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[Lawmaker wants Army breastfeeding policy](#)

(2 Jul) *The Hill*, by Kristina Wong

Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-Mass.), a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, is calling for a military "cultural shift" to better support female troops.

[Mabus triples maternity leave from six to 18 weeks](#)

(2 Jul) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

Starting immediately, paid maternity leave is tripled to 18 weeks for moms, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus announced Thursday.

[Law prevents some family members from suing the military](#)

(5 Jul) *Military Times*, By Patricia Kime

This fall, the Supreme Court will receive another petition on a case involving injuries to a baby related to circumstances of the baby's active-duty mother.

[Take three years off: Army extends sabbatical program](#)

(6 Jul) *Army Times*, By Jim Tice

The Army continues to offer a special program for active-duty officers, warrant officers and enlisted soldiers who want to pursue personal or professional goals while taking a break of up to 36 months from their military careers.

[It just became easier to be a mother in the Navy](#)

(6 Jul) *Deseret News*, By JJ Feinauer

"Meaningful maternity leave when it matters most is one of the best ways that we can support the women who serve our county," [Navy Secretary Ray] Mabus said in a statement after the policy change was announced.

[Investigation: Commander tried to fudge her tape test](#)

(8 Jul) *Army Times*, By Kyle Jahner

An Army colonel fired from her job in April tried to intimidate subordinates to bend the rules after a tape test found her to be overweight, according to an Army investigation.

[Study: Junior troops, women more likely to try suicide](#)

(8 Jul) *Military Times*, By Patricia Kime

The research found that female soldiers, who make up about 14 percent of the Army, were twice as likely as their male counterparts to attempt suicide.

[Air Force considering longer maternity leave](#)

(8 Jul) *Air Force Times*

The Air Force is considering lengthening paid maternity leave, following the lead of the Navy, which tripled the benefit to 18 weeks.

[New Air Force rules give new moms longer break from deployments](#)

(8 Jul) *Air Force Times*, By Stephen Losey

New mothers who have given birth on or after March 6 will not have to deploy for a full year under new Air Force rules.

ASSIGNMENTS

[Columbus Promotes First Ever Female Recruiting Commander](#)

(1 Jul) *IOTV Web Staff*

The military made history during a first-of-its-kind promotion for army recruiters in Columbus.

[Experts: DoDEA could help develop future force](#)

(6 Jul) *Military Times*, By Andrew Tilghman

Many top military officials worry that the pool of prospective recruits is shrinking as today's young people appear less interested in military service when compared to past generations.

[They Survived Training, Now Female Marines Await Word On Ground Combat](#)

(7 Jul) NPR, By Tom Bowman

In a yearlong experiment, Marine researchers and researchers from the University of Pittsburgh have collected reams of information on male and female Marines' physical strength, endurance, speed and marksmanship. The data will show whether gender made a difference in the fighting ability of the unit.

[Controversy surrounds firing of Marines' female recruit battalion CO](#)

(7 Jul) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

A Marine officer who led the service's only all-female recruit battalion was fired amid complaints of a toxic leadership environment — but her supporters say she was only trying to make the unit better by holding women to tougher standards.

[The Biggest And Most Disruptive Layoffs In America Are Coming From The Military](#)

(8 Jul) Washington Post, By Lydia DePillis

The Army has already discharged 80,000 troops. The next 40,000 will be harder, especially for the communities that depend on them.

[Why Gen. Joseph Dunford could face decision on women in combat twice](#)

(9 Jul) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

As the military approaches one of its most significant decision points in decades, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford may be poised to be a key player in more than one role.

EXTRA

[Twin sisters among first female veterans to be saluted at fireworks](#)

(2 Jul) The Columbus Dispatch, By Allison Ward

In 1948, the twins — registered nurses — enlisted in the Organized Army Reserve Corps (now the U.S. Army Reserve) before being called to active duty to care for sick and wounded soldiers returning from the Korean War.

[Susan Ahn Cuddy Dies At 100; Pioneering Korean American In U.S. Military](#)

(2 Jul) Los Angeles Times, By Ann M. Simmons

She is believed to be the first Asian American female U.S. Navy officer and became the Navy's first female gunnery officer during World War II, according to her official 2002 biography, "Willow Tree Shade: The Susan Ahn Cuddy Story," written by John Cha. Rising to the rank of lieutenant, she later went on to work for U.S. Navy Intelligence, the Library of Congress and the National Security Agency.

[Longest-serving female member of 'The President's Own' to retire](#)

(3 Jul) Marine Corps Times, By Mary Cirincione

Longest-serving female member of The President's Own Marine Band set to retire. Master Gunnery Sergeant Ruth McDonald will retire this October after 30 years of service.

[Pencil skirt, beltless slacks in the works](#)

(3 Jul) Navy Times, By Lance Bacon

One deckplate-driven change to women's uniforms is complete, and others are in the works.

[Navy, Marines Ease Up On Transgender Policy](#)

(3 Jul) Honolulu Star Advertiser, By William Cole

Unit leaders no longer may try to kick out service members who have "gender dysphoria".

[Study: 50% of pregnant women in U.S. are obese](#)

(6 Jul) Headline News, By Amy Huggins

According to a study conducted by Charite University Medicine in Berlin, 50% of pregnant women in the United States gain too much weight during the 40-week gestation period. As reported by [Reuters](#), this has potentially dangerous consequences for mother and child.

[New clinic to help growing number of women vets](#)

(7 Jul) Tucson News, By Barbara Grijalva

VA officials said they expect the number of women veterans they serve to double to 9,000 within the next five years. According to the Pentagon, only about 42,000 women were enlisted in 1973 on active duty. That number has grown nationally to at least 204,000.

[5 Top Issues Women Veterans Face When Returning Home](#)

(7 Jul) NewsMax, By Sean Piccoli

Women veterans who have completed their military service face various issues in returning to civilian life — some identical to the challenges confronted by military men, and some unique to the rapidly growing population of women veterans in the era since 9/11.

[‘Get the Hell Out’: Activist’s Frank Call for Military Chaplains Who Don’t Support Gay Marriage and Homosexuality](#)

(7 Jul) *The Blaze*, By Billy Hallowell

Following the Supreme Court’s gay marriage ruling, an activist is calling [for the removal of](#) “all homophobic military chaplains” who openly share their biblical views about sexuality, pushing back against claims that gays and lesbians are “sinners” for “choosing” their lifestyle.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Women in Combat -- Lessons Learned from Cultural Support Teams:](#)

A discussion with former members of the U.S. Department of Defense’s cultural support teams (CSTs). The CSTs consisted of small teams of U.S. servicewomen who were specially selected, trained, and deployed in support of special operations missions in Afghanistan. The women served with Ranger teams during direct action missions and on Special Forces teams during village stability operations. The event will be held at the GWU Elliott School (Rm. B12) at 1957 E. Street NW, on Monday, **13 July**, from 3:30pm-5:00pm. The event is free; however, you must RVSP by clicking the above link in the header.

[Author Series Event – “Ashley’s War”:](#)

In 2010, the US Army Special Operations Command created Cultural Support Teams, a pilot program to put women on the battlefield alongside special operations teams in Afghanistan. The idea was that women could have access and build relationships—woman to woman—in ways that male soldiers could not. In the New York Times bestseller *Ashley’s War*, Gayle Tzemach Lemmon draws on her first-hand reporting to tell the story of First Lieutenant Ashley White and her unit, CST-2. On Tuesday, **21 July**, the Women’s Foreign Policy Group will be hosting a luncheon and program. The program will be followed by a book signing with the author. Space is limited and advance registration is required. Visit <https://wfp.memberclicks.net/upcoming-events> for more information.

[Tidewater Regional Networking Reception:](#) Hosted by the USCG Women’s Leadership Initiative, participants will enjoy a spectacular evening socializing with Coast Guard, Department of Defense, Federal, State and Local port partners and industry attendees on Friday, **14 August**, 2015, from 7:00-10:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Nauticus Half Moone Cruise and Celebration Center in Norfolk, Virginia. The USCG Women’s Leadership Initiative supports mentoring, leadership training and professional development opportunities for Coast Guard women in uniform and civilians, with the goal of increasing women’s retention in the Coast Guard and providing a bridge for service personnel to achieve success following their Coast Guard careers. Space is limited, so register early by clicking the above link in the header.

Lawmaker wants Army breastfeeding policy

(2 Jul) *The Hill*, by Kristina Wong

Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-Mass.), a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, is calling for a military "cultural shift" to better support female troops.

"Since I joined the Armed Services Committee, I have become acutely aware of the lasting challenges women face in an institution historically dominated by men," [she wrote](#) in an *Army Times* op-ed on Wednesday. In particular, she said the Army had no policy on breastfeeding on the job, leaving women to the "mercy of superiors" as to where and when they could pump milk, or find sanitary places to do so.

She said one woman was told she "should be grateful" she was allowed to pump in the first place, and others said they were made to feel guilty, ostracized or like an inconvenience.

Tsongas said the testimonials from Army moms illustrate a larger problem — "a military environment where equality is not yet a reality."

"With more women in the services than ever, and with that number growing, the Pentagon and Congress must closely examine how to ensure servicewomen receive the same

quality resources and protections as their male counterparts," Tsongas wrote.

She also said the military needs to address women's health matters and develop equipment and policies to "increase safety and success" on the battlefield.

She said legislation she worked on led to the tripling of funding for the development of gender-specific body armor better tailored to a woman's body.

Tsongas, who is co-chairwoman of the Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus, also called for military leaders to be held accountable on sexual assault within their ranks, and demonstrate an ability to serve justice and appropriately support survivors.

Tsongas said she authored an amendment in the House's 2016 National Defense Authorization Act requiring the Army to develop a breastfeeding policy that designates a private, clean area with electrical outlets to pump milk, with an allowance for breaks.

She urged colleagues to support the provision as the bill is conferenced with the Senate's version.

"Supporting military women is essential to building the strongest military possible," she wrote.

"From a practical standpoint, the Army spends millions of dollars training women to do a job. Without adequate support,

Mabus triples maternity leave from six to 18 weeks

(2 Jul) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

Women in the Navy and Marine Corps hoping to raise families while advancing their careers are about to get a big boost.

Starting immediately, paid maternity leave is tripled to 18 weeks for moms, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus announced Thursday.

"When the women in our Navy and Marine Corps answer the call to serve, they are making the difficult choice to be away from their children — sometimes for prolonged periods of time — so that they can do the demanding jobs that we ask them to do," Mabus said in a release. "With increased maternity leave, we can demonstrate the commitment of the Navy and Marine Corps to the women who are committed to serve."

Mabus first announced his intention to expand maternity leave in a May speech at the Naval Academy, where he floated the idea of expanding leave to 12 weeks.

The new 18-week figure was inspired by Google's maternity leave policy, according to chief of naval personnel spokesman Cmdr. Chris Servello.

When the company increased its policy from 12 to 18 weeks in 2007, he said, they found that half as many new moms were leaving the company.

The Navy and Marine Corps have a similar problem when it comes to women getting out to focus on their children. The hope is that women will be more likely to stay on active duty if they have more time with their newborns.

Law prevents some family members from suing the military

(5 Jul) Military Times, By Patricia Kime

Army Spc. January Ritchie was pregnant and serving at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, in 2006 when doctors advised her to limit physical activity or risk losing her baby.

The specialist had a miscarriage scare earlier in the pregnancy that resulted in surgery to prevent the loss of her unborn son.

Her doctor advised her to modify her work schedule, emphasizing rest and light duty. But according to court documents, Ritchie's chain of command directed her to

resources and health care options, many women may choose to leave the military at the end of their enlistments, denying the military their talents."

http://thehill.com/policy/defense/army/246763-congresswoman-calls-for-military-cultural-shift-to-support-women?fb_ref=Default

"Meaningful maternity leave when it matters most is one of the best ways that we can support the women who serve our county," Mabus said in the release. "This flexibility is an investment in our people and our services, and a safeguard against losing skilled service members."

