



## DACOWITS: Articles of Interest 24 July 2015

### WELLNESS

#### [Navy announces court-martial results for June](#)

*(17 Jul) Navy Times*

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

#### [Army releases verdicts from June courts-martial](#)

*(19 Jul) Army Times*

The Army on Wednesday released a summary report of 73 verdicts from June courts-martial, including seven cases in which the accused soldier was acquitted of all charges.

#### [Stupid Sailor Pranks: Hazing Reports Drop In Severity](#)

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

"My instincts tell me that just as there's been an awakening in society concerning women's equality..."

#### [Congress scuttles bill on fertility treatment for troops, vets](#)

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

If it had passed both legislative bodies, the Women Veterans and Families Services Act would have expanded fertility services offered by the Defense Department, through Tricare, to severely injured troops, including those with fertility issues related to traumatic brain injury, and also would have lifted the ban on in vitro fertilization at VA medical centers.

#### [Paternity leave for single military fathers?](#)

*(23 Jul) Military Times, By Karen Jowers*

Possible paternity leave for single sailor fathers is on the radar, according to a Navy spokeswoman.

### ASSIGNMENTS

**[General Officer Assignment.](#)** The chief of staff, Army announced the following assignment: Col. (Promotable) Maria B. Barrett, executive officer to the chief information officer, G-6, U.S. Army, Office of the Secretary of the Army, Washington, District of Columbia, to deputy commander, operations, Cyber National Mission Force, U.S. Cyber Command, Fort Meade, Maryland.

#### [Army Ranger School's assessment of women has moved to the mountains, but the scrutiny remains](#)

*(17 Jul) Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe*

If any of them advances again, she'll move on to the Florida Phase, learning swamp and jungle warfare tactics, and potentially become the first woman ever to graduate Ranger School.

#### [3 West Point grads vying to be first women to pass Army Ranger school](#)

*(18 Jul) McClatchy DC, By Chuck Williams*

The women are earning respect as they slug their way through a combat leadership course that creates stress by depriving students of food and sleep. Their leadership skills are graded on their ability to lead small units on patrol missions.

#### [Fired female Marine commander turns to Congress](#)

*(18 Jul) The Hill, By Kristina Wong*

A female Marine commander of an all-female battalion wants Congress to intervene after she was fired over what she believes were her efforts to push female recruits to become better.

#### [Commission wants easier active-to-reserve transition](#)

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

The congressionally mandated group tasked with examining the Army's future force structure believes the service must improve the transition of soldiers back and forth between active duty and the Reserve and Guard.

#### [Senate plan would eliminate one housing allowance for married military couples](#)

*(22 Jul) The Virginian-Pilot, By Bill Bartel*

It could be particularly damaging to women in the service, the group wrote, noting that 20 percent of women in uniform are married to other service members, compared with almost 4 percent of men.

### **One Year Later, Women Still Shut Out Of Quarter Million Military Jobs**

*(22 Jul) Stars & Stripes, By Wyatt Olson*

Less than a year from an integration deadline, nearly a quarter-million positions remain closed to women in the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines as of March, along with 25,700 positions still closed to women by the U.S. Special Operations Command, according to Government Accountability Office data.

### **Senior NCOs oppose BAH cut for dual-military couples**

*(23 Jul) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman and Michelle Tan*

“At a time when we are working to recruit more women and open more options for women to serve, this provision unnecessarily challenges our efforts to accomplish this goal.”

### **Nominee Lt. Gen. Neller’s Answers to Senate Advance Questions**

*(23 Jul) USNI News*

Advance Questions for Lt. Gen. Robert Neller, USMC, nominee for the position of Commandant of the Marine Corps. The questions were answered by Neller in advance of his July 23, 2015 confirmation hearing. Questions pertained to Assignment Policies for Women in the Military and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response.

## **EXTRA**

### **Transgender troops policy change raises many questions**

*(19 Jul) Navy Times, By Andrew Tilghman*

Defense Secretary Ash Carter made the announcement July 13 and said that over the next six months, top military officials will hammer out details of a new policy to allow active-duty troops to transition from one gender to another. That will force the Pentagon to tackle questions like these: How will their fitness standards change?

### **8 Things You Probably Didn’t Know About Women in the Military**

*(20 Jul) AMVETS National*

For over 3,000 years in a large number of cultures and nations, women have played many roles in the military, from ancient warrior women, to the women currently serving in conflicts, although the vast majority of all combatants in every culture have been men.

### **For years, former POW Jessica Lynch kept the hurt inside**

*(20 Jul) CNN, By Ashley Fantz*

During the [2003] ambush that claimed 11 soldiers, her back was broken in two places. Her arms and legs were smashed. The Iraqis pulled her unconscious from a wrecked Humvee and took her to one of Saddam Hussein's palaces and sexually assaulted her. She has had 22 surgeries, most of them on her lower extremities...[her daughter is] the embodiment of Lynch's determination to prove wrong military doctors who initially told her that her internal injuries were so severe she probably would not be able to have children."

### **For the first time in 6 decades, any new U.S. citizen can decline to pledge to go to war**

*(22 Jul) The Week, By Bonnie Kristian*

As of Tuesday, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has clarified the situations under which new American citizens may avoid pledging to go to war, extending the right to nonreligious people.

### **UNSUNG HEROES: The Female Soldier Who Provided Crucial Medical Treatment Under Mortar Fire**

*(23 Jul) Task & Purpose, By Michael Lane Smith*

In the waning hours of Apr. 25, 2007, Army Pfc. Monica Lin Brown, 18, rushed out of her Humvee after a vehicle in her convoy was hit with an improvised explosive device. With small arms fire raining down, Brown bravely put herself in harm's way to save the lives of two critically injured fellow soldiers.

## **Navy announces court-martial results for June**

*(17 Jul) Navy Times*

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

### **NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON**

#### **General courts-martial**

- In Washington, D.C., Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Marq Martinez pleaded guilty to receiving and distributing child pornography. On June 19 the military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 20 months.
- In Washington, D.C., Cryptologic Technician (Technical) 1st Class D'Urville Christopher was tried for assault consummated by a battery and indecent acts with a child. On June 23 the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to all charges and sentenced him to forfeit all pay and allowances, a reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for six years.

### **NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC**

#### **General courts-martial**

- In Norfolk, Virginia, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Darrell T. Peterson was tried for larceny and making a false official statement. On June 12 the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to all charges and sentenced him to a punitive letter of reprimand, a fine of \$25,000 and confinement for one year.
- In Norfolk, Lt. Stefan J. Thimmes pleaded guilty to failure to obey an order or regulation (viewing pornography on a government computer) and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. On June 17 the military judge sentenced him to confinement for 100 days.
- In Norfolk, Machinist's Mate Fireman Mitchell C. Stankiewicz pleaded guilty to sexual assault of a child and enticement of a person under 18 to engage in sexual activity. On June 19 the military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for six months.
- In Biloxi, Mississippi, an E-4 was tried for aggravated sexual assault. On June 26 the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.
- In Norfolk, Seaman Apprentice Aquil Bethea pleaded guilty to assault consummated by a battery. On June 29 the military judge sentenced him to confinement for 30 days.

#### **Special courts-martial**

- In Norfolk, Marine Sgt. Zachary A. Carrington was tried for violating a general order (hazing) and dereliction of duty. On June 5 the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty for violating a general order, but returned a

verdict of guilty for dereliction of duty and sentenced him to no punishment.

- In Norfolk, Chief Machinist's Mate Phillip Thomas pleaded guilty to adultery. On June 24 the military judge sentenced him to a reduction in rank to paygrade E-6.

### **NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST**

#### **General courts-martial**

- In Mayport, Florida, Missile Technician 3rd Class Cody T. Shoemaker pleaded guilty to failure to obey an order or regulation and indecent viewing. On June 2 the military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-2 and confinement for 18 months.
- In Pensacola, Florida, an E-5 was tried for abusive sexual contact. On June 10 the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.
- In Mayport, an E-4 was tried for conspiracy to distribute and distribution of an indecent visual recording, and indecent viewing. On June 23 the military judge returned a verdict of not guilty.
- In Mayport, Missile Technician 2nd Class Ryan B. Secrest pleaded guilty to failure to obey an order or regulation, making a false official statement, and indecent visual recording. On June 29 the military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-2 and confinement for 10 months.

#### **Special courts-martial**

- In Jacksonville, Florida, Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Amber A. Ball pleaded guilty to wrongfully disposing of military property, possession and use of Schedule II controlled substances, larceny, and housebreaking. On June 3 the military judge sentenced her to a bad conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-3 and confinement for 180 days.
- In Pensacola, an E-3 was tried for wrongful use of a controlled substance. On June 17 the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.
- In Pensacola, Hospitalman Recruit Hyunho Yoon pleaded guilty to violating a general order and was tried for abusive sexual contact. On June 25 the military judge returned a verdict of guilty to all charges. The military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge and confinement for six months.

### **NAVY REGION NORTHWEST**

#### **General courts-martial**

- In Bremerton, Washington, Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class Jeffrey Quichocho pleaded guilty to sexual harassment and assault consummated by a battery, and was tried for sexual assault. On June 23 the military judge returned a verdict of guilty to all charges and sentenced

him to a dishonorable discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for four years.

- In Bremerton, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Kevin L. Fugate pleaded guilty to assault consummated by a battery on a child less than 16 years old. On June 24 the military judge sentenced him to a dishonorable discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for two years.

#### **Special court-martial**

- In Bremerton, Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Zjehiah P. Herrera pleaded guilty to assault consummated by a battery on a child less than 16 years old. On June 25 the military judge sentenced him to a reprimand and hard labor for 60 days.

### **NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST**

#### **General courts-martial**

- In San Diego, Electronics Technician 2nd Class Brett Hernandez was tried for attempted abusive sexual contact, sexual assault and abusive sexual contact. On June 5 the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to one specification of abusive sexual contact and sentenced him to no punishment.
- In San Diego, Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Richard P. Trotter was tried for aggravated sexual abuse of a child and abusive sexual contact with a child. On June 9 the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to all charges and sentenced him to a dishonorable discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 24 months.
- In San Diego, Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Kenneth Grinolds pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit larceny and larceny. On June 30 the military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, a fine of \$5,000 and confinement for 17 months.

#### **Special courts-martial**

- In San Diego, Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Corey Rogers pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit larceny and bank fraud. On June 2 the military judge sentenced him to

### **Army releases verdicts from June courts-martial**

*(19 Jul) Army Times*

The Army on Wednesday released a summary report of 73 verdicts from June courts-martial, including seven cases in which the accused soldier was acquitted of all charges.

The cases, organized by judicial circuit:

#### **First Judicial Circuit (Northeast and mid-Atlantic states)**

- On June 3 at a special court-martial at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Sgt. Narkietha Q. Stanley was convicted by a

reduction in rank to paygrade E-2 and confinement for 95 days.

- In San Diego, Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Courtney Rasberry pleaded guilty to absence without leave. On June 9 the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-4 and confinement for 60 days.
- In San Diego, Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Aaron Bonestell pleaded guilty to dereliction of duty, larceny and wrongful appropriation. On June 29 the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-3, a fine of \$2,000 and confinement for 89 days.

