



Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services Articles of Interest for the Week of 25 September 2015

GENDER INTEGRATION

1. Gender Integration of Marines Brings Out Unusually Public Discord

(18 Sep) The New York Times, By Dave Phillips

The Marine Corps and its civilian leadership at the Pentagon are squaring off in an unusually public dispute over whether integrating women into the corps's all-male combat units will undermine the units' effectiveness, or whether the male-dominated Marine leadership is cherry-picking justifications to keep women out.

2. Top Marine recommends limits on women in combat

(19 Sep) AP Sources, By Lolita C. Baldor

The commandant of the Marine Corps is recommending that women be excluded from competing for certain front-line combat jobs, U.S. officials say, even as other military services are expected to allow women to serve in battlefield posts.

3. We Need What Women Bring to the Fight

(21 Sep) War on the Rocks, By Kyleanne Hunter

With his announcement that all combat jobs, including Marine Infantry, will be open to women, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus has joined both the Army and the Air Force in lifting restrictions to combat arms Military Occupational Specialties (MOS).

4. Army Generals Discuss Their Views on Whether to Allow Women in Combat

(21 Sep) Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, By Chuck Williams

As the Army prepares to make its recommendation to the Secretary of Defense about opening all combat positions to women, many of the organization's top generals were speaking from the same playbook last week.

5. New female engagement team completes mission in Qatar

(21 Sep) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

A Marine female engagement team recently wrapped up a mission in Qatar — the first for the all-women teams since the Corps disbanded them in Afghanistan three years ago.

6. Navy Secretary: Gender Should Not Bar Women From Marine Combat Roles

(22 Sep) PBS, By Gwen Ifill

<transcript from television interview>

7. Curb Your Enthusiasm/Skepticism Over Women In SOF

(22 Sep) Small Wars Journal, By T. Negeen Pegahi

As decision points fast approach, the question of whether women should be allowed to serve as special operators is receiving renewed attention.

8. A Few Good Women

(22 Sep) Huffington Post, By Donna McAleer

With Secretary Panetta's decision, the law has now caught up to reality. The exclusion policy didn't keep women out of combat. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated this self-evident truth: bullets, bombs, RPGs and IEDs know no gender.

9. [Exclusive: US Marine memo hints at shift on women in combat](#)

(23 Sep) The Christian Science Monitor, By Anne Mulrine

A recent Marine document gave a starkly negative view of women in combat, but a larger version of the memo, obtained by the Monitor, offers a more nuanced picture.

10. [Congressman wants proof standards weren't fudged for female Ranger School attendees](#)

(23 Sep) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

A congressman who led an infantry battalion in combat in Iraq has asked the Army to release documents relating to the performance of the first female students in Ranger School.

11. [As Marines take heat for handling of gender integration, Army stays quiet on plan](#)

(23 Sep) The Washington Post, By Dan Lomothe

As the U.S. military ends its long effort to consider how to more fully integrate women into combat roles, a dichotomy has emerged between the two services likely to change the most: The Marine Corps has pressed its case publicly to keep some jobs closed, while the Army has not yet disclosed its research or preferred plans.

12. [Academy Graduates: Open Combat Roles To Women](#)

(23 Sep) Huffington Post, By Brenda S. "Sue" Fulton

Sixty graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the US Naval Academy at Annapolis recently signed this letter to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, in response to the Marine Corps's requests to keep some of their units closed to women.

13. [Exclusive: Marines see benefits, risks to women in combat](#)

(24 Sep) The San Diego Union-Tribune, By Gretel C. Kovach

The Marine Corps general in charge of implementing a Pentagon plan to open ground combat jobs to women concluded there are benefits as well as significant risks to the proposal, and he outlined ways to eliminate most of an anticipated weakening of combat effectiveness during the transition, according to a document leaked Wednesday to The San Diego Union-Tribune.

14. [West Point women request lawmaker's Ranger records](#)

(24 Sep) Stars & Stripes, By Travis J. Tritten

A group of female West Point graduates has turned the tables on Oklahoma congressman Steve Russell, asking the Army to turn over his Ranger records.

CAREER PROGRESSION

15. [Carter: DoD Provides 'Unconditional' Support for 'Lean In Circles'](#)

(21 Sep) DoD News, By Defense Media Agency

The Defense Department is providing "unconditional" support for "Lean In Circles," or peer-to-peer mentoring groups, to help in empowering women and to propel them into leadership roles, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said today.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

16. [Army releases results of August courts-martial](#)

(18 Sep) Army Times, Staff Report

The Army on Friday released the results of 35 courts-martial held in August, including one case in which the accused soldier was acquitted of all charges. In those instances, the service does not release the name of the accused.

PREGANCY AND PARENTHOOD

17. [Sailors ask new CNO about paternity leave at all hands](#)

(22 Sep) Navy Times, By Lance M. Bacon

A sailor's request to boost paternity leave was the first to receive a round of applause. Richardson said the policy is driven by the Pentagon and signed into law by Congress, but promised to take the request to appropriate leaders.

HISTORIC

18. Vegas woman among oldest female Marine veterans

(21 Sep) Review Journal, By Keith Rogers

Laurene Quateman is believed to be one of the three oldest women Marine vets in the nation.

19. Women-focused Honor Flight highlights their service

(22 Sep) Air Force Times, By Leo Shane III

A group of 140 women veterans traveled from Ohio to Washington on Tuesday for a trip recognizing their service and sacrifice in the ranks. It was the first-ever all-women event, but organizers have promised more to come.

1. Gender Integration of Marines Brings Out Unusually Public Discord

(18 Sep) The New York Times, By Dave Phillips

The Marine Corps and its civilian leadership at the Pentagon are squaring off in an unusually public dispute over whether integrating women into the corps's all-male combat units will undermine the units' effectiveness, or whether the male-dominated Marine leadership is cherry-picking justifications to keep women out.

The military is facing a deadline set by the Obama administration to integrate women into all combat jobs by 2016 or ask for specific exemptions. The Marines, with a 93 percent male force dominated by infantry, are widely seen as the branch with the hardest integration task. The Marine Corps has the most units closed to women and still trains male and female recruits separately.

The tension began last week when the Marine Corps released a summary of a nine-month, \$36 million study that found that integrated combat units were slower, had more injuries and were less accurate when firing weapons.

The commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., submitted the corps's recommendation on gender integration to the secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, on Thursday. Pentagon officials said the corps was expected to request an exemption for at least some front-line combat units.

Mr. Mabus, the civilian head of the Marine Corps, has steadfastly said in public statements that the Marine Corps study is flawed and that its summary findings were picked from a much larger study in a manner that was biased toward keeping women out of combat roles.

In an interview Thursday, Mr. Mabus said he planned to push ahead with integration despite the study. "My belief is you set gender-neutral standards related to the job Marines have to do, and you adhere to them," he said. "It doesn't matter whether the Marines who meet those standards are male or female."

Further complicating the dispute is the fact that General Dunford, who will take over next week as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will be responsible for submitting recommendations to the secretary of defense for all the armed services, including the United States Special Operations Command. Officials in the Army, Navy and Air Force have suggested they are not likely to seek exemptions on integration.

On the surface, the debate within the Marine Corps has centered on the physical abilities of men and women. But critics say the dispute is also driven by a male-dominated culture that encourages Marines to believe that their esprit de corps will be undermined by the presence of women.

"The Marines have a climate of non-inclusivity and justify it by talking about combat effectiveness, but a lot of it is based on emotion and not fact," said Lt. Col. Kate Germano, who was removed as the commander of female Marine recruits this summer after she pushed for integration and clashed with male superiors. "A lot of them, especially the older generation, believe integrating women will be disastrous in war."

A [recent op-ed](#) by retired Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold of the Marines laid out the concerns about integration, saying women posed a threat to the "alchemy that produces an effective infantry unit."

"The characteristics that produce uncommon valor as a common virtue are not physical at all," Mr. Newbold wrote in the piece, published in the online magazine War on the Rocks, "but are derived from the mysterious chemistry that forms in an infantry unit that

revels in the most crude and profane existence so that they may be more effective killers than their foe.”

He asked rhetorically how mixing men and women of “the most libido-laden age cohort in humans, in the basest of environs, will not degrade the nearly spiritual glue that enables the infantry to achieve the illogical and endure the unendurable.”

Mr. Newbold could not be reached for comment.

Mr. Mabus dismissed the idea that women would erode unit cohesion and lower morale.

“That is almost exactly the same argument made against ending racial segregation in the military, and the ban on gays — that it will ruin morale,” he said in the interview. “And it just isn’t true. We’ve seen that.”

A senior Pentagon official briefed on the Marine Corps study, who was not authorized to speak publicly, said a separate, unreleased study on the same group of Marines, by the [Naval Health Research Center](#), showed that while women scored lower in many physical tasks and had higher injury rates, they scored higher in mental resilience and had fewer mental health problems. The study also found that integrated units rated their unit cohesion at the same levels as all-male units and outperformed male units at making complex decisions, the official said.

The disagreement between the Marine Corps and the Pentagon is a rare public display of tension in a culture that generally values silent professionals.

“I’m struck by how much they aired their dirty laundry in public,” said Michael E. O’Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution specializing in defense issues. “The Marine leadership is definitely dubious and reluctant about this. I think they know they will have to integrate, but they have real concerns about what it will mean to the force.”

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Ray Mabus, the Marine Corps’s civilian chief, has criticized the idea that women would hurt combat units’ cohesion or morale. Credit Kris Connor/Getty Images

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Mr. Mabus will make his recommendation to Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter by January. Mr. Carter recently echoed Mr. Mabus’s belief that women should be able to enter all military careers if they can meet standards set for their tasks.

Some Marines familiar with the corps’s integration study are concerned that changes to current operations could threaten lives. Sgt. Maj. Justin D. LeHew, a decorated Iraq war veteran who oversaw the integration tests, said in [a post](#) on his personal Facebook page this week that lowering standards to allow women into combat teams would endanger other Marines. The post was soon taken down, but [was published](#) by Marine Corps Times.

“In regards to the infantry... there is no trophy for second place. You perform or die,” Sergeant LeHew wrote. “Make no mistake. In this realm, you want your fastest, most fit, most physical and most lethal person you can possibly put on the battlefield to overwhelm the enemy’s ability to counter what you are throwing at them, and in every test case, that person has turned out to be a man. There is nothing gender biased about this; it is what it is.”

The Pentagon will announce final decisions on integrating the remaining closed positions and occupations and on any approved exceptions around Jan. 1, Capt. Jeff Davis, a spokesman, said.

Captain Davis said that since 2013, some 111,000 jobs that women were previously excluded from had opened up to them, with

220,000 still closed. Presumably, the bulk of those will open come January.

Helene Cooper contributed reporting.

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/19/us/gender-integration-of-marines-brings-out-unusually-public-discord.html?_r=1

2. Top Marine recommends limits on women in combat

(19 Sep) AP Sources, By Lolita C. Baldor

The commandant of the Marine Corps is recommending that women be excluded from competing for certain front-line combat jobs, U.S. officials say, even as other military services are expected to allow women to serve in battlefield posts.

Officials said Friday that Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford submitted his recommendation to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus a day earlier. Mabus has made it clear he opposes the proposal from and has recommended that women be allowed to compete for any Navy or Marine Corps combat jobs.

The developments have raised questions about whether Mabus can veto the Marine Corps proposal to prohibit women from serving in certain infantry and reconnaissance positions. And it puts Dunford, who takes over next week as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in the position of defending an exclusion in his own service that the Army, Navy, Air Force and U.S. Special Operations Command have suggested isn't warranted in theirs.

Officials said Defense Secretary Ash Carter is aware of the dispute and intends to review the Marine plan. The Marine Corps is part of the Navy, so Mabus is secretary of both services.

U.S. officials said they didn't know the details of Dunford's report, but suggested that the Marine Corps believes that mixed-gender units are not as capable as all-male units. So they concluded that allowing women to compete would make the Marine Corps a less-efficient fighting machine.

The Marines in the past week have been publicly and privately laying the groundwork for the Corps to maintain the current rule that excludes women from infantry and some ground combat jobs.

Officials say the Army, Navy and Air Force are expected to allow women to serve in all combat jobs and will not ask Carter for any exceptions. They say that Special Operations Command is also likely to allow women to compete for the most demanding military commando jobs — including the Navy SEALs — though with the knowledge that it may be years before women even try to enter those fields.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Mabus on Monday made his position clear. "I'm not going to ask for an exemption for the Marines, and it's not going to make them any less fighting-effective," he said, adding that the Navy SEALs also will not seek any waivers. "I think they will be a stronger force because a more diverse force is a stronger force. And it will not make them any less lethal."