And women who are currently on maternity leave or about to start it will benefit as well. The new policy also applies to any women who have gotten their maternity leave authorized since Jan. 1.

Current data estimate that about 5,000 women a year are eligible for maternity leave.

The benefit will not extend to adoptive parents or new fathers, Servello confirmed.

Maternity leave and parental leave are governed separately, so while Mabus has authority to expand leave for post-partum mothers, expanding leave for adoptive parents and fathers would require a change to laws set by Congress.

This latest move is part of a larger push to accommodate parents in the Navy, led by Mabus and the chief of naval personnel's office.

Additionally, on-base child cares began implementing a new schedule this year — opening two hours earlier and closing two hours later — to allow parents to work long hours, a common occurrence in the Navy, and still have reliable childcare.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/07/02/navy-secretary-ray-mabus-maternity-leave-18-weeks/29625963/>

perform her regular Army duties, which included standing for long hours, physical training and picking up trash.

During a particularly strenuous day of bending and lifting, Ritchie went into labor. Her son Gregory was born at 23 weeks and died less than 30 minutes later in her arms.

Jonathan Ritchie, Gregory's father and January's husband, sued the military, alleging that January's command ignored medical orders and forced his wife to perform physical activities that led to the baby's death.

But the federal court ruled in favor of the Army, citing the Feres doctrine, a 1950 Supreme Court decision that bars active-duty troops from claiming damages for actions related to military service.

The baby's death, the court ruled, was directly related to the mother's active-duty military service and therefore, Feres applies.

Ritchie appealed, but the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the decision. Ritchie then asked the Supreme Court to consider the case, but the petition was denied.

"In our view, this was an open and shut case of negligence against the Army," said Ritchie's attorney, Eric Seitz. "I frankly was surprised that the Supreme Court didn't take the case. It presented an excellent issue in terms of injuries to people who ought to be protected but are not."

This fall, the Supreme Court will receive another petition on a case involving injuries to a baby related to circumstances of the baby's active-duty mother.

In the case, mother and Air Force Capt. Heather Ortiz was given a medication during labor and delivery at Evans Army Community Hospital, Fort Carson, Colorado, to which she is allergic. Her medical records clearly state she should not be given the medicine.

The subsequent allergic reaction and treatment caused a precipitous drop in Ortiz's blood pressure and because the hospital staff was not monitoring the baby's condition properly, the infant suffered brain damage and severe disabilities, according to court documents.

As with the Ritchie case, the Ortiz suit initially was dismissed by a federal district court, citing Feres. And on May 15, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals weighed in, ruling in favor of the federal government, albeit reluctantly.

"To be sure, the facts here exemplify the overbreadth (and unfairness) of the doctrine, but Feres is not ours to overrule," Judge Timothy Tymkovich wrote.

Had Ortiz's husband been an active-duty member and Heather the military spouse, the outcome would have been different because civilians and retirees can sue the government for malpractice in military hospitals and clinics.

But in both cases, 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 the Ortizes plan to appeal.

They will file a petition with the Supreme Court either in August or October, said their attorney, Austin, Texas-based Laurie Higginbotham.

"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 Supreme Court has received at least three petitions in the past decade to rethink Feres, mainly medical malpractice cases. Bills also have been introduced in Congress in the same period to clarify the law that set the Feres precedent back in 1950, the Federal Tort Claims Act.

Families, even those with active-duty members, can sue the government for negligence under the Federal Tort Claims Act. Troops themselves, however, cannot sue the government for personal injuries caused by the negligence of military members, including those providing medical care.

That's because the Supreme Court concluded in the 1950 Feres ruling that the government is not liable for injuries stemming from activity "incident to service."

But the doctrine has been used time and again to dismiss egregious errors by military physicians and contractors, ranging from an airman who died when an Air Force nurse improperly intubated him using a medical device designed for a child, to another airman whose aorta was punctured during routine surgery, causing the loss of both legs, to a Marine who died from melanoma after doctors failed to refer him for treatment and later misdiagnosed the identified cancer as a birthmark.

Still, Feres remains the law of the land, even though circuit courts appear to be divided over the ruling.

The 9th Circuit Court in 1996 allowed the widow of a soldier who died at Fort Lewis, Washington, to proceed with a wrongful death lawsuit. The soldier died while off-duty at a recreation area.

That decision followed earlier precedent by the same court that allowed the mother of a soldier killed by another service member to sue the government for wrongful death in 1985.

The 11th Circuit Court also has transmitted its approval for some military death and injury lawsuits to proceed.

In 1987, even Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia weighed in after the court upheld an appellate decision in a wrongful death case brought by the widow of a Coast Guard pilot.

"Feres was wrongly decided and heartily deserves the widespread, almost universal criticism it has received," Scalia wrote in a dissent of *United States v. Johnson*.

Higginbotham said she hopes the divide in the appellate courts, along with the obvious discrimination in the Ortiz case against female service members, will convince the Supreme Court to consider her petition.

Houston-based attorney Jamal Alsaffar said court precedent helped his client, the husband of an Air Force medical technologist, win a case for his son who suffered brain damage as a result of his active-duty mother receiving medication that caused fetal distress during labor and delivery in Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

Eerily similar to the Ortiz case, the government sought a motion to dismiss based on Feres but eventually settled, awarding the family \$6.5 million to provide care and services for the child, who is severely mentally and physically disabled.

"Because of geographical coincidence of where the military committed their malpractice, one mom [Ortiz] is being absolutely left out to dry and another mom [Timmons] was able to have her day in court and get a good result. ... Using the Feres doctrine against babies of military moms is about the worst thing. ... 'Injustice' doesn't cover it. It's cruel," Alsaffar said.

About 50,000 babies are born each year in military facilities in the U.S. and overseas. 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.

In 2011, nearly five in every 1,000 babies born at military hospitals suffered some kind of birth trauma, according to a review of records last year by the New York Times.

Military advocacy groups say that for the most part, military doctors are well-trained, highly educated and dedicated to caring for patients at maximum proficiency.

Retired Navy Capt. Kathy Beasley, a former Nurse Corps officer who now works in government relations for the Military Officers Association of America, said military medical personnel are "leaders in the industry" who enter the

Take three years off: Army extends sabbatical program

(6 Jul) Army Times, By Jim Tice

The Army continues to offer a special program for active-duty officers, warrant officers and enlisted soldiers who want to pursue personal or professional goals while taking a break of up to 36 months from their military careers.

The unconventional service option, called the Career Intermission Pilot Program, was launched one year ago, six years after being authorized by Congress as a retention incentive for all the services.

Army CIPP is open for calendar 2015, which will allow the service to assess its viability for possible expansion or future adoption as a career track alternative for active-duty soldiers.

The program initially was authorized in 2009, and over the past seven years has steadily gained in popularity with the Navy Department, which views it as a potential major retention incentive for top-quality sailors and Marines.

service to "serve doubly," helping patients while serving their country.

But, she added, if a clear trend is emerging that affects service women and their children, MOAA would support a re-examination of Feres.

"We certainly would be very interested in looking at it and how it is applied," Beasley said.

Mary Ross, a retired Army sergeant first class who serves as national commander for Women's Veterans of America, believes Feres certainly should not apply in cases involving babies.

"It should not matter if the mother is active duty or not. I believe that the Feres doctrine is just another way for the government to not be held accountable for the actions of the people who have been hired by the federal government," Ross said.

The Supreme Court will decide whether to hear or deny the petition by the end of the year.

Alsaffar, who is married to Higginbotham, said he hopes the court will consider the Ortiz case to clarify the law and provide recourse for military members and those who never served.

"The truth is, the government always says the family can use the active-duty mother's insurance to pay for the needs of these children. But Tricare is woefully inadequate for these disabled children and will not cover most of the child's medical needs throughout their lives including the 25-30 years they'll live after their parents pass," Alsaffar said.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/health-care/2015/07/05/feres-doctrine-military-service-women-children/29570329/>

The CIPP is optional for the services, but the Army has been slow to offer the program, apparently because until the recent past it was in a growth mode and not supportive of any program that would draw, even temporarily, quality troops from the active-duty force, according to service personnel officials.

When the Army pilot was offered for the first time in 2014, the service approved nine of 10 applicants for enrollment.

Since then, three of the soldiers have dropped out of the program, and the remaining six — two officers and four enlisted members — have started their career breaks. Reasons for signing up could include: education enrollment, time to care for aging parents or even to align assignment cycles as members of the Married Army Couples Program. Soldiers

could even use the time to see the world, or complete other personal adventure goals.

Under prompting from the Navy, Congress is considering legislation as part of the fiscal 2016 budget process that would expand the annual CIPP enrollment cap for each of the services from its current level of 40 people to 400, while relaxing certain enrollment criteria and increasing the pay of service members when they are on career intermission.

"While the Army supports the Navy's request to expand the authority, and to make it permanent in law, we are too early in our own use of this authority to fully evaluate its benefits or drawbacks," according to a statement provided by the Office of the Army G1 at the Pentagon.

"The use of the program is at service secretary discretion, and carries with it a responsibility to report back to Congress each year on its effectiveness and scope within our service.

"We will be continuing to accept applicants and to select participants in order to offer career flexibility to some of our proven performers in the enlisted and officer grades," according to the G1 statement.

Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey said he likes the idea behind the career intermission program, as well as a more flexible process that would allow soldiers to easily transition between components.

"I think it's very tough to manage," Dailey said. "Our intent is we give someone the ability to do that ... and not have them at a disadvantage with their peers."

But the Army also must consider how such programs might impact readiness and morale, he said.

"You've got to think about the morale of the people that stay and the contribution they continue to make," Dailey said. "Is it fair? What message are you sending? Is it better now to take a sabbatical? There's a lot of stuff we've got to work out with that."

Programs like the intermission program must have limits, Dailey said.

"You don't want to punish people for doing it, but you don't necessarily want to sell it, either, because not everybody can do it," he said. "There's always going to be a limit to those things."

Who is eligible?

In its current form, the Army CIPP is open to select categories of Regular Army and Active Guard and Reserve (Army Reserve) soldiers who have completed their initial active-duty service obligation, and who will have fewer than 17 years of creditable service for retirement on the date they apply for the program.

As stipulated by Congress, career intermission breaks are capped at no more than 36 months in length, and are available to no more than 20 officers and 20 enlisted soldiers.

Additional Army-specific criteria for calendar 2015 requires that RA commissioned officers be members of year groups 1999 through 2011, while enlisted soldiers must be in the ranks of sergeant or staff sergeant, and not be assigned to one of several high-priority military occupational specialties.

Specialties closed to the program include: all the Special Forces MOSs; 12D diver; 25D cyber network defender; 31D CID special agent; 35L counterintelligence agent; 35P cryptologic linguist; 35Q cryptologic network warfare specialist; 37F psychological operations specialist; 38B civil affairs specialist; 51C contracting NCO; and 79R recruiter.

Active Guard and Reserve commissioned officers, warrant officers and enlisted soldiers must have completed their initial three-year term of active duty to qualify for the program.

As written by lawmakers, the CIPP authorizing legislation does not allow program enrollment for service members who have incurred service obligations related to retention incentives, such as bonuses or government-funded civil schooling.

Army-specific restrictions apply to soldiers who have incurred active-duty service obligations under the Selective Retention Bonus program, the Critical Skills Retention Bonus program, flight school attendance and graduate school attendance.

Also ineligible are officers with service obligations related to the post-commissioning station-of-choice and branch-of-choice programs; officers, warrant officers and NCOs who have been centrally selected for professional military education courses; special branch officers assigned to the Army Medical Department, Judge Advocate General's Corps or Chaplain Corps; soldiers who are scheduled for deployment and enlisted soldiers who have been conditionally promoted, but who have yet to complete the requisite NCO Education System course for their new rank.

Human Resources command will entertain requests for exceptions to these Army-specific requirements, provided the waiver would not violate one of the CIPP provisions stipulated in law.

Participation in this year's CIPP is limited to 40 soldiers — 10 officers (commissioned and warrant) and 10 enlisted members.

