



DACOWITS: Articles of Interest 31 July 2015

WELLNESS

[Baby On Board? Go Navy!](#)

(29 Jul) Los Angeles Times Editorial

When [Secretary of the Navy Ray] Mabus finally unveiled his new policy this month, it was even more generous than promised – 18 weeks, effective immediately and retroactively to the beginning of 2015. Generous, that is, by U.S. standards. This is the only industrialized country that doesn't mandate paid maternity leave for workers. Who would've guessed the armed forces would become the model for progressive family leave policy?

ASSIGNMENTS

[General Officer Announcement.](#) Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced today that the president has made the following nomination: Air Force Maj. Gen. Gina M. Grosso for appointment to the rank of lieutenant general and for assignment as deputy chief of staff, manpower, personnel and services, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Pentagon, Washington, District of Columbia. Grosso is currently serving as director, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, Office of the Vice Chief of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Pentagon, Washington, District of Columbia.

[Air Force Secretary Addresses Priorities at Aspen Security Forum](#)

(25 Jul) DoD News, Defense Media Activity, By Amaani Lyle

"If you are doing your job capably and if you're living those core values, then you're the type of person I want in my Air Force," [Secretary Deborah Lee] James said. "Times have changed." Similarly, James said her former membership on the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, helped her better examine the issue of gender-neutral opportunities in the military.

[The few, the proud: Marine women blaze a trail](#)

(25 Jul) The San Diego Union-Tribune, By Gretel C. Kovach

The San Diego Union-Tribune recently spoke to six women serving in three ground combat units at Camp Pendleton and Twentynine Palms, as well as men who work with them. Aside from some cold shoulders, initial wariness and the awkward introduction of a breast-milk pump to the office, the consensus was that the transition from male bastion to mixed-gender force has been smooth.

[New Officer Career Tracks Being Mapped](#)

(27 Jul) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman

The goal is to scale back the rigidity of today's personnel system and create more leeway for officers to pursue individualized career tracks or even take time off in the civilian sector before returning to active duty and resuming a military career.

[Lt. Col. Kate Germano on the Marines and Women](#)

(28 Jul) The New York Times, By C. J. Chivers

For decades the Marine Corps has tolerated, even encouraged, lower performance from the young women who enlist in its ranks, an insidious gender bias that begins with the way women are treated immediately after they sign up and continues through their training at boot camp.

[10th Mountain Division welcomes first female general](#)

(28 Jul) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

Col. Diana Holland couldn't believe her ears when she learned she had been selected to serve as a deputy commanding general at the storied 10th Mountain Division.

[Current and Past SOCOM Commanders Split on Women in Combat](#)

(28 Jul) Military.com, By Richard Sisk

The current and former heads of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) split last week on lifting the restrictions on women in combat in special operations and throughout the military.

[Fired Marine officer's case gets Senate attention](#)

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

The case of a Marine commander fired amid controversy last month is receiving attention from a powerful member of the Senate.

[Inclusiveness Drive Could Change Marines' Core](#)

(29 Jul) *USA Today*, By Jim Michaels

[Lt. Col. Kate] Germano refused to accept that women couldn't shoot as well as men and took steps to boost their scores on the rifle range.

EXTRA

[New book explores women's challenges in combat zones](#)

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

A new book from Oxford University Press takes a fresh look at women in combat and finds that while the number serving in war zones has risen exponentially in the past 20 years, the research on issues important to female troops — health, family, career advancement and relationships — is lacking.

[House backs bill to help vets who've suffered sexual assault](#)

(27 Jul) *Military Times*, By Matthew Daly

Veterans who suffered sexual assault or other sexual abuse while in uniform would get help more easily from the Department of Veterans Affairs under a bill approved Monday by the House.

[PP15 Women, Peace And Security – A Night With The Women Of RFMF](#)

(27 Jul) *Navy Live Blog*, By LT Jessica Koningisor

“We shared stories, exchanged personal and professional histories, and without any explicit statement, recognized an understanding of our mutual experience as women in a male dominated profession...in that moment, I appreciated my female peers with whom I share this experience of serving all the more as I watched Major Tadu stand as one women among her fellow officers. And I appreciated the American female officers who preceded me...”

[Marine vet honors fallen female troops with 160-mile run](#)

(27 Jul) *Marine Corps Times*, By Dean DeChiaro

When veteran Marine Maj. Bridget Guerrero set out to run a mile for each of the 160 female troops killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, she never thought that one of their moms would show up to support her along the way.

[Dismantling military's transgender ban to begin Monday](#)

(29 Jul) *USA Today*, By Tom Vanden Brook

Top Pentagon officials plan to meet Monday to lay out the road map for allowing transgender troops to serve openly in the military, a Defense Department official said Wednesday.

[Women In Command Of South Mississippi Seabee, Air Force Bases](#)

(30 Jul) *Biloxi Sun Herald*, By Regina Zilbermints

For the first time, both military bases on the Coast are being led by women.

Baby On Board? Go Navy!

(29 Jul) *Los Angeles Times Editorial*

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced in May that he was planning to increase paid maternity leave for sailors from six to 12 weeks. It was one of a number of changes designed to make his branch of the armed forces more attractive to women – and to keep them once they signed up.

Then he doubled down. When Mabus finally unveiled his new policy this month, it was even more generous than promised – 18 weeks, effective immediately and retroactively to the beginning of 2015. Generous, that is, by U.S. standards. This is the only industrialized country that doesn't mandate paid maternity leave for workers. Who would've guessed the armed forces would become the model for progressive family leave policy?

The upgrade is thanks in large part to Silicon Valley. In the intervening weeks between the announcement and the policy change, Mabus realized that if he wanted to compete with tech companies for skilled female workers, he had to do better than 12 weeks. Google, for example, offers mothers between 18

and 22 weeks of leave. Other companies such as Facebook offer similarly long parental leaves, for dads as well. Thanks to Mabus' decision, the Air Force is now considering 18 weeks of maternity leave. Ideally, other employers will also reconsider their policies.

Eighteen weeks of paid leave might seem like a financial burden for employers. But the Navy's calculation is that the one- or two-time cost (the typical American mom has two kids) is a long-term bargain that pays off in savings from not having to retrain replacement workers. When Google hiked its maternity leave, the rate at which new moms left the company was cut in half.

Women make up about half of the U.S. workforce but only about 25% of new recruits and only 18% of the Navy's workforce. Female sailors leave the service in great numbers in years five and six, and the top reason is "family." Family is also the No. 2 reason that men leave the Navy, and Mabus is pushing for more leave for new fathers as well as for sailors who adopt children.

Staying put in a job pencils out for women, too. When women quit a job to take care of family, their earning power is severely diminished when they return to the workforce. Research indicates that when mothers have access to paid maternity leave, their wages increase as much as 9%. Paid parental leave also leads to lower infant mortality rates, healthier children and a happier workforce. Yet only about

12% of U.S. workers have this benefit. Most of them are in the four states, including California, that have publicly funded some level of paid family leave. That's dismal. We should do better. <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-navy-maternity-leave-20150729-story.html>

Air Force Secretary Addresses Priorities at Aspen Security Forum

(25 Jul) DoD News, Defense Media Activity, By Amaani Lyle

The Air Force secretary yesterday discussed her top national and homeland security issues, as well as current personnel challenges, during a question and answer session with Fox News at the sixth annual, three-day Aspen Security Forum in Colorado.

Regarding her perspective of the current top U.S. threats, Secretary Deborah Lee James said Russia tops the list, followed by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Al Qaida and general extremism in the Middle East, China, North Korea and Iran.

“We have had budget cuts and we’re the smallest Air Force we’ve ever been,” James said. “Whatever we are called upon to do, we will step up to the plate, we will send our most effective and our best trained personnel and most modern capabilities, and we will get the job done.”

The secretary also noted the significance of cyber threats and space investments not only to the Air Force, but the Defense Department.

James also recounted that while the U.S. Air Force once enjoyed decades-long absolute control of the skies, other countries are catching up.

“My job is not to pick a fight with anybody ... but my job is to make sure we’re ready,” James said. “We’ve got to have the right people, the right training, the right capabilities today, and ... invest in the future.”

According to James, the 1980s and 1990s were the first decades in which the world at large saw the fruits of stealth and precision-technology investments, particularly during the Persian Gulf War. “Ever since that time, countries have been investing, testing ... and replicating to the greatest extent possible.”

They’ve also been investing in asymmetric capabilities, James added. “I don’t ever want a fair fight; if I have to fight, I want to be one or two or three steps ahead of the competition.”

Vulnerabilities Out there

But the secretary acknowledged she remains concerned about cyber security, and hopes for ongoing collaboration with industry to buffer against attacks.