Under the current process, the service chiefs present their plans to the service secretaries, who will then forward recommendations to Carter. He will make the final decisions by the end of the year.

Carter has asserted that anyone, regardless of gender, who meets the standards and requirements for a job should be allowed to do it.

Informing Dunford's decision is the Marine Corps' yearlong study on gender integration. It concluded that, overall, male-only units performed better than gender-integrated units. It found that the male-only infantry units shot more accurately, could carry more weight and move more quickly through specific tactical movements. It also concluded that women had higher injury rates than men, including stress fractures that likely resulted from carrying heavy loads.

The report acknowledged that "female Marines have performed superbly in the combat environments of Iraq and Afghanistan and are fully part of the fabric of a combat-hardened Marine Corps after the longest period of continuous combat operations in the Corps' history."

Women make up less than 8 percent of the Marine Corps, the smallest percentage across the four active-duty services.

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/8a2eb8b78d08472595acd3b1e62cb8df/ap-sources-top-marine-recommends-limits-women-combat>

3. We Need What Women Bring to the Fight

(21 Sep) *War on the Rocks*, By Kyleanne Hunter

With his announcement that all combat jobs, including Marine Infantry, will be open to women, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus has joined both the Army and the Air Force in lifting restrictions to combat arms Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). With these definitive statements, one could assume the conversation is over. However, the comment sections of articles announcing the expanded role of women show that while the political debate may be close to over, the cultural one is still raging. With the arguments about physicality or capability debunked through these announcements, the case against full integration has turned to intangibles.

As highlighted in a recent *War on the Rocks* article by LtGen Gregory Newbold (USMC, ret), those arguing against the full integration of women tend to turn to the ideas of “unit cohesion” and “military effectiveness” to prove women have no place in combat units. While the argument that women do not belong among those who “can confront the Islamic State, North Korean automatons, or Putin’s Spetsnaz and win every time” is convenient, it rests on two problematic points. First, unit cohesion is unmeasurable. However, Newbold believes that he holds the keys to explaining it, shutting down measured debate in the name of passion over evidence. Second, he infers that military effectiveness is directly tied to a specific character trait seen in a limited definition of combat operations. While combat success is a component of military effectiveness, his narrow characterization misses the strategic forest for the trees. In resorting to the comfortable “war is hell, and introducing a lady will make men unable to confront that hell” argument, he ignores the reality of the past 15 years of combat operations. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, women have been an integral part of the success of our military’s most celebrated units. Not only *can* women be part of the elite forces designed to combat our nations foes, the best strategic decision we can make now is to ensure that they *do*.

The root of the unit cohesion argument is that camaraderie and trust are uniquely forged in situations where individuals must reach beyond themselves in order to achieve a common goal. Newbold speaks of the “nearly spiritual glue” that holds infantry units together. This ethereal assumption – that there is something mystical about 19 to 22 year old males that holds them together – denies the research done on both the formation of unit cohesion and its impact on effectiveness. Despite Newbold’s assertion to the contrary, unit cohesion can – and has – been successfully measured and studied. As a crux in an argument that has such dire consequences for our nation, it deserves rigorous due diligence, not just comfortable assumptions.

Military sociologists and psychologists alike have found that successful unit cohesion is forged not due to the likeness of group members, but around the accomplishment of specific tasks and the quality of small-unit leadership. In fact, groups comprised of too-similar individuals tend to deteriorate under stressful conditions due to an inability to solve problems creatively. Similar studies have also found that the stresses of military training and deployment are just the sort of conditions to strengthen cohesive bonds between people and that create military units that are both efficient and effective at integrating new members. This “task based” cohesion is magnified by the presence of positive small unit leadership, certainly something the Marine Corps prides itself on.

These findings on the formation and strengthening of unit cohesion through task-completion and effective leadership are not relegated to the pages of academic journals. In the past 15 years, groups of young Marines of all races, religions, sexual orientations, and genders have been tested in Iraq and Afghanistan, often performing duties for which they were not specifically trained or equipped. The blurring of the front lines of combat – from convoys coming under direct-fire during ambushes to military police being used as initial checkpoints and first-line defenses – have shown that mixed-gender units succeed in the harshest environments. The shared experiences of these groups of individuals fostered cohesion and morale. With a task-oriented purpose, the assumptions Newbold relies on to differentiate men and women fall by the wayside, and are instead replaced by a shared sense of purpose and dedication to mission accomplishment.

Have there been problems in unit cohesion? Certainly. But these problems are not unique to women. Instances of poor cohesion and performance are a result of deficient training and sub-standard leadership. There are plenty of instances of all-male units failing to coalesce into a perfect unit, resulting in some of the dire consequences Newbold cautions against. However, no one blames their gender for their shortcomings. Even in the mist of Bowe Berghdal being charged with desertion, no one has once questioned the suitability of males for combat. Yet every time an individual woman fails, it is used as evidence that the entire gender is unfit to fight. The assertion that it is *women* who are somehow responsible for failure is a convenient way of avoiding hard questions about how we are actually training and leading those individuals brave enough to willingly go into harm’s way.

Unit cohesion, it is argued, is of the upmost importance because it directly impacts military effectiveness. The problem with the usual course of this argument is that it ignores the military’s purpose. Military effectiveness is frequently used in arguments as a personal and unmeasurable quality of combat forces. To this end, it is commonly interchanged with “close combat effectiveness,” and without directly saying it, nothing more than killing the enemy. Is success in close combat a component of military effectiveness? Of course,

but as our experience in Vietnam shows, a high body count does not an effective military make.

The ambiguous swapping of “military” and “combat” effectiveness ignores the larger purpose of the military. The military is a political actor, whose effectiveness is ultimately measured by its ability to shape the international arena to favor our larger strategic aims. This requires the ability to adapt to new and ever changing environments. In 2010, Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn stated that the “changing nature of warfare” requires a change in military training and tactics. At the heart of this changing nature is the counterinsurgency fight. The 2014 Department of Defense Joint Publication on Counterterrorism recognizes terrorism and insurgency as the top threats to U.S. security. These new threats require new tactics. The past several decades have witnessed a great change in the nature of international threat and require a change in tactics to successfully meet them.

An independent study commissioned by the Department of Defense’s Civil-Military Operations Staff Section (J-9) found that the common thread in successful counterinsurgency operations was a commitment to simultaneously resolving conflicts in political, economic, social, and security dimensions. Those strategies that relied purely on overwhelming combat force not only proved more costly – both in terms of life and treasure – but resulted in unstable political environments when military forces left. Success in this modern battlefield requires not only tactical skill with a rifle, but also cultural understanding and adaptation.

In looking to the past 15 years of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is hard to declare absolute victories in either case. However, there are glimmers of success stories. Special operations leaders had great foresight in thinking that “America would never kill its way out of the wars” and sought to leverage the best of their forces, including women, to fight insurgents on all fronts. As a Marine Corps infantry captain who served in Iraq and Afghanistan stated, “You really have to have female counter-insurgents if you are expecting to have a successful counterinsurgency strategy.” The cultural and political aspects of counterinsurgency are as critical as the tactical aspects of warfare. The women involved in counterinsurgency combat operations, to include night-raids, proved to be mission critical.

That war is hell and a not an experience desired by “normal humans” is nothing of a surprise for myself and the thousands of other women who have served during the past decade and a half. The women who chose to serve are not “normal,” and that is a fact to be celebrated and fully utilized, not ignored. Full integration of women into all sectors of the military is not about the opportunities of one or two particularly outstanding young women. It is about fully embracing the strengths of the total population in order to make the most effective military in the world. Meeting the physical rigors of elite level training show that women *can* perform at demanding tactical standards while the successes of the past 15 years show that they *should*. It is time we let go of hallowed ideas on the nature of the sexes and continue to let women succeed in ways we were not previously allowed. Our strategic place in the world depends on it.

Kyleanne Hunter is a PhD Student at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies. She spent 10 years as a Marine Corps Officer, deploying as an AH-1W Super Cobra pilot in support of OIF and OEF, and serving as the Marines’ Liaison Officer to the House of Representatives.

<http://warontherocks.com/2015/09/we-need-what-women-bring-to-the-fight/>

4. Army Generals Discuss Their Views on Whether to Allow Women in Combat

(21 Sep) Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, By Chuck Williams

As the Army prepares to make its recommendation to the Secretary of Defense about opening all combat positions to women, many of the organization’s top generals were speaking from the same playbook last week.

It’s about standards -- not gender -- they said while at [Fort Benning](#) for the Maneuver Warfighter Conference, three days of conversation devoted annually to combat and readiness.

Those remarks come a month after two officers -- [Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver](#) -- became the first women to successfully complete [Ranger School](#), the Army’s most elite combat training course, which was previously closed to women until April of this year.

Gen. David Perkins, in charge of the Training and Doctrine Command, has been heavily involved in the Army’s gender integration study that was completed in advance of any recommendation. Perkins was not backing down from the gender integration discussion during his Tuesday address.

"Anyone going to ask about gender integration?" he inquired of the mostly male soldiers in McGinnis-Wickam Hall.

He then took nearly 15 minutes to outline how the Army had gotten to this point on the sometimes divisive issue.

The decision to open combat positions was made in January 2013 by then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta. After more than a year of study, Panetta ordered each of the military services to expand all of its positions to women -- or provide reasons why certain jobs should remain exclusively male.

The Army has been deliberate in its approach to Panetta's order. Secretary of the Army John McHugh is likely to have his recommendations to Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter next week, ahead of the Oct. 1 deadline. There will also be a separate recommendation on [Special Forces](#) positions from Gen. Joseph Votel, head of U.S. Special Operations Command.

The Army could request exceptions for certain jobs, which would require a justification, or it could request no exceptions and open all the combat jobs previously closed to women.

Last week at Fort Benning, Votel did not say what the recommendation would be.

"I will tell you from an SOF (Special Operations Force) standpoint, from a SOCOM (Special Operations Command) standpoint, we value people," Votel said. "People are our most important resource. We are an organization that the nation expects to be able to go out and work in a variety of different areas with a variety of different people -- and so I would make the argument that diversity is extraordinarily important to us."

It is about standards, Votel said.

"I have talked to a range of people both in and out of the military -- particularly those that are in, and those in the SOF community -- the one thing they constantly emphasize to me is that if we do this we have to ensure that we maintain our very high standards," Votel said. "No female, no male, no one wants to be able to get into an organization having not met the standard. It will be imperative that we do that."

1. Deliberate approach

Perkins, in charge of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, discussed the process that the Army undertook during the gender integration study. Part of that was creating a physical demands study for all Army combat positions.

"Our criteria was it had to be quantifiable, qualifiable and legally defensible," Perkins said.

That came down to standards, Perkins said.

"My tribe is infantry/armor," he said. "Talk to folks there and say, 'What do you think about women in combat?' The first statement is, 'I don't know, we'll see, but definitely do not change the standards.'"

That leads Perkins to ask a followup question.

"My next question is what is the standard? ... So, what is the standard to be in the infantry, armor or artillery right now?" he asked. "Pretty much the standard to be in the Army. You have to pass a PT test, height, weight. ..."

"What we did for two years is we exhaustively went out to every MOS (military occupational specialty) closed to women and came up with all the operational tasks you have to do in combat. Put on ruck sack, 110 pounds, 12 miles. Went to folks in Afghanistan we had to relate it to a combat standard and said, 'What is your average load?' For artillery units, we tried to find the most demanding physical thing ... rate of loading of a machine gun, extracting a wounded soldier out of a combat vehicle."

A lot of research went into those standards, Perkins said.

"Since we design our combat vehicles for the 90th percentile male, that is the 271-pound male," Perkins said. "You have to drag their body 45 feet in 30 seconds. We have never had that standard that you had to do that before you could sign and come into the Army."

2. 'Valid standard'

All of the generals who spoke at the Warfighter Conference were careful not to get ahead of the recommendation that will come next week. But some, like Lt. Gen. Bob Brown, responsible for Army leadership development and currently commanding general of the United States Army Combined Arms Center at [Fort Leavenworth](#) in Kansas, are willing to share their opinion. Brown was the former commanding general of Fort Benning and was charged with pulling the infantry and armor schools into the Maneuver Center of Excellence.

"I go back a long time on the gender integration," Brown said. "... I have three daughters. My oldest daughter is a senior captain, teaching at [West Point](#), and she will be a major soon. Commanded a company, deployed twice, married to a major who deployed three times."

For Brown it is about standards.

"I have always felt that we should have a valid standard, one standard as Gen. Perkins described," Brown said.

