female Soldiers. The course was the first to include women. But Odierno said he does not think the assessments will stop.

"Ranger school ... really is a leader development course," he said. "The intent is to keep working it. And I think ... we will probably run a couple more pilots. I don't think we are going to give up on it. I think it has been a real success for us as an Army. I think we have had many females who have done such a terrific job preparing themselves. And I think we will continue to do that and we will just see how it goes from there."

Ranger school begins with the four-day Ranger assessment phase, called "RAP week," on Fort Benning, Georgia. Soldiers, who make it through RAP week, move on to the patrolling or "Darby" phase of Ranger school, which begins with fast-paced instruction on troop-leading procedures, principles of patrolling, demolitions, field craft, and basic battle drills focused toward squad ambush and reconnaissance missions.

The next phase is the mountain phase in Dahlonge, Georgia, where students receive instruction on military mountaineering tasks, mobility training, as well as techniques for employing a platoon for continuous combat patrol operations in a mountainous environment. The last phase, located on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, focuses on skills needed to survive in a rain forest or swamp.

http://www.army.mil/article/149670/Three_women_recycled_again_in_Ranger_School/

In a series of talent management initiatives released last month, Mabus and Navy officials set forth a timeline: increase female enlisted accessions to at least 25 percent of all accessions by next year.

For the Marine Corps, this represents a radical demographic shift. Only seven percent of Marines are women, making the Corps the most male-dominated of all the military services.

Though Mabus did not directly address a question about how to span the yawning chasm in Marine Corps demographics to meet his goal, he said both services were set to become more accommodating to attract and keep women.

"The services have got to be friendlier when you come in, because even if you get enough women, we're losing too many between eight and 12 years," he said.

Other talent management initiatives that Mabus said will help recruit and keep more women include doubling paid maternity leave for Marines and sailors from six weeks to 12, opening childcare centers earlier and closing them later, and improving co-location policies to avoid separating married service members.

"If both the husband and wife are military, we're going to do a better job," Mabus said. "It won't be 100 percent, but we're going to do a much better job of co-locating people and not having a geo-bachelor [situation] so you've got a single parent there."

In April, a Navy officer, writing under the pseudonym Anna Granville, criticized current inflexible co-location policies in a

popular Task & Purpose editorial, "[Four] reasons I am resigning my commission as a naval officer."

Involuntary separations are the norm, she said, and deployment schedules don't take into account the added strain for dual-military couples.

"The military still largely is stuck in its 1950s model of a man working as a single provider for a wife who stays at home," she wrote.

Mabus suggested that the Navy and Marine Corps may see new recruiting initiatives in coming months targeted at women that highlight new options available to them. On the Navy side, he said recruiting is already paying off, with female students making up more than 27 percent of the incoming Naval Academy class.

"We've got to do a far better job in terms of recruiting and we've got to show [women] that they can have a career path that can lead to the very top, but also that it's a far more flexible career path than it's been in the past," Mabus said. <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/06/02/mabus-id-like-to-do-better-than-1-in-4-recruiting/28352131/>

Wright-Patterson's top general retiring, new commander to start

(3 Jun) Dayton Daily News, By Barrie Barber

The Air Force's top general will preside over a historic Air Force Materiel Command change of command ceremony Monday that will see the service branch's first four-star female general transfer power to only the second four-star female general to hold the leadership role.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh, the highest-ranking general in the service branch, will be at the event when AFMC commander Gen. Janet Wolfenbarger retires and Lt. Gen. Ellen Pawlikowski gains a fourth star and takes over AFMC.

The transition will mark the first time a female four-star general is replaced by a female four-star general at a major command in the Air Force, said Susan Murphy, an AFMC spokeswoman. Pawlikowski will become the third woman who is a four-star general in the service branch's history.

AFMC, headquartered at Wright-Patterson, oversees the development and acquisition of virtually every Air Force weapon system. The command has about 80,000 civilian and

military personnel around the world, with more than 13,000 airmen and civilian employees at Wright-Patterson.

Wolfenbarger, 56, a 1976 graduate of Beavercreek High School and the daughter of an Air Force officer, was in the first class of female cadets at the Air Force academy. She spent most of her 35-year military career in different roles at Wright-Patterson.

Pawlikowski was the first woman to become an officer through the New Jersey Institute of Technology's Air Force ROTC program in 1978. Most recently, she was the military deputy of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition at the Pentagon. Pawlikowski is also a former commander of the Air Force Research Laboratory at Wright-Patterson.

