



Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services Articles of Interest: 20 Nov – 4 Dec 2015

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

1. [A Call To Service Can Help Unite A Divided Nation](#)

(30 Nov) *Defense One*, By Seth Moulton

What can you do for your country? For starters, tell Congress to support national service.

2. [First Steps Towards the Force of the Future](#)

(1 Dec) *War on the Rocks*, By David Barno and Nora Bensahel

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced the first set of reforms to emerge from the Force of the Future initiative.

3. [Sources: Few women choose to stay in submarine force](#)

(6 Dec) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

For the first women to earn the coveted dolphin pin, it's decision time about whether to stay in the Navy. And so far, only three of the original 24 have signed up.

EMPLOYMENT & INTEGRATION

[General Officer Announcements.](#) Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced today that the president has made the following nominations:

- Air Force Col. Lee Ann T. Bennett has been nominated for appointment to the rank of brigadier general. Bennett is currently serving as the mobilization assistant to the commander, 25th Air Force, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.
- Air Force Col. Patricia N. Beyer has been nominated for appointment to the rank of brigadier general. Beyer is currently serving as the mobilization assistant to the commander, Air Force Legal Operations Agency, Joint Base Andrews Naval Air Facility, Maryland.
- Air Force Col. Tracey A. Siems has been nominated for appointment to the rank of brigadier general. Siems is currently serving as the mobilization assistant to the deputy assistant secretary for budget, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller, Pentagon, Washington, District of Columbia.

[General Officer Announcements.](#) Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced today that the president has made the following nominations:

- Air Force Col. Angela M. Cadwell has been nominated for appointment to the rank of brigadier general. Cadwell is currently serving as the executive officer to the deputy commander, U.S. European Command, Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany.
- Air Force Col. Linda S. Hurry has been nominated for appointment to the grade of brigadier general. Hurry is currently serving as commander, 635th Supply Chain Operations Wing, Air Force Materiel Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.
- Air Force Col. Jeannie M. Leavitt has been nominated for appointment to the grade of brigadier general. Leavitt is currently serving as the principal military assistant to the secretary of defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Pentagon, Washington, District of Columbia.
- Air Force Col. Heather L. Pringle has been nominated to the grade of brigadier general. Pringle is currently serving as the executive officer to the chief of staff, U.S. Air Force, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Pentagon, Washington, District of Columbia.

4. [Women officers say price tag for Navy's uniform push is unfair](#)

(21 Nov) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

Some female officers are not only unenthusiastic about the many new uniforms, but are incensed they'll have to pay out of pocket to buy them, unlike enlisted.

5. Marine is first woman to lead engineer support battalion

(30 Nov) Marine Corps Times, By Lance M. Bacon

Lt. Col. Lauren Edwards became the first woman in Marine Corps history to assume command of an engineer support battalion.

6. Report: ACC mandates race, gender criteria for promotion board

(2 Dec) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

An email from Air Combat Command leadership sets specific race and gender criteria for an upcoming officer promotion board.

7. Military promotions need an overhaul next, experts say

(2 Dec) Military Times, By Leo Shane III

Now that Congress has updated military retirement benefits to be closer to private-sector offerings, outside experts are hoping lawmakers will do the same for the armed services' promotion and personnel systems.

8. Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Carter in the Pentagon Briefing Room

(3 Dec) DoD News Transcript

9. Carter Opens All Military Occupations, Positions to Women

(3 Dec) DoD News, By Cheryl Pellerin

Defense Secretary Ash Carter announces his Women in Service Review during a press brief at the Pentagon, Dec. 3, 2015.

10. All combat jobs open to women in the military

(3 Dec) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghmann

The Defense Department will lift all gender-based restrictions on military service starting in January, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced Thursday.

11. Congress offers praise, wariness on women in combat

(3 Dec) Military Times, By Leo Shane III

Thursday's decision to open all military jobs to women — including combat roles — earned both praise and promises of closer scrutiny from members of Congress.

12. Combat jobs: The MOSs now opening to women in the Army

(3 Dec) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

Women will soon be able to join the ranks of the Army's infantry, armor and special operations units.

13. Air Force leaders welcome decision to open combat jobs to women

(3 Dec) Air Force Times, By Jeff Schogol

The Air Force's senior leaders are praising Defense Secretary Ash Carter's decision to open all career fields to women, including the six Air Force combat jobs that had been male-only.

14. Women in Combat: Why the Pentagon Chief Overruled the Marines

(3 Dec) Time, By Mark Thompson

The Marines, alone among the services, had argued that women should be barred from the corps' ranks of infantry, machine-gunners and fire-support reconnaissance units.

15. Secretary of Navy: Allowing Women in Every Combat Role Was Overdue

(3 Dec) Time, By Secretary Ray Mabus

'Diversity is vital to maintaining our exceptional fighting force'

16. In historic decision, Pentagon chief opens all jobs in combat units to women

(3 Dec) The Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter said Thursday that he is opening all jobs in combat units to women, a landmark decision that would for the first time allow female service members to join the country's most elite military forces.

17. Pentagon OKs plan allowing women to join Navy SEALs

(4 Dec) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

Defense Secretary Ash Carter's order Wednesday busts down the final barriers to women serving in the Navy's elite special operators.

18. [Female Marines on women in combat: 'We're ready'](#)

(4 Dec) Marine Corps Times, By Gina Harkins

The Marine Corps will immediately begin implementing new policies following the defense secretary's decision to open all combat fields to women, and female Marines who've been waiting for the ban to lift have one message: They're ready.

19. [White House revisits exclusion of women from military draft](#)

(4 Dec) Military Times, By Kathleen Hennessey

The government is deliberating whether to propose Selective Service changes that would make women eligible for the military draft, the White house said Friday, a day after the Pentagon said it would no longer bar women from combat jobs.

20. [Shattering the Military's Glass Ceiling](#)

(4 Dec) The Atlantic, By David Barno and Nora Bensahel

Defense Secretary Ash Carter's long-overdue announcement on Thursday opens the door for talented young men and women.

21. [Dunford Says All in Military Will Work to Fully Integrate Women](#)

(5 Dec) DoD News, By Jim Garamone

Following Defense Secretary Ash Carter's announcement Dec. 3 that all military specialties would be open to women, it is the responsibility of all in the military to ensure that the integration process is done well, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said today.

22. [Women in combat: What's next](#)

(5 Dec) The San Diego Union-Tribune, By Jeanette Steele

After Pentagon declares women can serve in fighting jobs, experts weigh in on details

WELL-BEING & TREATMENT

23. [Report finds fault in CID's work on sex assault case](#)

(20 Nov) Army Times, By Kevin Lilley

Officials with Army Criminal Investigation Command agreed with most of the findings in a Pentagon report that outlined faults in CID's investigation of a sexual assault claim lodged by a civilian against an Army Reserve member.

24. [Sex scandals rock Laughlin flight school](#)

(20 Nov) Air Force Times, By Jeff Schogol

Nine instructor pilots at Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas have been implicated in scandals stemming from an investigation into whether one of the pilots was having a sexual unprofessional relationship with a student, officials told Air Force Times on Thursday.

25. [Colonel faces sexual assault charges](#)

(28 Nov) Air Force Times, By Phillip Swarts

The former commander of a medical group based in South Korea faces charges of sexual assault, according to official charge records.

26. [Feds: Women secretly filmed on Navy ship](#)

(1 Dec) The San Diego Union-Tribune, By Kristina Davis

A Navy reservist has been charged with video voyeurism

27. [Navy releases court-martial results for October](#)

(2 Dec) Navy Times, Staff Report

The Navy has released results of special and general courts-martial verdicts for October.

WOMEN VETERANS

28. [The problems veterans face in the professional workplace](#)

(22 Nov) The Washington Post, By Jena McGregor

Corporate America loves hiring veterans, but a new study shows that many feel underutilized, alienated and uninspired in corporate workplaces.

29. Today's US veterans are less educated, less healthy, less wealthy, and less employed than veterans 20 years ago

(23 Nov) Business Insider, By Bob Bryan

The percent of veterans who saw combat is the same between the 1992 and 2010 cohorts (18%), and leaped up for the 1998 and 2004 cohorts (34% and 33%, respectively), but the percentage of veterans on disability or with a health problem that limits work has steadily grown.

30. Florida VA Clinic Provides Care for Vets With PTSD

(24 Nov) DoD News Features, By Shannon Collins

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' PTSD website, military sexual trauma, or MST, is the term used by the VA to refer to experiences of sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that a veteran experienced during his or her military service.

31. Ernst, first female combat vet in Senate, retires from military

(1 Dec) The Hill, By Rebecca Kheel

Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), the first female combat veteran in the upper chamber, has retired from the military after 23 years.

1. A Call To Service Can Help Unite A Divided Nation

(30 Nov) Defense One, By Seth Moulton

What can you do for your country? For starters, tell Congress to support national service.

In 1960, President John F. Kennedy challenged us to "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." He issued this historic call to service at a time when our nation was torn apart by the threat of communism abroad and the fear of its presence at home, not to mention the fight for civil rights that tested our fundamental values. Five decades later, we fear forces of terror abroad and worry it will infiltrate our communities, while the debate over the immigration status of millions of people living in the United States divides our nation. President Kennedy's challenge is as relevant now as it was then.

As a freshman member of Congress, I often get asked about public service, mostly by people who question, "Why would you want to do this?" Congress is gridlocked, it has historically low approval ratings, and everybody seems to hate Washington. For me, my interest in Congress comes not from a background in politics but from the Marine Corps: It was during my time as a Marine in the Iraq War that I truly learned the value of public service—and the consequences of having the wrong people in Washington making important decisions.

Every day in Iraq, even in the middle of a war I disagreed with, my work had an impact on the lives of others—the lives of the amazing fellow Americans I was honored to lead, and of the Iraqis we tried to save. To be fair, I didn't join the Marines expecting to go to war; I decided to join right after college graduation, just before September 11th. My inspiration came in part from a college mentor, the late Reverend Professor Peter Gomes, who lived a life of service and always encouraged his students to "make a life and not just a living."

In truth, I imagined that when I finished my four years in the Marines I would have "checked the box" of public service and never have to do it again. Instead, when I got off active duty, I desperately missed it. I missed that sense of purpose I had in my life every day.

You can find that sense of purpose in many places beyond our military as well, and I've been struck by how much we military veterans have in common with veterans of other national service programs like CityYear, the Peace Corps, and Teach for America.

The service mindset strengthens our nation because those who have served their country will continue to seek other forms of service. National service veterans vote at higher rates, become more involved in our communities, and we even do better in business. As the fires blazed in the West this past summer, members of the Washington State Vets Corps who once put their lives at risk in foreign wars stepped up as volunteer firefighters.

And when we serve, we also tend to put hateful politics aside. In my platoon in Iraq, I had Marines from all over America: Massachusetts and Texas, Alabama and Vermont, a gated community outside Park City and a housing development in Brooklyn. We came together with remarkably different backgrounds—different religious beliefs, different political beliefs. Yet at the end of the day, we set aside those differences to do what's best for our country.

That is exactly what President Kennedy called upon all Americans to do in 1960, a time when we were as divided a nation as we are today. Giving more Americans, young and old alike, the opportunity to serve through increased investment in AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, and in our veterans would make us a stronger nation. It would help us see beyond our hateful, partisan political bickering to

focus on what's best for our country. It would teach young Americans to think beyond themselves, and it's a lesson Congress could learn as well.

In the face of danger, it is easy to feel isolated and small. Serving teaches you how to be far bigger than you could ever be on your own. I am proud to have served my country in the Marines, and I'm proud to serve it in Congress. Let's show the world—our friends and enemies alike—that we are committed to our country and committed to service. I hope you'll join me.

<http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2015/11/call-service-can-help-unite-divided-nation/124048/>

2. First Steps Towards the Force of the Future

(1 Dec) War on the Rocks, By David Barno and Nora Bensahel

“You're killing me, Lieutenant.”

That's what Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley told Lt. Joseph Riley, his fellow panelist last month at the Reagan National Defense Forum. Riley, a Rhodes Scholar and the top nationally ranked ROTC cadet of 2013, had just shared that he had recently been told that he would not be promoted and was at risk of being forced out of the Army. Why? Because after being commissioned, he had spent two years studying at Oxford instead of holding the standard military jobs expected of junior officers during that period of their careers. The military personnel system saw him as lagging far behind his peers. So even though around 90 percent of his fellow lieutenants would be promoted, Riley was told that he would not be one of them and that he would face a separation board.

At that moment, the military personnel system stood as a massive barrier between the young lieutenant on the left of the stage and the Army's most senior general on the right. Milley immediately tried to reach across that barrier, telling Riley “I'll be your personal assignments officer — I just adopted you,” and ending their exchange with a hearty “Welcome back to the United States infantry, young man!” But this story reveals the depths of the problems within the military personnel system — that even promoting a Rhodes Scholar to a relatively junior rank requires active intervention by senior officers, up to and including the Chief of Staff of the Army.

Last month, we published an article in *The Atlantic* called “Can the U.S. Military Halt Its Brain Drain?” In it, we argued that the military personnel system is driving too many talented and innovative officers out of the military because it remains stuck in the industrial era, where individuals are treated as interchangeable parts. We contended that the current decades-old system is simply not up to the challenge of finding and keeping the best military talent required to fight and win the nation's wars, or to help prevent those wars from occurring in the first place. As soon as the article was posted, we started hearing from many current and former junior officers who shared their own stories about why they had left the military or were considering doing so. The details varied, but the basic storyline was essentially the same. The inflexible personnel system would either prevent them from veering even slightly from the most standard career path, or would punish them if they managed to do so. And in order to help these officers, many of their leaders were jousting with a rigid system that was seemingly impervious to logic.

In effect, today's system often requires senior military leaders — up to and including the service chiefs — to intervene personally in order to keep top talent within the force. That certainly has helped Lt. Riley and other junior officers fortunate enough to receive such assistance and attention from the top of the pyramid, but does nothing to solve the systemic problems that affect the entire force.

But on November 18, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced the first set of reforms to emerge from the Force of the Future initiative (and recorded a podcast on the subject with Ryan Evans, WOTR's editor-in-chief). The Force of the Future is a wide-ranging personnel reform effort focused on recruiting and retaining top talent for the Department of Defense. Carter announced it during his first weeks in office, and it remains one of his highest priorities. The first tranche of reforms generally falls into four categories. First are what Carter called “on-ramps,” which will enable more Americans to serve in the Department of Defense (DOD) either temporarily or for a full career. These include expanding internship programs, creating a Defense Digital Service to bring technology experts into DOD on a temporary basis, and hiring a chief recruiting officer to help private sector executives serve in DOD's senior civilian leadership.

Second are what Carter called “short-term off-ramps.” These will enable more military personnel to gain new experiences outside the military and then bring new, creative, and innovative ideas back into the force. This includes expanding fellowship programs with industry, local and state governments, and universities. DOD will also work with Congress to make the Career Intermission Program permanent, which offers military personnel a sabbatical period to learn a skill, earn a degree, or start a family.

Third, DOD will harness the power of big data to analyze trends within the force and to inform better personnel policies. The services

will also create talent management platforms to better match military personnel with available positions, similar to LinkedIn and the Army's Green Pages experiment. Collectively, these programs will allow DOD personnel managers to better "see" their populations. They will also allow local commanders to have far more say in who gets assigned to key jobs in their commands, and will better align service members with billets that fit their capabilities and desires.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, DOD will conduct exit surveys to find out who is leaving the force and why. This may seem mundane, but it may prove revolutionary. Today, the U.S. military does not gather any systematic information on who is leaving the force, let alone their reasons. Senior service leaders, personnel managers, or even those like us, who are concerned that the best talent is leaving the force, have no choice but to rely on anecdotes to sniff out trends. Data simply does not exist — and as Tim Kane recently noted, to entrenched bureaucracies, "No data means no problem." Lt. Riley's experience is echoed in hundreds if not thousands of individual stories across the force. But today these stories and the diverse reasons behind them are not collected or analyzed in order to determine whether these steady departures add up to a potentially dangerous talent drain. Exit surveys mean that we will soon have that data — and to the extent that they reveal any problems, DOD and the services will face far more pressure to address them.

These first initiatives are all good, though as always implementation will be key. But they are only the tip of the iceberg. In many ways, these first reforms are the "low-hanging fruit" — those that could be pushed through the byzantine wickets of service concurrence and buy-in with the least resistance. The hard ones are yet to come, but are absolutely critical to the future. Far more remains to be done.

At the end of his speech, Carter mentioned perhaps the single most important reform still left unaddressed: reforming the up-or-out promotion system, so that promotions are based on performance criteria over flexible timelines rather than rigidly determined by service entry year group. This should be accompanied by establishing an enterprise career track for officers that allows them to develop expertise in one of the many important institutional management functions (such as personnel, finance, or installation management). Officers on that track would not regularly command troops, but instead develop an unparalleled depth of experience through their careers and have viable promotion paths to the most senior positions in their functional area. Other desperately needed reforms include adopting more family friendly policies (particularly for parental leave), and expanding lateral entry programs to more specialties to allow more back-and-forth movement between uniformed and civilian jobs.

The U.S. military cannot afford for this bold initiative to simply gather dust on bookshelves in the Pentagon. Secretary Carter will have to build consensus among the secretaries and chiefs, and have them take ownership in the results. Clearly, not all of them buy into some of the bolder ideas that have yet to be publicly announced. Carter's next big job will be to slowly win them over. To do so, he will have to convince them that adopting these reforms may be one of the biggest contributions they will make during their tenure. For the Force of the Future is about far more than matching talent with jobs inside DOD and producing a more satisfied workforce. It is fundamentally about building the right force of the right people to win the nation's future wars. Even more than picking the right new ships, planes, or tanks, the service chiefs must see this initiative as their legacy, their gift to their successors over the coming dangerous decades. Today's decisions are all about investing in the best people who will shape and lead that force. We simply cannot afford to get that wrong.

Lt. General David W. Barno, USA (Ret.) is a Distinguished Practitioner in Residence, and Dr. Nora Bensahel is a Distinguished Scholar in Residence, at the School of International Service at American University. Both also serve as Nonresident Senior Fellows at the Atlantic Council. Their column appears in War on the Rocks every other Tuesday.