And that hasn't always been the case.

"Surprisingly, when I was here in the Maneuver Center, we didn't have a valid standard for each MOS," Brown said. "We kind of had good ol' boy 'it's a road march at this speed.' 'Why?' 'Well, we don't know.' Now, we have a valid standard. We methodically went through it. So if you have one valid standard that can be proven that you need to do that for that military occupation or speciality. ... "

And if you meet the standard?

"Anybody who meets that standard should be able to serve," Brown said. "No question. I would think the younger generation will almost laugh at the older folks: 'What don't you get about it?' I have served with many women in combat. They are as much in harm's way as anybody. My daughter, she was one of the first intelligence officers in an infantry battalion deployed, a position previously closed to women."

That is just the point, said Sue Fulton, chairwoman of the U.S. Military Academy Board of Visitors, a West Point oversight board that reports to President Barack Obama.

"Women have demonstrated that, with the right training, they can perform even in the most physically punishing infantry jobs," Fulton said. "I expect that the service secretaries will look at the available data and conclude that there is no reason to exclude qualified women from any military job."

3. The Navy and Marines

The commander of the Army's 18th Airborne Corps, Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend, admits that there are some in the Army who might have an issue with some positions being fully opened.

"I think it is about standards," Townsend said. "I think there are a lot of people out there that have some discomfort. I had to admit I had some discomfort when we started this process. The more I think about it, the more I believe in the standard."

And the impact of those standards will cut both ways, Townsend said.

"If we go to that, there will probably be some male soldiers in the infantry today that don't measure up, don't qualify to be the infantry," Townsend said. "That's OK with me. It's also OK with me if there are female soldiers who qualify. Also, I see there will be female leaders who rise to leadership positions in the infantry. It doesn't trouble me as long as we have one standard, and everyone meets that standard."

While the Army leaders seem to be sending the same message, that is not the case with the decision that will come from the [U.S. Navy](#) about the [Marine Corps](#). A week ago, the Marines released new data that showed [men outperformed women](#) in a host of combat-related tasks. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said in the wake of the release of that study, that he plans to [open all jobs in the sea services to women](#) -- including those in the Marine infantry and [Navy SEALs](#).

"When the services were asked to review opening jobs to women, they took different approaches," Fulton said. "The Army set about this based on objective data, informed by years of gender integration. They allowed women to train locally with men preparing for Ranger School, they screened based on high, gender-neutral, physical fitness standards, and they set objective parameters for success."

Not so with the Marines, said Fulton.

"The Marine Corps -- so backward that they still separate women from men in basic training -- did the equivalent of tossing women into the deep end of the pool and asking them to compete with the swim team," she said. "Now, they're trying to tell everyone that women just can't hack it, and accusing others of political motivation while they themselves are pushing everyone from junior sergeants to senators into the media to defend their all-male infantry."

Brown, who has experience executing delicate decisions, points to the merging of armor and infantry at the Maneuver Center of Excellence as a template.

He was the general charged with pulling the two cultures together.

"When Armor came down here, there was a very good plan in place," Brown said. "When I got here with this complex plan, folks said, 'It's not a big deal, armor is coming.' I said, 'How about if infantry was moving to [Fort Knox](#)?' 'Whoa, that would be tough.' 'They are feeling the same way. You've got to welcome them.'"

The merger involved give and take.

"We changed about every course in infantry a little, based on what we learned from armor," Brown said. "And armor changed their course a little based on what they learned from infantry."

That lesson can be applied to integrating combat positions, Brown said.

"So for gender integration, I say the same thing," he said. "We will be a better force for this. Diversity is our strength. The more diverse we are, the better our viewpoint we get in this complex world."

Brown played basketball at Army and sometimes looks at his military world in the same way a coach would.

"As a coach, I would be saying 'Don't be afraid of change,'" Brown said. "Embrace change. Look at how much better we will be from this integration. I have an advantage with three daughters and three granddaughters. I am a better person because of them because they will see things I won't see. Same with force as we integrate. We will get better. We will be much, much better."

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/09/21/army-generals-discuss-their-views-on-whether-allow-women-combat.html>

5. New female engagement team completes mission in Qatar

(21 Sep) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck

A Marine female engagement team recently wrapped up a mission in Qatar — the first for the all-women teams since the Corps disbanded them in Afghanistan three years ago.

A concept that originated as a way to bridge cultural and gender gaps during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is now being used to forge bonds with allied nations in the Middle East. A FET attached to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit returned from its first mission in Qatar in late August after more than two weeks spent training female troops in martial arts, shooting basics and other skills.

About 25 female members of the Qatari Internal Security Forces, who provide security for VIPs, participated in the skills exchange with nine Marine members of the FET from Aug. 6 through 23.

The training exchange originated with a request from U.S. Special Operations Command Central for female troops to work directly with the Qatari forces, said Maj. Brian Block, a spokesman for the MEU.

In Qatar, the Marines and the local forces honed medical skills, law enforcement techniques and range skills, and worked on elements

of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, members of the FET said.

"The doors are open to us," said 1st Lt. Jennifer Mozzetta, assistant team leader for the FET. "There were no men involved in the training. We were able to be very involved and friendly with them."

While the Marines on the FET were instructed to discuss domestic topics like their home and family lives in order to forge connections with their Qatari counterparts, this was a different kind of FET mission than those in which female Marines shared cups of tea with civilian women to foster trust in Afghanistan.

Block said the 15th MEU's team plans to position itself to accomplish missions on both ends of the spectrum. Because of that, he said, the unit has taken to calling itself a "female partner force engagement team."

Since the FET is composed of a dozen female Marines representing a variety of specialties and experience levels, Block said, "you can select [Marines] who are most appropriate for partner force engagement" or for cultural liaising, depending on the mission at hand.

For Sgt. Jeanette Ventura, an aircraft intermediate level structures mechanic, the exchange provided the chance to work on combat skills outside her own MOS and to participate in dynamic partnership building, a key mission for the MEU.

"I've been in the Marine Corps for eight years and I always love taking opportunities given to me," she said. "The exchange in itself was better than I even could have imagined. I learned a lot from the culture, as well as from the tactics that the [Qatari forces] used."

The MEU, which deployed in May, decided to create its own FET while underway in order to respond to such requests, which often go unanswered due to a shortage of trained female troops in theater. Prior to the MEU's revival of the FET concept, the units were used in Iraq and Afghanistan to allow U.S. troops to extract information from and foster relationships with local women without violating gender taboos. The last Marine FET disbanded in 2012.

While no other MEU has committed to forming its own FET, Block said the 15th MEU plans to brief the East Coast-based 26th MEU on team lessons learned and best practices before it deploys later this year.

One early finding, FET members said, was that the team could have used more Marines. The nine members who went to Qatar were hugely popular with their counterparts.

"The biggest takeaway was, there was a lot of discussion about it, and eyes were watching," Mozzetta said. "It really does help foster our relationship with the Qataris."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/09/21/new-female-engagement-team-completes-mission-qatar/71941712/>

6. Navy Secretary: Gender Should Not Bar Women From Marine Combat Roles

(22 Sep) PBS, By Gwen Ifill

Transcript from 22 SEP 15 television interview.

GWEN IFILL: But, first, the battle brewing at the Pentagon over the future of women in America's armed forces.

Early next year, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter is expected to announce whether previously closed positions to women in the military will open. The Army, Air Force and Navy are expected to allow women to serve in all combat roles.

But Marine Corps Commandant General Joseph Dunford, soon to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has asked that the Marines be excluded from the new rule.

Joining me now to explain why he disagrees with that assessment is Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, who is also the civilian head of the Marine Corps.

Welcome. And thank you for joining us, Secretary Mabus.

RAY MABUS, U.S. Secretary of the Navy: Gwen, thank you.

GWEN IFILL: There is a report that has come out that shows that women in integrated combat units were slower, there were more

injuries, they were less accurate at firing weapons. What is your take on that report?

RAY MABUS: Well, first, the commandant and I share the overall goal of making sure we maximize the combat effectiveness of the United States Marines. That's the first principle.

Second, this study, that Marine study, and had Marines doing very valuable work, and it came out with some great findings, the main one of which was that, before then, there had been no standards set for being in the infantry.

So, this study set those high standards. Before then, it was assumed that if men went through boot camp, they could become Marine infantry. Turned out that the specific jobs in the infantry, which the study went through, deconstructed all the jobs, here's what you need to do to be a success in this, to do the job.

But then the Marines took averages from the study. It wasn't the individuals. They set the high standards. But then they looked across averages. And the Marines have never been about average. The Marines are about exceptionalism.

And what my view is, set high standards. Make sure those standards have something to do with the job. And then whoever meets those standards, gender is not crucial. If you can meet the standards, you should be able to serve.

GWEN IFILL: Should those standards include other ways in which these studies show that women excel, for instance, lower incidence of mental health problems?

RAY MABUS: Well, I think that the standards themselves, in terms of what you have to do, because if you're a Marine in combat, in infantry combat, you want to know that the Marine on either side of you has met the same high standards.

And that's what this study has brought forth, that here are now the standards to be a Marine in Marine infantry. But once you do that, the notion of somehow saying, even if you meet the standards, you can't serve because of your gender, that doesn't follow to me.

GWEN IFILL: General Dunford aside, you know there has been some pretty vigorous pushback from Marines about whether this is a good idea or not.

Do you — is this a legitimate concern on the parts of these Marines, or is this a — speak to the culture of the Marine Corps itself?

RAY MABUS: Well, I think the Marines — and I have talked to thousands of Marines out around the world in my now more than six years in this job.

The Marines that I have talked to, the one concern they have is that standards not be lowered, is that they know, if they go into combat, that people have met these high standards. Now, before this, there were surprising number of men who couldn't do the infantry job just because they had come through boot camp.

And so now those Marines are going to have the certainty that the Marines on either side of them have met those standards. And that shouldn't depend on gender.

GWEN IFILL: But what do you say to those in the Corps who say this will prove to be a challenge to the alchemy, the chemistry of the Corps, also unit cohesion?

RAY MABUS: Well, number one, that's not one of the arguments that the Marines have made in terms of whether an exemption should be given.

But, number two, I have seen the Marines enough. Once they're given a task, they move out. They execute. They do it better than anybody. And there were similar concerns, Gwen, at the repeal of don't ask, don't tell. There was all sorts of concerns out, as people talked about it, that if you allowed gay service members in, that it would harm the unit cohesion.

And there were similar concerns, you know, in the late '40s, when the Marines integrated. And each time, the Marines have shown that, once a decision was made, once the decision was made to make sure that, whether it was African-Americans, whether it was gay service members or now women, whatever decision Secretary Carter finally makes, integrated into their force, that they're really good at making it right.

GWEN IFILL: One more concern that has been expressed, which is that this is an example of politically correct social engineering.

RAY MABUS: Well, the thing that I want to point out is, these are Marine standards. These are standards that the Marines set up. And if somebody can meet Marine standards, they should be able to be a Marine.

GWEN IFILL: No matter the gender.

RAY MABUS: No matter the gender.

And I think that's almost the opposite of political correctness. That's setting a very high standard, but saying, we have set the standard.

GWEN IFILL: How unusual is it for this kind of disagreement to be aired so publicly?

RAY MABUS: Well, the one thing I want to make certain that is understood, General Dunford and I have a tremendous respect for each other. We have a tremendous working relationship. I admire and respect him just without — without cease.

And he's going to be a great chairman. And the president and the secretary of defense are very fortunate that they will have him to give them advice. We give each other our very candid opinions.

And, sometimes — sometimes, they diverge, but the underlying notion that we want to maintain and maximize the effectiveness and the combat effectiveness of the United States Marine Corps, we're absolutely together on.

GWEN IFILL: And, as you mentioned, the final decision rests with the defense secretary, Ashton Carter, between now and January 1. Is that correct?

RAY MABUS: That's correct.

The services put their recommendations in by October 1. And, you know, the Navy, I will point out that the SEALs are not asking for an exception here.

GWEN IFILL: So, if there can be women Navy SEALs, there can be women Marines, you're saying, in combat roles.

RAY MABUS: Again, set the standards. Do not deviate. And then whoever meets those standards, they ought to get to perform the job.

GWEN IFILL: Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, thank you.

RAY MABUS: Appreciate it, Gwen.

