



Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services Articles of Interest: 19 Dec 2015 – 8 Jan 2016

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

1. [New Army NCO eval reports for each rank aim to stop promotion inflation](#)

(18 Dec) *Army Times*, By Jim Tice

On Jan. 1, the Army launches its new NCO evaluation reporting system designed reduce the inflation of high scores.

2. [Selective early retirement boards to meet in '16](#)

(20 Dec) *Army Times*, By Jim Tice

Faced with a mandate to cut nearly 30,000 active and Reserve soldiers in the coming year, the Army will have little patience with troopers who cannot deploy or perform their operational duties.

3. [Navy seeks to add new perks to re-up bonuses](#)

(20 Dec) *Navy Times*, By Mark D. Faram

In fiscal 2016, the Navy plans to spend \$156.4 million for new Selective Reenlistment Bonus contracts, \$16.7 million more than they spent last year.

4. [Marine recruiters don't expect sharp rise in female accessions](#)

(20 Dec) *Marine Corps Times*, By Lance M. Bacon

Though Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said earlier this year that he wants 25 percent of new recruits to be female, Marine Corps officials expect slightly more than 10 percent of new enlisted Marines and officers to be women this fiscal year.

5. [Army PME mandatory for promotion in 2016](#)

(21 Dec) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

New mandatory PME requirements kick in this year — as early as Jan. 1 for some — as the Army makes some sweeping changes to the way it educates soldiers.

6. [Pilots eligible for retention pay](#)

(21 Dec) *Air Force Times*, By Stephen Losey

The Air Force has announced the aviator retention pay amounts and eligibility requirements for fiscal 2016.

7. [Army's new promotion point system focuses on soldier skills](#)

(23 Dec) *Army Times*, By Jim Tice

Promotion points for sergeants and staff sergeants are no longer awarded for completing NCO Education System courses.

8. [Opportunities rising to get out up to two years early](#)

(24 Dec) *Navy Times*, By Mark D. Faram

Navy officials have now made early outs a “program of record” and use it to target specific ratings, paygrades and year groups where the Navy has too many sailors.

9. [Need to know, 2016: A bigger force](#)

(24 Dec) *Air Force Times*, By Stephen Losey

For the first time in six years, the Air Force is planning to grow in 2016.

10. [Marine promotions: Resident PME becomes requirement for many](#)

(25 Dec) Marine Corps Times, By Lance M. Bacon

Marines better factor professional military education into their promotion equations in 2016. New resident courses are now required for lance corporals and corporals to get promoted; sergeants will follow suit by year's end.

11. [Big advancement changes coming in 2016](#)

(26 Dec) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

Personnel bosses shook up the enlisted advancement system this year by revamping the spot advancement rules. And they're set to greatly expand these in 2016.

12. [Need to know, 2016: Air Force offers three-year sabbaticals](#)

(1 Jan) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

The second class of airmen chosen to take up to three years off under the new Career Intermission Program will begin their sabbaticals in 2016 — and the Air Force could move forward on expanding the program.

13. [Navy personnel boss eyes big changes to bonuses, advancement](#)

(3 Jan) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

Now the Navy's personnel boss is targeting big changes to petty officer advancement and your bonuses with an aim of retaining the best talent as the service adopts the new retirement system in two years.

14. [Army issues new reg with updated promotion rules for NCOs](#)

(6 Jan) Army Times, By Jim Tice

Policies governing a new promotion system for noncommissioned officers of the active and reserve components are included in a major update to the service's principal regulation for advancing enlisted soldiers through the service's rank structure.

15. [Army child care contractor switch to begin in February](#)

(7 Jan) Military Times, By Karen Jowers

Army officials say they have delayed the start date of their new contract for child care fee assistance to make sure they protect Army families from financial hardships like those they've experienced with the current contractor.

EMPLOYMENT & INTEGRATION

Marine Corps Times Video Clip: [Marine Infantrywoman Reflects on Ground Combat Integration Study](#)

Marine Corps Cpl. Remedios Cruz, a Fleischmanns, N.Y., native was one of the six female riflemen to participate in the Marine Corps' Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCEITF) study.

16. [Military Muscle: 5 critical drills to improve women's strength](#)

(15 Dec) Military Times, By Bob Thomas

For women who want to apply to those previously closed military units, it's a given that strength training should be a critical component of their everyday routine.

17. [Women and the Selective Service](#)

(15 Dec) CRS Insight, By Kristy N. Kamarck

Some contend that women cannot be equal in society as long as they are barred from full participation in all levels of the national security system and thus should be *allowed to* register for Selective Service.

18. [Army official: Updates coming soon on potential fitness test changes](#)

(18 Dec) Army Times, By Kevin Lilley

The Army's top civilian and its top general both said in January that a report from Training and Doctrine Command regarding new ways to measure soldier fitness would be on their desks in 2015.

19. [For military women, equal opportunity, equal obligation: Our view](#)

(20 Dec) USA Today, The Editorial Board

Equal opportunity requires more than a formal change in policy, and many challenges remain.

20. [Why You Can Stop Doing Sit-Ups](#)

(21 Dec) *The Wall Street Journal*, By Rachel Bachman

Exercise gurus and military experts are pushing for alternate exercises, like plank pose, to prevent back injuries

21. [Marine fitness review: Big changes in store for 2016](#)

(23 Dec) *Marine Corps Times*, By Lance M. Bacon

Marine Corps Training and Education Command is conducting a comprehensive review of the service's fitness and body composition standards.

22. [Need to know, 2016: Women in combat](#)

(23 Dec) *Air Force Times*, By Stephen Losey

Now that Defense Secretary Ash Carter has decided to open all combat jobs to women, the Air Force will spend 2016 laying the groundwork to integrate women into these career fields.

23. [Navy's eased BCA rules start now](#)

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

After a transition over the fall, Jan. 1 ushers in a new era of body fat measurement in the Navy.

24. [Army infantry, armor, spec ops units open to women in 2016](#)

(26 Dec) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

In 2016, women will be able to join the ranks of the Army's infantry, armor and special operations units.

25. [Navy SEALs prepare to open elite teams to women](#)

(26 Dec) *Military Times*, By Meghann Myers

The year 2016 will be known as the year everything changed for the storied Navy SEALs.

26. [Commentary: Draft our daughters](#)

(27 Dec) *Navy Times*, By Chris Marvin

It's very likely that in the near future, either Congress will act to require Selective Service registration for women, or a court will rule on a challenge to *Rostker v. Goldberg*, the 1981 decision that upheld the male-only draft.

27. [Defense Secretary Ash Carter's historic personnel changes irk generals](#)

(27 Dec) *USA Today*, By Tom Vanden Brook

Women in the infantry. Transgender troops. 401(k)s for soldiers. The Pentagon in 2015 witnessed some of the most significant changes to its policies on who fights and how they're compensated since the draft ended in 1973.

28. [Enlisted women report to submarines in early 2016](#)

(27 Dec) *Navy Times*, By David Larter

The first four enlisted women completed the intensive basic enlisted submarine course in October and, starting next year, will report for duty to the blue and gold crew of the guided missile submarine Michigan.

29. [Officials reviewing exercises for job-related PRT](#)

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

For decades, it's been the same thing: Run, pushups and sit-ups, twice a year. But now, after an overhaul of the body composition test that allows bigger waist measurements but fewer failures before separation, the Navy is eyeing changes to the physical readiness portion of the physical fitness assessment.

30. [Army boosts credentialing to give soldiers credit for experience](#)

(28 Dec) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

The Army continues to boost its credentialing program so that soldiers receive proper credit for their training and experience.

31. [What to expect in 2016](#)

(30 Dec) *Stars & Stripes*, By Jason Duhr

The Defense Department was busy in 2015. But rather than look back at the year that was, Stars and Stripes has decided to look ahead to 2016. Here are some of the top issues facing Marines, soldiers, sailors and airmen in the new year.

32. Sailors building LinkedIn-style detailing system

(30 Dec) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

The Navy's brain trust is tackling the service's antiquated assignments system, with an aim to build an in-house network that affords sailors more say over their next set of orders. Think LinkedIn meets Navy Personnel Command's detailers.

33. Pentagon's women-in-combat push faces chilly headwinds

(30 Dec) The Hill, By Rebecca Kheel

The toughest part of the integration, which President Obama and Defense Secretary Ashton Carter have made a priority in their final year in office, will be overcoming deep-seated opposition among many male special forces commandos.

34. First 4 Enlisted Women Will Soon Report For Duty Aboard U.S. Navy Submarine

(30 Dec) The Huffington Post, By Dominique Mosbergen

2016 will be a milestone year for the U.S. military, a year when one of its few remaining gender barriers will be dismantled as four enlisted women become the first to integrate into the crew of a Navy submarine.

35. As Pentagon opens combat roles to women, what are special forces' concerns?

(30 Dec) The Christian Science Monitor, By Anna Mulrine

An end to male bonding, infidelity in the field, and a sense that the special forces would be 'less elite' were among the worries cited in two recently released studies.

36. With combat jobs now open, military women scale another wall

(3 Jan) Milwaukee-Wisconsin Journal Sentinel, By Meg Jones

Veterans of Iraq or Afghanistan know that's not true. American female service members have been in combat for years — fighting and dying just like male troops. If anything, the resistance was on the home front.

37. Army major writes ultimate take-down of 'senseless' tape test

(3 Jan) Army Times, By Maj. Ric Haeussler

We are a smart and powerful nation with an incredibly advanced and capable Army. Why does that Army practice primitive and imprecise body composition methods with charts and tape measures when the technology exists to be so much better?

38. Army submits plan for women in infantry, armor, special operations

(4 Jan) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

The Army has submitted to the Defense Department its plan to open its infantry, armor and special operations ranks to women.

39. U.S. West Point academy swears in first woman commandant of cadets

(5 Jan) Reuters, By Mike Segar

The first female commandant of cadets at the U.S. Military Academy was sworn in on Tuesday, the latest milestone for American women who now are allowed to serve all military combat roles.

40. Services Submit Plans on Integrating Women Into All Military Jobs

(5 Jan) DoD News, By Lisa Ferdinando

The Defense Department has received plans from each of the services for implementing plans to integrate women into all positions in the military, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said today.

41. Pentagon reviewing plans to integrate women into newly opened combat roles

(5 Jan) Stars & Stripes, By Cory Dickstein

Pentagon leaders are examining plans proposed by each military service to open about 225,000 previously male-only jobs to female troops in the coming months.

42. Inside the Decision to Open Up the Frontlines to Women

(5 Jan) Time, By Jay Newton-Small

Leon Panetta didn't enter the Pentagon thinking he'd become a champion for women's rights.

43. Marine Corps boot camp, job titles to be gender neutral by April

(6 Jan) Marine Corps Times, By Gina Harkins

The Marine Corps has been ordered to come up with a plan to make its enlisted entry-level training coed, and to make its job titles more gender-neutral following the recent move to open all military combat roles to women.

44. Navy looks to remove 'man' from all job titles

(7 Jan) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

The Navy secretary has ordered the service to review all job titles and consider removing any reference to "man" in them, a move that could force name-changes to nearly two dozen specialties, from airman to yeoman. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus ordered the scrub as the force prepares to open the last remaining billets to women sailors in Marine ground combat elements and the Navy SEALs.

WELL-BEING & TREATMENT

45. Balance, Bonding and Expectations

(17 Dec) All Hands Magazine, By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Leah Stiles

One mother's advice for military parents

46. In the war against sexual assault, the Army keeps shooting itself in the foot

(18 Dec) The Washington Post, By Craig Whitlock

For the past two years, the Pentagon has acknowledged having a severe problem with sexual assault in the ranks. Military leaders have promised Congress, the White House and their own troops that they are redoubling efforts to protect victims and punish offenders.

47. Military family pushes Supreme Court to consider malpractice claim

(21 Dec) Military Times, By Patricia Kime

Isabella was born March 16, 2009, to Air Force Capt. Heather Ortiz at Evans Army Community Hospital, Fort Carson, Colorado. As her mother was prepped for a planned Cesarean section delivery, she was given a medication to which she had a known allergy—one that was noted in her medical records. When she was administered an antihistamine to counter the ensuing allergic reaction, her blood pressure plummeted, depriving Isabella of oxygen in the womb.

48. Coast Guard courts-martial, firings from April to June 2015

(21 Dec) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

The Coast Guard released its good order and discipline data for the third quarter of fiscal year 2015 in a Dec. 11 service-wide message.

49. Department of Defense Forwards to Congress Proposed Changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice

(28 Dec) DoD News, Press Operations

Today the Department of Defense forwarded to Congress a legislative proposal to reform the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the statutory framework of the military justice system.

50. Defense Department Proposes UCMJ Changes

(28 Dec) DoD News, Defense Media Activity

Following a two-year review of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Defense Department today forwarded to Congress a legislative proposal outlining a number of reforms.

51. Navy releases 20 courts-martial verdicts for November

(29 Dec) Navy Times, Staff Report

The Navy handed down 20 verdicts via courts-martial in November, with charges ranging from cruelty to a subordinate to stalking and wire fraud.

52. USAF launches new strategy to curb sexual assault

(30 Dec) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

After years of mixed results with its sexual assault-prevention strategy, the Air Force is rolling out a new program that will do less lecturing and more encouraging of bystander intervention.

53. Army's breastfeeding rules prove need for DoD-wide personnel policies

(4 Jan) Army Times Editorial

Of all the services, the Army was the last to adopt an official breastfeeding policy. The intent was to give clear guidance to commands and ensure female soldiers would have a safe, secure place to pump at work. The service's first attempt, released in September, was a failure.

54. [Soldiers often marry young, and for good reasons](#)

(5 Jan) *Military Times*, By Katelyn Clark

The military forces people to grow up fast — especially when it comes to marriage.

55. [Family Support Class Reduces Symptoms of Anxiety, Depression: Report](#)

(5 Jan) *Military.Com*, By Amy Bushatz

Troops and family members who participated in a military-run emotional support and family communication class had their anxiety and depression symptoms halved six months after leaving the program, according to a new report from the University of California, Los Angeles.

56. [Air Force Academy athlete accused of groping female cadet faces Article 32](#)

(6 Jan) *Air Force Times*, By Oriana Pawlyk

An Air Force Academy athlete accused of sexually assaulting a female cadet faces an Article 32 hearing Wednesday.

57. [Third Air Force Academy cadet headed to court over sexual-assault allegations](#)

(7 Jan) *The Gazette*, By Tom Roeder

An Air Force Academy track and field athlete faces a Wednesday hearing on charges that he sexually assaulted a female cadet at the school.

58. [Reports of Sexual Assaults Spike at Military Academies](#)

(8 Jan) *Associated Press*, By Lolita C. Baldor

Reports of sexual assaults at the three military academies surged by more than 50 percent in the 2014-15 school year, and complaints of sexual harassment also spiked, according to Pentagon officials.

WOMEN VETERANS

59. [Letter to Charter Members, Members and Supporters](#)

(4 Jan) *Women in Military Service for America Foundation*, By Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Wilma L. Vaught, USAF

This past year marked my 29th year as president of the Women's Memorial Foundation...I am grateful to announce that I will be leaving the Foundation in the very capable hands of retired Army Major General Dee Ann McWilliams.

60. [Female Army vet leads 'dream team' to fight ISIS in Iraq](#)

(5 Jan) *Army Times*, By Oriana Pawlyk

A former Army officer who operates under the alias "Kat Argo", and five other volunteers make up "[Qalubna Ma'kum](#)," translated from Arabic to mean, "Our hearts are with you."

61. [This female pilot was denied equal pay during WWII. Now Arlington Cemetery bars her remains.](#)

(6 Jan) *The Washington Post*, By Sarah Kaplan

...Secretary of the Army John McHugh reversed the old rule and said that ashes of WASPs can no longer be inurned at Arlington Cemetery.

62. [Congresswoman fights ban on burying female WWII pilots at Arlington](#)

(7 Jan) *Air Force Times*, By Stephen Losey

Rep. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., on Wednesday introduced a bill that would allow the cremated remains of women who flew non-combat missions during World War II to be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery.

1. New Army NCO eval reports for each rank aim to stop promotion inflation

(18 Dec) Army Times, By Jim Tice

On Jan. 1, the Army launches its new NCO evaluation reporting system designed reduce the inflation of high scores.

The DA Form 2166-9 series of reports that begins populating the personnel files of active and reserve soldiers in January are sharply different from the enlisted rating systems of the past for several reasons.

First, the revised system introduces [separate report forms](#) for soldiers of different ranks, much like the officer system that was launched in 2014.

The revised NCOER also will introduce new roles and responsibilities for rating officials, and will employ an inflation-dampening technique, long used for officers, that limits the number of top-box ratings that senior raters can issue for promotion potential.

The new system also will employ the Electronic Entry System, an online tool for processing and submitting evaluations to Human Resources Command for placement in a soldier's official file.

The new rating system consists of three rank-specific evaluation reports, and one counseling form, according to George Piccirilli, chief of HRC's evaluations, selections and promotions division.

Counseling under the new system should be conducted twice during the rating period by the senior rater, normally an official who rates the rated soldier's rater.

For many sergeants, the senior rater likely will be the platoon sergeant or platoon leader.

Because the new system will apply to the Regular Army, National Guard and Army Reserve, HRC's evaluations branch will process about one million reports annually once the system matures.

This will be the first time that National Guard NCO reports will be processed by HRC, rather than state organizations.

The new system focuses on three levels of NCO leadership, with separate reports for soldiers in the ranks of sergeant, staff through first sergeant, and sergeants major and command sergeants major.

The sergeant report, DA Form 2166-9-1, is designed for direct-level leaders and focuses on technical proficiency as well as the roles and responsibilities of the NCO.

The second grade plate for the new system, DA Form 2166-2, will be used for staff sergeant through first sergeant ratings, and will focus on organizational processes and systems.

Unlike the sergeant NCOER, senior raters will have limits on the number of subordinates who can receive a top-box check for promotion potential.

Senior raters will not be allowed to issue "most qualified" ratings to more than 24 percent of the NCOs they rate at that grade.

Originally the Army had set the top-box ceiling at 50 percent, similar to enumeration technique for officers, but reduced it to 24 percent in recognition of the lower promotion select rates for the senior NCO ranks.

For example, during the past year the promotion select rates averaged 13 percent for sergeant major, 9 percent for master sergeant and 24 percent for sergeant first class.

The enumeration technique was introduced for officers in 1997, and at that time was quite controversial.

Piccirilli said it took the officer corps three to four years to adjust to the fact that not everybody would receive a top-box check, and that the "center of mass" rating was the promotion selection standard for most officers.

The number one box under the new system is “most qualified,” and the number two box is “highly qualified.”

“The biggest concern for NCOs will be ‘can I be promoted with a number two box’,” Piccirilli said.

The third grade plate under the new system, DA Form 2166-9-3 for sergeants major and command sergeants major, focuses on the strategic level of leadership. It requires raters and senior raters to assess, in written comments, the attributes and competencies of the rated NCO.

Another change under the new system involves a revised NCOER Support Form, DA Form 2166-9-1A, that will be used by rating officials to counsel subordinates during the rating period.

Regulations governing the new system require senior raters to counsel at least twice during the rating period.

Officials expect that SR participation will not only complement the rater’s counseling, but will let rated soldiers know where they stand in terms of being evaluated for promotion.

Soldiers should expect it to take a few years for the inflation-dampening features of that system to strongly influence the decisions of promotion, school and special assignment boards, according to personnel officials.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/enlisted/2015/12/18/new-army-nco-eval-reports-each-rank-aim-stop-promotion-inflation/77307838/>

2. Selective early retirement boards to meet in '16

(20 Dec) Army Times, By Jim Tice

Faced with a mandate to cut nearly 30,000 active and Reserve soldiers in the coming year, the Army will have little patience with troopers who cannot deploy or perform their operational duties.

