



DACOWITS: Articles of Interest 21 August 2015

WELLNESS

[Additional Information In Courts-Martial Results Of Trial](#)

(18 Aug) Navy Live Blog, By Office of the Judge Advocate General Public Affairs

Since 2013, we have released results of trial informing you about courts-martial in the Navy. We report the date, name, rank, crime, and adjudged sentence. The “adjudged sentence” is what the judge or members’ panel, commonly known as the jury, decides as the punishment for the crime(s). This month we are updating our practice and will now include a description of the pretrial agreement (if there is one in the case) and its effect on an adjudged sentence.

[Military Mom Returns From War to Discover She Must Fight for Custody of Kids](#)

(18 Aug) Yahoo Parenting, By Beth Greenfield

A Florida military veteran who served overseas in both Iraq and Afghanistan has returned home to find herself in another fight — this time for the custody of her two children.

[For Women In The Military, Birth Control Can Be A Battle](#)

(18 Aug) The Washington Post, By Michelle Andrews

Next year, the military will lift restrictions on women in combat, which may open up as many as 245,000 jobs that have been off limits to women. But women who deploy overseas may continue to face obstacles in another area that can have a critical impact on their military experience: contraception.

ASSIGNMENTS

[More enlisted women sought for sub duty by 2016](#)

(18 Aug) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

Wanted: more enlisted women for submarine service.

[As women finish Ranger course, military faces new pressure on gender barriers](#)

(18 Aug) The Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

The graduation this week of two female soldiers from the Army’s famously difficult Ranger School has put new pressure on the U.S. military to make women eligible to serve across its combat ranks, current and former U.S. officials said.

[These are the Army’s first female Ranger School graduates](#)

(18 Aug) The Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

For more than 120 days, Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver have ground it out at Ranger School, the Army’s famously difficult school designed to build elite leaders capable of withstanding the rigors of combat.

[Two Women Finish Ranger School](#)

(18 Aug) USA Today, By Jim Michaels

Two female soldiers will graduate from the Army’s legendary Ranger School this week, the first women to complete the course since it was opened to them on an experimental basis this year, the U.S. Army said Monday evening.

[Navy SEALs set to open to women, top admiral says](#)

(18 Aug) Navy Times, By David Larter and Meghann Myers

The Navy is planning to open its elite SEAL teams to women who can pass the grueling training regimen, the service’s top officer said Tuesday in an exclusive interview.

[A Few Brass Tacks: Why Gender Arguments Blind The Military To Bigger Problems](#)

(18 Aug) Foreign Policy, By Jim Gourley

In two recent essays on the subject of women in combat, Marine Captain Katey Van Dam directly addressed the issue of women’s physical aptitude for infantry combat.

[Lindsey Graham: Female Rangers have earned right to fight](#)

(18 Aug) The Gazette, By James Q. Lynch

If two women who have successfully completed the Army’s Ranger School are ready to go into combat, South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham won’t stop them.

New Military Pressure Over Gender Barriers

(19 Aug) Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

The historic achievement by the two women, who are expected to be awarded the prestigious Ranger Tab at a ceremony on Friday, comes amid a sweeping assessment at the Pentagon that is expected to lead to the removal of long-standing barriers to female soldiers across the armed services.

Meet The Women Who Survived Army's Ranger School

(19 Aug) Defense One, By Gayle Tzemach Lemmon and Kevin Baron

Their names are 1st Lt. Kristen Griest and Capt. Shaye Haver. They are the first women to ever have completed the U.S. Army Ranger School and on Friday they will affix the "Ranger tab" patch to their shoulders. According to the men who guided them through it, they are the real deal.

Officials: Military Likely To Open Most Combat Jobs To Women

(19 Aug) Associated Press, By Lolita C. Baldor

The military services are poised to allow women to serve in most front-line combat jobs, including special operations forces, senior officials told The Associated Press.

Marines lag behind in bringing women into ranks

(19 Aug) Stars & Stripes, By Heath Druzin

As barriers continue to fall, most recently with the historic graduation of two women from the Army's grueling Ranger School, just 7 percent of Marines are women, the lowest percentage of women of any branch of the military. That has much to do with the Marines emphasis on light infantry, but critics say it's also partly due to an ingrained change-averse culture.

To be SEALs, women will have to survive BUD/S

(19 Aug) Navy Times, By Sam Fellman

The Navy SEALs are pushing forward with a plan to integrate women into their storied commando teams. Officials say the arduous standards are to remain the same, standards that any future female SEAL candidates will have to face alongside men.

How did these two women become the first to complete Army Ranger School?

(19 Aug) The Washington Post, By Mary Jordan and Dan Lamothe

The two women who will graduate Friday from the Army's Ranger School did not seem particularly destined to break that gender barrier. Both were strong students and gifted athletes, like many others who emerge from high schools across the country every year. But they made their mark on the U.S. military this week by tapping rare levels of determination that intensified over time.

Everything you need to know about the Army's elite 75th Ranger Regiment

(19 Aug) SOFREP

The 75th Ranger Regiment is the US Army's premier airborne light infantry unit.

10th Mountain Gets First Female Brigadier

(19 Aug) 10th Mountain Division, By Army Spc. Osama Ayyad

Army Col. Diana Holland, the 10th Mountain Division's deputy commander for support, was promoted to brigadier general and became the first woman to serve as deputy commanding general in any Army light infantry division during a July 29 ceremony here.

Ranger School Success Reflects U.S. Military's Opening To Women

(20 Aug) Reuters, By David Alexander

When two women completed the daunting U.S. Army Ranger school this week they helped end questions about whether women can serve as combat leaders, as the Pentagon is poised to open new roles, including elite Navy SEALs, to women in coming months.

Women As Navy SEALs: Controversial Plan Presses Ahead

(20 Aug) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers and David Larter

The "Navy does not intend to request any exemptions" banning women from serving in special warfare positions, including as a SEAL commando, Cmdr. William Marks, a top Navy spokesman, told Navy Times Thursday.

Carter Calls For Services To Identify Specific Jobs Unsuitable For Women

(20 Aug) Defense Daily, By Dan Parsons

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter said Aug. 20 that all ground combat jobs will be open to women unless service chiefs can deliver convincing reasons, backed by data, that certain roles should remain closed in reports due Oct. 1.

Marines' decision on women in combat expected in weeks

(20 Aug) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

The Marine Corps is just weeks away from a decision on whether to open all combat jobs to women or ask for exceptions, a spokesman for Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford said Thursday.

2 Graduating Rangers, Aware Of Their Burden

(21 Aug) New York Times, By Richard A. Oppel Jr. and Helene Cooper

The Army, because it is by far the biggest service, has the most jobs closed to women. But that is where the graduations of Captain Griest and Lieutenant Haver, who showed an officer's poise and command of the stage at her appearance on Thursday, will come into play: Their success will diminish most arguments against women holding other combat positions, defense officials say.

EXTRA

Woman believed to be nation's oldest veteran dies at age 110

(17 Aug) Associated Press

A Michigan woman who was believed to be the nation's oldest veteran at 110 has died, about a month after meeting President Barack Obama in the Oval Office.

Study: Military Children More Prone To Risky Behavior

(18 Aug) Wall Street Journal, By Michelle Hackman

Children from military families were more likely than their nonmilitary peers to report potentially harmful situations or behaviors such as experiencing violence and harassment at school, experimenting with alcohol or drugs and carrying a weapon on school grounds, according to a study published Monday in the journal JAMA Pediatrics.

Marine enlisted leaders pushed to embrace social media

(18 Aug) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

Dozens of senior enlisted leaders attended a brief on social media over a buffet lunch at the annual Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps symposium last week. The message of the hour-long brief was straightforward: Marines communicate on social media. Their senior leaders can either join the conversation or be left out of it.

Transgender SEAL says Pentagon serious about changing policy

(20 Aug) Washington Examiner, By Jacqueline Klimas

Kristin Beck, a former Navy SEAL and now a transgender woman running for Congress, said Wednesday that the Pentagon is taking the secretary's order to look at lifting the ban on transgender service very seriously and doing a good job looking at issues each branch might face.

Additional Information In Courts-Martial Results Of Trial

(18 Aug) Navy Live Blog, By Office of the Judge Advocate General Public Affairs

Since 2013, we have released [results of trial](#) informing you about courts-martial in the Navy. We report the date, name, rank, crime, and adjudged sentence. The "adjudged sentence" is what the judge or members' panel, commonly known as the jury, decides as the punishment for the crime(s).

This month we are updating our practice and will now include a description of the pretrial agreement (if there is one in the case) and its effect on an adjudged sentence.

When we started publishing results of trial, we concluded each case synopsis with the adjudged sentence as the appropriate end-point. The adjudged sentence is the final judicial action that signals the completion of a trial.

However, in cases where the accused (generally known as the defendant) pleads guilty, it is most commonly with a pretrial agreement. This is very similar to a "plea agreement" in civilian courts. In both civilian and military courts, there are many reasons why these agreements are employed: certainty of outcome, greater finality of result, economy of court process, expedited timeline, and precludes necessity of victim testimony, thereby avoiding additional trauma.

A pretrial agreement is the result of measured negotiations between the accused (represented by defense counsel) and the convening authority, with input from the victim(s), the convening authority's attorney, and others.

An observer sitting in a courtroom listening to a service member plead guilty would often hear an additional discussion after the adjudged sentence was announced. The military judge would discuss with the parties any pretrial agreement and whether the adjudged sentence was affected by the pretrial agreement.

Starting with July 2015's results of trial, and in collaboration with the Marine Corps, the impact of any pretrial agreement on the adjudged sentence will be included in our results of trial synopsis. While sitting in the courtroom remains the best way to witness the variables and dynamics of a particular case first-hand, we believe that including information about whether and how an adjudged sentence is affected by a pretrial agreement will provide greater detail about the results of courts-martial.

We hope you will find this helpful to better understand our system.

The following reports the results of Special and General Courts-Martial tried and completed within the United States Navy in July 2015. The cases are listed by the Navy Region in which they were tried.

Naval District Washington

General Court-Martial

- At a General Court-Martial in Washington, D.C., HM3 Derek B. Hahn, USN was tried for sexual assault. On 20 July 2015, the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced him to be discharged with a Dishonorable Discharge, to forfeit all pay and allowances, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 6 months.

Special Court-Martial

- At a Special Court-Martial in Washington, D.C., YN1 Keithan Smith, USN was tried for unauthorized purchases with his government travel card, fraudulent claim, and failure to pay debts. On 1 July 2015, the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to all charges and sentenced him to a reprimand and restriction for 60 days.
- At a Special Court-Martial in Washington, D.C., HM3 Tyler J. Zarozinski, USN pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to false official statement and wearing unauthorized ribbons. On 24 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to a reprimand, to forfeit \$1,031 per month for 2 months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 60 days. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, confinement greater than 30 days is to be suspended. The suspended confinement may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.

Navy Region Mid-Atlantic

General Court-Martial

- At a General Court Martial in Norfolk, Virginia, an E-5 was tried for sexual assault and assault consummated by a battery. On 24 July 2015, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

Special Court-Martial

- At a Special Court-Martial in Norfolk, Virginia, MM3 Cassi L. Leonard, USN pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to unauthorized absence, failure to obey a lawful order, and wrongful use of a controlled substance. On 16 July 2015, the military judge sentenced her to be discharged with a Bad Conduct Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 4 months. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, confinement greater than time served is to be suspended. The suspended confinement may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.
- At a Special Court-Martial in Norfolk, Virginia, CTT2 Heather B. McCrea, USN was tried for wrongful use of a controlled substance. On 29 July 2015, the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced her to a reprimand, to forfeit \$1,020 per month for 4 months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 4 months.

Navy Region Southeast

General Court-Martial

- At a General Court-Martial in Pensacola, Florida, an E-4, USN, was tried for abusive sexual contact. On 15 July 2015, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.
- At a General Court-Martial in Mayport, Florida, MT2 Jonathan M. Ashby, USN, pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to violating a lawful general regulation. On 23 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 4 months. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, confinement greater than 90 days is to be suspended. The suspended confinement may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.
- At a General Court-Martial in Pensacola, Florida, LT Jason R. Panos, USN was tried for attempting to violate a lawful general order, violating a lawful general order, making a false official statement, abusive sexual contact, and assault. On 31 July 2015, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty to the charges of making a false official statement and assault, but returned a verdict of guilty for the charges of attempting to violate a lawful general order, violating a lawful general order, and abusive sexual contact. On 31 July 2015, the panel of members sentenced him to a reprimand, to forfeit \$2,000 per month for 6 months, and restriction for 1 month.

Special Court-Martial

- At a Special Court-Martial in Jacksonville, Florida, AD1 Felix RiosMcConnell, USN was tried for unauthorized absence, failure to obey a lawful general order, and solicitation of a prostitute. On 30 June 2015, the military judge dismissed the charges of unauthorized absence and solicitation of a prostitute, but returned a verdict of guilty for failure to obey a lawful general order. On 1 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to a reprimand, to forfeit \$1,000 per month for 6 months, and hard labor for 30 days.
- At a Special Court-Martial in Mayport, Florida, GSE3 Benjamin C. Leighton, USN pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to violating a lawful general regulation, wrongful distribution of a Schedule I controlled substance, and obstruction of justice. On 23 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a Bad Conduct Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 7 months. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.
- At a Special Court-Martial in Pensacola, Florida, YN2 Lawrence S. Newman, USN pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to violation of a lawful general regulation, larceny, and dishonorably failing to pay a debt. On 27 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a Bad Conduct Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 7 months. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, confinement greater than 4 months is to be suspended. The suspended

confinement may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.

Navy Region Southwest

General Court-Martial

- At a General Court-Martial in San Diego, California, LT Ernest M. Thompson, USN pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to conspiracy to commit larceny, wrongfully selling military property, and larceny. On 8 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to a reprimand, a fine of \$23,000, and confinement for 364 days. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.