“We probably have the best protections in the world, but are they good enough? Are the vulnerabilities out there?” James asked. “We are constantly serving [and] looking and when we find issues that concern us, we try to plug the holes.”

Confidence in Iran Nuke Deal

Regarding the United States’ recent deal with Iran to potentially lift the arms and intercontinental ballistic missiles embargo in 5 to 8 years, James expressed confidence in the arrangement. “It’s the best deal that we could hope for under these circumstances,” James said. “The totality of the deal takes off the table the various paths that Iran might have to develop this nuclear weapon over the next decade or so.”

Domestic Issues

Of domestic nuclear issues, James acknowledged the fallout from the 2011-2013 Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, debacle in which some 100 missile officers cheated on a nuclear proficiency test via cell phone.

“We never found evidence of cheating beyond that one base, but we did find evidence of systemic problems across the board,” James said, adding that the Air Force opted to take a holistic approach in addressing the problem as a “people” rather than “cheating” issue.

James said the service therefore redirected money and manpower to bolster training, incentive and development opportunities for the nuclear force. “I think we’re making good progress ... so we just have to keep on it.”

Sexual Identity and Gender

Following Defense Secretary Ash Carter’s recent order to implement a six-month study reviewing what he called “outdated” barriers to military service based on sexual identity and gender, James emphasized that her concerns focus primarily on a military member’s job capability and adherence to their service’s core values.

“If you are doing your job capably and if you’re living those core values, then you’re the type of person I want in my Air Force,” James said. “Times have changed.”

Similarly, James said her former membership on the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, helped her better examine the issue of gender-neutral opportunities in the military.

“We were tracking on closed specialties and efforts to open up those specialties,” James said, adding that the standards might be of a mental nature, physical nature or both. “We need ... gender neutral standards for all of these jobs in military,

because that will tell us whether or not an individual, be it a man or a woman, can do the job.”

Currently, the Air Force offers the greatest number of open jobs with only six or seven positions closed to women, and those positions, James said, are “closely aligned to the special operations world.”

James said the Air Force will open remaining currently closed jobs for women, provided gender neutral standards are in place, and the service will allow people to compete.

The few, the proud: Marine women blaze a trail

(25 Jul) San Diego Union Tribune, By Gretel C. Kovach

Female Marines now staffing formerly all-male units such as tanks and artillery are nudging the Corps’ famously hyper-masculine culture in a more inclusive direction.

Although relatively small in number, they are the vanguard for a historic shift on the horizon throughout the U.S. armed forces, demonstrating some of the opportunities and pitfalls of the plan to open all combat jobs to women.

In the past few years, the Marines have opened nearly 6,000 supporting positions in ground combat units, allowing women to compete for the first time with men for billets like communications officer or supply clerk. Since the Corps has such a small proportion of women – 7 percent – and the normal turnover process is employed, only about 160 women have been assigned to those jobs.

As it stands, a woman in the Marine Corps can serve in a tank unit, but she can’t be a tanker. Nearly 60,000 Marine positions remain closed to female troops, including primary war-fighting jobs in all ground combat units. Additionally, the Corps has reserved its infantry, reconnaissance and special operations units for men.

That could soon change. The armed forces face a late September deadline to request an exception to a Defense Department policy lifting restrictions on women in combat. Under the plan, announced in 2013, the services must open all jobs to qualified women by Jan. 1 unless they provide convincing evidence for the status quo.

After nine months of research, the Corps deactivated its Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force on July 14. The experimental unit of more than 600 troops included mixed-gender platoons of infantry, artillery and armored vehicles performing combat tasks while observers tracked performance and injury rates.

Results, which have not been released, will inform the Marine commandant’s recommendation to the defense secretary and chairman of the Joint Chiefs on prospects for women in ground combat units. Meanwhile, the other services and U.S. Special Operations Command are coming to their own conclusions about whether to seek an exception.

Although the Corps has been more open about its research with the gender-integrated task force and failed attempts for a female Marine to pass its infantry officer course, the Marine leadership was reluctant to publicize details of its new staff assignments. They began two and a half years ago, shortly before the Pentagon scrapped its ban on women in ground combat.

“If there is a request coming up to me for an exemption, the burden of proof would be heavy to demonstrate to me why that should be if we’re talking about gender-neutral standards and simply requiring that all sorts of people be able to meet those standards.”

Each summer, senior government and industry leaders discuss current key security issues in order to foster leadership at a nonpartisan venue. The Aspen Institute has campuses in Aspen, Colo., the Wye River on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, offices in New York City as well international partnerships. <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129350&source=GovDelivery>

Commanders said singling out the handful of women who checked into all-male units might put more pressure on them and undermine the Corps’ gender integration strategy – a philosophy of “A Marine’s a Marine” regardless of gender, with performance to standard being all that matters. The San Diego Union-Tribune recently spoke to six women serving in three ground combat units at Camp Pendleton and Twentynine Palms, as well as men who work with them. Aside from some cold shoulders, initial wariness and the awkward introduction of a breast milk pump to the office, the consensus was that the transition from male bastion to mixed-gender force has been smooth.

Gaining Respect

1st Lt. Alice Klarkowski, a 31-year-old prior-enlisted Marine, thought her orders to join an all-male unit were a mistake, and so did the man she replaced. She was the first woman sent to 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO), a Camp Pendleton unit that calls in close air support, artillery, rockets and naval gunfire for foreign forces and U.S. coalitions. Since then, several more women have joined the staff. When Klarkowski arrived in July 2013 to work as the adjutant processing travel orders and other personnel matters, she discovered there was only one bathroom in the building. It had urinals but rarely any toilet paper. To use the restroom, she displayed a “female head” sign she acquired and locked the door.

Some men she served with were openly hostile at first, including higher-ranking ones who turned and walked away from her as she spoke. Klarkowski shrugged it off. In time, her proficiency with a new defense travel program they needed to tap for frequent field exercises earned their respect.

Maj. Ryan Bauman, the unit’s executive officer, said “her performance speaks for itself. She is aggressive. She is not afraid to speak her mind. Being in what could be perceived as a male-dominated world over here ... she is at the forefront when it comes to performance.

“There’s plenty of males that could follow her as a role model,” said Bauman, 37, of Elgin, Ill.

Still, Klarkowski’s maternity leave was an inconvenience for the unit. She had married a civilian financial planner soon after joining ANGLICO. Their first child, a girl, arrived five months ago. The day she left the hospital after giving birth, she was helping Marines with travel needs on her laptop. When Klarkowski returned to the office, the guys tried yelling through her closed door over the drone of her breast milk pump.

Now, she handles business with a lactation blanket draped over her uniform.

"I pump with my door open and everyone comes in. The (executive officer) sits and talks to me. Some people are weirded out by it, but she's got to eat and I'm not going to mess up my schedule because you have a problem with my boobs," Klarkowski said.

No Big Deal

In the 23 years since he enlisted in 1992, the first time Lt. Col. Lee Rush worked with women in a tank unit was a year ago, when he took command of the 1st Tank Battalion.

"If there were those who probably exhausted far too much emotional time into it, I guess I would fall on the end that did not. I've always kind of thought that way – that we are judged by our own merits," Rush said.

The key is to not make a fuss because most Marine units and schoolhouses have long included women, he added.

"I do my best to never speak of my Marines as male or female. I have Marines," he said, pausing for emphasis. "If my message is clear, we are all evaluated based on our abilities to perform our duties, based on our reputation. I think that's working very well for us."

Practical concerns for berthing and hygiene should not be ignored, such as providing larger urinalysis cups or bringing a small tent and folding toilet seat for field operations in the desert. But any form of special treatment when it comes to accomplishing the mission is counterproductive, the Marines said, whether it's coddling or bias.

Two of Rush's most demanding staff billets are filled by women.

1st Lt. Isis Culver, 26, of West Palm Beach, Fla., is the communications officer. She joined the battalion in January 2014 as the first female Marine officer.

"If you don't come in with a chip on your shoulder and you don't make a big deal of being a female in a male unit, you will be just fine," Culver said. "I saw myself as an officer with a job to do, and with a platoon that needed me to step up to the plate and be able to do my job regardless of my gender. And that's what I did."

1st Lt. Zully Pasindo Rubio, 28, of Chicago, is the supply officer. She manages a \$4 million budget and more than 50 tanks worth \$2.5 million each.

As a tanker "on today's battlefield, if you can't communicate, you probably can't move or shoot. If you don't have a good supply chain and readiness, well you're not doing much of anything," Rush said.

The enlisted women on staff are high performers. The battalion's supply chief, Gunnery Sgt. Joshua Padilla, put two of them in charge as section chiefs because of their drive and knowledge.

He worried that tankers who had never worked with women before would be distracted. "We were concerned they would hang around a little more because we have females in the office. But there's been no problem, nothing like that at all," said Padilla, 31, of Cleveland.