However, available quotas by branch, area of concentration, career field and military occupational specialty will be determined by the officer and enlisted readiness divisions of HRC, according to a directive governing the 2015 program.

Benefits and how to apply

Soldiers approved for participation will be transferred from their active-duty component, either the Regular Army or the Active Guard and Reserve, to the Individual Ready Reserve in a non-participating and inactive status.

During their period of career intermission, these soldiers will not be required to attend drills or participate in other military activities.

Upon completion of the intermission, soldiers will return to active service with the RA or AGR where they will regain promotion eligibility, and resume the professional development track of assignments and schooling for their specialty and rank.

During the period of intermission soldiers will keep military medical benefits for themselves and family members, and will receive a pay stipend equal to 1/15th of their military base pay.

For a sergeant E5 with more than four years of service that would equate to about \$220 monthly, and for a captain with five years of service about \$350 monthly.

Participants must sign a contract in which they agree to serve two months on active duty for every month they spend in the CIPP.

It just became easier to be a mother in the Navy

(6 Jul) Deseret News, By JJ Feinauer

Women in the U.S. Navy and Marines now have up to 18 weeks of paid maternity leave, [according to The Associated Press](#), and some wonder if the extension might indicate changing tides in work-life balance in America.

As Think Progress' Bryce Covert [reported last May](#), Navy Secretary Ray Mabus believes extending maternity leave might encourage more women to remain in the military.

"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 said in a speech at the U.S. Naval Academy, according to Covert.

"Meaningful maternity leave when it matters most is one of the best ways that we can support the women who serve our county," Mabus [said in a statement](#) after the policy change was announced. "This flexibility is an investment in our people and our services, and a safeguard against losing skilled service members."

Investigation: Commander tried to fudge her tape test

(8 Jul) Army Times, By Kyle Jahner

An Army colonel [fired from her job in April](#) tried to intimidate subordinates to bend the rules after a tape test found her to be overweight, according to an Army investigation.

The investigation also found that Col. Glenda Lock, commander of McDonald Army Health Center, fostered a "toxic" work environment. Her own command sergeant major

Application packets for the CIPP should be submitted to Human Resources Command on an open enrollment basis, as described in MilPer Message 15-161, dated May 29. Before being submitted, the packets should be processed through the applicant's first lieutenant colonel-level commander.

In addition to including a signed contract stipulating service obligations, and a CIPP counseling form, application packets should include the applicant's most recent officer or enlisted record brief and a written statement explaining why the soldier is applying for CIPP.

Requested separation dates from the RA or AGR must be no earlier than nine months from when the applicant wants to leave active duty.

While the requested period of career intermission cannot exceed 36 months, soldiers who are approved for the program will be allowed to terminate their intermission earlier than the end date stipulated in the CIPP contract.

Upon return to the Regular Army or Active Guard and Reserve, the soldier's active duty service obligation or service-remaining requirement will be adjusted to reflect a shorter commitment.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/07/06/career-intermission-pilot-program-2015/28471175/>

As Covert pointed out in his Think Progress article last May, the Navy already has six weeks of paid maternity, which is more guaranteed leave time than the average American.

"There is no national requirement that employees have access to paid family leave although three states have enacted their own programs," Covert wrote. "Just 12 percent of employees in the private sector get paid time off for the arrival of a new baby."

The announcement of the extension also came with news that on-base child care will be opening two hours earlier and closing two hours later than normal, [according to the Navy Times](#). However, the Navy Times also reported extended paid leave does not apply to men or adoptive parents.

<http://national.deseretnews.com/article/5081/It-just-became-easier-to-be-a-mother-in-the-Navy.html#m71tXwFPBGtOQWw2.99>

described her as a "dictator," according to the investigation obtained by Army Times through the Freedom of Information Act.

Though Lock did have some supporters, many of the dozens of witnesses in the report portrayed Lock as an authoritarian leader and sometimes-abusive "bully" who decimated morale,

citing several specific examples including belittling of subordinates and retaliatory reassignments.

Army Times reached Lock by email, but she declined comment.

"I will again hold my comments for now. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my perspective on this action," Lock's email said.

The investigation was conducted in November with follow-up interviews conducted early this year. In Lock's Jan. 16 statement to investigators, she accepted responsibility for being overweight, but disputed allegations of undue influence and criticism of her leadership abilities.

"I am not a toxic leader. I have never been a toxic leader, and I will not become a toxic leader because I am not a toxic person," she said, according to the investigation.

'I cannot be in non-compliance'

While many of the complaints against Lock revolved around alleged abrasiveness, much of the investigation centered on her alleged attempts to influence her body composition measurements.

According to the report, Lock was measured on Nov. 3, 2014 — the week after the unit was supposed to be measured — and she was found to be outside of standards.

Three people were in the room with Lock when she was measured: two tapers — a civilian and a soldier — and the first sergeant, whose office was used and who recorded results.

Lock was measured twice and both times found to be out of regs. Then Lock told the first sergeant "she would re-do the weigh-in later on that week."

The first sergeant told Lock she'd let her know, and said, "it is not my decision to do that or not." The first sergeant later contacted an officer up the chain of command for instruction, and was told to give Lock a "flag," or Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions. A flag renders Lock ineligible for promotion, assumption of a command, bonuses, and advance or excess leave, among other actions.

She was also to be enrolled in the Army Body Composition Program, as required upon not meeting body fat percentage requirements. Soldiers in the ABCP are provided exercise guidance by a unit fitness trainer, nutrition counseling by a registered dietitian, and "assistance in behavioral modification, as appropriate," according to [Army Regulation 600-9](#).

Lock tried a workaround to avoid getting in trouble, the investigation found. The medical center's chief of HR said in a sworn statement that Lock gave her a call later that day.

"She asked me if I could remove the flag or somehow fix it because it could not go forward," the HR chief's statement said.

Later, the HR chief called Lock back to confirm that the flag could not be removed unless it was erroneous, and said Lock told her, "I wasn't asking you that; I was only trying to find out the procedures."

The HR chief said in the clarifying statement that Lock did not explicitly order the flag's removal, "but her intent was that the flag be removed....I perfectly understood what she was saying." The HR chief added: "An O6 in my rating chain was asking me to do something unethical and I don't think I should be put in that position."

Lock denied wrongdoing related to her body measurements, but investigators deemed her accusers' stories as more credible.

Lock would be re-taped after the initial investigation, and problems again occurred. She was requested to be measured Dec. 8 but did not show up. She was eventually taped again on Dec. 22, according to the first sergeant's follow-up interview on Jan. 5.

During the new measurements Lock "attempted to call out her measurements during the taping process in an effort to influence the grader's recordings," according to the investigation. Lock also refused to sign a Dec. 23 ABCP counseling form that reaffirmed her flagged status.

Lock passed her Army Physical Fitness Test in the fall, though she did so at a time of her choosing and away from most other soldiers. Investigators concluded Lock had "demonstrated a pattern of secrecy regarding her APFT," and never participated in APFT or measurements with her soldiers at any time during her command.

'Intimidating' and 'aggressive'

When the Army announced Lock's relief in April, "poor command climate," was provided as a reason. The investigative reports shed light on that accusation.

The CSM cited in the report called her a "borderline toxic leader" who "treats everybody the same; with an iron fist."

The CSM's name was redacted in the report, but the position at McDonald at the time of the investigation was Sgt. Maj. Shelia Adams. She declined through an Army spokesperson to comment for this story and said "her remarks in the report stand on their own."

Adams gave an example of a town hall meeting where Lock embarrassed a subordinate and a commander.

During the town hall, someone asked a question pertaining to the WTU. First, Lock criticized the question, stating the matter should have been discussed in the weekly meeting with her

WTU commander. When the WTU commander stood to say something, Lock allegedly snapped.

"The commander is going to sit down right now. Sometimes she thinks that she is the boss but I am the boss," Lock said, according to Adams, who reportedly felt embarrassed for the company commander.

Adams, who said a poor command climate pre-dated Lock, added that the colonel sometimes interrupted people in meetings and told them "I'm talking now."

Adams said "this job has made me decide that I want to retire" and that Lock lacked confidence in him/her and other employees.

"People are afraid of her," she said. "A lot of people feel like the command group is fake. I do not think that COL Lock provides clear guidance to the staff members and as a result she does not get the outcomes she wants."

Adams acknowledged in her statement that Lock had referred to the CSM as a toxic leader in a counseling report.

Some interviewed did speak well of Lock, characterizing her as a strong leader who was strict and direct. A deputy commander of clinical services called her "better than most I worked with in the Army" and "a professional soldier and a good commander."

Study: Junior troops, women more likely to try suicide

(8 Jul) Military Times, By Patricia Kime

A broad study of suicide attempts by Army soldiers from 2004 to 2009 finds that new enlistees, women and troops diagnosed with mental health disorders are at higher risk for trying to take their lives, according to a study published Wednesday in JAMA Psychiatry.

Researchers working on a massive cohort study of troops called the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers, or Army STARRS, reviewed Defense Department suicide records to explore the circumstances under which soldiers attempted suicide.

Dr. Robert Ursano, lead author and chairman of the psychiatry department at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, said that while suicide events are widely studied, suicide attempts are not — and furthering an understanding of who tries to commit suicide could help prevent deaths.

"Once [soldiers] have completed suicide, there's nothing you can do about it. They are dead," Ursano said. "So you try to work backward — to understand those who have tried, then those who have completed a plan, and those who have thought about it."

According to the data, 99 percent of suicide attempts from 2004 to 2009 were made by enlisted personnel, who make up about 84 percent of the force. The research also found that female soldiers, who make up about 14 percent of the Army,

But a larger number disagreed.

"There are a lot of people saying that we are riding out the storm and counting the months until she is gone," said one medical center employee.

Lock was commissioned in March of 1989, and trained at Fort Sam Houston, Texas; upon joining her home of record, which was Richmond, Virginia, according to Army personnel records.

The medical-surgical nurse (MOS 66) has worked at more than a dozen locations in her 26-year career. Overseas assignments have included South Korea, Germany, Honduras and Afghanistan. Her decorations include a Legion of Merit Medal, Bronze Star, seven Meritorious Service Medals and two Army Commendation Medals.

Lock has not lost rank or pay after being removed from command, according to Army human resource records. The records show that in May the Army's Medical Command reassigned her to San Antonio, Texas, as a Senior Nurse Staff Officer.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/2015/07/08/glenda-lock-fired-mcdonald-army-health-center-investigatoin/29871027/>

were twice as likely as their male counterparts to attempt suicide.

The research also found that:

- Enlisted soldiers and officers were more at risk for attempting suicide if they entered service at age 25 or older.
- Risk was particularly elevated during the first tour of duty, notably in the first few months of service.
- Personnel who received a mental health diagnosis were at risk for attempting suicide within a month of getting the news.
- Non-Hispanic Caucasians were at higher risk than minorities.

The data showed that during the time frame studied, the Army had the highest sustained increase in suicide rates relative to the other services, and suicide attempt rates rose sharply as well.

From 2004 to 2009, a total of 9,650 soldiers attempted suicide, according to Defense Department Suicide Event Reports. Over that period, 676 soldiers died by suicide.

Previous studies indicate that those who attempt suicide are 40 times more likely to die by suicide than those who have never tried.

While the review provides a perspective on suicide attempts and events during a period of high operational tempo, Ursano said its findings still could be useful for future operations and peacetime service regardless of whether a service member is

Air Force considering longer maternity leave

(8 Jul) Air Force Times

The Air Force is considering lengthening paid maternity leave, following the lead of the Navy, which tripled the benefit to 18 weeks.

The Air Force currently offers six weeks of maternity leave, as Defense Department policies require. But in an email Wednesday, Air Force spokeswoman Rose Richeson said the Air Force is looking into extending that leave.

Richeson said the possible extension would be "similar to the recent changes announced by the Secretary of the Navy," Ray Mabus. Richeson said there is no time frame for making any decisions on changing the leave policy.

Mabus announced the Navy's maternity leave expansion on July 2. The Navy said it was inspired by Google's expansion of maternity leave from 12 weeks to 18 weeks in 2007, which the company said halved the number of new mothers who left after giving birth.