<http://warontherocks.com/2015/12/first-steps-towards-the-force-of-the-future/>

3. Sources: Few women choose to stay in submarine force

(6 Dec) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

For the first women to earn the coveted dolphin pin, it's decision time about whether to stay in the Navy. And so far, only three of the original 24 have signed up.

The reasons span the work-life spectrum. The demands on a nuclear engineering trained submarine officer. The strain of balancing careers with a spouse who's also a military officer. A lingering sense of disgust after the submarine video scandal.

"I would probably expect that most of the women are going to get out," Lt. Jennifer Carroll told Navy Times. "I don't know exactly what everyone's personal reasons are for it, but I think a lot of it has to do with co-location."

Carroll, 28, was one of the first women to earn her dolphins in 2012 as a junior officer aboard the ballistic missile sub Maine, and

today works with the Submarine Force's integration office in Norfolk.

Carroll said she is considering leaving the Navy instead of becoming a department head, principally because it's unlikely she'll be able to find orders in the same area as her husband, an E-2 Hawkeye pilot.

The number of women who re-up for undersea service is a crucial test to assess whether the five-year integration effort will be sustainable and will yield enough women to serve as department heads, and eventually submarine skippers, to make the sub force appealing to young women. Officials expect original cadre's take rate to hover around the force-wide average for female line officers of 18 percent.

Officials are already concerned by an underwhelming take-rate among both male and female nuclear-trained junior officers from the 2010 class, which broke the gender barrier on subs, according to three sources familiar with internal discussions.

"Regardless of community or gender, committing to a department head tour requires dedication and sacrifice by our junior officers and their families," SUBFOR spokesman Cmdr. Tommy Crosby said in an email. "Submarine force leadership remains committed to mentoring our junior officers, male and female, as they face this challenging decision."

Keeping officers

Crosby confirmed that three of the original 24 women selected for submarines have signed up for their department head tour, and noted that the window for the bonus is still open.

When assessing officer retention, Crosby said officials factor in losses and time served.

Five officers have washed out of the program for medical issues, academic failures and other reasons. Something as simple as a shellfish allergy could disqualify a person from submarine service. The service also only counts those who have reached three years of commissioned service.

Factoring in those unplanned losses leaves the retention rate at 16 percent for the first submarine officers, Crosby said.

Crosby noted that retention for nuclear-trained women in surface warfare stands at 14 percent, and pointed out that one woman from the 2011 year group has already committed to being a submarine department head.

Keeping women officers serving is a challenge across the force. In the surface and aviation communities, 36 and 39 percent of officers take the department head bonus, according to statistics.

But within those communities is a great disparity. While 41 percent of male SWOs stick around, about 22 percent of their female colleagues do.

And for aviators, the numbers show a 48 percent take rate for men and just 18 percent for women. Women make up less than 20 percent of the Navy and are much less likely to stay past an initial contract regardless of their specialty.

Couple that with the fact that many more female sailors are married to male sailors than the other way around, and keeping a dual-service family together is a challenge.

Carroll said that's the issue for her and many of her colleagues. She said her options to be stationed with her husband for sea duty are limited to Norfolk and the Los Angeles-area Naval Base Ventura County.

"I think our career path is really unique, too," she said. "We're opening more ports. We've got Kings Bay, Bangor, Groton. We're working on Pearl Harbor."

Women took another step this year, from boomers to attack boats, which means more duty stations.

Carroll stays in touch with her submarine cohort, she said, many of whom have married in the past few years. Of those, only one is married to a civilian. The rest are married to other officers and in the same boat, so to speak.

There are also stresses unique to being a so-called pioneer, she added.

"Any female in the military can probably speak to this, that being a demographic minority or looking different from all the people you work with, there's a spotlight on you," she said.

The sub force is trying to head off some of those issues with the integration of enlisted women, she said, by keeping the ratio to about 20 percent.

Another important factor is the commanding officer. In her case, Carroll said, her skipper made it clear to everyone on the boat that they were all equal and would be expected to do the same things.

"I think there already is kind of a perception that we're special or different or there's something big going on here," she said. "I think everybody feels that quite clearly. So downplaying that, I think that made the transition easier for me."

The goal is to get women through the initial shock of joining a force where they are still a rarity and then convincing them to stick around for another tour.

Sweetening the deal

The Navy Department is trying to tackle that issue, for officers in general and women in particular, with a slew of new measures announced earlier this year.

Among them is a fully-funded, in-residence graduate school program, expansion of the service's career intermission program and — in the future — getting rid of officer year groups altogether.

Officers can take up to three years off with CIP to raise children, or possibly work in new parenthood during a graduate school stint. But for those staying on active-duty, the Navy extended both installation child care hours and maternity leave this year.

Eighteen weeks of maternity leave sounds great in theory, one female officer told Navy Times, but there are still concerns about how it will affect careers.

"It's nice, but I don't know anybody who could spend four months away from their job and still do well," said the designated helicopter pilot, who asked not to be named out of concern for her career.

As with CIP, she added, there are concerns that taking the time off could jeopardize a promotion or come with a stigma.

"Maybe on the up-and-up it's not supposed to, but if you've got somebody who doesn't spend four months away from work and you've got somebody who does, and you're saying, 'Okay, which one am I going to rank higher?' You know?" she added.

Still, Carroll said, she's optimistic about the future of women on submarines.

"When you look at the first year group going through, I think there is more friction associated," she said. "I would expect the numbers in the first couple year groups to be lower anyway."

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has said the service would work to make co-location easier for active-duty couples, while keeping their career paths in mind. For Carroll, however, the timing might not be right.

"The idea of going back to a fast-attack is exciting, but the other piece of that is just it's a really demanding job," she said.

"So when you want to prioritize your family, you really have to decide if you're willing to go back to that demanding lifestyle."

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/careers/navy/2015/12/06/sources-few-women-choose-stay-submarine-force/76605940/>

4. Women officers say price tag for Navy's uniform push is unfair

(21 Nov) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

Women sailors will soon be getting black crackerjacks and the iconic "Dixie cup" cover as part of the Navy's top-down push to render uniform styling gender-neutral.

There's one hitch, though: Some female officers are not only unenthusiastic about the many new uniforms, but are incensed they'll have to pay out of pocket to buy them, unlike enlisted.

"Not only do we not like the fact that they're changing the uniforms to make us all look like men, it's also the cost," said an O-5 helicopter pilot, who asked to remain anonymous to criticize the Navy's initiative.

The active-duty officer said that she did the math: To replace her five-year-old dress whites for the new ones with a high Mandarin collar will cost about \$300 for the coat and skirt, extra for tailoring, and as much as \$100 for shoulder boards and sleeve stripes.

To replace her year-old cover, complete with scrambled eggs, will run about another \$145.

"It's a good chunk of change for stuff I have that is not worn out," she said. "My cover is in perfectly good shape and it's practically brand new."

The O-5 said women are upset that these changes, ordered by Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, have been fast-tracked above changes that women wearing them want to see, like better fitting khaki pants for officers and chiefs. And they're stuck with the bill.

"Uniform changes across the board have affected everybody, male and female alike, and we're OK if everybody's got to foot the bill," she said. "We're the only ones that have to shell out this money."

Female junior enlisted get an annual clothing allowance and chiefs receive a replacement payment, but officers are on their own.

Officers are required by law to foot the bill for their uniforms, following a one-time stipend at the beginning of their careers, CNP spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen said.

"We appreciate the concerns of sailors regarding uniform changes, but being in uniform, means being uniform in appearance," he said. "The most recent changes to Navy uniforms send a signal that the Navy is one team, has one standard, and is one in dress."

Christensen also said the service was developing a new khaki trouser design that's likely a few years away from fielding.

Softening the blow is the fact not all the uniforms must be replaced at once. According to a NAVADMIN released in October, women have until next fall to buy new covers and can continue to wear their dress whites until they're no longer serviceable, but must replace them by Jan. 1, 2020.

Khaki pants

While women have spoken out against the uniform changes, they have also voiced frustration about their suggestions.

Under the pseudonym Lt. Anna Granville, an outgoing junior officer shared her complaints about the women's khaki pants, which haven't changed in decades, on the military blog [Task and Purpose](#).

Others, including the helicopter pilot, say they have been asking for years to have the pants redesigned, as the high-waisted, pleated design is unflattering and uncomfortable for many.

"The one thing that we have been harping on for 10 years, that I know of, is to fix our damn pants," she said. "It's the one thing that gets overlooked, and we wear that uniform every single day."

Uniform experts are looking at redesigning these trousers, Christensen confirmed, although it is a three- to four-year process. Once a

design is selected, it can take years to produce enough prototypes for a wear test, make changes and then field the improved version.

Christensen was unable to provide details on where uniform officials are in that process.

'An attitude thing'

The Navy's push to a single dress uniform style is part of a larger effort to foster respect and equality between the genders, Mabus told Navy Times in a September interview.

Mabus said he was inspired by his first Army-Navy game, watching male and female West Point cadets march on the field in the same gray overcoats and covers, while the midshipmen wore two different uniforms.

"It's not to get women to wear men's uniforms, but I do think uniforms used to segregate women, and they're an historical accident, because women couldn't join the Navy or the Marine Corps," he said. "They joined the auxiliary, and they were given different uniforms to indicate that they weren't full sailors or Marines."

But for women who have spent their careers trying to prove themselves as outstanding officers while owning their gender, and who feel a kinship with the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service and the uniforms they once wore, it feels like a step back.

"It's not gender neutrality to us," said the helicopter pilot. "It's, 'You'll dress like a man.' "

While the uniforms have been redesigned to fit women, with nipped-in waists and oval covers to accommodate hair buns, some wearers feel the new style takes away an individuality they've grown accustomed to.

"If they went and redesigned the uniform and it was a new Navy dress uniform, that would be one thing," she added. "But it wasn't. It's, 'Now the women will wear the men's uniform. And oh, we made it a little wider in the hips.' "

The service has also moved to eliminate a number of female-specific uniform styles and accessories, including the beret, tiara and dress cape.

The pilot also questioned how altering uniforms — like the dress whites she's only worn three times during her multi-decade career — will promote respect.

"Every time I've ever been harassed or inappropriately touched, it was not because of what I was wearing," she said.

For her, it comes down to equal consideration by the men who run the uniform board and beyond.

"I get that they don't see it because it doesn't affect them, but we don't get thought of, and it's more of an attitude thing," she said. "Sexual assault is out there, sexual harassment is out there, yes. But on a day-to-day basis, the 'You don't think about how this affects me,' is more of the discrimination that I think most of them see."

That will change as more women take on leadership roles, she said.

"There's just not enough women at the top yet."

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/11/21/women-officers-say-price-tag-navys-uniform-push-unfair/76010990/>

5. Marine is first woman to lead engineer support battalion

(30 Nov) Marine Corps Times, By Lance M. Bacon

Lt. Col. Lauren Edwards became the first woman in Marine Corps history to assume command of an engineer support battalion.

Edwards took the helm of 8th Engineer Support Battalion from Lt. Col. David Morris during a ceremony Monday at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Blazing a trail for others to follow is nothing new for Edwards, who has been a fast burner since graduating from George Washington University. She was platoon honor graduate at Officer Candidates School, and was honor graduate from Combat

Engineer Officer's Course, where she also received the leadership award.

As a company commander, Edwards deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Her forward arming and refueling point, or FARP, team was part of Task Force Tripoli and the march to Tikrit, Iraq. She once led more than 150 Marines and several vehicles in defensive maneuvers while taking enemy fire.

Edwards' awards reflect her combat and expeditionary experiences. They include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat "V" device and two stars in lieu of third award, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Combat engineering is one of many fields opened to women in recent years as the military looks to break down long-standing gender barriers. New gender-neutral physical rules announced in October require that all Marines heading into 29 military occupational specialties meet the same standards for each of those MOSs in order to graduate. Those jobs include infantry, artillery, combat engineering, tanks and amphibious assault vehicles, ground ordnance, and some close-air support roles.

Edwards' is the latest in a line of "firsts" for women in the combat engineer community. In 2012, 1st. Lt. Brandy Soublet was named the first female maintenance management and logistics officer for 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California.

In 2013, Gunnery Sgt. Robin Baker became the first female combat engineer gunny when she pinned on rank in Afghanistan while serving with Combat Logistics Regiment 2. In December of that year, 1st. Lt. Amanda Mathew became one of the first women to lead a deployed combat arms platoon. She was part of Operations Platoon Engineer Support Company in the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, which deployed to Afghanistan.

As commander of 8th ESB, Edwards will provide general engineering support to II Marine Expeditionary Force units, to include standard bridging, explosive ordnance disposal, provision of tactical utilities, and the production and storage of bulk water. About 100 Marines from the battalion partnered in June with 150 warriors from II MEF and 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing to form [Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-South](#), the U.S. military's first rapid-response task force to be based in Central America. There, they trained local forces battling drug cartels and served as the ready force for humanitarian aid and disaster response.

During a 2009 deployment to Afghanistan, Edwards, then a member of the All-Marine Running Team, organized a [marathon at Camp Leatherneck](#) that was run in conjunction with the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/11/30/first-female-marine-takes-helm-engineer-support-battalion/76567206/>

6. Report: ACC mandates race, gender criteria for promotion board

(2 Dec) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

An email from Air Combat Command leadership sets specific race and gender criteria for an upcoming officer promotion board.

The specifics are contained in a Nov. 24 email, posted online by [blogger Tony Carr](#). In the email, ACC informs leadership that it needs five pinned-on colonels to sit on a March 2016 board for choosing colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors next year.

The email also specifies one must be a black male pilot, and one must be a female colonel in the Biomedical Sciences Corps, which can include physical therapists, clinical psychologists and physicians assistants.

The other three colonels on the board must be a male navigator, a male air battle manager and a male logistics officer, the email said. ACC spokeswoman Maj. Genieve David confirmed the email's legitimacy to Air Force Times, but declined to comment further.

The request for board members is for the CY16B board for BSC colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors, and for lieutenant colonels in the Line of the Air Force and Medical Services Corps.

In a statement Tuesday evening, the Air Force said Air Force policy has for years required the demographic makeup of promotion boards to closely mirror the population of promotion-eligible airmen, in terms of gender, race, functional career area, aeronautical rating and major command.

"This policy is fully transparent to airmen and has been clearly articulated in [Air Force Instruction] 36-2501, Officer Promotions and

Selective Continuation, for many years," the Air Force said.

That AFI says that "Central Selection Board membership will reflect the eligible population in terms of minority and women officers and MAJCOM of assignment when practical."

The email said ACC is setting these requirements in order to meet statutory guidance and to "comply with [Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James'] guidance to mirror the demographics of the members meeting the board."

But the Air Force said in its statement that the policy "is not tied to nor was it generated or adjusted based on any of the new SecAF-announced initiatives associated with diversity and inclusion."

In a March 4 speech in Washington, D.C., James outlined her plans for improving the diversity of the Air Force. She sent a memorandum of instruction to promotion boards, instructing members "to find officers who have demonstrated they will nurture and lead in a diverse and inclusive Air Force culture," she said.

James also lamented in that address the lack of diversity in the upper ranks of officers. The representation of women and minorities declines in the higher officer ranks, she said, and women leave the service at twice the rate of men during the middle of their careers.

She singled out problems with minority underrepresentation in the Air Force's pilot ranks. Black airmen make up 6 percent of the officer corps, for example, but just 2.3 percent of pilots, James said. And women make up 6.7 percent of pilots, while accounting for 20 percent of officers.

The email said that board membership "IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE, CLOSE HOLD INFORMATION, and is not to be released to anyone."

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/careers/air-force/officer/2015/12/01/report-acc-mandates-race-gender-criteria-for-promotion-board/76610982/>

7. Military promotions need an overhaul next, experts say

(2 Dec) Military Times, By Leo Shane III

Now that Congress has updated military retirement benefits to be closer to private-sector offerings, outside experts are hoping lawmakers will do the same for the armed services' promotion and personnel systems.

"This is not about one particular constraint, it's about the idea that everyone's (military) career should look the same," former Defense Undersecretary for Personnel David Chu told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee on Wednesday. "We're grooming all our officers to be chief of staff. They're not all going to do that. But many are looking for a career in middle management that they can perform for a long period of time."

Wednesday's hearing is part of a larger effort by the committee to consider holistic reforms throughout the Defense Department, including talking to internal and external experts about ways to improve acquisition, readiness and fiscal responsibility.

Committee chairman Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said the personnel reform issue hits all of those other areas.

"The question is whether our military is able to recruit and retain so many excellent Americans because of its personnel system, or in spite of it," he said. "I am concerned that, all too often, it is the latter."

Former defense officials testifying Wednesday said the decades-old promotion and assignment systems in the military are well overdue for an update. Forcing out talented individuals too early leaves offices without experienced leaders. Letting others stay too long stifles innovation and productivity.

The solution, Chu and others said, is to move away from the Pentagon's one-size-fits-all model for promotions and recruiting.

"We need to manage individual careers that make sense for each career," said Bernard Rostker, who preceded Chu in the Pentagon personnel role. "We need to tell [the] manager of each department that each of these groups should have a career structure that makes

sense for that group.”

That could mean lifting mandatory retirement rules for experienced acquisition officers, Rostker said, and allowing some midcareer specialists to stay in place even without rank advancement. It could also mean quicker outprocessing for certain combat posts, where youth and fitness are a higher priority than experience.

The services already do some of that, in medical and supply specialties. “There are other ways to do this,” Chu said. “They aren’t being used aggressively.”

Defense Secretary Ash Carter has hinted at such plans with his “Force of the Future” initiatives, but lawmakers say they worry that those proposed changes don’t go far enough to shape the force to be prepared for future threats.

Fellowships and sabbaticals outside the military bring new ideas into the ranks, according to former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead. But such plans are ideal in only specific circumstances, and don’t provide real reform in the military’s archaic career structure.

He said military leaders need to find ways to value skill over longevity and “give people latitude to make mistakes,” two philosophies that aren’t supported by the current rigid military promotion system.

Both lawmakers and the experts acknowledged that diagnosing the problem is easier than developing long-term solutions. But they said military leaders need to keep having those discussions to prevent making an already difficult recruiting job even harder, and to keep skills critical to national security from being dominated by private sector companies.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/12/02/military-promotions-overhaul-ideas/76663106/>

8. Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Carter in the Pentagon Briefing Room

(3 Dec) DoD News Transcript

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ASH CARTER: Good afternoon, or good morning. No, it’s good afternoon. Thanks for being here. Appreciate it.