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/news/local/wright-pattersons-top-general-retiring-new-command/nmTyR/>

First female West Point graduate reflects on historic anniversary

(28 May) CBS News, By Rachid Haoues

They wouldn't make it, the men said; the math and science wouldn't interest them, the physical routine would be too tough and the opposition would drive them out. On May 28, 1980 -- 35 years ago Thursday -- the men behind those words were proven wrong as dozens of women tossed their caps alongside men at America's prestigious military academies. The Class of 1980 broke ground as the first to have women graduate from the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), the Naval

Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Coast Guard Academy. Among those pioneering women was Andrea Hollen, the first female graduate from West Point.

"This is a symbolic day, but it's also a day for, I'd say, very careful consideration for exactly what we've done," said Hollen in a 1980 interview with correspondent Ike Pappas that aired on the "CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite."

Hollen, 56, has had nearly four decades to consider what she and her fellow female cadets accomplished.

CBS News caught up with her this week. Hollen told us "significant progress" has been made since her time at West Point when she had to overcome hostility from men.

"We faced a good bit of opposition to our presence at the Academy," said Hollen. "Much of it was very principled. It was rooted in a deep conviction that the academies are crucibles for combat leadership and because we weren't going on to take combat positions, we were taking slots that men should have been filling."

The men voiced their opposition to the women, some respectfully, others in unbecoming ways. One male cadet put it bluntly in 1976: "We don't want them around."

During Hollen's senior year she remembers male cadets adorning doors and bulletin boards with snippets of former Senator James Webb's article, "Why Women Can't Fight." "That article, which made the point that women would destroy unit morale and cohesion and lower military readiness, as you might imagine, caused quite a stir at all the academies," said Hollen. "I remember at the time being disappointed in that. But also a little discouraged along the lines of, 'Hmm, am I really doing the right thing?'"

In 2015 Hollen has no more doubts. She points to the accomplishments of her classmates in military and civilian life. Her class includes the likes of retired Brig. Gen. Anne Field McDonald, an Army aviator who served two combat tours; Pat Locke, the first black female West Point graduate who became a distinguished engineer; and Sue Fulton, the chair of the USMA's Board of Visitors.

While enrollment numbers have grown over the years, Hollen admits there's room for improvement. In 1980, 62 females graduated from West Point, representing 6.7 percent of the class. Last week, the Class of 2015 saw 162 women graduate, making up 16 percent of the class. Preliminary figures for the Class of 2019 show that number rising to 23 percent with a record 303 females.

Still, groups like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Service Women's Action Network, believe the academies aren't admitting enough women and have sued the Department of Defense to release enrollment records they claim will show patterns of discrimination.

"We have a long way to go and I wouldn't be surprised if in the coming years women were up to a third of the academy," said Hollen. "I think the goal is to get women in leadership positions especially as these new opportunities open for women in combat units and in special operations units and the academies will have to respond to that."

Women in combat, immigration profiled in reservist's film

(1 Jun) Military Times, By Oriana Pawlyk

For Army Reserve Capt. Rebecca Murga, telling the story of women in combat ranks in significance just below the privilege of actually donning a military uniform.

Hollen applauded the DOD's 2013 order to rescind the rule that excluded women from direct combat. She attributes the decision, in part, to the "valor and distinction" women showed in their service post 9/11.

As the military inches towards having more inclusive ranks, Hollen and the other members of the Class of 1980 are monitoring what could be the next symbolic hurdle to clear -- having women pass the Army's elite Ranger School; eight women are currently going through the course.

"At the time [1980] I thought women would never get to Ranger School and now that they're there, I'm elated," said Hollen. "The women in my class, we're following this very closely. We're rooting for them. We have such admiration for what they're doing. It'll be a big step."

Hollen spent 12 years in the military, serving much of that time in Europe in tactical positions as a company commander with the 3rd Infantry Division. But in 1992, an opportunity with the White House Communications Agency - one that required high security clearance - presented Hollen with a difficult choice: hide being gay or turn down the job.

"I realized that I would have had to have lied on the security clearance form to go on and take the assignment and I realized that I'd have to dissemble my way through the rest of my career and I just couldn't do that so I resigned from the military," said Hollen.

Now living in Baltimore, Hollen is the Director of Analytics and Research for Case Commons, a New York City based technology start-up aimed at bringing the human services sector into the 21st century by providing workers with social network based software. It's a job that requires a good bit of math; so much for what they said back in 1980.