Unit Cohesion

Although the staff positions are not as physically demanding as the main ground-fighting jobs, women in these units said they feel the same expectation for peak performance. As Marines, being fit is a point of pride and a way to bond. Pasindo Rubio is a five-time marathoner who grabs coworkers for a run at all hours. Her property chief, Cpl. Sara Jaramillo,

21, of Naples, Fla., is an all-star at trash-can football during physical training sessions.

Klarkowski, the new mother, is falling in with male and female Marines on rucksack runs to the beach and push-up sessions in the surf – channeling her inner "G.I. Jane."

2nd Lt. Rosemary Doyle, the incoming adjutant who checked into the 2nd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment about a month ago, performed 18 pull-ups at The Basic School for her last physical fitness test.

The soft-spoken Marine is tougher than she sounds, perhaps because she is the youngest of 15 children in an Irish-Catholic family.

A staff job doesn't give you a pass on strength and endurance. "No, it doesn't really matter what you do, it's the Marine Corps," said Doyle, 24, of Newtown Square, Penn.

Enduring grueling conditions and long hours in the field is another time-tested way for troops to build camaraderie.

During a recent exercise at Camp Pendleton, Doyle and one of her female Marines set up cots at night in the back of a truck, near the men sleeping outside on Humvee hoods or the open ground.

Artillery field conditions seemed rough at first to Cpl. Donna Gogo, 23, from Guam. During an exercise at Twentynine Palms, they couldn't shower for 15 days. She had to slick her long dirty hair down with gel to keep it regulation.

"It's weird but you get used to it," she said.

The administrative specialist was nervous about joining the artillerymen. She was used to working with more women and girl talk about makeup instead of cars and combat.

The male sergeant who called to welcome her to the admin shop said: "Don't worry, we'll take care of you."

"I learned that there's a lot of things that I can handle that I just never really thought I could," Gogo said. "It's more of a mental challenge really. My husband (another Marine) always reminds me, 'You know what you're doing, other people don't really do. And you're strong.'"

On bathroom hikes to a bush in the open desert, Culver, the communications officer for the tankers, joked with her female gunny that they were building muscle, saying "This is going to make us better than everybody else!"

She added: "There is nothing better than being miserable with the Marines. When the Marines are tired and they see you tired and you're cold and you're hungry ... you just come so much closer. I think it earns you some more respect when they see you in the dirt with them. They know that when the time really matters, you're going to be there."

Combat Jobs

Opinions about whether the Corps should allow qualified women to serve in the main ground-pounding combat jobs are mixed, even among newly integrated staff in those units.

Asked about her biggest take-away regarding women in all-male combat units, Pasindo Rubio seemed stumped. Gender dynamics aren't something she thinks about much at work.

"That it's not that big of a deal?" she said.

Klarkowski, the air-naval gunfire adjutant originally from Oxford, Wis., is opposed to opening the main combat jobs.

Bauman, her executive officer, is all for it.

Klarkowski served in a Lioness team in Iraq with a woman who became pregnant, flouting prohibitions against sexual relations in a combat zone. The woman redeployed to the U.S., leaving Klarkowski to pick up the slack at work.

"There are human factors we cannot control," she said.

Baum, chuckling over their opposing views, said: "I don't think it's without its challenges, but if somebody can come in and do the job, why not?"

The change will be harder for senior Marines who worked years and years in an all-male environment, but a good one for the Corps, he predicted.

New Officer Career Tracks Being Mapped

(27 Jul) Military Times, By Andrew Tilghman

Top Pentagon officials are mapping out a way to scale back or end the "up-or-out" rules and joint billet requirements that have defined career paths for generations, a defense official said.

The goal is to scale back the rigidity of today's personnel system and create more leeway for officers to pursue individualized career tracks or even take time off in the civilian sector before returning to active duty and resuming a military career.

That will likely include asking Congress to authorize changes to two key Cold War-era laws: the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980, known as DOPMA, and the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, a defense official said.

The need to change those laws are among the key conclusions emerging from an internal Pentagon review of the personnel system launched earlier this year by acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Brad Carson. He's vowed to seek "revolutionary change" and create a military personnel system that emphasizes talent rather than seniority. Carson plans to unveil a slate of about 50 recommendations in August, the defense official said.

"We're looking at ways to help increase the flexibility to move people around on a timeline that's more conducive to the needs of the individual service but also the individual service member," said one senior defense official familiar with the review.

Specifically, that includes looking at changing, or even eliminating, the parts of DOPMA that impose statutory caps on the number of field grade officers each service can have, the defense official said.

The current law limits the total number of officers in the O-4, O-5 and O-6 paygrades. That helps create a rigid time-based personnel system with fixed promotion "zones" where selection is based more on seniority than skills, experience and performance. DOPMA was originally drawn up in the early years of the all-volunteer force and aimed in part to ensure that officers' career opportunities were roughly equal across all of the services.

For the services, removing the legal caps on the total number of officers would allow them to promote – or hold back – officers in a way that more closely reflects the private sector. For officers, changing DOPMA might effectively eliminate the up-or-out system that forces individuals to earn a promotion on a set timeline or see their military career end with an automatic separation.

Under the current system, officers must compete against peers they enter the service with, meaning for example that an officer seeking promotion to the O-5 paygrade must do so around 16 years of service and must compete with all of the other officers who also have about 16 years of service.

The current system rewards officers who adhere closely to traditional career tracks. "It doesn't leave a whole lot of

"You're going to have more capable (Marines) to pick from in terms of that larger population," Baum said.

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/jul/25/marine-women-staff-ground-combat-units/>

breathing room if you want to, say, take a career intermission to start a family or go get an MBA," the defense official said. "We're going to address the issue of managing folks by year group," the defense official said.

Carson is likely to suggest that Congress authorize changes to DOPMA in the form of pilot programs and give the individual services a window of time to implement the changes, for example, five years, the defense official said.

The push for change in the military personnel system comes amid growing concern that the military will struggle to recruit and retain the high-skilled, high-tech force needed in an era of cyberwar, drones and weaponized space operations.

And some Pentagon officials see a rare window of opportunity as Congress is finalizing the first major overhaul of the military retirement system in more than 30 years. The new system will help foster a less rigid personnel system by offering portable 401(k)-style individual investment accounts to all service members regardless of whether they serve a full 20-year career.

Another measure that could create more flexibility for officers is loosening the requirements for "joint" service under the Goldwater Nichols Act.

Under the current system, officer promotion boards give priority to those who have served in jobs designated as joint and officially listed on the Joint Duty Assignment List. Those typically include jobs at the Pentagon, with combatant commands and other Defense Department agencies outside the military service branches.

Initially, the law was intended to tamp down interservice rivalries and encourage the services to work together. But nearly 30 years later, many military experts say it's achieved its mission and its requirements are outdated.

"In a lot of situations, the joint billet has become a perfunctory 'check the box' to make sure that your high-performers get past one of five sticky wickets before they are next up for promotion. Let's reject that premise. A high-performer is a high-performer. Whether they execute a joint billet or not, that is an artificial construct," the defense official said.

Carson's team that is developing recommended changes for the personnel system is still hammering out the details for potential implementation. The aim is to give the services significant autonomy to set their own parameters and timelines, the defense official said.

After drawing up an array of related legislative and policy changes, the services might let them take effect simultaneously with a new round of recruits or other cross-section of the force.

"The notion would be a single cohort would go through the system with all of these new changes to get a better idea of how larger changes might look," the defense official said. Some changes will require Congress to pass new laws and many of the far-reaching policy changes would need tacit approval from Capitol Hill.

"One of the big questions is about how much runway the Hill will give us," the defense official said.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/07/27/dod-officer-careers/30575107/>

Lt. Col. Kate Germano on the Marines and Women

(28 Jul) The New York Times, By C. J. Chivers

For decades the Marine Corps has tolerated, even encouraged, lower performance from the young women who enlist in its ranks, an insidious gender bias that begins with the way women are treated immediately after they sign up and continues through their training at boot camp. The results are predictable – female Marines risk being less confident and less fully accepted than their male counterparts, because the Corps has failed them from the outset.

That is the position of Lt. Col. Kate Germano, an active-duty Marine officer who commanded both a Marine recruiting station in San Diego and a segregated all-female training battalion at Parris Island, the Corps' boot camp in South Carolina. Colonel Germano presented this argument in a draft article, "When Did It Become an Insult to Train Like a Girl?" that she wrote early this year and in which she argued for tougher standards and higher expectations, or, in her words, a movement toward "radical change."

The article, which does not address full integration into combat roles but details institutional patterns that Colonel Germano suggests ensure female Marines will not be fully respected by their male peers, had been slated for publication in September in the monthly [Marine Corps Gazette](#), a private publication that serves as the Corps' de facto professional journal. Then matters grew complicated.