Now, before I turn to my statement on the subject about which I’d like to speak to you, I’d first like to offer my condolences to the families of those who were killed yesterday in San Bernardino, California.

President Obama just spoke about this tragedy. We’re monitoring the situation closely in coordination with the rest of the president’s national security team. Our highest priority, of course, is the protection of our people.

The law enforcement community’s taking the lead on this, and they’ll be able to provide more information as it becomes available. I’m confident they’ll have more answers in the days ahead.

Let me now turn to my statement.

When I became secretary of defense, I made a commitment to building America’s force of the future: the all-volunteer military that will defend our nation for generations to come.

Like our outstanding force of today, our force of the future must continue to benefit from the best people America has to offer. In the 21st century, that requires drawing strength from the broadest possible pool of talent.

This includes women, because they make over -- up over 50 percent of the American population. To succeed in our mission of national defense, we cannot afford to cut ourselves off from half the country’s talents and skills. We have to take full advantage of every individual who can meet our standards.

The Defense Department has increasingly done this in recent decades, in 1975, for example, opening up the military service academies to women, and in 1993, allowing women to fly fighter jets and serve on combat ships at sea.

About the same time, though, DOD also issued the Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule, which still prohibited women from being assigned to units whose primary mission was engaging in direct ground combat.

That rule was in turn rescinded in January 2013, when then-Secretary Panetta directed that all positions be opened to qualified women by January 1st, 2016 -- that is, less than one month from today -- while also giving the secretary of the Army, the secretary of the Navy, the secretary of the Air Force and the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command three years to request any exceptions, which would have to be reviewed first by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and then approved by the secretary of defense. As many of you know, I was deputy secretary of defense at the time. That decision reflected, among other things, the fact that by that time the issue of women in combat per se was no longer a question. It was a reality, because women had seen combat throughout the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, serving, fighting, and in some cases making the ultimate sacrifice alongside their fellow comrades in arms.

We've made important strides over the last three years since then. We've seen women soldiers graduate from the Army's Ranger School. We have women serving on submarines. And we've up -- opened up over 111,000 positions to women across the services. While that represents real progress, it also means that approximately 10 percent of positions in the military -- that is, nearly 220,000 -- currently remain closed to women, including infantry, armor, reconnaissance, and some special operations units.

Over the last three years, the senior civilian and military leaders across the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Special Operations Command have been studying the integration of women into these positions.

And last month I received their recommendations, as well as the data, studies, and surveys on which they were based, regarding whether any of those remaining positions warrant a continued exemption from being opened to women.

I reviewed these inputs carefully. And today, I'm announcing my decision not to make continued exceptions, that is, to proceed with opening all these remaining occupations and positions to women. There will be no exceptions.

This means that, as long as they qualify and meet the standards, women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they could not before.

They'll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars, and lead infantry soldiers into combat. They'll be able to serve as Army rangers and green berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers and everything else that was previously open only to men. And even more importantly, our military will be better able to harness the skills and perspectives that talented women have to offer. No exceptions was the recommendation of the secretary of the Army, the secretary of the Air Force, and the secretary of the Navy, as well as the chief of staff of the Army, chief of staff of the Air Force, chief of Naval operations, and the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command.

While the Marine Corps asked for a partial exception in some areas such as infantry, machine gunner, fire support reconnaissance and others, we are a joint force, and I have decided to make a decision which applies to the entire force.

Let me explain how I came to this decision. First, I've been mindful of several key principals throughout this process. One is that mission effectiveness is most important. Defending this country is our primary responsibility, and it cannot be compromised. That means everyone who serves in uniform -- men and women alike -- has to be able to meet the high standards for whatever job they're in. To be sure fairness is also important, because everyone who's able and willing to serve their country, who can meet those standards, should have the full and equal opportunity to do so. But the important factor in making my decision was to have access to every American who could add strength to the joint force.

Now, more than ever, we cannot afford to have barriers limiting our access to talent. The past three years of extensive studies and reviews leading up to this decision, all of which we're gonna post online, by the way, have led to genuine insights and real progress. Where we found that some standards previously were either outdated or didn't reflect the tasks actually required in combat, important work has been done to ensure each position now has standards that are grounded in real-world operational requirements -- both physical and otherwise. So we're positioned to be better at finding not only the most qualified women, but also the qualified men for military specialties.

Another principal is that the careful implementation of integrating women into combat positions would be a key to success -- integration. And also that any decision to do so, or not would have to be based on rigorous analysis of factual data. And that's exactly how we've conducted this review.

It's been evidence-based, and iterative. I'm confident the Defense Department can implement this successfully, because throughout our history we've consistently proven ourselves to be a learning organization. Just look at the last decade and a half. We've seen this in war where we adapted to counter insurgency and counter terrorism missions in the wake of 9/11 and in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We've seen it technically, as new capabilities like unmanned systems and cyber capabilities have entered our inventory. And we've also seen it institutionally when we repealed Don't Ask Don't Tell. In every case, our people have mastered change excellently, and they've been able to do so because they're leaders have taken care to implement change thoughtfully. Always

putting the missions and our people first. We will do the same today.

As we integrate women into the remaining combat positions, we must keep in mind the welfare and total readiness of our entire force. And as we focus on the individual contributions that each service member makes, we also have to remember that in military operations, teams matter. That's why it's important that the services chose to study both individual performance and team performance. And they not only made comparisons to other elite units like NASA, long-duration flight crews, and police SWAT teams, they also worked with our international partners to examine how they have integrated women into ground combat roles. Again, how we implement this is key. As Chairman Dunford has noted, simply declaring all career fields open is not successful integration. We must not only continue to implement change thoughtfully, but also track and monitor our progress to ensure we're doing it right. Leveraging the skills and strengths of our entire population. All of us have a role to play.

As we proceed with full integration of women into combat roles in a deliberate and methodical manner, I'm directing that seven guidelines be used to steer this implementation.

First, implementation must be pursued with the clear objective of improved force effectiveness. Leaders must emphasize that objective to all service members, men and women alike. Second, leaders must assign tasks and jobs throughout the force based on ability, not gender. Advancement must be based on objective and validated standards.

A good example of this is SOCOM's selection processes which combine objective and substantive criteria in, and I quote, "a whole person concept that includes rigorous physical standards and also strong moral character, leadership skills, mental agility, problem-solving skills, selflessness, maturity and humility."

The third guideline is that for a variety of reasons, equal opportunity likely will not mean equal participation by men and women in all specialties. There must be no quotas or perception thereof. So we will work as a joint force to expertly manage the impacts of what studies may -- the studies that have been done suggest may be smaller numbers of women in these fields, the fields that were previously closed.

Fourth, the studies conducted by the services and SOCOM indicate there are physical and other differences on average between men and women. While this cannot be applied to every man or woman, it is real and must be taken into account in implementation. Thus far, we've only seen small numbers of women qualified to meet our high physical standards in some of our most physically demanding combat occupational specialties, and going forward, we shouldn't be surprised if these small numbers are also reflected in areas like recruitment, voluntary assignment, retention and advancement in some of these specific specialties.

Fifth, we'll have to address the fact that some surveys suggest that some service members, both men and women, have a perception that integration would be pursued at the cost of combat effectiveness. Survey data also suggests that women service members emphatically do not want integration to be based on any considerations other than the ability to perform and combat effectiveness. In both cases, based on these surveys, leaders have to be clear that mission effectiveness comes first, and I'm confident that given the strength of our leaders throughout the ranks, over time, these concerns will no longer be an issue.

Sixth, as I noted, both survey data and the judgment of the services leadership strongly indicate that particularly in the specialties that will be opened, the performance of small teams is important, even as individual performance is important.

The seventh guideline has to do with international realities. While we know the United States is a nation committed to using our entire population to the fullest, as are some of our closest friends and allies, we also know that not all nations share this perspective. Our military has long dealt with this reality, notably, over the last 15 years in Iraq and also Afghanistan. And we'll need to be prepared to do so going forward as it bears on the specialties that will be opened by this decision.

With all these factors in mind, Chairman Dunford recommended that if we were to integrate women into combat positions, then implementation should be done in a combined manner by all the services working together. And I agree, and that will be my direction.

Accordingly, I'm directing all the military services to proceed to open all military occupational specialties to women 30 days from today, that is, after a 30-day waiting period required by law, and to provide their updated implementation plans for integrating women into these positions by that date.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Paul -- General Paul Selva will work with the services to oversee the short term implementation of this decision, ensure there are no unintended consequences on the joint force, and periodically update me and Chairman Dunford.

Before I conclude, it's important to keep all this in perspective. Implementation won't happen overnight. And while at the end of the

day this will make us a better and stronger force, there still will be problems to fix and challenges to overcome. We shouldn't diminish that.

At the same time, we should also remember that the military has long prided itself on being a meritocracy, where those who serve are judged not based on who they are or where they come from, but rather what they have to offer to help defend this country. That's why we have the finest fighting force the world has ever known.

And it's one other way we will strive to ensure that the force of the future remains so long into the future. Today, we take another step toward that continued excellence.

Thank you.

Now, I'll take your questions.

Q: Mr. Secretary, you mentioned that the Marine Corps had asked for a partial exception. The Marine Corps made a very vigorous and detailed case for keeping some combat positions open to men only. In what ways did you find their argument unpersuasive?

SEC. CARTER: I did review the Marine Corps data, surveys, studies, and also the recommendation of the commandant of the Marine Corps at the time, of course who was General Dunford, now our chairman, that certain Marine Corps specialties remain closed to women.

I reviewed that information and I looked at it carefully. I also heard from other leaders of other services who had studied similar issues in their own force, the recommendations of the other service secretaries and service chiefs, and I came to a different conclusion in respect of those specialties in the Marine Corps.

Where I strongly agreed with now Chairman Dunford is two very important points. I noted them in here. The first is that the key here is going to be implementation. And I viewed the -- the issues that were raised by all the services, by the way, in varying degrees, and obviously by the Marine Corps, that we needed to take those seriously and address them in implementation. And I believe that the issues raised, including by the Marine Corps, could be addressed successfully in implementation.

And second, that there was great value in having a joint or combined approach to implementation. That's why I have decided to have no exceptions in any service and to have them all working together on implementation.

Q: You said -- sorry -- just a quick follow-up. You said you came to a different conclusion, obviously. I was asking what about the argument you found lacking?

SEC. CARTER: Because I believe that we could in implementation address the issues that were raised. Barbara?

Q: Two things, sir. Since you opened up referencing San Bernardino, and you said that you're monitoring it closely, can you share with the American people and with troops your concerns? You know, what are you monitoring? What concerns you about this incident? What -- what's your assessment of the potential growing issue of seeing acts of potentially terrorist-inspired violence in this country? What -- what does that raise for you?

And on this issue that you're discussing here today, can you tell us why General Dunford is not here with you?

SEC. CARTER: Sure. Okay. On the question of San Bernardino, Barbara, the law enforcement community is investigating what happened there. Again, I'm not going to speculate on what -- what happened. To your general question, obviously protecting our people is our most important mission. But we don't know what the causes are of the San Bernardino tragedy.

And law enforcement, I'm sure, will get to the bottom of that, but I just can't tell you what that is.

Q: But the broader issue that we have seen so many times now, that, I mean, you the other day on Capitol Hill I believe referenced Chattanooga. And you have -- you have raised this issue of concern in the past. So I'm just wondering what your latest assessment is of -- of how much it worries you.

SEC. CARTER: Well, again, we don't know the reasons behind this particular shooting. But the protection of our people, including our service people, and concern about radicalization, including of American citizens living in America in the manner that we saw in Chattanooga, is a huge -- enormous concern. And yet another reason why ISIL needs to be fought and defeated in its heartland of Syria and Iraq, about which I've spoken a great deal.

But it's a global campaign, including one that involves law enforcement, homeland security, intelligence and other elements right here at home. That is the world that we are in. And we need to protect our people in that world.

Q: And why is General Dunford not here, sir?

SEC. CARTER: I'm sorry. Why is -- is --

Q: (inaudible)?

SEC. CARTER: -- well, this -- I'm announcing my decision. I was the one who took this decision. I'm announcing my decision. I -- you know, I should say, about General Dunford, you're going to have an opportunity to talk to -- to General Dunford. I've talked to him extensively about this subject. He's very knowledgeable about it. He will be with me as we proceed with implementation. I have taken parts of his -- the conclusions he drew. Others drew different conclusions, including myself. And that's the decision I've taken, and that's the direction we're going to go.

Q: Mr. Secretary?

Q: Secretary Carter?

SEC. CARTER: Phil?

Q: Mr. Secretary, does this decision now lead to a -- a greater debate about whether women need to register for selective service?

SEC. CARTER: It may do that, Phil. That is a matter of legal dispute right now, and in fact litigation. So I can't -- I don't -- I don't know how that will turn out.

I -- by the way, the -- the legal -- that legal determination won't affect what I announce today -- that is, our timetable for the implementation of the decisions I've announced today. But it is an issue that's out there. Unfortunately it's subject to -- to -- to litigation.

Jennifer?

Q: Secretary Carter, the three women who made it through the Ranger School, will they now be welcomed into the ranger regiment? Will they become a part of the regiment? Because they weren't until now.

SEC. CARTER: Those -- those positions will now be available to women. Once again, just to remind you, you have -- people have to qualify for -- for positions, positions have to be open and so forth.

So there's a lot that goes into it. But those positions will now be open to them, yes.

Q: And secondly, can we assume that you found the Marine Corps study which concluded that mixed gender units aren't as capable as male units to be flawed?

SEC. CARTER: It -- just not definitive, not determinative. There are other issues other than the -- those -- those studies are reflective of something I spoke of, which is teams do matter and we need to take that into account.

And at the same time, the -- the individual's capabilities, and the -- the capabilities of the individual to contribute are extremely important. On average, and I said this very directly, men and women will have different physical capabilities. I'm -- I -- the data show that clearly.

Now, that's on average. So there will be women who can meet the physical requirements of these specialties -- even as there are men who cannot meet those requirements.

And so averages tell you something about the need to pay attention to numbers, team dynamics and so forth. But they do not determine whether an individual is qualified to participate in a given unit.

Q: Mr. Secretary?

Q: Mr. Secretary?

SEC. CARTER: Let me just see. Tom, yeah, please.

Q: The general that led this Marine Corps study said in a memo to then-Commandant Joe Dunford that opening up ground combat jobs would increase the risk, meaning more casualties for Marines.

I wonder what you think of that, or is that statement overblown? And also, I understand, one of General Dunford's concerns was, since women -- women in the experimental unit suffered more injuries than men, that -- he was concerned that you would lose some hard-charging women Marines, and what did you think about that?

SEC. CARTER: Yeah. No. Both of those -- I mean first of all, to the first point, combat effectiveness is the critical criterion in implementation.

So the issue that you -- your first quote dealt with is something that must be dealt with, and, I believe, can be dealt with in implementation. So it needs to be taken into account. It's a serious issue. Combat effectiveness is why we're here. With respect to -- I'm sorry, your second point, Tom, was?

Q: Well, the concern was that some of the women in the experimental battalion that they put through the training (inaudible) --

SEC. CARTER: Oh. Yeah, no. No.

Q: -- concern is that you would lose some hard-charging women Marines due to injury.

SEC. CARTER: Yes. There are a number of studies that indicated that. Again, that's something that doesn't -- doesn't suggest to me that women shouldn't be admitted to those specialties, if they're qualified.

But it's going to -- something that's -- needs -- that's going to need to be taken into account in implementation. So these are real phenomena that are -- affect gender -- that are, rather, affected by gender and need to be taken into account in implementation.

Q: (inaudible). The Marines -- Marine Corps has concluded that it would harm combat effectiveness, and that's something that Secretary Panetta mentioned when he --

SEC. CARTER: Combat effectiveness is the critical criterion. And it -- this change will be implemented, and I'm -- I'm confident can be implemented in a way that will enhance combat effectiveness, not detract from combat effectiveness.

Mik.

Q: Mr. Secretary, will the women's desire to enter combat roles or missions be entirely voluntary? Or will there be a time to -- where they could, like many of their male counterparts, be required to go into combat missions?

SEC. CARTER: Absolutely. If you're a service member, you have some choices, but you don't have absolute -- absolute choice. People are assigned to missions, tasks, and functions according to need as well as their capabilities. And women will be subject to the same standard and rules that men will.

Q: So are you concerned, as you alluded to in your opening remarks, that that could actually cause women not to want to enlist in the military, if they thought there was a possibility they would be required to go into a combat role?

SEC. CARTER: Well, I -- I presume there are people in general, men and women, who don't join the military because they don't want to live by the military's rules and standards. But that's -- they -- they don't join, it's an all volunteer force. But if you do decide to join, you're subject to our rules and standards, period.

Jamie.

Q: Mr. Secretary, I want to get back to the absence of General Dunford, because given that he was the only service chief that asked for an exemption of all -- all of them, and given that he's now the senior military adviser, wouldn't it be important for him to be here and to send a message that the U.S. military is ready to salute smartly and carry out your orders? Because his absence may be sending an unintended message that he's not fully on board with your decision.

SEC. CARTER: General Dunford and I have discussed this many, many times. I just met with him and the other chiefs and service secretaries today. And he will be a full part of implementation. And as I said, I came to a different judgment about a part of the conclusions of the studies that were conducted by the Marine Corps when he was commandant, but agreed with the great bulk of them, and they will be reflected in implementation. The issues that were raised by those studies I believe can be addressed in implementation and will be. That's my judgment. And he understands that's my judgment. And we will -- he will be at my side as we do the implementation. That's the idea.

Q: Was he on board with your decision?

SEC. CARTER: Well, you'll have to speak to him about that. But he understands what my decision is and my decision is my decision, and we will implement it accordingly.

Let me see.

Gordon. Where's Gordon?

Hi, Gordon.

Q: Hi. I wonder if we can move on to a different subject briefly, is the shooting down of the Russian jet. I wondered if you could give us an assessment a little more of -- of how that complicates the issue, and if Turkey overreached on -- on that shooting down of the jet.