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/navy-secretary-gender-bar-women-marine-combat-roles/>

7. Curb Your Enthusiasm/Skepticism Over Women In SOF

(22 Sep) Small Wars Journal, By T. Negeen Pegahi

As decision points fast approach, the question of whether women should be allowed to serve as special operators is receiving renewed attention. The combat exclusion policy is set to expire on January 1, 2016, at which point women will be allowed to compete for spots in the remaining military occupational specialties currently closed to them: namely, armor, artillery, infantry, as well as special operations forces (SOF). The services have until October 1, 2015 to request exemptions to the repeal of the ban, however. While a combination of rumor intelligence and outright statements suggests that the ban will be fully repealed, officially, we are not yet there and debate correspondingly continues.

Most commentators believe that evidence, not ideology, should drive whether any of the services request exemptions and whether the Department of Defense favorably entertains any such requests. Precisely because of the ban, however, there are no truly unproblematic data from which to draw. Much of the debate over whether to allow women into ground combat specialties has thus revolved around what information we should actually use and what that information actually tells us.

The experience of the Cultural Support Teams (CSTs) in Afghanistan is the most relevant case we have for the SOF portion of the debate. While women have long worked with SOF in combat zones in a wide variety of enabling roles, the CSTs represent the first time women have truly been in combat with SOF. Commentators on both sides have thus seized on the CSTs in trying to make their respective cases. They use the experience of the same program, in short, to reach opposite conclusions. The publication of a recent book on the subject and the subsequent media coverage of it have only exacerbated the situation.

Creating the Cultural Support Teams (CSTs)

The CSTs were the brainchild of Admiral Eric Olson, among others, while he was the commander of SOCOM. Since retired and

speaking at this summer's Aspen Security Forum, Olson nonetheless urged caution in citing the program as implying the integration of women into combat roles. He reminded the audience that the CST members' "role on target was to be women, not to be combat soldiers, and the first thing they did when they fast roped out of the first helicopter on the target was to take their helmet off, let their hair down and corral the women and children[.]" When combined with his other comments at the forum, Olson seemed to be suggesting that women should be limited to serving with special operators as opposed to serving in such positions themselves.

Megan MacKenzie, author of *Beyond the Band of Brothers: The US Military and the Myth that Women Can't Fight*, roundly mocked Olson's characterization of the CSTs' work. MacKenzie has argued that the traditional myths used to prevent women from holding combat positions – that they are physically incapable of sustaining the demands of war, that the public cannot accept female casualties, and that the presence of women undermines unit cohesion – have been disproved by both the work of scholars and the actual experience of servicewomen in combat zones. She holds that leaders who are against allowing women into the remaining specialties have therefore put forward a new myth – namely, that CST members were (only) "lady soldiers" doing "lady missions." MacKenzie disparages this interpretation and claims instead that the CST experiment proves that women can serve as special operators themselves.

Accurately Characterizing the CSTs' Roles

So who's right? On the narrow questions of what CSTs were sent to do and what they did do, the record clearly supports Olson. SOCOM developed the CST program in 2010 in response to perceived battlefield needs in Afghanistan. Afghan sensitivities meant that efforts by groups of (all-male) special operators to speak with and even search Afghan women, particularly inside family compounds, often did more harm than good in terms of achieving US objectives. Afghan women were thus largely ignored for most of the first decade of the campaign, meaning operators could not avail themselves of any of the information and influence Afghan women might have held. US commanders eventually realized that the military's own women were a natural solution to this particular problem.

Once selected and trained, CST members were divided into two groups for their deployments. The majority were attached to teams of Army Special Forces, Navy SEALs, and Marine Special Operators focusing on the village stability operations portion of the US and broader coalition counterinsurgency effort. A smaller number were attached to groups of Army Rangers and Navy SEALs conducting the direct action portion of the US counterterrorism effort. Regardless of whether the CSTs were working in villages during the day or on objectives at night, the logic of their employment was the same: their status as women enabled access to and interaction with Afghan women, which in turn was expected to help (male) operators accomplish their missions.

The program adhered to plan. Gayle Tzemach Lemmon's recent book *Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield* provides an inside look at the CSTs' journey stateside and their experience while forward. Lemmon quotes the CSTs' lead trainer at Fort Bragg, a Ranger veteran of over a dozen deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, spelling out their roles to the women assigned the direct action mission: "Your job is not to be a Ranger and you are not a part of the Ranger assault team." Instead, "you have a very particular job to do on the battlefield ... engage with the women and children. ... I need you to find out where the bad guys are, as quick as you can."

Once deployed, the CSTs accompanied Rangers to objectives and waited at a distance while Rangers cleared compounds. Lemmon recounts the experience of one CST member trying to calm and extract information from a group of Afghan women and children caught in one such night raid: "Slowly [the CST member] put on her blue nitrile gloves, and softened her tone. ... Then she removed her helmet to make herself look less scary, and make it clear she was a woman, too. One of the children immediately stopped crying, and Amber draped a teal-colored cotton scarf over what she now called her 'combat braids' ... The higher-ups had told the CSTs they should be able to prove quickly and uncontrovertibly that they were female while out on the objective; this would put the Afghan women at ease, which in turn might encourage them to speak more freely and share valuable information.

Lemmon's reporting reveals not just the gap between what the CST members and the special operators they accompanied did on objectives but also the gaps between how each group was selected, trained, and treated. CST members had a separate and substantially shorter assessment and selection process than the operators with whom they would work, a separate and sharply abbreviated training course, and separate and inferior workspaces on their forward operating bases. (Indeed, members of one CST lobbied successfully to move into a broom closet, viewing that space as a step up from the office with which they had initially been provided.) CST members were not issued the same SOF-specific Crye Precision uniforms as the operators they accompanied, having to wear the regular Army "MultiCams" instead. (Again, though, they pressed successfully to have this changed.) Official guidance even limited when CSTs could actually accompany operators on raids, requiring them to stay on base if the operation was expected to involve particularly difficult terrain or an imminent threat of contact.

All this makes clear that these women – however brave, fit, talented, and committed – were decidedly stuck on the "Pink Team," as one woman's former colleagues derided the all-female enablers. The CST members themselves seemed to understand this. Lemmon quotes one drawing an explicit comparison between her and her teammates' training, experience, and responsibilities on the one hand

and those of the special operators with whom they worked on the other: “No way in hell we are even close to what they do.” Reports of women working with still more elite special operations units bear out the same general pattern. In another recently published book on SOF, Sean Naylor briefly discusses the role of women in a troop specializing in deep reconnaissance and undercover work for one of the national mission units. Naylor reports that the troop paired men and women in “guy-girl teams” to reconnoiter targets on the assumption that mixed-sex pairs presenting as couples would draw less unwanted attention than men operating alone or in pairs. While Naylor writes admiringly of these women and the job they are doing, an experienced Tier 1 operator quoted in the book refers to them as “props,” there simply to facilitate the men’s efforts.

Understanding the Implications for the Integration Debate

So what? Why does it matter which specific roles women have been filling with SOF and how commentators characterize those roles? Proponents of removing barriers to women don’t seem to realize – and critics of ending the ban may quietly hope – that programs like the CSTs and other “Pink Team” equivalents across SOF can just as easily serve as off-ramps in the drive towards equal opportunity as they can stepping stones. By mischaracterizing and overhyping what servicewomen have done to date with SOF – specifically, the narrow, female-specific tasks they have been allowed to do – these advocates may inadvertently be making it easier for the services to stop “integration” where we currently are.

Indeed, recent statements by SOF leaders themselves seem to support such an argument. Current SOCOM Commander General Joseph Votel also discussed the CST program at the Aspen Security Forum, noting that, “In many ways, SOCOM has been at the leading edge of integrating women into critical positions.” At the funeral of Lieutenant White, the young soldier and CST member for whom the book *Ashley’s War* is named, the then head of United States Army Special Operations Command Lieutenant General John Mulholland told the crowd of mourners: “Make no mistake about it, these women are warriors; these are great women who have also provided enormous operational success to us on the battlefield by virtue of their being able to contact half of the population that we normally do not interact with. They absolutely have become part of our special operations family.” Comments like these could be used to support suggestions for a new “separate but equal.”

The point of allowing women to compete for positions in SOF and other military specialties currently closed to them is to broaden the talent pool from which all positions can draw, thereby making for a stronger overall military. That is a very different motivation than recognizing that there are certain roles in certain theaters that only female servicemembers can fill and a very different end-state than allowing women to serve in those – and only those – roles. In the waning days of the debate over whether to truly end the combat exclusion policy, we should be very careful not to confuse working with other societies’ restrictions on women with overcoming those of our own.

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/curb-your-enthusiasmskepticism-over-women-in-sof>

8. A Few Good Women

(22 Sep) Huffington Post, By Donna McAleer

In 2013, then Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey lifted the Direct Ground Combat and Assignment Rule frequently referred to as the “Combat Exclusion Policy”, opening all remaining closed combat position to women. This was a military decision endorsed by politicians about military readiness, strategic decision-making, and national security.

Shortly thereafter, Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno said, “We need their talent. This is about managing talent. We have incredibly talented females who should be in those positions.” This reflected an October 2010 decision by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead and Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus to open two classes of nuclear submarines to women.

With Secretary Panetta’s decision, the law has now caught up to reality. The exclusion policy didn’t keep women out of combat. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated this self-evident truth: bullets, bombs, RPGs and IEDs know no gender. In August, two women graduated from the Army’s storied Ranger School. They demonstrated that physical strength, mental toughness, and leadership are not gender specific. They are found in exceptional men and women.

Ranger School is considered the Army’s premier small unit leadership school. Only 3% of the Army has earned the Ranger Tab. Individual performance and an individual’s contribution as a member of a team are the sole considerations. Average men and women do not earn the Ranger tab; the men and women who graduate Ranger school are exceptional soldiers.

Shortly there after, the Navy announced that its SEAL program would be open to women. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jon Greenert said, “Why shouldn’t anyone who can meet the standard be accepted?”

This is the key to successful integration -- setting physical and mental standards based on job requirements, and physical and mental capability, not gender. Most of the opposition to allowing women in combat arms branches focus on doubts about women possessing the requisite strength and stamina and/or whether the presence of women dilutes unit cohesion. Unit cohesion arguments have been roundly debunked by the ongoing integration of populations into the military, most recently gays and lesbians. As for physical readiness, the success of women Army Rangers debunked those concerns.

Nevertheless, last week, in the wake of Ranger graduation, the Marine Corps hastily released its own study of women in infantry roles, concluding that all-male combat units performed better than mixed units.

This study has multiple flaws, which include inadequate screening and training of the women; failure to control for variability in experience of participating; and evaluating groups rather than individuals. The Marine Corps Times also hinted at cultural difficulties growing out of the USMC's unique practice of training recruits separately by gender.

The Marines have never been about average. They have always been about exceptional -- the few, the proud. Yet, they base their conclusions of the effectiveness of all male units based on the average performance of Marines grouped by gender, rather than evaluating individuals to meet a single standard. In fact, unlike the Army, they didn't even screen women volunteers to ensure that they met anything better than the baseline standard of physical fitness. Despite their initial training deficits, many women showed that they are capable of meeting the rigorous physical and tactical standards required for infantry training - but they weren't evaluated on their own abilities, only by the total group.

It is encouraging that the Marine Corps, for the first time in its history, is creating standards that can be used for occupational operational combat effectiveness. Now that these standards have been set, why not allow individual Marines to train to and meet these standards, regardless of gender?

When women (51% of our population) are excluded from combat units and positions, we are squandering immeasurable resources and contributions. There is more to our Nation's current fight than simply physical strength, and the winner will be the side that does not exclude half their population. Diverse organizations and teams innovate and produce more optimal outcomes than homogeneous teams, which risk group-think and too often reach sub-optimal solutions.

For too long, the Marine Corps has demanded and expected too little from women Marines. The Marine Corps needs to learn from the other services. Set high, job-based standards and demand that women meet them as well as men. Screen for highly qualified women for Infantry roles, rather than setting a low baseline. Hold leaders accountable to train to, and demand these high standards. With gender-neutral occupational standards established, the best-qualified Marines operating in the right positions will not only maximize their individual potential, but optimize the total fighting force in defense of our great Nation.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/donna-mcaleer/a-few-good-women_2_b_8164570.html

9. Exclusive: US Marine memo hints at shift on women in combat

(23 Sep) The Christian Science Monitor, By Anne Mulrine

A 33-page Marine Corps memo obtained by The Christian Science Monitor suggests that, behind the scenes, the Marines are already talking about how they can integrate women into combat units.

The memo gives a fuller and more nuanced assessment of a Marine gender integration study than a shorter summary released earlier this month. According to the four-page summary made public on Sept. 10, the study found that women were worse shooters than men, got injured more often, and would be a detriment to unit cohesiveness. It prompted a strong backlash from women's groups, who said it was biased and poorly conducted.