### **NAVY REGION HAWAII**

#### **Special court-martial**

- In Pearl Harbor, Aircrew Survival Equipmentman 2nd Class Calvin H. Cackler pleaded guilty to willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer and obstruction of justice. On June 9 the military judge sentenced him to a bad conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 90 days.

### **NAVY REGION JAPAN**

#### **General court-martial**

- In Yokosuka, Japan, Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Timothy J. Davis pleaded guilty to making a false official statement, sexual assault of a child and sexual abuse of a child. On June 17 the military judge sentenced him to a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1 and confinement for 17 years.

### **NAVY REGION EUROPE, AFRICA AND SOUTHWEST ASIA**

#### **General court-martial**

- In Naples, Italy, an E-3 was tried for sexual assault. On June 25 the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/07/17/navy-special-general-courts-martial-june-2015/30253467/>

military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of cruelty and maltreatment, one specification of wrongful use of a controlled substance and two specifications of assault consummated by battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for five months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On June 4 at a general court-martial at Fort Drum, New York, Spc. Jeff A. Godfrey was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of signing false documents,

one specification of false official statement and three specifications of larceny of military property of a value of more than \$500. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for eight months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On June 4 at a general court-martial at Fort Campbell, Pfc. Michael A. Russell was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of committing a lewd act with a child, one specification of possessing child pornography, one specification of distributing child pornography, two specifications of receiving child pornography and two specifications of soliciting child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 10 years, and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 8 at a general court-martial at Fort Drum, Spc. Kevin Resto was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of sexual abuse of a child. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 16 years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 11 at a special court-martial at Fort Campbell, Sgt. Michael R. Hess was convicted by a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of insubordinate conduct toward a noncommissioned officer and one specification of drunk and disorderly conduct. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade E-4 and to forfeit \$1,000 pay per month for three months.
- On June 11 at a general court-martial at Fort Dix, New Jersey, Staff Sgt. Eric M. Miles was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of four specifications of maltreatment and one specification of abusive sexual contact. The accused was acquitted of one specification of attempted sexual assault, one specification of maltreatment and one specification of aggravated sexual contact. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for one year, and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 11 at a general court-martial at Fort Drum, Staff Sgt. Thomas C. Nichols was convicted by a military judge of one specification of dereliction of duty. The military judge sentenced the accused to no punishment.
- On June 19 at a special court-martial at Fort Lee, Virginia, Spc. Justin E. McDonald was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of failure to obey a lawful order, four specifications of assault with an unloaded firearm and one specification of disorderly conduct. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for eight months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 23 at a special court-martial at Fort Lee, Spc. Christopher A. Shidagis was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of false official statement, one specification of selling military property of a value of more than \$500, four specifications of larceny of military property of a value of more than \$500 and one specification of impersonating a noncommissioned officer. The military judge sentenced

the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for five months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On June 24 at a special court-martial at Fort Campbell, Pfc. Olyn V. Lowrey was convicted by a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of two specifications of larceny of military property of a value of more than \$500, two specifications of larceny of nonmilitary property of a value of less than \$500 and one specification of assault consummated by battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit \$940 pay per month for 12 months, to be confined for 12 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 25 at a general court-martial at Fort Lee, Sgt. Jason E. Dunham was convicted by a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of two specifications of aggravated sexual assault of a child, one specification of wrongfully committing an indecent act with a child and one specification of sodomy with a child. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 30 months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 30 at a special court-martial at Fort Campbell, Pvt. Christopher D. Noah was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of absence without leave, one specification of false official statement, one specification of wrongful disposition of military property and one specification of larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for five months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

## **Second Judicial Circuit (Southeast)**

- On June 1 at a general court-martial at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Spc. Jose L. Cuellar was convicted by a military judge of one specification of possession of child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 31 months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 3 at a general court-martial at Fort Bragg, Spc. Kendrick A. Woolsey was convicted by a military judge of one specification of sexual assault. The accused was acquitted of one specification of conspiracy to commit obstruction of justice, three specifications of sexual assault, one specification of indecent exposure and one specification of obstruction of justice. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for nine years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 5 at a general court-martial at Fort Bragg, Sgt. Dominic E. Bolin was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of attempted larceny, two specifications of conspiracy to commit larceny, four specifications of absence without leave, seven specifications of failure to go to his appointed place of duty, three specifications of the wrongful use of controlled substances, seven specifications of larceny and seven specifications of housebreaking. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 20 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On June 9 at a special court-martial at Fort Bragg, Pfc. Jamaal A. Washington was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of five specifications of attempted larceny, three specifications of absence without leave and two specifications of larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to E-1, to be confined for six months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 10 at a general court-martial at Fort Bragg, a specialist was acquitted by a military judge of two specifications of sexual assault.
- On June 10 at a general court-martial at Fort Benning, Georgia, a private first class was acquitted by a military judge of two specifications of sexual assault.
- On June 11 at a general court-martial at Fort Bragg, Sgt. Benjamin R. Etter was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of possession of child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 12 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 12 at a general court-martial at Fort Bragg, Master Sgt. Kenneth S. Addington was convicted by a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of conspiracy to commit larceny and one specification of larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reprimanded, to be reduced to the grade of E-4, to be confined for one month, to pay a fine of \$5,000 and to be confined for two months if the fine is not paid.
- On June 17 at a general court-martial at Fort Stewart, Georgia, a sergeant first class was acquitted by a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members of two specifications of cruelty and maltreatment towards subordinates, four specifications of sex-related offenses, one specification of indecent exposure, one specification of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of obstruction of justice.
- On June 24 at a special court-martial at Fort Bragg, Sgt. Rhandall S. Lavoisier Jr. was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of absence without leave terminated by apprehension, six specifications of failure to go to his appointed place of duty and three specifications of child endangerment. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for six months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- maltreatment, one specification of abusive sexual contact and four specifications of assault.
- On June 3 at a general court-martial at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Sgt. Gary J. Eloi was convicted by a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of aggravated assault. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 18 months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 4 at a general court-martial at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Maj. John J.C. Quinn was convicted by a military panel composed of officer members of one specification of providing alcohol to a minor. The accused was acquitted of four specifications of sex-related offenses and one specification of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. The members sentenced the accused to be reprimanded and to forfeit \$1,000 pay per month for four months.
- On June 5 at a special court-martial at Fort Hood, Staff Sgt. Lamon A. Cornileus was convicted by a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members of one specification of maltreatment. The members sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-5.
- On June 5 at a general court-martial at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Pfc. Fritz Harry L. Nostrates was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of accessory after the fact and one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 165 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 8, at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Spc. Curtis T. Davis was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of conspiracy, one specification of failure to obey a lawful regulation, one specification of false official statement, one specification of maiming, three specifications of aggravated assault, one specification of obstruction of justice, one specification of unlawful discharge of a firearm and one specification of unlawfully carrying a concealed firearm. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 141 months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 9 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Sgt. John G. Lemon Jr. was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of committing lewd acts upon a child. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 10 years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 10 at a special court-martial at Fort Hood, Pvt. Corneilus W. Morton was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of desertion and one specification of absence without leave. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for two months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 11 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Spc. Steven L. Marko was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of attempted sexual assault of a minor, one specification of attempted sexual abuse of a minor and one specification of enticement of a minor. The military judge sentenced the

### **Third Judicial Circuit (Southwest and Midwest)**

- On June 1 at a general court-martial at Fort Hood, Texas, Capt. Benjamin J. Durham was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of three specifications of failure to obey a lawful general order, two specifications of maltreatment, one specification of stalking, one specification of assault, three specifications of assault consummated by a battery and two specifications of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for two years and to be dismissed from the service.
- On June 2 at a special court-martial at Fort Hood, a staff sergeant was acquitted by a military panel composed of officer members of one specification of cruelty and



accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for nine months and to a dishonorable discharge.

- On June 12 at a general court-martial at Fort Leavenworth, Pvt. Joshua A. Marks was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of possession of obscene images of children and one specification of production of obscene images of children. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for five years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 16 at a general court-martial at Fort Riley, Kansas, Staff Sgt. Edmourd P. Touchette was convicted by a military judge of one specification of failure to obey a lawful general regulation, one specification of false official statement and one specification of a sexual assault. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for nine years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 17 at a general court-martial at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, a sergeant first class was acquitted by a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members of three specifications of maltreatment, three specifications of abusive sexual contact, one specification of forcible sodomy and two specifications of obstruction of justice.
- On June 18 at a general court-martial at Fort Polk, Louisiana, Pvt. David J. Fox was convicted by a military judge of one specification of possession of child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for two years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 23 at a special court-martial at Fort Hood, Pvt. Lamar J. Parker was convicted by a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of two specifications of desertion and one specification of absence without leave. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 120 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 23 at a general court-martial at Fort Riley, Spc. Alrid N. Reid was convicted by a military judge of one specification of absence without leave terminated by apprehension, seven specifications of intent to defraud and one specification of obstruction of justice. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for two years and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 30 at a general court-martial at Fort Riley, Sgt. Willie L. Copeland was convicted by a military judge of one specification of possession of child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 22 months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 30 at a general court-martial at Fort Leonard Wood, Pfc. Joseph A. Warren was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of three specifications of obstruction of justice. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1; to forfeit \$1,000 pay per month for three months; to be restricted to the limits of his barracks room, place of duty, place of worship and dining facility for 60 days; and to perform hard labor without confinement for 90 days.

#### **Fourth Judicial Circuit (Far west and Far East)**

- On June 1 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, Pfc. Louis C. Smith was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of desertion. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 11 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 2 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Pvt. Raul B. Garcia was convicted by a military judge of one specification of desertion. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 92 days, to forfeit \$1,000 pay per month for two months and to pay a fine of \$3,200.
- On June 2 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Spc. William C. Peyrot was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of assault consummated by a battery upon a child. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 90 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 3 at a general court-martial at Fort Bliss, Texas, Spc. Luis G. Nieto was convicted by a military judge of one specification of absence without leave terminated by apprehension, one specification of violating a lawful general order, one specification of false official statement, two specifications of abusive sexual contact and one specification of indecent recording. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for five years, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 4 at a general court-martial at Fort Irwin, California, Pvt. Samuel A. Matute was convicted by a military panel composed of officer members of one specification of failure to obey an order or regulation. The members sentenced the accused to no punishment.
- On June 4 at a special court-martial at Fort Bliss, Pfc. David A. Petrocco was convicted by a military judge of one specification of absence without leave, one specification of failure to obey a lawful order, one specification of the wrongful use of a controlled substance and one specification of larceny of military property. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 11 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 4 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Spc. Joshua G. Thomas was convicted by a military judge of three specifications of sex-related offenses, four specifications of assault consummated by a battery, one specification of unlawful entry and one specification of kidnapping. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for five years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 5 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, a sergeant was acquitted by a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members of six specifications of sexual assault and four specifications of abusive sexual contact.
- On June 6 at a general court-martial at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, Staff Sgt. Ali A. Alirad was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of attempted sexual assault and two specifications of abusive sexual contact.