SEC. CARTER: Well, I mean, first of all, we've said repeatedly, the President said the Turks are entitled to defend their own airspace. We have urged both sides not to allow this to lead to further escalation. It has not had any effect on our prosecution of our own air campaign. We, as you know, have a memorandum of understanding with the Russian military, which is being adhered to and which is -- provides procedures that guarantee the operations of our own air campaign unimpeded.

With respect to the relations between Turkey and -- and Russia, we obviously have our differences of perspective with Russia about what is going on in -- in Syria. That doesn't translate, in our judgment, into any desire to see a conflict of any kind between Russia and -- and Syria. And Turkey, for its part, is a member of our coalition. And they're working with us in some regards. Obviously we would like them, like many other members of the coalition, to do more in Syria and Iraq against ISIL.

Q: Quick follow up on that.

Is it -- what do you think it would take -- obviously the U.S. is pressing Turkey to do more on different levels, particularly this cordon of forces along a stretch of the border to -- to help eliminate the flow of foreign fighters. What do you think it will take for Turkey to kind of agree to do that and move forward?

SEC. CARTER: Well, I don't -- I don't know. I mean, my -- in my view, they have ample evidence of ISIL's -- the danger ISIL poses to their own people and their own country. We also understand the other dangers they face, but they need to join in the fight against ISIL.

I think there is more that they could do. It involves their military, it involves their intelligence services, it involves their border and homeland security forces. So we would like to see Turkey do more. That's essential. Tony?

Q: I want to tie together the fight against ISIL with your decision today. The fact that SOCOM did not press for any exemptions, does that in theory mean that women over the next year could become part of the specialized counterterrorism commando units that you want to accelerate in the fight against ISIL, like the specialized targeting expeditionary task force you announced the other day?

SEC. CARTER: That is -- yes, that is reflected in my decision. It was, as you said, also reflected in the recommendation of the commander of the Special Operations Command. And I saw it the same way, and therefore, my decision is the same as the decision of General Votel, or the recommendation of General Votel, in this case.

And as far as the time scale goes, Tony, I mean, remember that the -- from the time a service member joins to the time they're assigned to a specialty, undergo training and so forth, the -- so people will be going through the pipeline, including women who are admitted pursuant to my decision today. Kevin?

Q: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

STAFF: Last question.

Q: On some of the same vein, were there any of the MO Ss or jobs particularly that were in need of more women? Meaning so the service secretaries in all their recommendations up to you say this is actually where we actually could use more here or there because the military is at capacity or over 100 percent, you're actually shrinking the size of the force.

And second question, to follow up on those targeting expeditionary forces, could you explain to us when that -- when those get started or they're already started. You mentioned one of their jobs specifically was to capture ISIS leaders. When they do that, what happens to them? It's a big question that we haven't heard from your level yet.

SEC. CARTER: Yeah, okay. Two things. Well, there are, Kevin, specialties, and I don't want to go into this too much, but they're --

that are designed specifically for women. These are women who are part of female engagement teams and so forth in places where it is sensitive for an American male service member to interact with local females. So there -- and I was alluding to that in my statement. So there are situations like that.

I suppose it's also fair to say -- and it is a statistical thing, it doesn't apply to individuals -- but there are specialties in which women have historically excelled. And you have to be careful about that, because it's sometimes a matter of where they felt they could advance rather than anything else.

But so women are represented differently across specialties that have long been open, and that's why I think that we really need to focus on standards as we go into implementation. And we're going to learn a lot, and we already have learned -- and the service studies and surveys suggest this -- about standards and about how to think about standards in the course of considering this matter of gender.

With respect to the expeditionary targeting force and capture, we will deal with that on a case-by-case basis. It's going to depend on the circumstances. And that is, of course, just one of the purposes of the expeditionary targeting force, but it is one, capture. And we will be doing such operations, as you know, both in Syria and also in Iraq.

And just to repeat what I said the other day, when we do it in Iraq, it will be with the knowledge and approval of the Iraqi government, Prime Minister Abadi, just to make that once again quite clear. And with that --

Q: What sort of -- (inaudible) -- do you see it possible that an ISIS fighter could be -- the full range, either military --

SEC. CARTER: There's a full range as -- yeah, all the way.
(CROSSTALK)

Q: -- U.S. law enforcement and tried --

SEC. CARTER: And other law enforcement of other -- of other nations. So the full range, and it really has to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Appreciate you being here.

<http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/632578/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-secretary-carter-in-the-pentagon-briefi>

9. Carter Opens All Military Occupations, Positions to Women

(3 Dec) DoD News, By Cheryl Pellerin

Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced today that beginning in January 2016, all military occupations and positions will be open to women, without exception.

For the first time in U.S. military history, as long as they qualify and meet specific standards, the secretary said women will be able to contribute to the Defense Department mission with no barriers at all in their way.

"They'll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat," Carter added. "They'll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers, and everything else that was previously open only to men."

Harnessing Women's Skills, Perspectives

Even more importantly, he said, the military services will be better able to harness the skills and perspectives that talented women have to offer.

Though more than 111,000 positions had opened to women in uniform since 2013 until today's announcement, Carter said, about 10 percent of military positions -- nearly 220,000 -- had remained closed to women. These included infantry, armor, reconnaissance, and some special operations units, the secretary said.

Over the past three years, he added, senior civilian and military leaders across the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Special Operations Command have studied the integration of women into these positions.

"Last month I received their recommendations [and] the data, studies and surveys on which they were based regarding whether any of those remaining positions warrant a continued exemption from being opened to women," Carter said, noting that the Army, Navy, Air

Force and Socom said none of the positions warranted exemptions.

The Marine Corps asked for a partial exemption in areas that included infantry, machine gunner, fire support reconnaissance and others, he added, “[but] we are a joint force and I have decided to make a decision which applies to the entire force.”

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. was the Marine Corps commandant at the time, and Carter said that he and Dunford have discussed the issue many times.

“I just met with him and the other chiefs and service secretaries today, and he will be a full part of implementation,” Carter added, noting that he believes the issues raised by the Marine Corps can and will be addressed in implementation.

Departmental Memorandum

In a memorandum to the secretaries of all military departments and others, Carter directed the military services to open all military occupational specialties to women 30 days from today -- a waiting period required by law -- and by that date to provide updated implementation plans for integrating women into the positions now open to them.

Carter said Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Paul Selva will oversee the decision’s short-term implementation, ensure there are no unintended consequences to the joint force, and periodically update Carter and Dunford.

Women will be fully integrated into combat roles deliberately and methodically, the secretary said, using seven guidelines.

Seven Guidelines

1. Implementation will be pursued with the objective of improved force effectiveness.
2. Leaders must assign tasks and jobs throughout the force based on ability, not gender.
3. Equal opportunity likely will not mean equal participation by men and women in all specialties, and there will be no quotas.
4. Studies conducted by the services and Socom indicate that on average there are physical and other differences between men and women, and implementation will take this into account.
5. The department will address the fact that some surveys suggest that some service members, men and women, will perceive that integration could damage combat effectiveness.
6. Particularly in the specialties that are newly open to women, survey data and the judgment of service leaders indicate that the performance of small teams is important.
7. The United States and some of its closest friends and allies are committed to having militaries that include men and women, but not all nations share this perspective.

Integrating Women in all Military Jobs

Implementation won't happen overnight, Carter said.

“Fully integrating women into all military positions will make the U.S. armed forces better and stronger but there will be problems to fix and challenges to overcome,” he said. “We shouldn't diminish that.”

The military has long prided itself on being a meritocracy, where those who serve are judged only on what they have to offer to help defend the country, Carter said.

“That’s why we have the finest fighting force the world has ever known,” he added, “and it’s one other way we will strive to ensure that the force of the future remains so, long into the future.”

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/632536/carter-opens-all-military-occupations-positions-to-women?source=GovDelivery>

10. All combat jobs open to women in the military

(3 Dec) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghmann

The Defense Department will lift all gender-based restrictions on military service starting in January, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced Thursday.

The historic change will clear the way for women to serve alongside men in combat arms units.

Carter's decision comes as a rebuke to an internal recommendation from the Marine Corps that sought to keep some jobs closed to women. In contrast, the Army leaders recommended opening all combat arms jobs to women.

"While the Marine Corps asked for a partial exception in some areas such as infantry, machine gunner, fire support reconnaissance and others, we are a joint force, and I have decided to make a decision which applies to the entire force," Carter said at a Pentagon press briefing Thursday.

"The important factor in making my decision was to have access to every American who could add strength to the joint force," he said.

In effect, Carter's decision will open to women about 220,000 jobs in all, or about 10 percent of the entire active and reserve force. Most of those jobs are in Army and Marine Corps infantry and armor units.

At its core, the decision means that as of Jan. 2, female service members — both current and incoming recruits — will be allowed to serve in any military job for which they meet the gender-neutral performance standards and other requirements.

"They'll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars, and lead infantry soldiers into combat. They'll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers and everything else that was previously open only to men," Carter said.

"And even more importantly, our military will be better able to harness the skills and perspectives that talented women have to offer."

Carter made the announcement at a Pentagon press briefing. Absent from the briefing was Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Dunford, the relatively new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was serving as commandant of the Marine Corps earlier this year when the Corps made its pitch to keep some gender restrictions in place.

Dunford was in the Washington area Thursday attending a series of meetings, officials said. His absence raised questions about his support for Carter's decision. The top general issued a statement Thursday that stopped short of agreeing with the decision.

"I have had the opportunity to provide my advice on the issue of full integration of women into the armed forces. In the wake of the Secretary's decision, my responsibility is to ensure his decision is properly implemented," Dunford said in the brief statement.

Earlier this year, the Marine Corps outlined a justification for that stance by publicly releasing some results of a yearlong study that concluded male-only units performed better overall than gender-integrated units.

Specifically, that Marine Corps-sponsored study found that male-only infantry units shot more accurately, could carry more weight and move more quickly through some tactical maneuvers. The study also found higher injury rates for women than for men.

Carter acknowledged that the Marine Corps' recommendation was based on a conclusion that allowing women to serve in combat units would jeopardize readiness and combat effectiveness, but said he disagreed with that assessment.

"I believe that we could, in the implementation process, address the issues that were raised," Carter said.

The Army, in contrast, has shown strong support for opening all military occupational specialties to women. So far this year, three female soldiers completed the prestigious Army Ranger School and earned the Ranger tab. In November, the Ranger School's first fully integrated class got underway at Fort Benning, Georgia.

For the Navy, the impact will be felt mainly in to the SEAL community, which was historically limited to men. The Navy integrated its fighter pilot career fields in the 1990s and began allowing women to serve on submarines several years ago.

For the Air Force, the change will affect six occupational specialties that had been closed to women: special tactics officer and combat rescue officer, and the enlisted fields of special operations weather, combat control, pararescue and tactical air control party. Those gender restrictions affected roughly 4,000 positions.

The contentious issue revealed a rare public disagreement between the Marine Corps leadership and the Department of the Navy, which technically oversees the Marines.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus voiced strong public support for lifting all gender restrictions, including those for Navy SEALs, yet Dunford, commandant of the Marine Corps at the time, disagreed.

The Corps' nine-month study compared all-male units to mixed-gender units and included battlefield simulations examining the impacts of integrating women into combat roles. The Corps released only parts of the study's final report, which highlighted unit cohesion problems and increased rates of injuries for women.

Critics said the Corps' study was flawed because it failed to take into account that many of the male Marines, unlike the females, had prior training in the combat arms, and also because it focused on average results rather than individual results.

Thursday's announcement was greeted with some skepticism on Capitol Hill. The leaders of the House and Senate armed services committees, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, issued a joint statement vowing to take a close look at the issue during Congress's 30-day review period.

"The Senate and House Armed Services committees intend to carefully and thoroughly review all relevant documentation related to today's decision, including the 1,000-page Marine Integrated Task Force report. We expect the department to send over its implementation plans as quickly as possible to ensure our Committees have all the information necessary to conduct proper and rigorous oversight," the statement said.

The Pentagon does not need direct approval from Capitol Hill to move forward on Carter's decision, but strong opposition from Congress could pose problems in implementing related policies.

The Pentagon leadership's final decision on lifting all gender restrictions has been influenced by a pending lawsuit from several former female service members who claim the combat exclusion rules violate their constitutional rights.

The change was also driven in part by support from the White House and President Obama's interest in expanding opportunities for all Americans to serve in the military. In 2011, Congress passed, and Obama signed, a law to end the prohibition on open military service by gays and lesbians.

And the change also was fueled by claims from women that the restrictions limited their ability to ascend to the military's highest level of leadership, which is often filled with officers who served in the combat arms.

It also comes after 15 years of counterinsurgency operations that made rules referencing "ground combat" seem out of step with missions targeting a shadowy enemy that used nontraditional, asymmetrical tactics.

During a decade's worth of conflict, more than about 300,000 women were deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 9,000 female troops have earned Combat Action Badges. More than 800 female service members have been wounded and at least 161 have died from combat- and noncombat-related incidents, according to Defense Department data.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/12/03/carter-telling-military-open-all-combat-jobs-women/76720656/>

11. Congress offers praise, wariness on women in combat

(3 Dec) Military Times, By Leo Shane III

Thursday's decision to open all military jobs to women — including combat roles — earned both praise and promises of closer scrutiny from members of Congress.

At a Pentagon press conference, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that the military will open all combat jobs to women early next year, with "no exceptions."

Congress has 30 days to review the move, and leaders from the House and Senate Armed Services Committees promised to give "proper and rigorous oversight" to the decision's potential long-term effects on the force.

In a joint statement, Rep. William "Mac" Thornberry, R-Texas, and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said the move will have "a consequential impact on our service members and our military's war-fighting capabilities."

Without offering any specific support or opposition to the move, the two said that they want defense officials to quickly turn over all research and rationale for the move — including a 1,000-page Marine Integrated Task Force report critical of allowing women in combat roles — to ensure that lawmakers fully understand the process that led to Carter's decision.

Rep. Joe Heck, R-Nev., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee's personnel panel, offered praise for the women with whom he served during his time in the Army, but added that "our first priority must be ensuring the safety and security of our troops" and that "this must be the foundation of any changes to the structure of military units."

Several Republican members of the HASC and SASC have publicly questioned whether the move is being driven more by political correctness than mission needs. Carter on Thursday said that the move is designed to add "strength to the joint force" by using the talents of every individual who meets military standards.

For supporters on Capitol Hill, that was welcome news.

"Today's historic announcement finally recognizes that our military is strongest when it prioritizes merit and capability, not gender — and it's about damn time," said Rep. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., who is one of four female Iraq War veterans serving in Congress.

"Women have been fighting and dying for our country since its earliest wars," she said. "They have shown they can compete with the best of the best, and succeed. We are a country that looks at people as individuals, not groups."

SASC Ranking Member Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., called the decision "a smart move that strengthens our nation." His House counterpart, Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., called it "a strong move toward achieving full equality in our armed forces."

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y. — a vocal advocate of the change — praised the move as good for both the military and country.

"Today, we are telling every girl in America that she can serve her country just like the boys she is growing up with," [Gillibrand said in a statement](#). "And we are setting the military up for the greatest possible success by giving it access to the very best America has to offer, regardless of gender."

The committees have not yet set any public hearings in the next month on the issue, but leaders have vowed to work closely with defense officials on the implementation plans.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/03/congress-women-combat-reaction/76729242/>

12. Combat jobs: The MOSs now opening to women in the Army

(3 Dec) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

Women will soon be able to join the ranks of the Army's infantry, armor and special operations units.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Thursday announced his decision to [lift all gender-based restrictions](#) on military service starting in January, paving the way for women to serve in these previously all-male specialties.

The decision opens nearly 220,000 jobs across the military — that's about 10 percent of the force — to women. It also will open all of the remaining Army MOSs that had remained closed.

A closer look at new jobs that will soon open to women:

Infantry

This is the Army's largest MOS. The active Army alone has about 62,000 infantrymen. Combined, all three Army components have about 100,900 infantry soldiers in the ranks.

This includes infantry officers (11A), infantrymen (11B), indirect fire infantrymen (11C) and infantry senior sergeants (11Z).

The move also effectively opens the 75th Ranger Regiment to women, provided they meet the regiment's requirements.

Armor

The size of the armor force wasn't immediately available, but the MOSs affected are armor officer (19A and 19B), cavalry officer (19C), cavalry scout (19D), armor crewman (19K) and armor senior sergeant (19Z).

Forward observer

The 13F MOS was the only field artillery job that hadn't been opened to women.

Officials wanted to make a decision about the 13F MOS alongside the infantry and armor specialties because forward observers often are embedded with infantry and armor units.

Special Forces

The elite Green Beret ranks also will open to women.

The MOSs are Special Forces officer (18A), Special Forces warrant officer (180A), Special Forces weapons sergeant (18B), Special Forces engineer sergeant (18C), Special Forces medical sergeant (18D), Special Forces communications sergeant (18E), Special Forces assistant operations and intelligence sergeant (18F) and Special Forces senior sergeant (18Z).

SOCOM commander Gen. Joseph L. Votel and his senior enlisted adviser Command Sgt. Maj. William F. Thetford assured the force in a [video statement](#) that they studied very carefully the decision to not seek to keep closed any special operations jobs.

"Highly successful operators come in all shapes and sizes," [Votel said](#), citing SOCOM's "time-tested" selection process, experienced leadership and mature approach as ways to mitigate concerns about integrating women.

Thetford emphasized that SOCOM will maintain its "rigorous training and standards."

"They've proven to bring the right people into our community," he said. "Our standards are and will continue to be the gatekeeper to service in our special operations career fields and units. The bottom line, our standards have worked for decades, and we are not going to change them."

In light of Thursday's announcement, it's difficult to say how many of the nearly 220,000 jobs that will soon open to women are Army jobs, said Lt. Col. Pat Seiber, an Army spokesman.

"The force drawdown and continued force structure changes will affect any final numbers," he said.

So far, between [May 2012](#) and October 2015, the Army has opened about 95,216 positions and nine occupations to women, Seiber said. This includes the [combat engineer \(12B\)](#) and [cannon crewmember \(13B\)](#) MOSs.

The Army also conducted a [gender-integrated assessment](#) of and [later opened](#) its storied Ranger School to women. [Three women](#) have graduated from the course and earned the coveted Ranger tab.

The Army has been assessing barriers to service for women since 2011 using an "incremental and methodical approach," Seiber said.

This includes conducting a gender-integration study, which looked at institutional and cultural factors associated with gender integration, and a task-assessment study that looked at physical factors, according to information from the Defense Department.