The longer memo still concludes that many coed units performed worse than all-male units, and it raises fresh doubts about female Marines' abilities.

But it also suggests that clear occupational standards will mitigate deep concerns that women would lower the effectiveness of the force. Indeed, it notes that "all" of the injuries sustained by the women in the study could have been mitigated by better screening.

It also points out the potential benefits of integrating women into the combat ranks, warning of the danger of "marginalizing female Marines due to gender bias and misconceptions about female performance."

The memo, signed by Brig. Gen. George Smith on Aug. 18, was addressed to the commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Joseph Dunford, who will assume the job of the nation's top military officer when Gen. Martin Dempsey retires as chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff later this month.

Debate around the issue of women in combat is gaining urgency. By January, the military services must open their combat positions to women or ask for an exemption, backed by scientific evidence.

On one hand, the newly obtained memo appears to embrace the Marines' longstanding view that women cannot cope with infantry requirements.

Noting the “timeless, brutal, physical and absolutely unforgiving nature of close combat,” the memo argues that those facts could adversely affect women in the force. The service “risks losing a number of highly talented female Marines prematurely due largely to the often extreme physical demands” of the infantry, Brigadier General Smith writes.

Men in Marine infantry units, too, face famously high levels of burnout. But the memo suggests that any “downward trend in retaining our top female Marines would be a tremendous loss for the Corps.”

The memo also suggests that a failure to meet the infantry's high standards could create frustration among female Marines. “The likelihood of a female Marine being less competitive in these significantly more physically demanding occupations may adversely impact the Marine Corps’ ability to retain top female talent and enable their progression into more senior ranks.”

On the other hand, the memo lays out practical steps toward bringing women into infantry units. That begins with having clear standards in place, which will make sure female Marines are both up to scratch and accepted by their male peers, Smith argues.

“The critical element of successful policy implementation will be an unwavering adherence to these standards, which will provide reasonable assurance of physical capability while mitigating injuries impacting combat effectiveness.”

If the Marines had used a “stricter physical screening tool” for the women in the gender integration study, “all the female Marines who sustained injury and were dropped” from the infantry training battalion would have been eliminated, notes an addendum to the memo.

These standards will also “be the primary driver in overcoming gender bias through clearly demonstrated performance standards, which is fundamental to a cohesive unit with high morale,” he adds.

The “most critical component” of a successful transition to women in infantry units would be leadership, Smith advises General Dunford.

This means “fully invested and unwavering demonstrations of support by commanders and leaders” who “must set the example for Marines at all levels.”

Without full leadership commitment to embracing women in combat roles, “this integration effort will very likely be fraught with friction and unduly protracted.”

This, he warns, would be “potentially a greater drain on combat effectiveness and unit readiness.”

In addition to leadership, a key will be defining what gender integration success looks like, Smith says, and laying out a plan and policies “designed to ensure success.”

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2015/0923/Exclusive-US-Marine-memo-hints-at-shift-on-women-in-combat>

10. Congressman wants proof standards weren't fudged for female Ranger School attendees

(23 Sep) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

A congressman who led an infantry battalion in combat in Iraq has asked the Army to release documents relating to the performance of the first female students in Ranger School.

Rep. Steve Russell, a Republican from Oklahoma who served in the Army for 21 years, requested the documents in a letter to Army Secretary John McHugh, according to a [report in People magazine](#).

The letter, obtained by the magazine, gave McHugh until Friday to produce documents outlining the female soldiers' test scores, evaluations, injuries, pre-training and more, People reported. The letter was delivered to McHugh on Sept. 15, according to the

magazine.

"The training of our combat warriors is paramount to our national defense," Russell wrote. "In order to ensure that the Army retains its ability to defend the nation, we must ensure that our readiness is not sacrificed."

McHugh's spokesman, Lt. Col. Justin Platt, confirmed the Army has received the letter and said the service will respond to the congressman.

Attempts to reach Russell's office were not immediately successful. In the article, Russell does not go so far as to accuse the Army of compromising standards. However, a "Capitol Hill source" told People the letter was written after rumors surfaced the women received "special treatment."

Russell, who is a Ranger School graduate who later earned a Bronze Star with Valor device, was elected to Congress in 2014. He led 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment during its deployment to Tikrit, Iraq. He retired as a lieutenant colonel, according to the [bio on his website](#).

Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver made history Aug. 21 by becoming the [first women to graduate](#) from the storied Ranger School and earn the right to wear the distinctive black and gold tab. The women were part of a gender-integrated assessment of the school, which until earlier this year had been open only to men.

One female soldier from that group is still in Ranger School; the Army announced last week that she would recycle the Swamp Phase, which is the school's third and final phase.

Russell's request comes on the heels of [resolutions](#) introduced by his colleagues in the Senate and House of Representatives commending Griest and Haver for their accomplishment.

"Earning the right to wear a Ranger tab is not for the faint-hearted," said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, in a statement announcing the Senate version of the resolution. "Capt. Griest and Lt. Haver have demonstrated that character, courage and tenacity, not gender, are the hallmarks of great service members and leaders."

Critics have for months accused the Army of lowering the standards of Ranger School or giving the female students an unfair advantage by allowing them multiple attempts at the school's three phases.

That chorus of criticism was reignited last week when the school announced the remaining female student's latest recycle opportunity; she has so far completed three attempts at the Darby Phase, two at the Mountain Phase and one at the Swamp Phase.

The criticism online and on social media has been so persistent that Maj. Gen. Scott Miller, commanding general of the Maneuver Center of Excellence, addressed the complaints during the Aug. 21 Ranger School graduation.

During his speech, Miller recalled what the speaker at his Ranger School graduation said.

"He said, more or less, 'you have people who will question the standards of Ranger School. When they question those standards, what I ask you to do is invite them back to Fort Benning, Georgia, and re-validate their tab,'" Miller said. "To date, we've had zero takers."

Miller went on to address "noisy and inaccurate" online critics who continue to insist the Army eased its standards or was pressured to ensure at least one of the women would graduate.

"Ladies and gentlemen, [Ranger Assessment Phase] week has not changed. Standards remain the same," Miller said. "The five-mile run is still five miles. The 12-mile march is still 12 miles."

The required weight of the students' rucksacks have stayed the same, "the mountains of Dahlongega are still here, the swamps remain intact," he said.

"There was no pressure from anyone above me to change standards, and, lastly, the president of the United States was not planning, nor is he here today," Miller said. "I know there are some who still don't believe. ... If you don't believe, grab your rucksack, come on

down to Fort Benning, Georgia, and [we] will roll you into the next RAP week.

As part of the Army's gender-integrated assessment of Ranger School, 19 women started Ranger School in April. The Army on Sept. 2 announced that Ranger School is now open to all qualified soldiers regardless of gender.

The prerequisites for students attending Ranger School remain in effect, including the standards of medical fitness, the Army said in its announcement.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/09/22/congressman-wants-proof-standards-werent-fudged-female-ranger-school-graduates/72651796/>

11. As Marines take heat for handling of gender integration, Army stays quiet on plan

(23 Sep) The Washington Post, By Dan Lomothe

As the U.S. military ends its long effort to consider how to more fully integrate women into combat roles, a dichotomy has emerged between the two services likely to change the most: The Marine Corps has pressed its case publicly to keep some jobs closed, while the Army has not yet disclosed its research or preferred plans.

Recommendations from each of the branches of service are due to Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter by the end of the month, defense officials said. Following a landmark January 2013 decision, all jobs will be opened to women unless the services seek and effectively convince Carter to keep some closed, citing research they completed.

In the Marines, the story has been dominated recently by the release of a four-page summary of research this month that said a study of a gender-integrated infantry unit found that women are injured more frequently and shoot less accurately than men. The study has been panned by critics, including Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, for focusing on what an "average" female Marine can do, rather than examining whether high-performing women can meet physical standards set for the job.

The Marine Corps, which stands by the study, released the summary with officials saying at the time they planned to release about 1,000 pages of related documents in coming days. But that has not occurred, at least in part because Carter's office asked the Marine Corps not to until he reviews it, defense officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the topic.

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The Marine Corps may have acted against the Pentagon's wishes in releasing the summary of its research. Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said the process agreed upon by all the services, U.S. Special Operations Command and Carter's office was to share information with each other and Carter before any public release.

"We fully intend to make public all of the data we can, as soon as we can," Davis said.

Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, the commandant of the Marine Corps, [recommended Thursday](#) to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus that the service keep its infantry and at least some of its reconnaissance units closed. But as of Tuesday, the Army would not say whether Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chief of staff of the Army, has had a similar meeting with Army Secretary John McHugh.

"The Service Secretaries are expected to provide recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on all remaining closed [jobs] on or by Sept. 30, 2015," said Army spokeswoman Cynthia Smith, in an e-mail. "The details of recommendations are unknown at this time."

It's possible that Milley, [who took over as the Army's top officer in August](#), may want to have more time before making his recommendations to McHugh. The Army is generally seen as less resistant to opening the infantry to women following the graduation of two women from the service's grueling Ranger School last month, but the service also could draw a distinction between the two, keeping the school open to women while requesting that Carter keep some combat jobs closed to women.

Ranger School officials insist that they did not lower the standards in the course, and that 1st Lt. Shaye Haver, 25, and Capt. Kristen

Griest, 26, earned their coveted Ranger tabs on their own merit. Nonetheless, Rep. Steve Russell (R.-Okla.), a Ranger School graduate and Army combat veteran, [has asked for proof](#), saying the women did not have to carry as much weight and were given opportunities to keep trying that male colleagues were not.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/09/23/as-marines-take-heat-for-handling-of-gender-integration-army-stays-quiet-on-plan/>

12. Academy Graduates: Open Combat Roles To Women

(23 Sep) Huffington Post, By Brenda S. "Sue" Fulton

Sixty graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the US Naval Academy at Annapolis recently signed this letter to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, in response to the Marine Corps's requests to keep some of their units closed to women.

17 September 2015
Secretary Ray Mabus
Office of the Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon, Room 4D652
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Mabus,

We fully support your drive to open all career fields and units to qualified service members based on their competence, character, and commitment rather than gender. By doing so, we believe America will capture the full potential of members, making our Armed Forces more agile, more innovative, and ultimately stronger.

As you make your decisions, we encourage you to look to the future of our Armed Forces. Undoubtedly you are receiving counsel and input from senior leaders and retired generals and admirals recycling the same old arguments that women will weaken the force. No doubt they have the wisdom of experience, but too many of their experiences excluded women. They were already in senior positions at headquarters while women troops on the ground in OIF and OEF fought valiantly and saved lives. They refuse to credit the experience of the Army Rangers of Class 8-15 and their instructors, who noted that the women Rangers not only met the standard, but led their classmates in extraordinary ways. These cadre members can verify that physical strength, mental toughness, a relentless commitment to mission accomplishment, leadership and the ability to inspire others at their lowest and weakest moments are not gender specific.

We stand with you in challenging the recently-published Marine Corps "study." Its multiple flaws include inadequate screening and training of the women; failure to control for the variability in experience of participants; and evaluating groups rather than individuals. The Marine Corps Times also hinted at the cultural issues growing out of the USMC's separate basic training by noting that NCOs were hesitant in correcting women Marines -- no doubt contributing to poor training.

For too long, the Marine Corps has demanded and expected too little from women Marines -- leaving talent on the table. We hope that the Marine Corps will finally be willing to learn from the other services. Set high standards and demand that women meet them as well as men. Screen for highly-qualified women for Infantry roles, rather than setting a low baseline. Hold leaders accountable to expect and demand adherence to these high standards.

When women (51 percent of our population) are excluded from combat units and positions, we are squandering immeasurable resources and contributions. There is more to our Nation's current fight than simply physical strength, and the winner will be the side that leverages talent most efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, diverse organizations and teams innovate and produce more optimal outcomes while homogeneous teams risk group-think and sub-optimal performance.

With gender-neutral occupational standards established, the best-qualified Marines operating in the right positions will not only maximize their individual potential, but optimize the total fighting force in defense of our great Nation. Thank you for your ongoing service, and for demanding nothing less than the best from our Naval and Marines forces.