As a woman in a technology field Hollen finds herself in a pioneering position once again. In 2013, just 26 percent of computing jobs in the U.S. were held by women, down from 35 percent in 1990, according to the American Association of University Women. And tech giants like Facebook and Google have long faced criticism for not having more women in tech roles.

But with the same resilience and optimism she exhibited through her time at West Point, Hollen thinks the tech field will, too, overcome its challenges with the help from a new generation of pioneers.

"I'm heartened by how many women we have on staff at Case Commons, who are talented coders, statisticians, modelers and they're very actively involved in community programs that encourage girls to learn to code and get comfortable about technology, so I'm very optimistic about the future of women in tech."

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/35-years-since-women-broke-a-military-barrier/>

Murga, a filmmaker, photographer and writer, is working on her latest short film, "American Girl," which follows a young woman's experience in becoming a soldier who eventually serves in Afghanistan.

She's one of 10 applicants participating in the AFI Conservatory Directing Workshop for Women this year, giving her the experience and skills to make the short film, which she hopes to turn into a full-length feature in 2016. She is the first service member to participate in the yearlong course, started by the American Film Institute in 1974.

Her film's basic subject matter is timely, as opportunities for women in the military are changing at an increasingly swift pace.

For example, for the first time this year, women began training at the Army's notoriously tough Ranger School, another step in the opening of ground combat occupations to female soldiers. The Marine Corps in 2014 opened up 11 military occupational specialties to female Marines.

"These women are not just soldiers, they're mothers, they're sisters and through storytelling and filmmaking, you can make that connection, and you can empathize in what some of these soldiers do," Murga said in an interview with Military Times. "To me, that is something that has gotten lost over the years."

Murga's story also explores what it means to be an immigrant serving in the U.S. military — the 12-year-old Guatemalan girl in the film must first reach the U.S. before she can begin to dream about serving.

"When I deployed, I met soldiers from all over the world, from Mexico, Jamaica, the Philippines, and was surprised to learn how many members serving in the military were fighting for a country that wasn't theirs," Murga said.

Since 2001, more than 92,000 foreign-born service members have become citizens while serving in uniform. Even as the debate on immigration continues, the Army — through the Defense Department's Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest, known as MAVNI, program — has signed up over 80 immigrants since March and plans to double its recruits to 3,000 by the end of fiscal 2016.

"I wanted to look at and tell that story of folks like my dad, who's Guatemalan, and folks who come to this country and want to do nothing but serve it," she said, adding that the central character in her film will have a personal journey, but also shed light on these cultural and political transitions.

Murga, assigned to the Army Reserve's California-based 201st Press Camp Headquarters, wants to correlate the film to her own experiences, not only as woman, but also as a person behind the lens in a combat zone.

In 2007, Murga deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom; she also deployed to Kuwait and traveled to Iraq,

Afghanistan and Qatar in 2010 covering military units as a writer and photographer.

Deploying again in 2011 — her "favorite deployment," she said — Murga covered Special Forces units and culture support teams, the first all-female units assigned to special operations forces who worked with Afghan women.

During her last trip to Afghanistan, she met friend and fellow soldier Paula Broadwell.

"Captain Murga is a mentee and I follow her career closely as a friend and mentor," Broadwell said in an email to Military Times. "I've tried to raise her profile as a rising star in the public affairs world and film industry because I think we need to illustrate success stories like hers, learn from her insightful films, and empower women to achieve their goals."

Broadwell also said the popularity of such works as Gayle Lemmon's "Ashley's War: The Untold Story Of A Team Of Women Soldiers On The Special Ops Battlefield" illustrates how "society wants to hear more from women in war."

Lemmon's book explores how women have already served in combat zones alongside elite special operations units prior to some services opening more roles to women in combat.

"At a time when the military is reviewing women's integration into [combat], I think these firsthand stories help educate the public about women's bravery, physical abilities and willpower," Broadwell said.

"Some of the female veterans I've met over the years ... worked in logistics, on cultural support teams, as commanders," Murga wrote in an op-ed for the New York Times in 2012. "But no matter what the job, or where the deployment, I would hear the same words from every woman I spoke to: It's lonely. Scary. Intimidating. Exhilarating. Satisfying. Frustrating. Anything but easy."

That's the story she's aiming for.

Murga, who joined the Army soon after 9/11, credits her directing skills to her military experience. Leadership skills learned in the military help her understand how to direct people to finish tasks, manage teams and build relationships.