"Women have been fighting, bleeding, dying and conducting heroic actions alongside men for the past 14 years," he said. "Women in combat is nothing new."

The Army is about to take a "historic step," retired Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, a former Army chief of staff and president of the Association of the United State Army, said in a statement.

"The key will be how this is implemented, with a goal of making changes that improve the force, without quotas, and keeping in mind that policy changes don't eliminate any physical differences between men and women," he said.

Retired Lt. Gen. Guy C. Swan III, a vice president at AUSA, said he believes Carter's decision is "the right thing to do for the United States Army."

"The most important thing in all of this is the maintenance of standards. I think we all agree with that," Swan said. "The biggest concern I think women soldiers would have is that somehow the standards were lowered so they could meet a standard or participate as full team members."

Implementing this change will require leadership at all levels, from noncommissioned officers and officers alike, Swan said.

"It comes down to a standards-based Army, and at the end of the day, the non-negotiable factor is a combat-ready Army that can fight and win the nation's wars," he said. "That doesn't matter if you're male, female, gay, straight, black, white."

The Army and the other services now have until Jan. 1 to provide DoD with "final, detailed plans" on how they will integrate the newly opened occupations and positions, according to information from DoD.

Positions will be open "as soon as practicable" following the required congressional notification period and in accordance with final, approved service implementation plans, according to DoD. The services must be ready to execute those plans no later than April 1.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/12/03/combat-jobs-moss-now-opening-women-army/76744094/>

13. Air Force leaders welcome decision to open combat jobs to women

(3 Dec) Air Force Times, By Jeff Schogol

The Air Force's senior leaders are praising Defense Secretary Ash Carter's decision to open all career fields to women, including the six Air Force combat jobs that had been male-only.

"This decision means that we will be able to maximize our military effectiveness because we'll be able to draw from a larger pool of skilled and qualified individuals," Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said in a statement. "The bottom line is to ensure the force's future success based on validated, gender neutral standards."

Prior to Thursday's announcement, about 4,000 positions had been closed to women in the career fields of special tactics officer and combat rescue officer, as well as the enlisted fields of special operations weather, combat control, pararescue and tactical air control party.

"Our Air Force is more effective when success is based on ability, qualifications, and mission performance," Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III said in a statement. "While not everyone aspires to be a Battlefield Airman, those who have the desire and are qualified will be afforded an opportunity to serve in those specialties in our Air Force. As with any new policy, implementation will take time and will be done in a deliberate and responsible manner."

The head of Air Force Special Operations Command said earlier this year that women special operators would have to meet the same physical standards as men if they were allowed to become battlefield airmen.

"The standards will not be lowered to incorporate or integrate women into our formations at U.S. Special Operations Command or in AFSOC — repeat, will not be lowered," Lt. Gen. Bradley Heithold told Air Force Times in an interview.

Rep. Martha McSally, a former A-10 pilot and the first woman to fly a combat decision, vowed to continue to work with lawmakers to integrate women into combat jobs.

"Today's historic announcement finally recognizes that our military is strongest when it prioritizes merit and capability, not gender — and it's about damn time," McSally said in a news release. "Women have been fighting and dying for our country since its earliest

wars. They have shown they can compete with the best of the best, and succeed."

ARE YOU TOUGH ENOUGH?

If you are a female airman interested in becoming a battlefield airman, Air Force Times wants to hear from you. In announcing his decision, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said, "only small numbers of women could" likely meet the standards set by elite infantry troops and Special Operations forces. Can you meet the standards?

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/12/03/air-force-leaders-welcome-decision-open-combat-jobs-women/76735556/>

14. Women in Combat: Why the Pentagon Chief Overruled the Marines

(3 Dec) Time, By Mark Thompson

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter [ruled](#) Thursday that women will be allowed to serve in all combat jobs in the U.S. military.

"As long as they qualify and meet the standards, women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they could not before," he said. "Even more importantly, our military will be better able to harness the skills and perspectives that talented women have to offer."

The Marines, alone among the services, had argued that women should be barred from the corps' ranks of infantry, machine-gunners and fire-support reconnaissance units.

Carter's bottom line echoes what advocates of opening up front-line combat jobs to women have long argued: that while the average female soldier or Marine may be weaker and slower than her male counterpart, outstanding women can out-perform average male military personnel. The defense secretary, who never served in uniform, relied on the advice of former Navy officer and current Navy Secretary Ray Mabus—who is the Marines' civilian overseer—for cover in steamrolling the Marines' recommendation against women serving in such combat assignments.

That could cause trouble on Capitol Hill. Rep. Duncan Hunter, a California Republican who served as a Marine in both Afghanistan and Iraq, called for Mabus' resignation after word leaked out that he was over-ruling the corps' brass. "He insulted the competency of Marines by disregarding their professional judgment, their combat experience and their quality of leadership," Hunter, a member of the armed services committee, said in a September letter to Carter. The Republican chairmen of the armed services committees said in a statement following Carter's announcement that they looked forward to reviewing "the 1,000-page Marine Integrated Task Force report" that buttressed the corps' request to keep women off the Marines' front lines.

Other lawmakers hailed Carter's action. "We know from all the quality data that women are just as capable and lethal on the battlefield, and so many women are already serving their country with pride and distinction," said Rep Jackie Speier, D-Calif., also a member of the armed services panel. "It is long past time that we let them fight in every capacity."

The Marines' recommendation had come from General Joseph Dunford, who was serving as commandant—the Marines' top officer—when the corps relayed its recommendation to Carter. But since Oct. 1, Dunford has served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the principal military adviser to the President. Nonetheless, Carter noted that Dunford "recommended that if we were to integrate women into combat positions, then implementation should be done in a combined manner by all the services working together."

But Carter wasn't swayed. The corps' arguments were "just not definitive, not determinative," Carter said. In his three-page order opening all combat slots to women, for example, he acknowledged the differences in injury rates. "Both the Army and Marine Corps studies found that women participating in ground combat training sustained injuries at higher rates than men, particularly in occupational fields requiring load-bearing," he wrote. "These studies also revealed concrete ways to help mitigate this injury rate and the impact to individuals and the teams in which they operate."

Careful implementation should smooth the path of women into all combat units, including the Marines, Carter said. "I believe that the issues raised, including by the Marine Corps, could be addressed successfully in implementation," he added, echoing a theme he cited several times at the press conference where he made his decision public.

Dunford, the nation's highest military officer, was conspicuously MIA as Carter made history. Reporters wondered why. "General Dunford and I have discussed this many, many times," Carter responded. "And he will be a full part of implementation."

<http://time.com/4135583/women-combat-marines-ash-carter/>

15. Secretary of Navy: Allowing Women in Every Combat Role Was Overdue

(3 Dec) Time, By Secretary Ray Mabus

'Diversity is vital to maintaining our exceptional fighting force'

The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps are the most formidable expeditionary force the world has ever known. But to remain so, especially in the face of the unprecedented demands and challenges of today's advanced military, it is essential we recruit our all-volunteer force from the broadest possible pool of expertise and talent.

The Navy and Marine Corps are at a strategic turning point: every position in these Services is [opening to women](#). This long-overdue move puts policy in line with reality, recognizing the critical role that women play in mission success. Women enhance the capabilities of our force, and now women will have equal – every – opportunity to do so. We will be using single occupational standards that are task-oriented and gender neutral to qualify Sailors and Marines for all positions, and we will be exercising the full potential of the talented people that make up our incomparable force.

The Department of the Navy has been building toward this integration with thought and anticipation. Not only have we carefully evaluated the powerful impacts of opening up these pathways, but we have identified ways to support and retain the diverse force we attract.

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The Department of the Navy has been building toward this integration with thought and anticipation. Not only have we carefully evaluated the powerful impacts of opening up these pathways, but we have identified ways to support and retain the diverse force we attract.

<http://time.com/4135649/women-in-combat/>

16. In historic decision, Pentagon chief opens all jobs in combat units to women

(3 Dec) The Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter said Thursday that he is opening all jobs in combat units to women, a landmark decision that would for the first time allow female service members to join the country's most elite military forces.

Women will now be eligible to join the Navy SEALs, Army Special Forces and other Special Operations Units. It also opens the Marine Corps infantry, a battle-hardened force that many service officials had openly advocated keeping closed to female service members.

"There will be no exceptions," Carter said. "This means that, as long as they qualify and meet the standards, women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they could not before."

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"There will be no exceptions," Carter said. "This means that, as long as they qualify and meet the standards, women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they could not before."

Carter said that top leaders in the Army, Navy, Air Force and U.S. Special Operations Command all recommended that all jobs be opened to women. The Marine Corps recommended that certain jobs such as machine gunner be kept closed, but the secretary said

that the military is a joint force, and his decision will apply to everyone. The top Marine officer who made that recommendation, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in September, and did not appear alongside Carter on Thursday.

The services will have 30 days to provide plans to Carter on how they will implement the policy change, he said. By law, the military also must notify Congress formally and wait that long before making any changes.

The roots of the secretary's decision date back to January 2013, when then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta announced he was rescinding a longtime ban on women serving directly in ground combat units. Panetta gave the services until this fall to research the issue.

About 220,000 jobs, or about 10 percent, of the military remained closed to women before Thursday's announcement, Carter said. Another 110,000 jobs in careers like artillery officer were opened in a series of decisions since 2013. President Obama said in a statement that the Defense Department is "taking another historic step forward" by opening up all positions to women.

"As Commander in Chief, I know that this change, like others before it, will again make our military even stronger. Our armed forces will draw on an even wider pool of talent," Obama said. "Women who can meet the high standards required will have new opportunities to serve. I know that, under the leadership of Secretary Carter and Chairman Dunford, our men and women in uniform will implement this transition — as they have others — in a responsible manner that maintains military readiness and the unparalleled professionalism and strength of our armed forces."

The issue has at times opened an uncommonly public rift between senior military leaders. In particular, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus took issue with a Marine Corps study that [found that the average woman struggled to keep up with men](#), according to a number of metrics. The study did not track individual performance, drawing fire from Mabus and others in favor of full integration.

As the Marine Corps commandant, Dunford recommended to keep a number of jobs in infantry and reconnaissance units closed. Carter, asked why Dunford was not present for the announcement on Thursday, said that he and the general have talked extensively on the subject, and he "will be with me" as the services proceeds with making related changes.

"He understands what my decision is, and my decision is my decision, and we will implement it accordingly," Carter said.

Dunford said in a statement on Thursday afternoon that it is his job to provide his "candid best military advice" to Carter on issues ranging from military readiness, to combat effectiveness, to how the services are employed.

"I have had the opportunity to provide my advice on the issue of full integration of women into the Armed Forces," Dunford's statement said. "In the wake of the Secretary's decision, my responsibility is to ensure his decision is properly implemented. Moving forward my focus is to lead the full integration of women in a manner that maintains our joint warfighting capability, ensures the health and welfare of our people, and optimizes how we leverage talent across the Joint Force."

Dunford's spokesman, Navy Capt. Gregory Hicks, said Dunford did not appear Thursday because it was Carter's decision, and his "opportunity to announce that decision." Three years ago, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, then the Joint Chiefs chairman, appeared alongside Panetta as he announced that he was rescinding the combat exclusion policy.

Carter said the important factor in him opening all jobs to women was to give the military access to every American who can add strength to it. Studies carried out by the services since 2013 found that some of the standards the military previously used to determine whether a service member was fit for a job were outdated or didn't reflect the actual tasks required in combat, he said.

"It's been evidence-based, and iterative," Carter said of the review. "I'm confident the Defense Department can implement this successfully, because throughout our history we've consistently proven ourselves to be a learning organization."

The Marine Corps will immediately begin the process of implementing the policy change, and share plans and lessons learned with the other services, said Maj. Chris Devine, a Marine spokesman at the Pentagon.

"We are well-informed by our combat experience, as well as our objective approach and data obtained from the past two years of study," Devine said. "As we move forward with full integration, we'll continue to maintain our standards, while leveraging every opportunity to optimize individual performance, talent and skills to maximize the warfighting capabilities of our [Marine air ground task forces] in an increasingly complex operating environment."

Carter cited the military's 2011 repeal on a policy banning gay service members from serving openly as an example of how gender integration can be completed successfully. The [repeal of that "don't ask, don't tell" policy](#) raised questions in many corners of the military at the time, but is now widely considered to have been implemented smoothly and without hurting the military's ability to fight.

The secretary also noted that three women have successfully been able to complete the Army's Ranger School this year as part of the research into how to better integrate women in the military. The service [opened it to women on a full-time basis in September](#), although the elite 75th Ranger Regiment remained closed to women at the time.

Skeptics remain, however. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.), chairmen of the Senate and House armed services committees, said in a statement released jointly on Thursday that they intend to "carefully and thoroughly review all relevant documentation related to today's decision," including the Marine Corps gender integration study that caused the rift between the service and Mabus.

"We expect the Department to send over its implementation plans as quickly as possible to ensure our Committees have all the information necessary to conduct proper and rigorous oversight," the statement said. "We also look forward to receiving the Department's views on any changes to the Selective Service Act that may be required as a result of this decision."

Other members of Congress applauded Carter's decision. Rep. Martha McSally (R-Ariz.), a retired Air Force colonel and A-10 attack jet pilot, said in a statement that the move recognizes that the military is strongest when it prioritizes merit and capability.

"It's about damn time," McSally said in the statement. "Women have been fighting and dying for our country since its earliest wars. They have shown they can compete with the best of the best, and succeed. We are a country that looks at people as individuals, not groups. We select the best man for the job, even if it's a woman."

Another female combat veteran and member of Congress, Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), released an even more pointed statement of support reflecting her time as an Army helicopter pilot in Iraq and injuries suffered there.

"I didn't lose my legs in a bar fight — of course women can serve in combat," she said. "This decision is long overdue."

Mabus said in a statement that Carter's decision will maximize the combat effectiveness of the Navy and Marine Corps alike.

"Our process and studies showed that as long as someone can meet operationally relevant, occupation-specific, gender-neutral individual standards, that person is qualified to serve," Mabus said. "Gender does not define the Service of a United States Sailor or Marine — instead, it is their character, selflessness, and abilities."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/12/03/pentagon-chief-to-announce-how-womens-roles-in-the-military-will-expand/>

17. Pentagon OKs plan allowing women to join Navy SEALs

(4 Dec) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

Defense Secretary Ash Carter's order Wednesday busts down the final barriers to women serving in the Navy's elite special operators.

The order to integrate the Navy SEALs, the service's last male-only force, was OK'd by the top SEAL but has been controversial among many recent and older veterans.

Don't expect GI Janes right away. The Pentagon's move sets the SEALs on a track that will likely take months or years before a woman is able to earn her Trident.

The first step is notification: The Defense Department will submit a letter to Congress with their intent to open the special warfare ranks, and lawmakers will have 30 working days to raise any objections. This could take months, as the working days are counted when Congress is in session.

Next, Naval Special Warfare will need to adopt gender-neutral physical standards and adjust its training regimen accordingly before a woman is even able to enter Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training, widely regarded as the military's most hellacious school. Eight out of 10 wash out.

No moves will be made until the notification period has passed, a Naval Special Warfare spokesman told Navy Times.

"NSW will be able to discuss our implementation specifics and timelines at a later date," said Cmdr. Jason Salata. "It would be premature to speculate as to when the first women would be available for SEAL or [Special Warfare Combat Crew] SWCC training."

The Pentagon's order comes after Rear Adm. Brian Losey, the head of Naval Special Warfare Command, led a comprehensive review and proposed integrating the SEALs, a recommendation backed by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert that was first reported by Navy Times in August.

The new rules will expand the eligible pool to any American who can meet the arduous standards to be a Navy SEAL — standards that officials have insisted will not be lowered. The move is a milestone for Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, who has pushed throughout his 6-year tenure to open all Navy and Marine billets to women. Beyond special operations, the decision also allows women attached to Marine units to serve at any level.

"Our process and studies showed that as long as someone can meet operationally relevant, occupation-specific, gender-neutral individual standards, that person is qualified to serve," Mabus said in a Thursday release. "Gender does not define the service of a United States sailor or Marine — instead, it is their character, selflessness, and abilities."

But it will undoubtedly change the bonds and rough-and-tumble rituals of the SEALs. Some worry that it will erode the extraordinary ties that have made SEALs the world's most feared and lethal warriors.

"Changing the direction of the SEAL teams by introducing females to the training process changes the chemistry, and then shows that what you have is no longer the SEAL teams as we know it," said Special Warfare Operator 1st Class (SEAL) Kevin Lacz. "It's something completely different."

Lacz, a SEAL Team 3 veteran with multiple deployments to Iraq, said it's likely a woman will be able to get through training, but that just letting them into the 6-month BUD/S course will alter the meaning of the organization.

The service at one point had been preparing to allow women to declare their intentions for Naval Special Warfare at boot camp as soon as this fall, but that time came and passed.

"Expansion of the force will be a deliberate process; it will not take hours, days or weeks, but months and potentially years," Salata said.

Salata could not elaborate on a timeline for when a woman might check-in at BUD/S, but Lacz offered some them some advice.

"Same as I would say to anyone: Don't quit."

'SEAL teams light'

The number one concern among active-duty and veteran troops throughout the Pentagon's last push to open combat jobs to women has been that the standards must not be sacrificed in the process.

Leaders have reiterated that they will not weaken the rules, but some are concerned that's just a line.

"There will be a change to the standards," Lacz said. "There already is, by allowing women to go and train."

In his remarks Thursday, Carter explained that the services have taken a look at which parts of their combat fitness standards are related to combat situations and plan to eliminate the ones that aren't.

Those updates have yet to be announced, but Lacz pointed out that more than push-up maxes and sand runs go into determining whether some is a fit for the SEALs.

"In these units, in the military, there are non-politically correct methods of determining if somebody's going to be there or not," he said.

Specifically, what he called "team-building" exercises: "And I changed that name from what it used to be, the 'H' word."

Many of those hazing rituals have been weeded out over the years, he said, weakening the gut checks the teams used to force out all but the toughest, most resilient candidates.

"Guys talk about how the quality of the students has decreased over the years, and I believe that will only further decrease," Lacz said. "We'll have something that isn't the SEAL teams, but SEAL teams light, if you will."

And once operational, there are concerns not only about how a woman will face combat, but how she'll be treated by teammates.