Respectfully,

Donna McAleer, Army Veteran, USMA '87
Hae-Sue Park, Lt. Col. (ret) US Army, USMA '87
Brenda Sue Fulton, Army Veteran, USMA '80
John Macdonald, Maj. Gen. (ret) US Army, USMA '79

Lillian A. Pfluke, Major (ret), US Army, USMA 80
Carol Barkalow, Lt. Col. (ret) US Army, USMA '80
Deirdre Dixon, Lt. Col. (ret) US Army, USMA 84.
Margaret M. Gordon, Army Veteran, USMA '84
Lucian K Truscott IV, Army Veteran, USMA '69
Kevin V. Arata, Col (ret), US Army, USMA '87
Bridget Altenburg, Army veteran, USMA '95
Stephanie Cook, Army Veteran, USMA '87
Ann Marie (Hughes) Collier, Army Veteran, USMA '80
Sonya Carter, Lt. Col. (ret), US Army, USMA '80
Chaplain (CPT) Andrea Baker, US Army Reserve, USMA 1984
Michael Pratt, Army Veteran, USMA '87
Emily Miller, Army Veteran, USMA '08
Bruce Shuttleworth, Navy Veteran, USNA '87
Brynn Tannehill, Navy Veteran, USNA '97
Carlys L. Lemler, Army Veteran, USMA '01
Paula M. Neira, Navy Veteran, USNA '85
Kristin M. Barnes, CDR (ret), US Navy, USNA '92
Jason Torpy, Army Veteran, USMA '00
Glen A. Carroll, Lt. Col. (ret) US Army Reserve, USMA '80
Donna Alesch White, Lt. Col. (ret) US Army, USMA '80
Barbara A. Wujciak, Lt. Col, US Air Force Reserve, USNA '84
Dan Manning, Army Veteran, USMA '04
Marty J Eaton, Maj. (ret), US Army, USMA '80
John A. Hazel, Lt. Col. (ret), US Army, USMA '73
Mike Crumlin, Army Veteran, USMA '83
Kiko Morillo, Army Veteran, USMA '87
Rebecca Kanis Margiotta, Army Veteran, USMA '91
Marene Allison, Army Veteran USMA '80
Magdaline Caradimitropoulo, Army Veteran, USMA '81
Paula Broadwell, Maj. (P), US Army Reserve, '95
April Moncrief, Army Veteran, USMA '01
Elizabeth A. Dzwonczyk, Army Veteran, USMA '07
Marianne Malizia, Army Veteran, USMA '81
Cheryl M. Connors, Army Veteran, USMA '83
Dawn E. Conniff, Maj. (ret), U.S. Army, USMA 1994.
Dean C. Stodter, Col. (ret), U.S. Army, USMA 1982
Kate J. Mitchell, Maj. US Army Reserve, USMA '03
CPT Emily Sfeir, USMA '09
Kate Mitchell, Maj. US Army Reserve, USMA '03
Allyson Dylan Robinson, Army Veteran, USMA '94
Susan P. Kelleth-Forsyth, MAJ (ret), US Army, USMA '80
Jolie Erickson, Army Veteran, USMA 98
Caroline Nalepa Phipps, Army Veteran, USMA '89
Michele M. Putko, COL (ret), US Army USMA '83
Martha Bowman, Army Veteran, USMA '87
Amberle Kurkowski, Army Veteran, USMA '07
Michelle Olson, Army Veteran, USMA '91
Maria Netherland, Army Veteran, USMA '94
Julie Murray, Army Veteran, USMA '02.
Suzanne Hickey Lt. Col. (ret) US Army, USMA '84
Meg O'Grady, Army Veteran, USMA 90
Jason Dempsey, Army Veteran, USMA '93
Rev. Dr. Cynthia R. Lindenmeyer, Army Veteran, USMA '90
Ellen Mearsheimer McDonald, Army veteran, USMA '84
Vicki Martin Lundquist, Army Veteran, USMA '80
Lorelei E.W. Coplen, Col (ret), US Army, USMA '85

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brenda-s-/academy-graduates-open-co_b_8182454.html

13. Exclusive: Marines see benefits, risks to women in combat

(24 Sep) The San Diego Union-Tribune, By Gretel C. Kovach

The Marine Corps general in charge of implementing a Pentagon plan to open ground combat jobs to women concluded there are benefits as well as significant risks to the proposal, and he outlined ways to eliminate most of an anticipated weakening of combat effectiveness during the transition, according to a document leaked Wednesday to The San Diego Union-Tribune. The 14-page memorandum and 19 pages of enclosures by Brig. Gen. George Smith Jr., director of the Marine Corps Force Innovation Office, were submitted to the commandant to help the Marine leader decide how far gender integration should go.

The assessment states that integrating female troops into the ground combat arms will add some risk of reduced performance in combat, as well as cost. “While this risk can be mitigated by various methods to address failure rates, injuries, and ability to perform the mission, the bottom line is that the physiological differences between males and females will likely always be evident to some extent,” it says.

Although it does not make a specific recommendation about which units to keep closed to women, the risk is highest for infantry units, especially those with crew-served heavy weapons, and “significantly lower for the non-infantry combat arms,” it says.

Among potential benefits that women could bring to ground combat units that are cited in the Marine Corps assessment are enhanced decision-making in the field and fewer disciplinary problems.

The document signed and dated Aug. 18 has not been released by the Marine Corps, which did not dispute its authenticity but declined to comment on its contents. A senior Pentagon official who followed the Marine Corps research from the beginning said it accurately reflects the thinking of the Marine brass and previously undisclosed research findings.

Marine officials also declined to share details of Gen. Joseph Dunford’s recommendation last week to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus asking to keep some front-line combat units closed to women, a decision that was informed by the Force Innovation Office assessment.

Mabus had questioned the premise and methodology of the Corps’ yearlong experiment on women in ground combat, saying the performance and physiological characteristics of female troops on average is not cause to bar all women from ground combat jobs.

According to a 4-page selection of results released by the Marine Corps on Sept. 10, researchers found that all-male units were faster and more lethal than mixed-gender units on most combat tasks.

The Corps has not released actual data from the experiment, only summaries. Mabus and other critics say it was not designed or executed in a way that would predict the effect on unit performance if women are allowed to compete against men for combat jobs. Outside of the task force experiment, the Corps’ highest-performing women theoretically would replace its lowest-performing men, potentially increasing overall combat effectiveness.

The Marine Corps is following guidelines from the office of the Secretary of Defense regarding the release of its gender integration research, said Capt. Philip Kulczewski, a Marine spokesman at the Pentagon.

Furthermore, the commandant “provided his recommendation to the Secretary of the Navy in private and believes that his best military advice should remain private during the deliberation process until the Secretary of Defense has reviewed all inputs and made a decision,” Kulczewski said.

The services are scheduled to brief Congress next Wednesday regarding prospects for eliminating all restrictions on women in combat by year’s end. The Marine Corps is expected to make an additional presentation afterward in a closed-door session.

Marine conclusions

Smith’s internal assessment is much more comprehensive than information disclosed publicly by the Marine Corps, and more nuanced.

Much of his report focuses on the risk of reduced combat effectiveness if physically demanding ground combat jobs are opened to women, especially in the infantry, reconnaissance and special operations units. However, it also mentions areas where women excel.

“Our female Marines very likely have more actual combat experience than any servicewomen in the world,” the report says, pointing to the 422 combat action ribbons they earned for service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Those Marine women were responding to ambushes and IED attacks, and their mission was not to “locate, close with and destroy the enemy” as infantry must, it notes. (The report does not mention the female Marines who hunt and destroy enemy

forces from near and far in air combat, who are subject to a different category of awards.)

The Marine Corps conducted its research to “understand the unique physical requirements and associated performance standards within these occupations and units, while recognizing the unchanging nature of ground combat and the physiological differences between men and women.”

Some would dispute those characterizations, pointing to technological advancements on the battlefield such as the use of surveillance drones and long-range weapons that have resulted in less frequent close-quarters combat and fewer Medal of Honor awards. The physical capabilities of women have also increased as activities such as weight-lifting have become more popular and socially acceptable.

All but 21 of the Corps’ 336 primary occupational specialties are open to women, the report notes. Those jobs represent a quarter of the positions in the Marine Corps, which has the highest proportion of male-only slots in the conventional armed forces, according to a July report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

The assessment states that its research methodology for the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force experiment was peer-reviewed by George Mason University and the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Not all recommendations by those organizations were incorporated, however. For instance, the suggestion that the task force needed to compare the performance of women and mixed-gender combat groups against a set occupational standard was dismissed, the Union-Tribune previously reported.

A shortcoming cited by outside observers that is noted in the Marine report is the bias in height and weight standards for female troops that would exclude larger women who are more likely to succeed in the infantry. The body mass index standard for women is 25, stricter than the male standard of 27.5, “which appears to be counterproductive,” the report states.

In an apparent argument for an exemption to the new open-door policy even if the Army does not seek one, the assessment claims that Marine infantry is “very different” than Army infantry since the Army organizes its units around platforms such as Stryker light-armored vehicles. “Marine infantry is of uniform organization ... (and) must be fully capable of regularly moving dismounted for extended distances with heavy loads,” it says.

However, both Marine and Army infantry include riflemen mounted on light-armored vehicles, Army soldiers march long distances under load like Marines, and both services spent more than a decade fighting largely from fixed patrol bases in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Findings

“Female Marines demonstrated that they were capable of performing the physically demanding tasks, but not necessarily at the same level as their male counterparts,” the report says, citing results of the experimental task force.

The internal assessment and its enclosures include a slightly different tally of performance than the one released by the Marine Corps. All-male groups performed “statistically better” than mixed-gender ones on 88 of 134 combat tasks, or less than 66 percent. Mixed-gender groups bested the men on five tasks, including a 30 percent better performance on two trials involving the M2 machine gun.

Among the 30 combat tasks with “operationally relevant” differences in performance, most fell in the infantry and provisional infantry platoons, with “all-male teams typically performing better.” The report does not state that the sample size of female troops for the entire infantry company was 29, as Marine officials previously told the Union-Tribune.

The only mention of a performance standard against which women in the task force were measured is a hiking standard of 4 kilometers per hour. Mixed-gender squads of infantry riflemen and women met the standard, while coed heavy weapons units did not.

The Marine Corps found that integrating women produced “very little” data differentiating performance within artillery, combat engineers, tanks, and amphibious assault vehicles.

It focuses on findings from the infantry company and especially the weapons company indicating a “greater risk” if women are allowed into crew-served weapons fields such as machine gunning.

Physiological differences between men and women are directly linked to the risk of reduced combat effectiveness, the Marine report says, because “size matters when executing a dismounted movement under load.”

Male advantages in average body mass, aerobic capacity and other factors are cited. “These realities are clearly not insurmountable,” but the strain on female troops would be cumulative during extended combat operations.

An enclosure from the University of Pittsburgh reports that men in the task force had better strength, power and agility on

average, whereas women bested them on most flexibility, balance and biomechanical variables.

Females and mixed-gender groups excelled in terms of lactate threshold, flexibility and .50 caliber marksmanship, “however, none of these formed strong predictors of overall improved mission performance or reduced injuries,” the Marine assessment states.

Looking at physical performance in the ground combat task force, “it is unknown how much a stricter (higher) physical screen would have improved the physical performance of female volunteers.” The female task force participants were above average to well-above average among their peers in the Corps, whereas the men were simply average, the report says.

Among other findings:

- At the entry-level schools, “a stricter physical screening tool would have eliminated all the female Marines who sustained injury and were dropped during ITB (the Infantry Training Battalion course.)”
- “When fitness is considered, female injury rates are similar/the same as male injury rates.”
- “Studies show that strength training, fitness, and calcium/vitamin D supplements decreases risk of injury to women.”

On the plus side for the women, “further integration of females into the combat arms brings with it many of the general benefits of diversity that we experience ... both within the military as well as the private sector,” the report says.

It cites a decision-making study the Marine Corps ran that compared all-male groups to mixed-gender groups that had to solve challenging field problems. Including women resulted in equal or better performance on cognitively challenging problems, the Corps found.

Other benefits cited include the likelihood of lower disciplinary problems after women join the unit, as seen previously in aviation and logistics fields.

Another argument in the public debate over adding women to all-male units is a potential loss of camaraderie, or unit cohesion. However, the experimental task force Marines reported medium to good unit cohesion after training together at Camp Lejeune, N.C., including nearly a third of men and women who said it was “very good.”

After the lengthy combat trials at Twentynine Palms and other California bases, cohesion dropped to medium and perceptions of combat effectiveness became less positive, which “could be attributed to general fatigue over the course of the (task force) assessment.”

Finally, the number of women entering the ground combat arms will likely be very small, less than the 7 percent of the Corps that is female. “Thus the overall impact on unit readiness will be buffered by the dominant numbers of male Marines, and should not show a significant difference.”

Canada is cited as evidence of the “token” number of women likely to be interested and qualify for ground combat jobs. More than 25 years after the Canadian armed forces were fully integrated, only about four in a thousand enlisted infantry are female.