The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for five years and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On June 8 at a special court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Sgt. Donnie Gibbs was convicted by a military judge of one specification of willful failure to obey a superior commissioned officer. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-3, to perform hard labor without confinement for 45 days and to be restricted to Schofield Barracks and Wheeler Army Airfield for 45 days.
- On June 8 at a general court-martial at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, Pvt. Terrell D. Price was convicted by a military judge of one specification of conspiracy to commit robbery, one specification of robbery and one specification of obstruction of justice. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 42 months, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 9 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Pvt. Markel McNeil was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of conspiracy to commit robbery and one specification of robbery. The military judge sentenced the accused to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 30 months, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 10 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Pvt. Quincy C. Broaden was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of conspiracy to commit larceny, one specification of robbery and one specification of obstruction of justice. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 54 months, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 11 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Capt. Joseph R. Armstrong was convicted by a military panel composed of officer members of one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The members sentenced the accused to be dismissed from the service.
- On June 11 at a special court-martial at Army Garrison Yongsan, South Korea, Staff Sgt. Gregory Z. Laracuenta was convicted by a military judge of one specification of signing a false official record with the intent to deceive, one specification of larceny of military property and one specification of making or using a false writing. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-5, to forfeit \$1,000 pay per month for six months and to be confined for two months.
- On June 15 at a general court-martial at Camp Casey, South Korea, Spc. Raymond J. Cooper III was convicted by a military judge of one specification of attempted murder and two specifications of aggravated assault. The accused was acquitted of one specification of attempted murder. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 20 years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 15 at a general court-martial at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, Pvt. Matthew Noerr was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of false official statement, one specification of sexual abuse of a child and three specifications of sexual assault of a child.

The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 24 months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On June 17 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Capt. Uvo Oghreikanone was convicted by a military panel composed of officer members, contrary to his pleas, of six specifications of sexual assault, one specification of abusive sexual contact, two specifications of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of adultery. The members sentenced the accused to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 20 years, and to be dismissed from the service.
- On June 18 at a general court-martial at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, Warrant Officer Tony L. Bishop was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of assault consummated by a battery upon a child. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for six months and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 18 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Sgt. Andrew J. Gomez was convicted by a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of attempting to wrongfully make an indecent video recording of the private area of another person, two specifications of attempting to wrongfully view the private area of another person, and two specifications of wrongfully viewing the private area of another person. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for 11 months, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 18 at a general court-martial at Fort Carson, Colorado, Spc. Jeffrey T. Page was convicted by a military judge, contrary to his plea, of one specification of murder. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 26 years and to a dishonorable discharge.
- On June 19 at a general court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Pfc. Jahmal S. Lee was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of fleeing apprehension, one specification of false official statement, two specifications of aggravated assault and one specification of obstruction of justice. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for four years, and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 22 at a special court-martial at Wheeler Army Airfield, Staff Sgt. Aaron J. Ochoa was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of maltreatment and three specifications of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reprimanded.
- On June 22 at a general court-martial at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, Spc. David P. Rubio was convicted by a military judge of one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for five months and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 23 at a general court-martial at Fort Huachuca, Pfc. David J. Abanosager was convicted by a military judge of one specification of possession of child pornography. The military judge sentenced the accused to



be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for five months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

- On June 23 at a special court-martial at Camp Zama, Japan, Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth M. Edwards was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of assault consummated by a battery and one specification of drunk and disorderly conduct. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-6 and to be confined for 75 days.
- On June 23 at a general court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Pvt. Hunter C. Wieting was convicted by a military judge of one specification of desertion and two specifications of absence without leave. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 120 days and to a bad-conduct discharge.
- On June 26 at a special court-martial at Army Garrison Yongsan, a sergeant was acquitted by a military judge of one specification of disobeying the lawful order of a superior noncommissioned officer, one specification of assaulting a superior noncommissioned officer, one specification of being disrespectful in department towards a superior noncommissioned officer and one specification of engaging in an inappropriate relationship.
- On June 26 at a general court-martial at Fort Huachuca, Capt. Jonathan Martinez was convicted by a military panel composed of officer members of one specification of disobeying a lawful order of a superior commissioned officer, one specification of disobeying a lawful general regulation and two specifications of assault consummated by a battery. The members sentenced the accused to be confined for 90 days and to be dismissed from the service.
- On June 29 at a special court-martial at Fort Bliss, Pvt. Amber E. Flores was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to her pleas, of one specification of failure to report, one specification of failure to obey an order, one

specification of wrongful use of marijuana, one specification of introduction of cocaine onto a military installation and two specifications of larceny. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for three months and to a bad-conduct discharge.

#### **Fifth Judicial Circuit (Europe and Southwest Asia)**

- On June 8 at a special court-martial at Vilseck, Germany, Sgt. Cedric A. Moore was convicted by a military judge of two specifications of failing to obey a lawful order, four specifications of violating a lawful general order or regulation, one specification of the wrongful introduction of a controlled substance and one specification of wrongful communication of a threat. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1 and to be confined for six months.
- On June 16 at a general court-martial at Kaiserslautern, Germany, Capt. Marion A. Alston was convicted by a military judge of one specification of false official statement and one specification of wrongful use of a controlled substance. The military judge sentenced the accused to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for six months, and to be dismissed from the service.
- On June 23 at a special court-martial at Kaiserslautern, Pvt. Christopher A. Nelsestuen was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of three specifications of disrespect toward a noncommissioned officer, two specifications of failing to obey a lawful order, one specification of resisting arrest and four specifications of assault. The military judge sentenced the accused to a bad-conduct discharge.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/07/19/court-report-ucmj-military-justice/30187327/>

### **Stupid Sailor Pranks: Hazing Reports Drop In Severity**

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

Across the entire force, only two sailors reportedly had their warfare pins tacked onto their flesh in the past year – one of the many signs that Navy officials have turned a corner in their fight against hazing.

The dangerous or demeaning initiation rites and verbal dressings-down that have been part and parcel of military life are steadily becoming a thing of the past, according to the Navy officials who oversee the effort to stamp out hazing. But many veterans and current sailors question whether the service has gone too soft.

The Navy is a professional organization and sailors are expected to uphold standards, said the leader of the Navy's anti-hazing effort.

"I think all of us want an environment that encourages fun, because it should also be fun to come to work," said Capt. Star Hardison, the acting head of the 21st Century Sailor office, in a June 30 phone interview. "But at the same time we need to manage that by maintaining a level of dignity and respect."

The 21st Century Sailor office took in 48 complaints of hazing from April 2014 to June 2015, of which 28 were confirmed as hazing, according to official data compiled by their office. The findings on four cases are still pending. The numbers have largely held steady since the office stood up its hazing task

force in 2013. The latest tally features fewer incidents involving violence, but hazing remains underreported and is still defended in many quarters.

The reports run the gamut from practical jokes to physical assault and rituals like tacking on warfare devices and "good-humored restraint," as the Navy describes it, as a division send-off.

When you think of hazing, you probably think of those cultural rituals, like throwing a chief-select overboard or a punch in the crows after you make petty officer.

But the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines hazing as the practice of playing unpleasant tricks on someone or forcing someone to do unpleasant things, and that's where the Navy makes its distinction.

"Each incident is judged by what the victim reports as it relates to hazing, and it's determined whether that sailor was exposed to any activity which is cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning or harmful," said Lt. Joe Keiley, a spokesman for the chief of naval personnel.

That includes verbal abuse, which played a part in seven of the past year's complaints. Five of them were found to be hazing. Some Navy Times readers who responded to a call-out for opinions on hazing thought that political correctness and

sensitivity were broadening the definition of hazing, but Hardison said it's better to be safe than sorry – sailors should report anything that gives them pause.

"I think it's important that any time our sailors see anything that they think isn't right, that they should always step up and step in, whether it be a situation of hazing or a safety violation," said Hardison, whose office oversees anti-hazing training and policy.

The victim's perception is key in making the decision, said Keiley, but that's not the only factor. Being a willing participant doesn't mean you weren't hazed.

For example, a February 2015 complaint alleged that an E-1 was taped to a bed by a fellow student, with consent. An E-3 reported the incident, in line with the Navy's definition of a hazing event.

"I think sailors realize that there's a time and a place for horseplay – it's probably not in the workplace," Hardison said. "I think that's coming through loud and clear through our training."

The training focuses not only on what hazing is, but what to do about it when you see it. Numbers of reports have held steady for the past three years, but Hardison confirmed that her office believes it's closing the gap between hazing incidents and the number reported.

"I think that's a fair assessment," she said. "Sailors know what hazing is or isn't, and they're willing to come forward and report it, and they trust that their chain of command is going to take action to investigate."

#### **'Combating Tradition'**

The flip side of the hazing debate, for many, is the dearly held rites of passage that many see as essential to their experience as sailors.

"Had my fellow submariners not tacked my dolphins to my chest, I am sure I would have felt they did not respect me and feel that I was their equal," wrote former Machinist's Mate 1st Class (SS) James Glass.

That ritual is barred now, but the Navy receives complaints about it every year.

Others have strong feelings about the Crossing the Line ceremonies, typically marked by a day of nastiness, which nonetheless has been toned down in recent years to address concerns about abuse and degradation.

"Back in the day, when a ship would do the Crossing the Line ceremony, sailors would be hazed to get rid of being a 'wog' and become a 'shellback,'" said former undesignated airman Roberto Lerma. "Nowadays you can't even have fun in berthing without someone getting mad and reporting you that you hazed them."

### **Congress scuttles bill on fertility treatment for troops, vets**

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

The hopes of veterans who need help starting a family as a result of injuries sustained in combat were dashed Wednesday when Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., pulled a bill that would have allowed the Veterans Affairs Department to fund fertility treatments.

Murray had planned to present her legislation to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Wednesday afternoon but pulled it after Senate Republicans, led by Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., added amendments that, among other things, questioned the

Though new sailors are now coming up in a Navy with a different attitude toward those traditions, some currently serving don't like the changes.

"In my view, they are combating things that are 'traditions' in the Navy," said an active-duty HM2, who asked not to be named due to concerns about his career.

"Everything is so politically correct these days that it opens doors for those who probably shouldn't make it through boot camp to complain about something as pathetic as a recruit division commander scaring someone too much or embarrassing the individual, and then that person is relieved of [his] job," he added.

The Navy is pandering to over-sensitivity, he said. Others agreed the service has been too sensitive.

"I think the Navy has lost some of its collective soul in the rush to be 'politically correct' and to make sure nobody's feelings get hurt, no matter how slightly," said former Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (SS) Skip Kirkwood. "If a sailor can't take a little ribbing, and give as good as he or she gets, how can shipmates know that they can count on them in a pinch?" But others see good in cracking down. A good-natured prank can go too far, one retired chief said.

"The problem with hazing is it can sometimes escalate if just one of the participants has a sadistic disposition," said retired Chief Boatswain's Mate Shawn Kelley. "When this happens, a pack mentality can manifest."

Kelley said he was proud to have survived his alcohol-fueled, borderline-sadistic chief initiation, but that he "would not wish that experience on anyone today."

"My instincts tell me that just as there's been an awakening in society concerning women's equality, racial equality and homosexual rights, there has also been a large upswing in awareness and quasi-universal comprehension of the wrongness of bad behavior in the world we live in, and even more so in the Navy because of the detrimental consequences to the careers of those who participate and also those who observe without reporting or trying to stop an escalation," he added.

Past Navy training has focused on what-not-to-do's, Hardison said, but her office is working on the 2016 roll-out of a new initiative called Chart the Course, which covers sexual assault, substance abuse and other misconduct issues.

"It will take a little bit of a different direction than [Bystander Intervention to the Fleet]," she said, "focusing on, what does right behavior look like and how to we emulate that?"