The legendary SEAL Team 6 founder, retired Cmdr. Richard Marcinko, has said that SEALs often have to choose whether to leave a wounded member behind during a mission and come back for him later.

If the choice is to leave behind a woman, he said, they might be more worried about her potential capture than he would with a man.

"The leader of this mission would have to weigh, should I drag her along with me and potentially slow things down, or do I leave her and hope for the best?" Marcinko said.

End of the brotherhood

One of the things that binds all SEALs together is BUD/S itself, because both officers and enlisted sailors have to pass it as their first step on the path to earn the golden Budweiser chest pin.

The nostalgia for that legacy runs deep, as some cite a change in general SEAL culture as a reason against integration.

"I think there's fact in the nostalgia," Lacz said. "I think if a SEAL team 15, 20 [years] ago said, 'Hey, we're not going to run with boats on our heads because it's bad for our necks, it's bad for our backs,' I think it would have affected our fighting ability."

It's very different than integrating women onto ship or submarine crews, he added, because of the environments and pressures of the job.

In essence, shunning women and political correctness is what has made the SEALs who they are, he argued.

"It's not just a bunch of old guys sitting around saying, 'I was in the last hardest class,' because it was a hard class, whether you want to admit it or not, because the class after you went through the exact same thing," he said. "The fact that it hasn't changed has allowed the SEAL teams to create the same hard individual year in and year out for the past 70-plus years."

The teams are looking for the Total Man: Someone who can go into combat, come back home, put on a business suit and go to a briefing, Lacz said.

How would a women fit into that mold?

That said, he added that there are plenty of places in special operations where women have served and could potentially serve as qualified operators, such as more clandestine missions.

"What looks more obvious than a bunch of big, tough American men walking around in a low-vis environment?" he said. "Women can blend in much better. What I've seen overseas in special operations, they're great in intel gathering. And that facilitates the mission in special operations."

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/03/pentagon-oks-plan-allowing-women-join-navy-seals/76721612/>

18. Female Marines on women in combat: 'We're ready'

(4 Dec) Marine Corps Times, By Gina Harkins

The Marine Corps will immediately begin implementing new policies following the defense secretary's decision to open all combat fields to women, and female Marines who've been waiting for the ban to lift have one message: They're ready.

When Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced Thursday that all military jobs will open to women in 30 days, Lance Cpl. Callahan Brown said her phone started ringing like crazy.

"My jaw just dropped," Brown told Marine Corps Times. "When the commandant requested [exemptions], I felt like all hope was lost and like the fight was all over — that everything for the past year didn't mean anything because it was done with."

Now the effort Brown put into passing Infantry Training Battalion, which was previously only open to male grunts — and making it through to the end of a nine-month experiment in which she served as a rifleman — will pay off. The North Carolina-based cryogenics equipment operator said she plans to put in a request for a lateral move to become an infantry rifleman as soon as possible.

Cpl. Angeliqe Preston, a field wireman, also plans to pay her career planner a visit soon. Her goal: to become a field artillery cannoneer after working with howitzers in the California desert during that same experiment.

"I feel like that's where I should be," Preston said of the military occupational specialty that was previously closed to women. "When I initially joined the Marine Corps, that's what I wanted to be."

'Hating life together'

When Brown first reported to ITB and Preston to the artillery unit with the experimental task force, it took a bit of time for the male Marines to accept them, they said.

"At first they were kind of ... they didn't really know what to make of us, because they didn't really know how to work with females," Preston said.

Eventually though, once the Marines were just doing their jobs in the field, their gender stopped mattering.

"Camaraderie-wise, misery loves company," she said. "And the field really sucks, so you're all just hating life together."

The Marine Corps will "immediately commence the process of further implementing the policy change, to include sharing plans and lessons learned with the other services," said Maj. Chris Devine, a Marine spokesman at the Pentagon. But it will all be done in a way that ensures Marines remain ready to fight — and win, he added.

"We are well-informed by our combat experience, as well as our objective approach and data obtained from the past two years of study," Devine said. "As we move forward with full integration, we'll continue to maintain our standards, while leveraging every opportunity to optimize individual performance, talent and skills to maximize the warfighting capabilities of our [Marine air-ground task forces] in an increasingly complex operating environment."

Both Brown and Preston said proving they could hack it in infantry and artillery units was key to being accepted in all-male units. Even if male Marines were standoffish to start, Preston said that lessened once they saw that she could do the physically demanding job that involved carrying and lifting 100-pound howitzer rounds.

Ahead of Carter's decision, the Marine Corps quietly enacted gender-neutral standards for more than two dozen fields that were likely to open to women Jan. 1. Those standards could make it harder for some women to end up in the newly opened fields, but Lt. Col. Kate Germano, who led the Corps' only all-female recruit training battalion, said it's a vital step toward acceptance.

Germano, whose leadership style came under fire this summer when she was deemed a hostile leader and removed from her post, said the Marine Corps could take that a step further by integrating recruit training so young male and female Marines get used to serving around each other from day one.

Enlisting the right people to be Marines will also be more vital than ever, she said, and placing quotas or goals in place could pressure recruiters into recruiting quantity over quality.

"We need to get back into the high schools and start recruiting heavily in the female athletics," said Germano, who now works at the Washington Navy Yard. "...To get the right people and then make sure the expectations for men and women are the same."

Changing course

Brown and Preston were two of roughly 100 women who left their units to participate in the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force experiment. They worked alongside about 300 men in infantry, weapons, artillery and mechanized units in North Carolina and California, where Marine officials and scientists carefully studied their performance.

A number of female Marines were dropped or sidelined during the experiment due to injury. Data released by the Marine Corps after the experiment wrapped up in July indicated that male Marines far outperformed the women in a variety of tasks. Women were slower, fired their weapons with less accuracy and were more susceptible to injury, the data showed.

In September, then-Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford requested — based on that data — that certain jobs in the Marine Corps remained closed to women. But Carter said while he reviewed the Corps' data, he "came to a different conclusion." The military is a joint operation, he said, and the services need to ensure they are recruiting and retaining troops from a wide pool.

Getting Marines on board with this change could take time, Germano said, especially among higher-ranking Marines.

"I think the most difficult individuals to sway are the older generation," she said. "The younger Marines, most of them have seen women excel in team sports in high school and they've seen women be outspoken. They've had mothers, aunts and sisters as leaders, so I think it's going to help them embrace this."

Germano added that it will take accountability at every level of leadership to get Marines on board with such a big change, though, from regimental commanders down to the most junior platoon commanders.

Since no women have yet passed Infantry Officer Course — 29 female officers attempted it, but none graduated — Marines like Brown and Preston who want to join previously closed fields will have male leaders. But Preston said that doesn't bother her.

"I've seldom have female higher-ups," she said. "A leader is a leader. If they're good, that's all that matters."

Now that several fields are opening to women, they'll have to face gender-neutral standards in order to be allowed to serve in them. Of the female Marines who've gone through ITB or participated in the integrated experiment, Brown and Preston say few plan to volunteer for new assignments. Brown said there are only "a few whose heart really lies with the infantry." And Preston said she doesn't know any other female Marines who want to be artillerymen.

"The reality is that not a lot of women are going to want to lat move into these jobs," Preston said. "It takes a certain kind of mindset."

Even if they're the only female members of their future units, though, neither worries about any fallout from male Marines. They're confident they can do the jobs, and have waited their whole lives for what's ahead.

"My dad's an artillery officer in the Army," Preston said. "When I was a kid, I remember he showed me videos of howitzers, and I said I wanted to do this. He said, 'Not in my lifetime.' But when he came to my graduation, someone said he looked proud."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/12/03/female-marines-women-combat-were-ready/76726914/>

19. White House revisits exclusion of women from military draft

(4 Dec) Military Times, By Kathleen Hennessey

The government is deliberating whether to propose Selective Service changes that would make women eligible for the military draft, the White house said Friday, a day after the Pentagon said it would no longer bar women from combat jobs.

The Defense Department has prepared an analysis of how the Pentagon change could affect the U.S. Military Selective Service Act, said White House spokesman Josh Earnest.

"We're going to work with Congress to look at that analysis, to review it, to get others' opinions and determine if additional reforms or changes are necessary in light of this decision," Earnest said.

Earnest said President Obama has not expressed his views to the Pentagon.

The comments came a day after Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced he was ordering the military to open all military jobs to women, including the most dangerous commando posts.

Carter's move opens up a total of about 220,000 jobs that were previously closed to women. They include some of the most demanding roles, including special operations forces. In announcing the historic change, Carter said the military could no longer afford to bar half the population from key posts solely because of gender.

The Selective Service Act requires eligible men to register for the draft when they turn 18 or face fines. Registrants can be called up for compulsory service until they are 26 years old, though none have been drafted in decades.

Carter has previously said he supports a review of the draft based on the growing role women play in the military.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/12/04/white-house-revisits-exclusion-women-military-draft/76794064/>

20. Shattering the Military's Glass Ceiling

(4 Dec) The Atlantic, By David Barno and Nora Bensahel

Defense Secretary Ash Carter's long-overdue announcement on Thursday opens the door for talented young men and women.

On Thursday, Carter [announced](#) that all jobs in the U.S. military will now be open to women. Positions will no longer be closed exclusively because of gender; *all* members of the military will now be able to serve in any position for which they meet the standard. This decision will take effect on or around January 1, after the legally required 30-day congressional-review period ends.

Carter's announcement is long overdue. As women in uniform have been fighting and dying in the wars of the last 15 years, their opportunities within the military have remained deeply constrained. Yet their remarkable performance in those same bloody conflicts has reinforced the beliefs of all who saw this day as both inevitable and right. And it has convinced many who were once skeptics.

This change will open the 10 percent of military specialties, totaling more than 200,000 individual positions, that had previously been available only to men—including many in [infantry, armor, and special operations](#). Carter explained that opening these positions will ensure that the U.S. military will have access to the broadest possible range of talent, an edge that he considers critical to win the nation's future wars and that is consistent with his broader [Force of the Future initiative](#).

Carter clearly and unambiguously noted that there would be “no exceptions” to this policy. In January 2013, then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced that all military positions would be open to women, but gave the military services three years to assess the positions that were still closed, conduct studies and experiments, and request any permanent exceptions to that policy. None of the civilian-service secretaries requested any exceptions, nor did the uniformed chiefs of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, or the four-star general who heads the U.S. Special Operations Command. The commandant of the Marine Corps, however, [requested two broad exceptions](#): one for specific operational specialties (including infantry officers, machine gunners, and special operations officers) and a second for whole types of units (including infantry regiments and reconnaissance battalions). The commandant at the time was General Joseph Dunford, and this request was one of his final actions before he assumed his current position as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Marines based this request on a two-and-a-half year, \$36 million study they commissioned to assess an experimental integrated Marine unit. However, the methodology and conclusions of the study's 978-page final report (which has not been officially released but is available [here](#)) [sparked criticism](#), both for failing to establish clear job-specific standards and for focusing on the average performance of all women in the unit rather than the far more relevant metric of how well individual women performed. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, who oversees both the Navy and the Marine Corps, publicly questioned whether Marine leaders had compromised the effort from the start. Mabus told [NPR](#) that the study “started out with a fairly large component of the men thinking this is not a good idea and women will never be able to do this. When you start out with that mindset you're almost presupposing the outcome.” After studying the Marines' request, Carter rightly chose not to grant those exceptions. The study, he explained, was “not definitive, not determinative,” because averages “do not determine whether an individual is qualified to participate in a given unit.”

The Marines' basic argument was even more deeply undercut by the strong support for integration by the other services. In effect, the Marines were claiming that Marine riflemen, reconnaissance specialists, and machine gunners were somehow fundamentally different from their counterparts in Army infantry and paratroop units, Ranger battalions, Navy SEAL teams, and other elite special-operations

units. The graduation of [three women](#) from the [Army's grueling Ranger school](#) earlier this year further undermined the Marine Corps' argument that women would not perform well under the toughest field conditions. Carter clearly found the Marines' separatist logic unpersuasive. In his announcement, he deliberately reinforced that the U.S. military is a joint force that will operate with a single set of standards.

Carter also noted that approving the policy change is only a first step. His announcement made clear that he is focused on effective implementation. In his speech, Carter outlined seven principles to guide the implementation of the policy change across the force, and strongly emphasized that force effectiveness would not be compromised as the changes went into place on January 1. These [include](#) recognizing that changing ingrained cultures may prove challenging and that some segments of the services expect that standards and combat effectiveness will be compromised. Carter also tasked Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Paul Selva with leading the effort to monitor the implementation process and report back to him with any issues that arise, thus reinforcing the importance of getting the follow-up right.

But now that the decision has been made, effective implementation becomes primarily a matter of good leadership across the force. The Department of Defense stressed the [importance of leadership](#) in implementing the 2010 repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which was widely seen as a smooth process that successfully integrated openly gay and lesbian service members into the force. That remains equally true for integrating women into these newly opened positions—and every service has plenty of leaders who can follow through to get that mission accomplished.

Despite the concern about the drawbacks of integrating units, though, this decision opens the doors for the U.S. military to draw upon the broadest possible assortment of talented young men and women, and put them in a meritocracy where their aspirations are only limited by their abilities, not their gender. This century's conflicts will be won far more by out-thinking enemies than by out-muscling them, and including women in every part of the U.S. military makes America's defenses stronger. This long-awaited and hard-earned policy change may turn out to be a vital advantage in America's future wars.

[David Barno](#) is a retired lieutenant general of the United States Army, a distinguished practitioner in residence at American University's School of International Service, and a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.

[Nora Bensahel](#) is a distinguished scholar in residence at American University's School of International Service and a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/12/no-exceptions-at-all-women-military/418887/>

21. Dunford Says All in Military Will Work to Fully Integrate Women

(5 Dec) DoD News, By Jim Garamone

Following Defense Secretary Ash Carter's announcement Dec. 3 that all military specialties would be open to women, it is the responsibility of all in the military to ensure that the integration process is done well, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said today.

Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford spoke to reporters here while on the first stop of his multi-day, three-continent trip with the 2015 USO Entertainment Troupe.

"As the senior military advisor and the senior uniformed leader, it's my job now to assist the secretary with full implementation to make sure that we do it in a way that maintains our combat effectiveness, maintains the health and welfare of our troops and takes advantage of the talent of all the men and women that we have in uniform," the chairman said. "So we are getting after that now."

When the general served as the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the service asked for exceptions for infantry and special operations forces. Carter examined the plans for integration of women into all specialties provided to him by each service and concluded a good implementation process would overcome the concerns expressed by the Marine Corps.

Next, each of the military departments will provide the defense secretary with their implementation plans by Jan. 1. "My role is to assist the secretary in overseeing the implementation of the plan for the force," he said. "That's what he has tasked me to do and I look forward to doing that."

Italy Base 'Critical' to Objectives

Dunford also discussed with reporters the critical role played by Sigonella Naval Air Station in U.S. and European objectives in Africa and the Middle East. The United States is an integral nation in the anti-terror coalition and, he said, the base right in the middle of the Mediterranean is key. "It's a hub," the general noted.

“The United States is taking actions both in Africa and the Middle East and working cooperatively with our coalition partners and allies to exchange information and ensure that we build a coalition to deal with the challenges,” Dunford said.

Signonella has a traditional mission to fly P-3 Orions over the Mediterranean and keep track of the naval activity in the region. There is also a growing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission on the base that supports U.S. and coalition goals.

The base also houses a special purpose Marine air-ground task force, ready for operations throughout the region. The unit’s placement is driven by its capabilities and response time. “It’s split between here and Moron [Air Base], Spain, and can be prepositioned in Africa should indications and warnings drive us to do that,” Dunford said.

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/632986/dunford-says-all-in-military-will-work-to-fully-integrate-women?source=GovDelivery>

22. Women in combat: What's next

(5 Dec) The San Diego Union-Tribune, By Jeanette Steele

As the dust settled on Thursday’s announcement that all U.S. military combat jobs will open to women, the Navy released an internal study that validated the tough physical standards for becoming an elite Navy SEAL – though the research showed that upper-body strength, probably the biggest challenge for females, is the least important predictor of success.

It’s just one piece of the blank slate in front of the armed forces as the Pentagon rolls out this historic change, which may upend entrenched assumptions about what makes a good soldier.

Veteran SEALs said they expect that leaders will try to follow Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter’s directive this week to keep standards the same.

But they predicted it will be difficult because of the intense spotlight that inevitably will be on the first women who report to the SEALs’ Coronado training ground.

“It’s going to be a clown show,” said retired SEAL Ed Hiner, a former training officer at the Coronado Naval Special Warfare Command. “I hate to say it. I know there’s a lot of tough women out there.”

Meanwhile, on the Marine Corps side, a female officer who has criticized the way Marines train women said the new policy just needs leaders to back it in a “no ifs, ands or buts” way.

Lt. Col. Kate Germano compared this situation to end in 2011 of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the longtime restriction on gays serving openly in uniform. After a fierce public debate, few problems have been reported in the ranks.

“Unless every single level of the chain of command is willing to commit to the success ... this will continue to be sort of a half-in, half-out approach,” said Germano, former commander of the Marine Corps’ all-female recruit battalion.

It’s still unclear when and how the first women will apply for the newly open combat jobs, which include Navy SEALs, Marine Corp infantry and Army Rangers.

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced the new policy Thursday, saying, “To succeed in our mission of national defense, we cannot afford to cut ourselves off from half the country’s talents and skills.”

An estimated 220,000 U.S. military jobs in more than 50 specialties will be newly gender neutral, the Pentagon said.

The Navy and Marine Corps aren’t offering many specifics yet.

On Saturday, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford – who as Marine Corps commandant asked to continue excluding women from direct combat jobs – told reporters he is “getting after” the new directive.

“It’s my job now to assist the secretary with full implementation -- to make sure we do it in a way that maintains our combat effectiveness, maintains the health and welfare of our troops and takes advantage of the talent of all the men and women we have in uniform,” Dunford said.

Officials said they are waiting for Congress to have its required 30-day comment period before rolling out plans that have been in the preparatory stages for months.

At the SEAL command, a spokesman said the elite force will take it slow.

“Expansion of the force will be a deliberate process. It will not take hours, days or weeks, but months and potentially years,” said Capt. Jason Salata, Naval Special Warfare command public affairs officer.