Standards

The long-held assumption in the Marine Corps that being a man is sufficient qualification for serving in the infantry has led to a certain amount of “wastage,” or men who are not fit enough to fight in the units they serve in, the report says.

It concludes that the effort to identify what an individual Marine must do to be a fully contributing member of a combat unit is perhaps the most important result of its three years of research since the Pentagon scrapped the ground combat exclusion policy on women in 2013. “More clearly defined individual performance standards ... will ensure that Marines are assigned to (occupations) for which they are best and more fully suited,” regardless of the outcome of the gender integration push.

“Bolstered physical performance standards at different points in the accessions and entry-level training continuum will likely mitigate much of that risk (of wastage) in the future within newly opened MOSs (occupations.) This includes potential risks associated with the physiological differences between male and female Marines related to the physical demands of a particular ground combat occupational specialty.”

For instance, the graduation rate for women in the Infantry Training Battalion, including research volunteers who dropped on request, was about 36 percent compared to the male rate of 98 percent. Better screening for entry into infantry training could potentially improve the female graduation rate to about 64 percent, the Corps estimates. “Screening has also been shown to reduce the number of injuries in these schools,” and it would help cull the lower-performing men in the combat arms.

However some level of risk for reduced combat effectiveness will remain in the infantry and special operations, the assessment concludes, because the physical demands of patrolling with a heavy combat load of gear cannot be fully accounted for, in the

Marine Corps view, by stricter screening.

Implementation

The assessment includes a detailed plan for successful integration of women into Marine ground combat units, seemingly anticipating that the Corps may be forced to accept women in their ranks. The Corps was also forced to comply with the end of Don't Ask, Don't Tell restrictions on the open service of gays. It was the only military service to protest the change, but experienced relatively few problems afterward.

An “unwavering adherence” to high standards will be “the primary driver in overcoming gender bias through clearly demonstrated performance standards, which is fundamental to a cohesive unit with high morale,” the report says.

“Leadership will be the most critical component to successful gender integration into ground combat arms occupational specialties and units. Fully invested and unwavering demonstrations of support by commanders and leaders must set the example for Marines of all levels.”

If leaders don't fully embrace the change, “the integration effort will very likely be fraught with friction and unduly protracted – potentially a greater drain on combat effectiveness and unit readiness,” the assessment concludes.

Based on the experiences of other countries as well as Marine integration of air and logistics fields, “Some of the initial negative impacts are likely to diminish over time.” The very small number of women who join will eventually increase, the higher female rate of attrition from service will go down, and “any initial detrimental effects on cohesion can eventually be mitigated with good training and solid leadership.”

Tailoring physical training regimens is easier if recruits are segregated by gender, as they are today in the Marine Corps and the United Kingdom, but “the Marine Corps should look for integrated training opportunities in order to prepare these young men and women to serve together in the near future.”

With skillful implementation, “the integration of female Marines into ground combat arms occupations to the fullest extent possible will expand the Marine Corps' talent base... and enhance our ability to place the best and most fully qualified Marines in the right occupations and increase the overall combat effectiveness and readiness of our MAGTFs (Marine Air-Ground Task Forces),” the Marine Force Innovation Office concluded.

Moreover, “many of the mitigation efforts identified in this report would serve the Marine Corps well and would help strengthen performance and reduce risks for both male and female Marines, regardless of the recommendation pertaining to integration.”

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/sep/23/marines-report-to-commandant-women-in-combat/>

14. West Point women request lawmaker's Ranger records

(24 Sep) Stars & Stripes, By Travis J. Tritten

A group of female West Point graduates has turned the tables on Oklahoma congressman Steve Russell, asking the Army to turn over his Ranger records.

The Republican freshman reignited debate this week over women in combat by requesting performance records to prove the first two women to graduate Ranger School were not given special treatment when receiving tabs in August.

Sue Fulton, a former Army captain and a member of the first female class of West Point in 1980, said she filed a Freedom of Information Act request Thursday for Russell's Ranger School file on behalf of an informal group of her fellow graduates. The congressman earned his tab in the mid-1980s and went on to serve 21 years in the Army, including time as an infantry commander during the Iraq War, according to his congressional bio.

“He like too many older men have biases about what women are capable of,” she said. “Ranger instructors and their leaders are known for their integrity but somehow when women pass the standard that integrity is no longer respected.”

The request for Russell's school records came after a conversation — what started as a joke — among about six members of a closed Facebook page for female West Point graduates, she said.

Fulton said the women were angered that the lawmaker was insinuating Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver were given unfair consideration, and it reminded them of years of resistance to putting women in combat roles, including claims it would destroy

unit cohesion and hurt national morale.

“This is about the fact that these are the same kinds of objections we [female servicemembers] have heard for 40 years. For some of us, enough is enough,” said Fulton, who serves as chairwoman on the West Point board of visitors.

After posting about the FOIA request, Fulton said about two dozen more women have told her they back the move.

Russell declined an interview request from Stars and Stripes. But he took to Facebook this week to explain his own request for Army Secretary John McHugh to turn over test evaluations, peer reviews and injury reports for Griest, Haver and all other female candidates who entered the program in May.

In a post Wednesday, he said it was an investigation of “serious allegations” made by members of the military.

“No one wanted to touch this issue,” Russell wrote. “As one of only two Ranger-qualified members of the House, I asked for the records to determine the nature of the allegations.”

He said he expects to examine the Army records next week.

The service and its Ranger staff at Fort Benning, Ga., have forcefully denied any special treatment of the female Rangers.

“There was no pressure on me from above to lower any standards. These soldiers graduating today accomplished it with the very same standards of Ranger School as those before them,” Maj. Gen. Austin Miller, the commander of the Maneuver Center of Excellence, said during the graduation ceremony last month.

<http://www.stripes.com/west-point-women-request-lawmaker-s-ranger-records-1.370010>

15. Carter: DoD Provides 'Unconditional' Support for 'Lean In Circles'

(21 Sep) DoD News, By Defense Media Agency

The Defense Department is providing "unconditional" support for "Lean In Circles," or peer-to-peer mentoring groups, to help in empowering women and to propel them into leadership roles, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said today.

Carter sat in on a Lean In Circle at the Pentagon today with Sheryl Sandberg, the best-selling author of "Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead." Sandberg is the founder of LeanIn.Org and the chief operating officer of Facebook.

More than a dozen women of various ranks from across the services took part in today's circle, including Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James, Army Brig. Gen. Patricia Frost, and retired Army Gen. Ann Dunwoody, the first woman in the U.S. military to achieve the rank of four-star general.

DoD Support for Circles

The Defense Department, Carter said, will provide space and time for service members and civilians to participate in the circles. The meetings are voluntary and open to everyone. The secretary added that he highly encourages everyone to "take advantage of DoD spaces made available before, after or during work hours" for these meetings, whether in the Pentagon or around the globe.

The circles are an "investment in our people and our future," he said, explaining that the meetings boost morale and productivity and help to build diverse leadership.

"Our people make us the best; to stay the best, we need to keep up with current trends in talent management," the secretary said. "These circles have a proven record of empowering women throughout our ranks, and giving men a way to lean in also and support their female colleagues and improve themselves."

Women 'Mission Critical' in Military

The participants in today's circle talked about "institutional barriers" in the military, Sandberg said, noting a "leadership gap" that she said exists in every industry in the United States along with an "unconscious bias" in dealing with gender and race.

"Nine percent of our generals are female; less than 5 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs are female," she said. A problem, she added, is that women often are placed in roles, such as support jobs, that are less likely to get promoted into CEO or general officer positions.

"The good news is that we can change this," she said.

Having women in the top roles in the military is "mission critical" in building the force needed to defend the United States and its values around the world, Sandberg said.

The military is the largest employer in the nation, and historically has a leader in social change, Sandberg noted. "If the United States military can get this right, other industries will follow, and today is part of that," she said.

"I have great admiration for the women and men who serve in uniform or are part of the Department of Defense civilians, she said. "I have special admiration for the women, because you fight for equality with every step you take every day you come to work. A more diverse force is a stronger force."

Important Discussions

Frost, the deputy commanding general for operations at U.S. Army Cyber Command, said she holds an informal "fitness group" Lean In Circle. The discussions allow her to hear the challenges and concerns of members and get the "pulse" on some of the things going on in her command, she said.

Having "open conversations" is important in moving women forward in the military, the general said. While the circles give women a chance to talk about their challenges, she added, it also benefits men.

"I think we really have had a success story when it is men and women, and we are discussing how women can mentor men about women," Frost said. "I don't know that men know some of the biases that they have, and I just don't think they see it."

Air Force Master Sgt. Heather Morales, who has a Lean In Circle at the Pentagon, said today's discussions focused on what is holding women back in the military, and some of the things the women were experiencing at their bases or had experienced throughout their careers.

"It's very important to have these discussions, and especially at this level -- to have the secretary of defense and the secretary of the Air Force engaged to solve these issues -- because many of the problems that exist, some are related to biases that people don't even know that they have," she said.

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/618037/carter-dod-provides-unconditional-support-for-lean-in-circles?source=GovDelivery>

16. Army releases results of August courts-martial

(18 Sep) Army Times, Staff Report

The Army on Friday released the results of 35 courts-martial held in August, including one case in which the accused soldier was acquitted of all charges. In those instances, the service does not release the name of the accused.

The verdicts, grouped by judicial circuit:

First Judicial Circuit (Northeast and mid-Atlantic states)

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Aug. 4:

Name: Pvt. Matthew A. Arnold, Jr.

Conviction: By a military judge, contrary to his plea, of one specification of making a **false official statement**.

Acquittal: One specification of **rape**, one specification of **abusive sexual contact**, one specification of **adultery** and one specification of **false swearing**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 30 days.

Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Aug. 4:

Name: Spc. Andrew J. Criswell

Conviction: By a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of making a **false official statement**, two specifications of **abusive sexual contact**, one specification of **assault consummated by a battery** and one specification of **orally communicating indecent language**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for two years, dishonorable discharge.

Fort Drum, New York, Aug. 6:

Name: Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Soria

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer**, three specifications of **violating a lawful general regulation**, one specification of **impeding an investigation** and one specification of

adultery.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 10 months, bad-conduct discharge.

Fort Campbell, Aug. 7:

Name: Pvt. Eric J. Wright

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of **desertion**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, forfeit \$1,156 pay per month for eight months, confined for eight months, bad-conduct discharge. As part of an offer to plead guilty, a pretrial agreement limited confinement to seven months.

Fort Campbell, Aug. 25:

Name: Pvt. Anthony C. Toney.

Conviction: By a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of two specifications of **sexual assault**.

Sentence: Confined for four years, dishonorable discharge.

Second Judicial Circuit (Southeast)

Fort Stewart, Georgia, Aug. 4:

Name: Pvt. Thomas J. Watford

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **receiving child pornography** and one specification of **enticing a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 12 months, bad-conduct discharge.

Fort Benning, Georgia, Aug. 7:

Name: Staff Sgt. Andrew C. Markowski

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer**, one specification of **operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of a controlled substance**, four specifications of the **wrongful use of a controlled substance** and one specification of **reckless endangerment**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-2, forfeit all pay and allowances, confined for 15 months. As part of an offer to plead guilty, a pretrial agreement limited confinement to nine months.

Fort Benning, Aug. 17:

Name: Not provided (staff sergeant)

Acquittal: By a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members, of two specifications of the **wrongful use of a controlled substance**.

Fort Benning, Aug. 18:

Name: Sgt. 1st Class David L. Ortiz

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of the **wrongful use of a controlled substance**.

Sentence: Reprimand, hard labor without confinement for 21 days.

Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Aug. 19:

Name: Pfc. Erik J. Carter

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **false official statement**, one specification of **sexual assault** and one specification of **abusive sexual contact**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 30 months, bad-conduct discharge. As part of an offer to plead guilty, a pretrial agreement limited confinement to 24 months.

Fort Bragg, Aug. 19:

Name: Sgt. Zachery A. Long

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **wrongful distribution of a controlled substance**, one specification of **sexual assault of a child** and one specification of **sexual abuse of a child**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, forfeit all pay and allowances, confined for 18 months, dishonorable discharge.

Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Aug. 27:

Name: Staff Sgt. Christian L. Liriano

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **rape of a child**, one specification of **sexual abuse of a child** and one specification of **production of child pornography**. Contrary to his pleas, the accused was convicted of seven specifications of **rape of a child** and three specifications of **forcible sodomy of a child**.

Acquittal: Four specifications of **rape of a child**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 50 years, dishonorable discharge. As part of an offer to plead guilty, a pretrial agreement limited confinement to 40 years.