Colonel Germano was relieved of command at Parris Island in June under circumstances that remain contentious, setting off a [controversy](#) about whether she was being punished for what the Corps calls an abusive leadership style, or for forcefully expressing her views about the how the Corps trains and integrates women into its male-dominated ranks.

Soon after she was relieved, the editor of the Gazette, John Keenan, who is also a former Marine colonel, dropped Colonel Germano's article from the journal's publication lineup. Her arguments taking the Corps to task for what she depicted as a record of double standards and complacency stood not to reach Marines' eyes, including such passages as this:

The performance double standard extends to virtually every aspect of recruit training. Over the past decade, female recruits have consistently scored below their male counterparts in every quantifiable category minus the gender-normed physical fitness test. Yet despite the statistics, historical records do not indicate that anyone has ever seriously considered why females have consistently been outperformed at boot camp. Acceptance of the status quo has simply become the norm. Ironically, notwithstanding the delta in female-male performance, a greater percentage of female recruits are promoted by contract to private first class upon graduation, meaning they are also more swiftly promoted to lance corporal

in spite of potentially being less qualified. This is essentially where the Marine Corps meritocracy cart goes off the rails.

The relief of Colonel Germano has been widely covered in the news media; criticism of the Corps surrounding her dismissal has at times been unsparing. The Gazette's decision raised a new question: Had the Corps exerted pressure on the journal's editor to pull Colonel Germano's article, and thereby squelch her voice?

Mr. Keenan's answer was an emphatic no. "I have never, ever, in my nine years as editor, been given any editorial direction from the official Marine Corps," he said by telephone Monday morning. He added: "Not printing that article is solely my decision." (The Marine Corps seconded Mr. Keenan's statement. Headquarters-Marine Corps "does not have any vote on what the editors at Gazette decide to publish, and we respect the contributions submitted by our fellow Marines," wrote Maj. Christian Devine, a spokesman.)

For the Gazette's part, the reasons behind the decision to pull the article were simple, Mr. Keenan said. Colonel Germano's relief complicated prospects for publication in the journal not just because it had damaged her professional credibility but also because some readers might see publication as an implicit endorsement of her position in her dispute with the Corps about being fired.

"You could argue that running that article would bolster her argument" surrounding her dismissal, he said. "And I'm not going to bolster that argument – on either side."

Mr. Keenan also said, however, that whatever the perceptions about Colonel Germano's dismissal, her article contained valuable insights. "Personally, I feel there is a lot of validity to what she is saying about, 'Don't hold women to lower standards,'" he said.

Late last week, after hearing of the Gazette's decision to kill her article, Colonel Germano provided the draft to The New York Times, with permission to publish it on this blog. In a phone call on Monday, she said she did not want to focus on her relief from command, but to use this moment as a chance to acknowledge the shortfalls in how female Marines are made, with hope of reforming the Corps in a way that will be more combat effective – and respectful and fair – for men and women alike.

Do you agree with Colonel Germano's article arguing that women who enlist in the Marine Corps should not face lower expectations for accountability and performance than their male peers? Why or why not? What can be done to improve gender integration? Share your views in the comments section below. A selection of responses will be posted later this week.

The text is below.

“When Did It Become An Insult To Train Like a Girl?”

By Lt. Col. Kate Germano

During the Super Bowl this year, the feminine product company Always created sensation with their commercial “Run Like a Girl.” For those non-football enthusiasts out there like myself, I had to tube the commercial up on the Internet to see what the “ad for pads,” as the [Huffington Post](#) called it, was all about. The commercial begins with a very attractive blonde 20-something being asked to demonstrate what it means to run like a girl. Predictably, she jogs in place while flailing her arms in the air and giggling. When the same question is posed to a group of 9-12-year-old girls, however, they have a completely different understanding of the question. Determinedly, they commit every muscle to simulate winning a race, clearly unaware that anything else would be expected by society or their peers on the playground. The question is then asked, “When did it become an insult to run like a girl?”

At first glance, it would seem that there could be no practical application of the commercial or its underlying message to the recruit training environment. After all, the military is supposed to be one of the few bastions of equality and fair treatment existent in modern American society – a meritocracy which holds all of its members to the same high standards and rewards success with opportunities for promotion and advancement. A deeper examination of how the Marine Corps trains women, however, falsifies this premise. For years the Marine Corps has tacitly accepted that substandard performance from female recruits is to be expected, thus begging the question, “When did it become an insult to train like a girl?”

In order to get at the root of this question, we must first examine how success is quantified at recruit training. The Marine Corps is unique in that it maintains gender-segregated enlisted entry-level training. All women who enlist are trained at Fourth Recruit Training Battalion on the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island. Regardless of gender, each recruit is expected to pass the initial strength test (IST) comprised of a mile-and-a-half run, flexed arm hang or pull ups, and abdominal crunches. Each recruit must then pass a series of nonsubjective graduation requirements, including academic testing, practical application testing, swim qualification, and the physical and combat fitness tests. They must also qualify on the rifle range with the M16-A4 service rifle. The culminating test for every recruit is the Crucible – a defining event requiring endurance and teamwork for more than two days with little food or sleep. Only after successful completion of these requirements can a recruit earn the title of United States Marine. Other than gender-normed physical and combat fitness tests, there is no difference in how graduation requirements are evaluated or scored for males or females. Unfortunately, that is where the parity for males and females in training ends.

In general, from the instant a female applicant joins the delayed entry program (DEP) she faces lower expectations for accountability and performance than her male peers. Females

are often allowed to miss applicant physical fitness training, seldom hold leadership positions within their respective recruiting substations, and are frequently allowed to ship to recruit training in spite of not having made progress with their physical development, all of which is observed firsthand by their male counterparts. As a result of this double standard, many female recruits arrive at boot camp utterly unprepared for the mental and physical rigors of training. Even more significant, their male counterparts arrive at recruit training with well-established preconceptions about the difference in accountability for men and women in the Marine Corps based on their observations in the DEP. The double standard is reinforced by the fact that, despite most females having an average of five months in the DEP, their IST failure rate is historically nine times greater than that of their male counterparts.

The performance double standard extends to virtually every aspect of recruit training. Over the past decade, female recruits have consistently scored below their male counterparts in every quantifiable category minus the gender-normed physical fitness test. Yet despite the statistics, historical records do not indicate that anyone has ever seriously considered why females have consistently been outperformed at boot camp. Acceptance of the status quo has simply become the norm. Ironically, notwithstanding the delta in female-male performance, a greater percentage of female recruits are promoted by contract to private first class upon graduation, meaning they are also more swiftly promoted to lance corporal in spite of potentially being less qualified. This is essentially where the Marine Corps meritocracy cart goes off the rails.

For decades, female recruits have been trained in general isolation from their male peers. Female recruits are primarily trained on a compound in a removed location on the Depot with its own recruit exchange, chow hall, health clinic, classrooms, and squad bays. Female-male recruit interaction is strictly limited to occasionally sitting in the same large classroom for instruction or attending church on Sundays. There is very little male-female socialization during training. The bottom line is that gender bias in the Marine Corps starts in the DEP and continues at recruit training in part because the males believe the females don’t work as hard – mainly because the males rarely see their female counterparts during training. Further, the segregation of female recruits and drill instructors during training creates a sense of mystery about how female Marines are made – even though they follow the same training schedule and regulations as the males.

If females are held to lower standards for performance from the day they join the DEP, it stands to reason that they will continue to underperform at recruit training when surrounded only by other females. Because they aren’t challenged to compete with their male counterparts during physical fitness events, most only aspire to achieve female standards for physical performance, which many would justifiably argue are too low to begin with. The truth is that when female recruits are held to higher standards, they rise to the occasion. This was clearly evidenced in Fourth Battalion following recent changes to the conduct of the final Crucible hike and the

subsequent Emblem Ceremony where successful recruits are formally made Marines. For years, the females and males on Parris Island conducted the nine-mile hike back from the Crucible separately, only to link up for a joint Emblem Ceremony at the Iwo Jima statue after the hike. Conspicuously, a line of chairs would be staged behind the female formation for recruits who were too “exhausted” or sore to stand. Conversely, there were no chairs staged behind the male formation. It was simply expected that the females would fall out of the formation, and fall out they did because there was no set expectation that standing through the ceremony was part of earning the title of U.S. Marine.