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/07/19/navy-hazing-2015/30185551/>

funding for the initiative and would have prohibited the VA from working with Planned Parenthood and other organizations that provide fertility and abortion services.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America has been under fire since the release of a video July 15 by the activist group Center for Medical Progress showing a doctor discussing the sale of tissues from aborted fetuses, as well as the process used to obtain intact tissue samples.

Murray called the amendments a "partisan attack on women's health," and said her bill, which passed the Senate in 2012 but failed in the House over funding concerns, would have ensured that the nation is doing "everything we can to support veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country."

"I am so disappointed — and truly angry that Republicans on the Veterans Affairs Committee decided yesterday to leap at the opportunity to pander to their base, to poison the well with the political cable news battle of the day, and turn their backs on wounded veterans," she said.

Tillis said the amendments were not intended "to kill in vitro fertilization." Rather, he said he has concerns about veterans who are waiting to receive medical care or are being denied care, including some of his constituents who have diseases related to exposure to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

"At some point, it may make sense to add another half a billion dollars for this medical treatment that's been proposed by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but not until we're absolutely certain that the promises we've already made going to be fulfilled," said Tillis, a freshman congressman.

If it had passed both legislative bodies, the Women Veterans and Families Services Act would have expanded fertility services offered by the Defense Department, through Tricare, to severely injured troops, including those with fertility issues related to traumatic brain injury, and also would

## **Paternity leave for single military fathers?**

*(23 Jul) Military Times, By Karen Jowers*

Possible paternity leave for single sailor fathers is on the radar, according to a Navy spokeswoman.

Married service members are allowed 10 days of paternity leave that is not against their other leave under a 2008 law that stresses the word "married."

Navy spokeswoman Lt. Jessica Crownover said requests for paternity leave from single service members have come in.

As such, "part of the Sailor 2025 initiative is to evaluate this law and consider how changes will improve work-life balance," Crownover said.

Army, Air Force and Marine Corps officials say the idea is not being discussed within their services, although the Marine Corps does allow single Marine father to request paternity leave under limited circumstances.

For example, when appropriate medical facilities are not available for delivery of a child, the male Marine may be authorized paternity leave to accompany his spouse before and immediately following delivery. That particular authorization may be extended to unmarried male Marines in circumstances such as — but not limited to — when the unmarried male Marine has sole custody of the baby.

have lifted the ban on in vitro fertilization at VA medical centers.

Under the legislation, spouses or surrogates of these troops and veterans also would have been eligible for services.

Paralyzed Veterans of America released a statement Wednesday expressing disappointment in the bill's demise and called Tillis's amendments "histrionic political grandstanding."

"As a result of the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, many young service members have suffered grievous injuries from explosive devices that have made them unable to conceive a child naturally," the statement read. "If this country is to uphold its moral obligation to make whole those men and women who have been sent into harm's way and returned broken, then it is time for this legislation to be enacted."

Tillis denied he is playing political games, citing a statistic that just 13 percent of Camp Lejeune water victims have had their claims approved by VA.

"Shouldn't it be 50 or 60 percent?" he said. "I don't think it's political when you're trying to live within your means or political to make sure that the policies you're implementing actually work the way you intended."

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/07/22/congress-scuttles-bill-fertility-treatment-troops-vets/30528847/>

A Navy veteran contends that excluding single fathers from paternity leave is discriminatory. "Does it make it any different for a married man than a single man who lives with his significant other or fiancé?" the veteran asked in a letter to Military Times. "As long as the male's name is on the birth certificate, is it any business of the Navy's if he's married or single?"

The veteran noted that Navy Secretary Ray Mabus announced in July that paid maternity leave is tripled for Navy and Marine Corps mothers, from six weeks to 18 weeks.

"The least he can do is correct this transgression against single fathers who can legitimately provide documentation of their child's birth and help the mother of their child, just the same as a married man would do, to get them home and started on their new routines of life," the veteran wrote.

Officials note that the limitation to married military fathers is a requirement in law.

"The rules need to be frequently reexamined to determine if they're really respecting the variety of people they're attracting to the military," said Kenneth Matos, senior director of research at the Families and Work Institute. But he said the discussion around paternity leave is a different one in the civilian world.

The civilian world is not entirely on board with granting paternity leave, "but they don't consider marital status" in granting leave to fathers after a child's birth, he said.

According to the National Partnership for Women & Families, 20 percent of private-sector employees work for employers that offer paid paternity leave to most male employees. Statistics were not available on how many employers offer paid paternity leave specifically to single fathers, but that's not generally a relevant question in the civilian world, Matos said.

He noted that in the private sector, employers are supposed to offer unpaid paternity as well as maternity leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Research indicates about 20 percent of employers are not complying with the FMLA, he said, and a number of those cases have to do with paternity leave.

And in general, fathers may face stigma for taking paternity leave.

The question for the military becomes a cultural and organizational one, Matos said. Instead of supporting military

families, he said, is the law "supporting military families that look the way we think they should?"

The civilian world has come to grips with the fact that people have children outside of marriage, he said.

"The civilian world has absorbed that — employers are not engaging in their employees' personal lives," he said. "The question should be, 'what's best for children of military members?'"

Studies have shown that the more men are involved early on in their children's lives, the more they remain involved in their children's lives later, Matos said, adding that numerous studies have shown that an involved father benefits children's lives in many ways — they tend to do better in school, for example.

"Is a single father going to stay in the military if he finds the military is not going to support his fatherhood?" Matos said.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/2015/07/23/paternity-leave-single-military-fathers/30590819/>

## **Army Ranger School's assessment of women has moved to the mountains, but the scrutiny remains**

*(17 Jul) Washington Post, By Dan Lamothe*

Dozens of Ranger School students lined up at the base of a 3,166-foot tall mountain here on Tuesday morning, dread hanging on some of their faces. The soldiers, wearing boots and camouflage uniforms, needed to make a 1.8-mile climb in an hour while carrying rifles and about 45 pounds of equipment, ascending some 1,000 feet through rocky trails and thick tree cover to a clearing above.

"It's simple, guys: Short walk, big hill," said Army Capt. Kyle Fichtner, their company commander. A moment later, he added a sarcastic word of encouragement: "Let's go, Rangers — America can't keep itself free, right?"

The climb up Mount Yonah was a routine part of Ranger School, but it also made history. For the first time, it included women who are tackling the famously difficult leadership school's 20-day Mountain Phase. Three female soldiers advanced to it for the first time last week after completing the first of Ranger School's three phases of training at Fort Benning, Ga. If any of them advances again, she'll move on to the Florida Phase, learning swamp and jungle warfare tactics, and potentially become the first woman ever to graduate Ranger School.

The women are attending as part of an ongoing assessment by the military about how it should better integrate women into combat roles in the military. It followed a 2013 decision by top Pentagon leaders to open all jobs in the military to women by 2016. The services were required to conduct research first, and are permitted to request an exception to the new policy in coming months for any jobs they want to keep closed, provided they can show evidence that it wouldn't work.

Nineteen women started Ranger School on April 20 as part of the first class ever to include female students. If any of the

remaining three complete the course, they will be allowed to wear the Army's Ranger Tab, a prestigious decoration, but will not be allowed to join the elite 75th Ranger Regiment, which performs raids and other Special Operations missions. Many male soldiers, ranging from pilots to artillerymen, also earn the tab and serve in roles outside the Rangers.

The military did not allow any of the three women to speak to the media, but it did permit a small group of reporters to observe the first days of the Mountain Phase.

The effort has faced intense scrutiny inside and outside the military. Some critics have questioned whether the remaining women have been afforded unfair opportunities, while others say the majority of the women already have washed out because the Ranger instructors grading them faced pressure to do so.

Col. David Fivecoat, commander of the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade leading the assessment, said it's inevitable that "you're going to get hammered from both sides." He's instructed his staff to continue doing their job as it always has, he said.

"We're a learning organization, and this is the first time we've done it," he said of the gender assessment. "We're trying to make sure everyone has a fair and equal chance to earn the tab."

Eight of the initial 19 women made it through the initial Ranger Assessment Phase, a grueling four-day test that includes everything from chin-ups and push-ups to an exhausting 12-mile road march and a water survival test in which students climb along a rope that is suspended over



water. The number of women dropped again in late May, when all eight failed the first phase for a second time, and Fivecoat awarded three of them the opportunity to become “Day 1 recycles.” The status is awarded to some service members who excel in many areas of Ranger School, but fail in a single key component.

On their third and final try, all three remaining women advanced, moving the gender assessment to the mountains. They reported July 11 to Camp Frank D. Merrill, a remote installation in the national forest leased by the Army. The women were joined by 156 male soldiers who had passed the first phase alongside them, and 42 men who already were training in the mountains, but had failed to pass there the first time.

The students arrived at Mount Yonah on Day 3 of training. Near the base of the Appalachian Trail, it is the site of at least two accidental civilian deaths since 2008 due to long falls from cliffs.

All but one of the soldiers completed the mountain road march, but it left many of them gasping for air by the time they reached the top. Afterward, instructors led them down a rocky, uneven trail toward a sheer rock wall perhaps 60 feet high. The students worked in pairs to climb it with the help of ropes, occasionally cursing as they slipped and a fellow Ranger student forcefully yanked a rope to stop their fall.

One of the women, perhaps 5-foot-5, made the climb quickly. A military police officer, she showed no signs of fear as she used a lane labeled as “Yellow.”

“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 to the Mountain

### **3 West Point grads vying to be first women to pass Army Ranger school**

*(18 Jul) McClatchy DC, By Chuck Williams*

The woman stood at the front of the formation Tuesday morning, toting a 50-pound rucksack and holding an M4 rifle. In front of her was Mount Yonah. Behind her were about 50 soldiers of Charlie Company. The mission was to march up a trail 1.8 miles long and more than 1,000 feet in elevation. About 45 minutes later, the soldiers, breathing heavily and sweating under their loads, emerged from the woods, found a road and finished the march.

Still near the front of that line was the same female soldier. She is one of three women – all West Point graduates – trying to become the first females to earn the U.S. Army Ranger tab. They have moved to the Ranger School mountain phase, arguably the most difficult piece of the most difficult training the Army offers.

Staff Sgt. Gregory Space has been an instructor assigned to the 5th Ranger Training Battalion at Camp Merrill for two years.

One of the female soldiers is assigned to his company.

“She’s pulling through and she wants the tab,” Space said. Will it happen?

“We’re finding out,” Space said. “There is a lot of mountains to go, but we will find out.”

In April, the Army opened Ranger School to women for the first time as part of an evaluation of how to fully integrate the

Phase in an effort to make sure the assessment goes smoothly. “I always watch for shaking. She didn’t even shake.”

The soldiers were soon faced with another challenge. A muscular thunderstorm swept through around noon, drenching uniforms and forcing the soldiers to seek cover from swirling winds and crackling lightning. Training continued afterward, with the newly created mud and wet stones forming additional obstacles as the soldiers practiced rappelling and eventually scaled a 150-cliff near the top of the mountain.

The Ranger students will begin a 10-day field exercise in the mountains next week. It includes simulated ambushes, night mountaineering, the use of rope bridges and patrols that are graded by instructors. It ends with a 200-foot rappel down a cliff at night aided by night-vision equipment. As of Thursday, 194 men and the three women were left in training.