“It would be premature to speculate as to when the first women would be available for SEAL or SWCC (special warfare combatant-craft crewman) training.”

The SEAL command asked two Ph.D.s to examine the physical demands of the job and whether current screening tests are good gauges of what’s required.

For example, to gain entrance to Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training – the grueling, make-or-break SEAL tryouts in Coronado – candidates have to run a mile and a half in less than 10 minutes, perform 18 pull-ups in two minutes and other tasks.

The report concluded that the swimming and running tests are the best predictors of graduation from BUD/S – which has a whopping 75 percent dropout rate.

Push-up and sit-up tests are weaker gauges. And high performance on pull-ups – probably the biggest challenge for women with less upper-body strength – is not a statistically accurate predictor.

“Additional information is needed about candidates to predict with greater confidence who will be successful, such as tests that measure desired psychological characteristics, like mental toughness or desire to be a SEAL,” the report said.

Former SEALs say they’ve long known the mental aspect plays a big role. Currently, the screening process includes a psychological battery test.

But Hiner said the physical side of the job is not just surviving BUD/S.

He is concerned that women don’t have the “combat chassis” that it takes to endure the day-to-day grind of SEAL work.

“It’s not just about getting through training,” said Hiner, who retired in 2012 and recently published a business book called “First, Fast, Fearless: How To Lead Like a Navy SEAL.”

“You need that diesel Humvee that can keep getting up in the morning and doing it over and over,” he said.

The subtleness of the mental-physical mix is one of the things that will make training women a challenge for the formerly all-male SEALs, said another retired officer.

“They are going to try to have as little change as possible, on the assumption that what they are doing now is working pretty well. Of course, that’s going to be hard,” the officer said.

For instance, in a rough-and-tumble culture, SEALs heap abuse on each other. Will they feel comfortable doing that to women?

“SEALs -- We’re pretty thick-skinned. There’s an awful amount of un-politically correct things that test if people can maintain their cool under those circumstances,” said the retired officer, who asked not to be named because the subject is sensitive in the SEAL community.

“That’s part of the crucible, just as much as can someone do push-ups and pull-ups,” he said. “But we’re coming from a society where that kind of thing is not acceptable across genders.”

There are lots of questions. Will the first women to graduate BUD/S be interviewed widely, even become a household name? Will that mean she’ll be too well-known for covert operations?

Germano said she’s not surprised by the SEAL research on what predicts success. It mirrors what she saw in her female Marine recruits.

“Part of it is the cardio strength and the ability to endure, the endurance that comes with physical conditioning, that affects everything you do,” she said.

Germano was removed from her recruit battalion command in June after complaints about her leadership. But it was also after she criticized the Marine Corps for allowing lower standards for females, saying it downplays women’s abilities.

In an interview Friday, she said she saw recruiters allowing females to slack off on workouts and required education. Then, when they showed up at boot camp, their performance suffered. Also segregated boot camps lead to different standards for males and females, she said.

That needs to change if women are going to make it in these new combat jobs, Germano said.

“I’ve seen women who were held to a high standard do amazing things in a short period of time. They thrive on it. That’s what they want. That’s why they joined the Marine Corps,” she said.

The military branches have until April 1 to start integrating women into formerly closed jobs.

23. Report finds fault in CID's work on sex assault case

(20 Nov) Army Times, By Kevin Lilley

Officials with Army Criminal Investigation Command agreed with most of the findings in a Pentagon report that outlined faults in CID's investigation of a sexual assault claim lodged by a civilian against an Army Reserve member.

But they disagreed with the only recommendation that may affect the outcome of the case itself: Whether the matter should be reopened in light of what the [Nov. 10 report](#) calls "significant deficiencies" in CID's tactics.

The Defense Department Inspector General's Office report includes few details on the case. It names neither the alleged victim nor the accused and no time frame for the incident is provided, though the soldier was honorably discharged in August 2014, the report states. The soldier's rank is not provided, though the charge of conduct unbecoming an officer is referenced.

Among the deficiencies pointed out by the report:

- The CID agent who interviewed the alleged victim "did not thoroughly probe the potential factors that could have affected the victim's ability or inability to resist or what may have caused her to not physically or verbally resist the subject from starting and completing the alleged sexual assault." The report brought up tonic immobility, a type of muscular paralysis that causes an individual to freeze in response to trauma.
- The agent had not completed the Army's Special Victim Unit Investigation Course and was not supervised by an agent who had, a setup that violated CID requirements.
- Agents did not interview individuals with whom the victim discussed the incident.
- Agents did not "report the nonsexual assault offenses of adultery and conduct unbecoming an officer to the commander for appropriate action, as required by policy."
- The agent who interviewed the alleged victim was "derisive and dismissive," a claim backed up by a CID investigation into the matter, at the behest of the IG, which stated the individual "did not display the professionalism expected of a CID agent."
- Agents did not update the victim on the investigation's status, skipping the required monthly updates over the last three months of the case and not telling the victim the results of the investigation before closing it.

DoD IG officials also found CID did not follow procedure and brief the first colonel in the accused individual's command chain regarding the investigation. Agents did inform a general officer and the unit's staff judge advocate of the matter, according to a response to the report from CID commander Maj. Gen. Mark Inch.

That response agreed with the report's recommendations to address many of the concerns brought forward and to ensure proper agent training and supervision. However, Inch did not endorse the recommendation to restart the investigation "and undertake corrective action to properly and thoroughly investigate the victim's complaint."

Lacking 'elements of proof'

The case should stay shut, Inch said in his response, because a civilian law enforcement agency in Virginia, as well as three attorneys who reviewed the CID investigation, all said "the events as described by the complainant did not meet the elements of proof for an offense" either under the Uniform Code of Military Justice or state law.

"It is CID's position that the investigation reached the proper conclusion and that reopening the case would in no way change the outcome of the investigation," CID spokesman Chris Grey said.

Grey also cited a [March DoD IG report](#) that looked at 181 randomly selected CID sexual assault cases from 2013 and found only two with "significant deficiencies."

DoD investigators said in the report that Inch's response did not "address the specifics of our recommendation" and that "[t]he fact that two separate law enforcement agencies came to a similar conclusion based on a less than full investigation is not dispositive."

The IG report came about in response to a January request from Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., on behalf of the alleged victim, a constituent who'd reached out to his office for assistance. Warner contacted CID and received information that contradicted the

victim's account of the investigation, leading to DoD IG's involvement, the report says.

"The report validated many of the concerns this constituent raised to Senator Warner," Rachel Cohen, a spokesman for the senator, said in an email. "While we appreciate that CID has concurred with some of the IG's recommendations, we intend to follow up with the IG, the Army and CID to find out what actions they intend to take to address the findings."

Requests made via Warner's office to speak to the constituent were not successful.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/11/20/report-finds-fault-cids-work-sex-assault-case/76047418/>

24. Sex scandals rock Laughlin flight school

(20 Nov) Air Force Times, By Jeff Schogol

Nine instructor pilots at Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas have been implicated in scandals stemming from an investigation into whether one of the pilots was having a sexual unprofessional relationship with a student, officials told Air Force Times on Thursday.

Among the nine are three instructor pilots who were grounded and stripped of their wings for text messages that they claim were misunderstood by investigators, as Air Force Times reported Oct. 19.

Here is the breakdown of the charges and investigations:

- Two pilots were court-martialed and pleaded guilty to having sexual unprofessional relationships.
- One is still under investigation for alleged sexual unprofessional relationships.
- Four were accused of drug use from text messages found on their phones. One of them was cleared at an Article 15. The other three were grounded and received letters of reprimand; two of them are also accused of not informing superiors of sexual unprofessional relationships they knew about.
- One other pilot is accused of not reporting sexual unprofessional relationships he knew about.
- One was disciplined administratively for a non-sexual but unprofessional relationship.

"The Air Force has the responsibility of ensuring safety, both in the flying environment and in the training environment," said Lt. Col. John Fredland, chief of military justice for Air Education and Training Command. "The Air Force carries out these responsibilities by upholding good order and discipline."

"Flying is a privilege here, not a right," Fredland told Air Force Times. "Command received information that it could not ignore in a risk-management sense and so that's why we went down these paths."

Fredland outlined the investigations as follows:

[Capt. Christopher Hill](#) pleaded guilty on Monday to adultery; having a sexual unprofessional relationship with a student pilot; fraternizing with three enlisted airmen, one of whom he had sex with; making a false official statement; failing to obey a no-contact order to stay away from the student pilot and obstruction of justice, Fredland told Air Force Times. Per a pre-trial agreement, Hill was sentenced to 45 days' confinement and dismissal from the Air Force.

In May 2014, a squadron commander received an allegation that Hill was having a sexual unprofessional relationship with a student pilot, prompting a commander-directed investigation into Hill, Fredland said. During the investigation, Hill's wife told Hill's commander that her husband was having sex with the student and that Hill and the student had violated a no-contact order.

With evidence of the sexual relationship, the investigation fell into the purview of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Fredland said.

OSI later discovered that Hill had buried an iPad, a cellphone, and an external hard drive with sexually graphic pictures of the student pilot and the enlisted airman with whom he had sex, said Maj. Jacquelyn Christilles, a reservist who is assigned to the 502nd Air Base Wing Staff Judge Advocate.

During the commander-directed investigation into Hill, the investigating officer received an allegation that another instructor pilot, 1st

Lt. Kevin Sheehan, was in a sexual unprofessional relationship with a student pilot, Fredland said.

OSI launched an investigation into Sheehan and the student pilot in question confirmed that the two had consensual sex about one week before her graduation, Fredland said. Investigators also learned that Sheehan had a second sexual unprofessional relationship with another student pilot and he had tried to have an intimate unprofessional relationship with a third student pilot, whose buttocks he was accused of grabbing.

Sheehan pleaded guilty to the two sexual unprofessional relationships but a military judge found him not guilty of two offenses related to third student pilot, Fredland said. On Sept. 29, Sheehan was sentenced to 100 days' confinement and forfeiture of pay, but he was not dismissed from the Air Force.

While investigating Sheehan, witnesses told OSI that a third instructor pilot may have been involved in sexual unprofessional relationships with student pilots, Christilles said.

"That instructor pilot has not been charged, so I cannot go into any specific allegations against him," said Fredland, who declined to identify the instructor pilot.

It was in the course of looking into the allegations against the third instructor pilot that investigators found text messages from four other instructor pilots that contained apparent references to drug use.

Those four instructor pilots claimed they were actually making cultural references to club and rap songs that use the word "Molly," which is a term for the illegal drug ecstasy. One song that the pilots used as a motif was Miley Cyrus' "We Can't Stop."

Two of the instructor pilots are flight commanders, Fredland said. Investigators believe that those two along with a third flight commander knew about some of the alleged sexual unprofessional relationships yet failed to report them as they are required to do under an AETC instruction, Fredland said.

"If you are an AETC faculty or staff member and you know that one of your fellow faculty or staff members is involved in an unprofessional relationship, it's your obligation to go forward to command and say, 'Hey, look, there's misconduct going on here; I know about it,'" Fredland said.

Two of the flight commanders agreed to public nonjudicial punishment proceedings and one did not, said Fredland, who declined to provide further information, citing privacy concerns.

"We can't go into that because some of them have not yet been resolved," Fredland said.

The grounded pilots appealed their case to Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., who has been advocating that the letters of reprimand be rescinded. The three all passed drug tests.

"It would be entirely stupid for the Air Force to try, then to even assume that if they can't get any of these pilots on this ridiculous claim of suspected drug use, that they might be able to get them on the fact that maybe one or others might have known about an unprofessional relationship – or might have heard of something and failed to report that," Hunter spokesman Joe Kasper told Air Force Times on Friday.

Airmen should not be required to report what they overhear and other unproven allegations, Kasper said.

"How fast can the Air Force create distrust within its own ranks and create a process and an environment in which people are not even trusting each ... if these guys are constantly being forced to rat on each other, not even knowing if the allegations are true?"

AETC spokesman Col. Sean McKenna clarified that only AETC faculty and staff are required to report unprofessional relationships, not all airmen.

Kasper also said he has contacted the Air Force about a Facebook post by a public affairs officer at Laughlin, who made a joke about buying cheap LSD, which Kasper claims is the same type of banter for which the three instructor pilots received letters of reprimand.

AETC is aware of the Facebook post in question, McKenna said.

“The comment by the PA [public affairs] member was posted in response to a friend's comment,” McKenna said. “47th Flying Training Wing leadership have spoken with the individual and they are handling the matter appropriately.”

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/11/20/sex-scandals-rock-laughlin-flight-school/76112638/>

25. Colonel faces sexual assault charges

(28 Nov) Air Force Times, By Phillip Swarts

The former commander of a medical group based in South Korea faces charges of sexual assault, according to official charge records.

Col. David Cockrum, former commander of the 51st Medical Group at Osan Air Base, is awaiting a Jan. 25 court-martial at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, on four specifications of sexual assault and one specification of conduct unbecoming of an officer, according to a Nov. 18 statement from the 7th Air Force.

Cockrum was relieved of command March 5 due to “information regarding fraternization and unprofessional relationships,” according to an Air Force statement at the time. The 7th Air Force said Cockrum was officially charged on Sept. 3.

Air Force Times was unable to reach Cockrum or his legal counsel.

Cockrum entered active duty in August 1997, according to service personnel records. He has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Achievement Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/11/28/colonel-faces-sexual-assault-charges/76309656/>

26. Feds: Women secretly filmed on Navy ship

(1 Dec) The San Diego Union-Tribune, By Kristina Davis

A Navy reservist has been charged with peering into the rooms of female shipmates and secretly recording video of them in private moments, according to a complaint filed in San Diego federal court.

Delwen Lamar Sutton was arrested last week at his home in El Cajon on one misdemeanor charge of video voyeurism.

Sutton was working as a civil service mariner and was assigned to U.S. Naval Ship Kanawha, a fleet replenishment oiler, from December 2010 until he was removed in March 2013 because of the investigation. The ship is currently based on the East Coast. Authorities said he is not on active duty at this time.

While the ship was off the coast of Italy in February 2013, a civilian merchant marine on board caught Sutton lying on the ground outside a shipmate's stateroom door, according to the charges filed Nov. 16. Sutton walked away.

Several hours later, another shipmate saw him lying on his side with his cellphone pointed at the vent of a female cadet's door, the complaint says. When confronted, according to the complaint, Sutton apologized and said it would never happen again.

The ship captain got word and seized all of Sutton's electronic devices, including a cellphone, laptop and hard drives, and handed them over to a Naval Criminal Investigative Service agent days later at the next port.

The investigation found nude images and videos of at least three identifiable women aboard the ship, according to the complaint. Agents also found that 23 stateroom doors, including every door to a room occupied by a woman, had damage to the vent louvers making it possible to peer inside.

In an interview with investigators, Sutton admitted filming the women and damaging the vents, the complaint states. He was granted \$20,000 bail in San Diego federal court Nov. 24.

Sutton's defense attorney, Charles Luckman, declined to discuss the charges but questioned why authorities decided to arrest Sutton two days before Thanksgiving, on accusations two years old.

“It's taken an extraordinary amount of time for the NCIS to decide to do anything about this,” Luckman said Tuesday.

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/dec/01/navy-ship-video-voyeurism-arrest/>

27. Navy releases court-martial results for October

(2 Dec) Navy Times, Staff Report

The Navy has released results of special and general courts-martial verdicts for October. The cases are listed by the Navy Region in which they were tried:

NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON

General court-martial

- In Washington, D.C., CTN2 Brian Christopher was tried for sexual assault, indecent visual recording and assault consummated by a battery. On Oct. 23, the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to all charges and sentenced him to a Bad Conduct Discharge, to forfeit all pay and allowances, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 1 year.

NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC

General courts-martial

- In Norfolk, Virginia, an E-6 was tried for rape of a child and indecent liberty with a child. On Oct. 8, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.
- At a sentencing rehearing in Great Lakes, Illinois, held on Oct. 9 for possession of child pornography, the military judge sentenced FC2 Shane A. Nichlos to a Bad Conduct Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 75 days.
- In Norfolk, Virginia, AOAA Dequan R. Walker pleaded guilty to sexual assault. On Oct. 26, the military judge sentenced him to a Dishonorable Discharge, to forfeit all pay and allowances, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 40 months.
- In Norfolk, Virginia, AOC Christopher J. Dorminey pleaded guilty to sexual abuse of a child and sexual assault of a child. On Oct. 28, the military judge sentenced him to a Dishonorable Discharge, to forfeit all pay and allowances, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 30 months.

NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST

General courts-martial

- In Mayport, Florida, FR Jonathan Golden was tried for sexual assault and pleaded guilty to unauthorized absence, wrongful use of marijuana, larceny, restriction breaking and wrongfully obtaining services. On Oct. 7, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty to sexual assault and sentenced him to a Dishonorable Discharge, to forfeit all pay and allowances, and confinement for 3 years.
- In Mayport, Florida, BM2 Nathaniel Bracewell was tried for abusive sexual contacts. On Oct. 21, the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to three abusive sexual contacts and not guilty to one abusive sexual contact. The panel sentenced him to be discharged with a Dishonorable Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 6 months.

Special courts-martial

- In Jacksonville, Florida, AEAN Anthony Chacon pleaded guilty to negligent destruction of military property and drunken operation of a vehicle. On Oct. 2, the military judge sentenced him to forfeit \$1,000 per month for two months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-2 and restriction for 60 days.
- In Jacksonville, Florida, MTCS Ronald Thomas pleaded guilty to making a false official statement and wrongfully giving a false or unauthorized pass. On Oct. 16, the military judge sentenced him to forfeit \$3,000 per month for six months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-7 and a fine of \$2,242.59.
- In Pensacola, Florida, HN Cody L. Bannister was tried for violating a lawful general order, abusive sexual contacts and assault consummated by a battery. On Oct. 28, the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to all charges, sentencing him to a Bad Conduct Discharge and restriction for 45 days.

NAVY REGION NORTHWEST

General court-martial

- In Bremerton, Washington, LCDR John T. Spannuth pleaded guilty to disrespectful behavior toward a superior commissioned officer, failure to obey a lawful order, harassment and adultery. On Oct. 14, the military judge sentenced him to confinement for 161 days.