While a bulk of the force reductions, 15,000 in the active component and almost 14,000 in the reserves, will be achieved through attrition, the Army will convene involuntary early retirement and separation boards for select categories of officers and NCOs.

Among those retention reviews will be an enhanced Selective Early Retirement Board, or eSERB, that convenes Jan. 12 for Army Competitive Category lieutenant colonels who have been passed over twice for colonel.

Another SERB will evaluate retirement-eligible chief warrant officers five of the Regular Army who hold an aviation or technical services military occupational specialty.

The specific zone of eligibility for the CW5 board that convenes March 29 will include aviators with five or more years in grade and tech services officers with four or more years in grade.

Lt. Gen. James McConville, Army personnel chief, said it also appears likely that captains in overstrength categories will be reviewed for possible involuntary separation.

“We don’t think we’ll have to do majors, but a lot of this depends on the behavior of the force (in terms of voluntary attrition),” he said. “If we can avoid involuntary separations we will, but the behavior of the force drives us on what we can do.”

“We brought in almost a thousand extra officers during the Grow the Army phase, and those officers are now captains and their year groups are overstrength.”

McConville, the Army G1 (chief of human resources), said that while it is Army policy to only look at captain and major year groups once for separation or early retirement, officers will go through promotion reviews at those grades that could result in involuntary separation.

“The lieutenant colonel separations are needed to provide promotion opportunity for officers coming up through the ranks,” he said. “If lieutenant colonels are passed over twice and are allowed to stay until 28 years (the tenure limit for O5s), then that will not

allow us to get the promotion rates for other officers where we want them to be.”

Actions during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30 included separation and enhanced selective early retirement boards for certain captains in the Army Competitive Category, primarily year group 2009.

Also targeted were certain specialties in the Army Medical Department year groups 2007 through 2009.

The Qualitative Service Program, a force-shaping tool for the NCO corps, remains a drawdown option for 2016, but because of recent Qualitative Management Program separations, will not be as heavily applied as in the past, according to McConville.

The QMP is not a drawdown tool, but rather a quality-control measure that is triggered when NCOs have derogatory information placed in their official file.

The QSP is a force-shaping program for staff sergeants and senior NCOs who are in career fields and specialties that are overstrength or have limited promotion opportunities, or both.

QSP and QMP reviews are held in conjunction with senior NCO promotion boards, which in 2016 will meet in March to select master sergeants, June for sergeants first class and September for sergeants major.

“Certainly, we want to avoid separating fully qualified soldiers just because they are in an MOS that is overstrength,” McConville said. “The ones to go first will be the soldiers who do not meet Army standards for behavior and performance under the QMP.”

Given the mandate to make steep personnel reductions over the next three years, the Army will be taking a hard line with soldiers who for medical and similar reasons are chronically non-deployable, and who are a drag on the readiness of the force.

The non-deployable problems run counter to Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley’s campaign to increase the readiness of the force.

Recently tabulated data indicates that nearly 103,000 soldiers, or about 10 percent of the Army’s total force – active and reserve - are not available for deployment and other operational duties.

With the Army now at one of its smallest levels since the end of the Cold War, and getting smaller, this level of non-availability is considered a major problem, according to McConville.

“If soldiers are not deployable, or are unable to do their job, we are going to have to take a hard look at their ability to stay in the Army,” he said.

“The message I want to get out is that we are a professional team, and if you want to be on this team, you need to get out there and play your position.

“This will become more important as the Army gets smaller,” McConville said.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/12/20/selective-early-retirement-boards-meet-16/77305998/>

3. Navy seeks to add new perks to re-up bonuses

(20 Dec) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

Bonus bucks are going up.

In fiscal 2016, the Navy plans to spend \$156.4 million for new Selective Reenlistment Bonus contracts, \$16.7 million more than they spent last year.

What's more, officials are eyeing bigger changes that could soon expand how many qualify for bonuses and what types of perks they're offered. As it is, only 9,100 sailors were expected to re-up for bonus bucks in fiscal 2015, which ended in September. Many sailors aren't in career fields or skill sets that qualify for re-up cash.

Officials want to spread that money to more sailors and also considering new perks, from getting a choice assignment, earning a higher incentive pay or getting a coveted school. These corporate-style bonuses were recently proposed by an independent think tank.

Monetary bonuses are only part of the Navy's plans.

"In order to continue to recruit and retain the very best, we need modern personnel policies and retention tools that offer flexibility and choice," said Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen, spokesman for the chief of naval personnel, in November. "We are continuing to look at a variety of options that will help us do just that — including the way bonuses are paid to our sailors."

These days, sailors and their families want greater control over their futures. The Navy's personnel boss says future bonus and incentive plans will likely include desired locations, competitive schools and Navy Enlisted Classifications, hard-to-get assignments and bonus dough. Though none have been announced yet for fiscal year 2016, officials say they will continue on a path that could bring these reforms and others into policy in coming years.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/careers/navy/2015/12/20/navy-seeks-add-new-perks-re-up-bonuses/77458164/>

4. Marine recruiters don't expect sharp rise in female accessions

(20 Dec) Marine Corps Times, By Lance M. Bacon

Though Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said earlier this year that he wants 25 percent of new recruits to be female, Marine Corps officials expect slightly more than 10 percent of new enlisted Marines and officers to be women this fiscal year. That is slightly better than last year, when women accounted for 8.6 percent of enlisted accessions and 9 percent of officer accessions.

The service does not have an assigned quota for female accessions, according to Jim Edwards, spokesman for Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Female accessions typically run between 8 and 10 percent of the total number of recruits, total force accessions.

The Marine Corps' recruiting quota for fiscal 2016 is 30,500 enlisted and 1,450 officers for active duty, a 3.5 percent increase over the 2015 enlisted goal, but a 6.7 percent drop for officers. The command expects that 3,200 of the total will be women, according to Edwards.

The Corps looks to add 5,105 enlisted and 130 officers for the Marine Corps Reserve, which is almost identical to last year's goals. In addition, the Corps looks to add 3,971 Marines (officer and enlisted combined) through prior-service accessions, a boost of 342 over last year.

In September, Lt. Gen. Mark Brilakis, then head of Marine Corps Recruiting Command, said recruiters would be given new quotas to recruit more women.

"They are going to be told what the floor is, and they are going to be recruiting females," Brilakis said.

But Brilakis, who has since become deputy commandant for Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs, stressed then that Marine leaders were already three to four years into their own female recruitment push, with measurable success.

Brig. Gen. Paul Kennedy assumed command of Marine Corps Recruiting Command on Dec. 17. He previously commanded 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade in Okinawa, Japan, and served a previous tour within MCRC as commanding officer of Recruiting Station San Francisco from 1997 through 2000.

Kennedy will be dealing with two-other hot button issues in 2016.

Pentagon officials are taking a hard look at proposals to allow civilians with highly specialized skills to enter military service at advanced ranks. The purpose of such a move would be to fill jobs that require a lot of technical expertise, particularly in the cyber/information warfare fields. So far, the Corps has not enacted any new programs along these lines, although the service already does it with the talented musicians who join The President's Own as staff sergeants.

Also, in the wake of the attack on a recruiting station and Naval Reserve center in Chattanooga, Tennessee, that killed four Marines and a sailor, new security measures are expected to be put in place by April.

In an October memo to the military's top uniformed and civilian leadership, including all of the service chiefs and heads of the military's joint combatant commands, Defense Secretary Ash Carter directed security enhancements at recruiting stations and small, remote military facilities. They will include more training alongside local law enforcement, accelerating use of extra "physical security enhancements," and improving mass notification alerts to inform local authorities and other nearby military personnel when there are specific threats or attacks already unfolding

The Marine Corps plans to add security cameras at recruiting centers, outfit doors with remote-locking mechanisms and provide offices with movable shields and desk partitions capable of stopping bullets. But Commandant Gen. Robert Neller has said recruiters will not be allowed to carry weapons, which would conflict with their mission.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/12/20/marine-recruiters-dont-expect-sharp-rise-female-accessions/77382086/>

5. Army PME mandatory for promotion in 2016

(21 Dec) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

New mandatory PME requirements kick in this year — as early as Jan. 1 for some — as the Army makes some sweeping changes to the way it educates soldiers.

Under a new strategy called STEP, or “select, train, educate and promote,” soldiers must have the right level of education before they can be promoted to the next rank.

STEP goes into effect Jan. 1 for soldiers seeking promotion to sergeant and staff sergeant. It becomes mandatory for promotion to sergeant first class later in 2016 and for promotion to master sergeant in 2017.

The new promotion requirements expand on the select, train, educate and promote procedures already used for advancements to sergeant major.

The implementation of STEP comes on the heels of an effort by Training and Doctrine Command to push a backlog of nearly 14,000 soldiers through the schools they need to be considered for promotion.

This included scheduling everyone in the backlog who needed the Advanced Leader Course and Senior Leader Course against a school date, and tightening the rules for requesting a deferment to attend school.

TRADOC also is studying various options, such as increasing the frequency of certain schools for low-density specialties, to make sure soldiers aren't disadvantaged by the new promotion requirements.

Along with STEP, the Army also is overhauling its professional military education by making classes tougher and more performance-based. Some of the new initiatives include grading soldiers' work and assigning a grade-point average, plus ranking soldiers by class.

The Army also is looking to include a writing assessment before every PME course. The Army ran an initial pilot last summer, and in 2016 will run a second assessment that will include all soldiers attending the Basic Leader Course (formerly known as the Warrior Leader Course). About 45,000 soldiers in all will be required to write an essay on the first day of the course. Their writing will be scored based on the complexity of the writing, grammar, spelling and other facets, officials said.

The new Master Leader Course is another major PME initiative in 2016. This course will be for sergeants first class preparing for promotion to master sergeant.

The Army ran a pilot in October at the NCO Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. There are plans for three validation courses in 2016, one on a Forces Command installation, one at a National Guard post, and one at an Army Reserve Training Institution.

The goal is to have the Master Leader Course up and running by fiscal 2018, making it a requirement for promotion to E-8 for soldiers selected by the fiscal year 2017 selection board.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/enlisted/2015/12/21/army-pme-mandatory-promotion-2016/77301448/>

6. Pilots eligible for retention pay

(21 Dec) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

The Air Force has announced the aviator retention pay amounts and eligibility requirements for fiscal 2016.

In a news release, Brig. Gen. Brian Kelly, director of military force management policy, said that the biggest change this year will be to allow 11X manned aircraft pilots, whose undergraduate pilot training active-duty service commitments are due to expire in fiscal 2017, to sign up for an early-enrollment aviator retention pay bonus that would be paid out this year. Previous early-enrollment bonuses were paid the year pilots' commitments expired, not the year they signed up for the bonus.

Those pilots signing up for early enrollment would get \$25,000 for each year they extend their service — \$125,000 for a five-year extension or as much as \$225,000 for an up to nine-year extension, or until they reach 20 years of aviation service.

They also could choose to get half their retention pay up front.

11X pilots whose commitments expire this year also are eligible for the five-year \$125,000 or up to nine-year \$225,000 bonuses. And those pilots whose commitments expired in previous years are eligible for smaller bonuses worth \$15,000 per year, or \$75,000 to \$135,000.

Also:

- Manned aircraft pilots in the 11X field who transition to the 11U remotely piloted aircraft field can get \$125,000 for a five-year extension to as much as \$225,000 for an up to nine-year extension.
- RPA combat systems officers (12U) and air battle managers (13U) can get \$25,000 per year for five-year commitments, with half the amount paid up front.
- 12F fighter combat systems officers and 12H rescue CSOs can get \$15,000 per year for five or up to nine years, or \$75,000 to \$135,000.
- Some pilots, who signed up for an aviator retention pay contract extensions last year, could also accept an agreement this year that will commit them until they reach 20 years of aviation service.
- 11X pilots who are “uncommitted,” meaning their undergraduate flying training commitment expired before fiscal 2016 or they completed 11 years of aviation service before fiscal 2016, could be eligible to receive bonuses of \$15,000 per year, or \$75,000 for a five-year extension to as much as \$135,000 for an up to nine-year extension.

To be eligible for aviator retention pay, officers must be lieutenant colonels or below, qualified for operational flying duty and receiving monthly flight pay.

The Air Force said that airmen applying for these bonus programs would likely get their first payments within three weeks of their application's final approval and processing by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/12/21/pilots-eligible-retention-pay/77556080/>

7. Army's new promotion point system focuses on soldier skills

(23 Dec) Army Times, By Jim Tice

Promotion points for sergeants and staff sergeants are no longer awarded for completing NCO Education System courses.

The change as of Jan. 1 was prompted by new policies that further link promotion eligibility to graduation from the various courses of NCOES.

The new system, called Select-Train-Educate-Promote, or STEP, will be implemented gradually over the next two years beginning in January with the fielding of a revised Promotion Point Worksheet.

Simultaneous with the point changes, the Basic Leader Course (previously the Warrior Leader Course) becomes a requirement for pin-on to sergeant, and the Advanced Leader Course a requirement for pin-on to staff sergeant.

The Army will retain an 800-point format for the worksheet, but will eliminate points for NCOES courses, as these are now promotion

requirements for sergeant and staff sergeant.

Under the previous system, promotable specialists could earn 80 points for completing the Warrior Leader Course, and an additional 12 points for making the class commandant's list, and 24 points for being named the distinguished honor graduate.

Promotable sergeants could earn 90 points for completion of Advanced Leader Course, and an additional 11 points if they made the commandant's list, and 22 points if named the distinguished honor grad.

The points eliminated for completing the NCOES courses have been redistributed and provide increased totals for physical fitness, marksmanship, civilian education and foreign language proficiency. See the [chart](#) for the details.

Soldiers who demonstrate academic excellence while attending the NCOES courses will still receive extra points for making the commandant's list or being named the distinguished honor graduate.

The Army also has eliminated the points (60 maximum for sergeant, and 90 maximum for staff sergeant) that were available for combat experience.

This sub-category of "Military Training" was added to the worksheet during the force buildup for Afghanistan and Iraq when many soldiers were unable to add points for certain military and civilian education achievements because of their operational duties.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/2015/12/23/armys-new-promotion-point-system-focuses-soldier-skills/77160392/>

8. Opportunities rising to get out up to two years early

(24 Dec) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

For decades, Navy officials would turn on and off early-out opportunities to help the Navy reach its mandated manpower levels, mostly during drawdowns.

Not anymore.

Navy officials have now made early outs a "program of record" and use it to target specific ratings, paygrades and year groups where the Navy has too many sailors.

The program was started in 2014, offering a ticket home up to 16-months before enlistments would normally expire. Since then, 816 sailors have been approved to leave active-duty with an average of 14 months shaved off their enlistments.

As of Oct. 1, there were 755 offerings in 21 different ratings. Both of those numbers had doubled since the program was brought back last year, when 378 sailor quotas across 10 ratings were offered initially.

Expect that trend to continue in 2016 as more sailors learn of the program and officials find more quotas inside overmanned skills.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/careers/navy/2015/12/24/early-out-navy-/77457624/>

9. Need to know, 2016: A bigger force

(24 Dec) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

For the first time in six years, the Air Force is planning to grow in 2016.

The Air Force's end strength has dropped each year since 2010, when there were nearly 334,200 active-duty airmen. But now, the Air Force is trying to increase its end strength up from 312,980 in 2015 to 317,000 in 2016 — and it's pulling out all the stops to do so:

Increasing enlisted accessions from a little more than 24,000 in 2015 to more than 28,000 in 2016.

Doubling the number of candidates attending Officer Training School at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, from 520 in 2015 to

more than 1,100 in 2016.

Allowing a few hundred airmen who have gone to the Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve to come back on to active duty for a few years.

Moving forward with a second year of prior service accessions to allow departed airmen in 85 career fields to come back on active duty if they choose, though no airmen who were cut during the 2014 force management program will be eligible.

Bringing back separated officers in several crucial fields: 14N intelligence, 17D cyberspace operations, 11F fighter pilots and officers in remotely piloted aircraft career fields.

But the Air Force is also scrambling to try to hold on to airmen with valuable experience. This year, the Air Force will vastly expand its selective re-enlistment bonus program, which will be open to more than 70 career fields and provide more than \$220 million in bonuses. In 2014, the Air Force offered about \$178 million in re-enlistment bonuses to airmen in 19 career fields.

And for the first time, drone pilots who agree to serve five more years can get a critical skills retention bonus of \$125,000.

The Air Force is also offering high-year tenure extensions to a few hundred high-performing senior airmen through master sergeants.

Brig. Gen. Brian Kelly, director of military force management policy, said that the Air Force's growing operational requirements — fighting the Islamic State group in the Middle East, continuing the war in Afghanistan and bolstering European allies made nervous by Russian aggression in Ukraine — mean the service is having to boost manning in several areas.

Maintenance is one area where the Air Force has particularly felt the strain. The service is trying to deal with shortages of the most experienced crew chiefs and avionics airmen, which forces squadrons to improvise to keep fighter jets in the air. But despite those workarounds, officials say the maintainer shortages are hurting readiness.

Most of the 4,000-airman end strength increase will go to bolster these career fields: maintenance; cyber operations; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; and nuclear missile. The increased accession levels will help meet those goals. For example, the Air Force brought on a little more than 5,900 new maintainers in 2015, but is planning to bring on more than 7,500 in 2016.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/12/24/need-know-2016-bigger-force/77756864/>

10. Marine promotions: Resident PME becomes requirement for many

(25 Dec) Marine Corps Times, By Lance M. Bacon

Marines better factor professional military education into their promotion equations in 2016. New resident courses are now required for lance corporals and corporals to get promoted; sergeants will follow suit by year's end.

All lance corporals must complete the MarineNet "Leading Marines" course and complete a command-sponsored leadership and ethics seminar to be eligible for promotion to corporal. Corporals must complete a command-sponsored Corporals Course to be eligible for promotion to sergeant.

On Oct. 1, 2016, sergeants will be required to complete the MarineNet "Sergeants Course," followed by the resident Sergeants Course at a Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy, to become eligible for promotion to staff noncommissioned officer.

Staff sergeants have a little more leeway. To be eligible for promotion to gunnery sergeant, they must complete the MarineNet "Career Course," followed by either the resident Career Course at a Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy or the Career Course Seminar distance education program.

Marines can expect to see an influx of cyber studies in nearly every facet of PME, especially foundational courses such as the Sergeants Course and the Lance Corporal Leadership and Ethics Seminar. The inclusion of this material is to ensure every Marine has some understanding of defensive and offensive cyber capabilities, officials said.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/careers/marine-corps/2015/12/25/marine-promotions-resident-professional-military-education/77291204/>

11. Big advancement changes coming in 2016

(26 Dec) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

Personnel bosses shook up the enlisted advancement system this year by revamping the spot advancement rules. And they're set to greatly expand these in 2016.

Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Bill Moran unveiled the Meritorious Advancement Program and told commands to promote their best sailors — not just those closest to high-year tenure limits. Commands, he said, should scour their deckplates for the most deserving sailors and advance them ahead of the exam cycle.

When the dust settled in October, all but eight of the 2,290 available quotas had been filled — much higher than previous years. In part, that's because skippers are required to report their MAP selections and return unused quotas to accommodate other skippers looking to tack on more petty officer crews.

Until now, spot advancements had been limited to those on sea duty or recruiting. No longer.

In 2016, Moran says he'll expand the program to shore duty commands. He's also said he's open to upping the fleet's quotas if they're being used, as no-test advancements play a bigger role in making rate. Moran says he'll up these quotas gradually to insure against overmanning.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/careers/navy/2015/12/26/big-advancement-changes-coming-2016/77459056/>

12. Need to know, 2016: Air Force offers three-year sabbaticals

(1 Jan) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

The second class of airmen chosen to take up to three years off under the new Career Intermission Program will begin their sabbaticals in 2016 — and the Air Force could move forward on expanding the program.

Interest in the CIP program is growing. During its first round, 46 airmen applied for the chance to take between one and three years off to start a family, go back to school or pursue other personal goals. Of those applicants, 32 airmen — 14 officers and 18 enlisted — were selected.