Special Court-Martial

- At a Special Court-Martial in San Diego, California, LSSA Edgar J. G. Urieta, USN pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to breaking restriction. On 1 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to forfeit \$500 per month for 1 month, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 25 days. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, the forfeiture is to be disapproved.
- At a Special Court-Martial in San Diego, California, BM2 Brian M. White, USN pled guilty pursuant to pretrial agreement to false official statements and damaging non-military property. On 2 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-4, and confinement for 20 days. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.
- At a Special Court-Martial in San Diego, California, SN Khalil K. Alexander, USN pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to assault consummated by a battery. On 16 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to a reprimand, reduction in rank to paygrade E-2, and restriction for 45 days. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.

- At a Special Court-Martial in San Diego, California, CM3 Dylan J. Kilby, USN pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to conspiracy to commit larceny and larceny. On 21 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-3, a fine of \$2,000, and confinement for 45 days. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.

Navy Region Hawaii

Special Court-Martial

- At a Special Court-Martial in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, MM3 Charles E. Dreisewerd, USN, pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to wrongful use of cocaine. On 2 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a Bad Conduct Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 60 days. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, the Bad Conduct Discharge is to be disapproved.

Navy Region Japan

Special Court-Martial

- At a Special Court-Martial in Yokosuka, Japan, an E-5 was tried for an assault consummated by a battery. On 15 July 2015, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia

Special Court-Martial

- At a Special Court-Martial in Naples, Italy, PS1 Carl S. Blanchard, pled guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to false official statement and larceny. On 15 July 2015, the military judge sentenced him to a fine of \$25,000 and confinement for 140 days. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.

<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2015/08/17/additional-information-in-courts-martial-results-of-trial/>

Military Mom Returns From War to Discover She Must Fight for Custody of Kids

(18 Aug) Yahoo Parenting, By Beth Greenfield

A Florida military veteran who served overseas in both Iraq and Afghanistan has returned home to find herself in another fight — this time for the custody of her two children, ages 13 and 14.

“I want my kids back,” Amanda Hurst of Orange City told [Bay News 9](#). “I want to be with my kids. I’ve missed so much of their lives serving my country that I don’t want to miss any more.”

Hurst’s attorney, Brad Sherman, tells Yahoo Parenting that Hurst “went into the service to gain control over her life.” She was still married at the time to her second husband and the father of her children, and they all lived together at her first duty station, Fort Drum, until her first deployment to Iraq in 2009. “I was scared, I’m not going to lie,” she tells Yahoo Parenting about being sent overseas.

While in Iraq, Hurst was notified about a “family situation” involving her then-husband, and had to return home on emergency leave, which gave her two weeks to figure out who would be responsible for her children while she finished her deployment. Her husband was “not stable” (and “in and out of jail,” Sherman notes), and they soon split. Hurst decided that her kids would remain in the temporary care of Hurst’s stepmom before returning to Iraq, where she was told she’d be redeployed to Afghanistan within the year.

“I chose to stay in the military because as a single mom, it was a way for me to provide for them,” she says. She added that she kept them with her stepmom the whole time because “they needed stability,” although it was “a hard decision to make.”

But between that time and Hurst’s return home in 2013, Sherman says, the stepmom became estranged from some family members, took the children, and moved to New

Jersey without legal permission. There, the children needed emergency mental-health services because of extreme behavioral issues and wound up in the care of the state. They remain in foster care.

Now, although judges in both states agree that the children should be in Florida with their mother, that determination hinges on Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) agreeing to provide the same or comparable services that the kids have received in New Jersey. And this week, Florida's DCF filed paperwork challenging that. "It's astounding," says Sherman. "She's the mother, but Florida DCF doesn't care, and just doesn't want to be told when to initiate services."

A spokesperson for Florida DCF tells Yahoo Parenting the agency is unable to comment because information regarding the case is "confidential."

Sherman, who deals with all sorts of custody cases, calls this one more "unusual" than most. "The New Jersey judge is clearly undermining Amanda's due-process rights and has limited them without any factual basis of her unfitness. If she had more funds for legal fees, she would be able to fight this more easily, which is very unfair."

For Women In The Military, Birth Control Can Be A Battle

(18 Aug) The Washington Post, By Michelle Andrews

Next year, the military will lift restrictions on women in combat, which may open up as many as 245,000 jobs that have been off limits to women. But women who deploy overseas may continue to face obstacles in another area that can have a critical impact on their military experience: contraception.

It's not a minor issue. Rates of unintended pregnancy among women in the military are 50 percent higher than those of women in the general population. And because of federal rules, their insurance does not generally cover abortion.

Tricare, the health-care plan for more than 9 million active and retired members of the military, covers most contraceptive methods approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Active-duty service members pay nothing out of pocket. Spouses and dependents of service members may face copayments in some instances.

But all methods aren't necessarily available at every military hospital and clinic, and overseas, for example, women may have difficulty getting refills of their specific type of birth control pill.

Nancy Duff Campbell, copresident of the National Women's Law Center, says, "It is unfortunate that here we have the military, that has one of the best health-care systems in the country, and where we still have a gap in contraception."

Fifteen percent of active-duty service members are women, and 97 percent of them are of childbearing age.

Unintended Pregnancies

The case certainly raises many questions and is indeed "very unusual," according to Kelly Hruska, government relations director with the [National Military Family Association](#), a nonprofit advocacy organization. Child-custody battles among military parents, she says, are typically avoided with the implementation of something called a [Family Care Plan](#) — required for all military service members who are single. (Hurst says that she did have a Family Care Plan by the end of her duty, after divorcing her husband.)

"That stipulates, should they be deployed, who will be in charge," Hruska explains. "We always tell people they need to have a Family Care Plan that spells out all the arrangements, though you wouldn't necessarily have that in a case like this, since it was not a contentious relationship [between Hurst and her stepmom]. And here, she's battling the state."

Meanwhile, a hearing is scheduled for this week in the hopes of determining if and when Hurst's children might return to Florida. "I hope that one day, when they are older," Hurst told Bay News 9, "they understand that Mom didn't give up."

<https://www.yahoo.com/parenting/military-mom-returns-from-war-to-discover-she-must-127011236577.html>

In a 2013 study, based on more than 28,000 responses to a Department of Defense survey, researchers found that after adjusting for the larger concentration of young women in the military, the rate of unintended pregnancy among military women was 7.8 percent, compared with 5.2 percent among women in the general population.

"It's critically important to address unintended pregnancy in the military, because it can be particularly damaging to women's careers, and it's hard to access abortion care," says Daniel Grossman, a study co-author who is vice president for research at Ibis Reproductive Health, a research and advocacy group.

Abortion is provided at a military facility or covered by military health care only if a woman's life is in danger or if the pregnancy is a result of incest or rape. Women who want an abortion in other circumstances must use a nonmilitary health-care provider and pay for the procedure out of pocket, according to Department of Defense health officials.

Coverage for emergency contraception, meanwhile, has recently been expanded to all active-duty servicewomen and female beneficiaries without cost sharing.

It can be challenging to use contraceptives while deployed overseas for many reasons. There is the problem of trying to schedule a daily birth control pill when traveling across time zones, and desert conditions may make a contraceptive patch fall off. Women are allowed a 180-day supply of contraceptives before deploying. But obtaining refills of the

same pill can be difficult, some women reported in a 2010 survey about access to contraception during deployment.

Little Counseling

Sixty-three percent of the 281 women surveyed – who because of the design of the survey were not necessarily representative of all military women – said they used birth control for at least part of their deployment, and a majority noted that they weren't counseled about using contraception for either pregnancy prevention or menstrual suppression before deploying.

Pre-deployment counseling that specifically addresses contraception could help counter confusion and ensure that women have access to birth control methods that meet their needs, say advocates and policymakers with expertise in women's health in the military.

Contraceptive and reproductive counseling is a covered benefit under Tricare, according to military health system officials, and it is an expected component of good clinical practice.

More enlisted women sought for sub duty by 2016

(18 Aug) *Navy Times*, By Mark D. Faram

Wanted: more enlisted women for submarine service.

A month after announcing the first 38 women picked for subs, Navy officials are renewing the call for enlisted female volunteers.

Applications are due to Navy Personnel Command by Dec. 15 and selections will be made in January.

"This round of conversions will be for the selection of the initial group of sailors to integrate the next submarine crews in 2017 in Kings Bay," Georgia, said Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Bill Moran in a naval message that called for more volunteers.

Enlisted women will begin to join the crews of the guided-missile submarine Michigan in 2016. The Florida's integration will come in fiscal 2017.

But it will take three more years — until 2020 — for females to arrive aboard Virginia-class attack submarines. The yet-to-be-named 23rd Virginia-class boat — designated SSN-796 — will be the first built to have female crewmembers.

"Our plan has always been to proceed in a thoughtful and deliberate fashion," said Rear Adm. Randy Crites, the head of Submarine Group 10 who's overseeing the integration task force. "I am absolutely confident that our efforts to date have been consistent with this overarching theme, and we'll stay the course going forward."

The recruiting effort starts with finding experienced fleet female sailors to convert into the silent service. Soon, officials

The House and Senate versions of the Pentagon's spending bill for the coming fiscal year contain measures that would affect contraception coverage in the military. The Senate version of the bill would guarantee family planning education and counseling, while the House version would make available a broad range of FDA approved contraceptives at military treatment facilities and ensure that women have enough contraceptives to last for the duration of their deployment. A congressional conference committee is working to write a compromise between those two bills.

Defense Department officials said they had no comment on the pending legislation.

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http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/contraception-in-combat-zones/2015/08/17/1d6cc2a8-405c-11e5-8d45-d815146f81fa_story.html

plan to begin start efforts to persuade female recruits to go subs.

"Our target was to have an even distribution of ratings and paygrades with females ultimately comprising 20 percent of a given crew," Crites said in an Aug. 13 phone interview. "This cohort size and composition was informed by a Center for Naval Analysis study on integration of women in submarines."

"To do this right, you need to have women with different levels of maturity, leadership and professional ability and we're starting from scratch — it's going to take time, I think as long as 10 years, before we'll have a [female] pool of sailors from the lowest pay grades all the way up to senior, so [that] we're self sustaining in this," he said. "I think that's the hardest thing but then, we'll need to retain enough of these folks along the way."

For now, Crites says this means there will be a steady drumbeat to recruit females from the fleet and the street, put them into the training pipeline and get them to specific crews.

Seeking the best

As more submarines are identified and modified for women, future policies will be set. The integration effort began when small cadres of female officers started reporting to Ohio-class subs in late 2011; these officers will serve as mentors for the enlisted women the force is now recruiting.

The numbers from the first round saw 113 women apply, Crites said. Seventeen chief petty officers and 91 E-6 and below got a look by the selection panel. Of those, 108 — 91

petty officers and 17 chiefs — were ruled as qualified for undersea service.

In the end, four chiefs and 34 petty officers were selected as what Crites calls "primary selectee candidates" and are first in line to integrate the Michigan's rotating Blue and Gold crews. The remaining 70 sailors are still in the mix, Crites said. Those 57 petty officers and 13 chiefs are being called "secondary selectee candidates" and will be used as alternates if any of the initial cadre drop out of training.

"All secondary selectee candidates will be considered in this application cycle if they so desire," Crites said.

Those applicants do not have to reapply. Their records are set for the next panel — but they can ask to opt out of the process.

"It wasn't easy to narrow down the tremendous choices of highly skilled and talented women to fill a fixed number of billets," Crites said. "Every single one of the sailors who applied were the best of the best within their communities."

The standards, Crites says, are exactly the same as for male peers. The women will have to face months of rigorous training and qualifications to attain their silver dolphin pin — and aren't going to get a pass for any reason.

"The question I would ask all candidates is why they want to be a submariner," Crites said. "We are looking for motivated, technically competent, professional Sailors who are passionate about committing their absolute best toward excellence in the submarine force."

As with changing ratings in the enlisted force, it's easier, officials say, to convert earlier in a career than later — but with the sub force looking to find females from E-1 through E-8, some exceptions are being made.

"For chief petty officers, the goal was to accept them into the submarine community with minimal additional training required," Crites said.

For that reason, fewer ratings are open to women and in the second round, applications being sought from women in ratings like yeoman; culinary specialist; hospital corpsman; logistics specialist; and information systems technician. To apply, though, chiefs in the IT rating must already hold one of three Navy Enlisted Classifications — 2780, 2781, or 2791.

Chiefs in the personnel specialist rating are encouraged to apply — as senior admin types, they'll be able to convert to submarine yeoman easily.

E-6 and below female have a few more options available to them, as they've got more time to settle into a new career path and be competitive to advance up to chief.

Junior enlisted women from any surface, aviation or other Navy rating can apply to convert to submarine ratings of sonar technician; fire control technician; machinists mate-weapons;

machinists mate-auxiliary; missile technician; electronics technician-navigation; and electronics technician-communications.

Non-designated females can also strike for submarine ratings.

"We didn't receive as many applications from undesignated Sailors in Professional Apprenticeship Career Tracks as we initially anticipated," Crites said. "We learned that the information we were putting out about the selection process made many junior undesignated Sailors think they wouldn't be eligible for selection."

But one cadre of enlisted women aren't being considered for conversion into the submarine force — those from the surface nuclear power ratings.

What's not clear is why, and officials haven't explained their reasons. But sources tell Navy Times it's a function of the current manning in the surface ratings — they're all critical and net large bonuses to re-up.

In addition, the percentage of women in surface nuclear power is well below Navy averages. Only around 12 percent of the surface nuclear machinist's mate rating are women and nuclear electronics technicians and electrician's mates have between six and seven percent women in those career fields.

To switch from surface to a submarine nuclear rating would require some retraining. They'd be required to complete training on the specific reactors they'd encounter on the submarines, by going through prototype training.

But apparently this won't be done for enlisted females due to rating manpower concerns as well as retraining times in the surface force, sources say.

Instead, all female submarine nuclear power sailors will come from the initial entry pipeline Crites said. That effort is separate from the current fleet recruiting program, which is targeted at non-nuclear ratings and officials did not confirm if it was underway yet.

Non-nuclear Sailors recruited from the street must attend submarine training prior to beginning the non-nuclear submarine rating training pipeline. For nuclear-trained sailors, it's a bit different: They aren't selected for submarines until they finish nuclear power school.