Fourth Battalion has worked to make the final Crucible hike a joint male-female evolution to strengthen the mindset that all recruits are expected to work hard and meet the same standards in order to earn the title of U.S. Marine, regardless of gender. It has not been without a fight, however. Many senior personnel on the Depot are adamantly opposed to conducting a co-ed Crucible hike. None of the critics have been able to articulate why it would be bad for the Institution, particularly since males and females hike at the same pace of three miles per hour and all hikes elsewhere in the Corps are integrated. Despite assertions that a joint hike would cause more females to drop out and lead to more injuries, neither has come to fruition. Since we implemented co-ed hikes, our female recruits have completed the hikes without slowing the males down and more female recruits actually complete the hikes instead of getting into a van midway. Clearly, it became an insult to “train like a girl” when it became normal to expect less from female recruits. If we are to make a lasting impact on how female Marines see themselves and are perceived by others, we must demand more from them right from the start.

High standards for performance should never be gender-normed and, barring physiological differences, concrete evidence shows that women can perform to the same standards as their counterparts if it is demanded of them. In Fiscal Year 15, the Fourth Battalion witnessed this phenomena firsthand at the rifle range. For decades, the female initial qualification rate on the rifle range at Parris Island hovered between 67% – 78%, compared to 85% – 93% for the male training battalions. The male battalions also produced significantly greater percentages of rifle experts and sharpshooters. In Fiscal Year 15, however, the Fourth Battalion drill instructors received a defined intent for success on the rifle range, and through a strong partnership with Weapons and Field Training Battalion were able to achieve an unprecedented 91.68% female initial qualification average. The key to success was establishing the firm expectation that

10th Mountain Division welcomes first female general

(28 Jul) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

Col. Diana Holland couldn't believe her ears when she learned she had been selected to serve as a deputy commanding general at the storied 10th Mountain Division.

"I was floored, honestly," she said. "I was not expecting that at all. In fact, I had to hear it twice to make sure that I hadn't misunderstood."

change was both possible and necessary to improve the credibility of our female recruits- come-new-Marines. Once the drill instructors, coaches, and primary marksmanship instructors began to see success, the movement became contagious. For the first time in history, female recruits are competitive with their male counterparts on the rifle range, proving it is not an insult to “shoot like a girl”. However, for lasting improvement across all of the testable categories to be realized, the Institution must be willing to critically examine the environment in which Marines are made and implement radical changes.

The Marine Corps has consistently touted that gender segregated training is healthy in that it provides female recruits the environment they need to develop self-confidence. However, if it is automatically assumed they won't be able to compete with their male counterparts to achieve stellar results, the expectation that females will somehow magically develop confidence simply because they are led by female Marines is unrealistic. Isolation of female recruits does nothing to foster a climate of mutual respect, nor can it be said that it contributes to their self-confidence. The assumption that confidence can be created without hard work and high standards is patently false. As football coach Bill Parcells once said: “You can't dream up confidence. Confidence is born of demonstrated ability.” This applies to outward identity as well.

Most female Marines will tell you that the adoption of the male dress blue uniform by women won't increase their sense of belonging or identity as a Marine. If a female recruit or Marine is held to less rigorous standards for conduct and performance, no new cover or dress-blue coat will camouflage the existence of gender bias. High standards should be demanded of all recruits and Marines in order to eliminate performance and conduct double standards and drive the Marine Corps towards a true meritocracy. The continued passive acceptance of diminished standards for females simply because we assume they are less capable of achieving high standards is contrary to our very ethos and is corrosive to our character as an elite fighting force. Until every leader demands the best from our recruits and Marines regardless of gender and the Institution truly considers the benefits of a more integrated approach to boot camp, it will continue to be an insult to “train like a girl”.

<http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/28/lt-col-kate-germano-on-the-marines-and-women/?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=second-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&r=0>

On Wednesday, Holland will be promoted to brigadier general and become, officially, the 10th Mountain Division's [deputy commanding general for support](#).

She will be the first female general officer at Fort Drum, New York, and the first woman to serve as a deputy commanding

general in one of the Army's light infantry divisions. Now-Maj. Gen. Laura Richardson was the first woman to serve as a deputy commanding general in a combat division; she was selected in 2012 to be part of the leadership team for the 1st Cavalry Division.

Holland, who is a career engineer officer, said she is grateful for the opportunity.

"I think it's a reminder that, really, the sky is the limit, no matter who you are," she said in an interview Monday with Army Times. "What other profession do you draw Americans from all walks of life, from all corners of the country, of all backgrounds, any demographic, and you get to compete equally?"

Personally, Holland said she has always relied on what her father, a Marine, taught her.

"You work hard, you do the right thing and you treat people well," she said. "I think it's important that each of us defines what success is. To me, it was always to have a positive impact everywhere you go, and everything will turn out fine. If that means retirement at 20 [years], or if that means getting to be a deputy commanding general at Fort Drum, then you're happy and satisfied and fulfilled no matter what occurs."

Holland, a 1990 U.S. Military Academy graduate who has been on the ground at Fort Drum since May 4, said she knew from a young age that she wanted to join the Army. What she didn't expect was to make it this far.

"I did think I'd make it a career, but I did not foresee this," she said. "I really never saw past lieutenant colonel [at] 20 years until I was pretty much upon that."

Her career has included assignments in Germany, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Fort Stewart, Georgia. Holland also taught at the U.S. Military Academy and attended the Army Command and General Staff College and the School of Advanced Military Studies.

In 2004, she was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division and soon deployed to Iraq. There she served as a plans officer before moving to be the operations officer for the 92nd Engineer Battalion.

Current and Past SOCOM Commanders Split on Women in Combat

(28 Jul) Military.com, By Richard Sisk

The current and former heads of [U.S. Special Operations Command](#) (SOCOM) split last week on lifting the restrictions on women in combat in special operations and throughout the military.

Army Gen. James Votel, who has led SOCOM since last August, backed the policy of the Obama administration and the Pentagon in stating that women who can meet the

After Iraq, Holland served an assignment with U.S. Central Command before returning to Fort Stewart to command the 92nd, nicknamed the Black Diamonds.

Holland led the construction battalion on a yearlong deployment to eastern Afghanistan in 2010 and 2011.

Holland deployed to Afghanistan again in 2013, this time as the commander of the 130th Engineer Brigade from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Her deployments taught her the importance of training and preparing leaders to be "flexible, adaptable," Holland said.

"The units to which I belonged, we would think we knew what the mission was, but when we got off the airplane, it was always a little different," she said. "You just have to be able to say, 'We can adjust, we will do this mission,' whether it was a mission we expected or not. What I have found is, without exception, our soldiers respond very quickly to that."

Before moving to Fort Drum for this assignment, Holland served for eight months as the executive officer to the director of the Army Staff.

Her time in the Pentagon was a "fantastic" learning experience, Holland said.

"It was just a wonderful time to understand how the Army runs, appreciate civilian oversight, and how we work with civilians on policy and implementation of policy," she said. "It was just a really great experience. I recommend it now to every junior officer I can."

As she prepares to take on her new role, Holland said she has seen opportunities for female soldiers expand over the years. As an example, she cited the three women who are continuing their quest to earn the coveted Ranger tab as part of the Army's [integrated assessment](#) at Ranger School.

"I think [opportunities] are only going to keep expanding," she said. "As long as we're out there, showing the great American public what the opportunities are for men and women, and how they can make a difference, and how the Army can be so rewarding, I think, again, the sky's the limit."

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/officer/2015/07/28/10th-mountain-division-welcomes-first-female-general-diana-holland/30750243/>

standards should be allowed to serve in previously restricted Military Occupational Specialties.

Standards are "absolutely the bottom line," Votel said at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado last Friday. "This is about meeting the standards for the task that the nation expects us to be able to do. If people can meet the standards, then we should be able to integrate them."

In a separate panel at Aspen, retired Adm. Eric Olson, SOCOM commander from 2007 to 2011, said that the military and the nation must look beyond standards in making the decision and view women in combat in another context.

"I think that we are only having part of the discussion on women in combat," Olson said in a separate panel discussion at Aspen. "I think that we need to ask ourselves as a society if we are willing to put women in front-line combat units to take the first bullet on target."

Olson continued: "Are we willing to cause every 18-year-old girl to sign up for selective service? Are we willing to cause women to serve in infantry units against their will as we do men?"

"About 30 percent of infantry units are men who didn't volunteer to be in front-line combat, and if we are willing to order women into combat -- not just let them volunteer for it -- then that is an entirely different discussion."

Both Votel and Olson noted the success in Afghanistan of the all-female Cultural Support Units, in which women volunteers served alongside special operations troops to engage with women in local communities.

"In many ways, SOCOM has been at the leading edge of integrating women into critical positions," Votel said.

"In my experience, our use of cultural support teams--where we've taken female soldiers from across the variety of specialties, given them special training, and put them with our strike forces out in Afghanistan, and really opened up 50 percent of the population that we just could not get to as males. And so it was definitely value-added," Votel said.

While applauding the work of the Cultural Support Units, which he promoted as SOCOM commander, Olson urged caution in citing them as an example for the integration of women into combat roles.