In fiscal 2014, the average Mountain Phase class had 219 students. On average, 6 percent were dropped from Ranger School, 24 percent were recycled to try again and 70 percent moved on to the Florida Phase, Fivecoat said.

The chances of passing improve even more in the swamp. The average class there had 190 students in 2014, with 4 percent dropped, 19 percent recycled to take it again and 77 percent passing, Fivecoat said. The earlier portions at Fort Benning were the big obstacles. The average class had 369 students when beginning the initial Ranger Assessment Phase, with 44 percent dropped. The average class in the “Darby” phase that follows had 207 students, with 16 percent of students dropped, 27 percent recycled and 57 percent advanced to the mountains. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/07/17/army-ranger-schools-assessment-of-women-has-moved-to-the-mountains-but-the-scrutiny-remains/>

Army’s combat forces. Nineteen female soldiers started the course at Fort Benning, and after three months, three remain.

The common denominator is that all three women are graduates of the United States Military Academy. That is not surprising, said Sue Fulton, who graduated from West Point in 1980 with the first class to include women.

“West Point teaches leaders to be tenacious in overcoming obstacles,” said Fulton, who chairs the West Point Board of Visitors that reports to the President of the United States. “At some point – probably more than once – you have to do a gut check and call on inner reserves to do something that you never thought you could do. Am I surprised that the three remaining women in Ranger School are West Point graduates? Not at all.”

The women are earning respect as they slug their way through a combat leadership course that creates stress by depriving students of food and sleep. Their leadership skills are graded on their ability to lead small units on patrol missions.

At Fort Benning, all eight women who passed the physical testing in April – including the three women currently in the

mountain phase – failed their patrols twice. The other five women were dropped from the course.

Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Arnold has been involved in the process from the beginning. During each phase, he and brigade commander Col. David G. Fivecoat have the final say on whether a student moves forward, is recycled or dropped. Before a student is dropped from the course, he or she meets with Arnold and Fivecoat.

Less than 30 percent of Ranger-qualified soldiers go straight through the course without recycling.

After failing the first patrol phase twice, the three women were offered an opportunity to start the course over from the beginning. Two male soldiers received the same invitation and decided to go home.

That changed the game, Arnold said.

“By accepting the Day 1 recycle, they absolutely validated their place here,” Arnold said. “This is tough, physically and mentally demanding training, and a soldier has to earn that Ranger tab. . . . What it said was they were here to earn it, that this was not a sideshow and there was not an agenda.”

Fulton agreed.

“I think that the women, at that point, showed they were willing to take on any challenge,” Fulton said. “They are not going to give up, and that is exactly what you want in a combat leader.”

The third time around, the women sailed through patrols and earned the right to go to the mountains. During the training at Camp Darby on Fort Benning, Ranger instructors were in the students’ faces, applying pressure to an already pressure-packed situation. But in the mountains, the Ranger instructors seemed much more like coaches and college professors than drill sergeants.

“Mother Nature takes care of that,” Arnold said. “The terrain up here will crush you. You don’t have to have a Ranger instructor in your face.”

Arnold had the same advice for the male and female soldiers. “Don’t quit,” he said.

During Tuesday morning’s march up Mount Yonah, only one of the 200 soldiers failed to get to camp in under an hour. He was told he would have to repeat the march the next morning. About an hour later, word began to circulate through the cadre that the soldier was leaving the course because of “LOM” – lack of motivation, which means he quit.

There is no lack of motivation or quit for the three female soldiers. Now a month from possible graduation, their journey is being watched closely across the Army – men and women.

That was evident as the training moved up to the bald rock face of Mount Yonah, where the students were climbing and rappelling – “the four best days you will have at Ranger School,” according to one Ranger instructor.

As the first women prepared to climb Mount Yonah, most of those in the vicinity turned to watch. First Lt. Jill Mueller, from a field artillery unit in Fort Bliss, Texas, is one of about a half dozen female soldiers assigned as observers and advisers to the Camp Merrill battalion.

Mueller was standing a few feet away as the female Ranger candidate began climbing the rock. Mueller watched intently as the woman, assigned to a Military Police unit, harnessed in, received her instructions and began to attack the rock.

“This is more emotional than I expected it to be,” Mueller said. “For so long, we have been told that this was not

possible. I have been saying this was possible – and I think we are being proved right.”

Lesley-Anne Crumpton, another observer/adviser, was also watching the woman climb. She focused on technique, not history.

“She didn’t shake, and she didn’t look like she had any muscle fatigue, and she didn’t look like she was scared of the climb,” Crumpton said. “Maybe she is a rock climber in her spare time.”

The historic significance is not lost on those involved in the process. Space, the Ranger instructor, said he is pleased to be part of it.

“I am getting to see this firsthand,” he said during training on Mount Yonah. “If they earn it, they deserve it. There is no coddling, and there has been no lowering of the standards.” What would Space say to the critics who insist the standards have been altered to get a woman through the course?

“I would tell them I was there, and I was one of the ones upholding those standards,” he said. “And I will be able to honestly tell them that.”

That is important to Fulton and other women watching this play out.

“We want to hear the standards have not been lowered,”

Fulton said. “I know that the professionals at the Army Ranger School are not about to lower the standards for anyone – men or women.”

It is also important for another reason. By maintaining the Ranger standards for the women, the Army is raising the standards across the board, Mueller said.

“We’ve all heard the excuses – ‘I can’t carry this’ or ‘I can’t keep up,’” Mueller said. “You can’t use that anymore. Everybody in our military, including the women, will be pushed to a higher standard.”

Fulton puts it another way.

“This demonstrates, once and for all, that leadership and physical courage is not unique to men,” Fulton said. “This will ultimately make the Army stronger because we can draw from a talent pool to put the best person in the right job across the force.”

After four days of mountain training, the students are now going through five days of combat technique training. The real test begins Tuesday when the class heads to the Chattahoochee National Forest for graded student-led patrols.

The remaining three women are among about 200 students currently in the mountain phase at Camp Merrill. Those who are successful will move seven hours south for the final phase in the Florida swamps near Destin.

And unlike when this started in April at Fort Benning, the women have blended into the class and no longer stand out.

“The first couple of days, I could not pick them out,” Mueller said.

They will become more visible as it gets closer to the Aug. 21 graduation at Fort Benning’s Victory Pond, especially if one or more of them earn the tab that is worn by less than 3 percent of the Army’s soldiers.

Space said it would be a “great point of pride” if any of the women get through the mountains, pass the Florida phase and earn the Ranger tab.

“If one of them makes it,” Space said, “I will go down there and pin the tab on them myself.”

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/national-security/article27659722.html>



## Fired female Marine commander turns to Congress

(18 Jul) *The Hill*, By Kristina Wong

A female Marine commander of an all-female battalion wants Congress to intervene after she was fired over what she believes were her efforts to push female recruits to become better.

Marine Lt. Col. Kate Germano was fired from her job on June 30 as commander of a training battalion for female recruits at Parris Island, S.C., an action that has been gaining [media attention](#) due to its awkward timing.

The Marine Corps and the other military services are readying to open all combat positions to women by January, or appeal to the Defense secretary.

Marine Corps officials say Germano's firing had nothing to do with gender, but her leadership.

Brig. Gen. Terry Williams, the top commander at Parris Island, [said](#) an investigation found Germano was to be "hostile, unprofessional and abusive," according to the *Marine Corps Times*.

But Germano, an 18-year veteran, says she was treated unjustly by the base's leadership. Her supporters say she was trying to hold women to tougher standards.

For example, when Germano took command of the unit last June, she focused on improving her female recruits' marksmanship in order to help close a gap she found between male and female performance standards.

"Once we showed the recruits and the coaches and drill instructors it was possible, it filled them with so much confidence," Germano said in a *New York Times* article published Sunday.

She said this week in an interview with *The Hill* that she chose to improve women's marksmanship first, due to the saying "Every Marine a rifleman." She said women had historically underperformed men in that area, reinforcing gender bias against women.

Germano said that after she increased training, about 90 percent of women in her battalion passed initial rifle qualification, equaling the rate for men.

Germano also sought to integrate males and females in boot camp exercises, although they had always been separated.

Germano said in a statement to investigators her efforts were undermined by a very small group of individuals in her unit and her direct superior, Col. Daniel Haas, who ordered a review of her leadership in a unit survey. Two-thirds of the unit responded to that survey, half with complaints.

Base leadership then ordered an investigation into Germano's leadership. Germano said the survey was problematic since it allowed respondents to take it more than once and requested that it be fixed and reissued.

Germano called for an investigation into the base's hostile work environment and gender-based discrimination, and submitted evidence that a battalion commander at Parris Island called her unit a "distraction" on training hikes, and that senior officials said there was "no value" in conducting co-ed training.

Marine officials could not substantiate her claims, but relieved her over complaints about her leadership.

Several officers under Germano's command interviewed by the *Marine Corps Times* and *The New York Times* defended her, saying she was just trying to improve the unit and that she was a caring leader and mentor.

In a letter to her unit after her firing, Germano wrote, "Despite considerable active and passive resistance throughout all echelons of the Recruit Depot and the Marine Corps, we each worked incredibly hard to improve the performance of our recruits to make them stronger, faster, smarter, and better shots — all to better the institution."

Integrating women into combat jobs is seen as a top priority of the Obama administration and the Marine Corps is widely believed to be the most resistant to allowing females serve in the infantry.

In 2013, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta ordered the military to remove a policy banning women from combat jobs and gave the services two years to implement that policy, or ask for exceptions for certain positions.

The Marine Corps has the lowest percentage of females serving of all the military services, and is the only military service in which male and female recruits are segregated.

Germano did not detail to *The Hill* her contact with members of Congress, saying was considered "protected communication." But there are a number of lawmakers who have made oversight of women in the military a priority.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), a member of the Armed Services Committee, pressed Marine Commandant and nominee for Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joe Dunford last week.

"I strongly believe that we should have standards that meet the needs of each position and then allow anyone in who meets those standards to compete," she said.

Dunford said the Marine Corps has finished looking at standards and would provide results to him in the next month or two.

"If I'm confirmed, sitting as the chairman ... I'll have a responsibility to look at each one of the requests on its own merits and make a recommendation to the secretary of Defense," he said.

## Commission wants easier active-to-reserve transition

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

The congressionally mandated group tasked with examining the Army's future force structure believes the service must improve the transition of soldiers back and forth between active duty and the Reserve and Guard.

Congress tasked the commission, led by retired Gen. Carter Ham, to examine the structure of the Army and recommend ways to make the best use out of limited resources and a shrinking end-strength.

It will also specifically examine the impact of the controversial transfer of the AH-64 Apache attack helicopters from the Army National Guard to active duty.

The commission's recommendations are due to Congress no later than Feb. 1, 2016.

After a public meeting Thursday, Ham said it's a "high priority" to improve the shift of soldiers between active duty, the Reserve and the National Guard.

"We have heard over and over again from soldiers from all three components a desire to move more seamlessly between components," Ham told the *Army Times*, after the meeting in Arlington, Virginia. "Current policies and procedures make that fairly difficult."

An easier transition could make reserve components more appealing to soldiers as the Army draws down to 450,000 soldiers [by the end of 2018](#). That would mean retention of key skills and experience that the military could summon if needed, and at a fraction of the price of growing new recruits.