Lots of planning by submarine and surface community managers went into deciding the ratings to open to women, Crites said.

"We looked at the overall health of each rating and the impact conversions would have," he said. This included both the ratings they would leave as well as those they would enter in the submarine force."

Crites says the submarine community was sensitive about that from the start and care was taken not to hurt any rating health.

“There was some uncertainty as to how other communities would perceive this effort or whether there would be sufficient interest on the part of women who would eagerly request conversion into the submarine force,” he said. “In the end we had an overwhelmingly positive reaction from both the

leadership ... and from the quality female sailors who are excited about joining our community.”

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/careers/navy/enlist/d/2015/08/14/more-enlisted-women-sought-sub-duty-2016/31730615/>

As women finish Ranger course, military faces new pressure on gender barriers

(18 Aug) The Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

The graduation this week of two female soldiers from the Army’s famously difficult Ranger School has put new pressure on the U.S. military to make women eligible to serve across its combat ranks, current and former U.S. officials said. The historic achievement by the two women, who are expected to be awarded the prestigious Ranger Tab at a ceremony on Friday, comes amid a sweeping assessment at the Pentagon that is expected to lead to the removal of long-standing barriers to female soldiers across the armed services. How far and fast those gender boundaries shift is expected to become evident within months, when each branch of the military is required to submit a petition to senior leaders in the Pentagon listing the dwindling set of jobs that they want to remain all-male, with detailed justifications required for every category from which women would be excluded.

There are already emerging signals on how some of the services plan to proceed. Each of the services is considering changes to physical requirements for certain positions that could enable greater female participation — a move that some have resisted out of concern that it would erode standards in place for decades.

The Army’s decision to allow women to attend Ranger School this year was seen by many as an unambiguous signal from a military branch that nevertheless has yet to allow females to serve in its elite units, including its 75th Ranger Regiment, a light-infantry force of about 3,600 soldiers.

The graduations this week of Kristen Griest, a military police officer from Orange, Conn., and Shaye Haver, an Apache helicopter pilot from Copperas Cove, Tex., make that ban on female Rangers increasingly precarious and could accelerate broader changes across the Army.

The completion of the Ranger course by two female West Point graduates punches holes in arguments that women are not capable of serving in the infantry or other physically demanding jobs, said retired Army Lt. Gen. David Barno, who commanded troops as a general in Afghanistan and served earlier in his career in Ranger battalions.

“From the first moment a woman pins on a Ranger Tab,” Barno said, “it is game over on the discussion about keeping women out of the military.”

In 2013, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta lifted a long-standing ban on women serving in combat roles but gave each of the armed forces until January 2016 to seek exemptions for certain jobs to remain male-only. Under Panetta’s order, the chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines would have to formally justify why those positions should remain closed to women.

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter, a civilian who never served in the military, is expected to rule on each request by

January with guidance and feedback from senior military officials. Marine Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, a Ranger School graduate and veteran infantryman, also is expected to have a leading role after taking over as the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in October.

Today, about 220,000 positions are open only to men. Virtually all are in the Army and Marine Corps, including infantry and armor units that fight on the front lines. Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said that the department has opened 111,000 positions to women since rescinding the gender ban last year and is poised to add thousands more jobs in the coming months. Overall, women make up about 14 percent of the active-duty military. The Marine Corps, which is 7 percent female, is the least integrated of the services and has been the most resistant to change.

The Army, Navy and Air Force are not expected to seek any exceptions to keep women out of combat jobs, the Associated Press reported Tuesday, citing officials who are aware of preliminary talks in the Pentagon.

Even the U.S. Special Operations Command is expected to allow women to compete for a broader array of jobs. If so, elite forces ranging from the Navy SEALs to the Army’s highly selective Delta Force could be open to women if they can meet the rigorous criteria to join those units.

Only the Marine Corps appears ready to resist the sweeping changes to gender roles, particularly in its infantry, where there is resentment of the idea from some leaders.

The Special Operations Command is also weighing changes to physical standards that could otherwise serve as a major barrier to female participation even if there is no longer a policy constraint. The review was launched to improve the process to select both men and women for the positions while reducing injuries, said Army Lt. Col. Robert Bockholt, a SOCOM spokesman.

The news is likely to be met with a mixed reaction among veterans and active-duty service members. “We understand that this will take time,” Bockholt said. “We want to get this right.”

The completion of the Ranger course by Griest and Haver was a particularly influential development, in part because of the stature associated with the Ranger name, a term whose history in America predates the Revolutionary War.

The Army has declined to identify the women so far, but The Washington Post was able to do so after observing Griest and Haver intermittently in Ranger School training in recent months. Both needed four months to complete the course, which includes parachuting, mountaineering, small-boat operations and patrolling at bases in Florida and Georgia. Of 19 women who entered the training in April, only Griest and Haver have so far finished. A third female soldier remains in training, but the others have washed out.

Completing Ranger School, however, does not necessarily lead to assignments in the Ranger Regiment for its graduates. The school is considered the service's premier leadership course and is attended by many service members each year who will never become part of the Ranger Regiment. Instead, they will serve in roles that include infantrymen, military police officers and helicopter pilots — returning to their units with a designation that helps them advance when under consideration for promotion.

The Ranger Regiment does not require all of its soldiers to attend Ranger School, but most eventually do. All leaders typically are required to before assuming their new positions of authority. The regiment also has its own training and assessment, including the difficult eight-week Ranger Assessment and Selection Program.

Barno said there has long been resistance to integrating the infantry, but he considers many of the objections to be based on flawed cultural arguments that men and women cannot coexist in a battlefield environment. They include concerns about privacy and mental toughness.

These are the Army's first female Ranger School graduates

(18 Aug) The Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

For more than 120 days, Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver have ground it out at Ranger School, the Army's famously difficult school designed to build elite leaders capable of withstanding the rigors of combat. They've withstood fearsome weather, exhausting hikes, sleepless nights and simulated combat patrols designed to test their reaction time, teamwork and tenacity under fire.

On Friday, the two women will become the first female soldiers ever to graduate from the course at Fort Benning, Ga., receiving the coveted black and yellow Ranger Tab alongside 94 male counterparts. Griest, a military police officer from Orange, Conn., and Haver, an Apache helicopter pilot from Copperas Cove, Tex., are among a group of 20 women who qualified to attend the first gender-integrated Ranger School beginning April 20, and the only two female soldiers to complete it to date.

The graduation of Haver and Griest, both in their 20s and alumnae of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., increases pressure on the Army to integrate women into more combat jobs. They have not previously been identified by the Army, but The Washington Post, [Christian Science Monitor](#) and [Columbus Ledger-Enquirer in Georgia](#) were able to do so after observing Ranger School training several times this year.

Ranger School was opened to women for the first time in April as the Army assesses how to integrate women into more jobs in combat units across the service. That followed a January 2013 decision by senior Pentagon leaders to open all jobs to women, with the services granted until this fall to make recommendations on whether anything should remain closed. Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter is expected to rule on each request by Jan. 1.

The women — like some of their male counterparts — faced an arduous process leading into graduation. One of the 20 who qualified opted not to attend before the training even started,

If “there is an argument beyond the physical requirements to be made, I haven't heard it yet,” Barno said of integrating women. “They've shown they can do it.”

In part to test a broader transition in gender roles, the various branches of the military have opened training programs to women over the past couple of years and tracked the results.

The Marines opened up its Infantry Officer Course at Quantico, Va., well as its infantry training program at Camp Geiger, N.C. [None of the 29 women who attempted the officer course passed](#), but about 44 percent of 240 female volunteers completed enlisted infantry training.

Craig Whitlock contributed to this report.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/as-women-finish-ranger-course-army-faces-new-pressure-on-gender-barriers/2015/08/18/a2811e4c-45db-11e5-8ab4-c73967a143d3_story.html

and the others were whittled to eight female soldiers within days following an initial four-day assessment that requirements ranging from chin-ups and push-ups to an exhausting 12-mile road march through Fort Benning's hills while carrying a full combat load.

All eight women then failed the first Darby Phase twice, and only three — Griest, Haver and the third remaining soldier still in the mountaineering phase — were allowed to try Ranger School again. They do so as a “Day 1 recycle,” an option that is offered on occasion to both men and women who excel in some aspects of Ranger School but fall short in something specific that can be improved.

Staying in training allowed the women to continue — but also drastically lengthened how long they were subjected to the physical rigors and lack of sleep and food associated with Ranger School. Any student who completes each phase of training on the first try graduates in about two months. Griest and Haver and a handful of their male colleagues took four, with the remaining woman not able to graduate earlier than Sept. 18 if she continues to advance.

Haver graduated high school in Texas in 2008 with Washington Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III as one of her classmates, [according to a story in her hometown newspaper](#), the Copperas Cove Herald. She ran cross country in high school, and graduated from West Point in 2012.

Griest was the distinguished honor graduate last December in a preparatory pre-Ranger School course run by her unit, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, [according to a Facebook page for her unit](#). She also [has run competitively](#), and graduated from West Point in 2011. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/08/18/these-are-the-armys-first-female-ranger-school-graduates/>

Two Women Finish Ranger School

(18 Aug) USA Today, By Jim Michaels

Two female soldiers will graduate from the Army's legendary Ranger School this week, the first women to complete the course since it was opened to them on an experimental basis this year, the U.S. Army said Monday evening.

The two were part of a group of 19 female soldiers who passed a rigorous screening process to begin the physically demanding course that had been closed to women since it opened more than six decades ago.

Another woman remains enrolled but is further back in the training cycle.

The graduation Friday will mark a key milestone in the military's ongoing efforts to open front-line combat units to women. The services have pledged to do so without compromising standards.

Students in the grueling two-month course are required to survive on little food and sleep despite demanding physical activity, including carrying more than 100 pounds of gear through mountains and swamps. Ranger School is the Army's most physically challenging course.

The women started the regimen in April, but like many men, they were required to retake a phase of the course if they didn't pass on the first go.

Navy SEALs set to open to women, top admiral says

(18 Aug) Navy Times, By David Larter and Meghann Myers

The Navy is planning to open its elite SEAL teams to women who can pass the grueling training regimen, the service's top officer said Tuesday in an exclusive interview.

Adm. Jon Greenert said he and the head of Naval Special Warfare Command, Rear Adm. Brian Losey, believe that if women can pass the legendary six-month Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training, they should be allowed to serve.

"Why shouldn't anybody who can meet these [standards] be accepted? And the answer is, there is no reason," Greenert said Tuesday in an exclusive interview with Navy Times' sister publication Defense News. "So we're on a track to say, 'Hey look, anybody who can meet the gender non-specific standards, then you can become a SEAL.'"

The push to integrate the storied SEAL brotherhood is coming on the heels of a comprehensive review led by Losey, the head of Naval Special Warfare Command, that recommended women be allowed under the same exacting standards required of male candidates. Final approval is still pending. The Army and Air Force are also moving to open all combat jobs to women, according to officials who spoke to the Associated Press. It's believed the Marine Corps may seek to keep its ground combat jobs, including the infantry, male-only.

The move to integrate the military's most storied commando units comes the day after news broke that two women had

graduated get to wear the coveted Ranger tab, which signifies their completion of the Army's premier small-unit leadership course for the infantry and other front-line troops.

"Each Ranger School graduate has shown the physical and mental toughness to successfully lead organizations at any level," Army Secretary John McHugh said in a statement. "This course has proven that every soldier, regardless of gender, can achieve his or her full potential."

But the women will not be able to join the infantry or other so-called ground combat jobs, including the Ranger regiment, which remain closed to women, at least through this year.

Opening the course to women is part of an assessment that all services have been ordered to undertake to determine how best to open the infantry, special operations forces and other ground combat jobs by next year. The Pentagon has ordered that all occupations be open to women after this year.

The services can request a waiver from some jobs but would need to provide an extensive justification for doing so.

The military services have been steadily opening jobs to women over recent years, but the infantry and special operations fields are the most physically demanding.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/08/17/army-ranger-school-women-graduate/31887987/>

passed the Army's arduous Ranger course. Nineteen women began the course, which has about a 45 percent passing rate.

The Navy has said it is on track to open all ratings to women by next year, but this is the first indication that the SEALs are leaning toward accepting candidates. Greenert didn't specify a timeline for allowing women candidates into BUD/S training.

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command is also conducting a review of its standards with an eye to including women, according to MARSOC head Maj. Gen. Joseph Osterman.

The SEALs would be the latest, and the last, of the traditionally male-only branches to open to women during Mabus' tenure.

In 2011, the first female officers reported to ballistic missile submarines, and early this year several more reported to Virginia-class attack subs. Enlisted women are on track to join them next year and the service is already recruiting enlisted women off the streets to enter submarine ratings.

And in 2012, riverine training opened to women, making way for the go-ahead to assign them to billets and deploy them last year.

It's not clear how many women will attempt to join the SEALs when it opens to them. The percentage of women in

expeditionary specialties, like Seabees and Navy divers, are exceedingly low.

Out of an end strength of 1,153, there are only seven female Navy divers – just .61 percent of the force. And there are only 10 women in the Explosive Ordnance Disposal community of the 1,094 total enlisted sailors.

EOD officers fill billets at EOD and fleet diver commands – billets that have also been open to women for decades – but less than 3 percent of those billets are held by women.

A Few Brass Tacks: Why Gender Arguments Blind The Military To Bigger Problems

(18 Aug) Foreign Policy, By Jim Gourley

In two recent essays on the subject of women in combat, Marine Captain Katey Van Dam directly addressed the issue of women's physical aptitude for infantry combat. She is justified in taking up the case because so many opponents have used the matter of physicality as an argument against their presence in infantry units. However, no matter how well either side presents its view, both sexes have much more in common physically than they realize. What they share is a lack of physical ability that constitutes a dangerous threat to ground troops' battlefield success.