Special courts-martial

- In Bremerton, Washington, AN Rodney A. Williams pleaded guilty to assault and communicating a threat. On Oct. 6, the military judge sentenced him to a Bad Conduct Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for four months.
- In Bremerton, Washington, AT1 Justin D. Sprinkle pleaded guilty to making a false official statement. On Oct. 13, the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 60 days.
- In Bremerton, Washington, SA Deven J. Robrahn pleaded guilty to absence without leave and wrongful use of a controlled substance. On Oct. 20, the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 43 days.
- In Bremerton, Washington, CS3 Isiah A. Williams pleaded guilty to larceny. On Oct. 21, the military judge sentenced him to be a Bad Conduct Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for six months.
- In Bremerton, Washington, ABFCS Edward Sandi pleaded guilty to failure to obey a lawful order and assault consummated by battery. On Oct. 28, the military judge sentenced him to a Bad Conduct Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-5 and confinement for 60 days.

NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST

General court-martial

- In San Diego, California, an E-4 was tried for sexual assault and abusive sexual contact. On Oct. 5, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

Special courts-martial

- In San Diego, California, EM3 Jeffrey M. Morales pleaded guilty to unauthorized absence and missing movement. On Oct. 8, the military judge sentenced him to forfeit \$500.00 per month for three months, a reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 90 days.
- In San Diego, California, AZ1 Dyshara J. Romerosanchez pleaded guilty to violation of a lawful general regulation, false official statement and wrongful use of a methamphetamine. On Oct. 14, the military judge sentenced her to a Bad Conduct Discharge, to forfeit \$1,031.00 per month for five months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for five months.
- In San Diego, California, SO1 Jeremy T. Roller pleaded guilty to false official statement and larceny. On Oct. 15, the military judge sentenced him to a Bad Conduct Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-4 and confinement for 90 days.

NAVY REGION JAPAN

Special court-martial

- In Yokosuka, Japan, LSSN Salih E. Falke pleaded guilty to desertion. On Oct. 14, the military judge sentenced him to a Bad Conduct Discharge, to forfeit \$1,031.00 per month for seven months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, a fine of \$120.00, and confinement for seven months.

NAVY REGION EUROPE, AFRICA, SOUTHWEST ASIA

General court-martial

- In Bahrain, an E-5 was tried for sexual assault. On Oct. 7, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/02/navy-releases-court-martial-results-october/76663992/>

28. The problems veterans face in the professional workplace

(22 Nov) *The Washington Post*, By Jena McGregor

Corporate America loves hiring veterans. Part good strategy (think valuable technical and leadership skills), part good finance (think tax incentives) and part good P.R. (no explanation needed), companies have increasingly been promoting their pledges to bring thousands of employees with military experience onboard. Some companies or employer coalitions like Starbucks, Wal-Mart and the newly renamed Veteran Jobs Mission are reaching or blowing past milestones toward the goals they've set.

But what happens once those sought after workers are in the door?

That track record, particularly among veterans in professional careers, is not very well understood, says Julia Taylor Kennedy, a senior fellow at the research think tank Center for Talent Innovation. So Kennedy and her team set out to survey 1,022 veterans working in full-time, white-collar professions as well as to conduct in-depth interviews with some 40 more.

"Companies are investing enormous resources into recruiting veterans," said Kennedy, a co-author of the report, released Tuesday, which cites data that veteran hiring efforts can consume as much as 20 or 30 percent of recruiting budgets at some large corporations. "But companies are failing to make good on that investment. What we find is veterans get in the doors of corporations and they're either not looking to rise -- what we call 'tuned out' -- or another big portion is 'stalled out,' "-- that is, they're eager to advance but have trouble getting promoted.

The study, which was co-authored by Michael Abrams, who founded the veteran support organization Four Block, found that many veterans feel underutilized, alienated and uninspired in corporate workplaces. Fully two-thirds of the respondents said they weren't using three or more of the skills they have that could be applicable to their employers.

Meanwhile, only 2 percent said they have an executive who really champions and advocates on their behalf. That compares with 19 percent of men and 13 percent of women in CTI's surveys of the general professional population, Kennedy said.

"That was really stunning for us, because we feel sponsorships are the real key to getting up the corporate ladder," she said, noting the gap may be due to the more hierarchical leadership style many military veterans bring to their jobs, which could make them less attractive candidates for such an advocate, even if unintentionally. "They're used to taking and giving orders. They're not used to getting buy-in first," Kennedy said.

Also in the survey, roughly half of respondents said their colleagues had made false assumptions about them (such as that they're politically conservative or have post-traumatic stress disorder); more than a quarter tried to downplay their military experience with colleagues; and nearly a third of those with a service-related injury or disability hid it from their colleagues.

Many said they didn't want to get into awkward or tough conversations with their colleagues. For example, one former sniper said, "you would not believe the number of times I've been asked how many kills I had," Kennedy recalls. Some also didn't want to be seen as having special advantages, an issue that could be particularly delicate as companies go out of their way to hire veterans.

That was especially true for veterans who are also racial minorities, the report says. Nearly 40 percent of Hispanic veterans, 25 percent of black veterans and 21 percent of Asian veterans -- compared with 14 percent of their white peers -- avoided sharing their military experience with colleagues, the study found.

Less surprising, however, is CTI's finding that nearly two-thirds of veterans said they felt more purpose in the military than in their corporate jobs. Many cited far less camaraderie with their teams at work, and those who were no longer leading other people as they had in the military missed doing so. This was particularly true for women: 56 percent of female veterans said their corporate careers weren't meeting their goal of meaningful work, compared to 47 percent of male veterans.

While such numbers may be not be encouraging, companies are starting to pay more attention to the sort of issues raised in CTI's report, said Nicholas Armstrong, the senior director of research and policy at Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families. That may be partly because just over half of veterans leave their first post-military job within a year, Armstrong said, leading to costly and time-consuming amounts of turnover for companies. "The conversation is shifting now," Armstrong said. It's moving from a focus on just hiring vets to asking, "What are we doing to find better matches for their careers?"

<http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20151122/business/151129978/>

29. Today's US veterans are less educated, less healthy, less wealthy, and less employed than veterans 20 years ago

(23 Nov) Business Insider, By Bob Bryan

Congress has been debating changes to the types of retirement benefits that veterans receive, including a switch to [a corporate 401\(k\)-style plan](#).

According to researchers, however, reforms should consider the economic and health realities of veterans approaching retirement now.

Alan Gustman and Nahid Tabatabai of Dartmouth, along with Thomas Steinmeier of Texas Tech, broke down the economic and health outcomes for veterans age 51 to 56 in 1992, 1998, 2004, and 2010, measuring how the government's services have helped over time.

"Among those 51 to 56 in 1992, veterans were better educated, healthier, wealthier, and more likely to be working than nonveterans," [said a new study](#). "By the 2010 cohort, 51- to 56-year-old veterans had lost their educational advantage over nonveterans, were less healthy, less wealthy and less likely to be working."

Using data from the "Health and Retirement Study," the researchers tracked outcomes, adjusting for rank, years of service, and a variety of other factors. (The findings were limited to male veterans, because female veterans in the data did not have a large enough sample to be reliable.)

In terms of service, the researchers pointed out that only the 2010 cohort had been a part of the All-Volunteer Military, instead of the Korean and Vietnam War drafts of the earlier cohorts.

This meant that a much lower number of the total population served (16% of the total male population in 2010 versus 50% in 1992) and a higher percent serving more than 10 years (13% in 2010 versus 8% in 1992).

In the outcomes for veterans over the age groups, a number of trends appear.

Education and health outcomes have worsened

In terms of education, the mean number of years in school has stayed the same for veterans (13.2 in 1992 to 13.4 in 2010), while the years for nonveterans has caught up (12.2 to 13.5). The percentage of veterans going to some college has also stayed fairly consistent (51% to 57%, with a peak in 2004 at 67%), while nonvets have again caught up (39% to 58%, with a peak in 2004 at 65%).

While nonveterans have caught up in education, they have lapped veterans in many other categories.

The percent of veterans who saw combat is the same between the 1992 and 2010 cohorts (18%), and leaped up for the 1998 and 2004 cohorts (34% and 33%, respectively), but the percentage of veterans on disability or with a health problem that limits work has steadily grown.

"While in the original HRS cohort, veterans were healthier than nonveterans, between the oldest and youngest cohorts, the health status of veterans age 51 to 56 deteriorated sharply relative to nonveterans," said the study.

Veterans are now much less prepared for retirement

Additionally, in light of the recent moves by Congress to address the military's retirement benefits, the researchers looked at wealth and savings for veterans as they approached retirement age.

Not only did the researchers find that younger veterans receive about half the amount in pensions from the military than their older counterparts, but there was also a reversal in veteran household wealth as compared to nonveterans.

So while newer retirement-age veterans have all been volunteers with roughly similar service demographics, they have worse health and wealth outcomes compared to older veteran peers and even nonveterans of their age group.

In the end, the researchers said they could not fully identify the reasons for the decline in positive outcomes for veterans, especially

compared to nonveterans, and that these conclusions should factor into future policy decisions.

"Our findings suggest that policies meant to increase the benefits of veterans who are already retired should be designed differently and targeted separately for members of different cohorts," they concluded. "Veterans from the two oldest HRS cohorts are better prepared for retirement than nonveterans from those cohorts, and there is no difference when covariates are included in the regression. The problem arises for the youngest HRS cohort."

<http://www.businessinsider.com/veterans-are-worse-off-today-2015-11>

30. Florida VA Clinic Provides Care for Vets With PTSD

(24 Nov) DoD News Features, By Shannon Collins

For veterans who may have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder due to wartime trauma or military sexual trauma, their first step is to contact their local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Vet Center or outpatient center.

But if veterans require more care, they can voluntarily check in at inpatient centers such as the Bay Pines VA Medical Center here.

Bay Pines has a 14-bed residential program for veterans with war-caused PTSD and a separate wing for veterans with PTSD caused by military sexual trauma.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' PTSD website, military sexual trauma, or MST, is the term used by the VA to refer to experiences of sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that a veteran experienced during his or her military service.

The definition for military sexual trauma used by the VA comes from federal law -- Title 38 U.S. Code 1720D. Under that law, MST is defined as: "Psychological trauma, which in the judgment of a VA mental health professional, resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred while the veteran was serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training."

Sexual harassment is further defined by the law as "repeated, unsolicited verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature which is threatening in character."

Bay Pines is the only VA inpatient facility that treats PTSD caused by MST, said Tony Taylor, program manager for the warzone PTSD program at Bay Pines.

Taylor, a Marine Corps and Vietnam War veteran who's worked with the VA for more than 36 years and has PTSD himself, said he's seen many positive changes in the VA for the treatment of PTSD.

Comprehensive Programs for Veterans

"I've seen tremendous changes," he said. "We now have comprehensive programs designed to help veterans who suffer from PTSD. It's a cooperative partnership we've established at this hospital where we have teams working together to help the veterans. The primary care doctor does the physical exam. The psychiatrists understand what medications have been proven to be effective for helping veterans with PTSD."

"We have psychologists and social workers who are trained in providing evidence based care for veterans with PTSD which is throughout the entire VA system," he continued. "You will get the finest care possible through the VA system if you seek care at a VA hospital."

Taylor said the next step is for veterans to be referred to the voluntary inpatient centers like Bay Pines by local Vet Centers or VA hospitals so there's a continuity of care, both before the veteran arrives and for follow-up care after the veteran leaves Bay Pines. There are approximately 20 programs like Bay Pines.

Rose Stauffer, a licensed clinical social worker who's been with the VA for five years and with Bay Pines for six months, said she loves what she does. She's been in her career field 16 years.

Veterans Seeking Help

"I started out working with homeless veterans and getting them hooked into services at the VA," she said. "I was very grateful to get this position at Bay Pines because I love it. This is where my heart is. This program is essential for people who are really getting a grip on the fact they have PTSD, and they've tried everything on their own that they've can."

Stauffer added, "We can help bring down the anxiety and provide hope. People do find a way to recover from PTSD in that they can live a life that is meaningful to them, but it's hard work and it's a big process. There's stuff that works and we can help you find it."

For Rachel Dyson, a pre-doctoral psychology intern who's worked at Bay Pines for three months, the call to service came from her family.

"I grew up in a family of veterans, so it's really near and dear to my heart," Dyson said. Her father, she said, served in the Air Force during Vietnam.

"I'd like to continue a career in PTSD and trauma-focused work and also focus on female veterans," Dyson added.

She said the therapists work with the other doctors as a team.

Using Teamwork to Assist Veterans

"As a team, we really have a commitment to what we call patient centered care so it's a wrap-around approach," Dyson said. "We meet every morning, and we discuss how everybody's doing on the unit. It's made up of social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and primary care doctors, so we really have a wrap-around program of care here, where we're able to communicate as professionals to provide individuals the best care that we can.

"The other piece of it," she continued, "is that everything is right here, so they can easily get access to their clinicians, and they can easily get access to resources."

Dyson said she knows coming into an inpatient residential program could be scary for veterans seeking help.

"This is something people have kind of put off for many years, and it takes an incredible amount of courage to actually come into a program like this and do the work, but I also know that there's a lot of hope for people who come into our program because we know there's things here that can really work," she said. "We know there are treatments here that can really help. Even though it might seem scary, we've got people who've gone through it and come out the other side and are better for it."

Veterans' Testimonials

Retired Army Staff Sgt. Manuel "Al" Alcantara, who'd served as a combat medic for more than 21 years, recently graduated from Bay Pines -- his second inpatient PTSD program.

Alcantara served three tours in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom and he said his PTSD symptoms started showing up after his second deployment from 2005 to 2006. He said he started cursing and being easily angered, when he used to be very patient and didn't curse.

He said he was in denial, destructive and had suicidal ideations. Alcantara went through his first inpatient treatment and was full of hope, but he regressed after he retired, having lost some of his battle buddies. He said he started pulling away from his family and friends and got divorced.

"I felt out of control again and the tools that I used to apply were failing. I was always angry at every little thing," Alcantara said. "So I ended up here. I've learned a lot. I've picked up a lot more tools and a lot of reinforcement of the old tools I used to have. It's generated new hope for me again.

Learning Value of Support

"I learned I need support," he continued. "I can't do it alone. I've isolated myself, withdrawn and just avoided people for the last three years, and that hasn't worked at all. I've learned how to make new friends and open up a little bit. Just having new friends, having someone who can understand you, someone who can empathize with what you've been through just helped me a lot. I'm not alone. Knowing my peers are going through what I'm going through helped a lot."

Alcantara found a lifelong friend in his peer, Marine Corps and Vietnam War veteran Jim Alderman. Alderman said he plans on teaching Alcantara how to cliff dive and other adventurous sports. Alderman said Bay Pines saved his life and he recommends it to other veterans.

Alderman was a force reconnaissance Marine who taught Navy SEALs ground and water survival. He also served as a drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island in South Carolina, and taught close combat at the FBI Academy.

For 50 years, Alderman said he didn't admit to himself that he had PTSD -- though he would wear a bulletproof vest and arm himself anytime he left his house. He was hesitant to go to Bay Pines for help but his wife, Pat, who he's been married to since 1972, encouraged him to go.

"I had re-conned the area first and I called my wife up and said, 'Pat, I don't really need to go' and she said, 'Get up off your behind and go in there. You made it this far. It's just another step, that's all you've got to do. One more step, and you've got this, and you're going to leave a mark on this place,'" Alderman said.

No Longer in Denial

Alderman said for years he thought, "I'm tougher than a bucket of nails. I am the best trained Marine the Marine Corps has ever had. I've been a drill instructor and a sniper. I've killed more people in more ways than you can shake a stick at. I can suck it up."

But that day, he went up to the front door of Bay Pines and said, "I'm Jim Alderman, and I'm a United States Marine, and I'm here for help," he said, crying.

Alderman recommends Bay Pines and other programs like it to veterans who need help.

"I guarantee you, there's nobody tougher or more skeptical to do this than me and I would recommend anyone to just give it a shot," he said. "It's not going to be perfect. It's not going to be easy. There's going to be a lot of tears, a lot of heartaches, a lot of just hope and joy."

"And you need support," Alderman continued. "You're not going to do this by yourself. If you think you can figure it out by yourself, you'll be just like you are for the next 10, 20, 30 years to your family, to your friends and you start getting isolated more and more. You'll start disliking things you used to love to do. I sat in a chair for 15 years playing a video game. I really isolated myself to absolute oblivion. I had a 9 mm [pistol] sitting on my stand, right there, and I can't tell you how many times I thought about using it. And then I joined the VA."

Grateful for VA's Help

Wiping tears from his eyes, Alderman added, "I have absolute heartfelt gratitude. I just can't thank everybody in this place enough. I was kind of embarrassed to ask for help, especially something going on in my head. I was stuck in time, back in 1967. I'm not expecting to get cured. There's no way you're going to cure this but they gave me tools to handle it. If you come here and have the same experience I do, you'll leave here a better person. You'll have a little hope and purpose, that's all I was looking for."

Alderman recently graduated from Bay Pines and he plans to reach out to other veterans in his community outside of Orlando, Florida.

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/631151/florida-va-clinic-provides-care-for-vets-with-ptsd?source=GovDelivery>

31. Ernst, first female combat vet in Senate, retires from military

(1 Dec) The Hill, By Rebecca Kheel

Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), the first female combat veteran in the upper chamber, has retired from the military after 23 years.

Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), the first female combat veteran in the upper chamber, has retired from the military after 23 years.

"Today is my first day as a full-fledged civilian," Ernst told Iowa reporters Tuesday, according to The Des Moines Register.

Ernst, who officially ended her service in the Iowa Army National Guard on Monday, had announced her intention to retire from the military earlier this year. She has said it was difficult to balance her duties in the Senate with her duties to the military.

"Obviously, serving as a United States senator, it does take a lot of time, a lot of energy," she said Tuesday, according to the Register. "And of course I would love to spend more time with my family, as well."

In 2003, Ernst ran convoys in the Iraq War. Prior to being elected to the Senate, she commanded the largest battalion in the Iowa Army National Guard.

Her service was a key part of her Senate campaign, during which she made waves by saying she had been sexually harassed during her time in the military.

"This was very much a part of my life," she said Tuesday, "and it is very difficult for me to step away because of the great people I had the opportunity to work with."

<http://thehill.com/policy/defense/261639-ernst-first-female-combat-vet-in-senate-retires-from-military>