New Air Force rules give new moms longer break from deployments

(8 Jul) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

New mothers who have given birth on or after March 6 will not have to deploy for a full year under new Air Force rules.

The Post-Pregnancy Deployment Deferment is being expanded from the previous six months. Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James announced the expansion of the deployment from the previous six months in a March 4 address outlining several initiatives to increase the service's diversity.

James said she wanted to alleviate the strain on "some of our talented airmen [who choose] to leave the Air Force as they struggle to balance deployments and family issues, and this is especially true soon after childbirth."

Additional details on the expanded deferment are expected to be released in a guidance memorandum in the next few weeks, the Air Force said.

in the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine Corps, and may shed light on civilian suicides as well.

"The more we know about the who and when, the more we can have precision medicines and individualized treatments for those at-risk," he said.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/health-care/2015/07/08/jamapsychiatry-army-starrs-study-suicide-attempts/29857623/>

The Navy's expanded leave benefit does not apply to adoptive parents or new fathers. Under the new policy, commanding officers are required to grant women who have just given birth up to 18 weeks of leave, using a combination of maternity leave and convalescent leave beyond 30 days. The Navy said that new moms don't have to take all of this leave at once, but they can only use it within one year of their children's births.

The Air Force has taken several steps to try to be more family friendly, and encourage new parents – especially mothers – to stay in the service. This year, the first class of airmen in the service's new Career Intermission Program began taking sabbaticals of up to three years. About 30 percent of those 32 airmen took time off to start a family.

And in March, the Air Force announced it would double the deployment deferment for new mothers from six months to a full year.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/07/08/air-force-considering-longer-maternity-leave/29869643/>

In a June 17 memo, Maj. Gen. Roosevelt Allen, director of medical operations and research in the Air Force's Office of the Surgeon General, said that medical treatment facilities will reissue pregnancy profiles affected by the new policy.

But the longer dwell time is not a requirement. New mothers have the option of waiving the deferment if they choose.

In a May 29 memo, personnel chief Lt. Gen. Samuel Cox said that after a review, the Air Force concluded "the overall impact on manning and deployment levels ... resulting from the increased deferment time will be negligible. ... This should allow minimal disruption to mission planning/training for deployments and/or assignments and allow units to more seamlessly execute."

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/07/08/new-moms-can-delay-deployment-after-giving-birth/29861997/>

Columbus Promotes First Ever Female Recruiting Commander

(1 Jul) 10TV Web Staff

The military made history during a first-of-its-kind promotion for army recruiters in Columbus.

Female Lt. Colonel Clydellia Prichard-Allen symbolically received a transfer-of-command during a ceremony known as the passing of the battalion colors. This unique and time-honored tradition is being passed to its first female commander of the local recruiting battalion.

"I'm truly humbled and honored to be before you today. To assume the command of this outstanding battalion I've heard so much about," Colonel Allen said. She will be responsible

for 23 recruiting centers spread across more than 30,000 square miles in Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia.

The 26-year veteran has a master's degree with honors in Human Resources Development from Webster University. She sees her two year assignment as an opportunity to mentor and mold young people into military leaders.

Colonel Allen added that she looks forward to bringing a woman's perspective to the work of recruiting.

<http://www.10tv.com/content/stories/2015/07/01/columbus-ohio-columbus-promotes-first-ever-female-recruiting-commander.html>

Experts: DoDEA could help develop future force

(6 Jul) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman

When the Pentagon asked a team of technology experts to identify some of the military's biggest assets for preparing for the future, they repeatedly offered an unexpected response: the Defense Department's own internal school system for educating military children.

The agency that runs 178 schools around the world for military dependents from kindergarten through high school, known as the Department of Defense Education Activity, or DoDEA, can help military leaders ensure they have the highly educated and motivated force required for future missions, several tech experts said.

"You can snap your fingers and more than a million K-through-12 kids can turn in one direction or another," said Doug Lenat, a pioneer in the field of artificial intelligence, told a group of military personnel experts.

Lenat and others suggested that DoDEA could influence the American education system far beyond its own schools.

Lenat was among a group of tech experts who joined in a first-of-its-kind "war game" focused on military personnel issues. The two-day event in late June in the Washington suburb of Tyson's Corner, Virginia, brought a team of Silicon Valley pioneers and computer-science experts together with current and former Pentagon officials and military experts from think tanks across Washington.

When confronting questions about future recruitment, many of those experts repeatedly cited DoDEA and its \$1.9 billion annual budget as a tool to help the Pentagon prepare for the future.

Defense Department leaders could use money and innovative education policies to transform DoDEA into a model for education that produces skilled youths who are eager to serve in uniform, and potentially influences students far beyond its own schools.

"What an opportunity. But in reality, so little has been done," one Defense Department official said.

Many top military officials worry that the pool of prospective recruits is shrinking as today's young people appear less interested in military service when compared to past generations. At the same time, the military needs a more highly educated crop of recruits than ever before to manage high-tech equipment and take on new missions like cyber warfare.

One way to tackle that problem is by reaching out to students long before they reach military recruitment age and take steps to ensure they are both well-educated and interested in military service. One personnel expert suggested that long-term recruiting needs will require the military to "go all the way back to elementary school and possibly even earlier" to support children who will become future service members.

Students from the DoDEA school system show a far greater interest in pursuing military careers compared to non-DoDEA students, studies show. Lenat suggested that through DoDEA the military could develop new education programs and software to reshape the current U.S. education system.

"If you look at the educational software that is out there — it's pretty atrocious, and it is pretty atrocious because it's mainly been developed by companies with these short-term pressures" to make money, said Lenat, who is the CEO of Cycorp Inc. of Austin, Texas.

"Since you don't have those pressures, you can actually develop qualitatively better educational software. You could develop things that percolate from DoDEA schools to civilian schools, you can develop things that can cause this lifelong positive relationship between the average American and the DoD, so that just like DoDEA kids have a higher propensity for going into the military, the next generation of kids, who've used the defense department-developed education software all their lives will have a higher propensity for going into military service," he said.

While DoDEA provides direct instruction to about 75,000 students in DoD-run schools, it also provides grant money and

support for the education of more than 1 million school-age children of active-duty service members.

The long-term outlook for DoDEA and its mission is unclear. Its student population is shrinking, in part because many military installations in Europe have closed during the past decade and DoDEA-run schools were shuttered.

Meanwhile, as the Pentagon faces budget caps, some lawmakers on Capitol Hill are wondering why the Defense Department is in the education business. In response, the Pentagon has launched a large-scale study to consider whether to close the 58 schools that DoDEA operates inside the continental United States.

They Survived Training, Now Female Marines Await Word On Ground Combat

(7 Jul) NPR, By Tom Bowman

Lance Cpl. Paula Pineda relaxes at a picnic table not far from her barracks in Camp LeJeune, N.C. She's in a crisp uniform and has a ready smile. It's one of the few breaks she's had in months — and she can finally laugh about Carl.

"Carl — our special, heavy, unique dummy," she says.

It was back in March, in the heat of the Mojave Desert in California, that Pineda — sweaty and grimy and just 5-foot-2 — struggled to help pull Carl the dummy out of her armored vehicle, along with another Marine, Julia Carroll. It was part of an exercise to rescue an injured crewman.

Carl weighed 220 pounds.

They also changed tires weighing 170 pounds on the armored vehicles, and hitched up heavy chains and hooks to simulate a towing operation.

The women proved something in their months of tough training, says Pineda, who wore a helmet with the words "Mad Max" taped on the back.

They're ready to serve in ground combat.

"In my opinion, I believe we can do it. The physical part of it, we can all work up for it," says Pineda, who grew up in a tough part of Los Angeles. "As long as we work hard and we're dedicated, we can all get there."

All seven women trained on tanks and armored vehicles, and all made it through to the end. Among them was 19-year-old Lance Cpl. Brittany Dunklee. She's lean with an intense stare. A former high school wrestler, she often took on the boys.

Right now she drives a Marine truck. But she'd rather be a crew member in a light armored vehicle.

The event hosting the tech experts was the latest step in a broader push inside DoD to modernize the entire military personnel system. The newly appointed undersecretary for personnel and readiness, Brad Carson, has vowed to seek "revolutionary change" in the way the military manages its people.

Carson wants to modernize the Pentagon's antiquated, paper-based personnel system and its promotion rules that prioritize seniority and stability over performance and innovation. He has promised to draw up a slate of reforms by August that will include far-reaching policy changes and proposed laws for Capitol Hill to consider.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/07/06/experts-suggest-dodea-help-develop-future-force/29512567/>

"I like shooting the gun, honestly," she says. "It's a big gun and the [\[M\]242](#) is easy to clean, so that's on the plus side also."

For Dunklee, it all comes down to these simple questions: "I've done it. So why can I not do it? If I can physically do it, why can't I?"

That's what Marine Corps officials are now trying to figure out.

In a yearlong experiment, Marine researchers and researchers from the University of Pittsburgh have collected reams of information on male and female Marines' physical strength, endurance, speed and marksmanship. The data will show whether gender made a difference in the fighting ability of the unit.

Small Marine units attacked with all men, then with one woman, then with two women. The numbers remain low to reflect reality: Women make up just 7 percent of the Marine Corps.

What the data won't address — but what many of the men talk about privately — is whether having women in units changes the chemistry of the group, or "unit cohesion."

Sgt. Kelly Brown, who trained with Alpha Company, the infantry unit, thinks not.

"After a while, you've been training together for so long, you've been living together and working together and sweating, and everybody's suffering together," she says. "I've had some of the guys I was working with say, 'Hey, I wouldn't have a problem if you were serving with me in combat.' "

Sgt. Ryan McCauley did serve in combat, three tours in Afghanistan. For this training, he served along with a half-dozen women.

"I thought the women performed to the best of their abilities," he says.

And what does that mean?

"Exactly what it is, sir. They performed the best they can, and they did it, and my hat's off to them for finishing all out."

In the end, McCauley said he'd be comfortable serving in combat with just one of the women he trained alongside.

First Sgt. John Dober is the top enlisted man in Alpha Company, the infantry unit. He thinks some of the women were up to the physical challenge.

"Some of the females performed better than some of the other females," Dober says. "Some of the females performed better than some of the males."

Dober says that the training will identify some male Marines who clearly don't belong in the infantry. And it will allow the Marine Corps to make sure future training and selection pinpoints the best candidates to serve in the infantry.

More than 30 percent of the women training in Dober's infantry unit washed out, most due to injuries like stress fractures from carrying heavy packs. That rate is far higher than for the men, some officers say, although the Marines are not releasing any details and are still completing their report.

Dober is a combat veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, and he's troubled by the high number of physical injuries among the women in a training course that he says is nothing like the real world of infantry combat.

"Close-quarters battle, it's a very ugly thing," Dober says. "It shouldn't be up to opinion or feelings. It should be about who's the best. Could I say [gender] integration will positively and absolutely enhance the combat effectiveness and efficiency of a Marine rifle squad? I doubt it."

Women will begin serving in ground combat jobs starting in January, unless Marine Corps leaders decide otherwise and can get Pentagon leaders to keep some jobs closed.

"Some people look at it as a civil rights issue," says Dober. "I will tell you emphatically and to my grave that it's not a civil rights issue. It's a national security issue."

Controversy surrounds firing of Marines' female recruit battalion CO

(7 Jul) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

A Marine officer who led the service's only all-female recruit battalion was fired amid complaints of a toxic leadership environment — but her supporters say she was only trying to make the unit better by holding women to tougher standards.

Lt. Col. Kate Germano, the former commanding officer of 4th Recruit Training Battalion at Marine Corps Recruit Depot

Actually, it's both.

When the Pentagon decided to open ground combat jobs to women more than two years ago, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said this:

"We've been working for well over a year to examine, how can we expand the opportunities for women in the armed services? Female service members have faced the reality of combat, proven their willingness to fight and, yes, to die to defend their fellow Americans."