In 2015, 59 airmen — 22 officers and 37 enlisted — applied; the Air Force has not yet announced how many will be chosen.

The Air Force is now authorized to let up to 40 airmen — 20 officers and 20 enlisted — participate in CIP each year. But the Air Force hopes to go further. In a March speech on diversity, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said she wants to expand CIP beyond the current cap, although the Air Force has not yet said how many it wants to take part in CIP.

In her speech, James held the program up as an example of how the Air Force hopes to become more family-friendly and alleviate airmen's work-life concerns.

"More flexibility, we think, is an important factor in order to keep some great airmen with the Air Force for the long haul," James said.

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James on Dec. 8 said that one way or another, the Air Force will triple its paid maternity leave benefit to 18 weeks as the Navy did in August.

James said she believes the extended maternity leave will be included in the second round of the Pentagon's Force of the Future initiatives, which she said would likely be unveiled in the next month or two.

But if the new Force of the Future plans do not extend maternity leave, James said she will act on her own.

And later in 2016, the Air Force will start collecting applications for the third round of CIP. The application window for the second round closed at the end of August 2015, and a panel convened at the end of September to choose who will begin those sabbaticals.

About 70 percent of the first group of airmen chosen took time off to go back to school; others hoped to start a family or care for their relatives, the Air Force announced in March.

The Air Force's CIP program is now authorized until the end of 2019.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/careers/air-force/2016/01/01/need-know-2016-air-force-offers-three-year-sabbaticals/77762608/>

13. Navy personnel boss eyes big changes to bonuses, advancement

(3 Jan) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

He's filled thousands of open fleet jobs, ushered in new long-deployment pay, and eased body fat standards.

Now the Navy's personnel boss is targeting big changes to petty officer advancement and your bonuses with an aim of retaining the best talent as the service adopts the new retirement system in two years.

"The ability to put the quality inside of our calculus and be able to tailor our compensation packages and tailor a compensation approach to retaining talent — we are going to have to do that with this new retirement program," Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Bill Moran said. "It starts in fiscal year 2018, two years from this January. We are going to have to be ready to look at it differently."

In nearly three years on the job, Moran has worked to even out opportunities as the service has emerged from a decade-long drawdown and then enlisted retention boards that trimmed the ranks lower than planned, worsening manpower shortages in operational commands.

"Priority wise, I would tell you nothing has changed...trust, balance, and stability — that is not going to change," Moran said in a Dec. 16 interview with Navy Times. "We always have to work on the trust side of things both up the chain and down the chain and I think we have made improvements there and we continue to work on it, that is a constant effort on our part."

Paying for fleet duty

In 2014, Moran hiked sea pay and the sea pay premium, the kicker payments for those who spend longer than average tours on sea duty. To date, 116,878 sailors have already collected. Moran says these moves have helped fill thousands of openings at fleet commands that have persisted for years.

Another pay initiative to reward sea duty was hardship duty pay-tempo, which pays \$17 every day a sailor is deployed beyond 220 days. So far, about 13,000 sailors have gotten this pay, too.

"We believe this has improved Sailors' propensity to serve at sea," Moran said in a follow-up email to the interview. "We've worked hard to improve fleet manning and over the past two years we've reduced gaps at sea significantly."

But in the long-haul, he says it will be the sea pay hike that will benefit sailors most with deployment lengths dropping from as long as nine months. The service anticipates paying out less HDPT as fleet bosses work to keep deployments under 7 1/2-months.

Fleet manpower

Moran's detailers have made headway in closing the thousands of open fleet jobs, a left-over from downsizing ship crews that has frustrated smaller crews faced with the same amount of work.

The gap has fallen from 12,740 billets in 2012 to 1,779, according to official measurements of "fill," where manning is calculated based on the number of sailors with the proper rating and paygrade.

Moran says manning will shift eventually to a more precise measure of manpower known as "fit," which tracks the percentage of sailors with the proper Navy Enlisted Classifications required for their job.

As of December, the "fit" level stood at 91 percent, with 11,421 billets lacking sailors with the proper NEC, paygrade and rating

combination.

“We are back in a very good place across the fleet, over 98 percent filled today of all our sea duty billets,” Moran said. “We are bumping up against our promise of 92 percent fit.”

The Navy is preparing to launch a new detailing system to boost fleet manning. This will define every billet to the skills and training needed to reach a “fit” standard.

“The fit number is today through a lot of manual efforts and we will see how the fit progresses under [billet-based detailing] because the command is getting a much better idea and picture of ... what that sailor is coming to the ship with,” Moran said.

Bonuses

Moran wants more sailors to qualify for re-up cash and wants to offer more perks as part of that contract.

That corporate-style approach is part of a larger rethink that Moran believes is needed as the service confronts a strengthening economy and, especially, a new retirement system that will replace the 20-year cliff-vesting system. The new system, which sailors can opt into, will provide retirement money for more than the one-in-five who reach the 20-year retirement today. It will offer sailors a 401(k)-style retirement savings account that the military will contribute to, with a corresponding drop in pension payments.

The Navy has asked the independent Center for Naval Analyses think tank to study ideas for new bonus structures. The think tank came up with ideas that melded the selective reenlistment bonus system into a hybrid where other incentives could come into play, such as assignments, professional schools and special pays.

Moran says the Navy is developing plans with the new retirement system to take effect in fiscal year 2018; sailors serving before Jan. 1, 2018 will be grandfathered into the existing retirement system, but those who joined after Jan. 1, 2006, will be able to opt into the new, blended retirement system.

“We are going to have to be ready to look at it differently,” he said. “The laws and statutes that govern how we shape the force are based on the calculus that is part of the retirement system that has been around for decades.”

Adjusting bonuses and other special pays to tailor the future Navy force and target specific skills and even specific individuals is critical, Moran said, adding that the new retirement system could radically change the shape of the force by retaining more junior sailors — they lose nearly 60 percent of first-term sailors — but recruiting fewer up front.

The smaller pensions and earlier retirement contributions could reduce the incentive for some to stay to their 20-year mark.

He’s confident that the Navy will be able to modify its bonus offerings, saying that only 20 percent of the changes will need lawmakers to enact new laws.

“We are going to have to do that with this new retirement program,” he said.

Advancement outlook

Moran has evened out enlisted opportunities so that most sailors can count on steady advancement up the ranks.

This fall’s advancement cycle saw an average of 23.3 percent of eligible sailors move up across all three petty officer pay grades. It’s ticked lower over the past few cycles due to high retention, Moran said, mostly due to continued high retention in the ranks. Overall during his tenure, it’s around 24 percent, a level he calls healthy and in line with historic averages.

You can expect that steady advancement to continue into the foreseeable future.

“Retention is a factor in our advancement planning as we advance to vacancies,” he said. “I think we will remain close to the 10-year-average for the foreseeable future.”

Moran's next move is to expand the new spot advancement system of moving sailors up the petty officer ranks. The Meritorious

Advancement Program saw commands use nearly every available quota. Moran has called for commanding officers to use these spots to promote the best, not to save mediocre sailors from high-year tenure limits.

“I was impressed with how command leadership implemented the first full season of MAP and complied with the intent of the program,” Moran said. “This year, we promoted 2,282 sailors and used 99.6 percent of available quotas. Only eight quotas went unused.”

MAP advancements from the 3-month window in the summer were then factored into setting overall advancement quotas.

The program’s success has opened the door. Moran said he plans to expand the program to shore commands starting in 2016, adding that those details are being worked out and will be released in early 2016.

“The real value here ... is that we [now] have excellent accounting of where and how we advanced these sailors — a dramatic improvement from years under the [Command Advancement Program] where we were far less effective at accounting,” he said. “Going forward, we will be able to do a better job at managing advancements by rate and paygrade.”

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/careers/navy/2016/01/03/navy-personnel-boss-eyes-big-changes-bonuses-advancement/77990016/>

14. Army issues new reg with updated promotion rules for NCOs

(6 Jan) Army Times, By Jim Tice

Policies governing a new promotion system for noncommissioned officers of the active and reserve components are included in a major update to the service’s principal regulation for advancing enlisted soldiers through the service’s rank structure.

The revised [AR 600-8-19, Enlisted Promotions and Reductions](#), was published Dec. 18.

Six key points to the new regulation:

- **The new reg incorporates the select-train-educate-promote, or STEP, policies.**

STEP procedures took effect Jan. 1 for sergeant and staff sergeant promotions and will expand to the sergeant first class and master sergeant ranks later this year and into 2017.

Under the Jan. 1 changes to the promotion system, specialists and corporals must complete Structured Self-Development 1 before being boarded for E5, and the Basic Leader Course for pin-on to sergeant.

Also effective Jan. 1, sergeants must complete SSD-2 before being boarded for E6, and the Advanced Leader Course for pin-on to staff sergeant.

Beginning in June, staff sergeants must complete SSD-3 to be considered for advancement to E7, and the Senior Leader Course for pin-on to sergeant first class.

While SSD-4 remains a requirement for consideration by an E8 board, the timing of a new promotion pin-on requirement for master is contingent on the fielding of a new NCO education system course, to be called the Master Leader Course.

Barring unexpected delays, the MLC pin-on requirement will apply to soldiers recommended for promotion by the master sergeant board that meets in March 2017.

The STEP concept initially was added to the NCO professional development track in 2008 with policies that require master sergeants to be selected competitively for the Sergeants Major Course, and to graduate from the resident or non-resident SMC before being scheduled for advancement to sergeant major.

The objectives of STEP are defined in the first chapter, paragraph 1-5, of the new regulation. Specific promotion pin-on rules are described in paragraph 1-28a.

Other significant changes appearing in the regulation include:

- **Rules governing the non-promotable status of soldiers who have been recommended for promotion to one of the senior NCO ranks when they are flagged, and placed under suspension of favorable personnel actions.**

If a flagging case is closed favorably, the soldier's promotable status will be restored, and he or she will be promoted on the date they otherwise would have been promoted.

If the soldier's case is closed with the notation "disciplinary action taken," or "other," for participation in a weight control, physical fitness or substance abuse program, the promotion pin-on date will be based on a future requirement, as determined by the Army.

- **Army continues to authorize battlefield promotions in designated areas for sergeants and below when their commanders determine they have demonstrated an extraordinary performance of duties while serving in combat or under combat conditions.**

The number of soldiers awarded these very special promotions ebbs and flows annually with the number of troopers deployed into combat zones.

For example, in fiscal 2015 there were 24 battlefield promotions to staff sergeant, and 55 to sergeant, for a total of 79, according to tracking data maintained by the Army.

By comparison there were 569 battlefield promotions — 182 to staff sergeant and 387 to sergeant — in 2009, a high tempo year in which 164,200 soldiers were deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Soldiers can be conditionally promoted to sergeant or staff sergeant under this policy if they have not completed the Basic Leader Course and or Advanced Leader Course. However, to retain their stripes the soldiers must complete the BLC or ALC within 270 days after redeployment to home station.

- **Army continues to authorize promotions for soldiers who are declared "missing in action."**

Once declared missing for a period of 60 days, soldiers in the ranks of private through sergeant will be promoted to the next higher rank upon reaching the time-in-service and time-in-grade requirement for that rank without a waiver.

However, the STEP education requirements for promotion will be waived for soldiers who are declared missing.

MIA soldiers in the ranks of staff sergeant through first sergeant who meet the time-in-service and time-in-grade requirements for promotion will be included in the zones of consideration for promotion to sergeant first class through sergeant major. The STEP schooling requirements will be waived.

- **Army continues to authorize the conditional promotion of terminally ill soldiers who are on standing selection lists.**

In such cases, the approval authority for advancements to sergeant and staff sergeant is the commander of the local medical facility for Regular Army and Army Reserve soldiers, the state adjutant general for federalized National Guard soldiers and the director of the Army National Guard for Title 10 Guard soldiers.

The approval authorities for advancements to the senior NCO ranks are the commander of the Human Resources Command for RA soldiers, Regional Support Command or general officer commanders for Army Reserve soldiers, and certain senior-level commanders for National Guard soldiers.

Hospitalization for such soldiers must be based on disease/injury received in line of duty. Life expectancy, as determined by medical authorities, must be 12 months or less.

- **Army continues to authorize promotion consideration and pin-on for soldiers who are pending a medical fitness determination under the Physical Disability Evaluation System.**

While in the DES, soldiers will not be required to maintain their PT test or weapons qualification for the purpose of promotion

eligibility or pin-on.

Soldiers determined unfit by the DES but approved for continuation on active duty or continuation in the active reserve may be recommended for promotion consideration, selection and pin-on.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/enlisted/2016/01/06/army-issues-new-reg-updated-promotion-rules-ncos/78349734/>

15. Army child care contractor switch to begin in February

(7 Jan) Military Times, By Karen Jowers

Army officials say they have delayed the start date of their new contract for child care fee assistance to make sure they protect Army families from financial hardships like those they've experienced with the current contractor.

While the new contractor, Child Care Aware, was supposed to take over in January, the start has been pushed to Feb. 22 and will be phased in over seven geographically defined segments.

An average of about 1,285 families will be in each phase, said retired Army Col. Stephanie Hoehne, director of family and morale, welfare and recreation for the Army Installation Management Command, testifying Wednesday before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee's government operations panel.

As of Feb. 22, Child Care Aware also will be responsible for any new families enrolling in the program.

Each stage, expected to take about a month, will be closely monitored. The complete rollout is expected to be finished by October, Hoehne said, adding that officials deliberately fashioned a conservative timeline to protect Army families.

"We learned from previous mistakes," she said.

The subsidy programs, offered by all the branches of service, help eligible military families reduce their child care costs when that service is not available on an installation. It compensates for some or all of the gap between the cost of care on installations and outside the gates.

Child Care Aware previously held the contract for administering the Army child care fee assistance program from 2004 to 2014, and has continued to administer the programs for the Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

Problems arose for Army families after their service decided to move the contract to the General Services Administration to save money. The previous contract was \$8 million; GSA originally received \$4 million for the contract when it took over in October 2014.

However, because of the failures of the program, the Army had to allot an extra \$4.4 million, for a total of \$8.4 million. GSA chief financial officer Gerard Badorrek said GSA used \$6.7 million of that in fiscal 2015.

GSA was not prepared to surge its operations to handle 9,000 Army families, from the previous 200, according to an investigation conducted by the GSA inspector general. In September, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee held a hearing exploring the reasons for a backlog of over 12,000 unpaid invoices to child care providers, affecting about 9,000 families.

The GSA inspector general investigated and found that the effect on Army families has been severe, ranging from bankruptcy to collection actions. Some families reported they were considering having a spouse quit a job or quit school so that one parent could stay home with their children.

In an update report issued Monday, the GSA inspector general noted that there has been progress in eliminating the backlog of invoices and administrative actions; by Dec. 21, GSA had cut the backlog of various actions to 3,100 from a high of 26,000 last summer.

The inspector general also noted a significant drop in complaints about the program since GSA paid the backlogged invoices by Oct. 16 — two complaints between Oct. 16 and Dec. 21, compared to 75 before Oct. 16.

Badorrek said incoming invoices are being paid within two to three business days. GSA and Army officials agreed with lawmakers in September that they would pay the outstanding invoices, including those that had discrepancies, and then reconcile the documentation. Of the 8,800 invoices that must be reconciled, about 1,000 have been completed.

Army Capt. Karmon Dyches, who attended the hearing Wednesday, said she wishes Child Care Aware were taking over the program today, "but unfortunately we have to wait a little longer."

"I've never heard anyone complain about Child Care Aware. We came on with Child Care Aware. They sent us a whole packet at the beginning, and helped us find a child care provider. They have unbelievable service, and unbelievable care. It was heart-wrenching when they left," Dyches said.

"We're very excited it's going back [to Child Care Aware], as are a lot of other families."

She said the organization keeps things simple, with one representative assigned to a number of families, so those families always talk to the same person.

"It's a complicated process. Kids get older, you change child care, you move," said Dyches, who has a 2-year-old daughter.

She said their problems with GSA are sorted out now, but initially, there were a number of delays in payments, the first around Christmas 2014. Out of their \$1,200-a-month child care costs, the fee program pays \$610.

Lynette Fraga, executive director of Child Care Aware, said the organization has been ramping up to handle the Army program once again, including assembling some staff members who formerly worked on the Army contract.

They're in the process of bringing on board about 50 staff members now, and anticipate that there will be up to 80 people at the "steady state" of the operations, Fraga said, adding more staff members may be added during the transition phase.

She said a key imperative for their program is to provide excellent customer support. Hoehne said Army officials also have been working with GSA and Child Care Aware to make sure families know how to communicate, and to avoid confusion in the transition.

"As we look at this phased-in approach, let's be as diligent with that as we have in trying to fix this particular problem," said Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., chairman of the government operations subcommittee.

"You said you would have the transfer done by January," Meadows said. "I'm going to hold you to the October deadline. If you see that's not going to be met, let this committee know ... so we can go to work to make sure families are supported in the manner they've earned and they deserve."

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/2016/01/06/army-child-care-contractor-switch-begin-february/78370796/>

16. Military Muscle: 5 critical drills to improve women's strength

(15 Dec) Military Times, By Bob Thomas

This year, three women earned the coveted Army Ranger tab, prompting the Army to state that Ranger School is now open to all who can make the grade. In addition, Defense Secretary Ash Carter has told all the services to give him their plans for opening up previously excluded jobs to women after the first of the year.

For women who want to apply to those previously closed military units, it's a given that strength training should be a critical component of their everyday routine.

For that matter, incorporating strength training into fitness routines is important for all women, regardless of age. Strength training improves everyday functional capability, helps prevent injury and improves performance in any athletic activity. It can be a vital component in preventing Type 2 diabetes and other health problems.

Consider: There is no difference in the quality of muscle in men and women, only the quantity of muscle mass. That will always create a disparity in run times, total repetitions and total weight used. But relative to their respective muscle mass and body structure,

women are as strong as men.

The only downside that I have observed — while freely acknowledging that I haven't kept any definitive data — is that women seem to drop their gained strength faster than men when they have a long-term break in training.

Regarding pullups, 100 percent of active-duty women with whom I have worked with were able to perform unassisted pullups within 30 to 60 days of starting their programs. I insist they do pullups *every single day*. A few started out being able to complete a nonassisted pullup. The rest used a gravitron — a specially designed machine that uses weights to assist — or bands.

Start your program by finding your one rep max in dead-lift, squats (these can be both front and back squats), shoulder press, bench press, and the lowest assistance you require to complete three pullups, palms facing away from you. Record these values.

The following are my top strength training exercises. It's critical to have a knowledgeable trainer show you proper technique so that you maximize your effort.

Dead-lift. The No. 1 overall strength exercise and the clear choice if you do only one, as it works almost every muscle in your body. Your trainer should emphasize hip drive as the bar clears your knees. Ask about the hinge lift, which requires lighter weights but emphasizes the small muscles in the lower back.

Squats. Do both front and back squats (also include a leg press machine and hack squat machine, if possible). Work the legs every day. If you have a day without weight work on the legs, execute walking lunges, step ups, body squats and plyo jumps.

Shoulder presses. Use barbells or dumbbells to work the shoulders, upper back and core muscles. Make sure that at the top of the lift, your arms are in true vertical position (arms will run right by your ears).

Bench press. Work hands wide, at shoulder width, and inside shoulder width. This will put a focus on your triceps, chest muscles and upper back muscles.

Pullups. If you're going to ruck a heavy pack, strong lats — a result of constant, plentiful pullups — will act as a stiffener on your back. Palms facing away is the standard; palms facing you incorporates more bicep. As you make progress, start wearing a weight vest.