On the same day that Van Dam's piece appeared on "War on the Rocks," NPR aired a story about women Marines undergoing infantry training to assess their aptitude for front line duty. The story noted that while only one woman dropped out of live-fire training at Twenty-nine Palms, nearly half the women who started the course failed during the first week of training at Camp Lejeune due to hip and leg fractures as a result of load bearing activities. Noting he "wasn't surprised" by the injury rate, Marine Captain Ray Kaster further commented that "The load obviously is something the majority of them are not used to. We're all different. And that's one of the things we're here to do, to show what are those differences, and do they affect the readiness, what toll on the readiness of the infantry small unit does that have."

Kaster can't be more wrong. While decades of studies show that there are differences in the skeletal injury rates of male and female recruits in military training (.pdf), the data point that should capture the military's attention is the disturbingly high aggregate rate. If Kaster was not surprised at the number of women who sustained fractures in the first week of training, perhaps he would be by Army Captain Daniel Kearney's remark in the Sebastian Junger documentary *Korengal* that fifteen of his men sustained broken ankles during a combat deployment to Afghanistan. In the current debate the inevitable question becomes whether a platoon of physically qualified women have fared better in that terrain. The question doesn't merit a response because of its inherent flaw – what exactly do we mean by "physically qualified?"

It is no mean issue. Consider how meeting current physical fitness requirements safeguards any infantry troops from sustaining those kinds of injuries. The only absolute performance metrics to qualify for infantry duty are the USMC and U.S. Army physical fitness tests, marksmanship certification, and some basic water survival and foot marching events. Front line infantry personnel and military medicine

Marine Corps Times Staff Writer Hope Hodge Seck contributed to this report.

[View Clip](#) (RT: 0:44)

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/08/18/women-seals-greenert-losey-buds/31943243/>

experts alike know that none of these tests approximate the demands of combat. The common refrain is that "we train to the test." Consequently, whether our platoons are staffed with infantrymen or infantrywomen, the only true physical qualifications they meet are to conduct a battery of pull ups, pushups, sit-ups, and a short endurance run. Our political and military leadership have determined to close the gender gap. What they fail to comprehend is that our military faces a combat gap. Training is not emulating battle, and sending untrained troops onto the battlefield costs us dearly in blood and treasure.

The evidence provides a much stronger indication that women's difficulty in passing the physical criteria for infantry duty is a consequence of societal norms and a lack of adequate preparation during the critical years of adolescence rather than their chromosomal arrangement. A 2012 study by the Centers for Disease Control found that women are less than half as likely as men to exercise for 30 minutes a day. Regular exercise is a strong correlate to bone strength, and the greatest amount of bone development occurs during the first five years of life. While no scientific study was undertaken to determine the cause of women's lack of exercise, researchers observed that sociological factors such as different parental attitudes toward allowing boys and girls playing outside had an impact. These trends continue in the public education system, where physical education time has been cut to abysmal levels with up to 20% of students in some states getting no time at all for physical activity. Of concern to women's physical fitness, biases toward boys seem to persist even when physical education standards are increased. However, these same trends toward a sedentary lifestyle are similarly diminishing the physical aptitude of male infantry candidates.

The military cannot manufacture qualified personnel from scratch. The raw material comes from American society, and the quality of recruits has sharply declined in the last twenty years. A remarkable corollary to this is the U.S. Navy's dilemma in recruiting more African Americans into the SEALs. Their efforts to target college athletes may not be digging far enough into the youth of an ethnic group with a historically tragic problem of children drowning. The reason goes back to the 1960s when segregation kept blacks out of public pools. Though such laws were repealed, not enough pools were ever built in traditionally black communities. We currently have as many black SEAL officers as we do black Olympic swimmers for the same reason, and it has nothing to do with genetics. African Americans simply aren't introduced

to swimming in sufficient numbers to foster an interested talent pool. Pick a metric for physical qualification and you can draw lines between multiple groups based on race, geographic location, and socioeconomic background. Yet each case is just another tree in a greater forest of physically unfit recruits.

The American military has been nominally aware of this problem for years, thanks in large part to the advocacy group Mission: Readiness. Its 2012 report “Too Fat to Fight” offered a sobering outlook of American youths’ physical aptitude for military service, estimating that less than 30% met weight standards. But as leaders at the military’s physical fitness training institutions have discovered, the problem is much worse than obesity. Recruits today lack the fundamental motor skills to safely negotiate an obstacle course. An appallingly small fraction of them can pass the same fitness test that their grandfathers did before going off to fight WWII. The military’s challenge to overcome these discrepancies is compounded by American society’s lack of emphasis on physical fitness.

But the military hamstringing itself by persisting in its outmoded approach to fitness. So long as it accepts the current standards of physical fitness as qualifications for infantry combat, service members of every demographic are placed at risk due to inadequate training. The armed forces are only now putting forth a dedicated effort to assess and quantify metrics for the physical demands of various military specialties. There is no telling how long it will take to produce sufficient documentation to articulate specific job demands, let alone the amount of time the military will take to adapt its physical training doctrine to better prepare troops for their tasks. But delays in these efforts only further reflect subconscious bias within the armed forces regarding physical ability. The Global War on Terror spurred the Defense Department to initiate innumerable “crash programs” in weapons and vehicle procurement to better provide for service members’ safety and success. Meanwhile, the very best rehabilitative physical therapy programs are reserved for special operations forces.

Lindsey Graham: Female Rangers have earned right to fight

(18 Aug) The Gazette, By James Q. Lynch

If two women who have successfully completed the Army’s Ranger School are ready to go into combat, South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham won’t stop them.

“They did something I couldn’t do. So who am I to tell them ‘no,’ ” the 2016 GOP presidential hopeful said about two women who are set to become the first female graduates of the training program at Fort Benning, Ga. Unlike their male counterparts, the women are not eligible to join the 75th Ranger Regiment that is considered an elite combat force.

This was the first time the Ranger School course has been open to women, and the Pentagon is reviewing its policies on women filling combat roles. A decision is expected later this year.

However, Graham convinced the women have earned the right to serve in a combat unit if they choose.

As bad as the F-35 program may have been run, it has generated a more successful product than military physical training programs. The core of our military’s strength is people, yet the Defense Department places inordinately greater attention on weapon systems than human systems.

Our dialogue is horribly skewed from the very beginning when we discuss women meeting the physical requirements for infantry combat duty, because we focus on “women” rather than “physical requirements.” As Colonel Martha McSally told Bill O’Reilly in the interview Van Dam referenced, the best and most fair approach to assessing women’s potential for infantry assignments is to test them to the same standard as their male counterparts. However, it cannot be stressed enough that we cannot accurately say whether any man or woman – let alone either sex as a collective – meets the physical standards for combat duty because our standards have nothing to do with combat. A truly gender-neutral fitness testing standard would be substantially more comprehensive and rigorous and would not scale its requirements based on gender or age differences.

The battlefield is ultimately the most unrelenting test of fitness, and it does not discriminate in its assessments between the quick and the dead. Neither should the armed forces. From aircraft carriers to armored vehicles, the Defense Department outlines performance requirements to ensure we have the very best systems in the world. Yet it faces a precipitous decline in quality and number of personnel ready to meet the demands of the battlefield. It is time for an equally uncompromising review of its standards for human performance requirements. By its very nature, the process would be blind to gender.

Jim Gourley is a former military intelligence officer. He now works as an author and journalist covering military affairs and sports science.

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/18/a-few-brass-tacks-why-gender-arguments-blind-the-military-to-bigger-problems-2/>

“Passing that program, going through the Ranger School and coming out successful is an amazing human feat,” Graham said while campaigning in Cedar Rapids on Tuesday evening. “So if these women want to go into war and protect my nation, as commander in chief, they’re ready to go, I’m ready to send them.”

That’s a turnabout for Graham, a third-term senator who retired earlier this year after 33 years in the Air Force.

“I have changed my mind, quite frankly,” he said. “They have earned the right to defend this country in the most dangerous fashion, which is being a ground soldier in combat.”

Graham acknowledged there have been questions about the effect on morale of women in combat units and that not all Americans may be ready to send women into combat.

“We’re all in this together,” Graham said. “ISIL (Islamic State) would kill everybody in America if they could get ahold of us. The fact that women want to go and fight radical Islam is a testament to American womanhood.”

Graham is convinced the United States needs at least 10,000 ground troops in Iraq and Syria to “destroy the caliphate, pull it up by the roots.”

“If I could protect this nation without sending a soldier back to Iraq, I would, but I don’t know how,” Graham said, adding that airstrikes will not be enough to destroy the terrorists.

“If I’m president we’re going on the offensive,” he said at the monthly meeting of the Linn County Republican Central Committee. He would have the military “hold the ground until it’s safe to come home.”

“If we don’t get it right we’ll have another 9/11,” Graham said.

Addressing the nuclear agreement with Iran, Graham charged President Barack Obama “doesn’t know what he’s doing” and

New Military Pressure Over Gender Barriers

(19 Aug) Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe

The graduation this week of two female soldiers from the Army’s famously difficult Ranger School has put new pressure on the U.S. military to make women eligible to serve across its combat ranks, current and former U.S. officials said.

The historic achievement by the two women, who are expected to be awarded the prestigious Ranger Tab at a ceremony on Friday, comes amid a sweeping assessment at the Pentagon that is expected to lead to the removal of long-standing barriers to female soldiers across the armed services.

How far and fast those gender boundaries shift is expected to become evident within months, when each branch of the military is required to submit a petition to senior leaders in the Pentagon listing the dwindling set of jobs that they want to remain all-male, with detailed justifications required for every category from which women would be excluded.

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The Army’s decision to allow women to attend Ranger School this year was seen by many as an unambiguous signal from a military branch that nevertheless has yet to allow females to serve in its elite units, including its 75th Ranger Regiment, a light-infantry force of about 3,600 soldiers.

The graduations this week of Kristen Griest, a military police officer from Orange, Conn., and Shaye Haver, an Apache helicopter pilot from Copperas Cove, Tex., make that ban on female Rangers increasingly precarious and could accelerate broader changes across the Army.

Secretary of State John Kerry “has no idea what he’s talking about.”

He called their agreement the “biggest miscalculation since Hitler,” referring to European nations’ appeasement policy toward the German dictator preceding World War II.

The agreement Kerry negotiated and Obama is asking Congress to approve gives radical jihadists “a pathway to a nuclear bomb,” Graham said.

Graham advised caucusgoers to take their first-in-the-nation role seriously.

“Vote for a commander in chief worthy of the sacrifice of those who have served and will serve.

“Take care of them with your vote, because they are going to take care of you,” he said.

<http://www.kcrg.com/subject/news/politics/election/republican-presidential/lindsey-graham-female-rangers-have-earned-right-to-fight-20150818>

The completion of the Ranger course by two female West Point graduates punches holes in arguments that women are not capable of serving in the infantry or other physically demanding jobs, said retired Army Lt. Gen. David Barno, who commanded troops as a general in Afghanistan and served earlier in his career in Ranger battalions.

“From the first moment a woman pins on a Ranger Tab,” Barno said, “it is game over on the discussion about keeping women out of the military.”

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Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter, a civilian who never served in the military, is expected to rule on each request by January with guidance and feedback from senior military officials. Marine Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, a Ranger School graduate and veteran infantryman, also is expected to have a leading role after taking over as the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in October.

Today, about 220,000 positions are open only to men. Virtually all are in the Army and Marine Corps, including infantry and armor units that fight on the front lines.

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Marine Corps, which is 7 percent female, is the least integrated of the services and has been the most resistant to change.

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The news is likely to be met with a mixed reaction among veterans and active-duty service members. "We understand that this will take time," Bockholt said. "We want to get this right."

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Meet The Women Who Survived Army's Ranger School

(19 Aug) Defense One, By Gayle Tzemach Lemmon and Kevin Baron

Their names are 1st Lt. Kristen Griest and Capt. Shaye Haver. They are the first women to ever have completed the U.S. Army Ranger School and on Friday they will affix the "Ranger tab" patch to their shoulders. According to the men who guided them through it, they are the real deal.

"Those two women are legit and would have had outstanding careers in the military with or without a tab," said Sgt. Maj. Colin Boley, the operations sergeant major for the Airborne and Ranger training brigade.

Soon, they may have company as women among the military elite. The Navy is will open its famed training school for

Completing Ranger School, however, does not necessarily lead to assignments in the Ranger Regiment for its graduates. The school is considered the service's premier leadership course and is attended by many service members each year who will never become part of the Ranger Regiment. Instead, they will serve in roles that include infantrymen, military police officers and helicopter pilots – returning to their units with a designation that helps them advance when under consideration for promotion.

The Ranger Regiment does not require all of its soldiers to attend Ranger School, but most eventually do. All leaders typically are required to before assuming their new positions of authority. The regiment also has its own training and assessment, including the difficult eight-week Ranger Assessment and Selection Program.

Barno said there has long been resistance to integrating the infantry, but he considers many of the objections to be based on flawed cultural arguments that men and women cannot coexist in a battlefield environment. They include concerns about privacy and mental toughness.

If "there is an argument beyond the physical requirements to be made, I haven't heard it yet," Barno said of integrating women. "They've shown they can do it."

In part to test a broader transition in gender roles, the various branches of the military have opened training programs to women over the past couple of years and tracked the results.

The Marines opened up its Infantry Officer Course at Quantico, Va., well as its infantry training program at Camp Geiger, N.C. None of the 29 women who attempted the officer course passed, but about 44 percent of 240 female volunteers completed enlisted infantry training.

Craig Whitlock contributed to this report.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/as-women-finish-ranger-course-army-faces-new-pressure-on-gender-barriers/2015/08/18/a2811e4c-45db-11e5-8ab4-c73967a143d3_story.html

SEALs to women, said Adm. Jonathan Greenert, chief of naval operations. After a "very objective analysis" of training standards, Greenert said, the special warfare community found they were appropriate for men or women.

"Why shouldn't anybody that can meet these be accepted? And the answer is: there is no reason," Greenert said, in an interview with Military Times. "So we're on a track to say, 'Hey look, here are the standards, anybody who can meet them, the gender non-specific, then you can become a SEAL.'"

Soldiers, sailors, veterans, and citizens forever will look at Griest and Haver in a different way. But in the beginning, “They didn’t look any different really than anyone else,” said Sgt. First Class Tiffany Myrick, a military police noncommissioned officer who served as an observer and advisor at Ranger Schools.