"If we can come up with some recommendations that might make those kind of transitions easier, that would be a benefit to the Army and to the nation," Ham said.

The personnel aspect jives with Defense Secretary Ash Carter's broader aims to make the Army more nimble in its ability to attract and more quickly utilize and reward talent. Among other reforms, Carter [has said](#) he wants to fundamentally change the promotion system to skew more to merit and skill and create new midcareer entry points for needed skills.

Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel Brad Carson echoed that sentiment when he [referred in a memo](#) to the "calcified personnel system largely unchanged since 1947" and warned "we will increasingly bleed key talent to the private sector."

### Tough words for congressmen

Retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Arnold Punaro, invited to speak before the commission, added some flare to the meeting.

Among other quips, Punaro called sequestration the biggest threat to National Security in his lifetime and said "anytime you bump into a congressman on the hill that's voted to keep the sequester, choke him to within an inch of his life," drawing laughs.

Punaro, the chair of the Reserve Forces Policy Board, stressed that the reserve component is a cost-efficient way to have a strong military. He also cited the Abram's Doctrine — if the military goes to war, Guard and reserves should go with it — in arguing that the reserve component should be a ready and able part of the nation's fighting force. And while criticizing Congress, he also said the Pentagon needed to change as well.

"We've got to break out of these old ways of doing business at the Pentagon. Congress has got to give the Pentagon more flexibility in the way they manage their money. So I think that's another area where the commission can strike a blow for freedom," Punaro said.

Among specific recommendations in his testimony to the commission:

- Learn from Air Force and Navy integration of reserve force components as blended units through shared active and reserve platforms. For example, co-locate the Apaches the Guard and active Army are fighting over, for training and mobilization.
- Utilize reserve component expertise where traditionally the Army would look active first.
- Increase active-duty soldiers serving in reserve units, but do better to recognize and reward their work. (They generally have lower promotion rates, Punaro said).
- Streamline the number of duty statuses in the reserve component.
- Rely heavier on reserve components, which cost between 22-32 percent as much as active duty
- Reform the pay system, which Punaro said pays 90 percent more than civilians of similar education and experience, while noting \$1 trillion in unfunded liabilities for retirees. He also recommended not adding benefits, especially deferred ones, for reserve components.

Ham agreed that the reserves would likely continue to play an increased role in the Army after heavy use in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"There is great interest in increasing the number of multi-component units across the Army," Ham said. He noted there would be some variation depending on the type of unit and job, "but in general, we're sensing a tilt toward multi-component organizations," he concluded.

## Senate plan would eliminate one housing allowance for married military couples

(22 Jul) *The Virginian-Pilot*, By Bill Bartel

A proposal on Capitol Hill to significantly cut the monthly housing allowances for married couples who both serve in the military is making many in Hampton Roads see red.

The proposal, part of a 2016 defense spending bill passed in the Senate, would cost affected couples more than \$1,000 a month for off-base housing. Under the bill, only one person would be allowed to receive a housing allowance instead of both. If approved, the limitation would not kick in until a couple moves to a new duty station.

Air Force Lt. Col. Kristi Church, whose husband, Rick, has the same rank, said the measure "is kind of a smack in the face" for those who chose to make the military a career.

The couple, who live in Virginia Beach with two children, are stationed at the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk. But should their next assignments require a move, "our standard of living is going to change," Church said. "We made decisions based on the fact that we both have O-5 (lieutenant colonel) incomes."

The 2016 National Defense Authorization Act is being negotiated in Congress. It is a complex policy bill that addresses ship construction, weapon systems and almost all things related to defense. The version passed in mid-June by the Senate includes a provision that cuts the housing allowance, beginning Oct. 1 for some.

The House version does not include the reduction. Negotiators for the two chambers have been meeting privately to reach a compromise on many parts of the bill.

The monthly housing allowances, which increase with rank, vary by region. In South Hampton Roads, the allowance for a Navy lieutenant commander who is married with children is \$2,199 a month. But if that officer is married to a sailor of the same rank, the two get \$4,074 a month.

The Senate bill would eliminate the second payment, and the couple would be left with \$2,199.

Just over 6 percent of service members - about 87,200 - were married to each other in 2013, according to the most recent Defense Department study.

The Senate provision also calls for reducing by 25 percent the housing allowances for all but low-ranked service members who aren't married but share the same house or apartment.

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, who voted for the Senate version and is part of the small group of negotiators meeting with House members, said in a statement the bill supports critical programs for national defense, but he has qualms about cutting the housing allowance.

"I believe we must carefully consider whether this change in policy is fair and whether it has been adequately examined," the Virginia Democrat said. Any compensation changes need to "make sense," and the reaction from service members should be considered, he wrote.

While many in Congress have been worried about reining in military spending, the proposed cut in housing allowances is not just about saving money, according to a senior Navy officer in Washington familiar with the issue.

The view of many is that the housing allowances today are large enough to cover much more than rent or mortgage payments, said the officer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

There is "common ground" among many on Capitol Hill and in the Pentagon to develop a compensation system that lowers the housing allowance and uses the savings for other compensation, such as day care for children, the officer said.

"It's unfortunate to paint the senators as these ogres trying to take money away from deserving service members," the officer said, but they need to figure out a way to address those other needs.

Church and others in the military acknowledge the housing benefit is generous and often used for more than just the mortgage or rent.

"For instance, child care," Church said, noting that during past deployments, they could afford to hire someone to stay with their children.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Ken Hockycko, who until March was an F/A-18 pilot at Oceana Naval Air Station, wrote in an article recently published online by the U.S. Naval Institute that the change would unfairly penalize success.

It is "logical that a senior military couple, like any other dual-employed similar qualified civilian couple, would earn what some may consider a high standard of living," wrote Hockycko. It's accepted that civilian couples - business executives, lawyers or members of Congress - deserve their shared financial rewards.

"Only in the case in which a service member is married to another service member does the standard of living become unacceptable," he wrote.

Hockycko, now on the staff of Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, made clear that the article represents solely his own views. However, Mabus has publicly opposed allowance cuts.

So have the seven top enlisted service members of each military branch, who wrote a letter Tuesday to congressional leaders warning that the housing cut "devalues the career and experience" of those in the military.

The group, including Michael Stevens, master chief petty officer of the Navy, calculated that a petty officer second class with six years' experience and no dependents earns an average pay package - including the housing allowance - of \$53,805 a year. If that sailor married another service member, he or she would lose \$16,248, the letter said.

It could be particularly damaging to women in the service, the group wrote, noting that 20 percent of women in uniform are

married to other service members, compared with almost 4 percent of men.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2015/07/senate-plan-would-eliminate-one-housing-allowance-married-military-couples#>

## **One Year Later, Women Still Shut Out Of Quarter Million Military Jobs**

*(22 Jul) Stars & Stripes, By Wyatt Olson*

Less than a year from an integration deadline, nearly a quarter-million positions remain closed to women in the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines as of March, along with 25,700 positions still closed to women by the U.S. Special Operations Command, according to Government Accountability Office data.

The four services have opened up 91,000 positions for women since January 2013, when the secretary of defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff rescinded a 1994 rule that prohibited women from being assigned to certain ground combat units.

Regardless of the prohibition, more than 800 women have been wounded and 130 have died while deployed to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001.

The DoD has required the services to integrate women into the remaining closed positions by the beginning of next year, but the department has no plans to monitor progress after that date, the GAO said.

The services and SOCOM are conducting studies to “identify and mitigate potential integration challenges” in areas such as unit cohesion, women’s health, and facilities modifications, equipment, uniforms and “interest in serving,” the GAO said Monday.

As of May, the Secretary of the Navy was the only military department secretary to recommend an exception to policy to keep positions closed to women on three classes of ships – frigates, mine countermeasure ships and patrol coastal craft. The Navy said the berths on the ships would need to be retrofitted, but the ships are close enough to decommissioning that it would be an inefficient use of money.

<http://www.stripes.com/blogs/stripes-central/stripes-central-1.8040/one-year-later-women-still-shut-out-of-quarter-million-military-jobs-1.359133>

## **Senior NCOs oppose BAH cut for dual-military couples**

*(23 Jul) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman and Michelle Tan*

The Pentagon's seven top enlisted leaders sent a rare joint letter to Congress criticizing the controversial proposal to limit dual-military couples to a single housing allowance payment.

The proposal from the Republican-controlled Senate would amount to a significant pay cut for troops married to other troops by eliminating the Basic Allowance for Housing payment for the lower-ranking member.

First floated in June, the proposal has fueled anxiety across the force, especially among the roughly 40,000 dual-military couples.

"Soldiers are aware of it, and obviously they're concerned, as they are concerned about all of their benefits," Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey told Military Times in an interview. "It's their livelihood, it's their future."

The enlisted leaders believe the measure would unfairly penalize a small group of service members and runs counter to the Defense Department's traditional preference to make any cuts to pay and benefits apply broadly and equally to all service members, according to the July 21 letter.

"We ask *each* service member to make untold sacrifices in the name of our national security; *each* should be compensated accordingly," they wrote.

The letter was signed by Dailey along with the top enlisted advisers of the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, the chairman

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Guard Bureau and the Coast Guard.

The enlisted leaders also noted that targeting married troops will disproportionately impact female service members.

"When faced with such a significant penalty for marrying another military member, the unintended consequence would be one of those service members would most likely leave the service," they wrote. "At a time when we are working to recruit more women and open more options for women to serve, this provision unnecessarily challenges our efforts to accomplish this goal."

About 20 percent of active-duty women are in dual-military marriages, compared with only 3.7 percent of active-duty men, according to Defense Department data. The enlisted leaders cited the example of an E-5 with six years of experience who, on average, receives \$16,248 in annual BAH.

The proposal also would reduce BAH payments for many unmarried troops who share homes or apartments with other service members. Those in paygrades E-4 and above would see their normal BAH rate cut by 25 percent.

The Senate included the controversial provision in its version of the 2016 defense authorization bill. It does not appear in the House version of the bill. That means a House-Senate conference committee will decide whether to include it in the final version of the bill that will go to the White House for President Obama's signature.



Obama has said he opposes the change.

The housing allowance has become a target for cutbacks as the Pentagon faces budget caps and the automatic enforcement mechanism known as sequestration.

Last year, DoD officially urged Congress to reduce BAH rates so that they cover only 95 percent of estimated housing costs,

## **Transgender troops policy change raises many questions**

*(19 Jul) Navy Times, By Andrew Tilghman*

When Dwayne Villanueva joined the Army at 17, he thought it would help to overcome his nagging desire to become a woman.

“It’s a hypermasculine environment and I thought that by joining the military it would make me more masculine,” Villanueva recalled in a recent interview. “I thought joining the military would help suppress those feelings or take them away, as far as wanting to be a female.

“It didn’t work.”

Today, Villanueva, an Army corporal at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, identifies as a woman, having changed her name to Laila both legally and in official Army records.

Officially, the Army still considers Villaneuva a man, and expects adherence to male grooming and uniform standards.

But culturally and personally, Villanueva says, her colleagues accept her as a woman.

“Currently I present as male, but the patients and other workers, military and civilians alike, view me as female and use the female pronoun.”

Villanueva acknowledged some difficulty in conforming to the military’s male standards “when you have people referring to you as a female.” Still, she said the transition is “exciting and liberating.”