Remember: Every day is the only way.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pt365/2015/12/15/military-muscle-womens-strength-5-critical-drills/77369126/>

17. Women and the Selective Service

(15 Dec) CRS Insight, By Kristy N. Kamarck

On December 3, 2015, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter ordered the military to open all combat jobs to women with no exceptions. Some have questioned the implications of this policy change for the Military Selective Service Act (MSSA). This law requires males to register but exempts females. **By law**, the Secretary of Defense is required to report to Congress within 30 calendar days of implementing any proposed changes opening units or positions that were previously closed to women. The Secretary's report is required to include justification for the proposed change and analysis of the implications for the MSSA.

Current Law and Regulations

Conscription (the draft) has been used to help meet military manpower requirements at various times in U.S. history since the Civil War era. While men have been required to register for induction into military service, women in the United States have never been subject to the draft. On January 27, 1973, then-Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird announced the creation of an all-volunteer force and the end of the need for military conscription. The last man inducted through the draft entered into the Army on June 30, 1973; however, the requirement for male U.S. citizens to register for Selective Service continues today.

The MSSA requiring all male citizens between the ages of 18 and 26 to register for the draft was first enacted as the "[Selective Service Act of 1948](#)". The Act has been subsequently amended a number of times. Today the [current law states](#),

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this title [...] it shall be the duty of every male citizen of the United States, and every other male

person residing in the United States, who, on the day or days fixed for the first or any subsequent registration, is between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six, to present himself for and submit to registration...

Potential consequences for failing to register for the Selective Service include both criminal penalties and ineligibility for certain federal aid or employment:

- If indicted, imprisonment of not more than 5 years and/or fine of not more than \$10,000 (50 U.S.C. §462).
- Ineligibility for Federal student aid (50 U.S.C. §462(f)(1) and C.F.R. §668.37)
- Ineligibility for appointment to a position in an executive agency (5 U.S.C. §3328 and 5 C.F.R. 300.704 – [Considering individuals for appointment](#))

Women are currently not required to register for the Selective Service. [Federal regulations state](#) that, "No person who is not required by selective service law or the Proclamation of the President to register shall be registered."

Background

The Selective Service registration requirement was terminated between 1975 and 1980, but was reestablished in 1980 following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. At that time President Jimmy Carter recommended that Congress amend the MSSA to permit the registration and conscription of women. Congress rejected the Administration proposal in 1980, with an explanation under Title VIII of S. Rept. 96-826,

[T]he starting point for any discussion of the appropriateness of registering women for the draft is the question of the proper role of women in combat. The principle that women should not intentionally and routinely engage in combat is fundamental, and enjoys wide support among our people. It is universally supported by military leaders who have testified before the committee, and forms the linchpin for any analysis of this problem. [...] Current law and policy exclude women from being assigned to combat in our military forces, and the committee reaffirms this policy. The policy precluding the use of women in combat is, in the committee's view, the most important reason for not including women in a registration system.

In 1981, a challenge to the exception for women to register for Selective Service was heard by the Supreme Court in *Rostker v. Goldberg* (453 U.S. 57). The court held that the practice of only registering men for the draft was constitutional. In the majority opinion, Justice William Rehnquist wrote: [t]he existence of the combat restrictions clearly indicates the basis for Congress' decision to exempt women from registration. The purpose of registration was to prepare for a draft of combat troops. Since women are excluded from combat, Congress concluded that they would not be needed in the event of a draft, and therefore decided not to register them.

There are at least two challenges to the current law that have been raised. One lawsuit has been brought by the [National Coalition for Men](#) who contend that the male-only draft is unconstitutional. This case is being considered by the 9th Circuit Court. The other is a [class-action lawsuit](#) brought by the mother of a female New Jersey teen, claiming that the exclusion of women from the draft is unfair discrimination.

Options for Congress

Some contend that women cannot be equal in society as long as they are barred from full participation in all levels of the national security system and thus should be *allowed to* register for Selective Service. Others believe that equal access to combat jobs should *oblige* women to take equal responsibility for registering for selective service and potentially being assigned to combat roles should the draft be reinstated. They contend that the current exemption for women is unfair to men. Others suggest that women should be allowed to enroll in the selective service system but not be forced into combat roles in the occasion of a draft.

Congress has a number of options to address this issue. Congress has the authority to change draft registration laws to include women. In this case, Congress may need to provide additional resources to the Selective Service Agency. It has also been suggested that this issue can be made moot by terminating the Selective Service registration requirement for all citizens. Another option for Congress might be to keep the draft registration laws unchanged, only requiring males to register.

<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/IN10414.pdf>

18. Army official: Updates coming soon on potential fitness test changes

(18 Dec) *Army Times*, By Kevin Lilley

The Army's top civilian and its top general both said in January that a report from Training and Doctrine Command regarding new ways to measure soldier fitness would be on their desks in 2015.

The year came and went with no fitness-test changes. Next year could be different.

A TRADOC spokesman tells *Army Times* to expect updates, likely "in the coming months." Lt. Col. Jeff Pray, public affairs officer for the U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training, would not offer details on ongoing tests or possible recommendations.

"We are waiting on guidance from senior military leadership on the future direction for gender-neutral standards," Pray said.

In early 2015, then-Army Secretary John McHugh [told Army Times](#) that TRADOC testing of about 700 soldiers over more than two years was part of a plan "to establish MOS-specific physical requirements." These likely would be in addition to a servicewide test similar to the current run-pushup-situp system, then-Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno said in a January virtual all-hands call.

The job-specific tests may offer a single standard, regardless of gender — a process that may overlap with plans to integrate specialties only recently opened to female soldiers.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/12/18/army-official-updates-coming-soon-potential-fitness-test-changes/77165710/>

19. For military women, equal opportunity, equal obligation: Our view

(20 Dec) *USA Today*, The Editorial Board

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter's historic decision this month to throw open all combat jobs to women marked both the fall of a discriminatory barrier and the recognition of reality.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, women have fired rifles, lobbed grenades, faced suicide bombers and defended their country alongside their male counterparts. In those two wars, 88 women have died in combat, and hundreds have been wounded, many of them grievously.

They have done the jobs from which they were officially barred but have been denied the real-world credit. Without combat service, it is nearly impossible to reach the highest ranks of three- or four-star general. Although women make up nearly 16% of the 1.3 million members of the active duty force, just [four women have reached the pinnacle of four stars](#), none in the Marines.

In recent months, while Carter considered whether all jobs would be opened, women began to compete for some of the jobs from which they've been excluded. Three women, among 19 who started the grueling nine-week course for Army Rangers, succeeded in [earning their black-and-gold Ranger tabs](#). (None, however, could actually serve as Rangers because of the exclusion.) Meanwhile, a lengthy Marine experiment in which women officers went through the infantry course ended [without a single female graduate](#).

No one said it was going to be easy. Nor are women seeking any guarantees. They simply want, and have earned, the opportunity to compete.

Equal opportunity requires more than a formal change in policy, and many challenges remain. Among the most important:

- **Keeping up standards.** If it turns out that many women fail to pass physical tests for combat jobs, as has happened in the Marines, the military will need to guard against any moves to water down standards. Doing so would be the fastest way to turn male troops against women and to harm military readiness.
- **Ensuring equal obligation.** Under the [Selective Service law](#), men are required to register at age 18 for any future draft. If there is going to be registration, women ought to be registered, too.
- **Changing attitudes.** An [independent study in 2014](#) among members of the military's elite special operations forces, which include Navy SEALs and Army Rangers, found that 85% did not want to let women into their jobs. Members' concerns ranged from the reasonable, such as how women's presence would change small all-male units, to the ridiculous, such as whether premenstrual syndrome would make women emotional.
- **Getting buy-in from the top.** Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had sought to keep nearly [49,000](#)

[Marine slots closed to women](#) earlier this year when he was commandant of the Marines. Dunford was noticeably absent when Carter made his announcement. If the military's top leaders fail to show real support, officers and enlisted men predisposed against moving women into combat jobs will never give women a chance.

Despite the distinguished service of so many women in Iraq and Afghanistan, critics continue to insist that standards will be lowered, that women will ruin unit cohesion, and that military readiness will suffer.

With variations, the same claims were made when combat units were [racially integrated during the Korean War](#) and when the [bar on gays](#) serving openly in the military was lifted in 2011. The dire predictions never materialized.

Expect the same of allowing women to do the jobs many have already proved they can do.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/12/20/women-military-combat-discrimination-editorials-debates/77453424/>

20. Why You Can Stop Doing Sit-Ups

(21 Dec) The Wall Street Journal, By Rachel Bachman

For anyone who has struggled on a gym mat, hands behind head, straining to touch elbows to knees, there's good news: The sit-up's reign as a workout standard may be ending.

People from high-profile exercise gurus to military experts are arguing that the sit-up, that staple of fitness tests, presents too great a risk of back injury.

A recent editorial in Navy Times, an independent publication that covers the U.S. Navy, called for banishing the sit-up from the [physical-readiness test](#) sailors must pass twice each year. The editorial called it "an [outdated exercise today viewed as a key cause of lower back injuries](#)." The Canadian Armed Forces recently cut the sit-up from its fitness test, citing concern over potential injury and its lack of connection to actual military work.

Tony Horton, creator of the popular P90X video workout series, says he no longer does sit-ups or crunches, their truncated cousins. "I really believe that the traditional, antiquated crunch has seen better days, and it's time to make a change," Mr. Horton says.

Sit-ups can put hundreds of pounds of compressive force on the spine, says Stuart McGill, [a professor of spine biomechanics](#) at Canada's University of Waterloo. In dozens of published studies, Dr. McGill has found that the forces, combined with the repeated flexing motion, in sit-ups can squeeze the discs in the spine. That combination eventually can cause discs to bulge, pressing on nerves and causing back pain, potentially leading to disc herniation.

For people who want to do abdominal exercises from the traditional sit-up start position, Dr. McGill advocates [a modified curl-up](#) he developed, with the hands placed underneath the low back and the shoulders barely leaving the floor.

Sit-ups can be done in many ways, including crunches and sit-ups on stability or Swiss exercise balls. The injury risk with modified sit-ups depends on the exact motion and on an individual's physical limitations. But some fitness instructors have ditched even modified sit-ups.

One move, called [plank pose](#), has expanded beyond yoga classes and is used widely in physical training in place of sit-ups. Plank resembles the upper position of a push-up, with the body held straight from heel to shoulder. It is also often performed with forearms on the ground.

Plank [uses muscles on the front, side and back](#) of your midsection or core, while a sit-up requires just a few muscles, experts say.

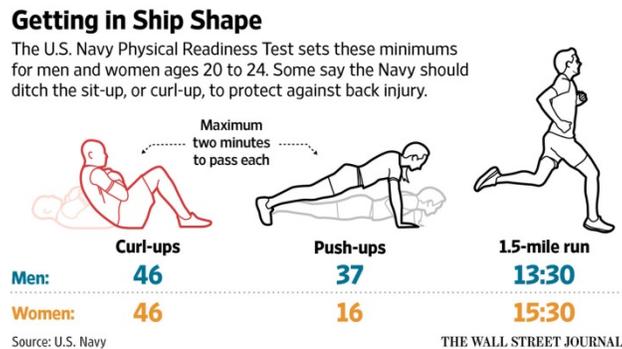
Cmdr. David Peterson, executive officer for the physical education department at the U.S. Naval Academy, advocates replacing the curl-up in the Navy's physical-readiness test with plank if the Navy keeps a core-readiness exercise in the test. In a [2013 paper in Strength and Conditioning Journal](#), he argued that plank was less likely to injure people and more relevant to Navy operations.

When performing real-world tasks, Cmdr. Peterson says, "we typically stabilize the abs so that we're able to generate more power from the core so we can lift, pull, push, carry. In that sense, sit-ups really don't prepare us for what we typically use our core for in

daily life, or operationally on the battlefield.” He stressed that he was voicing his opinion, not that of the entire Navy.

The Canadian Armed Forces’ [overhaul of their longtime fitness test](#), phased in through last year, emphasizes functional tasks such as lifting a 44-pound sandbag 30 times within 3 1/2 minutes.

“We went away from just measuring core strength by doing sit-ups or push-ups,” says Patrick Gagnon, senior manager of human performance for the Canadian Armed Forces. He says the new test more accurately predicts how well soldiers will perform their jobs.



One study of 1,500 U.S. Army soldiers found that 56% of the injuries related to the Army’s three-part physical fitness test [were attributed to sit-ups](#). The test’s two-mile run portion was associated with 32% of injuries and push-ups with 11%. Overall, injuries affected nearly 8% of all soldiers studied.

Versions of the sit-up remain in the regularly required physical fitness tests for the U.S. Air Force, Army, Marines and Navy, though three of those tests are under review. (The Coast Guard’s fitness test, which also includes sit-ups, is required only for certain positions.)

The Army in recent years put 10,000 soldiers through a pilot of a [revamped physical-fitness test that excluded sit-ups](#). While the Army is studying the best methods to measure baseline soldier readiness, it’s sticking with its long-standing three-event test: timed push-ups, sit-ups and a two-mile run, a spokesman says.

The Marines and Navy also are reviewing the elements of their tests. The Marines will [collect recommendations through July 1](#). The Navy has no deadline for [possible changes to its test](#), says Lt. Joe Keiley, public affairs officer for the Chief of Naval Personnel.

“We’re certainly looking at ways we can improve it,” Lt. Keiley says.

Many Americans first did sit-ups as part of what is now known as the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, the decades-old, multi-discipline test given to millions of schoolchildren.

The FitnessGram, the health-related fitness assessment tool now most commonly used in school fitness programs, in 1992 replaced the sit-up with a lower-rising curl-up.

“Experts believe it puts less stress on the lower spine and the hip flexors than sit-ups do,” says Laura Fink DeFina, president and CEO of the Dallas-based Cooper Institute, which developed and launched the FitnessGram in 1982.

The sit-up has remarkable staying power. Mark Langowski, a New York-based personal trainer who founded the company Body by Mark, says he hasn’t done a sit-up in 10 years and tells his clients not to do them. Yet earlier this year he found himself supervising the sit-ups of chief meteorologist Ginger Zee on a [“Good Morning America” segment](#) about the [FBI’s recently adopted fitness test](#).

“I’m holding her feet and I’m counting her reps and cringing the entire time,” Mr. Langowski says. He says he didn’t speak up because the segment was about whether Ms. Zee could pass the new FBI test, not about the sit-up. An FBI spokesman declined to comment.

Another argument against the sit-up: Research suggests it is not the best exercise for strengthening abdominal muscles. A 2010 study in the Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy found that [exercises using an inflatable Swiss exercise ball activated more](#)

[muscles](#) than did bent-knee sit-ups or crunches.

John Childs is CEO of Evidence in Motion, a company that trains physical therapists. He says generally available research shows that traditional sit-ups do increase forces and loading on the back but that “from our data, we can’t say that sit-ups cause back pain.”

The most important thing is for people to perform exercises they enjoy so they’ll continue doing them, Dr. Childs says. “Staying active and doing regular exercise the old-fashioned way is far more advantageous than doing nothing,” he says.

But Pete McCall, spokesman for the American Council on Exercise, says he encourages alternative exercises for abdominal muscles. He calls the sit-up “an antiquity of exercise best left in the dustbin of fitness history.”

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/why-you-can-stop-doing-sit-ups-1450722637>

21. Marine fitness review: Big changes in store for 2016

(23 Dec) Marine Corps Times, By Lance M. Bacon

Marines can expect some big fitness changes in the year ahead.

Marine Corps Training and Education Command is conducting a comprehensive review of the service's fitness and body composition standards.

In November, Commandant Gen. Robert Neller signed an all-Marine message directing the command to look at the scoring on the physical and combat fitness tests as well as body composition rules like height, weight and body fat standards for all Marines.

The review could lead to changes to scoring or events on Corps-wide fitness tests or the tape test, which measures Marines' body fat percentages.

Many Marines have expressed their dismay with height-weight standards and the tape test, which they contend fails to take into full account the fact that Marines are getting stronger and, as a result, bigger.

TECOM officials will complete the review and deliver their recommendations by July 1. The review will be "supported by experts from the fields of medicine and exercise science with inputs from our leadership and operating forces," according to a Marine news release.

The goal, Neller wrote, is to "[ensure] the overall health and fitness of our Corps." Fitness test scoring and body composition standards must be relevant, challenging and encourage behaviors that enhance cardiovascular capacity, muscular strength, flexibility, agility and the reduction of injuries, he said.

During the review period, male and female Marines must continue meeting current fitness requirements.

"All Marines are encouraged to continue all forms of resistance training as a means for developing dynamic upper body strength, but females will maintain the current option of either flexed arm hang or pull-ups during scored PFTs until any new policy is implemented," Neller wrote.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/12/23/fitness-review-2016-year-ahead/77470218/>

22. Need to know, 2016: Women in combat

(23 Dec) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

Now that Defense Secretary Ash Carter has decided to open all combat jobs to women, the Air Force will spend 2016 laying the groundwork to integrate women into these career fields.

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said Dec. 8 that it is possible that some women may start training for newly opened jobs such as tactical air control party, pararescue and combat rescue officer in 2016. But because of the multiyear training path these jobs

require, the Air Force said that women won't start seeing combat in those jobs for at least another 2 1/2 years.

The Air Force Recruiting Service said that recruiters will start trying to bring female candidates into those jobs Jan. 2. And the Air Force's recruiting website and printed materials are being redesigned and updated to drop the male-only language from those jobs. The redesigned AirForce.com site is expected to launch in late January.

The other three jobs now open to women are special operations weatherman, combat controller and special tactics officer. All newly opened jobs account for 4,099 positions in the Air Force.

The elimination of gender-based combat job restrictions will likely be the biggest step the Air Force takes toward creating a more diverse force.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/12/23/need-know-2016-women-combat/77756048/>

23. Navy's eased BCA rules start now

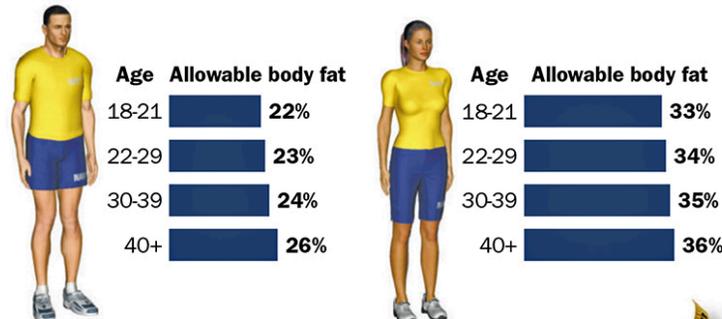
(24 Dec) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

After a transition over the fall, Jan. 1 ushers in a new era of body fat measurement in the Navy.

Per an August NAVADMIN message, sailors who bust the height-and-weight chart will be measured only at the waist, and will be able to go up to the Defense Department's much looser standard.

New body fat standards

The Navy has introduced new standards for the Body Composition Assessment (BCA) based on a graduating scale that increases with age. The following percentages are the maximum allowable body fat for different age ranges.



3-step BCA

Step 1: Get your height measured, then step onto the scale. Your height and weight will be compared to the maximum weight allowed, based upon sex.
 ■ If you're under the weight: You pass the BCA
 ■ If no: Proceed to step 2

Step 2: Do you meet the abdominal circumference measurement of less than or equal to 39.0 inches for males or 35.5 inches for females?
 ■ If yes: You pass the BCA
 ■ If no: Proceed to step 3

Step 3: A body circumference measurement will be applied to determine body fat percentage. Do you meet the DoD maximum allowable body fat limit of less than or equal to 26% for males or 36% for females?
 ■ If yes: You pass the BCA. But, if over the allowable body fat percentage (chart above) you will be enrolled in Fitness Enhancement Program.
 ■ If no: You fail the PFA and will be enrolled in the FEP

SOURCE: CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
 JOHN BRETSCHNEIDER/STAFF

That's 39 inches for men and 35.5 inches for women. If you're over that standard, it's back to the old rope-and-choke — waist and neck

for men; waist, neck and hips for women — with a resulting body fat measurement.