Third Judicial Circuit (Southwest and Midwest)

Fort Carson, Colorado, Aug. 4:

Name: Pvt. Sean A. Mecker

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of five specifications of the **wrongful use of a controlled substance** and one specification of **larceny of nonmilitary property of a value of \$500 or less**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for five months, bad-conduct discharge.

Fort Carson, Aug. 5:

Name: Sgt. Maj. Virgil L. Ebrecht

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his plea, of one specification of **abusive sexual contact of a child**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-4, confined for 30 months. As part of an offer to plead guilty, a pretrial agreement limited confinement to six months.

Fort Carson, Aug. 6:

Name: Pfc. Anthony R. Vandyke

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **contempt toward a noncommissioned officer**, two specifications of **false official statement**, one specification of **larceny of military property of a value of more than \$500** and one specification of **falsifying a marriage application**.

Sentence: Confined for nine months, bad-conduct discharge.

Fort Hood, Texas, Aug. 18:

Name: Pfc. Daniel E. Harris

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **assault consummated by a battery**, one specification of **wrongfully communicating a threat** and one specification of **unlawful entry**. Contrary to his pleas, the accused was convicted of one specification of **indecent exposure** and one specification of **aggravated assault**.

Sentence: Confined for five months, bad-conduct discharge.

Fort Carson, Aug. 21:

Name: Spc. Antony Dang

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of three specifications of **wrongfully possessing child pornography** and one specification of **wrongfully distributing child pornography**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, forfeit all pay and allowances, confined for 40 months, bad-conduct discharge. As part of an offer to plead guilty, a pretrial agreement limited confinement to three years.

Fort Polk, Louisiana, Aug. 26:

Name: Sgt. 1st Class Roland H. Stamm

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his plea, of one specification of **desertion**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-4, confined for seven months, bad-conduct discharge.

Fourth Judicial Circuit (Far West and Far East)

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, Aug. 4:

Name: Spc. Harry J. Ciborowski

Conviction: By a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members, contrary to his plea, of one specification of **sexual assault**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for three years, dishonorable discharge.

Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, Aug. 4:

Name: Staff Sgt. Bradley I. Howard

Conviction: By a military panel composed of officers and enlisted members, contrary to his plea, of one specification of **indecent exposure**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, reprimand.

Camp Red Cloud, South Korea, Aug. 7:

Name: Spc. Immanuel E. Martinez

Conviction: By a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of **attempted**

sexual assault, one specification of **conspiracy to view the private area of another without consent**, three specifications of **sexual assault**, one specification of **abusive sexual contact** and one specification of **indecent viewing**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, forfeit all pay and allowances, confined for 15 years, dishonorable discharge.

Fort Irwin, California, Aug. 15:

Name: Pvt. Joseph S. Gipson

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his plea, of one specification of **absence without leave terminated by apprehension**.

Sentence: Confined for six months.

Fort Irwin, Aug. 16:

Name: Pfc. Rick A. Villanueva

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **conspiracy to use marijuana**, one specification of **absence without leave terminated by apprehension**, one specification of **absence without leave**, two specifications of the **wrongful use of marijuana** and one specification of the **wrongful introduction of marijuana onto a military installation**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for six months, bad-conduct discharge. As part of an offer to plead guilty, a pretrial agreement limited confinement to three months.

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Aug. 17:

Name: Spc. Lionel P. Scott

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his plea, of one specification of **absence without leave**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 100 days, bad-conduct discharge.

Wheeler Army Airfield, Aug. 19:

Name: Spc. Loren R. Berg

Conviction: By a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of **false official statement**, one specification of **sexual assault of a child** and one specification of **assault consummated by a battery**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 16 months, bad-conduct discharge.

Fort Bliss, Texas, Aug. 20:

Name: Spc. Andres Basilio

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **disobeying the lawful order of a superior commissioned officer** and five specifications of **failure to obey a lawful general order**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-3, confined for 90 days.

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Aug. 20:

Name: Spc. Ricky L. Brown

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of **desertion** and one specification of **absence without leave**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for eight months, bad-conduct discharge.

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Aug. 20:

Name: Staff Sgt. Anthony T. Powell

Conviction: By a military panel composed of officers and enlisted members, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of **assault consummated by a battery** and one specification of **adultery**.

Acquittal: One specification of **abusive sexual contact**, one specification of **forcible sodomy** and two specifications of **assault consummated by a battery**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-4, bad-conduct discharge.

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Aug. 21:

Name: Pfc. Scott M. Lepley

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **desertion** and one specification of **absence without leave**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 107 days, bad-conduct discharge.

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Aug. 24:

Name: Spc. Jake Sweatt

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his plea, of one specification of **desertion**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 90 days, bad-conduct discharge.

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Aug. 26:

Name: Spc. Brandon S. Ellison

Conviction: By a military judge, contrary to his plea, of one specification of **sexual assault**.

Acquittal: Two specifications of **sexual assault**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 30 days, dishonorable discharge.

Army Garrison Yongsan, South Korea, Aug. 26:

Name: Pvt. Robier Ramon

Conviction: By a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of **failure to obey a lawful general regulation** and three specifications of **assault consummated by a battery**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 30 months, bad-conduct discharge. As part of an offer to plead guilty, a pretrial agreement limited confinement to 14 months.

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Aug. 28:

Name: Pfc. Jacob R. Grant

Conviction: By a military judge, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of **failure to go to his appointed place of duty**, two specifications of **failure to obey a lawful order**, one specification of **false official statement**, four specifications of **abusive sexual contact** and one specification of **sexual assault**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for eight months, dishonorable discharge.

Fifth Judicial Circuit (Europe and Southwest Asia)

Kaiserslautern, Germany, Aug. 21:

Name: Sgt. 1st Class Leron D. Delaney

Conviction: By a military panel composed of officer and enlisted members, contrary to his plea, of one specification of **assault consummated by a battery**.

Acquittal: One specification of **sexual assault**.

Sentence: Forfeit \$1,000 pay per month for two months, reprimand.

Kaiserslautern, Aug. 28:

Name: Sgt. Windell M. Reeder

Conviction: By a military panel of officer and enlisted members, contrary to his pleas, of one specification of **failure to obey a lawful general regulation** and one specification of **wrongfully altering an official pass**.

Acquittal: One specification of **sexual assault**.

Sentence: Reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for 30 days, reprimand.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/crime/2015/09/18/army-releases-results-august-courts-martial/72396422/>

17. Sailors ask new CNO about paternity leave at all hands

(22 Sep) Navy Times, By Lance M. Bacon

The new chief of naval operations fielded sailor questions on paternity leave, training and everything in between in his first all hands call.

Adm. John Richardson, who took the CNO reins on Friday, answered each query with the calm poise of a former submarine skipper. He identified four priorities for the Navy on his watch: Safety and integrity, accountability and assessment, creativity and initiative, and resilience.

A sailor's request to boost paternity leave was the first to receive a round of applause. Richardson said the policy is driven by the Pentagon and signed into law by Congress, but promised to take the request to appropriate leaders.

Sailors aired a variety of grievances. Some were unhappy that food and housing allowances are included in calculating base childcare costs. Fielding an improved flame-resistant coverall was a popular topic; CNO said he is in favor, but "we have some work to do." Richardson said shorter deployments "are achievable," and by fiscal year 2017 none will last longer than seven months, barring an emergency or war.

In closing, the CNO conducted an informal poll to measure morale. The majority said it was good, with about 20 percent who view it as high and about the same number seeing it as poor. Richardson thanked them for their perspective.

Richardson was joined by Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens — a team approach that will be more common, the MCPON told Navy Times. The duo also answered questions via Twitter and Facebook. This step will help ensure that every question gets a response, now or later, said Cmdr. Chris Servello, the CNO's spokesman.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/09/22/sailors-ask-new-cno-paternity-leave-all-hands/72617762/>

18. Vegas woman among oldest female Marine veterans

(21 Sep) Las Vegas Review-Journal, By Keith Rogers

Like the lone candle on her cake, Laurene Quateman's eyes sparkled when she heard the Marine Corps League men and women veterans chime in for her 98th "Happy Birthday" song.

It was a slightly off-key rendition that marked the occasion Wednesday, filling the room at her Las Vegas assisted-living home with warmth and memories from her days during World War II.

Quateman, known then as 1st Lt. "Laurie" Felchlin Niermann, is believed to be one of the three oldest women Marine vets in the nation receiving health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, according to her daughter, Nancy Edwards.

"She's a tenacious woman who never complained even under the worst circumstances," Edwards said. "She's positive, open-minded and loving of all people from all backgrounds."

Quateman was a nun first, then an enlisted Marine clerk typist who became a stateside stenographer supervisor and also procured materials for the war effort, according to her honorable discharge papers. After the war, she became a commissioned officer in the Marine Corps Women's Reserves, serving as a lieutenant until 1949.

"I had a platoon. We did a lot of marching," she said Wednesday.

Born Sept. 16, 1917, in Fond Du Lac, Wis., she grew up on a farm with her younger brother, Jim, the children of Leonard and Elizabeth Felchlin, who operated a cheese factory and traveled by horse and buggy.

In her 20s, she joined the School Sisters of Saint Francis convent but left after 4½ years.

"Children were so precious. I went to confession and told the priest I thought I really wanted my own children," she told Review-Journal columnist Jane Ann Morrisson in 2006. The priest told her, "You'd make a better mother than a nun."

She became a secretary and met her first husband, Robert Niermann. They went to San Diego, where she sang soprano for a USO trio, "The Clef Dwellers." After Robert joined the Marines in early 1944, she enlisted in April 1944 and served at Camp LeJeune, N.C., until October 1945.

After the war they settled in Chicago. She was a sixth-grade teacher, and also worked as a secretary, a contact lens company analyst, and a part-time model for the Shirley Hamilton agency.

Then she pursued a career as an airline reservationist, working for United Airlines in Chicago, then Western and Delta in Minneapolis in 1970 before transferring to Las Vegas, where she "remarried the love of her life, Joseph Quateman" in 1972, her daughter said.

She later worked for the Las Vegas News Bureau and Las Vegas Convention Center.

Quateman said at her birthday party that she's not convinced women in the military should be serving in combat roles.

"Where are the children going to come from?" she asked.

<http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/military/vegas-woman-among-oldest-female-marine-veterans>

19. Women-focused Honor Flight highlights their service

(22 Sep) Air Force Times, By Leo Shane III

Sue Miller served in the Army for 22 years in four different jobs. She might have held more if the Army had let her.

“We all know what we went through to get where we are,” said Miller, whose service included two tours between 1955 and 1996. “I’m older than a lot of the girls, and what we did helped them get their foot in the door. When I went in, we only had three MOSs open to women. Now we have two women Army Rangers. And I’m looking for some female SEALs any day.”

Miller, 78, was one of 140 female veterans gathered in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday for the first women-only "honor flight," a program that brings thousands of veterans across the country to the nation’s capital each year to tour the memorials and monuments to their military service, providing many aging heroes a once-in-a-lifetime thank-you tour.

But organizers say getting women veterans on those trips can be problematic because of stereotypes about their service and contributions, often from the women themselves.

Tuesday’s event, bringing in a group of Ohio-area women, refocused the established tour on several sites specific to their service, including a special presentation at the Women in Military Service Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

For Linda Dobb, a specialist in the Women’s Army Corps from 1957 to 1962, the trip was her first chance to tour the memorial and bond with her fellow service members.

“This is just a such good tribute,” she said, surveying the portraits of women service members inside the memorial. “It’s just wonderful.”

Veteran Affairs Secretary Bob McDonald, keynote speaker for the event, praised the generations of women veterans as trailblazers for the military, even if they didn’t realize it at the time.

“You didn’t sign up to shatter glass ceilings,” he said. “You came to serve, and you did so with distinction. What (your service) teaches is that courage is courage, excellence is excellence and sacrifice is sacrifice.”

Honor flight organizers say they hope to hold similar events in the future, encouraging more women veterans to celebrate their service in ways to better inform the public.

Dobb, 77, said that before Tuesday’s event, she never really knew any veterans like her in the Cincinnati neighborhood where she lives.

“I go to VA, but I’ve never really known any of the other women veterans,” she said. “So this is a chance to get to know some new friends, maybe become more active in the VA.”

For Miller, the trip allowed her to pay tribute to her fellow service members in ways that never presented themselves to her before, so that she could feel more connected than ever to the military.

“Today I got to lay a wreath at the Tomb (of the Unknown Soldier),” she said. “It made my whole life.”

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/veterans/2015/09/22/women-veterans-honor-flight/72636346/>