“I knew it just by their performance during the smoke sessions how they stood out,” Myrick told Defense One this week. A lot of people were kind of hurting and they still looked strong – smoke session is like exercises and corrective training. That is what made them stand out was their performance during all the physical events.”

On Friday, they will graduate with their class, but still are far from combat. There is an entirely different set of qualifications to gain entry into the 75th Ranger Regiment, the active unit dispatched on the most sensitive and specialized missions.

But they might get their shot. The Defense Department is looking at every single job with an eye toward opening it to women, unless the service chiefs and secretaries request an exemption from Defense Secretary Ash Carter. That includes Navy SEALs and the Ranger Regiment.

Defense Department officials so far have approved 111,000 jobs for women since beginning their review in January, with 220,000 to go. Each job approval requires 30-day Congressional notice, Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis told reporters Tuesday. The final approvals and exceptions to the rule will be announced “on or about” Jan. 1, 2016.

For now, Haver and Griest can enjoy what they have earned: respect.

“Haver was the most intense; she was the most vocal, she wasn’t afraid to speak up,” said Myrick. A resident of Copperas Cove, Texas, she is a pilot of Apache helicopters, according to the Washington Post, which published their names Tuesday evening. The Army previously had said it would release their names to the public on Thursday, but several reporters who spent time on the Ranger School course already had learned much about them.

Officials: Military Likely To Open Most Combat Jobs To Women

(19 Aug) Associated Press, By Lolita C. Baldor

Two women have now passed the Army’s grueling Ranger test, and even tougher and more dangerous jobs could lie ahead. The military services are poised to allow women to serve in most front-line combat jobs, including special operations forces, senior officials told The Associated Press.

Based on early talks, officials say the Army, Navy and Air Force likely will not seek exceptions that close any jobs to women. Marine Corps leaders, they say, have expressed concerns about allowing women to serve in infantry jobs and yet may seek an exception.

The services are wrapping up reviews and must make their recommendations to Defense Secretary Ash Carter this fall.

But Myrick, a military police officer, has especially high hopes for fellow MP Griest, who hails from Orange, Connecticut. “Griest was quiet, and looking at her, you wouldn’t think she could perform as well as she did ... Quiet but very strong and very humble,” said Myrick.

A West Point instructor who met Greist through another cadet, but declined to be identified for this article, told Defense One this week, “She had talked about [going infantry] from when she was a cadet. It was common knowledge to people that knew her that that is what she wanted to do.”

Myrick had a different perception of Haver. “Haver was more of my personality – when she wanted to get something done, she was like, ‘Get over and let’s get it done.’”

“When I watched Haver patrol when she was yelling at the guys to get in position and get moving. I just kind of chuckled to myself because that is something I would do or say, so I laughed to myself at that. She was well respected and that stood out a lot and that also reflected her leadership style as well.”

“Greist was more like, she was in command, but she spoke in a different manner. It just shows that you can have different leadership styles and still be successful.”

“Greist was more quiet. But she was great at planning. Her orders that she gave were very thorough. She didn’t leave out anything. That stood out to me, and during her patrol she looked strong. She was a good team player when she was a squad leader, so I thought that stood out as well.”

“They were pretty impressive. They didn’t stand out over the male students they just performed well. They were definitely respected.”

Indeed, when Griest is tabbed on Friday, she’ll get more than respect. She’s expected to be promoted to Army captain.

<http://www.defenseone.com/management/2015/08/meet-women-army-ranger-school-navy-seals/119232/>

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

Even if Marine leaders object, they are likely to meet resistance from senior Navy and Defense Department officials who want the military to be united on this issue.

Undercutting the Marines’ reservations is that Special Operations Command is likely to allow women to compete for the most demanding military commando jobs - including the Navy SEALs and the Army’s Delta Force - though with the knowledge that it may be years before women even try to enter those fields.

Women have been steadily moving into previously all-male jobs across the military, including as members of the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, best known as the helicopter crews that flew Navy SEALs into Osama bin Laden's compound. Women are also now serving on Navy submarines and in Army artillery units.

Friday will mark another milestone as the two women graduate at Fort Benning, Georgia, from the Ranger school, a physically and mentally demanding two-month combat leadership course. Completing the course lets the two women wear the coveted Ranger black-and-gold tab, but it does not let them become members of the Ranger regiment. Neither woman has been publicly identified by the military.

Longer term, the uncertainty of the Marine decision underscores the wrenching debates going on within the military over the changing role of women, and it reflects the individual identities of the services and how they view their warrior ethos.

Only a handful of jobs in the Navy and Air Force are currently closed to women.

Last year the Navy considered seeking an exception that would have prohibited women from serving on older guided missile frigates, mine-countermeasure ships and patrol coast craft. Some argued that those ships, which are due to be phased out in coming years, would need millions of dollars in construction to add facilities for women and it wasn't worth the expense.

But Navy Secretary Ray Mabus withdrew that plan in a memo late last month that was obtained by the AP. Officials said Navy leaders concluded that since women can serve in all the same jobs on other ships no real exclusion existed.

The Army and Marine Corps, however, have thousands of infantry, artillery and armor jobs that are currently closed to women. There has been a lot of study and debate over whether to open those positions, because they often involve fighting in small units on the front lines, doing physically punishing tasks.

The Marine Corps set up a task force this year to set gender-neutral job standards and determine whether incorporating women into small squads affected unit cohesion or combat readiness. Companies made up of all men and mixes of men and women spent up to three months in California performing a broad range of unit tasks and going through detailed scientific evaluations to see how they did. Senior leaders are reviewing those results.

Marines lag behind in bringing women into ranks

(19 Aug) Stars & Stripes, By Heath Druzin

Marines may be the tip of the spear in battle, but not so much when it comes to bringing women into the ranks.

As barriers continue to fall, most recently with the historic graduation of two women from the Army's grueling Ranger School, just 7 percent of Marines are women, the lowest percentage of women of any branch of the military. That has much to do with the Marines emphasis on light infantry, but

Army leaders did similar scientific analysis, reviewing all tasks needed to do the combat jobs and have been creating gender-neutral standards that troops will have to meet in order to qualify. Meanwhile, however, the Army began to slowly open some combat positions, including artillery jobs, to women.

In recent days, officials familiar with the discussions said they believe the Army will allow women to seek infantry and armor jobs as well.

Gen. Ray Odierno, who retired last week as Army chief of staff, hinted at that conclusion.

"In order to best manage your talent, you have to pick the best people who can perform to the standards that we have established," Odierno said. "If you can meet the standards that we've established, then you should be able to perform in that (position). And I think that's where we're headed."

In January 2013 then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey signed an order wiping away generations of limits on women fighting for their country, ordering a quarter-million positions open regardless of gender. They called for sweeping reviews of the physical requirements for combat jobs and gave the military services until January 2016 to argue if any positions should remain closed to women.

Throughout the process, all the services have made it clear they will not reduce any standards to allow women to qualify for the most demanding jobs. But they reviewed the requirements for the various combat posts to make sure they were directly related to tasks that had to be done as part of the jobs.

During the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, thousands of women served and fought, and about 160 died.

Dempsey told reporters during that 2013 news conference that he did not rule out women serving as members of special operations forces, although it might be years before they actually qualified.

"I think we all believe that there will be women who can meet those standards," he said.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/08/18/officials-military-likely--open-most-combat-jobs--women/31945141/>

critics say it's also partly due to an ingrained change-averse culture.

But resisting the tide might be more difficult with the Ranger School news (although those women still can't join the actual Ranger Regiment) and the Navy's chief of operations all but saying that the SEALs, the military's most elite special

operations unit, will open to women. The Marine Corps, while a distinct branch, falls under the Department of the Navy.

“Just like with ‘don’t ask, don’t tell,’ the Marines seem to be the last branch to speak up and do the right thing,” said Marine veteran and activist Anu Bhagwati, who founded the Service Women’s Action Network, the group behind the lawsuit that helped push the Pentagon to open more jobs to women. “The good thing for us is that the Marine Corps belongs to the Department of the Navy.”

One huge factor in the low percentage of women in the Marines, of course, is the Corps’ emphasis on light infantry positions, coupled with the former armed services rule barring women from combat roles. But while the other three branches have been rapidly changing in the past two years, out of the 111,000 formerly restricted positions that have opened to women, only 11 were in the Marines.

Earlier this year the Marines held a massive, three-month simulated combat deployment in the high desert outside of Twentynine Palms, Calif., with mixed infantry units to study the feasibility of opening infantry positions to women.

Marine Corps spokesman 1st Lt. Philip Kulczewski, who participated in that exercise, said the Marines are not resisting change, simply stripping out the emotion from the debate and looking only at facts.

“I would say we’re taking a data-based, responsible and very deliberate approach to integrating,” he said. “You really need to separate the two issues -- there’s advancing women throughout the services and increasing opportunities and national security issues and you really need to take a hard look at things.”

To be SEALs, women will have to survive BUD/S *(19 Aug) Navy Times, By Sam Fellman*

The Navy SEALs are pushing forward with a plan to integrate women into their storied commando teams. Officials say the arduous standards are to remain the same, standards that any future female SEAL candidates will have to face alongside men.

Future G.I. Janes will have to survive the military's most formidable year of training. Widely regarded as the hardest test during this period is the 6-month Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training held in and around Coronado, California. Two-thirds of SEAL hopefuls wash out during the training, according to a Navy recruiting video.

After their introduction to the course, SEAL candidates — officers and enlisted — are exposed to three phases: physical conditioning, combat diving and land warfare. The conditioning phase includes beach runs and grueling workouts, as well as the legendary Hell week — five days of nonstop training that can force even the toughest candidates to abort by ringing the bell.

Kulczewski also said the news from other parts of the military, such as the Rangers and SEALs, wouldn’t affect the Marines’ decision.

“We’re taking a look at integration through the lens of the Marine Corps, so we’re not worried about other branches,” he said.

Pentagon officials, though, have said opening more jobs to women is a collaborative process.

“The Services and Special Operations Command have been sharing information and lessons-learned throughout that entire process,” Davis said in a released statement. “Beyond regularly occurring meetings at the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs level, the Services (at all levels) routinely cross share information, lessons-learned, and best practices.”

None of the branches volunteered for the changes currently being considered. The lawsuit filed by SWAN and four female war veterans in late 2012 to open combat jobs to women came before then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta launched the process of more fully integrating the military in January 2013.

The Pentagon’s highest-ranking officials have until Jan. 1, 2016, to open all jobs to women or request formal waivers for those they want to remain closed. Defense Secretary Ash Carter will have to sign off on any waivers.

<http://www.stripes.com/marines-lag-behind-in-bringing-women-into-ranks-1.363590>

Only the most resilient sailors working together can survive and go on to earn the coveted SEAL Trident.

BUD/S physical conditioning:

Sit-ups with telephone pole-sized logs. Scaling the obstacle course. Paddling rubber boats into crashing waves. This phase is designed to harden the candidates mentally and physically and enhance their teamwork to steel them for harrowing drills.

Hell week:

Hell week is not for the faint of heart. The physical conditioning escalates into five days of nonstop training during the third week of this phase. Inflatable boat races on the beach. Freezing in the surf. The TV mini-series, "Navy SEALs: BUDS Class 234," captures the training and psychological torment that a real BUD/S class faced.

Combat diving:

This 7-week phase trains candidates to be frogmen. In pool sessions, they learn to rig SCUBA gear under intense harassment by instructors. They also go on long-distance swims and learn diving tactics and navigation — often essential to SEAL team insertion.

Land warfare:

This 7-week phase focuses on weapons, small tactics and demolition training, then takes the candidates to San Clemente Island off the California coast to hone their skills.

How did these two women become the first to complete Army Ranger School?

(19 Aug) The Washington Post, By Mary Jordan and Dan Lamothe

The two women who will graduate Friday from the Army's Ranger School did not seem particularly destined to break that gender barrier. Both were strong students and gifted athletes, like many others who emerge from high schools across the country every year. But they made their mark on the U.S. military this week by tapping rare levels of determination that intensified over time.

First Lt. Shaye Haver, 25, was a star high school soccer player in Texas, making the varsity team as a freshman. She learned to fly an Apache helicopter like her father. First Lt. Kristen Griest, 26, ran cross-country in Connecticut before applying to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., where she would cross paths with Haver for the first time.

Both failed the initial phase of Ranger School but kept trying even as others elected to drop out. On Friday, the two will become the first women to wear the elite Ranger Tab on their uniforms, after exhibiting degrees of perseverance that brought pride to past mentors.

When Haver first met military instructor Enrique Herrera as a freshman in high school, she immediately impressed him with her fire, her smarts and her demeanor. She already had the athleticism and gravitas to be a leader in his Junior ROTC class, he said.

"She told me straight-out: 'I love my feminism, and I love dressing up,'" Herrera said. "'But I'm also tough.'"

Anna Mahon, Griest's high school English teacher, described her former student as a "solid, all-around kid" who was always determined to succeed but recently seemed fundamentally transformed. "When I saw her at Easter, she looked even more disciplined and fierce," Mahon said, "which is strange because she's so nice, so it was a little weird to see. I'm just super proud of her."

Both started Ranger School on April 20 as part of the first class to include women. Of the 400 soldiers in that class, 117 — including Haver and Griest — have crossed the finish line. Eleven others remain in training, including a third woman.

The Ranger course is among the most intense and demanding in the military. Its participants are expected to operate on limited food and sleep, facing tests of physical endurance, skill and combat in woods, on mountains and in swamps.

The first phase alone demands 49 push-ups, 59 sit-ups, a five-mile run in 40 minutes, a combat survival swim test and a 12-

mile road march that must be completed in three hours while the soldier carries dozens of pounds of gear.

Those who pass BUD/S will go onto to another six months of advanced training before they earn the gold badge that marks their full entrance into the SEALs: the Special Warfare insignia known as the Trident.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/08/19/seals-women-have-survive-buds/32004705/>

Both female officers twice failed to clear the first phase but were allowed to start over. While many men also are allowed to redo a phase, it's rare — though not unheard of — for soldiers to be allowed to start over from the beginning after failing the same phase twice. Of the 20 women who qualified, only Griest, Haver and a third woman made it to the second phase.