"Directing is also capturing feelings on camera, and that to me is organic, but a lot of that I learned in the military — to be honest and real with people and being able to connect with them," she said.

In the last few years, she has made a handful of shorts and TV specials ranging from profiling wounded service members to an ABC Christmas special.

Another project, "War Ink," is a documentary series she is simultaneously working on that captures words and photos, and video and audio interviews, of Iraq and Afghanistan

veterans who tell their stories through the tattoos on their bodies.

"I was crying when I saw it," said Patty West, AFI program director, of Murga's piece. "I felt like she had a really good handle on storytelling — capturing unique individuals, emotions and feelings."

That work, plus the appropriate character traits — "a very strong work ethic, but a really, really charming personality," West said — helped Murga emerge from this year's 250-applicant field.

"It is really important to me to shed some light on these experiences," Murga said. "There's a little bit of a disconnect; when you have less than 1 percent (of the population) fighting two wars for 10 years, the rest of the population ... they don't really have that connection."

Murga said it isn't that people are afraid of understanding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, they "just don't know the right questions to ask."

Group looks to honor Female Civil War soldiers with monument

(2 Jun) The Winchester Star, By Onofrio Castiglia

When considering the millions of men who fought in the American Civil War, one local group highlights the fact that some of them were not men at all—but women, in disguise.

Recently, Steve Killings, board president of the Academy for Veteran Education and Training—an educational nonprofit group located at Historic Jordan Springs—said that the organization is trying to erect a monument to honor the more than 500 women who posed as men so they could fight.

According to the Civil War Trust, more than 3 million soldiers fought in the war.

Killings said that there is no memorial anywhere dedicated to the little-known group of women who fought as valiantly as their male counterparts, and not as nurses or seamstresses, but as combat soldiers.

"There have been 513 positively identified women who fought in the war," Killings said. "It's a field that's not very well documented because women had to hide their identities."

According to Killings, Tonie Wallace and Greig Aitken—the owners of Historic Jordan Springs—are donating a portion of their land to the public trust for construction of the monument.

He said that Jordan Springs is an ideal spot, as it is close to battlefield sites in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia and a scenic drive from Washington.

In preparation for "American Girl," she has shared stories from her deployments with women's groups in California.

Through the organization Veterans in Film & Television, Murga is working with members of the military who will be donating their time to help her with the short film; production starts in July.

"This is the first step, making the short, making it well, and then we'll shop it around to members of the industry to see if we can get funding for the feature." For "American Girl," the cost could run anywhere from \$1 million to \$3 million, she said.

"Out of the 126 films that were made last year by large studios, only four went to women, so I'm looking beyond that, like, 'Why is that?'" Murga said.

"Our society is defined by the stories that we tell, and to me, without women, we're missing a whole lot of stories." <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/entertainment/2015/05/30/female-army-reservist-profiles-women-in-combat-immigration-in-upcoming-short-film/28087633/>

"This area is Civil War history-central," Killings said. "It really is a perfect place for [the monument]."

Apart from being one of a kind, Killings said the monument—titled Glory Honor's Stone—will also stand out in that it will house a data depository where academics and historians can preserve collections of related documents and artifacts.

An online funding campaign has been launched in support of the monument.

The fundraising is being done through razoo.com—a crowdfunding website—and the goal to be reached is \$75,000 in three months.

Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught, founder of the female veterans memorial in Arlington, was also present at the meeting, Killings said.

He said the monument will be accessible to the public and is meant to be a Virginia State Park, though he believes there is the potential for it to be a national monument. http://www.fredericksburg.com/features/history/group-looks-to-honor-female-civil-war-soldiers-with-monument/article_f5e0641c-22a3-58f3-a524-61395a69cf6f.html

New Documentary Sheds Light On Struggles Of Deployed Servicewomen Returning Home

(3 Jun) CBS News, By Rick Dayton

Transitioning from military life to civilian life can be tough for any veteran. Now, we're learning more about the struggle for female veterans in particular.

There's a new film that's gaining ground, but it needs the public's help to become a reality.

They were asked to go to war, then come home, and almost pretend nothing ever happened.

"You are supposed to come back and just fit in where you left off, but you can't because you are forever changed — in good ways, very good ways — but also in other ways that are not so positive," U.S. Army Individual Ready Reserves Lt. Col. Ivonne Daly said.