Still, he added:

"If members of our military can meet the qualifications for a job — and let me be clear, I'm not talking about reducing the qualifications for the job — if they can meet the qualifications for the job, then they should have the right to serve regardless of creed or color or gender or sexual orientation. ... We are all committed to implementing this change without compromising readiness or morale or our warfighting capabilities."

Brown, the sergeant who trained with the Alpha Company infantry unit, thinks women can serve in ground combat — but stresses that officers and sergeants must hold everyone to the same standards.

"You know you're working with someone of another gender and you have to have a certain amount of professionalism," she says. "This has not been tested in combat."

One of those who hopes to be tested is Sgt. Danielle Beck. She's been a Marine for six years, working as a comptroller.

Beck completed the combat training, carrying an anti-tank weapon and sometimes a pack weighing 155 pounds. It left her with a stress fracture on her hip. Right now, she's hobbling around on crutches — but remains determined.

"We've never been able to do this before," says Beck. "This is why I joined the Marine Corps — to be able to fight and serve along[side] our brothers in arms."

Beck should know later this year whether that will be possible.

<http://www.npr.org/2015/07/07/419497279/they-survived-training-now-female-marines-await-word-on-ground-combat>

Parris Island, South Carolina, was found to be "hostile, unprofessional and abusive," according to a command investigation obtained by Marine Corps Times. She was relieved for cause on June 30 by Brig. Gen. Terry Williams, Parris Island's commanding general.

But officers who served with her say she was a blunt reformer who spearheaded efforts to improve recruit training regardless of gender, and that a vocal minority in the battalion undercut her achievements. Germano's tactics, for example, dramatically improved range qualification rates for female recruits.

The ensuing controversy, some say, provides a glimpse into an ongoing struggle to establish equal standards for male and female Marines at the Corps' East Coast recruit depot. Now Germano is petitioning lawmakers for redress, saying she was treated unjustly by base leadership. Germano declined to provide additional details about those efforts, due to concerns about protected communications to Congress.

Williams cited a poor command climate and the loss of trust and confidence in Germano's ability to serve in command, according to a statement that was provided to Marine Corps Times. The command investigation, completed June 25 and obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, states that Germano displayed "toxic leadership" by publicly berating and showing contempt for subordinates, bullying Marines and singling them out for under-performance.

On one occasion, the investigation found, she made comments during a sexual assault prevention brief that female Marines interpreted as victim-blaming, leading some to testify that it would make them feel less comfortable reporting a sexual assault within the command.

Germano also "reinforced gender bias and stereotypes" in the minds of her Marines by telling them on several occasions that male Marines would not take orders from them and would see them as inferior if they could not meet men's physical standards, the investigation found.

The nearly 300-page document included more than two dozen partially redacted interviews and written statements from Marines at Parris Island and within Germano's unit.

It also included the results of a Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute command climate survey taken by 64 members of the battalion in April. The survey found that nearly half of respondents thought the unit did not promote a climate based on respect and trust, and nearly 20 percent of respondents believed the unit did not create an environment where victims would feel comfortable reporting a sexual assault.

In a letter to 4th Recruit Training Battalion following her relief, Germano painted a different picture — one in which her unit had excelled regardless of outside opposition.

"Despite considerable active and passive resistance throughout all echelons of the Recruit Depot and the Marine Corps, we each worked incredibly hard to improve the performance of our recruits to make them stronger, faster, smarter, and better shots — all to better the institution," she wrote. "We achieved unprecedented and historic results in just a short period of time, and regardless of the controversy cause by our goal to

improve the caliber of our graduates, I ask that you remain steadfast and committed to this objective."

Germano declined requests for comment, telling Marine Corps Times that she wanted the letter to serve as her statement on the matter. In that letter, she wrote that she had one final request for her Marines: to pull together and move forward as a unit despite her firing.

A year at Parris Island

A legal officer by training, Germano took command of the unit last June. At the post, she was responsible for leading nearly 100 Marines and overseeing three drill instructor teams, responsible for 22 boot camp series graduations per year. In her 18 years as a Marine officer, she held a number of high-profile positions, including a year as Marine aide to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus in 2011. She previously served as commander of Recruiting Station San Diego, screening potential recruits from 2007-2010.

According the accounts of three officers who served at Parris Island and spoke with Marine Corps Times, Germano was dismayed upon arrival to find that the all-female recruit battalion was kept separate from its male counterparts for events such as the Crucible hike, the famed concluding challenge of boot camp. The unit, she found, struggled to retain adequate enlisted and officer staff because of its all-female composition, resulting in shortened rest periods between boot camp series and overworked Marines. She also discovered that the standards for female recruit performance in objective skills such as shooting were historically lower than for male recruits.

"What she did when she came is she changed the mentality of the Marines in the battalion and the recruits to not expect a historically lower performance than the male recruits at the battalion," said a female Marine officer stationed at the depot, one of three who spoke with Marine Corps Times on condition of anonymity, for fear of professional retribution. "Almost all the categories performed better during her tenure, just by challenging the training protocol of performing separately."

Parris Island officials confirmed that range qualification scores improved dramatically within 4th RTB during Germano's tenure. From 2014-2015, average first-time rifle qualification rates for the depot's three male battalions improved from 93 percent to 96 percent, said Col. Jeff Fultz, chief of staff for Parris Island and the Eastern Recruiting Region. During the same timeframe, rifle qual rates for the female battalion soared from 79 percent to 91 percent.

A May 18 "request mast" memo submitted to Williams, the depot commander, shows that Germano believed these efforts were being undermined by her immediate superior, Recruit Training Regiment commander Col. Daniel Haas.

Germano wrote that Haas had an "intractable stance" regarding her ability to command that was further cemented by the poor results of the April command climate survey. Haas

declined through his command to offer comment on the request mast.

"Through his words, actions, and omissions, he has empowered malcontents within my unit to foment dissent as demonstrated by the very pointed and similar comments about me in the recent [Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute] survey," she wrote. "...This has resulted in a climate where female Marines who seek out the regiment staff to complain that the battalion leadership is mean are treated with kid gloves (feelings vs. facts)."

In the request, she asked that depot leadership be directed to consider 100 percent of the battalion's feedback in forming a perspective on the unit's command climate, and that the entire unit be allowed to take a Commandant of the Marine Corps command climate survey, administered in a formal, controlled way. The DEOMI survey, she said, had been loosely controlled, allowing disgruntled Marines to take it multiple times and negatively weight the responses. According to official documentation, 64 of the 99 members of the battalion took the survey, and at least one respondent admitted to taking it more than once, though it's not clear what kind of feedback the respondent provided.

The command climate survey, Fultz said, had been administered like any other DEOMI survey. It would have been possible for Marines to take the survey multiple times, Fultz said. However, he said, the survey was not the only factor that prompted Williams to conduct the initial command investigation.

Fultz said a second investigation, conducted by Training and Education Command at the behest of Williams, found no evidence of the hostile work environment or gender-based discrimination that Germano alleged.

That investigation, which was completed June 26 and released to Marine Corps Times, established that the relationship between Haas and Germano was strained, but found no evidence of gender or protected-class discrimination, based on a series of interviews conducted by TECOM officials. It did, however, establish that 4th RTB struggled due to inadequate personnel and a high operational tempo, a problem that Germano worked hard to change, according to officers who served with her.

The investigating officer recommended that the battalion's on-hand end strength and operational tempo be reviewed, and concurred with Germano's request for a fresh CMC or DEOMI command climate survey, asking that one be completed no earlier than the end of October, with input from her and Haas. TECOM Commander Maj. Gen. James Lukeman disapproved these recommendations, however, saying no additional manpower review at Parris Island was necessary and advising only that normal DEOMI command climate surveys continue.

A TECOM spokesman said the survey recommendation was rendered inapplicable by Germano's relief, as a new command climate survey would be implemented within 30 days of a new commander's arrival, according to existing Marine Corps

regulations. Lukeman also said in his investigation endorsement that he found "no indication of inadequate support" at 4th RTB, and that TECOM continued to support manning requirements across the command.

'Throw like a girl'

The Parris Island command investigation and witness statements paint a portrait of Germano as a driven officer who could be abrasive and aggressive, and doggedly pursued the goal of unit improvement to the apparent alienation of at least some Marines in the command.

The document describes a May 9 Crucible hump conducted by the battalion's Papa Company, which finished about a half mile behind a male recruit company. Witnesses alleged Germano took the company to task in a meeting two days after the hike, saying it was the worst she'd ever seen and the Marines in the company should be as embarrassed as she was about it. She also told the Papa Company Marines company that they were responsible for the negative comments in the command climate survey and that she was tired of being blamed, the investigation states.

If the unit's members "focused on doing the right thing instead of running outside of [the battalion] talking about how mean she was and how horrible the command is, our command climate would be just fine," she told the unit, according to one member who was interviewed.

Another event that illustrates the tension between Germano's attempt at reform and the pushback from her unit came the same month, when she showed the short film "Throw Like a Girl," to a group of new Marines. Created for a Procter & Gamble advertisement that was screened during the Super Bowl, the video illustrates how many take the descriptor "like a girl" to mean weak or ineffective. The class then took a hard-edged turn, according to multiple witness statements, when Germano singled out Marines who couldn't perform three pullups or complete a physical fitness test's 3-mile run in less than 23 minutes.

Making these Marines stand, she told them they wouldn't be able to lead their male counterparts in the fleet, witnesses said.

Allegations that Germano took a "victim-blaming" approach to sexual assault prevention stem from a January brief to officers. Witnesses said she implied that sexual assault is "100 percent preventable" and that "by drinking, you are putting yourself in a position to be sexually assaulted." One attendee said she would not feel comfortable reporting an assault following the brief because she felt it would not be taken seriously.

The investigation found that Germano's personal viewpoints on the issue of sexual assault revealed no malice or bad intent. But, the investigating officer found, her poor choice of words and focus on accountability left room for misinterpretation and left some Marines feeling less safe.

Multiple witnesses, however, testified that Germano was a caring and supportive leader who made herself available to her Marines and prioritized troop welfare and the wellbeing of their families.

"I have been mentored and supported throughout my time here and feel the environment is demanding but in a positive manner that encourages growth and learning and creates pride from successes," one Marine witness said in a voluntary statement.

One female officer who spoke to Marine Corps Times in Germano's defense said she had observed her as a leader and mentor who went beyond the requirements of her job to look after her Marines, even taking the time to send flowers to family members of troops who were ill.

While the officer felt that the majority of the troops understood and supported what Germano was trying to do for the battalion, others clashed with her direct personality or "didn't have the best encounters" with her method, the officer said. The pressure to ready the unit for upcoming changes, such as a new requirement that all female Marines perform pullups that may be implemented as soon as next year, only compounded tensions, she said.

"She was trying to make a difference for everyone," the officer said. "Who knows if she went about it the right way; I can't say."

The Biggest And Most Disruptive Layoffs In America Are Coming From The Military

(8 Jul) Washington Post, By Lydia DePillis

The Iraq war was good for the economy of Jefferson County, N.Y. Perhaps too good.

"We had to grow, and grow quickly," says Carl McLaughlin, executive director of the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization, which supports the military base that has been there since the mid-1980s. "Because the community wants to keep Fort Drum here, and it wants to show we're very supportive, it did a lot of things that were over the top."

As troops poured into the Army base at Fort Drum, the rural area developed at a breakneck pace. With help from state tax breaks, developers built 3,800 units of brand-new housing and 600 hotel rooms. Troops depended on the local hospital system, which received \$100 million in upgrades. The school system took on thousands more students. In an area where the last big industry – paper mills – had disappeared decades ago, the infusion of people and cash was welcome.

Now, however, the citizens of Jefferson County are bracing for a collapse. In the next few weeks, the Army is expected to announce 40,000 troop cuts to comply with Congressional budget mandates, along with many thousands more pink slips for civilian support staff. At Fort Drum, estimates suggest that 16,000 of 19,000 could leave the base, as a worst-case outcome. Counting spouses and kids, about 40,000 people – a third of the county's population – would vanish, unless they found other employment nearby.