New body fat limits will go beyond the previous under-40 and over-40 age standards, with four new groups.

Men ages 18 to 21 will stay at the previous 22 percent body fat max, but from 22 to 29 they're allowed up to 23 percent, 24 percent between 30 and 39, and up to 26 percent over 40.

For women, it's 33 percent from 18 to 21, 34 percent for 22 to 29, 35 percent for 30 to 39 and 36 percent over 40.

For sailors still out of standards, that will mean a PFA failure. However, you'll still be required to take your PRT test, and you'll be enrolled in the Fitness Enhancement Program until your body fat comes down.

There are also new administrative separation rules, starting with resetting everyone with multiple PFA failures in the past four years back to one.

So now it will be easier to pass the body composition assessment, but it's not a freebie: Sailors who continue to stay out of shape will only be able to fail PFA twice in three years, rather than three times in four.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/24/sailors-need-to-know-for-2016-new-bca-fitness-navy/77098690/>

24. Army infantry, armor, spec ops units open to women in 2016

(26 Dec) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

In 2016, women will be able to join the ranks of the Army's infantry, armor and special operations units.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Dec. 3 announced his decision to lift all gender-based restrictions on military service starting in January, paving the way for women to serve in these previously all-male specialties.

The decision opens nearly 220,000 jobs across the military — that's about 10 percent of the force — to women.

“There will be no exceptions,” Carter said. “This means that as long as they qualify and meet the standards, women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they never could before. They’ll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars, and lead infantry soldiers into combat. They’ll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers, and everything else that previously was open only to men.”

The decision allows the military to tap into “the broadest possible pool of talent” as it builds “America’s force of the future,” Carter said.

This means several key Army MOSs will soon open to women. They are infantry, which is the Army’s largest MOS; armor; forward observer; and Special Forces.

Before this decision, the Army in the past three years has opened about 95,216 positions and nine occupations to women. This includes the combat engineer (12B) and cannon crewmember (13B) MOSs.

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

Each of the services was given until Jan. 1 to provide the Defense Department with “final, detailed plans” on how they will integrate the newly opened occupations and positions, according to information from DoD.

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

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/12/26/army-infantry-armor-spec-ops-units-open-women-2016/77165628/>

25. Navy SEALs prepare to open elite teams to women

(26 Dec) Military Times, By Meghann Myers

The year 2016 will be known as the year everything changed for the storied Navy SEALs.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced on Dec. 3 that the military would be opening previously closed specialties to women, and with them, the Navy's last all-male units.

The plan is a couple years in the making, as the Navy announced in 2013 its intentions to open every job to female sailors. The timetable, however, has yet to be determined.

Following his announcement, Carter notified Congress of his intentions. That started a 30-working-day clock for lawmakers to voice any objections, which could take months. Once that period has passed, Naval Special Warfare can begin implementing changes.

"It would be premature to speculate as to when the first women would be available for SEAL or [Special Warfare Combat Crewman] training," said NSW spokesman Cmdr. Jason Salata.

First, women will have to select the SEAL track at boot camp or through an officer training pipeline after meeting the existing fitness standard.

The Naval Academy will begin allowing female students to screen for the SEALs in 2016, putting them on track to graduate their first female SEAL officers in 2017, academy superintendent Vice Adm. Ted Carter told an audience at a Board of Visitors meeting on Dec. 7.

"We'll be ready to put women through the screener as early as next year," Carter said. "I don't know that we could move any faster, but it could be longer depending on what the details of the policy decisions are."

For those already in the Navy, the pipeline begins with Naval Special Warfare Preparatory School, an eight-week course in Great Lakes, Illinois.

From there, it's on to 24 weeks of the legendary Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training in Coronado, California.

Those courses are not yet open to women and a decision has not been made on when to open them, Salata said.

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

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/26/need-know-2016-women-seals-navy/76940422/>

26. Commentary: Draft our daughters

(27 Dec) Navy Times, By Chris Marvin

I spent this past Veterans Day as a guest in a sophomore English class talking about military service. When I asked the boys what was required of them soon after their 18th birthdays, "vote" and "go to college" were popular answers.

These were smart kids. They knew the answer must be military related, but none of them saw boot camp in their future. In three classes, no student seemed aware that the law will require him to register for Selective Service.

In fact, upon hearing the word "draft," most of the students looked relieved. That could never happen, they must think. We haven't used the draft in [over 40 years](#). For most of their young lives, we've been fighting two simultaneous wars without conscription.

The draft does not seem to have much effect on young people today. But there may be some interesting changes soon — for the girls.

This month, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit in California [heard arguments](#) on a constitutional equal protection challenge to the [male-only requirement](#) to register for selective service. The case, [National Coalition of Men v. Selective Service System](#), is

debating the degree to which changes in defense policy may render women equal to men for the purposes of the draft.

The larger policy implications are quite interesting. This is primarily because on Dec. 3, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter [declared](#) that by January female service members will be allowed to serve in any military job for which they meet gender-neutral performance standards.

This watershed decision means that limiting mandatory draft registration to men could soon be held to be unconstitutional on the basis of equal protection. It's very likely that in the near future, either Congress will act to require Selective Service registration for women, or a court will rule on a challenge to [Rostker v. Goldberg](#), the [1981 decision](#) that upheld the male-only draft.

As a combat veteran and the father of two young daughters, I embrace the expansion of Selective Service.

In Afghanistan and Iraq, women played integral roles on the front lines as members of [cultural support teams](#). High-ranking female officers already [hold leadership positions](#) in all branches of the military. It is clear that more gender equality improves our national defense.

However, like those students, I know it is unlikely that my daughters will be conscripted into the military. Budget cuts and sequestration have led to downsizing. Today, fully trained service members are being forced out.

But a gender-equal draft would be much more useful if it could also offer national solutions beyond military manpower.

In recent years, leaders such as Gen. Stanley McChrystal have [pointed out the benefit](#) that a draft could have for institutions of national and international civilian service such as AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps. Others have gone so far as to [propose new Selective Service models](#) that would include an opt-out for those who don't want to serve — so long as they also opt out of other government programs such as Medicare and federally backed mortgages.

Perhaps the most significant use of a federal database that involves every young adult in the country is voter registration. Consider it as the "motor voter" program on steroids. Check a box on your draft registration form, and you'd automatically be registered to vote. But that is only possible if women are included in Selective Service.

Ideas like these can reinvent a biased and dated Selective Service System as a "welcome to adult citizenship" moment. It would unite national defense, civilian service and electoral participation — some of the key tenets of an engaged citizenry — all in one system.

Moreover, as our country continues national debates on refugees, voting requirements, civil rights and future boots-on-the-ground combat, it is crucial that all Americans have a real stake in the conversations.

Even if we don't actually conscript people into the military, we should revive the draft as a way to strengthen national security and participation in our democracy. For those sophomores I met, and for the rest of us, it seems that a nice reminder of what it means to be an American might be overdue.

Chris Marvin is a retired Army officer, a former Black Hawk helicopter pilot, and a combat-wounded veteran of the war in Afghanistan. He is the principal for Marvin Strategies. He is also a fellow with the Truman National Security Project.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/opinion/2015/12/27/commentary-draft-our-daughters/77837286/>

27. Defense Secretary Ash Carter's historic personnel changes irk generals

(27 Dec) USA Today, By Tom Vanden Brook

Women in the infantry. Transgender troops. 401(k)s for soldiers. The Pentagon in 2015 witnessed some of the most significant changes to its policies on who fights and how they're compensated since the draft ended in 1973.

The changes pushed by Ash Carter, who took office in February, make him "the most consequential secretary of Defense in 40 years," according to a top deputy. Analysts and critics agree the changes are monumental but note that they remain deeply unpopular among senior uniformed officers.

The coming year promises more upheaval as women seek to qualify for combat and elite special operations and the military deals with

a burgeoning problem with recruiting. Also expected for 2016: An overhaul of the mechanism for awarding medals that could include commendations for drone pilots.

Brad Carson, the Pentagon's top civilian for personnel, in a brief interview credited Carter's personnel initiatives for making him "the most consequential" Pentagon chief in four decades. That covers a lot of ground, and several high-profile secretaries, including Donald Rumsfeld who was fired for the botched approach to the Iraq war, and Bob Gates who led the effort to repair the Army's dysfunctional Walter Reed hospital.

The changes Carter has championed are a big deal, said Todd Harrison, a military budget and personnel expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. They also face resistance inside the Pentagon from senior officers, he said.

"Almost none of it would have happened if it had been left to the uniformed military," Harrison said. "No gays in the military, at least not openly. Transgender would not even be on table. No changes to the retirement system. They have opposed every bit of this.

"The problem with instituting personnel reform is that it does not to the benefit of the general," Harrison said. "The measures you need to take for the lower-ranking, enlisted and junior officers are very different than the needs of senior officers. The changes are a great credit to civilian leadership in military and our congress. They're good for troops and good for military."

Top brass have resisted the personnel changes because they feel troops have been forced to accept too much social change too quickly, all while fighting wars in the Middle East.

Carter's announcement Dec. 3 that all combat units will be open to women in 2016 was set in motion in 2013 by then-Defense secretary Leon Panetta who called for an end to the restriction that kept more than 200,000 military jobs, most in the infantry, a male-only preserve.

But it was Carter who, despite a plea from the Marine Corps to keep women out of infantry units based on a study of fighting effectiveness, declared gender equality for all military jobs provided women meet the same standards as men. Gen. Joseph Dunford, who is chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the nation's top military officer, declined to appear with Carter when he made the announcement. Dunford had been Marine Corps commandant and had sought to keep women from infantry units.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, a California Republican and member of the Armed Services Committee, blasted the policies putting women in combat and allowing transsexuals to serve as "the politicization of the U.S. military."

Ignoring Dunford's advice, Hunter said, indicates Carter and the White House are more concerned with appearances than combat effectiveness.

"They don't care about the outcome," Hunter said. "Small infantry units become less effective, and less able to kill."

Senior officials continue to meet on a weekly basis to implement the new policy on transgender troops. The top civilian and uniform officials are working toward a target date of May 27 to rescind the ban that affects as many as 12,000 troops. Current policy disqualifies troops diagnosed with gender dysphoria, although Carter effectively ended the practice of cashiering those troops by requiring a top official to sign off on such decisions.

Among the issues officials are sorting through are housing, uniforms and how to handle time off for troops under hormone treatment or surgery.

The Army made history in February when it approved hormone treatment for Chelsea Manning, the soldier convicted of leaking national security secrets, as first reported by USA TODAY. Manning, previously known as Bradley, is an inmate at the Army's prison in Leavenworth, Kan.

The working group dealing with the issue meets again in January.

Changes to military pensions also caused consternation among senior officers, Harrison said. Congress approved a hybrid retirement system that blends 401(k) style benefits with the military's traditional pension of 50% of their annual pay after 20 years. Veterans and currently serving troops will continue under the old system.

Henceforth, troops who serve 20 years will receive 40% of their pay as a traditional pension and have the option to contribute to a 401(k) style fund that the Pentagon will match dollar for dollar up to 5% of their pay. Ultimately, the change is forecast to save the military \$2 billion per year, Harrison said.

The current retirement system means that young troops who served multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan but left before reaching 20 years of service receive no retirement benefit.

“Under the new system, just about everyone leaves with something whereas 83% leave now without any retirement,” Harrison said. “The career military are the ones who objected to this change.”

More personnel changes are expected in 2016. Changes to promotion practices, family leave and lengthening troops' stays at their home bases are among the issues being considered.

The most urgent issue could be recruiting. In 2015, the Army barely met its annual goal of 59,000 new soldiers and did so by depleting its pool of recruits in its delayed-entry program.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/12/23/defense-secretary-ash-carter-transgender-troops-women-in-combat-gen-joe-dunford/77825314/>

28. Enlisted women report to submarines in early 2016

(27 Dec) Navy Times, By David Larter

The first four enlisted women completed the intensive basic enlisted submarine course in October and, starting next year, will report for duty to the blue and gold crew of the guided missile submarine Michigan.

The first cadre of 38 enlisted women selected for the program were announced this summer; the second round of selectees will be announced in January. The Michigan is the first sub to integrate enlisted women and the guided missile sub Florida will follow later that year.

In October, the Atlantic Fleet's top enlisted submariner said they were still working on the instruction that will govern the integration, revising it down from 49 pages to something more concise — especially when it comes to equal opportunity matters.

"We are revising our instruction that was — no kidding — 49 pages long of excruciating detail on what you wear on the treadmill and how you manage the head," said Force Master Chief Wes Koshoffer at the annual gathering of the Submarine League in Northern Virginia.

"The instruction just ought to read: We will treat each other with dignity and respect because we are professionals. We have a fraternization policy and until we cross those lines, proceed."

The Navy wants women to make up about 20 percent of the crews of seven of the 18 Ohio-class submarines by 2020, at which point they will start to send enlisted women to Virginia-class attack submarines.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/27/enlisted-women-join-subs-in-2016-16-things/77311456/>

29. Officials reviewing exercises for job-related PRT

(27 Dec) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

For decades, it's been the same thing: Run, pushups and sit-ups, twice a year.

But now, after an overhaul of the body composition test that allows bigger waist measurements but fewer failures before separation, the Navy is eyeing changes to the physical readiness portion of the physical fitness assessment.

"So we do pushups, curl-ups and run, but does that tell you that you can put on firefighting gear and go down into a space and carry somebody out of it?" Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens asked sailors at an Oct. 31 all-hands call. "Does that test tell you that you can do that? And the answer is no."

Stevens said the Navy is looking at not only a new PRT, but multiple fitness tests that align with sailors' jobs.

A working group at the Physical Readiness Program in Millington, Tennessee, is brainstorming ideas, a Navy official confirmed in November, from new PRT events and a job-specific test, to a hybrid that would measure strength and cardiovascular health, as well as skills needed for working around ships, aircraft and other Navy environments.

And they're looking to other professional tests, such as the stair climbs in firefighting training. Fitness experts have recommended the Navy adopt new exercises like the standing jump and the kneeling powerball throw as part of a job-related fitness test, suggesting they replace the traditional PRT or be administered annually, like the Marine Corps' combat fitness test.

"We are continuing to look at a variety of policy options," said Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen, spokesman for the chief of naval personnel. "However, we don't have anything new to announce at this time."

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/27/officials-reviewing-exercises-job-related-prt/77096962/>

30. Army boosts credentialing to give soldiers credit for experience

(28 Dec) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

The Army continues to boost its credentialing program so that soldiers receive proper credit for their training and experience.

As the service undergoes its largest drawdown in decades, Army leaders are doubling their efforts to boost the Army Credentialing Program, which gives soldiers opportunities to earn civilian-equivalent certifications and licenses. This includes a major effort by Training and Doctrine Command to link credentialing opportunities to every single military occupational specialty in the Army.

The emphasis on credentialing helps soldiers in and out of uniform.

Earning credentials helps soldiers sharpen their skills and gives them valuable promotion points.

Soldiers competing for promotion to sergeant and staff sergeant can earn 10 points for each technical certification, for a maximum of 50 points.

Credentials also help soldiers when they leave the Army and re-enter civilian life by giving them hard-earned proof of their skills that is universally accepted by employers.

In November, the Army announced that more than 10,000 soldiers and veterans have earned commercial driver's licenses since a Department of Transportation program recognizing soldiers' driving experience was launched in 2011. In 2014, about 20,000 soldiers earned credentials in 65 MOSs.

Soldiers can earn two types of credentials.

The first is a non-Defense Department government license, such as a commercial driver's license issued by a state government or a Federal Aviation Administration license. The second type is a certification from an independent, industry-recognized agency, such as the American Culinary Federation or the American Welding Society.

As TRADOC continues to work on MOS-specific credentials, the Army's Credential Opportunities On-Line, or COOL, provides soldiers a vast menu of credentials in just about any field they might be interested in.

The Army COOL website also has information on what soldiers need in terms of skills, tasks and requirements to earn any number of requirements.

If a soldier earns a credential through TRADOC, the Army covers the cost. A soldier working on his own in some cases can use Tuition Assistance to cover some training and preparation costs, but not the cost of the credentialing exam.

Sometimes, especially if a soldier is in a transition program, a non-government entity such as a trade union in that field may cover the soldier's credentialing expenses.

31. What to expect in 2016

(30 Dec) Stars & Stripes, By Jason Duhr

Combat roles for women

Integrating women into combat units tops the agenda for all branches of the service.

After nearly five years of surveying and testing, the decision to open all military occupational specialties to women was announced earlier this month by Defense Secretary Ash Carter. For the Army, that means five officer, one warrant officer and 13 enlisted occupations will soon be able to accept female applicants.

The Army took part in five studies, including a pilot program at the U.S. Army Ranger School, in which three female officers earned their Ranger tabs.

The Army is required to submit its plan to integrate women into combat positions by Jan. 1, 2016, with full implementation set for April 1, 2016.

Going from the approval phase to the implementation phase will require work on everyone's part, Carter said.

"The responsibility for implementation is not borne solely on the shoulders of women, nor by the forces within the newly integrated career fields; it is borne in equal measure by the entire force and the military and civilian leadership of the Department of Defense," Carter said in a memorandum released to Stars and Stripes.

All eyes are on the Marine Corps as a new commandant looks to navigate through challenges that will shape the future of the Marines. From integrating women into infantry battalions to planning the future of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, the Marines have a busy year ahead.

Women in the infantry

Earlier this month, Defense Secretary Ash Carter opened all military jobs to women, and while the ruling applies to every branch of service, none has opposed the move more than the Marine Corps.

In September, the Marine Corps released a summary of a \$36 million study looking into the effectiveness of women in combat arms roles. The report concluded that women were at significantly higher risk for injury, were less accurate when firing weapons and less capable of lifting heavy objects.

While that report has since [come under fire for its methodology](#) it has remained a lightning rod for detractors of the move to integrate women into modern infantry units.

This move will open more than 30,000 individual positions within the Marine Corps to women.

Regardless, top Marine officials say the Corps has received its marching orders and will spend much of 2016 integrating the once male-only job fields.

"We have a decision. It's time to move out," new Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert B. Neller said Dec. 4 during a video address to the troops.

A plan to integrate women into these new roles is expected on Carter's desk in early January.

From the growth of the force, to the opening of pararescue jobs to women airmen, to allowing enlisted troops to take to the skies, the Air Force will be much different in the upcoming year.

Rebuilding the force

After steep cuts in 2014, the Air Force had just 312,980 active-duty airmen on its books in 2015. The service's end-strength was lower in only one year, 1947, when it was formed.

Fewer troops mean several important career fields are undermanned, such as airborne cryptologic language analysts, combat controllers and airmen working in mental health services. Especially hard hit were aircraft maintainers who are forced to work long hours to keep up with an ever-increasing operations tempo.

The Air Force has several programs designed to boost its numbers in 2016.

Some plans center on bringing in new airmen. For instance, the original call for 24,000 recruits has grown to more than 28,000.

There are also programs that offer prior service enlisted airmen and officers from critical career fields the opportunity to serve again.

In addition, re-enlistment bonuses for more than 70 jobs and high-year tenure extensions for a few hundred enlisted airmen aim to keep experienced individuals the Air Force may have lost otherwise.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/special-reports/features/what-to-expect-in-2016-1.368618>

32. Sailors building LinkedIn-style detailing system

(30 Dec) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

The Navy's brain trust is tackling the service's antiquated assignments system, with an aim to build an in-house network that affords sailors more say over their next set of orders. Think LinkedIn meets Navy Personnel Command's detailers.

Still in its early stages, the envisioned LinkedIn-style detailing system would give sailors the opportunity to search out their next orders, and let commands browse for qualified sailors to fill open billets.

The Chief of Naval Operation's Rapid Innovation Cell project would allow sailors to maintain their own profiles, and when it comes time to find new orders, they could search a list of commands for open billets that might fill their personal and professional wish list.