Stories like Villanueva’s are likely to become more common and more widely shared across the military as the Pentagon begins to set in motion a plan to lift the longstanding prohibition on allowing transgender men and women to serve openly in the military.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter made the announcement July 13 and said that over the next six months, top military officials will hammer out details of a new policy to allow active-duty troops to transition from one gender to another.

That will force the Pentagon to tackle questions like these:

- When do transgender troops begin adhering to a new dress code and grooming standards?
- How will their fitness standards change?
- How will billeting rules apply?

rather than the full 100 percent. Congress gave idea a cool reception and approved a reduction in average BAH rates of only one percentage point, to 99 percent.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/pay/allowances/2015/07/23/bah-cuts-letter/30583569/>

- Will the military health care system provide them with hormone replacement therapy or gender reassignment surgery?

While the details remain unclear, Carter made apparent that Defense Department policy indeed will soon change.

“Current regulations regarding transgender service members are outdated and are causing uncertainty that distracts commanders from our core missions,” Carter said in a statement July 13.

He has ordered the creation of a “working group” to study the issue over the next six months and identify any readiness implications of the policy change. The group will be led by Brad Carson, acting DoD personnel chief. acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Brad Carson.

“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.

Under current rules, transgender individuals are considered medically unfit for service and can be honorably discharged if diagnosed with “psychosexual conditions, including but not limited to transsexualism, exhibitionism, transvestism, voyeurism, and other paraphilias,” according to DoD Instruction 6130.03.

For now, any administrative discharges for those diagnosed with gender dysphoria or who identify themselves as transgender will require approval from Carson, Carter said. That is likely to limit or effectively halt such discharges.

“At a time when our troops have learned from experience that the most important qualification for service members should be whether they’re able and willing to do their job, our officers and enlisted personnel are faced with certain rules that tell them the opposite,” Carter’s statement said.

“Moreover, we have transgender soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines — real, patriotic Americans — who I know are being hurt by an outdated, confusing, inconsistent approach that’s contrary to our value of service and individual merit.”

The announcement comes nearly four years after the 2011 repeal of the don't ask, don't tell policy that barred gays from serving openly. In recent years, a small number of transgender troops have come forward to talk about the remaining prohibition.

Anecdotal reports suggest local unit-level commanders have begun making these decisions and allowing some transgender troops to publicly transition. For example, Senior Airman Logan Ireland, a transgender man, received permission to wear a man's uniform when he attended an LGBT reception at the White House in June.

In some cases, military treatment facilities have filled prescriptions for hormone-replacement therapy and rejected them in some cases, advocates say.

But the issues are too complex to leave to local commanders, said Allyson Robinson, a West Point graduate who is now policy director for SPARTA, an advocacy group for LGBT service members.

"There needs to be a DoD wide policy," she said. "That policy ought to set a date at which a gender transition will take place in the service member's official military records, and that decision should be made by the service member and their medical team and their unit commander."

## **8 Things You Probably Didn't Know About Women in the Military**

(20 Jul) *AMVETS National*

"For over 3,000 years in a large number of cultures and nations, women have played many roles in the military, from ancient warrior women, to the women currently serving in conflicts, although the vast majority of all combatants in every culture have been men.

Even though women serving in the military has often been controversial, a very small number of women in history have fought alongside men. In the American Civil War, there were a few women who cross-dressed as men in order to fight. Fighting on the battlefield in disguise was not the only way women involved themselves in war. Some also served as nurses and aides."

### **1. Women have served in the military since 1901 as members of the Army Nurse Corps.**

Before its inception, during the 1898 Spanish–American War, the Army hired female civilian nurses to help with the wounded.

### **2. Roughly 20% of female veterans have a service-connected disability, which is nearly 3% more than their male counterparts.**

One in five women enrolled in VA health care screen positive for Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Treatment is a lengthy process and not all victims fully recover.

### **3. Until the 1970s, family policies of the armed services rested on the premise that women's responsibilities as**

The biggest sticking point may be fitness standards, but Robinson suggested the military could follow the lead of the National College Athletic Association, which requires transgender women to undergo hormone replacement therapy for 12 months before competing in women's athletics.

Transgender men are not permitted to compete as women after starting hormone therapy, according to NCAA rules.

Advocates estimate up to 15,000 transgender individuals may be among the 2.2 million active-duty and reserve troops serving today.

A 2014 study published by the Williams Institute at the University of California Los Angeles School of Law cited several data sources suggesting transgender people may serve in the military at higher rates than the general population. For example, a review of health records of all veterans receiving health care through the Veterans Health Administration from 2000 through 2011 found a prevalence of Gender Identity Disorder five times that of the U.S. general population. <http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/07/18/transgender-troops-policy-change-raises-many-questions/30256249/>

### **wives and mothers took precedence over their military careers.**

As a result, women were involuntarily discharged for pregnancy and for having minor children in the home.

Women were allowed to request discharges for marriage (an option not given to male military personnel).

In May 1975, the Department of Defense ordered the armed forces to rescind involuntary discharge for pregnancy—although women could still choose to resign.

### **4. Married servicewomen did not always receive the same benefits as men.**

Some benefits, such as military housing for families and their spouses were not entitled to family medical care routinely available to servicemen's wives—unless they could prove their husbands and children were, in fact, dependent.

### **5. The first female, black officer was commissioned during WWII**

During World War II, Charity Adams Earley was the first black commissioned officer in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC—later the Women's Army Corps or WAC), and she commanded the only organization of black women to serve overseas. Earley left the Army with the rank of lieutenant



colonel—the highest possible rank except for the director of the WAC.

#### **6. Israel is currently the only country in the world with a mandatory military service requirement for women.**

Mandatory conscription for single and married women without children began in 1948.

Initially all women conscripts served in the Women's Army Corps, serving as clerks, drivers, welfare workers, nurses, radio operators, flight controllers, ordnance personnel, and course instructors.

Roles for women beyond technical and secretarial support started to open up in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

#### **7. In 2013, the US Government issued an order to end the policy of “no women in units that are tasked with direct combat.”**

On January 24, 2014, the US Army announced that 33,000 positions that were previously closed to women would integrate in

### **For years, former POW Jessica Lynch kept the hurt inside**

*(20 Jul) CNN, By Ashley Fantz*

At night the Iraqi men come again for [Jessica Lynch](#).

They chase her through the woods. The crunching of the earth beneath their boots drowns out her pounding breath. She turns but can't see their faces.

Before they grab her, she wakes up.

The nightmare has never changed over 12 years. The woman made famous for being a prisoner of war would give anything for it to stop.

"I try to dream about peaceful things, beaches," Lynch said. "That is what I cannot understand. Why are they chasing me?"

It's a rainy June day and Lynch has awoken with more than the few hours of sleep she normally gets. She's standing outside the courthouse in Elizabeth, West Virginia, her tiny hometown.

When the sun breaks through for a moment, she said, "You have to put a smile on! Today will be a good day."

After all the cameras left this place in 2003, she stayed. It was home. It always would be.

While Lynch fought the alienation and the sense of dislocation that soldiers experience when they return from war, she committed to giving what she felt she owed the public -- the retelling of her story, often through motivational speeches and appearances.

the upcoming month of April, 2014 though it still has yet to be determined if and when women may join the US Army's Special Operations community.

#### **8. Women are now able to serve on subs in the US Navy**

In 2012, the Pentagon announced that 2013 will be the first year women will serve on U.S. attack submarines. On June 22, 2012, a sailor assigned to USS Ohio (SSGN 726) became the first female supply officer to qualify in U.S. submarines.

In 2015 the U.S. Submarine Force will begin accepting applications for the Enlisted Women in Submarines (EWIS) Initiative. This is a detailed process that will systematically place enlisted female Sailors on OHIO Class submarines. Female Sailors from all communities and ratings will be afforded the opportunity to be among the first to join the U.S. Naval Submarine Service.

<https://medium.com/american-veteran-magazine/8-things-you-probably-didn-t-know-about-women-in-the-military-fd8f177bca40>

Optimistic by nature, she likes feeling that she's inspiring people.

"Most people want to hear my story, hear about what happened," she said. "I keep it general. I feel that people don't want to hear all that stuff. They want to hear the positive stuff."

By stuff, she means post-traumatic stress, and the darkness it brings.

"People expect me to be doing OK," she said. "They expect that I should be perfectly fine now."

Afraid she will burden friends and family or be pitied, she will not talk to them about her trauma. The idea of talking to her parents about that is unimaginable.

"I didn't want to relay all this hurt and anger and confusion," she said. "I saw photos of my parents when I was missing. I know how much they hurt. I didn't want them to feel hurt again. I didn't want to put my hurt on top of their hurt. So when they would ask, I would say, 'Yeah, I'm OK.'"

For 12 years, Lynch never saw a mental health professional. She rethought that as the anniversary of her capture approached this March and she was unable to will her way out of depression.

"I put up this wall, this barrier, it was my way of dealing with things," she said. "In the beginning, I was able to block

everybody out, whereas now it's getting harder ... to deal with."

### **5,000 steps, and counting**

Media attention on Lynch might have dimmed, but it has never stopped. This is the third time in a month that a national news reporter has come to town. She offers CNN ideas on angles to shoot and questions to ask.

The courthouse is the usual meeting spot. Other than a few family members, no one is allowed at her home on an 80-acre property that she bought in 2006, shortly after the Army honorably discharged her. Her parents, Dee and Greg Lynch, do not talk to reporters, she said, and neither does her longtime fiancé, with whom she has a daughter, Dakota.

The 8-year-old is in tow with her mom this day. She's usually part of the story, the embodiment of Lynch's determination to prove wrong military doctors who initially told her that her internal injuries were so severe she probably would not be able to have children.

Dakota is shy and polite. Lynch usually takes her daughter around the country when she gives speeches so the girl can experience life outside her small town.

Lynch wears a gray Army T-shirt. Her flaxen hair hangs in long, loose curls, and her makeup is carefully applied.

She's in white shorts and wearing a Fitbit. "I try for 5,000 steps a day," she said, looking down at her pink tennis shoes.

Lynch doesn't have many shoe options. When the Iraqis ambushed the supply convoy carrying her and other soldiers in March 2003, her legs and feet were crushed. She has had 22 surgeries, most of them on her lower extremities. A brace runs down her left calf, immobilizing her ankle and forcing her to walk on the side of her foot. That puts enormous pressure on her joints. Her next surgery probably will be a knee replacement.

She has only dull feeling in the leg with the brace. Looking down to adjust a pad in her shoe, she notices a deep blister above her heel. She can't feel it, but she doesn't want it to get worse.

"Remind me to get something on that."

### **'Help me so that I can be rescued'**

It's a little after 11 a.m. at Mountain River Physical Therapy. Lynch is ready to finish her second session of the week with Jodie Guthrie.

For years, they tested Lynch's breaking point, eight hours a day, five days a week.

During the ambush that claimed 11 soldiers, her back was broken in two places. Her arms and legs were smashed. The

Iraqis pulled her unconscious from a wrecked Humvee and, she said, took her to one of [Saddam Hussein's](#) palaces and sexually assaulted her. An Army report substantiates the rape, Lynch said, but because she wasn't conscious, she doesn't remember the assault.