A May 21 statement from a 4th RTB Marine whose name and title is redacted sums up what appears to be a commonly held viewpoint.

"I thought she proposed some good initiatives such as transparency in billet selections and improving rifle range scores," the Marine wrote. "However, as the summer wore in, it became apparent that [Germano] thought she was fixing a broken battalion with a poor command climate."

Germano's reputation suffered due to a lack of buy-in to her reform efforts from other officers in the unit, said another officer who spoke with the paper.

"Lt. Col. Germano is direct, and people have a tendency to take it personally," she said. "If it had come from a male officer, there would have been no objection."

Another Parris Island officer who supported Germano's fight to address unit personnel shortfalls said the unit was better for having her as a commanding officer.

"The battalion was headed in the right direction under Lt. Col. Germano," the officer said. "She meant well. She was very passionate for what she did and believed in."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/07/07/kate-germano-fired-marine-corps-female-recruit-unit-commander/29763371/>

"We're on pins and needles," McLaughlin says. "To not create a Detroit-like scenario, we cannot lose soldiers. We'll feel every soldier we lose."

That feeling is manifest at the nation's 30 largest military installations – all of which are steeling themselves for an economic punch in the gut, as the Defense Department works through its biggest drawdown since the aftermath of the Cold War.

And this time, the pain is exacerbated by politicians.

With permission from Congress, the Defense Department has gone through a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process five times since 1988, helping it more efficiently allocate forces after periods of rapid change. Over the past few years, while budgeting for troop levels to decline from a wartime high of 570,000 in 2012 to 450,000 by the end of fiscal year 2017 – and possibly 420,000 if budget caps aren't lifted – lawmakers have been reluctant to grant the military's request for the ability to close bases.

Instead, they will stay in operation, costing billions a year to maintain (and without the possibility of being sold off for re-use, which might give the county a chance to bring in other business). Ultimately, less funding remains for personnel at the places where they're actually needed.

“They may say, we’re going to take 10,000 people from this base, but we can’t close the base,” said Tim Ford, chief executive of the Association of Defense Communities, which advocates for the people who live around military bases. “You keep the base there, but you hollow out the mission. So you have a big hole in your community.”

So far, the Army has almost gotten down to 490,000, largely through reducing its presence overseas, and shrinking the number of free-floating soldiers who aren’t assigned a base. The next 40,000, however, will largely come from people stationed at installations.

In Fort Drum’s case, the base could end up with a skeleton crew to keep the lights on. With a BRAC round, it could be used for some other purpose. Legislators still fear base closures in their states and districts. They’re also skeptical that the reductions will save much money: The last one, in 2005, focused on strategic goals rather than budget cutting and ended up costing \$35 billion to implement.

“Congress will not go along with a BRAC round until they conclude that the alternative is worse,” says John Conger, the acting undersecretary of defense for installations and environment, at a conference in late June. The upcoming wave of hollowed-out bases, Conger thinks, will make his point the hard way. “It’s going to make it clear that this dynamic is more painful than the BRAC round.”

Some installations might even benefit from a BRAC round, like Fort Benning in Georgia, a large base that could pick up extra troops if the Army is allowed to consolidate. But if the budget caps set by sequestration aren’t lifted, negative impacts could be more widespread. That’s why even Fort Benning, fearful of losing the units it has, is waging a campaign to avert the worst.

“Our whole focus is to go and attack sequestration and make it so blindingly obvious that nobody can stand it,” says Gary Jones, executive vice president for military affairs at the Columbus, Ga., Chamber of Commerce.

To that end, they’re placing billboards and encouraging people to write their legislators through a dedicated Web site, GrowBenning.com. And in what’s become standard practice for military communities fearing cuts, they’ve retained lobbyists – Columbus chose the Spectrum Group, which has picked up a bunch of retired high-ranking military officers recently to take drawdown-related work.

Why Gen. Joseph Dunford could face decision on women in combat twice

(9 Jul) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

As the military approaches one of its most significant decision points in decades, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford may be poised to be a key player in more than one role.

With Dunford’s nomination to become the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff expected to meet fast approval after a Thursday hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, some are wondering how he will approach the

“We are fighting a strategic battle,” Jones said. “And the strategic battle is fought in the halls of Washington. So we need to make sure to make sure elected leadership has all the support they need.” For conservative Georgia, that means giving legislators the political cover they need to vote for higher budgets, despite a tea party base that opposes politicians for doing so.

When cuts do happen, the Army offers some assistance to communities through the Office of Economic Adjustment, which had \$46 million available this year to help them pivot toward other industries.

Defense-oriented Northern Virginia, for example, has received money to help contractors hit by shrinking procurement dollars, or discharged military personnel who want to start their own businesses. Now, they can walk into an office and get free advice on alternative strategies like selling services to other countries instead of just the U.S. military.

It’s the kind of thing that should probably happen before defense spending starts to dry up, but doesn’t.

“People realized how dependent we were on DoD,” says Stephanie Landrum, president of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, which is administering some of the adjustment funds. “But I don’t think anybody was preaching diversification.”

That kind of assistance could also help places like the area around Fort Benning, which has other big economic drivers, like an auto plant that employs 12,000 people. If those businesses can be educated on the benefits of hiring veterans, people from the base might be persuaded to stick around.

Still, those funds aren’t enough to save places where little exists to take up the slack. Jefferson County, for example, has no other industrial anchors. So even if the Army keeps the base for future use, it’s unclear where else the people who depend on it will go to find work.

“They might try to mothball it,” McLaughlin says. “The problem is, you can’t mothball the community. That’s the issue.”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2015/07/07/the-biggest-and-most-disruptive-layoffs-in-america-are-coming-from-the-military/>

issue of opening ground combat units to female troops. It’s a question he’ll likely face twice — first as the commandant and, if approved, as chairman.

The question of how to integrate women into combat arms has dogged the services since early 2013, when Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey and then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta set a Jan. 1, 2016, deadline to open all closed billets and units to women. All exclusions to this new rule

would have to be based on specific, well-researched recommendations from the service chiefs, they decided.

"Any recommendation to keep an occupational specialty or unit closed to women must be personally approved first by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and then by the Secretary of Defense; this approval authority may not be delegated," Dempsey and Panetta wrote in a memo about the change.

Because of this rule, Dunford, who became the commandant in October, may be in a position to give first approval to his own recommendations, as well as those of the other service chiefs.

"It certainly raises questions about how the process as far as how that's going to work," said Greg Jacob, a former Marine infantry officer and the policy director for Service Women's Action Network. "We think that needs to be addressed during confirmation."

Jacob said the scenario did not necessarily represent a conflict of interest or even a definite problem, but it did bear further discussion.

"We want to make sure that process has the same level of integrity it had when it was initiated," he said. "They decided to make the chairman and secretary of defense the final arbiters on this for a reason."

Dunford could face questions about how he'll handle those decisions during Thursday's hearing.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., who authored legislation aimed at supporting Panetta's combat integration mandate, is aware of the issue and her office has discussed it, according to a staffer who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Staff members with Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., said her office is also following the questions surrounding the upcoming women in combat decision. McCaskill is known for her sponsorship of sweeping legislation aimed at cracking down on sexual assault in the military.

Twin sisters among first female veterans to be saluted at fireworks

(2 Jul) The Columbus Dispatch, By Allison Ward

As he gazed upon his twin daughters for the first time, Donald Lownie was elated to be blessed with two healthy girls.

Yet the father, a private in the U.S. Army during World War I, also felt a tug at his heartstrings: He had hoped to have a son follow him in his military footsteps.

Little did he know that his daughters, June and Joyce, would one day serve their country.

In 1948, the twins — registered nurses — enlisted in the Organized Army Reserve Corps (now the U.S. Army Reserve)

Sarah Feldman, a McCaskill staffer, said McCaskill was aware of the issue, but it was unclear whether she would raise it during the hearing.

Lt. Col. Eric Dent, Dunford's spokesman, emphasized that Defense Secretary Ash Carter would have the final say on decisions for the Defense Department. He added that Navy Secretary Ray Mabus would also weigh in on any recommendations from the Marine Corps regarding exceptions to the new policy.

"It's safe to assume that Gen. Dunford's approach to a Marine Corps potential recommendation for an exception to policy would remain consistent, whether he's the service chief or the chairman, if confirmed," Dent said.

At this point, whether Dunford will ask for exceptions to the combat integration rule is unknown. In advance of the 2016 deadline, the Marine Corps opened its enlisted and officer infantry training schools to female volunteers, successfully graduating hundreds of enlisted troops but no officers. It also assembled a gender-integrated ground task force of volunteers, assessing its success in training and completing combat tasks over the course of nearly a year.

A report compiling findings from the task force is expected to reach Dunford by the end of the summer.

The commandant himself has remained reticent on the topic ahead of a decision point, telling Marine Corps Times in April that he was "going to try to be as open as possible and not make any conclusions until the data is all in."

"By the fall, we'll know what direction we're headed in," he said. "So at this point, there's nothing I would say never to, but there's also nothing I would subscribe to. That's just where we are in the process."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/07/08/joint-chiefs-promotion-joseph-dunford-women-in-combat/29869649/>

before being called to active duty to care for sick and wounded soldiers returning from the Korean War.

Their service, according to the 86-year-old Whitehall residents, was a calling.

"It all stemmed from Dad," June Lownie Radcliff said. "It had to be the Army."

Finishing her sister's thoughts as she often does, Joyce Lownie Davis added: "We didn't have many toys, but we used to bandage our dolls. We just got interested in nursing somehow."

“Maybe you’re just born to do it. We did it all our lives.”

The women start most conversations about their military service by emphasizing that they never saw combat — unlike the thousands of men they nursed back to health.

Still, the retired nurses are flattered they will be recognized as grand marshals of the Red, White & Boom parade and during a ceremony before the fireworks.

They represent two of the 10 central Ohio veterans from the U.S. Army and various wars (from World War II to Afghanistan) chosen to take part in the Oval of Honor.

In its fourth year, the program is saluting female veterans for the first time.

The twins are joined by Nola Horchler and Virginia Parrish, who served in the Army Nurse Corps during World War II.

“We wanted a 360-degree look at veterans,” said John Clairmonte of iHeartMedia, a sponsor of the event along with area Ford dealers.

“A veteran comes home from war beat-up; ultimately, the nurses are the ones who took care of him.”

The Oval of Honor was established in 2012 as a way for people at Red, White & Boom to put faces with the true reason for the celebration.

“We’re able to take this time off to celebrate because of veterans past, present and future,” Clairmonte said. “June and Joyce, they were passionate about helping at a time when they were needed. To have that commitment of two sisters, twins, at that time is incredible.”

Raised during the Great Depression in Trenton, N.J., the Lownie sisters had a childhood they describe as anything but adventurous.

The two worked at a pottery factory to save money for tuition at the nearby William McKinley Hospital School of Nursing.

In 1948, the sisters graduated from nursing school and began working at the hospital.

Soon, they joined the reserve — which required little more than attending medical lectures on weekends.

Then, in February 1953, the nurses were called to active duty.

“We lived a dull life prior to that,” Radcliff said. “We never left home, never traveled.”

“Boy, we’ve made up for that,” Davis added.

Apprehensive and a bit naive, the sisters boarded their first flight for six weeks of basic training at Fort Sam Houston in Texas. Then they took a rickety bus to Denver, where they were assigned to a communicable-disease hospital on an Army base.

“Nurses didn’t want to go there,” Davis said. “Veterans were returning with tuberculosis, dengue fever, malaria. Everyone wanted to go to Hawaii or the East Coast, but they just send you.”

The women spent two years at the military hospital combining their two loves: nursing patients and serving their country.

Her work even allowed June to meet future husband Richard Radcliff, a soldier and patient.

With their stint in the Army completed, the first lieutenants moved to Ohio.

June followed Richard to his home in Sugar Grove. The couple, married in 1955, welcomed daughter Pamela the next year.

Joyce arrived soon after in Columbus to make a life near her sister. She wed one of her brother-in-law’s friends, Paul Reibel; after their divorce, she married Rich Davis in 1970.