"I will just remind you that their 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 and have a very important mission on the target that only they could do," Olson said.

Fired Marine officer's case gets Senate attention

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

The case of a Marine commander fired amid controversy last month is receiving attention from a powerful member of the Senate.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., offered up Lt. Col. Kate Germano as an example of a Marine officer fighting for tougher standards for women in the military during the July 23 confirmation hearing of Lt. Gen. Robert Neller, nominee for commandant of the Marine Corps.

"And I think that expanding that kind of role for women in ways that women can perform that men can't is something I think we ought to seek every opportunity to do," he said.

However, "If we are going to have equal opportunity, then we also have to have equal obligation to serve in those very dangerous roles, and if we are as a society willing to stop saying 'women and children first' and instead say 'every man for himself' on a sinking ship, then that is the kind of discussion we ought to be having because it does affect how we think about women in very dangerous roles," Olson said.

When asked to comment on Olson's remarks at a later panel, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James disagreed with him on standards and also said she had no problem with women being required to register with Selective Service. "I see no reason why not to have that requirement for men and women," James said.

James said that the fundamental question for women in any MOS must be: "Are you capable of doing the job?"

In a closely-watched test of gender integration in SOCOM, [three female soldiers have advanced to the Mountain Phase](#) of the Army's grueling Ranger School in seeking to become the first women to wear the Ranger tab.

In 2013, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta ordered the services to open up all jobs in the military to women or report back to the Pentagon by the end of this year if they wanted to seek a waiver for certain specialties.

"SOCOM, like all of the other services, has been looking at this issue for quite some time now. We're going through a pretty deliberate process," Votel said. By this fall, "if we determine that we seek some exceptions, we'll go to the secretary and make our case."

"I would just say this about SOCOM -- SOCOM needs diversity. We need people of color, we need men, we need women, to help us solve the problems that we deal with," Votel said.

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/07/28/current-and-past-socom-commanders-split-on-women-in-combat.html>

Gillibrand mentioned Germano during a question to Neller about how he planned to approach integrating women into closed combat units, a process set to take place next year under a Defense Department mandate.

"I know that in the case of Col. Kate Germano, she was trying to create even tougher requirements for them so that they could meet standards," she said. "As you look at your standard

review, and as you look as to whether you're going to ... ask for a waiver for any positions today, I would urge you not to seek waivers."

Germano, the former head of 4th Recruit Training Battalion out of Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, was relieved June 30 by Brig. Gen. Terry Williams, the base commander. An investigation found she had created a toxic command climate and was "hostile, unprofessional and abusive" to subordinates. But Germano and her supporters say she had been working successfully to improve the Marine Corps' only female recruit battalion, and was ostracized as a result of her methods.

Glen Caplin, a spokesman for Gillibrand, said the senator was closely following Germano's case, but declined to describe next steps her office might take on the officer's behalf.

Gillibrand, a longtime advocate of military sexual assault prevention and other issues facing women in uniform, told Neller that while female Marines might struggle to meet the job requirements for certain combat posts today, a waiver would prevent them from working to achieve those standards in the future.

"I would caution you not to take that action because in the future of the force, we want all of our best and brightest," she said.

Neller declined to commit to a position in his response, saying he had yet to speak with Gen. Joseph Dunford, the current commandant, about where integration planning stood.

"I have not seen all the data, and I don't believe we've in any way, shape, or form presupposed whether we will or not," he said.

Inclusiveness Drive Could Change Marines' Core

(29 Jul) USA Today, By Jim Michaels

Born inauspiciously in a Philadelphia tavern in 1775, the Marine Corps has grown into the country's preeminent 911 force, proving itself in battles from Tripoli to the streets of Fallujah, Iraq.

Along the way the Marines built a legend based on grit and raw courage. It's what propelled them across the beaches of Iwo Jima and Guadalcanal and through Hue City's deadly streets in Vietnam.

Is the Corps facing a new challenge as America's culture of inclusiveness seeps into the service and threatens to dilute the warrior ethos that has set it apart from the other services for more than 200 years?

Lt. Col. Kate Germano, who headed female recruit training at the Marine Corps' legendary Parris Island, hopes not.

She was fired from her post recently, triggering a debate over whether she was canned for holding her Marines to the same high standards expected of men. She remains in the Marine Corps but has been placed in another job.

Neller did not mention Germano or remark on Gillibrand's reference to the fired commander.

Germano has said she is appealing her relief through lawmakers, though she declined to discuss the specifics with Marine Corps Times, citing protected communications with Congress.

Reached for comment, Germano thanked all the senators who asked questions about gender integration during Neller's confirmation hearing.

"I am grateful to the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, especially Senator Gillibrand, Senator [Tim] Kaine, and Senator [Mazie] Hirono, for their interest in this very important matter," she said in a statement provided to Marine Corps Times. "The discussion of gender integration and high standards is very important both for our nation and the Marine Corps, which I love and have served for two decades."

Germano's case has been hailed by some as an example of a way female Marines are encouraged to underachieve, leaving them less prepared to lead male counterparts in the fleet. The Marine Corps maintains, however, that her relief was the result of poor leadership cited by her fellow Marines, rather than a gender-based issue.

In an [editorial published by The New York Times](#) on July 17, author, Marine veteran and Silver Star recipient Elliot Ackerman wrote about the case, saying it highlighted the "hypermasculine culture" of the Marine Corps, and raised questions about whether the Corps was willing to fully embrace the presence of women in its ranks.

"The deeper challenge is not physical," he wrote. "It is institutional."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/07/28/ired-marine-officers-case-gets-senate-attention/30746639/>

The debate has surfaced at a critical time. The Marines and the other services have been ordered to begin the process of including women in the infantry and other physically demanding jobs by the end of this year.

The Marine Corps said as a leader she had created a toxic environment, alienating her subordinates with her leadership style. She also persistently questioned the Marines' approach to training women, suggesting the corps was too willing to make allowances for females.

The top officers have pledged that standards will not drop as the changes are made. "I promise you that the one thing we will not compromise on is standards," Gen. Martin Dempsey told a group of U.S. servicemen in Baghdad recently.

Perhaps not surprising, it is women already in the service who are most worried about standards slipping.

I get that. I served in the Marine Corps more than 30 years ago. Then, as now, men and women were attracted to the Marine Corps to test themselves. No one wants to see the bar lowered.

Germano refused to accept that women couldn't shoot as well as men and took steps to boost their scores on the rifle range. Women had historically scored low, and Germano believed that the brass just assumed females couldn't shoot as well as men. She proved them wrong. Under her command, scores increased to a 91% qualification rate from historic levels of under 70%.

At Parris Island, she noticed that a row of chairs were placed behind women standing in formation after a nine-mile hike so they could sit down if they were tired out. There were no chairs behind the men's formation. They were expected to stand.

"It was simply expected that the females would fall out of the formation, and fall out they did because there was no set expectation that standing through the ceremony was part of earning the title of U.S. Marine," Germano wrote in an article for the Marine Corps Gazette. The article was rejected after her firing.

"The reality is we don't really have high standards for everybody," Germano said.

She didn't believe women should be cut any slack.

The Marines, particularly the infantry, are proud of their no-frills culture. The Army can have fancy dining facilities. The Marines pride themselves on chowing on field rations and

sleeping in the mud. Being called a knuckle dragger is a compliment in the Marine Corps.

The other services may be defined by their equipment and their mission. What sets the Marines apart is something harder to quantify: esprit de corps, a warrior spirit drilled into every recruit before he or she graduates from boot camp.

As an institution the Marines have clung to their values for centuries even as the society they are here to protect changed around them.

It doesn't mean they haven't changed.

A string of recruit abuses in the 1950s and 1960s rightly led to boot camp reforms. Critics worried they would lead to softer training, but today's boot camp turns out smarter and tougher recruits, proving it's possible to reflect a society's changing values without compromising what's central to the Marine Corps.

It's a delicate balance that the Marines have managed to maintain for more than two centuries. But today a drive for inclusiveness could undermine what wearing the eagle, globe and anchor has meant for generations of Marines.

Michaels is a military writer at USA TODAY and former Marine infantry officer

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/07/28/question-inclusiveness-undermining-corps-germano/30463249/>

New book explores women's challenges in combat zones

(27 Jul) Military Times, By Patricia Kime

A new book from Oxford University Press takes a fresh look at women in combat and finds that while the number serving in war zones has risen exponentially in the past 20 years, the research on issues important to female troops — health, family, career advancement and relationships — is lacking.

"Women at War," edited by retired Army Col. Elspeth Cameron Ritchie and Army National Guard Col. Anne Naclerio, doesn't question whether women should be in combat, since they have been for years.

Rather, it aggregates the scant data on the effects of war and military service on women, from the physical impact and psychological consequences to influence on relationships, financial stability, and long-term health.