Later segments included parachute jumps and helicopter assaults, mountaineering in northern Georgia's Chattahoochee National Forest and waterborne operations in the streams and swamps in Florida. Students are graded on how they perform on dozens of simulated combat patrols, by instructors and fellow students.

While other women struggled, Griest and Haver kept up with their male counterparts and occasionally did better. On July 14, Griest and Haver were required to scale about 60 feet of sheer rock wall on Mount Yonah in northern Georgia. As others struggled, Griest — who will be promoted to captain Friday — moved steadily up the surface at a pace that eclipsed some of the men.

"You can tell she doesn't even have muscle fatigue," said Capt. Lesley-Anne Crumpton, one of four female "observer-advisers" the Army trained and deployed during the training. "I always watch for shaking. She didn't even shake."

In the final phase of the training in Florida, Griest and Haver blended in almost seamlessly among other students paddling small rubber boats up the Yellow River on Eglin Air Force Base. Like the men who were required to get buzz cuts for the training, the women also had to have close-cropped hair.

"My sister grew up with a desire to do a lot of things with her life," Michael Griest said in a telephone interview. "She has always been very athletic and very smart," he said, adding that she can do "an insane" number of push-ups.

The two women now put a spotlight on the long-simmering debate over how far the military should go in allowing women into combat roles. In 2013, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta gave the armed services until this fall to petition senior

defense officials if they wanted to keep any jobs closed to women, with a decision on each expected by January.

Even after Griest and Haver have earned the prestigious Ranger Tab, women across the Army remain ineligible to seek membership in the elite 75th Ranger Regiment, which conducts raids and other Special Operations missions. But that lingering barrier to women may fall in the coming months, current and former U.S. officials have said.

Teachers and friends of the two female officers said Wednesday that while both women were strong, disciplined athletes, perhaps the most distinguishing feature was their focus.

Mahon, the English teacher who is now the principal at Griest's high school in Orange, Conn., and was a hammer thrower in the 2004 Olympics, said she helped Griest with her West Point application and with some of the physical tests.

Griest was a talented distance runner but like Mahon began competing in the hammer throw. "It's a totally different use of your body and [requires] mind discipline," Mahon said. "You have to concentrate all of your energy into three to six different movements, while distance is a long, drawn-out concentration. She had an interest in doing both of those, and it made her unique."

Everything you need to know about the Army's elite 75th Ranger Regiment

(19 Aug) SOFREP

The 75th Ranger Regiment is the US Army's premier airborne light infantry unit.

Specializing in raids and airfield seizures, the Regiment is one of very few units that has been constantly deployed since 9/11, with each Ranger battalion having rotated into a combat zone in the neighborhood of fifteen times each.

After completing Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training, and Airborne School, potential Rangers are carefully evaluated in the Ranger Assessment and Selection Program, or RASP.

RASP identifies which soldiers have the mental fortitude and physical toughness required to serve as a member of this elite unit.

Additionally, RASP provides training to these new recruits in critical Ranger tasks.

Upon graduation of RASP, new Rangers will most likely be assigned to 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Ranger Battalion. Regimental Headquarters and the Regimental Support Battalion are also co-located at Ft. Benning with 3rd Battalion.

Today's Ranger Battalions were stood up on the orders of General Creighton Abrams in 1974. As many of you may know, our Army had suffered a great deal and wasn't looking so great in the Post-Vietnam War years.

"I'm not surprised she's making history as one of the first women to accomplish this," she said, calling it a "testament to her devotion and drive."

Haver — who was a high school classmate of Washington Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III in Texas — told her local newspaper in 2007 that her determination to join the military was strengthened after several soldiers who were her father's friends died in Iraq.

"You have to be the one who's on top of things, who wants to get stuff done," Haver told the Copperas Cove Herald newspaper. "I may think that I'm okay right now, but I may not even know my potential yet because I haven't been pushed like that."

Griest and Haver have declined interviews, and their families issued a joint statement Wednesday saying that like all the other soldiers who graduated, the two "are happy, relieved and ready for some good food and sleep. Like everyone who will pin the tab on Friday, they are exceptional soldiers and strong teammates."

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-did-these-two-women-become-the-first-to-complete-army-rangers-school/2015/08/19/a745c962-46af-11e5-8ab4-c73967a143d3_story.html?hpid=z1

1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions were created to be a role model for the rest of the Army, a unit where soldiers would be held to extremely high standards, their commanding guidance derived from the Ranger Creed, penned by Command Sergeant Major Neil Gentry.

While the Ranger Creed is a way of life in the Regiment, it also provides important guidance to a Ranger whenever there is a question or doubt about what the correct course of action may be. In these difficult times, Rangers will default to the Ranger Creed.

The Ranger Creed

Recognizing that I volunteered as a Ranger, fully knowing the hazards of my chosen profession, I will always endeavor to uphold the prestige, honor, and high esprit de corps of my Ranger Regiment.

Acknowledging the fact that a Ranger is a more elite soldier, who arrives at the cutting edge of battle by land, sea, or air, I accept the fact that as a Ranger, my country expects me to move further, faster, and fight harder than any other soldier.

Never shall I fail my comrades. I will always keep myself mentally alert, physically strong, and morally straight, and I will shoulder more than my share of the task, whatever it may be, one hundred percent and then some.

Gallantly will I show the world that I am a specially selected and well trained soldier. My courtesy to superior officers,

neatness of dress, and care of equipment shall set the example for others to follow.

Energetically will I meet the enemies of my country. I shall defeat them on the field of battle, for I am better trained and will fight with all my might. Surrender is not a Ranger word. I will never leave a fallen comrade to fall into the hands of the enemy and under no circumstances will I ever embarrass my country.

Readily will I display the intestinal fortitude required to fight on to the Ranger objective and complete the mission, though I be the lone survivor.

The Rangers are arguably (I've debated this with soldiers who served in the Honor Guard in Washington DC) the oldest existing unit in our military. Rangers fought in a number of American conflicts *before* the signing of the Declaration of Independence, such as the French and Indian War and King Philip's War. In the Revolutionary War, Francis Marion organized and fought in a Ranger unit against the British. Marion was known as the swamp fox because his men would attack and quickly disappear into the swamps to evade the British military.

Six Ranger Battalions fought in the Second World War. It was during D-Day at Omaha beach that the Rangers came upon their unit motto. During the assault, Colonel Norman Cota asked Major Max Schneider which unit he belonged to. When someone replied that they were 5th Ranger Battalion, Cota replied, "Well, then goddammit, Rangers, lead the way!" Today all Rangers sound off with the unit motto, "Rangers Lead The Way" when saluting an Officer, to which, any Officer worth his salt responds with, "All The Way!"

Rangers also served in the Korean War with distinction, including 2nd Ranger Company, an all African-American company of Rangers. For the first time, Rangers were now Airborne qualified.

10th Mountain Gets First Female Brigadier

(19 Aug) 10th Mountain Division, By Army Spc. Osama Ayyad
Army Col. Diana Holland, the 10th Mountain Division's deputy commander for support, was promoted to brigadier general and became the first woman to serve as deputy commanding general in any Army light infantry division during a July 29 ceremony here.

Holland, who has served in that position since her arrival here in May, is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan this fall as the division's deputy commanding general for support, in support of Operation Resolute Support.

Holland previously deployed with the 3rd Infantry Division to Iraq in 2004 and led the 92nd Engineer Battalion and the 130th Engineer Brigade during deployments in Afghanistan.

Because of her qualifications and previous assignments, Holland is well-equipped to be the DCG-S during the division

In the Vietnam War, there were Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) teams that executed some of the hairiest missions of the war. Penetrating deep into the jungle in their distinctive tiger strip uniforms to conduct reconnaissance, ambushes, and more, these men were later reorganized into Ranger Companies. Despite what the press might have said, our Vietnam era Rangers served with distinction and have plenty to be proud of.

With Rangers reformed after Vietnam in 1974, their next deployment was the failed attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran in 1980, known as Desert One. 1st and 2nd Battalion conducted a combat jump into the island nation of Grenada in 1983, where they successfully captured the Point Salines airfield and rescued the American medical students being held on the True Blue facility. 3rd Ranger Battalion was formed shortly after in 1984. In 1989, the entire Regiment jumped into Panama as a part of Operation Just Cause.

Alpha and Bravo Company of 1/75 played a role in Operation Desert Storm while Bravo Company of 3/75 participated in Operation Gothic Serpent, the infamous Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia in 1993.

Following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11th, 2001, 3/75 jumped into Objective Rhino in Afghanistan on October 19th.

3/75 Rangers also jumped into Iraq during the opening salvo of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, participating in the battle of Haditha dam. Today, Rangers deploy regularly in support of Operation Enduring Freedom while Operation Iraqi Freedom has only recently been scaled back, with Rangers having conducted untold thousands of combat operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Meanwhile, one Ranger Battalion always remains on standby while home in the United States, prepared to be recalled for rapid deployment at a moment's notice.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-armys-elite-75th-ranger-regiment-2015-8>

headquarters' upcoming deployment to Afghanistan, said Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey L. Bannister, 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum commander.

Accomplished Officer

"The missions we have during our next deployment are right along her DNA," Bannister said during Holland's promotion ceremony.

Holland was among 895 second lieutenants who graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in 1990. It was the 10th class to graduate women and the first to have a female cadet serve as first captain, the highest leadership position in the Corp of Cadets.

Approximately 2,000 of the 7,000 lieutenants who received their commission that year went on to reach the rank of colonel, and only 40 have been selected to become brigadier generals.

"That's a heck of a cut," Bannister said. "It's a little more than competence. It's about the character and about the reputation that you from the 2,000 to that half of a percentage point who become generals."

After postponing her promotion ceremony so family and friends could attend, Holland began her remarks by making sure her audience could hear her, including the few in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, who watched the ceremony via teleconference.

Many of her friends and colleagues traveled to attend the ceremony, during which she thanked all for their support.

Recognizing Noncommissioned Officers

Holland also gave special recognition of the noncommissioned officers with whom she has worked throughout her career, recalling the names of every enlisted soldier who was part of her command teams: her platoon sergeant when she was a platoon leader, her first sergeant when she was a company

commander, and her command sergeants major as a battalion and brigade commander.

"As a leader in the Army, we are charged with inspiring our soldiers," Holland said. "But I often found myself inspired by them."

She added, "Our soldiers accomplish amazing things every day and under incredible stress, and, when the going gets tough and the mission seems insurmountable, they raise their hands and say 'send me.'"

Serving with soldiers "is a privilege, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside such great Americans," Holland said.

"It is no wonder that we are, and continue to be, the greatest army in the world," she said.

Previously, 18 of the Army's 308 generals were women. Now Holland has joined their ranks.

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/614056/face-of-defense-10th-mountain-gets-first-female-brigadier?source=GovDelivery>

Ranger School Success Reflects U.S. Military's Opening To Women

(20 Aug) Reuters, By David Alexander

When two women completed the daunting U.S. Army Ranger school this week they helped end questions about whether women can serve as combat leaders, as the Pentagon is poised to open new roles, including elite Navy SEALs, to women in coming months.

The feat by Army Captain Kristen Griest and First Lieutenant Shaye Haver followed a re-evaluation of the role of women after their frontline involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and the end of a rule barring them from combat roles in 2013.

The two on Tuesday completed a 62-day course including parachute jumps, helicopter assaults, swamp survival and small unit leadership that earned them a Ranger badge, a prestigious decoration that is held by many senior leaders.

"This is the Army's toughest training," said Sue Fulton, a former Army captain who now chairs the advisory Board of Visitors to the U.S. military academy at West Point.

"If there were any remaining questions about whether women could serve as combat leaders, those questions have been answered," she said.

Griest and Haver, who are both in their mid-20s, are expected to face media questions at an event at Fort Benning, Georgia later on Thursday, before formally graduating from the course on Friday.

Only they and 94 men completed the training, which was started by 19 women and 381 men. It was the first time women had been allowed to take part.

Opening Jobs For Women

Two years ago, under then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, the U.S. services were told to develop gender-neutral standards for all jobs and to report by this September whether any jobs should remain closed to women.

Women serving in traditional noncombat roles had increasingly found themselves in combat positions. Special operations forces in Afghanistan, for example, found they needed women troops accompanying them to interact with Afghan women.

Since 2013, a number of changes have made women eligible for 111,000 jobs from which they had been excluded, while about 220,000 jobs remain closed to them, said Navy Captain Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter will next month review recommendations from the services and the Pentagon will announce in January which additional positions would be opened.

Most of the positions that remain closed are in the Army and Marine Corps.

Only 4,300 Air Force positions in six job classes are still closed, a spokeswoman said. They include positions like forward air controllers who deploy with ground troops near front lines to call in air strikes.

Combat pilot jobs opened to women in 1983 and about 99 percent of the 640,000 Air Force active duty and reserve positions are open to women.

In the Navy only special warfare operators like Navy SEALs and special warfare boat operators remain men-only. There are about 2,500 SEAL jobs and 750 special warfare crewman positions.

Navy spokesman Commander William Marks said the service did not plan to seek exceptions that would prevent women from serving in any positions when it reports to Carter in September.

Women As Navy SEALs: Controversial Plan Presses Ahead

(20 Aug) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers and David Larter

The "Navy does not intend to request any exemptions" banning women from serving in special warfare positions, including as a SEAL commando, Cmdr. William Marks, a top Navy spokesman, told Navy Times Thursday.

His comments underscore those made by the Navy's most senior officer, Adm. Jon Greenert, who told Navy Times in an exclusive interview Tuesday that the service was "on a track to say, 'Hey look, anybody who can meet the gender non-specific standards, then you can become a SEAL.'"

The Navy and all the services must notify the Defense Department by Sept. 30 of any exemption they want from new Defense Department policy that would end long-time bans on women serving in numerous combat billets. Greenert's comments were the first reported statement on the Navy SEALs' intent not to seek that exemption.