Before long, June and her family joined Joyce in Columbus — and the sisters pursued careers at the Ohio State University Medical Center in the late 1960s.

Radcliff rose to head nurse of hematology and oncology for 15 years until she retired in 1986 to care for her ailing husband, who died in 1988. Davis worked in gastroenterology and retired in the early 1980s.

The sisters are content in retirement.

“All those years, we worked wherever they needed you, six days a week,” Davis said.

Although age has slowed them, the sisters — both widows — have continued their adventures.

Radcliff earned a black belt in Tang Soo Do, a Korean martial art, and the pair started traveling the world.

The military, however, remains a strong influence.

“It makes you think,” Davis said, “that maybe I did do something with my life.”

http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/life_and_entertainment/2015/07/02/1-sisters-in-service.html

Susan Ahn Cuddy Dies At 100; Pioneering Korean American In U.S. Military

(2 Jul) *Los Angeles Times*, By Ann M. Simmons

In her final weeks, Susan Ahn Cuddy kept her calendar full, as always – she attended fundraisers, participated in U.S. military events and even led a "survivor's lap" at an American Cancer Society Relay for Life, pushed around the running track in her wheelchair.

The day after speaking at a leadership summer camp in Wrightwood for Korean American youth, where she encouraged attendees to aim high and be the best they could be, she died in her sleep at her home in Northridge. She was 100. There was no cause immediately given for her June 24 death.

"She was completely active until the day she died," said her daughter Christine Cuddy, 65, an entertainment attorney. "She was a force of nature."

It is a descriptor that characterizes the life of the petite Korean American, who succeeded in breaking down barriers at a time when America was rife with discrimination and racial inequities.

She is believed to be the first Asian American female U.S. Navy officer and became the Navy's first female gunnery officer during World War II, according to her official 2002 biography, "Willow Tree Shade: The Susan Ahn Cuddy Story," written by John Cha. Rising to the rank of lieutenant, she later went on to work for U.S. Navy Intelligence, the Library of Congress and the National Security Agency. She was one of the nation's oldest living Korean Americans born in the U.S. and her parents were among the first Koreans to immigrate to the United States, arriving in 1902.

"She was a trailblazer, a go-getter, a challenger of anything and everything," said her son Philip, 59, who works in the medical research field.

Born Jan. 16, 1915, in Los Angeles, Cuddy was the elder daughter of Helen Lee and Dosan Ahn Chang Ho. Her father was a revered Korean independence leader. The couple had five children.

"I think my personal life [was] guided by my father," Cuddy said in an April 2015 interview with *The Times*. "He was always in Shanghai or China working for the independence of Korea."

But when he came home "he gave us time," she said. Her father was also exceptionally "liberal" by Korean standards, allowing his daughters to be "rough ... not ladylike."

"We grew up under a sense of freedom," she said.

Baseball became her passion and she excelled at the sport at Los Angeles' Belmont High School and later at Los Angeles City College, where she was in charge of women's baseball. She graduated from San Diego State College in 1940 with a degree in sociology.

In 1942 she enlisted in the U.S. Navy, ignoring criticism that serving in the military wasn't suitable for a Korean woman. She said her father, who died before she enlisted, taught his children to "be good Americans but don't forget your native land."

Cuddy enrolled at the U.S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School at Smith College in Northampton, Mass., the training grounds for junior officers of the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Naval Reserve, or WAVES. Her first application to the San Diego Navy Board to join the officers' program a year earlier was rejected because, as she later learned and told her biographer, she "was an Oriental."

She instructed pilots in air combat tactics before becoming a gunnery officer, and subsequently a lieutenant. Eventually she became the naval liaison from Naval Intelligence to the Library of Congress.

In 1947, Cuddy married Chief Petty Officer Francis X. Cuddy, an American of Irish descent. Their families frowned on the union and Cuddy said her mother didn't speak to her for five years.

"Many people in the Korean community thought that was bad," she told *The Times*. "They didn't accept him. I had to go on one side or the other, and I took his side."

Cuddy went on to work for the National Security Agency in Washington, D.C., and during the Cold War ran a think tank of more than 300 agents working in the Russia section and worked on top-secret projects for the Department of Defense, according to her biography.

In 1959, Cuddy moved home to Los Angeles, where she helped her family manage the popular Phil Ahn's Moongate restaurant, a Cantonese eatery in Panorama City that closed in 1990.

She also became involved in supporting L.A.'s growing Korean American community while preserving the story of pioneer Korean immigrants, such as her parents.

Do Kim, president of the KW Lee Center for Leadership, an L.A.-based nonprofit dedicated to training youth to become future leaders, said Cuddy helped instruct young people on how to organize in their community, taught them Korean history and encouraged them to be whoever they wanted to be.

"I think the students really loved hearing her story ... They loved hearing about the path she took as a pioneer," Kim said. Cuddy also helped to promote civic engagement among Korean Americans and build bridges between communities, work that impressed L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who became friends with Cuddy.

"Susan never forgot her father's struggle and sacrifice for independence, and so it was in her nature to be open and sympathetic to all who struggled to gain their rights and acceptance," Ridley-Thomas said.

In 2003, the State Assembly of California's District 28 named Cuddy Woman of the Year, and three years later she received the American Courage Award from the Asian American Justice Center in Washington, D.C., according to her website.

Cuddy, whose husband died in 1994, is survived by her children Christine and Philip, siblings Soorah Buffum and Ralph Ahn, and grandchildren Michael and Julia Gittes.

<http://www.latimes.com/local/obituaries/la-me-susan-ahn-cuddy-20150701-story.html>

Longest-serving female member of 'The President's Own' to retire

(3 Jul) Marine Corps Times, By Mary Cirincione

The Marine Band was in a state of transition when clarinetist Master Gunnery Sgt. Ruth McDonald auditioned 30 years ago.

It had only been 12 years since the first female member joined "The President's Own," and there were still no locker rooms or specially designed uniforms for women.

But over the course of her 30-year career, McDonald's leadership and guidance played an integral role in improving the life, comfort and presence of women in "The President's Own."

McDonald, who began playing the clarinet in the third grade, auditioned for the band in 1985 after seeing an advertisement in the musician's union paper. She had just earned a master's degree at New England Conservatory. Three years prior, she completed a bachelor's degree in music at Ithaca College in New York.

Following her July 10 retirement ceremony, McDonald will earn the distinction as the longest-serving female member of the Marine Band.

"It's going to be a big loss when we see Ruth retire," Maj. Michelle Rakers, the band's assistant director, said. "She has shouldered the burden of transition when women just came into this organization."

McDonald sat down with Military Times to reflect on three decades of service, as well as the changes she's seen and what she will miss the most.

Q. How did you make the most of your position as one of the band's female pioneers?

A. I had wonderful opportunities to showcase what I could do. I sought opportunities to do solos, perform chamber music and coordinate chamber recitals. Then I became assistant section leader of the clarinet section. I just always believed in doing my job well. I also was given opportunities to lead changes on women's uniforms. I worked on improving the fit of maternity uniforms, something needed as more women join the Corps.

Q. How have things for women changed over the course of your career?

A. When I auditioned for the band, it was behind a screen and you took your shoes off so no one knew if you were a man or a woman. There have just been so many changes [in terms of]

the number of women who have auditioned and successfully joined the band. We have key people in positions of principal — principal clarinet, principal flute — who are women. When I first got in the band, one of the most notable changes is if there were a small group going out — for instance, a funeral band going to Arlington — it would not be unusual for there to be just one woman on that job. Now there are five or six women going together. So just the camaraderie of women [to deal] with issues about uniforms or family I think has improved life for the women in the band.

Q. What are some of the especially memorable performances during your three decades with "The President's Own?"

A. I served under five presidents, but was involved in seven inaugurations. One of my favorite inaugurations, which was a difficult experience because it was just so cold, was President Obama's first ceremony. I have never seen anything like that on the National Mall. There were people everywhere. They were in the trees, on the monuments — that was quite a view.

Q. What about your time serving with the Marine Band has been the most meaningful?

A. Seeing the veterans sitting in the front rows at a tour concert [while] you play the national anthem. There's no way that they're going to stay in their seat. Or as we finish up the concert with the "Armed Forces Medley," there's no way that there is a dry eye from any of them because they're just so moved from their pride and their patriotism. We are honoring those families and those heroes who have either served for a length of time, or have given their lives.

Q. What will you miss the most?

A. It has been a wonderful career, to be in the band for 30 years, to play with musicians of this level. The musicians that we're getting now, there's just a great desire to perform. I think more so than when I first got in the band. Just the talent, that's perhaps the thing that I will miss the most. Playing with such wonderful musicians.

[http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/07/03/longest-serving-woman-in-the-presidents-own-to-
retire/29598061/](http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/07/03/longest-serving-woman-in-the-presidents-own-to-retire/29598061/)

Pencil skirt, beltless slacks in the works

(3 Jul) *Navy Times*, By Lance Bacon

One deckplate-driven change to women's uniforms is complete, and others are in the works.

The first change may not be immediately apparent. Female sailors had complained the bottom hems of their khaki tuck-in shirts were fraying and asked to have the same rolled hem used in the male shirt. But during wear tests, women found that although it provided a cleaner hemline, the rolled hem produced a distinct line in female slacks, which are closer fitting, according to Capt. Janet Bristol, head of Navy Uniform Matters.

The Navy instead switched to reinforced stitching, which "seems to have fixed the problem," she said. All new tuck-in khaki shirts have this fix.

Bristol commended the sailors who brought the problem to her attention, and provided *Navy Times* an update on two other requests that emerged in a women's uniform survey circulated in late 2013.

1. Beltless khaki slacks.

The Navy is experimenting with slacks for women that can be worn, beltless, with the overblouse.

Current rules are simple: If the trouser has belt loops, a belt must be worn. But this adds "a little extra bulk to the center portion of the woman's figure, which we all don't desire," Bristol said. "Getting rid of the belt and loops makes it a more flattering outline for the female form."

A wear test of two prototypes wrapped up in late 2014. The winner has yet to be determined. Some sailors liked the side-zip version, which Bristol described as providing "reduced functionality but more flattering" fit.

The Navy has gone this route with service dress blues for E-7s and above. But a side zipper provides no gig line to align the overblouse and has no pockets other than the interior welt pocket. Combined with a shirt that has no pocket, this could be a deal breaker.

"We try to keep our personnel looking sharp, and we want them to be flattering in appearance, and we want them to fit properly and be functional," Bristol said. "We want people to

be proud of what they are wearing – uniforms that reflect our Navy heritage."

2. Pencil skirts.

That same wear test, which was held in the Washington, D.C., area, also included two prototypes (side and front zippers) of a new skirt.

The women's survey showed strong support for a pencil design skirt in white and khaki. Current skirts are A-line, which is narrow at the waist and wider at the bottom. Women said they prefer the narrower hem line and more fitted look of the pencil skirt.

These changes aren't a simple matter of a reinforced hemline. Once a decision is made, more prototypes will be manufactured to help finalize specifications. Then contracts must be drawn and vendors selected to build the inventory. Most uniform changes take between three and four years from concept to rollout, which means you're not likely to see these skirts until 2017.

Larger pockets. In the meantime, uniform officials are looking to enlarge the internal pockets on officer and chief's service dress blues and service dress whites to accommodate larger items such as smartphones.

Other items. The Navy version of the Army's all-weather coat will be issued in recruit training this fall. Officials view it as a more stylish version of the raincoat. The new warm-up suit (a design borrowed from the Marines) will roll out later this year. Officials expect the new service dress blue jumper for female enlisted will be available for purchase in early 2016 (along with an improved version of the male uniform eight years in the making), and the lightweight Navy Working Uniform will be distributed in time for the summer heat. In addition, the long-awaited redesign of service dress whites is expected to arrive in fiscal 2017.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/07/03/navy-uniforms-female-sdw-overblouse-khaki-pencil-skirt-beltless-slacks/29581361/>

Navy, Marines Ease Up On Transgender Policy

(3 Jul) *Honolulu Star Advertiser*, By William Cole

The Navy and Marine Corps have joined the Army and Air Force in making it harder to discharge transgender military members.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus signed a memorandum Wednesday stating, "Effective immediately, separations initiated under the provisions of the reference for service members with a diagnosis or history of gender dysphoria, who identify themselves as transgender, or who have taken steps to externalize the condition, must be forwarded to the assistant secretary of the Navy (manpower and reserve affairs) for decision."