Featuring 19 chapters written by 40 contributors, including 10 men, the textbook-style work is heavy on the academic research, with articles ranging from illnesses and mortality rates of women in Iraq and Afghanistan and post-traumatic stress to medical concerns, reproductive health, homecomings, motherhood in wartime and more.

Ritchie said she tackled the project largely because so few advancements have been made in accommodating women on the battlefield.

"I published a paper in 2000 about the issues facing women on deployment — things like going to the bathroom, managing recent childbirth and breastfeeding, birth control. But when my fellow editor deployed to Afghanistan, she found the same issues. Why the reason for so little change?" she said.

About 15 percent of U.S. troops today are female, with the figure expected to increase in the future and more likely to enter the combat arms as opportunities expand. But as Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho wrote in the foreword to *Women at War*, this "begs the question, what is being done to better understand and address" their needs?

"This book makes it clear that progress in understanding women's issues related to war and serving in the military has been made but much more research on these vital topics is needed," Horoho wrote.

Women at War delves into topics that even female troops are squeamish discussing — gynecological issues, birth control and reproductive concerns, sex, disease and death. Ritchie said part of the reason so few advancements have been made in accommodating women's needs on the frontlines is the reluctance to address them.

"Women don't want to admit they have different needs than men do," said Ritchie, who deployed to Iraq and served in Somalia and Cuba. "They tend to suck it up and drive on."

Roughly 770 female U.S. troops deployed to Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989. More than 223,000 served in Iraq or Afghanistan or both from 2002 to 2011, 11 percent of the total U.S. force. Just over 2 percent of casualties in the two wars were women.

The sheer numbers and their projected growth, Ritchie said, should compel current and future leaders to educate

themselves on the unique needs of women in field training or combat operations.

Those needs include how to go to the bathroom in full combat gear (many women choose to wear diapers and there's a piece of gear, called the female urinary diversion device that lets them evacuate through the fly of utility trousers); accessing birth control in remote locations, not only to avert pregnancy but to suppress menstrual cycles; and psychiatric care for issues more common to female troops, like eating disorders or post-traumatic stress related to military sexual assault.

"The military really hasn't tackled women health issues in a meaningful way. We are hoping to raise awareness of these issues so we can fix them," Ritchie said.

Despite the dense research contained in the 368-page book, *Women in War* suffers from some notable gaps, according to the editors.

Ritchie said she could not find an author willing to write about what it means to be gay and female in the military, and she found a notable lack of research about consensual sex in a combat zone. The opportunities for studies on both topics are wide open, she said.

"Most of the research focuses on military sexual assault. But we know very clearly that sex happens. It's better to acknowledge that and address the birth control aspect of it. A

House backs bill to help vets who've suffered sexual assault

(27 Jul) *Military Times*, By Matthew Daly

Veterans who suffered sexual assault or other sexual abuse while in uniform would get help more easily from the Department of Veterans Affairs under a bill approved Monday by the House.

The bill would allow a statement by a survivor of military sexual trauma to be considered sufficient proof that an assault occurred. The House approved the bill by voice vote Monday night.

The bill is named after Ruth Moore, a former Navy sailor who was raped twice by a superior officer nearly three decades ago. Moore, of Milbridge, Maine, was awarded more than \$400,000 in retroactive disability benefits last year after a decades-long battle with the VA.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Chellie Pingree, D-Maine, called it an important step to get the VA to make its benefits process easier and fairer for veterans like Moore who were sexually assaulted during their military service.

Since starting work on the issue five years ago, Pingree said she heard from "countless veterans who've struggled for years to get disability benefits for (post-traumatic stress disorder) and other conditions that stem from their assaults."

The survivors are men and women of all ages, from every branch of the service, Pingree said. "There are veterans who

study indicated that as many as 12 percent of deployed women in 2008 had an unplanned pregnancy," she said.

While the book is an academic tome, with the hefty price tag of a textbook — \$85 — Ritchie hopes it will be picked up by commanders and troops and be considered for integration into military leadership school training modules.

Ritchie and Naclerio have been making the rounds in Washington, D.C., speaking to the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in The Services and private bookstores and clubs, talking about the book's message.

Women at War will be the [subject of an author's chat at the Politics and Prose independent book store in Washington D.C. at on Saturday, July 25, at 1 p.m.](#) and featured in the [National Museum of Health and Medicine's Science Cafe discussion series in Silver Spring, Maryland, on Tuesday, July 28.](#)

Interested readers can pick up a copy at a 30 percent discount using the promo code AMPROMD9 at [the Oxford University Press web site.](#)

"We're hoping the conversation around this book really drives improvement in services for military women and veterans," Ritchie said.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/07/24/new-book-explores-womens-challenges-combat-zones/30620555/>

are suffering from PTSD because they were sexually assaulted, and they are not being treated fairly," she said.

Approval of the bill comes as the military struggles to combat sexual assault and members of Congress demand swift steps to protect whistle-blowers, including sexual assault victims who have faced retaliation from commanders or peers. Moore says her second rape occurred in retaliation for reporting the first rape.

Since the vast majority of sexual assaults in the military go unreported and even those that are reported are often not prosecuted, many survivors of military sexual trauma have found it hard to prove that an assault occurred.

Current VA policy allows statements from a mental health professional or even a family member to be considered as evidence of an assault, although critics say the VA has been inconsistent in applying that policy.

The Defense Department estimates that about 19,000 sexual assaults occurred in the military in 2010, but only 13.5 percent of those assaults were reported.

Although military sexual trauma is the leading cause of PTSD among female veterans, the VA rejected about two-thirds of sexual trauma claims, according to the Service Women's Action Network, an advocacy group.

Moore was raped twice while she was stationed in the Azores islands in the late 1980s. She said she was discharged on a false mental illness diagnosis and never received proper treatment from the military for the sexual assault.

Moore subsequently struggled with depression, anxiety disorders, homelessness and physical ailments tied to the incident, but was continually denied benefits.

After contacting Pingree's office in 2010, Moore told her story to a TV reporter on the condition that her identity be concealed. She went public in 2012 and later agreed to lend

her name to Pingree's bill. The House approved the bill in 2013, but it was not taken up in the Senate.

An identical bill is sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/07/27/house-backs-bill-to-help-vets-whove-suffered-sexual-assault/30762343/>

PP15 Women, Peace And Security – A Night With The Women Of RFMF

(27 Jul) Navy Live Blog, By LT Jessica Koningisor

The engagement was another event on the Fiji schedule, a schedule already jam-packed with subject matter expert exchanges, community health engagements and opportunities for Pacific Partnership leadership to meet with Fijian Government and Republic of Fiji Military Forces leadership. But by the end of the night, the engagement proved to be one of my more memorable times in Fiji.

We had been in Suva for four days, and in that time I had interacted with many female Fijians, mothers at the mall while browsing Fijian woodcrafts, nurses in pink smocks in the passageways of the ship, and cooks and hostesses in the local lawn bowling club restaurant who I was told were the wives of club owners who filled these roles while the men played the game.

So when our diverse group of junior and senior officers, male and female, of several different nations and even more professional backgrounds from Pacific Partnership arrived at the Officers Club of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces for an evening social event, I was not surprised to be greeted by women in traditional dress passing out drinks. One soldier graciously guided us into the Mess where there was a cluster of Fijian military officers in brightly colored shirts and sulu. All of them were men, with one exception. Major Amelia Tadu's presence was stately, elegant and assured, an RFMF military officer, and a woman, with clear command and respect of her peers. Also in bright traditional dress and jewelry, amongst the sea of men, she was instantly relatable and my friends and I were instantly drawn to her. As my friends and I bombarded her with questions, we discovered she was a Staff Officer 3 for Logistics who had been serving for nearly 30 years in the military, was one of only nine female RFMF officers currently serving, and one of the original first seven women RFMF officers who were commissioned in December 1988. Our curiosity turned to awe. We shared stories, exchanged personal and professional histories, and without any explicit statement, recognized an understanding of our mutual experience as women in a male dominated profession.

As the night progressed with music and dancing and ever full glasses of sweet wine and dry draft beer, the Fijian military band moved from American Blue Grass, to an Australian pop classic, to Fijian slow songs and eventually the American, Australian, Canadian, Kiwi and Fijian officers began singing and laughing, giving high fives and pats on the back. It was the kind of raw human diplomacy that I associate with a bygone era, where music and clinking glasses fosters multilateral partnerships that secure our world. But there was one marked difference I noted from the scene in 2015 and the scene I imagined in that same Mess from previous decades. The women dancing around me were not spouses or girlfriends in supporting roles to the male officers present. The women were nurses and doctors and pilots and scientists and officers themselves. And in that moment, I appreciated my female peers with whom I share this experience of serving all the more as I watched Major Tadu stand as one woman among her fellow officers. And I appreciated the American female officers who preceded me, and stood as one woman like Amelia. I was struck thinking of her strength and her example, to the women of Pacific Partnership, and the girls of Fiji.