"Where I can see opportunities I would want to do, and maybe, really, in that five-minute conversation with my detailer, he didn't understand all the skill sets, and all my desires and interests that really make who I am," CRIC member Lt. Don Mateo Coates said in a Dec. 23 video announcing the project.

And in the other direction, commands with spots opening up can search sailors who are getting ready to make a move and recruit them through NPC.

"Navy personnel records exist across more than 100 different systems right now, and so it's very difficult to update the Navy on the profile of you," said project lead Lt. Cmdr. Rollie Wicks. "We're trying to fix this so the Navy can better understand who you are, what your skills are and can then recruit you into a job that's going to match those skills."

The idea marries the more general career experience of LinkedIn with some of the features of the military networking site RallyPoint, a private site where troops and veterans connect to hunt around for open billets or civilian jobs.

Instead of sailors having to do their own legwork with a non-Navy program, NPC would have buy-in with the CRIC's program.

This new detailing philosophy is part of a larger push by Defense Secretary Ash Carter, who has called on the services to launch just such a pilot program as one part of the department's Force of the Future initiative.

"Think of a [sailor] logging on, setting up a profile, seeing what they're qualified for, and selecting what they want to do, while the unit looking to bring someone on sees the profiles that fit their criteria, and chooses who they're interested in," Carter said in a release.

The system would allow sailors and commands to advocate for their own needs in the detailing process, with NPC coming in at the

end to reconcile manning and career-track concerns.

The CRIC team spent two days recently brainstorming ideas with the technology consulting firm 18F in Washington, D.C., resulting in three prototypes that will be refined throughout the year.

The goal is to test the process this fall in the information dominance corps, according to the release.

"We're going to allow them to use this information platform and we're going to work with commands, sailors and NPC to pilot this new talent marketplace concept," said Lt. Cmdr. Mike Mabrey. "From the information that we'll gain over one year, we'll be able to give some good data points to senior leaders and let them decide if we can scale this up to the broader officer pool and eventually the enlisted detailing process as well."

This latest project is one of more than a dozen that have run through the CRIC since its first class in 2012. Currently, members are working on projects including:

- A renewable energy process that uses galley waste food.
- A solution to automate Notice to mariners updates to naval charts.
- Automation of on board material distribution.

Past projects include the unmanned underwater vehicle Silent Nemo, Google Glass and shipboard 3D printing.

Applications are open for 2016 CRIC selections through January. The team is looking for junior officers O-4 and below or enlisted sailors who plan to stay in the Navy through 2018.

"CRIC candidates must have exceptional drive, passion, and the vision necessary to carry their project to completion," program director Cmdr. Ben Salazar said in a release. "In return, successful applicants will be provided funding, oversight, training, administration, and logistics support via the CRIC NWDC that manages the CRIC program on behalf of the CNO."

The program, which can last up to two years, includes about four days of travel about every other month to meet with each other, leaders and experts to get their ideas off the ground.

For more information on how to apply, visit <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/cric2016>.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/29/sailors-building-linked-in-style-detailing-system/77979338/>

33. Pentagon's women-in-combat push faces chilly headwinds

(30 Dec) The Hill, By Rebecca Kheel

The Pentagon faces major challenges ahead in 2016 as it works to make good on a pledge to open all U.S. military combat jobs to women.

The toughest part of the integration, which President Obama and Defense Secretary Ashton Carter have made a priority in their final year in office, will be overcoming deep-seated opposition among many male special forces commandos.

"They feel what makes them special is being all male, and somehow integrating women is going to make them less special and less adept," said Megan MacKenzie, author of "Beyond the Band of Brothers: the US Military and the Myth that Women Can't Fight."

"A lot of that is based on emotion and a lack of experience working with women."

The four services are already taking steps to allow women to serve in all jobs. Service chiefs must submit their implementation plans to Carter by Jan. 1.

Carter made history this month when he announced that all combat jobs would be open to women, with no exceptions. The decision came despite a recommendation from the Marine Corp to keep some jobs closed.

Carter acknowledged the difficulty of implementing his order when he made his announcement.

"How we implement this is key," he said. "Simply declaring all career fields open is not successful integration. We must not only

continue to implement change thoughtfully but also track and monitor our progress to ensure we're doing it right.” The response to Carter’s announcement on Capitol Hill was mostly positive. Still, some who praised the decision added that implementation would be crucial and focused on the need to not lower standards to get women into the newly available roles.

After Carter’s announcement, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) — the chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services committees, respectively — promised to use Congress’s 30-day review period to thoroughly examine the studies Carter used to inform his decision.

As part of that review, Thornberry and Rep. Joe Heck (R-Nev.), chairman of the subcommittee on military personnel, sent a letter to Carter with 17 questions about his decision.

Among the questions is how the Pentagon plans to implement Carter’s decision, how the services plan to maintain gender-neutral standards and whether the decision has any legal implications on women registering for the draft.

“Although the department has provided some documentation and briefed the committee, several questions remain,” they wrote in the letter, which was also signed by 16 other committee Republicans. “The issue of women serving in all previously closed positions is complex and multi-faceted, and the department’s decision must be carefully reviewed to evaluate its impact on military readiness.”

Thornberry and Heck asked for a response by Jan. 3.

An aide for McCain said Tuesday the Senate committee’s review is ongoing and that a hearing is planned for after the Senate returns from the holiday recess.

There are already indications that integration is going to be tough. A survey of special operation forces released after Carter’s announcement found that opposition to opening special ops to women was “deep-seated and intensely felt.”

In the survey, 85.6 percent of the 7,618 respondents said they were either strongly or somewhat opposed to opening their specialty to women. And 70.9 percent said they were strongly or somewhat opposed to opening their unit to women.

The survey, done by the RAND Corporation and commissioned by Special Operations Command, also included a series of 49 focus groups. RAND kept the participants anonymous in its report.

The focus group responses show concern about lower standards, unit morale, political motives and accusations of sexual assault, among other issues. The 292-page study includes statements of vehement opposition from across the military’s branches.

“It’s a slap in the face telling us that chicks can do our job,” one Army Ranger said.

“It’s not the physical aspect that bothers me. My issues are morale and retention. This wouldn’t be special to anyone anymore.”

One special operations Marine chocked the entire initiative up to Washington politics.

“This is a political thing. This is people in Congress. Because there is no grassroots movement of women saying we want to,” he argued in the survey. “It’s some congressmen trying to make equal rights for women. Whether anyone in this room wants to say it or not, that’s what I think we all think.”

But not all the responses were negative.

“I think we are selling ourselves short by not opening it up to the best individuals,” a special operations Marine said. “There are some positives. In some countries, two gorilla, tattooed men would look suspicious. But me and [a woman] walking down the street holding hands would not. It opens up new possibilities.”

MacKenzie, the author of a book on the role of women in the military, predicted that some of the hang-ups about adding women into special forces would fade away once women actually join. She cited the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, in which feared consequences didn’t become reality, as evidence.

“Just working with women will help dispel some of those myths,” she said. “They’ll realize women can pull their weight; they’ll realize unit cohesion doesn’t fall apart and the world doesn’t end when they have to have a woman in it.”

Leadership will also need to set an example for those they command, MacKenzie added. In that regard, she said, Carter has already done a good job by making his announcement unequivocal.

“Just making it clear this is no longer an option,” MacKenzie said of how leaders should act. “Making it clear this is no longer something the military is seeking feedback on, that this is a decision that’s been made.”

<http://thehill.com/policy/defense/264411-pentagons-women-in-combat-push-faces-chilly-headwinds>

34. First 4 Enlisted Women Will Soon Report For Duty Aboard U.S. Navy Submarine

(30 Dec) The Huffington Post, By Dominique Mosbergen

2016 will be a milestone year for the U.S. military, a year when one of its few remaining gender barriers will be dismantled as four enlisted women become [the first to integrate into the crew of a Navy submarine](#).

The four sailors, who along with 38 other enlisted women completed an intensive basic submarine course in October, will [report for duty to the U.S.S. Michigan, a guided missile submarine, in “early 2016.”](#) The Navy Times reported.

The exact date of the integration remains unknown.

In October, the Atlantic Fleet’s top enlisted submariner said the navy was still laboring over the instructions for the integration. “We are revising our instruction that was -- no kidding -- 49 pages long of excruciating detail on what you wear on the treadmill and how you manage the head,” said Force Master Chief Wes Koshoffer, per The Navy Times. “The instruction just ought to read: We will treat each other with dignity and respect because we are professionals. We have a fraternization policy and until we cross those lines, proceed.”

Captain Andrew Jarrett, the commander of the Naval Submarine School, said earlier this year that the female sailors will be given [“the same opportunities as their male counterparts”](#) when they report for duty.

“It will be good for the navy, it will be good for the young ladies, it will be good for the submarine force,” Jarrett said, according to The Associated Press.

The navy lifted its ban on women serving aboard submarines in 2010. The following year, the first female officers began service aboard Ohio-class subs. In January, an officer became the [first woman to serve aboard a fast-attack Virginia-class submarine](#).

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/enlisted-women-submarine_568385a0e4b06fa68881808b

35. As Pentagon opens combat roles to women, what are special forces' concerns?

(30 Dec) The Christian Science Monitor, By Anna Mulrine

An end to male bonding, infidelity in the field, and a sense that the special forces would be 'less elite' were among the worries cited in two recently released studies.

With the lifting of the ban on women in special operations forces earlier this month, female service members are no longer automatically disqualified from being Navy SEALs, Delta Force operators, and Army Rangers because of their gender.

The Pentagon’s next big step is figuring out how to make it work. To this end, Defense officials launched a couple of big studies earlier this year to give them a sense of the major concerns and points of resistance among the troops who do these jobs.

What they found was that, while the men in these elite units express concerns about women meeting the grueling physical standards, they are generally quick to concede that they all know a woman or two who could make the cut.

The far bigger hurdle is the culture of special forces operators, who perceive themselves as “hyper-masculine, elite alpha males,” according to one of these newly released studies, conducted by the University of Kansas (KU) in partnership with the US Army Research Institute.

Hundreds of special operators interviewed earlier this year in another study commissioned by the Pentagon and conducted by the RAND Corp. lamented an end to “towel-snapping” locker room bonding, and expressed concerns about everything from the ways in which menstruation might affect women’s rationality to how foreign enemies might not be as frightened of being hunted by coed military units.

But, the studies’ authors say, the comments sound very similar to complaints voiced by servicemen in earlier eras as the military broadened its definition of who would be allowed to serve. Many of these fears, for example, echo the worries that white troops

expressed with racial integration, and males expressed with the integration of women into their ranks in World War II – and again in the 1970s, when women were first admitted to the military service academies.

“I don’t think the hang-up is around physicality, but around these broader cultural issues” that, historically, tend to fade as men work with women, says Shannon Portillo, an associate professor at KU who worked on the study.

For example:

“Integrating females will be seen as a sign of weakness. They are going to lose their fear of us,” a Marine in special operations complained.

“Special Forces will stop being looked at as elite,” another special operator said.

“It’s a slap in the face telling us that chicks can do our job. It’s not the physical aspect that bothers me. My issues are morale and retention. This wouldn’t be special to anyone anymore,” another argued.

The simple fact that male-only units exclude women is actually “an artificial source of prestige and elitism,” the KU study notes.

“We heard a lot of that from men in special forces – that they were going to leave because it wasn’t as elite as it used to be,” says Professor Portillo.

Researchers found the reasoning counterintuitive, Portillo says, given that Pentagon officials have stressed repeatedly that physical standards for these military occupational specialties will not change.

“The idea is that if competition is more open and not restricted to only men, then somehow it loses its competitiveness,” Portillo notes.

Yet in many ways, the men’s arguments against women are also “heartening,” she adds, since researchers found that the “physical arguments were where those conversations started, but they were really quickly pushed to the side by men.”

The RAND study on the integration of special operations forces (SOF), conducted in the spring, found that in 24 focus groups of special operators nationwide, roughly 40 percent cited potential benefits of having women in their units, including in “conducting sensitive operations” as well as communicating with local populations.

Many also knew women who had been plucked out of their units to take part in “black ops” missions that are often more physically intense than the average SOF assignment.

The problem with these black ops missions is that the women who take part in them can’t talk about them.

“For a woman, even if she has the ability to do this work, she can’t use it as a résumé builder,” Portillo notes.

Men in the study “would often say that they had met or worked with women who have kicked their butts, and most said they knew women who could pass the physical tests” required of special operations forces.

As the Pentagon moves ahead, the key, analysts add, is to point out incongruities in their concerns, and to cite how the US military has repeatedly overcome them in the past.

“A lot of the barriers men discussed were very traditional” in the special operations community, including concerns centered around women’s emotionality or rationality, as well as what is seen as their “lack of control over their reproductive abilities,” says Portillo.

Many of the men who discussed their views of women in these terms had never worked with women as adults. “Many of them went into the military at age 18 and worked exclusively with men since then.”

Portillo and her colleagues call it “gender oblivion.”

Most men they surveyed believe some women can do the job, but perceive them as too “emotional” for the battlefield.

“They’re indecisive and they’re trying to process multiple things, connecting it to emotionality and then freezing – I think there’s a huge potential for that,” one special forces soldier said in the focus group that accompanied the Army Research Institute study.

“I have a wife. She’s very independent. But when that time of her month comes, she’s weaker,” another argued.

Men often brought up their own spouses in discussing their worries. “They were concerned that their wives would just say ‘no’ to their deployments,” Portillo notes, for fear of infidelities that might result from them working in close quarters with female colleagues.

They also lamented what they saw as an end to important male bonding. “As strange as it sounds, someone slapping someone with a towel in the shower – that’s an element of the male cohesive unit,” one special operator said.

“We just don’t have the time or patience to deal with thinking about how we walk, or talk around females. It’s not part of our nature,” added a Navy SEAL. “We are expected to be misogynistic. That is our job.”

These are concerns that women have had to grapple with for some time. A 1954 report on Women’s Army Corps during World War II noted that the presence of women was widely feared by men because of what was seen as their potentially negative impact on military performance and unit morale, as well as their ability to become pregnant.

Yet “women’s morale held up excellent,” as the 1954 study put it, and pregnancy rates for those in deployed locations was less than one half of the world WAC pregnancy rate.

Years later, in the 1970s, when the Navy was contemplating bringing women on ships, most men agreed that women were “more emotional,” and one third expressed the belief that women were “less stable” and had innately “less leadership ability.”

Fully three quarters of men disagreed with the statement that “women officers should be given the same opportunities as male officers, including sea duty and flying status.”

Today, the Navy is one of the most integrated military services.

In short, the study notes, women were “able to gradually convince the enlisted men that their roles were to achieve military missions.”

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2015/1230/As-Pentagon-opens-combat-roles-to-women-what-are-special-forces-concerns>

36. With combat jobs now open, military women scale another wall

(3 Jan) Milwaukee-Wisconsin Journal Sentinel, By Meg Jones

Sonia Buchanan knew something wasn't right.

Call it a hunch. A gut feeling. Maybe a mother's intuition.

The Wisconsin National Guard staff sergeant and a female interpreter were talking to a group of women in Afghanistan's Helmand province while American special operations troops waited outside a small compound.

Buchanan noticed the young children were acting strangely, repeatedly tapping the home's thick clay walls as the women tried to shoo away the youngsters.

"The kids were poking at the walls and I thought, 'Why are they doing that?'" recalled Buchanan, 43. "The women would bat them away. I'm a mom. If your kid wants to play with something and you're busy, you'll just let them play."

She shared her suspicions with the Marine special forces. They discovered weapons and ammunition hidden inside the walls.

It's fair to say the male troops would not have made that discovery had it not been for Buchanan, who deployed to Afghanistan in a groundbreaking all-female unit created to work alongside special operations units normally closed to women. Buchanan and three other Wisconsin National Guard members were among the first stationed in Afghanistan in what are known as "cultural support teams," which were created to place American female troops in conservative areas where it's culturally inappropriate for male troops to interact with local women.

Though Buchanan was attached to special forces units, living in the same austere camp, going on the same missions, carrying the same weapons and facing the same dangers, she was barred from officially joining the Rangers or SEALs because they're combat units.

And the U.S. military has never allowed women to serve in combat jobs.

Veterans of Iraq or Afghanistan know that's not true. American female service members have been in combat for years — fighting and dying just like male troops. If anything, the resistance was on the home front.

Times are changing, though.

In December, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter ordered the military to open all combat jobs to women by Jan. 1, a move that started months ago. Initially, he included a caveat that commanders wanting their units to remain all-male had to specifically request the exclusion of women. But ultimately he announced that every job will be open to anyone who qualifies, male or female.

Noting that the U.S. military can no longer afford to discount half of the country's population when seeking qualified candidates, Carter said, "We are a joint force, and I have decided to make a decision which applies to the entire force."

Evolving viewpoints

The move opens up the last 10% of military jobs that had been closed to women — around 220,000 positions. That means women will finally be allowed to become 11 Bravos, the military designation for infantrymen, as well as combat engineers, special operations team members and other positions, as long as they pass gender-neutral qualifications.

While the commandant of the Marines wanted some front line jobs to remain off-limits to women, citing studies showing mixed units are not as capable as all-male units, Gen. Joseph Votel, head of U.S. Special Operations Command, said his office also did extensive analysis and decided not to keep any of the commando jobs closed. The U.S. military had already benefited from integrating women into some jobs in recent years, Votel said, including the elite special operations helicopter crews that flew Navy SEALs into Osama bin Laden's compound, and in cultural support teams like the one Buchanan served in.

The debate against allowing women to serve in combat often came down to the contention that females were not strong enough, quick enough or tough enough. But 14 years of warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq have debunked those arguments. Hundreds of thousands of women have served effectively and honorably, many earning medals of valor.

Another contention was that the American public was not emotionally ready to see female service members return home in flag-draped coffins. That, too, has changed.

While women had served behind front lines in prior wars, Iraq and Afghanistan were much different. There were no front lines, or rather, the front lines were everywhere.

"It's an evolution," said Wisconsin Army National Guard Col. Julie Gerety, who served a deployment in Iraq. "There's no denying that in Iraq and Afghanistan, because of the way those wars were fought, a lot of females were on the road, a lot were on convoy security. It made us think and open our eyes. That's how change comes about."

The first female National Guard member in the United States to be killed in combat was Michelle Witmer, who was shot to death while firing her machine gun during an ambush in Baghdad in April 2004. Gerety was part of the team of Wisconsin Guard officials who knocked on the Witmer family's door to deliver the awful news.

Strength through diversity

Long before the American public began accepting the idea of women in combat, military commanders knew they were quite capable of pulling their weight and handling themselves in high-risk situations.

Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, Wisconsin's deputy adjutant general and the leader of the state's Army National Guard, has noticed a huge change in the military during his 33-year career. Opening all jobs to females will make the military stronger, he said, and will not affect battle readiness.

"The greatest thing is it will continue to strengthen the diversity of the organization that we already promote and to a certain degree that we already have," said Anderson, who is a special assistant on diversity to the chief of the National Guard Bureau.

Wisconsin's National Guard has opened traditionally all-male jobs to women in recent months. Buchanan was one of the first females to serve in the formerly all-male 105th Cavalry Regiment and one of the first female drill sergeants in the state. The first female artillery officers joined their Wisconsin guard units in 2014 and 2015.

In Wisconsin's Army National Guard, 18% of the approximately 7,400 soldiers are women. The Air National Guard's percentage is higher — 23% of 2,280 members are female.

U.S. military commanders realized that in a Muslim country where females are frequently not allowed to speak or interact with males who are not relatives, half of that country's population was essentially off-limits. That led to the creation of cultural support teams.

American female soldiers could provide access to a world that had been out of reach for all-male units in Afghanistan.

"In a war where knowledge is critical, you need every nugget of information," said Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, whose 2015 book "Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield" focused on the cultural support team on which Buchanan served.