The memo was directed to the chief of naval operations and commandant of the Marine Corps.

Previously, discharge could be initiated by unit commanders. Sgt. Shane Ortega, a three-time Iraq and Afghanistan veteran and openly transgender soldier at Wheeler Army Airfield, said he was "elated" with the news because it gives transgender troops worried about discharge "the opportunity to breathe."

"These types of historic actions are the ones that parallel the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell," Ortega said, referring to the removal of the ban on openly gay military service.

The military policy changes mean transgender personnel seeking medical treatment won't be automatically separated from service, he said.

In 2013 the mental health manual used by psychiatrists for diagnosis replaced "gender identity disorder" with "gender dysphoria" for individuals who see and feel themselves to be a different gender from their assigned gender, according to the American Psychiatric Association.

"It is important to note that gender nonconformity is not in itself a mental disorder," the association said. "The critical element of gender dysphoria is the presence of clinically significant distress associated with the condition."

The Army and Air Force previously adopted requirements similar to those now in place for the Navy and Marines. Openly transgender service is still technically prohibited by U.S. military regulation, but the White House and Pentagon have been slowly moving toward full acceptance.

Air Force Senior Airman Logan Ireland, an Afghanistan war veteran who, like Ortega, transitioned from female to male, was the invited guest of President Barack Obama at the White House's recent Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month reception.

Ireland, whose command put him on special orders to attend in a male dress uniform, was accompanied by his fiancée, Army Cpl. Laila Villanueva, a transgender woman.

An estimated 15,500 transgender troops are on active duty and in the Guard or Reserve, according to the Williams Institute, which conducts research on sexual orientation at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The policy change for transgender troops "doesn't mean that equal opportunity protections, uniforms, medical care and

other important issues" have been resolved, Ortega said. "It simply means a step forward in the right direction toward ethical and moral human rights treatment for our service members."

The American Medical Association said in early June that a commission co-chaired by a former acting Army surgeon general determined that providing transgender personnel with medically necessary health care would not be excessively burdensome.

The AMA passed a resolution affirming "there is no medically valid reason to exclude transgender individuals from service in the U.S. military."

http://www.staradvertiser.com/newspremium/20150703_Navy_Marines_ease_up_on_transgender_policy.html

Study: 50% of pregnant women in U.S. are obese

(6 Jul) Headline News, By Amy Huggins

Lots of women make jokes about being able to eat anything while pregnant, and get away with chowing down, but what German researchers have learned about the issue isn't funny.

According to a study conducted by Charite University Medicine in Berlin, 50% of pregnant women in the United States gain too much weight during the 40-week gestation period. As reported by [Reuters](#), this has potentially dangerous consequences for mother and child.

Babies can be saddled with diabetes, hypertension and other problems which could surface when they reach adulthood. In addition, overweight babies may have trouble getting through the birth canal, forcing surgical intervention in the form of Caesarean sections. Issues for obese mothers include the risk of miscarriage.

Researchers say about 25% of the German women studied gained weight at a higher than desirable rate. Why it's so much lower than the Americans' is not known and needs further study.

Just how much weight a pregnant woman should gain is subject to debate. There have been differing opinions from respected medical authorities who, over the years, have challenged certain guidelines. The [American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#) acknowledges this in its own set of recommendations.

What isn't controversial is the fact that obesity in pregnant women appears to be an ominous trend.

<http://www.hlntv.com/article/2015/07/06/pregnancy-obesity-america>

New clinic to help growing number of women vets

(7 Jul) Tucson News, By Barbara Grijalva

The Tucson VA hosted an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony at its new Women's Health Clinic on Tuesday.

The new clinic has four times the space of the old one, to accommodate the growing number of women veterans.

VA officials said they expect the number of women veterans they serve to double to 9,000 within the next five years.

According to the Pentagon, only about 42,000 women were enlisted in 1973 on active duty. That number has grown nationally to at least 204,000.

The new clinic is considered at the highest level in the VA system, because of the services it offers.

Officials said they hope that women veterans of all ages will find it a safe and comfortable place.

All veterans, both men and women, share many health issues, but certain issues, such as PTSD, can be very different.

"There's also a sensitization in that women sometimes do not bring a lot of these issues to the force when they're in an environment that's not safe and gives them a feeling of 'there's a safety net for me that I can be open and share my issues,'" said Dr. Fabia Kwiecinski, chief of staff for the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS).

The clinic offers primary care, health screenings such as mammograms, OB-GYN care, surgical treatments and mental health care.

"This so extended and so much more," said World War II Navy Veteran Helen Anderson Glass, "They're touching so many facets that have never been touched. And we were overlooked for many years and we are certainly getting marvelous treatment."

<http://www.tucsonnewsnow.com/story/29497245/new-clinic-to-help-growing-number-of-women-vets>

5 Top Issues Women Veterans Face When Returning Home

(7 Jul) *NewsMax*, By Sean Piccoli

Women veterans who have completed their military service face various issues in returning to civilian life — some identical to the challenges confronted by military men, and some unique to the rapidly growing population of women veterans in the era since 9/11.

Here are five of the most pressing issues for women reintegrating after military service.

1. Invisibility

Many returning female vets have felt isolated, unacknowledged and invisible in a civilian society that either can't fathom what they've been through, or discounts their military experience as somehow less challenging than that of male veterans.

Even as their numbers grow, these women have sometimes struggled to find and connect to one another and build mutually supportive veteran networks of the kind that are more established and taken for granted among male veterans.

These were just some of the findings of a September 2014 study, "[Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home](#)," published by Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and widely reported on in national news media as the country began to address the women's veteran population boom.

2. Falling through cracks

Women say that sense of female invisibility can persist even in the institutions created to help the military population. Benefits and service programs operated by the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs "tend to lag behind in serving women," *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#), citing the 2014 DAV study and other sources.

"A third of VA medical centers lack a gynecologist on staff, the [DAV] report says," the *Journal* reported. "About one in five women veterans report having experienced military sexual trauma, including rape, yet 31% of VA clinics lack staff to provide adequate treatment, according to the Institute

'Get the Hell Out': Activist's Frank Call for Military Chaplains Who Don't Support Gay Marriage and Homosexuality

(7 Jul) *The Blaze*, By Billy Hallowell

Following the Supreme Court's gay marriage ruling, an activist is calling [for the removal of](#) "all homophobic military chaplains" who openly share their biblical views about sexuality, pushing back against claims that gays and lesbians are "sinners" for "choosing" their lifestyle.

Mikey Weinstein, president of the [Military Religious Freedom Foundation](#), a group that monitors perceived violations of the separation of church and state, originally proclaimed in [an op-ed published](#) following last month's gay marriage ruling that chaplains vocally opposed to same-sex nuptials and homosexuality should voluntarily vacate their role, or be terminated by the Department of Defense.

of Medicine, an independent nonprofit."

3. Self isolation

Women veterans will sometimes place themselves beyond the reach of help. "We have found that women veterans underutilize VA care, largely because of a lack of knowledge about VA benefits and available services," [the agency's chief consultant for women's health services wrote in 2013](#).

Some women veterans "were less likely to seek care in what they perceived to be male-oriented programs," [the National Health Care for the Homeless Council reported](#) in a 2012 study, "Health & Homelessness Among Women Veterans."

"Hesitance to identify as a veteran, sometimes triggered by avoidance of traumatic military experiences or a perceived lack of acknowledgement from society," was another reason for self-isolation found by the "Health & Homelessness" study.

4. Unemployment

The DAV report found unemployment among recently discharged female veterans running more than a point above jobless rate for male service members in 2013.

5. Homelessness

Female veterans were no more likely to suffer from PTSD than male veterans, according to a 2012 [VA study published in the Journal of Psychiatric Research](#). Yet they were the fastest-growing segment of the veteran homeless population, [the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) reported in 2011](#).

Female veterans were also more likely than male veterans to be single parents, the VA found, a potentially complicating factor in the search for [stable and secure housing](#), *CNN reported* in 2013. <http://www.newsmax.com/FastFeatures/women-veterans-issues-returning-home/2015/07/07/id/653933/>

"If chaplains believe that they must preach to their troops a message that their [lesbian, gay, bi] brothers and sisters are 'sinners' because they have 'chosen to be [lesbian, gay, bi]' then MRFF demands that such chaplains either voluntarily leave the military or be immediately terminated," Weinstein said in an email to *TheBlaze*.

Weinstein argued that anyone who preaches such sentiment in the military — even those who are not chaplains — should also be removed, as he believes that these denunciations are destructive to the cohesiveness, uniformity and morale that is sought within the armed forces.

"We have many [lesbian, gay, bi] military members in various positions of leadership, even very senior leadership in the

military ... some are generals and admirals commanding vast numbers of troops and weapons of mass destruction,” Weinstein continued. “Why should we tolerate either a chaplain or any other member of the military who publicly asserts that such fine American military leaders are ‘sinners’ who ‘choose’ to be [gay] in direct defiance of their personally favored version of the either the Bible or the Quran?”

Weinstein questioned whether anyone would be willing to tolerate chaplains making similar claims about women, ethnic groups or religious minorities, and said that, in the end, it is the military’s goal to maximize “military readiness and mission accomplishment, unit cohesion, good order, morale, discipline, health and safety.”

He used much stronger language [in his op-ed](#), though, openly deriding chaplains who vocally oppose homosexuality:

“What truly troubles these cretinous sentinels of vile prejudice and hate-mongering bigotry is the fact that this ruling will go down historically as the watershed moment which may indeed shatter the spine of the religious right in the U.S. military, whose prior viselike grip over the chaplaincy has formed the key obstacle to social progress within the Armed Forces. Cry us a river!

Nobody is arguing that these losers don’t have a right to their religious beliefs – that right is sacrosanct, and is backed by the highest law of the land – the U.S. Constitution. However, as long as these faux “victimized” chaplains insist on accepting a government paycheck from us, the taxpayers, while nurturing and maintaining the state of antagonism between their religion and the sexual/gender identities of service members, then they don’t belong in the military. At this stage, the only honorable thing that these losers can do is to fold up their uniforms, turn in their papers, and get the hell out of the American military chaplaincy. If they are unwilling or too cowardly to do so, then the Department of Defense must expeditiously cleanse itself of the intolerant filth that insists on lingering in the ranks of our armed forces.”

But others like Dr. Ron Crews, executive director of the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty, a group that works to protect chaplains’ religious liberties, [don’t quite see it Weinstein’s way](#).

“Chaplains exist to make sure those who serve our armed forces are able to exercise their religious liberty. We have been doing that since July 1775 when George Washington established our chaplain corps,” Crews told TheBlaze. “Chaplains must be faithful to their calling and ordination. They must represent those who ordained them and sent them to the military.”

He continued, “So, we must allow chaplains who come from faith traditions that hold as doctrine that marriage is the union of a man and woman to preach, teach and counsel from that doctrine.”

Crews said that chaplains who hold traditional views come from evangelical, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim and other religious backgrounds, with each individual ministering from a specific faith tradition; that includes the right to address theological views on same-sex nuptials.

“If a service member is offended by that then chaplains will help them find another chaplain or faith leader who will serve them,” he said.

Crews said that Weinstein is wrong to call for chaplains’ resignations, accusing the Military Religious Freedom Foundation of failing to understand how chaplains conduct ministry.

“Chaplains have been working together for over 200 years making sure that our men and women in uniform receive the ministry they desire and deserve,” Crews said.

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/07/07/activist-calls-for-military-chaplains-who-vocally-oppose-homosexuality-in-the-armed-forces-to-quit-or-be-terminated/>