If the Navy, as Marks said, does not seek an exemption, then for the first time in its history, the service will open all positions and assignments regardless of gender. That would include about 2,500 SEAL positions and 750 positions in the Special Warfare Combat Crewman community.

The decision to open those communities follows a comprehensive review and rests on a requirement that women be able to pass the existing elite physical and mental standards. That review was initiated when DoD in early 2013 announced it was lifting the combat exclusion for female troops. In the Navy at the time, only enlisted submarine billets, riverines, Marine Corps ground combat support and special warfare were closed to women.

To be sure, the recommendation to open the SEAL and SWCC communities to women must also be approved by U.S. Special Operations Command as it makes its way to the defense secretary. If it's finally approved, then lawmakers will be notified and have 30 working days to respond.

All combat positions will be opened to women unless there are compelling reasons to keep them closed, the Pentagon's leader made clear Thursday.

"The department's policy is that all ground combat positions will be open to women, unless rigorous analysis of factual data shows that the positions must remain closed," Defense Secretary Ash Carter said in a press conference.

The long-awaited news of Navy's plan to integrate the SEAL teams was hailed by many as a victory for women's rights.

It was a SEAL commando team that killed al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in his hideout in Pakistan in 2011.

(Reporting by David Alexander; Editing by David Storey and Richard Pullin)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/20/us-usa-military-women-idUSKCN0QP0CE20150820>

Others warned that it could undermine the legendary camaraderie at the heart of SEAL effectiveness.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and one of the Navy's most celebrated heroes, said he supported the move as long as their rigorous standards remain high.

"Senator McCain supports Adm. Greenert's plan to begin accepting women into Navy SEAL teams if they can meet the service's difficult standards," spokeswoman Julie Tarallo told Navy Times on Wednesday. "Senator McCain believes it is critical that the Navy maintains the same high standards that have made the American military the greatest fighting force in the world – particularly the rigorous physical standards for our elite SEAL teams."

Navy Times readers expressed similar thoughts.

"The teams work as cohesive units because each and every member has endured BUD/S. Officer and enlisted men alike. There are no special standards for officers. In fact, the Hats are harder on the officers than the enlisted men," wrote Christopher Duncan on Facebook. "This same standard must apply to women in order for there to be satisfactory unit cohesion. Nothing less is acceptable."

Greenert said his endorsement comes after discussions with the NSWC commander, Rear Adm. Brian Losey, who oversees SEAL manpower, training and equipment from his headquarters in Coronado, California.

"I believe it completely and I know that the commander of our Special Warfare Command, Adm. Losey, believes that," Greenert said.

Women aren't eligible for the 6-month Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training yet, and Greenert didn't specify a timeline on when the first women would be able to enter SEAL training should the plan receive final approval.

"I don't see it right now ... We're not complete but I don't see any reason for an exemption right now," he said.

Making The Cut

The likely opening of Navy special warfare to women mirrors initiatives across the services to integrate them into previously closed combat roles.

Army Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver, both West Point graduates, are set to graduate from the Army's toughest school on Friday, making them the first women in history to wear the coveted Ranger qualification tab.

In the Marine Corps, more than a hundred women have made it through enlisted infantry training, though no officers have made it through.

Women have proven they can pass some of the military's most elite training under the same standards as their male counterparts, but the BUD/S training is a whole other animal.

And unlike Ranger school, it's not just a feather in one's cap – it comes with a military specialty rating change to special operator.

The six-month crucible has a nearly 80 percent drop-out rate, and that's for the impressive athletes who qualify for and complete the two-month Naval Special Warfare Preparatory School at Great Lakes, Illinois.

At a minimum, SEAL candidates must swim 500 yards in 12½ minutes, run 1.5 miles in 10½ minutes, and do 50 curl-ups, 50 pushups and 10 pullups in two minutes each to be accepted.

SWCC candidates have a relaxed but still tough standard: swim 500 yards in 13 minutes, a 1.5-mile run in 12 minutes, plus 50 pushups, 50 curl-ups and 6 pullups.

But then there's a catch: Candidates are graded on a curve.

In fiscal year 2014, the average in-fleet SEAL or SWCC candidate who was selected for training did more than 22 pullups in his physical standards test, said the SEAL/SWCC recruiting boss, Capt. Duncan Smith, in a 2014 Navy Times interview.

“In other words, the requirement of 10 pullups doesn't even get you looked at,” he said.

Despite the bare minimum requirements, applicants in each monthly pool compete against each other for a limited number of spots. Of hundreds of thousands who contact NSW recruiting every year, maybe 10,000 work with a recruiter to prepare, and less than 700 will end up cleared for training, Smith said.

“A lot of people pass the class, but we're looking for the ‘A’ students,” he said, which generally includes a lot of top performing college athletes.

Carter Calls For Services To Identify Specific Jobs Unsuitable For Women

(20 Aug) Defense Daily, By Dan Parsons

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter said Aug. 20 that all ground combat jobs will be open to women unless service chiefs can deliver convincing reasons, backed by data, that certain roles should remain closed in reports due Oct. 1.

The military occupational specialties (MOS) open to women were greatly expanded during Carter's previous stint as deputy secretary of defense under then-Secretary Leon Panetta.

Pushing The Deadline

While the four DoD services have been opening up billets or training opportunities to women since 2013, special operations bosses have been tight-lipped about the possibility of assigning women to their ranks.

“Each service and SOCOM has identified decision points by which they will make final recommendations to the secretary of defense to open positions or to request an exception to policy to keep positions or occupations closed,” Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen told Navy Times in late 2014.

In a 2013 release, the Navy announced that special warfare was in the process of reviewing its standards and the possibility of integrating women. Without an exemption, the planned timeline was to submit their report to the Navy Secretary Ray Mabus in summer 2014.

That was pushed back, Mabus told Navy Times last September, but the plan was still on track. At the end of the year, Christensen confirmed that the Navy still planned to complete its plan and notify Congress of its decision by July 1, 2015.

That would have gotten the ball rolling on the original plan to allow women going through boot camp in fall 2015 to pre-select the special warfare track and go through training in early 2016, when the exclusion lifts.

That timeline has since been pushed, Marks confirmed. Once the Navy notifies SOCOM of its position, the joint combatant command will send their recommendations to the Defense Department, which can grant an exemption before the end of this year.

To wrap it all up, the Pentagon will have to notify Congress of its plan and allow 30 working days for members to make an argument against it.

The legendary founder of the shadowy SEAL Team 6 is critical of the Navy's plan to integrate SEAL teams, but said he doesn't doubt that some extraordinary women will be able to pass the arduous training.

“Some young woman ... is going to bust through and prove that it can be done,” retired Cmdr. Richard Marcinko told Navy Times.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/08/20/deadline-looms-navy-pushes-integrate-seals-swcc/32043219/>

Around 110,000 ground combat positions are now open to female soldiers, Carter said.

Carter has asked the services to provide a report to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff detailing any specific jobs they feel should remain closed to women and why.

“I will review the services' recommendations and make a final determination by the end of this year,” Carter said. “The

department's policy is that all ground combat positions will be open to women unless rigorous analysis and factual data shows those positions must remain closed."

The announcement comes 24 hours before the first female students will graduate from one of the most rigorous infantry training school the U.S. military has to offer. Two women – Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver – on Friday will graduate from Army Ranger School along with 94 men, becoming the first females ever to wear the Ranger Tab on their uniforms.

"I'm happy to be done with the course," Greis said during a press conference Thursday at Fort Benning, Ga., where Ranger School is located. "I just came here to be a better leader and improve myself."

The pair was the only two of 19 women who completed the entire course. However, combat jobs in Special Operations are still closed to them.

"Truly it is a huge credit for anyone, man or woman, to endure the intense training regimen at Ranger School and to prevail and to graduate," Carter said.

Maj. Gen. Austin Miller, commander of the Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, stressed that the standards for graduating from Ranger School had not been changed in the slightest. He called the two female Ranger graduates

Marines' decision on women in combat expected in weeks

(20 Aug) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

The Marine Corps is just weeks away from a decision on whether to open all combat jobs to women or ask for exceptions, a spokesman for Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford said Thursday.

Dunford awaits a comprehensive report containing data on the feasibility of women entering ground combat jobs. The report will lean heavily on findings derived from a nine-month infantry experiment that monitored male and female volunteers in a simulated ground combat unit as they worked together to complete infantry tasks. The task force wrapped up its assessments earlier this summer and disbanded last month.

The report will also include data from other Marine Corps integration experiments dating from late 2012, when the service temporarily opened its infantry officer training to female volunteers. The following year, the Corps opened its enlisted infantry training to women. In all, 122 enlisted women graduated from Infantry Training Battalion for a pass rate of 34 percent; none of the 27 female officers who attempted the Infantry Officer Course within the testing period graduated.

"In the next few weeks I anticipate the commandant will have time to make a recommendation and determine the way ahead," Lt. Col. Eric Dent, Dunford's spokesman, told Marine Corps Times.

"trailblazers," "pioneers" and said that meeting the standards matters more than gender.

"You're looking for capable and competent soldiers," he said during Thursday's press conference. "I want people to meet the standards. We've just shown that it's not exclusively a male domain here."

Even though Greist and Haver are not yet cleared to serve in combat, their experience has made them better soldiers and better leaders, just like their male classmates, Miller said.

"This is a great leadership school that tests you to your limits," he said. "If they are going to combat, I don't see why we wouldn't want them to be as trained as possible."

Miller would not say if he believes Special Operations Command should open jobs to women, but said that his staff and that of senior leadership in all services – including SOCOM Commander Gen. Joseph Votel – are comparing notes as they gradually expand the roles in which women can serve.

"It wouldn't be helpful right now for Gen. Votel to have my opinion," Miller said. "Let's give it time and do the assessments."

<http://www.defensedaily.com/carter-calls-for-services-to-identify-specific-jobs-unsuitable-for-women/>

Outgoing Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert announced that he expected the elite Navy SEALs to open their training to women next year.

"So we're on a track to say, 'Hey look, anybody who can meet the gender-nonspecific standards, then you can become a SEAL,'" he said in an exclusive interview with Defense News and Navy Times, Marine Corps Times' sister publications.

This news comes on the heels of game-changing developments from two other services also working to comply with a Defense Department mandate to open all combat jobs to women or secure exceptions by the beginning of next year.

The Army announced Monday that two officers would be the first female graduates of its grueling Ranger course, after it opened the training to female volunteers on an experimental basis four months ago. The female soldiers, Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver, are not yet authorized to join Ranger units, which remain closed to women. However, their success could impact the Army's final decision on opening its ranks later this fall.

Marine Corps leaders have remained rigorously neutral on the subject of women in combat roles ahead of a final decision.

"We have looked at this issue pretty hard," Dunford told a Senate panel at his confirmation hearing to become the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff last month. "I expect the

data that we've collected over the past 18 months in a very deliberate, responsible way to be available to me in the August-September timeframe. And we'll meet the timeline established by Secretary [Leon] Panetta and General [Martin] Dempsey in the letter from 2012."

The previous commandant, Gen. James Amos, said the service would be prepared to ask for exceptions to the integration mandate, but did not describe any specific waiver requests that might be considered.

2 Graduating Rangers, Aware Of Their Burden

(21 Aug) New York Times, By Richard A. Opper Jr. and Helene Cooper

First Lt. Shaye Haver, an Apache attack helicopter pilot who on Friday will be one of the first women to graduate from the Army's elite Ranger School, wants to remain an aviator. But she takes away weighty lessons from her grueling Ranger training: "Your mind can take a whole lot more than your body," she said.

"I think I would be crazy to say" that the thought of quitting never occurred, she said on Thursday in her first public appearance since completing the exhausting nine-week course of little sleep and constant hiking with backpacks, water, weapons and other gear that weighed more than 100 pounds. But, Lieutenant Haver said, "the ability to look around to my peers and see that they were sucking just as bad as I was kept me going."

The other woman poised to make history by graduating Friday, Capt. Kristen Griest, said that if the Army ever allowed women to take the final step into combat, she may want to join the Special Forces. Captain Griest admitted she felt "internal pressure" over how her performance could affect future opportunities for women.

Yet she said their accomplishment showed "what they can expect from women in the military, that we can handle things physically and mentally on the same level as men, and that we can deal with the same stresses and training."

And Captain Griest was blunt about what should never happen: "No woman that I know wants to go to Ranger School if they change the standards, because then it degrades" the designation, she said.

The appearance of Captain Griest and Lieutenant Haver here on Thursday, showcased by the Army, was a signal moment in the history of integrating women in the military, one bound to have an effect on the looming decisions about what military roles should be open to women and which, if any, should remain closed.

Now, after two years of study, the heads of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines will make recommendations to Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter in September, military officials said. At that time, the services can request exceptions to the overall directive to open positions to women and specify which positions and units they want to keep closed, and why.

Though Gen. (sel.) Robert Neller is set to become commandant next month, multiple officials said Dunford plans to make the recommendations regarding women in combat roles before he assumes his next post.

The Marine Corps is the most male-dominated of all the services, with women making up just 7 percent of the force. The service opened 11 previously closed military occupational specialties to women last summer, leaving 20 combat jobs that are now exclusively available to men.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/08/20/marines-decision-women-combat-expected-weeks/32065377/>

At a news conference on Thursday, Mr. Carter reiterated the Pentagon's position that "all ground combat positions will be open to women unless rigorous analysis" from the services gives a compelling reason they should not be gender-neutral. Decisions are expected around the New Year.

He welcomed the graduation of the female Rangers. "Like every Ranger fighting today," Mr. Carter said, "they will help lead the finest fighting force in the world." But for many military women, the graduation ceremony is the ultimate confirmation that there should be no limits on what women can achieve.

"I have an idea our Ranger sisters have no idea that we're all coming down here to see them graduate," said Donna McAleer, a 1987 graduate of West Point, said Thursday morning, just after she had made a red-eye flight to Columbus, Ga., from Salt Lake City. Ms. McAleer, who wrote "Porcelain on Steel: Women of West Point's Long Gray Line," said about 50 women who had graduated from West Point were making the trip.