Buchanan and three other Wisconsin National Guard members saw the mass email sent out in 2011 seeking candidates for the hand-picked cultural support units that paired two-person teams with special operations units throughout Afghanistan. Making the cut along with Buchanan were Master Sgt. Karen Dumke, Sgt. Kristen Baneck and 1st Lt. April Nelson.

They wore headscarves and tunics over their camouflage uniforms, helped run clinics, advised Afghan women on health issues, organized business opportunities for women, talked to villagers and, in a way, provided a glimpse for Afghans into a world where women enjoy more freedoms.

In some instances, cultural support team members first had to gain the trust of the special operations units they were stationed with, to show they could fend for themselves.

A piece of the puzzle

Cultural support team members were allowed to choose special operations units, and Dumke chose the Green Berets because the Army special forces unit's mission in Afghanistan appealed to her. She was sent to Farah province in the west where locals initially treated her with distrust or bemusement. But once she began to make return trips, she slowly earned their friendship.

Trying to make a connection with women in villages, Dumke asked about their households and meals.

"I would ask where could I buy onions and the women didn't have any idea what is sold in the stores because only their husbands go," said Dumke, 49, who recently retired from the Wisconsin National Guard after 27 years in the military.

Baneck was stationed in Herat province, in western Afghanistan, where she performed 85 missions in small villages near the Iranian border. She also ran a women's clinic on Wednesdays and spent time at a girls' school. As the special operations soldiers remained outside compounds talking to village elders, Baneck and a female interpreter visited the women and children inside.

"There were definitely instances where I would get something and relay that information — I would get a piece of the puzzle," said Baneck, 30, who later became one of the first female drill instructors in the Wisconsin National Guard. "There's no doubt we were able to have conversations with women who wouldn't come out of the compound or even look at the males.

"I'm small and (villagers) would ask, 'Do you know how to shoot that gun?' They said, 'You know, the Taliban knows what you're doing, they know you're coming in to the houses and talking to us.'"

Did that worry her? "I thought this is what I'm here for. So be it. If they're looking for me, they're looking for me," said Baneck.

Nelson is a registered nurse and spent much of her deployment providing medical care, working alongside special forces in Kandahar province. Women were happy to come to a clinic and speak to Nelson and her female interpreter, as well as interact with Nelson during night missions.

In Afghanistan "females talk to females just like in the United States. We like to gossip, we like juicy stories," said Nelson, 40, who

has since been promoted to captain. "We were more of an outlet for the female population. They could trust us once we were there for so long."

The female cultural support teams lived in the same primitive surroundings as the special operations troops. Buchanan's location had no running water, toilets or electricity, and meals were beans and rice. She could call home to her two teenage children only once a month for 10 minutes. But that austerity helped her connect with Afghan women.

"They live such a hard life. When I found out the average life span is 42, I thought: I'm a senior citizen," said Buchanan, who procured 30 donated sewing machines for village women to earn money by making scarves. "It was like walking through the Old Testament."

'Change is slow'

Two months into the deployment, a member of the close-knit team was killed in an IED blast. All four Wisconsin National Guard soldiers had trained with 1st Lt. Ashley White and were devastated by her death. Dumke hung White's picture on her wall in Afghanistan and thought of her each day.

"It was a very intense time to realize that one of our sisters didn't make it," said Baneck. "They told us throughout training: 'Look, one of you may not come home.' But you feel so invincible."

In the epilogue of her book about White, Lemmon mentions a Pentagon news conference in June 2013 where a Special Operations Command leader called the cultural support teams a huge success that could provide the foundation for fully integrating the military. That appears to be happening.

"Change is slow and hard. Reality is well ahead of regulations in this case. I think there were leaders who saw the reality years ago and it's given people time to come around and see what's already been happening in this last decade of war, that women are on the front lines and there's no way around that," said Lemmon.

The four Wisconsin National Guard members who served on the cultural support team range in age from 30 to 49, with three still serving. Some said they wished they had been born at a different time, entering the military now when every job will soon be open to them. Some admit being female hampered their military careers and chances for promotion because of fewer opportunities available to them. Some would have chosen a combat job, others would have chosen the path they're in.

All said they're glad they joined the military.

"When I was younger, I was in the position of asking, 'Why can't I do that? Why is that not available to me?'" said Nelson. "I'm excited for the females of the future because they will have those opportunities."

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/with-combat-jobs-now-open-military-women-scale-another-wall-b99635128z1-364040871.html>

37. Army major writes ultimate take-down of 'senseless' tape test

(3 Jan) Army Times, By Maj. Ric Haeussler

[Editor's note: The following is a commentary by Maj. Ric Haeussler, commander of the U.S. Student Detachment at Command and General Staff School.]

We are a smart and powerful nation with an incredibly advanced and capable Army. Why does that Army practice primitive and imprecise body composition methods with charts and tape measures when the technology exists to be so much better?

It is available for pennies on the dollar at any local discount department store in the form of a body fat analyzing scale. A sizable percentage of soldiers reading this right now probably have that technology in their pocket. There is surely an app out there which allows our smart phones to compute body fat; if not, there will be one day.

When there is, it will certainly have the potential to be more accurate than Army Regulation 600-9 methods. With careers, readiness and basic health all at stake, shouldn't we be the best that we can be when it comes to that accuracy?

I am on my third command below battalion level so I have had the displeasure of counseling many soldiers who have not met the expected body composition standard: more than I can recall.

Most were truly overweight and I am not urging any leaders to make exceptions for fat, sorry — sensitivity alarm: “overweight,” soldiers.

What I am urging is that our leaders stop ignoring technology and admit there are better methods out there, and in cases where these means are readily available, allow leadership to officially use them.

The update to the AR would be short and simple. A period of sampling and testing should be expected and then after our senior leadership evaluates what we have learned, just implement it. Publish a MILPER message immediately to allow the use of whatever approved body fat scale, dunk tank or electronic measuring device is determined as acceptable. In consideration for separation cases, it is criminal that we have not done so already.

Most soldiers believe the current method of measuring various circumferences and putting them into a height-weight-age formula is flawed. Most leadership when surveyed agrees. While I believe 90 percent of the 50 or more soldiers I counseled on the overweight program were indeed overweight, not all really were. There is a small group I am less than certain about.

A few literally perplexed me as to how they possibly measured too heavy for service. From flagging to adverse career consequences to the time lost as they navigate the military’s legal and medical processes, we owe it to them to do better.

I counseled several with heart-felt sincerity to seek legal recourse and fight their recommended discharge at the highest level. It is disheartening for a commander to feel obliged to recommend his soldiers contest the very thing he is administratively required to process.

It is not just speculation that there are better methods out there. Army Times has addressed the issue on several occasions; not to mention printing many editorials. In a June, 2015 Army Times piece on initiatives of the new Sergeant Major of the Army, Michelle Tan wrote: “In 2013, Military Times put the tape test to the test by taping 10 active-duty troops stationed in the Pacific Northwest and then putting them in a hydrostatic ‘dunk tank’, considered among the gold standards for determining actual body fat composition. The results showed not once did the taping match the dunk test results. The tape test was wrong every time, and in nine out of 10 cases, the tape method measured troops’ body fat percentages higher — the worst was a 66 percent difference between the scores. The closest was nearly 12 percent off.”

How is it possible that information fell on deaf ears? When I read it this summer I wondered 1) how did I miss it in 2013, and 2) how could our leadership not do something about this? The rest of the article, which included the SMA’s thoughts and his response, was not particularly encouraging.

We live in a society that has the propensity to re-open cold cases and re-try suspects years later following acquittals or convictions because new technologies and evidence collection techniques now exist. Why are we still using tape measures, the erroneous human eye, and pencil and paper when most of us keep a super-computer on our night-stand or in our pocket capable of so much more precision?

If using those super-computers is out of the question, then why is it not allowable to cough up a few dollars of unit funds, spend a fraction of what an average high-end medical scale costs, and purchase something at the local government-approved store for each company or battalion?

When a soldier fails the tape measure test this would be an acceptable judgement alternative to the overweight program and elimination. If this alternative, whatever it may be, comes to the same conclusion as the tape test, then it only reinforces what leadership says about health to the soldier and that they care to get things right before initiating a path to elimination.

I believe the tape test, much like a scale and associated height-weight table, should be a screening device, not a punitive and potentially career-ending one. It is too imperfect, it has too great a margin of error, and we have too many better alternatives out there readily accessible and easily portable.

Our doctors don’t take body temperatures with analog thermometers anymore. They use huge all-in-one rolling computers in hospitals; or, in the field, mini digital ones (with microchips in them). If we harness such computing power for the simple act of measuring temperature, why can’t we also do so for the much more delicate, complex and life-changing act of measuring a

soldier's body composition?

There is no pass or fail for how close you are to 98.6 degrees. Yet there is for body fat — one with serious career-ending repercussions. Why can't we take it just as seriously? We have the technology. We choose to ignore it. That is senseless.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/opinion/2016/01/03/army-major-writes-ultimate-take-down-senseless-tape-test/77378618/>

38. Army submits plan for women in infantry, armor, special operations

(4 Jan) Army Times, By Michelle Tan

The Army has submitted to the Defense Department its plan to open its [infantry, armor and special operations](#) ranks to women.

The implementation plan comes one month after Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced his decision to [lift all gender-based restrictions](#) on military service starting in January. The move paved the way for women to serve in these previously all-male specialties.

The plan, which is supposed to outline how the Army will integrate the newly opened occupations and positions, is now being reviewed and discussed as part of the implementation working group co-chaired by Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work and Air Force Gen. Paul Selva, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Army officials could not say when the plan might be rolled out or approved by senior DoD leaders.

The working group is tasked with overseeing the “short- term implementation” of Carter’s decision and ensuring there are no “unintended consequences on the joint force,” Carter said Dec. 3 when he announced his decision and the creation of the working group.

“Implementation won’t happen overnight,” Carter said at the time. “While at the end of the day this will make us a better and stronger force, there still will be problems to fix and challenges to overcome. We shouldn’t diminish that. At the same time, we should also remember that the military has long prided itself on being a meritocracy, where those who serve as judged not based on who they are or where they come from, but rather what they have to offer to help defend this country.”

Carter’s decision opens nearly 220,000 jobs across the military — that’s about 10 percent of the force — to women, and it allows the military to tap into the “broadest possible pool of talent” as it builds “America’s force of the future,” Carter said at the time.

“There will be no exceptions,” he said. “This means that as long as they qualify and meet the standards, women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they never could before. They’ll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars, and lead infantry soldiers into combat. They’ll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers, and everything else that previously was open only to men.”

Before the Dec. 3 announcement, the Army in the past three years has opened about 95,216 positions and nine occupations to women. This includes the combat engineer (12B) and cannon crewmember (13B) military occupational specialties.

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

The remaining positions in the Army and the other services will be open “as soon as practicable,” and the services must be ready to execute those plans no later than April 1, according to DoD.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2016/01/04/army-submits-plan-women-infantry-armor-special-operations/78274764/>

39. U.S. West Point academy swears in first woman commandant of cadets

(5 Jan) Reuters, By Mike Segar

The first female commandant of cadets at the U.S. Military Academy was sworn in on Tuesday, the latest milestone for American women who now are allowed to serve all military combat roles.

Brigadier General Diana Holland, 47, an Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran, assumed the leadership post after being honored in packed ceremony at the academy 50 miles (80 km) north of New York City, whose graduates typically serve as Army officers.

"I'm very grateful for this opportunity," said Holland, a 1990 West Point graduate who thanked her husband and father for their support and said she looked forward to working with the cadets. "They ask for so little, only to be well led."

Holland assumes the historic leadership position a month after the U.S. military struck down gender barriers in the armed forces, announcing it would accept women in all combat jobs previously open only to men, from leading infantry soldiers into battle to serving as Navy SEALs.

At the ceremony, West Point superintendent Lieutenant General Robert Caslen gave a nod to other female alumni who recently made military history, including the first two women to receive the coveted U.S. Army Ranger title, Army Captain Kristen Griest and First Lieutenant Shaye Haver, who completed their training in August 2015.

Holland's resume includes barrier-breaking accomplishments such as becoming the first female general of the U.S. Army Fort Drum & 10th Mountain Division.

Holland, whose hometown is Santa Barbara, California, served in Germany as well as in deployments to Iraq in 2004 and Afghanistan in 2010 and 2013.

As the 76th Commandant of Cadets, she replaces Major General John Thomson III.

The new post marks a return to West Point for Holland, who taught history at the academy after earning a master's degree at Duke University.

West Point, founded in 1802, accepted its first female cadets in 1976.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-new-york-westpoint-idUSKBN0UJ1RB20160105>

40. Services Submit Plans on Integrating Women Into All Military Jobs

(5 Jan) DoD News, By Lisa Ferdinando

The Defense Department has received plans from each of the services for implementing plans to integrate women into all positions in the military, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said today.

The office of the acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness received the plans, Cook said at a news conference.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced in December his decision to open all positions in the military to women, with no exceptions. Army Gen. Joseph L. Votel, the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, requested and was granted a short extension in providing his plan, Cook said.

That extension was to give Socom time to collaborate thoroughly with the services, because many of the actions critical to successfully integrating women into special operations specialties and units fall under service authority, Cook said.

Group Will Oversee Implementation

Cook noted that Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work and the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force Gen. Paul J. Selva, are chairing a group on implementing the decision.

The group will work with the services to oversee the short-term implementation of the decision, Cook explained, to ensure there are no unintended consequences on the joint force. The group will periodically update Carter and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., on the progress, he said.

The first meeting of the implementation group will take place this week, the press secretary said.

"The services and Special Operations Command will begin to execute the implementation of their approved plans as soon as practicable, but no later than April 1," he added.

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/639984/services-submit-plans-on-integrating-women-into-all-military-jobs?source=GovDelivery>

41. Pentagon reviewing plans to integrate women into newly opened combat roles

(5 Jan) Stars & Stripes, By Cory Dickstein

Pentagon leaders are examining plans proposed by each military service to open about 225,000 previously male-only jobs to female troops in the coming months.

Pentagon leaders are examining plans proposed by each military service to open about 225,000 previously male-only jobs to female troops in the coming months.

Implementation plans were due to Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Monday, about one month after he announced women would no longer be barred from serving in any position in the military for which they are qualified. Officials from each service confirmed their implementation plans had been submitted.

The plans, which outline how each service intends to incorporate women into the newly opened jobs and units, will be reviewed by the Pentagon's implementation working group, tasked with overseeing the short-term execution of Carter's decision and "ensure there are no unintended consequences on the joint force," the defense secretary said Dec. 3. The working group, co-chaired by Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work and Air Force Gen. Paul Selva, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was directed by Carter to work with the services to open all positions by April 1.

U.S. Special Operations Command was granted a "short extension" to submit its own implementation plan, Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said Tuesday. Army Gen. Joseph Votel, SOCOM's commander, requested the extension to allow time to "collaborate thoroughly with the services" because many special operations units also report to the individual services, Cook said.

Carter's decision followed years of studies on the impact that integrating women into the traditionally all-male jobs and units would have on the military. Mandated by Congress in 2011, the Defense Department reviewed its policies restricting women from roles primarily in the infantry, armor and special operations fields. The Army, Air Force and Navy secretaries and the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command supported Carter's decision, while the Marine Corps commandant asked for exceptions for several jobs.

"There will be no exceptions," Carter said during his announcement. "This means that as long as they qualify and meet the standards, women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they could not before. They'll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat."

The services conducted more than 30 comprehensive studies and developed gender-neutral physical standards for individual occupations. Despite years of planning, Pentagon officials have said some problems are expected to occur as women are integrating into the new fields.

"Implementation won't happen overnight, and while at the end of the day, this will make us a better and stronger force, there still will be problems to fix and challenges to overcome," Carter said.

He stressed the services' implementation plans must not compromise unit effectiveness or weaken existing job standards. Additionally, Carter said equal opportunity would not mean there would be quotas for female troops in certain positions or units.

"Mission effectiveness is most important," Carter said. "Defending this country is our primary responsibility, and it cannot be compromised. That means everyone who serves in uniform – men and women alike – has to be able to meet the high standards for whatever job they're in."

Since 2013, more than 110,000 formerly male-only positions have opened to female troops, primarily in the Army, Navy and Air Force. Carter's decision opened the remaining 19 Army, 22 Marine Corps, five Navy and six Air Force male-only occupations to

women. Nearly all of those jobs were in the infantry, armor, field artillery or special operations branches.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/pentagon-reviewing-plans-to-integrate-women-into-newly-opened-combat-roles-1.387242>

42. Inside the Decision to Open Up the Frontlines to Women

(5 Jan) Time, By Jay Newton-Small

Leon Panetta didn't enter the Pentagon thinking he'd become a champion for women's rights.

Indeed, when the former California congressman and Clinton White House chief-of-staff first became director of the Central Intelligence Agency in February 2009, he was surprised at the number of women serving there and he was impressed by the willingness of female CIA officers to go out to the frontlines. Many of the CIA's most senior counterterrorism officials were women: 47 percent of the Agency's workforce is female, as well as more than 33 percent of upper management.

Ten months after Panetta's appointment, two of those women, Jennifer Matthews and Liz Hansen, died in an al Qaeda bombing in the Khost province in Afghanistan. The attack, one of the deadliest in CIA history, killed seven officers. Panetta attended all the funerals, standing graveside at Arlington National Cemetery comforting Matthew's three young children.

In July 2011, Panetta was confirmed as Defense Secretary and again, saw women as military police guarding convoys and engaging with the enemy, as helicopter pilots flying him across war zones. He visited a young woman at a military hospital in San Antonio, Texas, to award her the Purple Heart for her actions in Afghanistan. Flying back from the U.S.S. Peleliu to Camp Pendleton in California, he chatted the whole way with a female Osprey pilot.

Upon his return to the Pentagon, Panetta started asking his generals why women were barred from forward deployments and combat missions. At first the answer seemed that it was because they couldn't meet the physical standards: for example, the number of pull-ups required.

But when he asked about the women who could meet those standards, the generals ran out of answers. "He found it was a gender-based prohibition, not merit- or physical-based prohibition," said Jeremy Bash, who served as Panetta's chief of staff at both the CIA and the Pentagon. "Just: men can and women can't. He thought that was wrong and worked very closely with [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] General [Martin] Dempsey to make a change."

A month before Panetta left office in 2013, he and Dempsey went to the press briefing room to announce a list of combat positions for which women could begin to compete and serve. After the briefing, Bash joined Panetta and Dempsey to reflect on the moment. "That worked out very well. It was a very powerful message. One day, sir, there's going to be a female Secretary of Defense, and one day there'll be a female chair of the joint chiefs. And then," Bash deadpanned, "We'll have the first unmanned press conference in the briefing room."

This is an excerpt from TIME Magazine correspondent Jay Newton-Small's new book "Broad Influence: How Women Are Changing the Way America Works," out January 5 and [available here on Amazon](#). The book looks at the areas in the workforce where women are reaching critical mass—typically between 20-30 percent—and how they're changing the way we govern, manage, adjudicate and command.

<http://time.com/4168433/military-women-frontlines-leon-panetta/>

43. Marine Corps boot camp, job titles to be gender neutral by April

(6 Jan) Marine Corps Times, By Gina Harkins

The Marine Corps has been ordered to come up with a plan to make its enlisted entry-level training coed, and to make its job titles more gender-neutral following the recent move to open all military combat roles to women.

In a Jan. 1 [memo to Marine Commandant Gen. Robert Neller](#), Navy Secretary Ray Mabus requested a "detailed plan" on how the service will fully integrate its boot camp and Officer Candidate School. The plan is due Jan. 15 and will be implemented by April 1, the memo states.

"The Department of the Navy's implementation plan must include gender integration of Marine Corps enlisted recruit training and officer candidate school," Mabus wrote. "In this submission, identify where, if anywhere, this training is already integrated, where it is

separate, and specific steps that you will take to fully integrate these trainings."

In a second memo from Mabus to Neller on the same day, the SecNav directed the Marine Corps to conduct a full review of its military occupational specialty titles in an effort to ensure that they are gender neutral.