But she cannot forget Saddam Hussein Hospital. She can't forget what it was like to be totally unable to move when Iraqi doctors wheeled her into a room and told her they were going to cut off her leg. She screamed and begged for them to stop. They performed a crude surgery, replacing her femur with a metal rod built for a man.

"I was completely alone." She recalled talking to God, " 'Guide me in the right direction so that I can get out of this hospital and help me so that I can be rescued.' "

Nine days after her capture, elite U.S. forces stormed the hospital.

A videotape of the rescue was broadcast around the world, but in all likelihood what it captured has faded from the public's memory: It shows her, down to 86 pounds, quivering with fear in the back of a helicopter. Gunfire pops outside the chopper. She lets out an animal kind of scream, as her eyes bulge from her shaved head.

While Lynch was held, a flood of [media reports](#), citing senior Washington officials, portrayed her as a GI Jane who shot at her attackers even after she was stabbed.

Though Lynch said in 2003 she felt the military had [dramatized her rescue too much](#), for years she never outright blasted anyone for such accounts.

Then in 2007, the family of [Army Ranger Patrick Tillman](#) asked her to [speak before Congress](#). [The Army](#) initially told Tillman's family and the public that enemy fire had killed Tillman, when in fact he was [killed by fellow Rangers](#).

Stories of "a little girl 'Rambo' from the hills of West Virginia who went down fighting," she testified, were not true. "I'm still confused as to why they chose to lie and try to make me a legend when the real heroics of my fellow soldiers that day were legendary."

Guthrie had read the early stories about Lynch.

"I was a little intimidated," the therapist said. And she wondered whether she would have the emotional wherewithal to push someone who'd been through that kind of hell.

But Lynch was a force, throwing herself into therapy for eight hours a day, five days a week.

"She never complained. Not once," Guthrie said. "She just did it."

"She's so mean to me! Make her stop!" Lynch laughs, her heavy feet scraping the treadmill.

A 70-year-old could do the routine of light weight-lifts and balance exercises, but for Lynch, it's hard and painful. And they have to be careful. Iraq left Lynch with conditions doctors can't easily explain. Her heart rate will suddenly spike. Migraines, likely from head trauma, have consumed whole days.

Each night she takes eight pills, including medication to ease nerve pain.

At the end of the session, Lynch lies down and puts her forearm over her eyes as a therapist drives needles into her legs to loosen damaged nerve tissue.

### **'I didn't want to be ... a broken soldier'**

After she left the Army, Lynch went after the dream that prompted her to join the service.

"I wanted to go to college and be a teacher," she said. "I'm all about kids. I've always wanted that. I was meant for that and I was going to have it."

She earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's in communication.

She works sometimes as a substitute teacher. The job gives her flexibility. She doesn't have to work when her body aches too much or she's sleep-deprived.

At a Christmas party in 2005, her aunt introduced her to factory worker Wes Robinson.

"I met the man of my dreams, and I wanted this family. I wanted this life. I didn't want to be a just a broken soldier with nothing," she said.

Dakota was born in 2007.

The professional speaking gigs pay the bills. Lynch also has appeared in Christian-themed movies, with the latest due out in September.

But [Iraq](#) still has its hold on her. The nightmares haven't let up. She constantly walks around her house locking and rechecking doors and windows to make sure they're secure.

"I need to check," she said. "I do that 200 times a night before I lay down and go to bed."

Earlier this year, she couldn't get out of bed. "I could see myself shutting everyone out. Don't call me, text me, don't message me, just completely leave me alone."

Weeks rolled by.

She had to go to the Department of Veterans Affairs to renew her benefits for physical therapy. The doctors, alarmed by her demeanor, urged her to see a psychiatrist.

She did. Their first few sessions have focused on Lori Piestewa.

### **'Why am I here, and not her?'**

Piestewa was Lynch's best friend. They were in the same Humvee when the Iraqis attacked their convoy. Like Lynch, she was pulled from the wreckage. Piestewa died at Saddam Hussein Hospital.

"I still don't cope well, to this day, with losing Lori," Lynch said.

Their friendship formed quickly when they met a little over a year before the ambush. The teenager who won Miss Congeniality at the Wirt County Fair looked up to the 23-year-old Native American single mother from Arizona. They made it through boot camp together and slept a few feet from each other in the barracks at Fort Bliss.

Their deployments to Iraq came swiftly. They were in the desert outside Nasiriya five days after the United States invaded.

It was Piestewa who picked Lynch up when Lynch's truck stalled in the desert sand. Lynch replays this fortune in her head a lot.

"I still don't understand," Lynch said. "Why did they kill her and not me? Why am I here, and not her?"

"She had two kids," Lynch said. "I didn't have the kids. I didn't have these dreams. Of course, I had dreams, I was 19. But I didn't have these realities already set. She had all these goals for herself."

Lynch said: "If I was to go back in time, I would want to switch places with her."

"The therapist is helping me -- telling me to focus on the ... memories (saying), 'Don't think about how you lost her.' "

She communicates constantly with Piestewa's parents, Terry and Percy.

Percy said she knows that Lynch feels tremendous grief.

"I try to tell her that it is not her fault and to live, to live and that we love her," Percy said. "I want her to not feel this way. I wish I could take away all of her pain."

Every year, on the anniversary of the ambush, Lynch has visited the Piestewas. There's dinner, a Hopi ceremony and time looking at a room in the Piestewas' home that has been

turned into a memorial with little pieces of her life everywhere.

This year, Lynch couldn't bring herself to go.

She spent a short time looking at a memorial she created for her friend. It's kept at her parents' house.

Lynch brings the memorial to a park in Elizabeth and displays it on a picnic table.

Among the photos and small mementos is a tiny bag of dirt from Piestewa's grave.

Dakota Ann is named after Lori Ann Piestewa. As the photos are taken, the girl plays in the park and it begins to rain.

Lynch has always told herself that when it rains, it's Piestewa. It comforts her.

"I think, 'Really, Lori, stop making it rain,' " she said. "I still think she's sprinkling safe travels wherever I go."

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/20/us/jessica-lynch-where-is-she-now/>

## For the first time in 6 decades, any new U.S. citizen can decline to pledge to go to war

(22 Jul) *The Week*, By Bonnie Kristian

As of Tuesday, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [has clarified](#) the situations under which new American citizens may avoid pledging to go to war, extending the right to nonreligious people.

Though a 1946 Supreme Court case had previously allowed a Seventh Day Adventist to become a U.S. citizen despite his refusal to fight, the new rules decouple conscientious objection from religious beliefs. While pacifist religious affiliations will still be accepted as a reason for modifying the citizenship oath, USCIS will now allow "conscientious

objection arising from a deeply held moral or ethical code" without requiring it to be tied to any particular theology.

Interestingly, the requirement that new citizens declare they will "bear arms on behalf of the United States" and "perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States" when required by law is a relatively recent rule. The citizenship oath was not standardized until 1929, and the clauses about joining a war effort were not added until 1950. <http://theweek.com/speedreads/567798/first-time-6decades-new-citizen-decline-pledge-war>

## UNSUNG HEROES: The Female Soldier Who Provided Crucial Medical Treatment Under Mortar Fire

(23 Jul) *Task & Purpose*, By Michael Lane Smith

**Army Pfc. Monica Brown provided medical treatment saving two fellow soldiers under a barrage of mortar fire, for which she earned a Silver Star.**

In the waning hours of Apr. 25, 2007, Army Pfc. Monica Lin Brown, 18, rushed out of her Humvee after a vehicle in her convoy was hit with an improvised explosive device. With small arms fire raining down, Brown bravely put herself in harm's way to save the lives of two critically injured fellow soldiers.

In Afghanistan's southeastern Paktika province, the 82nd Airborne Division's 782nd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, was for a leader engagement with the village elders when the trail Humvee in the convoy hit a pressure-plate IED and then ambushed, [according to Brown's Silver Star citation](#).

Spring is known as the beginning of the fighting season when the Taliban re-enter Afghanistan through thawing mountain passes from their safe-havens in Pakistan, and when the fighting began to ramp up for that season, Brown, a medic, was assigned to Delta and Charlie units spending multiple days at a time on combat operations. Reflecting on her assignment at the time, Brown described it as "a constant mission."

That day, they had just turned into a dry streambed when someone began yelling, indicating the vehicle had been destroyed, Brown said in an [Department of Defense press](#)

[release](#). As the soldiers saw the vehicle's tires flying through the field adjacent to the convoy, they quickly realized it wasn't an isolated accident.

"I only saw the smoke from the vehicle when suddenly we started taking small-arms fire from all around us," she said. The combat team's gunner began returning fire and their platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. Jose Santos, yelled to Brown, "Doc! Let's Go."

"Everyone was already out of the burning vehicle," remembered Brown. "But even before I got there, I could tell that two of them were injured very seriously."

Arriving, she saw that all five of the soldiers from the Humvee were stumbling, burned and cut. Spc. Stanson Smith and Spc. Larry Spray, however, were critically injured. Spray was suffering from severe burns and Smith suffered a severe laceration on his forehead blinding him, [according to a 2008 Washington Post report](#).

Two other soldiers from the vehicle assisted Brown in moving Smith and Spray away from the burning Humvee. They made it into a ditch right as the insurgents started to fire mortar rounds. Protecting the injured with her body, Brown counted more than a dozen mortar strikes. Just then, the ammunition from the downed Humvee began to self-detonate from the heat of the fire — 60mm mortar rounds, 40mm grenade rounds, and more.

“I was surprised I didn’t get killed and she’d been over there for 10, 15 minutes longer,” Brown’s platoon leader, Martin Robbins, told the Washington Post. He had just moved his vehicle close to Brown and the injured. “There was small arms coming in from two different machine-gun positions, mortars falling ... a burning Humvee with 16 mortar rounds in it, chunks of aluminum the size of softballs flying all around,” Robbins continued. “It was about as hairy as it gets.”

Santos retrieved the pickup truck and positioned it to load the two wounded men, while Brown kept telling Smith to keep Spray conscious. “Talk to him,” she instructed Spray, as she put her expertise as a medic to use readying both injured men for helicopter extraction that wouldn’t arrive for another 45 minutes.

Brown “never looked around or anything,” Robbins said of her calm demeanor in the heat of the action. “She was focused on the patients the whole time. She did her job perfectly.”

Monica Brown’s combat experience in 2007 is part of a larger dialogue on the place of women in combat roles. She was only in the field for two more days before being removed from her posting. “I got pulled,” she told the Washington Post, because

her presence as “a female in a combat arms unit” had attracted attention. “I didn’t want to leave.”

Following the attack, Brown was promoted to specialist and presented the Silver Star in 2008 by then-Vice President Dick Cheney for her gallantry that day. The Silver Star is the third-highest award for valor during combat. Brown is the first woman of the war in Afghanistan and the second woman since World War II to receive the Silver Star. The only other woman to receive the Silver Star since Sept. 11 is [Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester](#), who engaged the enemy in direct combat in Iraq in 2005.

Brown said she never expected to be in a situation like that and credits her training and instructors for her actions that day. “I realized that everything I had done during the attack was just rote memory,” Brown told the DoD press service.

“Kudos to my chain of command for that. I know the training, like I was given, any medic would have done the same in my position.”

<http://taskandpurpose.com/unsung-heroes-the-female-soldier-who-provided-crucial-medical-treatment-under-mortar-fire/>