Now, a documentary called "Journey to Normal" details the lives of eight women who served in various branches of the service doing many different jobs.

It focuses on their trials of reintegrating to life stateside.

"People don't realize the effect that it has and how it affects everybody, not just veterans because the change of women and their role in the military is directly affecting the fabric of society," Theodora Polamalu said.

The film is headed to its final stages of editing, but more money is needed to have it ready for the major film festivals.

Let Transgender Troops Serve Openly

(4 June) New York Times Editorial

Staff Sgt. Loeri Harrison could receive the paperwork any day now, forms certifying that after an exemplary eight-year Army career, she is no longer fit for duty and must leave Fort Bragg because she is transgender.

Early this year, Senior Airman Logan Ireland feared he might face a similar fate when he disclosed to his commanders during a recent deployment in Afghanistan that he transitioned from female to male. Yet, his supervisors have been supportive, allowing him to wear male uniforms and adhere to male grooming standards even though Air Force records continue to label him as female.

It can go either way in the military these days. While transgender civilians in the federal work force enjoy robust legal protections from discrimination, those in the armed forces may be discharged at any moment. The Pentagon, shamefully, has yet to rescind anachronistic personnel guidelines that prohibit openly transgender people from joining in the military, labeling their condition a "paraphilia," or perversion.

The policy has forced thousands to serve in silence, repressing an essential part of their identity. The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, which researches gender issues, estimates there are about 15,500 transgender troops serving in uniform.

Troy and Theodora Polamalu are stepping up to help by holding a fundraiser Monday, June 8 at the new Hotel Monaco.

Theodora's grandfather served in the Pacific during World War II. Reaching out to veterans is something she and Troy have done for years.

"We have been so blessed in our life, truly blessed by the City of Pittsburgh, by Troy's career and just our family's influence on us that we felt that the only way we can actively give back is to promote and help people who serve this country selflessly who are bigger role models than Troy or any athlete," Theodora said.

Daly, who now works as a trauma surgeon at UPMC, is grateful so many have worked so hard to share her story and those of the other women, too.

"I am very grateful that they are taking on, that they have taken on this project that they have embraced it, and help us bring that message in order to get help. There is so much work to be done. There is so much more that is needed, but not only for women — for men — for all of us," Daly said.

Hopefully, this documentary will help all veterans complete their journey to normal.

<http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/2015/06/03/new-documentary-sheds-light-on-struggles-of-deployed-servicewomen-returning-home/>

Those who take steps to transition while in uniform must carefully compartmentalize their lives as they test the shifting boundaries of tolerance within an institution that still allows discrimination on the basis of gender identity. While some service members have come out in recent years to commanders willing to bend or disregard rules, scores have been expelled.

The absence of common-sense leadership on this issue by Pentagon leaders has forced commanders on the ground to develop a patchwork of unofficial rules. Those have created a tremendously uneven landscape in which some service members are treated with respect and assured career advancement, while others are subject to scorn, if not dismissal.

A recent graduate at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., who is in the early stages of transitioning from male to female, is agonizing about the months ahead. When she reports for flight school in Pensacola, Fla., in the fall, and undergoes a medical exam, the officer may be forced to explain why she has been on hormone replacement therapy for more than a year.

"If they let me serve as myself, I will give 30-plus years," said the 22-year-old Navy officer, who asked to be identified only as Alex, which is part of her name. "I will sign up for the

rest of my life. I love the military. I love my peers. I love the whole structure of the military.”

The rules that prohibit transgender people from entering military service were introduced in the early 1980s, an era during which few people lived openly and those who did were widely stigmatized. The Pentagon’s transgender ban went largely unchallenged, even as the medical community’s understanding of gender identity evolved considerably over the years.

In the 1990s, when Congress passed the “don’t ask, don’t tell” law allowing gay and lesbians to serve in the military as long as they remained closeted, there was no mention of transgender troops. The unspoken consensus was that they did not belong in the force.

During the months leading to the repeal of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” law in 2011, gay activists refrained from publicly talking about the transgender ban, which was never codified in law. Some feared that advocating for transgender rights would cause Congress to enact a ban on transgender service. After “don’t ask, don’t tell” was rescinded, transgender service members felt slighted. Like gay troops had done a few years earlier, some began to mobilize covertly, initially largely online, to make the case that they, too, deserved to serve openly and proudly.