"We have been working on this for decades," she said, sounding ebullient. "There are thousands of servicewomen who are behind them."

The Army, because it is by far the biggest service, has the most jobs closed to women. But that is where the graduations of Captain Griest and Lieutenant Haver, who showed an officer's poise and command of the stage at her appearance on Thursday, will come into play: Their success will diminish most arguments against women holding other combat positions, defense officials say.

Even the Navy SEAL teams appear prepared to accept women who could pass their training program, though many in the military consider it more rigorous than even Ranger School.

Only six Air Force job classes are currently closed to women – positions like air controllers who call in airstrikes from the front lines.

An Air Force spokeswoman, Capt. Brooke L. Brzozowska, said the Air Force had not made a final decision on what, if any, exceptions it would seek.

That leaves the Marines, widely seen as the most reluctant to fully integrate women. The Marines have not said what they

plan to recommend to the defense secretary, but officials at the Pentagon are bracing for a fight.

One defense official said “there’s going to be a lot of pushback” from both sides – the Marines, many of whom argue that women cannot cut it physically; and Pentagon officials, who say that everything should be open and that exceptions should be granted only in extraordinary circumstances.

Some critics have questioned whether the two female Ranger students received any breaks. Army instructors emphatically deny that, and say they met every requirement the men did.

In fact, they say the two women scored very high on performance assessments made by their fellow students, one of the most important evaluations, in which negative assessments can mean a quick exit from the school.

Some other students even urged instructors to give the two women – and another female officer now retaking an intermediate segment of the course – another chance after they twice failed an early phase.

“All three of these soldiers scored very high” on peer assessments filed by other students, “and for us that spoke volumes,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Arnold, the top enlisted man in the training brigade that oversees Ranger School.

Woman believed to be nation's oldest veteran dies at age 110

(17 Aug) Associated Press

A Michigan woman who was believed to be the nation's oldest veteran at 110 has died, about a month after meeting President Barack Obama in the Oval Office.

Emma Didlake died Sunday in West Bloomfield, northwest of Detroit, according to the Oakland County medical examiner's office.

Didlake was a 38-year-old wife and mother of five when she signed up in 1943 for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. She served about seven months stateside during the war, as a private and driver.

She spent time with the president in July during a trip to Washington that was arranged by Talons Out Honor Flight, a southwest Michigan chapter of a national nonprofit that provides free, one-day trips for veterans to visit monuments and memorials in the nation's capital.

"Emma Didlake served her country with distinction and honor, a true trailblazer for generations of Americans who have sacrificed so much for their country," Obama said Monday afternoon in a statement. "I was humbled and grateful to welcome Emma to the White House last month, and Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to Emma's family, friends,

“You got fellow students writing in on peers: ‘Hey, they deserve another shot,’” he said. Some of the other students were even more emphatic, saying they began the course very skeptical the women could make it but quickly realized how wrong they had been.

Second Lt. Zachary Hagner said his mind “completely changed” one day as he was growing weary of carrying a heavy machine gun, and others in his group would not help. But Captain Griest stepped in.

“Nine guys were like, ‘I’m too broken, I’m too tired.’ She was just as broken and tired, and took it from me almost with excitement,” Lieutenant Hagner said. “I thought she was crazy for that.”

Another second lieutenant, Michael V. Janowski, said he did not think he would have made it to graduation had it not been for a similar intervention by Lieutenant Haver.

“No matter how bad she was hurting, she was always the first to volunteer to grab more weight,” Lieutenant Janowski said. “I wrote about how I would trust her with my life.”

Richard A. Oppel Jr. reported from Fort Benning, and Helene Cooper from Washington.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/21/us/military-weighs-role-of-women-army-ranger-graduates.html>

and everyone she inspired over her long and quintessentially American life."

Didlake was born in Alabama and moved with her family to Detroit in 1944. She was known to her family as "Big Mama" and recently moved to an assisted living family in suburban Detroit.

She was deemed the oldest U.S. veteran based on information gleaned by Honor Flight representatives through national outreach campaigns.

Granddaughter Marilyn Horne told The Associated Press last month that when Talons Out officials presented her grandmother with a short-sleeved shirt bearing the group's logo to wear on the trip to Washington, Didlake took a look and said: "I don't have Michelle Obama arms — I'm going to need a jacket."

During her visit to the White House, Didlake wore a patriotic-themed neck scarf and sat in her wheelchair in the same spot in the Oval Office where foreign leaders sit when they meet with Obama.

<http://news.yahoo.com/woman-believed-nations-oldest-veteran-dies-age-110-210921233.html>

Study: Military Children More Prone To Risky Behavior

(18 Aug) *Wall Street Journal*, By Michelle Hackman

Children from military families were more likely than their nonmilitary peers to report potentially harmful situations or behaviors such as experiencing violence and harassment at school, experimenting with alcohol or drugs and carrying a weapon on school grounds, according to a study published Monday in the journal *JAMA Pediatrics*.

The study, by researchers at the University of Southern California and Bar-Ilan University in Israel, examined data from a 2013 survey of about 689,000 middle- and high-school students from every county in California. The differences between military and nonmilitary students persisted across various school districts, accounting for different points on the socioeconomic spectrum.

“This is another diversity group that has a different culture, that has a different set of experiences,” said Ron Avi Astor, a professor of social work at the University of Southern California and a co-author of the study. “Their experiences need to be looked at, particularly in public schools,” which most military-connected children attend.

The survey, conducted by the California Department of Education, didn’t ask students to specify whether they lived in one- or two-parent homes. Mr. Astor said it is unlikely that the effects seen in the study were simply due to living with one parent rather than two, as data for socioeconomic status closely track the number of parents in a home.

Children from military backgrounds reported experiencing risky situations or behaviors across 21 categories spanning physical violence to substance abuse at a rate that was four to 10 percentage points higher than the general population, the study found. About 63% of military students experienced some kind of physical violence at school, compared with 52% of nonmilitary students. Similarly, about 66% of military students surveyed experienced social harassment, eight percentage points higher than nonmilitary peers.

The findings come on the heels of a similar study by the same researchers that found that children with military backgrounds are disproportionately vulnerable to attempting suicide.

In the U.S., there are about two million school-age children with military backgrounds, 80% of whom attend public

schools, according to the Military Child Education Coalition, a nonprofit. On average, school-age children whose parents are serving move between six and nine times, according to the group.

The study, coupled with previous analyses of similar data sets, found that students’ risky behavior tended to increase with the number of deployments their parents had as well as how many school moves they had been through, Mr. Astor said.

In 2014, the Los Angeles Unified School District became the first public school district in the country to ask parents on emergency questionnaires about military involvement. The district has begun offering services – such as connecting new students with military backgrounds to buddies, as well as immediately offering intensive tutoring – to help stave off potential risky behavior.

Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth, director of the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University, who wasn’t involved in the study, said it isn’t yet clear whether a student’s military background is the precise problem – or whether a different factor that many military families share is causing the children’s trouble in school.

“The fact that military and nonmilitary kids are different is certainly meaningful,” she said. “But we don’t know what it might be about military experience that’s producing these differences.”

Kelcey Liverpool, whose husband is deployed in Japan, said her children have found stability in a military enclave in Highwood, Ill., where the family has lived for six years. But it’s tougher on other children who move every few years, she said.

“If they were bullied in a previous duty station, they feel like, ‘I’m not going to let that happen to me again,’” said Ms. Liverpool, who started a group called Kids Rank, which aims to provide a safe social environment for military children. “So they might come with a guard or a fence up, and that rubs other kids the wrong way.”

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/study-military-children-more-prone-to-risky-behavior-1439851199>

Marine enlisted leaders pushed to embrace social media

(18 Aug) *Marine Corps Times*, By Hope Hedge Seck

For the roomful of grizzled sergeants major in suits, the slides of Facebook metrics and Twitter case studies were a stark indicator that the Marine Corps has changed since they first stood on the yellow footprints.

Dozens of senior enlisted leaders attended a brief on social media over a buffet lunch at the annual Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps symposium last week. The topic’s inclusion in the symposium, which typically features briefs on subjects like future missions and professional military education, underscored how much the Marine Corps has changed since 2009, when it briefly banned social media use on its networks.

The message of the hour-long brief was straightforward: Marines communicate on social media. Their senior leaders can either join the conversation or be left out of it.

“They call us dinosaurs,” chuckled Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Ronald Green, who introduced the lecture and concluded it. “But the alligator’s still around. The rhino’s still around.”

Green, who became the Marines’ top enlisted leader in February, told *Marine Corps Times* he included the brief in the

symposium's schedule in acknowledgement of the Corps' mammoth millennial population, to which four out of five Marines belong.

"Eighty-five percent of the Marine Corps is enlisted, and [the majority are] sergeants and below," Green said. "You take a look at that, and we have to learn to communicate in the same forums that they're in."

The enlisted leaders heard business case studies about corporations that failed to acknowledge the impact of social media. One vignette recounted an infamous Domino's Pizza incident in which executives were caught unaware when a video of two employees adding disgusting ingredients to a pie went viral on YouTube.

Tim McIntyre, a spokesman for Domino's said at the time that the company "got blindsided by two idiots with a video camera and an awful idea."

Sgt. Lisette Leyva, who presented the lecture during the symposium, said Marine Corps officials could be forced to make a similar statement that included the word "lance corporal" or "lieutenant."

Leyva, who leads the Marine Corps' digital engagement team, was also frank about the Corps' own failings when it came to embracing social media. She recounted then 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit's 2011 deployment that stretched for a near-record 11 months. When the MEU's commanding officer declined to create a unit Facebook page to keep family members informed, several Marine spouses set up their own page, which quickly became a platform for complaining about unit leaders.

"All because the CO decided not to have the conversation himself," Leyva said.

She also described successful ways the service has used social media to connect with Marines. In 2014, the media engagement team convinced then-Commandant Gen. James Amos to do a live Q-and-A session on Facebook. The first aviator to serve as commandant, Amos was asked almost immediately why he didn't have a CAR — a combat action ribbon. But instead of taking offense, Amos dashed off a pithy answer about the 1972 Volkswagen convertible that he purchased as a young officer.

Transgender SEAL says Pentagon serious about changing policy

(20 Aug) Washington Examiner, By Jacqueline Klimas

Kristin Beck, a former Navy SEAL and now a transgender woman running for Congress, said Wednesday that the Pentagon is taking the secretary's order to look at lifting the ban on transgender service very seriously and doing a good job looking at issues each branch might face.

"There's a lot of meetings going on behind closed doors," Beck told the *Washington Examiner*. "I know they're going to do a very good job. They're taking it very seriously and working through all the difficulties toward success."

Judging from the Facebook metrics, Leyva said Marines loved the response.

"He was real; he was himself," she said. "He had a good sense of humor and he was able to show that."

Some senior enlisted leaders who attended the brief said they still felt troubled by the lack of control officials had on content once it was posted online, citing examples of Marine Corps videos that had been remixed or overdubbed to create parodies.

"What irritates me is you use it as a professional tool to educate the young Marines and the reality is anyone outside the institution can manipulate that specific message you're trying to put out there," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Steven Rhoads, in the combat camera section of the Marine Corps Office of Communication. "I don't think you can fix that."

Rhoads acknowledged, however, that the Marine Corps needs to use social media to communicate effectively with its population.

"The biggest thing I took out of the brief is the amount of people that are really utilizing this," he said. "When you talk about millions and billions of people, that's a great communication tool."

Sgt. Maj. Richard Thresher, with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing out of Cherry Point, North Carolina, said he remembered when Marine Corps units were equipped with just one desktop computer for all the troops to share, and "you had to turn it on 30 minutes ahead of time."

While some of the more senior Marines are reluctant to learn about social media, Thresher said he's seeing a slow but growing acceptance of websites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram—especially as they try to connect with their troops.

"The reality is if we don't get on board, the people we don't want on board are going to drive the train," he said. "To get the message out, we have to use it."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/08/18/marine-enlisted-leaders-pushed-embrace-social-media/31905125/>

The Pentagon-wide working group established last month by Defense Secretary Ash Carter met for the first time Wednesday afternoon, according to Matthew Allen, a Pentagon spokesman. The group with representatives from the services, the Joint Chiefs and the Office of the Secretary of Defense will present its findings by January.

Beck hid her transgender identity for 20 years while serving as a Navy SEAL, deploying 13 times and earning the Purple

Heart and a Bronze Star with "V." She retired from the military in 2011 and began her transition to become a woman in 2013. She is now mounting a primary challenge in 2016 to Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md.

Beck said each branch has been meeting "for a while" to look at how lifting the ban on transgender troops serving openly would effect its troop morale and operational readiness. Studies conducted by the services, she said, will then be passed up to a higher level.

"I think it's a great idea," she said. "The impact on each branch will be different, they have different needs and different ideas of how this will effect them."

While the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in 2011 allowed gay troops to serve openly, transgender troops can still be kicked out of the military under current law. There are about 15,500 active-duty transgender troops, according to some estimates.

Carter announced the formation of the working group last month, calling the ban on transgender service members "outdated" and saying that it distracted from the military's "core missions."

"At my direction, the working group will start with the presumption that transgender persons can serve openly without adverse impact on military effectiveness and readiness, unless and except where objective, practical impediments are identified," Carter said in a July statement.

Beck said she spoke at a three-day conference with officials from Special Operations Command last month to discuss transgender inclusion, as well as other hot-button issues like sexual assault, minority treatment and equal opportunity.

"That's pretty intense. They're leaning forward pretty fast and working really hard to make this effective and also not to adversely affect operational readiness and troop morale," she said.

While she largely praised the Pentagon for its efforts to provide an in-depth, unbiased view on how lifting the ban would affect the services, she did say it could be doing one thing better: Have a high-level panel member who is a transgender person.

Still, she acknowledged it could be tough to find a transgender individual with military experience who would provide an unbiased view.

"If you look at all the qualifications, you have to be of the right voice for them to hear. A lot of activists in the transgender community would be so far over in one direction, it's just a bias," she said. "Unbiased is the most important thing right now."

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/transgender-seal-pentagon-serious-about-changing-policy/article/2570496>