Amelia was a proud and welcoming RFMF officer who will forever embody my image of the heart and grace of the Fijian people. And I smiled in hindsight, thinking how I had first imagined the women of Pacific Partnership going out into the host nation communities and serving as an example to the women we would encounter, when in fact, it is women like Major Amelia Tadu who are the greatest examples and provide the most significant contribution to the women, peace and security aspirations of the Pacific Partnership mission.

Lt. Jessica Koningisor is Staff Judge Advocate, Pacific Partnership 2015.

<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2015/07/27/pp15-women-peace-and-security-a-night-with-the-woman-of-rfmf/>

Marine vet honors fallen female troops with 160-mile run

(27 Jul) Marine Corps Times, By Dean DeChiaro

When veteran Marine Maj. Bridget Guerrero set out to run a mile for each of the 160 female troops killed in Iraq and

Afghanistan, she never thought that one of their moms would show up to support her along the way.

After training for months, Guerrero set out to run 160 miles around Washington's Puget Sound from Thursday through Sunday. When she noticed a stranger among the crowd that came out to support her along the four-day trek, Guerrero introduced herself — and quickly realized the woman was the most important person there.

Re McClung, the mother of [Maj. Megan McClung](#), an accomplished triathlete and the first female Marine officer killed during the Iraq War, had come to wish Guerrero well. She gave Guerrero her daughter's service coin, which Guerrero kept duct-taped to her arm for the remainder of the race.

"To know she is running for my daughter ... and to know that she is running with Meg's coin and to know that funds she raises will pay forward to the daughter of another Marine — it's overwhelming," Re McClung wrote on Facebook.

In an interview Monday after she completed the run, Guerrero, who left active duty in 2000, said meeting McClung and running with her daughter's coin made the purpose of her mission all the more salient.

"She said that Megan would be sitting on my shoulder the whole run," Guerrero said. "I think we joked around and I said I hoped she wasn't too heavy."

Guerrero's Valor Run honored McClung and the other 159 female service members who have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. She hoped to raise \$5,000 for various charities, including the U.S. Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, which dispenses money in McClung's honor.

Guerrero said she ran to highlight the sacrifices of servicewomen.

"The media very rarely recognizes female losses, so when the average American thought of those losing their lives in Iraq or Afghanistan, they'd automatically think they were men," she said.

She also hoped her run would highlight the inroads female Marines are making as new opportunities open to women in the Corps.

"A lot more occupational specialties are available to women, and with that comes a risk of losing your life — and there are

160 who have," she said. "We want to honor the sacrifices that our sisters have made, and all of us are willing to make, just as much as the men are."

Guerrero's race was the second Valor Run since Navy Reserve Capt. Nancy Lacore founded the organization in 2014. Lacore said she hadn't envisioned her race as something that would inspire followers, but was thrilled that Guerrero was taking it bicoastal.

"It validates for me that this is the right thing to do," she said. "I never thought someone else would be crazy enough to do it."

Guerrero, 47, enjoyed robust support along the 160-mile route, which began Thursday in Oak Harbor, near McClung's hometown, and ended Sunday in Tacoma. At various points along the way she was joined by retired and active-duty service members, family members of deceased troops and in one case a very old friend.

Matthew Denney, a retired Marine who ran alongside Guerrero at amphibious warfare training in the mid-1990s, flew from his home in Bend, Oregon, early Saturday morning and met Guerrero along the third leg of her race. They hadn't seen one another since 2001, but Denney ran 30 miles by Guerrero's side.

"I originally tried to come up with a good reason why I couldn't go run with her," Denney said. "But this is something that warrants attention and support."

Guerrero, a lifelong runner who served as a communications and intelligence officer with 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, was a member of the Corps' marathon, super-marathon and pentathlon teams.

She lives in Edmonds, Washington, with her husband, Dan, son, Sam, and twin daughters, Claire and Ella.

Visit the [Valor Run website](#) for more information about the run and the charities and organizations it supports.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/07/28/marine-vet-honors-fallen-female-troops--160-mile-run/30788571/>

Dismantling military's transgender ban to begin Monday

(29 Jul) USA Today, By Tom Vanden Brook

Top Pentagon officials plan to meet Monday to lay out the road map for allowing transgender troops to serve openly in the military, a Defense Department official said Wednesday.

Meantime, on Tuesday, Defense Secretary Ash Carter sent a memo to top military brass and civilians formally outlining his plan that would protect transgender troops from being discharged and directs officials to develop a plan within six months to incorporate those troops into the ranks.

How transgender troops will be housed, what uniforms they'll be permitted to wear and what medical treatments they'll be entitled to will be among the key issues for the Pentagon to resolve, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss details of the discussions publicly.

"The working group will start with the assumption that transgender persons can serve openly without adverse impact on military effectiveness and readiness unless and except

where objective, practical impediments are identified, and shall present its recommendations to me within 180 days," Carter wrote in his memo.

Earlier this month, Carter announced that decisions on discharging transgender troops, who are barred for medical reasons from serving, would be raised to the top levels of the Defense Department. Each of the services in recent months had made it more difficult for commanders to relieve transgender troops from duty by placing the decision in the hands of a senior civilian.

Effective July 13, transgender troops cannot be discharged or denied re-enlistment unless the top Pentagon official for personnel, Brad Carson, gives his "personal approval," the memo says.

A similar directive was issued before the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," the Pentagon's policy that had banned gay and lesbian troops from serving openly. It effectively ended the military's discharge of those troops before the ban was rescinded formally in 2011.

Medical benefits will likely be one of the most vexing issues for repealing the ban on transgender troops, the official said. For instance, will a soldier be allowed to deploy to a forward

operating base in a war zone while he or she is undergoing hormone therapy?

The military has already taken a small step in determining who pays for such treatment. In February, USA TODAY reported that the Army had approved hormone therapy for Chelsea Manning, the convicted leaker of national security secrets, for transition to a woman at the Army's Fort Leavenworth prison. Manning is both an inmate and a soldier.

In addition, the Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes that transgender men and women can qualify for medical treatment. The VA pays for hormone treatment and counseling for those who qualify.

A report by former U.S. surgeon general Joycelyn Elders, sponsored by a LGBT advocacy group, noted that denying transgender troops hormone treatment is inconsistent with treatment offered to other troops. The report estimates that there are 15,000 transgender troops in the ranks.

The Pentagon does not track how many troops it has discharged for being transgender.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/07/29/defense-secretary-ashton-carter-chelsea-manning-transgender/30828647/>

Women In Command Of South Mississippi Seabee, Air Force Bases

(30 Jul) Biloxi Sun Herald, By Regina Zilbermints

For the first time, both military bases on the Coast are being led by women.

Capt. Cheryl M. Hansen assumed command of Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport on Thursday morning. Col. Michele Edmondson took command of Keesler Air Force Base in June.

Both are the first women to hold those roles.

"It is significant in that it's representative of the opportunities open to women within the Department of Defense," Hansen said of her new role. "The opportunities are unprecedented at this time."

Hansen relieved Capt. Paul James Odenthal, who had commanded the base since July 2013 and assumed command of the Naval Construction Group 2, based within the NCBC. Odenthal assumed command at a time when furloughs and sequestration were the big concerns in the military community. The base moved past that and during Odenthal's tenure received numerous national awards and saw full accreditation of all its programs.

Odenthal gave most of the credit to his crew.

"The reality is I sat at the top of the organization and watched in amazement as the crew got it done," he said.

Of his job taking care of the sailors and families in Gulfport, he said, "I can't think of a better job description."

Hansen, a Kentucky native, recently completed a tour as deputy fleet engineer for the Commander Pacific Fleet, where

she was responsible for the Pacific Fleet's operational environmental readiness and infrastructure requirements. She has served in various leadership roles within the Navy for two decades and her decorations include the Joint Meritorious Service Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, three Navy Commendation Medals and three Navy Achievement Medals. She said she most looked forward to being in a leadership position that allowed her to work more closely with the people she serves.

Although there is significance to a woman assuming command of the base, Hansen also stressed her education, credentials and performance and lauded the support she's received from Navy leadership.

"I would recommend a Navy career to any young woman," she said.

And though Hansen and Edmondson are the first to take command of their respective bases, both bases have women in other leadership roles.

At the Seabee Base, women command the Naval Construction Training Center and the 22nd Naval Construction Regiment. Women also serve as the base's chaplain and Judge Advocate General Corps officer.

http://www.sunherald.com/2015/07/30/6344626_women-in-command-of-south-mississippi.html