Sergeant Harrison, a satellite communications expert who joined the Army in 2007, contacted Sparta, an advocacy group for gay and transgender troops, after returning in 2012 from her second deployment to Afghanistan. At the time, her marriage was crumbling, and she was finding it increasingly hard to suppress the desire to live as a woman.

She was among the active duty service members who traveled to Houston in January 2014 for a Sparta strategy meeting attended by representatives of prominent advocacy groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Center for Transgender Equality and the Palm Center. It was a galvanizing moment for those who had been too afraid of taking steps to transition.

Senior Airman Ireland met an Army nurse, Cpl. Laila Villanueva, to whom he is now engaged. The two legally changed their names last year and began coming out gradually. The underground support community started expanding.

“Meeting all those people, seeing what they were doing, how they were balancing the military life with themselves, gave me an impetus to do more than just talk to a therapist,” said Sergeant Harrison, who legally changed her name this year. Soon after the Houston meeting, Sergeant Harrison told her battalion physician during a regular checkup that she intended to start hormone replacement therapy soon. The doctor urged her to notify her commander. “That was a scary moment, basically going up to someone and saying, ‘Here is my career. You can flush it if you want, but this is what I need to do to be sane,’” she said.

Much to her surprise, her commander was supportive. As long as she adhered nominally to male grooming standards during the day, he said, the unit would overlook everything else that was happening in her life. She used strong gel to slick her hair back during the work day, asked close colleagues, as a personal favor, to use female pronouns, and began using a female restroom near her office that was infrequently used. Late last year, after a stressful period at work, Sergeant Harrison went to the behavioral health center at Fort Bragg to

talk to a therapist, where she broke down in tears. A physician who reviewed her file during that visit filled out a form setting in motion her expulsion from the Army.

Two former secretaries of defense, Leon Panetta and Chuck Hagel, were urged to review the military’s ban on transgender troops and the type of policies needed to allow them to serve openly. Neither made it a priority.

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter should take on what they refused to do. The current policies leave transgender troops vulnerable to discrimination that the Justice Department and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission describe as a violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Medical and military experts who have studied the policies have concluded that there is no rationale for disqualifying transgender troops from serving on medical grounds.

On the ground, commanders and military doctors who have reached the same conclusions have resorted to makeshift, imperfect solutions. Some doctors prescribe hormones for transgender patients without clearly documenting the reason on their medical files. In rare cases, policies on personal grooming and uniform standards are waived.

Lt. Cmdr. Jesse Ehrenfeld, a Navy Reserve doctor who returned recently from a deployment to Afghanistan, has treated several transgender service members. He said the type of medical care most of them need is fairly basic and should not preclude them from being deployed.

“They do just fine and are able to serve appropriately,” he said. “I’ve seen folks deploy with all sorts of complex medical conditions that are frankly more limiting.” Yet, some commanders have prohibited troops from taking hormones to transition.

Military officials from several of America’s closest allies have been pragmatic and enlightened about this issue for years. Britain, Canada, Australia, Germany and Israel are among the nations that allow transgender people to serve openly. The Israeli military has begun educating commanders and rank-and-file troops about gender identity to ensure that the handful of service members who transition each year are treated with respect.

“It’s not that hard,” Brig. Gen. Rachel Tevet-Weisel, a senior Israeli military leader who played a significant role in fostering an open environment for transgender troops. “The issue is you have to have very good education for the young soldiers coming each year.”

Commander Ehrenfeld and Senior Airman Ireland were among the troops who met with Mr. Carter during his visit to Kandahar, Afghanistan, in February, a few days after being sworn in. The doctor asked Mr. Carter what he thought about transgender troops serving in austere environments, a reference to the argument some officials at the Pentagon have made to justify the ban.

Mr. Carter replied that he hadn’t studied the issue closely, but he added that the military should be working to attract the most qualified people. “That’s the important criteria,” he said. “Are they going to be excellent service members?”

They already are. While some, like Senior Airman Ireland, are thriving, others, including Sergeant Harrison, fear that their careers could unravel at any moment. That is an inexcusable way to treat Americans who want to serve their country.

Alex, the recent Naval Academy graduate, decided during her junior year that she would transition publicly in the near future. The only alternative, she felt, was suicide. “I’m going

to stop fighting it, and I'm going to do something about it to save my life," she said she decided then. She is scheduled to report for flight school in October. That gives Mr. Carter ample time to ensure that her career gets off

the ground smoothly, and that transgender troops will no longer have to suffer in silence. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/04/opinion/let-transgender-troops-serve-openly.html>