"As we achieve full integration of the force ... this is an opportunity to update the position titles and descriptions themselves to demonstrate through this language that women are included in these MOSs," Mabus wrote. "Please review the position titles throughout the Marine Corps and ensure that they are gender-integrated as well, removing 'man' from the titles and provide a report to me as soon as is practicable and no later than April 1, 2016."

A Navy official said that the service received a similar memo pertaining to its MOS titles and descriptions. Mabus doesn't intend to require iconic titles like "infantryman," "riflesman" or "midshipman" to be changed, however, according to the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

"The idea is not to go in there and change the name when 'man' is incorporated as part of the term," the official said. "... But when the word 'man' appears as a separate word ... they want that name to be changed."

Examples of some of those titles in the Marine Corps include reconnaissance man, fire support man and field artillery sensor support man. In those cases, the official said it's possible the "man" could just be dropped from the names.

Marine officials have confirmed receipt of both letters.

Lt. Col. Eric Dent, Neller's spokesman, said the Marine Corps is "working diligently to meet the intent of the Secretary of Defense's policy." The Marine Corps delivered its implementation plan to Mabus and Defense Secretary Ash Carter last month, Dent added, and it's now being reviewed by a Defense Department working group.

Each of the military services was required to present that plan by Jan. 1. The Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps' plans were to include "timelines for integrating newly opened occupations and positions using their existing recruiting, accession, training, and assignment procedures," according to [a Defense Department memo](#).

Since Mabus' memo on integrating boot camp wasn't sent until after that deadline, a Marine official said the Corps' plan didn't include details on changing its entry-level training. The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity called Mabus' 15-day deadline to come up with a plan to integrate Marine boot camp "an aggressive timeframe."

"It requires a look at ... how much personnel to bring, how many drill instructors to bring, the leadership and support cadre that comes along with that," the Marine said. "The barracks in San Diego are H-shaped, for example, so you can see everything that's going on. If women are living in them, do you black out the windows or make an entire building that's theirs? Do you do a floor for men and a floor for women?"

While male and female Marine officer candidates have trained together for years, the service remains the only military branch to segregate its enlisted trainees. Female recruits only attend Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, where they live and train separately from their male counterparts there.

Marine officials have long touted the benefits to this model as it allows for intense mentoring between female drill instructors and the women in their charge. But critics say it can backfire with female recruits not being held to the same physical standards as their male counterparts.

It's not immediately clear whether the Marine Corps' West Coast recruit depot could also open to women in coming months, but Mabus wrote that simply having Marines training on the same grounds won't cut it.

"Co-location does not meet the requirement for gender integrated training," he wrote.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2016/01/06/marine-corps-boot-camp-job-titles-gender-neutral-april/78351756/>

44. Navy looks to remove 'man' from all job titles

(7 Jan) Navy Times, By Mark D. Faram

It could spell the end of time-honored Navy titles like fireman and seaman.

The Navy secretary has ordered the service to review all job titles and consider removing any reference to "man" in them, a move that could force name-changes to nearly two dozen specialties, from airman to yeoman. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus ordered the scrub as the force prepares to open the last remaining billets to women sailors in Marine ground combat elements and the Navy SEALs.

"Lastly, as we achieve full integration of the force ... this is an opportunity to update the position titles and descriptions themselves to demonstrate through this language that women are included in these positions," Mabus wrote, according to sources who quoted directly from the letter. "Ensure they are gender-integrated as well, removing "man" from their titles, and provide a report to me as soon as is practicable and no later than April 1, 2016."

Mabus sent the directive to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson. A similar memo and mandate was sent to the Marine Corps commandant, asking for the same job title review.

Some hallowed titles like seaman could be tough to replace, but others could be swapped with gender neutral descriptors as the service has done before. In 2005, for example, officials changed personnelman, a rating where many women had served, to personnel specialist.

There are at least 20 job titles that include the word "man." Aviation has the most to review, with five of their 12 enlisted rating descriptions ending with "man." Surface engineering includes eight.

Those don't include the traditional entry-level designations for non-rated sailors as well as designated strikers. How the Navy finds gender neutral titles for airman, seaman and fireman is likely to prove challenging, as well as for the Seabee and medical titles of constructionman and hospitalman for non-rated sailors.

Mabus hasn't mandated that any titles go away, according to a source familiar with the memo. He simply wants to see options for making titles as gender neutral, as part of persuading more women to make the Navy a career.

"This isn't a draconian edict to get rid of all references to the word 'man,'" said the official, who asked not to be identified publicly while internal deliberations continue. "But it is an opportunity to look at position descriptions and change them where it makes sense."

Nearly all of the Navy's jobs with "man" in the title have been opened to women for decades, and without interruption since the Women's Armed Services Integration Act was enacted in 1948.

Women were allowed on active duty briefly during and after World War I as "yeomanettes" and again in a greater number of enlisted ratings as Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) during World War II.

But since the 1948 change in law, women have served permanently in the armed forces, and have been serving in nearly all enlisted ratings ever since.

The job of coming up with these options — or justifications to keep things unchanged — will likely fall to Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Bill Moran and the enlisted community managers he oversees. He'll most likely delegate the job to his enlisted community managers.

"We are in the beginning stages of this review and are working to comply with the Secretary's direction," said Cmdr. Nathan Christensen, spokesman for CNP told Navy Times on Jan. 7.

As the Navy has merged or created new ratings, it has opted for gender neutral titles. In 1999, the radioman rating was merged into information systems technician.

Take fire controlman. This surface fleet specialty could be renamed to match their counterparts in the submarine force, the fire control

technicians.

Barring unforeseen technical reasons, adopting the sub designation Navy-wide could be an easy solution, sources say.

“Simply removing 'man' and replacing it with technician or specialist works in many cases,” said the source familiar with the memo.

But the toughest to alter will be long-standing titles like seaman and airman, both practically and culturally, according to senior enlisted leaders familiar with the review.

Fireman could be easily changed to engineer, the sources say, which is technically a better description today anyway with fires less common than before.

NAVY RATING NAME-SCRUB

The Navy has 21 rating designations that could get changed as a result of Navy Secretary Ray Mabus’ mandated review of job descriptions. The job titles include "man" in the title and could be removed:

Apprentice, non-rate designations:

- Airman
- Constructionman
- Fireman
- Hospitalman
- Seaman

General and compression Ratings:

Administration

- Yeoman
- Legalman

Aviation

- Aircrew Survival Equipmentman
- Aviation Ordnanceman
- Aviation Support Equipmentman
- Aviation Maintenance Administrationman
- Master Chief Constructionman

Surface Engineering

- Damage Controlman
- Engineman
- Machinery Repairman

Seabees

- Utilitiesman
- Master/Senior Chief Constructionman

Surface Warfare/Ops

- Fire Controlman

- Mineman

Medical

- Hospital Corpsman

Supply

- Ships Serviceman

SOURCE: NAVY PERSONNEL COMMAND

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/01/07/navy-looks-remove-man-all-job-titles/78415190/>

45. Balance, Bonding and Expectations

(17 Dec) All Hands Magazine, By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Leah Stiles

Finally, the day had come! The end of the seven month deployment was here! I was so anxious to finally pull in to see my husband and kids on the pier. I had seen all of the sappy commercials and television shows about homecomings and spent 210 days envisioning ours.

This was my first deployment and I couldn't wait to reunite with my family for that picture perfect moment.

I raced off the brow, searching the crowd for my family. Then I heard my son's sweet little voice screaming "MOM!" as he ran up to me.

He jumped in my arms and we squeezed each other tight just as I had pictured! After a few moments I put him down to make my way to my husband and my one-year-old daughter. I approached her and slowly took her from her father's arms and into mine. I looked into her eyes waiting to hear her say "mama" and embrace me just as her brother had. I got nothing. No response, just a blank stare. Just then a Photographer's Mate walked up to take photos of our reunion. I cracked. All of the tears I had held in during deployment opened up like a flooded dam.

The photo snapped in that moment has been used in so many publications. It is printed in huge poster size at some Naval Facilities. It is used on the coins in Iraq. Everybody that sees it says the same thing, what a beautiful reunion.

Nobody distinguishes that those are not the tears of a joyous reunion, but of a broken hearted mother whose child doesn't recognize her. Nobody prepared me for this. It never came up in conversations on the mess decks. This is not what I expected.

As parents in the military we all remember that moment when we look down at that precious newborn face and wonder if and when we will have to leave them. A day, a week, a year, any amount of time seems like too much. And then there are the comments made by people who simply don't understand. "If you were a real parent, you wouldn't leave your child," or "I don't know how you can just leave. I could NEVER do that to my child." It starts to take a toll. So first and foremost you must remember that our children ARE the reason we make such sacrifices.

The Navy offers resources to help service members and their families cope with deployments. And I encourage my Sailors to take full advantage of counseling and financial services if they are needed. But I also try to be real with my Sailors by giving them advice that I've gathered over the years that will keep them remain connected to their loved ones while deployed.

Being a dual military family makes this even trickier. This is my top five list my family uses to maintain our bond with our children while we are away. This is by no means an all-inclusive list, but it's a great start.

1. Leave a jar of candy (M&Ms) and allow them to remove one piece each day you are away. This helps them physically see the time progressing. (TIP: Always include a few "in case" extras. This is the Navy after all.)

2. Prepack Birthday Boxes. This includes Hats, balloons, table cloths, napkins, etc. I make one for them, and take one with me. When one of us has a birthday, we break out both boxes and either Skype together, or take a photo and send it depending on connectivity at the time. (TIP: Shop at the dollar store. Also, Google "Canned Cakes," they are delicious and can stay fresh for a year!)

3. Similar to the United Through Reading programs, I buy a book and pre-record me reading to them. I leave them the book and the video to read along to. (TIP: For older children and teens, start a new reading series together. This gives you a connection and something to discuss when you talk or email.)

4. Track a map. Post a map on the wall and let them place stickers or pins at each of your ports. Then, each of you look up three facts about the area to share with each other. (TIP: OPSEC, OPSEC, OPSEC! Don't discuss port visits until AFTER arriving.)

5. Leave love. Hide notes, Hershey kisses, stuffed animals, etc. Know and expect they will have bad days. Rather than feeling helpless when hearing about the bad days, you can direct them to the hiding spot to get the little surprise. (TIP: It helps when you spray these gifts with your perfume or cologne.)

Being a military parent does NOT mean that we are disengaged or distant. In fact, I feel like I have an extremely close bond with my children. Does it take a little more effort than our civilian counterparts? Yep. But the effort is so worth it! Not every moment will be picture perfect, but they can be more like what you picture.

http://www.navy.mil/ah_online/frStory.asp?id=92358

46. In the war against sexual assault, the Army keeps shooting itself in the foot

(18 Dec) The Washington Post, By Craig Whitlock

To mark the end of Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, the 188th Infantry Brigade held a potluck luncheon here at the largest Army installation east of the Mississippi River. The deputy commander reminded his soldiers they were all “responsible for bringing an end to sexual assault and harassment,” according to the brigade’s Facebook account.

What most of the soldiers didn’t know was that the deputy commander, Lt. Col. Michael D. Kepner II, was himself facing court-martial on charges that he had sexually harassed and assaulted a female lieutenant on his staff.

Despite repeated complaints from the victim and other officers, Kepner’s chain of command violated Army rules and allowed him to stay in a leadership post for at least eight months while he was under criminal investigation, internal Army emails and memos show. He later pleaded guilty to some of the charges and is serving time in a military prison.

For the past two years, the Pentagon has acknowledged having a severe problem with sexual assault in the ranks. Military leaders have promised Congress, the White House and their own troops that they are redoubling efforts to protect victims and punish offenders.

But those pledges have been undermined by a string of previously undisclosed cases in which soldiers entrusted with key roles in the campaign against sexual assault and harassment have, in turn, been accused of committing those very offenses, according to a Washington Post investigation.

The Army Reserve’s 80th Training Command summoned about 350 personnel to an Orlando hotel in 2013 for a four-day conference on sexual-assault prevention. One session highlighted how excessive drinking is often at the root of sex crimes committed by those in uniform.

Soon after the conference began, sheriff’s deputies were called to the hotel to investigate a report that a female guest had been raped by one of the participants — an inebriated soldier she had met at the hotel pool.

The two-star general in charge couldn’t believe it when aides told him what had happened. Maj. Gen. William H. Gerety “turned beet red and said, you are f—king shitting me,” according to an Army inspector general’s report obtained by The Post under the Freedom of Information Act.

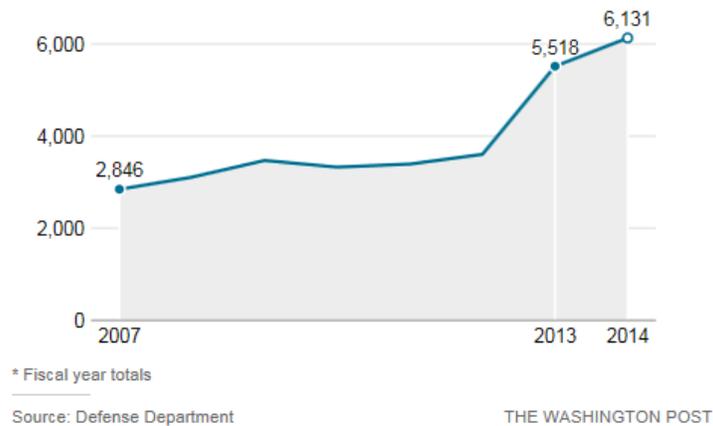
In a separate case in Florida, the Pentagon in October removed the leader of a military training institute dedicated to the prevention of discrimination and sexual misconduct.

Seven female employees told investigators that the commandant, Army Col. Morris “Reese” Turner, had inappropriately hugged them, rubbed their shoulders or touched them without consent, documents show. Turner acknowledged to investigators that he was a “touchy-feely” person but denied wrongdoing.

The Army concluded that he had committed assault when he touched two of the seven women, and it reprimanded him for creating “a hostile and ineffective work environment,” records show.

Overall, the Defense Department received 6,131 reports of sexual assault last year, a figure that has more than doubled since 2007.

Reported sexual assaults in the armed forces
Annual cases reported to the Defense Department have more than doubled since 2007. Pentagon officials say troops are now more likely to file reports because they have greater trust in the military to investigate complaints and protect victims.



According to Pentagon officials, the increase is actually a sign of progress. They say troops are more likely to report assaults than in the past because they have more faith in the military to properly investigate such crimes.

That assertion, however, has been undercut by a rash of scandals.

In March, a sexual-assault-prevention [officer](#) for an Army battalion at Fort Hood, Tex., pleaded guilty to acting as a pimp by luring cash-strapped young female soldiers into a prostitution ring.

Last year, the Army [disciplined](#) its former top sex-crimes prosecutor after receiving a complaint that he had kissed and groped a female officer — while attending a conference on sexual assault.

Other branches of the armed forces haven't been immune.

Members of Congress publicly excoriated the Air Force two years ago after the officer in charge of its sexual-assault-prevention programs was [arrested](#) outside a bar for allegedly grabbing a woman's buttocks. The officer was acquitted in civilian court, but he received a reprimand from the Air Force and was removed from his job.

Still, the Army has a particularly spotty record on putting the right people in such sensitive roles. Last year, the service fired or reassigned 588 people from their jobs as victim counselors, military recruiters and "positions of trust" after background checks revealed a history of sex crimes, child abuse, drunken driving and other offenses.

Army leaders declined interview requests for this article.

In a statement, Lt. Col. Ben Garrett, an Army spokesman at the Pentagon, said the service "has refined and enhanced its screening and selection processes to ensure that only the most qualified people are assigned to provide support and assistance to the victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment."

"When these individuals engage in misconduct or fail to meet the Army's exacting standards for these critical positions," he added, "the Army takes appropriate action to hold them accountable."

Don Christensen, president of Protect our Defenders, a victim-advocacy group, said the armed forces have hamstrung themselves by filling sexual-assault-prevention jobs with poorly trained personnel. Just as people start to gain experience, they typically rotate to new assignments within a year or two as part of the military's "revolving-door mentality," he said.

The system shows that the military "doesn't really take sexual assault seriously and just plugs somebody in without vetting them," said Christensen, a retired colonel who served as the Air Force's chief prosecutor. "You keep churning people through the program

and eventually you're going to end up with people who are bad.”

‘Sir, no!’

Commanders at Fort Stewart — home to the Army’s 3rd Infantry Division — received a series of blunt warnings that they were mishandling the case of Kepner, the lieutenant colonel accused of sexual assault.

Kepner was placed under criminal investigation in September 2014 after a lieutenant under his command reported that he had sexually harassed her over several months and repeatedly pressured her to have sex.

The harassment turned physical, culminating in two back-to-back incidents in which he grabbed her by the neck and pushed her against a wall, according to charging documents.

Agents from the Army Criminal Investigation Command confronted Kepner. He acknowledged that he had put his hands on the female officer’s shoulders, pressed her against the wall and said, “This is what all those horny lieutenants want to do to you” and “Let’s do it on this desk,” according to the agents’ investigative reports.

Kepner played down his remarks as “playful banter.” He told agents that he stopped after the female officer said, “Sir, no!”

Kepner and his military attorney declined to comment for this article.

Under Army policy, criminal suspects must be removed from leadership positions and lose their security clearances until their cases are resolved. A few days after Kepner was placed under investigation, he was relieved as commander of the 83rd Chemical Battalion.

But instead of sidelining him, Kepner’s superiors placed him in a more important post. He became deputy commander of a larger unit: the 188th Infantry Brigade. He also kept his security clearance.

Records show that Army brass assured Kepner’s victim that he would be restricted to “making coffee and paper airplanes” in his new role as the deputy brigade commander. In fact, he frequently served as the brigade’s acting commander and led the unit in training exercises, according to the documents.

After a five-month investigation, Kepner was formally charged with sexual assault, violating a protective order and other crimes.

A separate disciplinary investigation concluded that Kepner had sexually harassed the lieutenant “on an almost daily basis.” That investigation found he had also harassed a second female lieutenant in the same unit.

“It was rare to have a conversation without him turning it sexual,” the second lieutenant told investigators in a statement. “His comments were so frequent, it was almost predictable.”

Other evidence surfaced. A major told investigators that Kepner had once undermined a sexual-assault-prevention class at Fort Stewart.

After instructors presented a case study about a sergeant who sexually assaulted a drunk female soldier, Kepner took his battalion aside to offer a different view, according to the major’s statement.

Kepner told his soldiers that there was “another side” to the story: The married sergeant had actually been trying to protect the drunk soldier by giving her a ride home.

In Kepner’s retelling, the sergeant “gave in to temptation” after the woman subjected him to sexual advances. Kepner asserted that the sergeant’s actions were understandable because he was just a “man being a man,” the documents show.

Despite the sexual-harassment findings and the criminal charges against Kepner, the Army allowed him to continue as deputy brigade commander — alarming some Fort Stewart officials.

“I am concerned about the message it sends to the victim and Soldiers in the unit that he is still in a leadership position, not to mention the impact if the media caught wind,” Lt. Col. William J. Anderson, the officer in charge of Fort Stewart’s sexual-assault-prevention programs, wrote in a Feb. 18 email to Col. Vernon Miranda, the 3rd Infantry Division’s chief of staff. Miranda did not respond to requests for comment.

The warning went unheeded. Two months later, Kepner spoke at the luncheon to commemorate Sexual Assault Awareness Month, according to the brigade's Facebook account. (The Army recently deleted the Facebook postings after The Post inquired about them.)

Meanwhile, Kepner's primary victim and her advocates were growing even more exasperated.

On May 27, the victim filed a congressional complaint with Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), a member of the Armed Services Committee.

"This is fundamentally wrong," the victim wrote. "I've been patient and have tried to trust the system, but my patience has run out."

She accused senior Army officials of "protecting" Kepner and added: "This is why women in the military do not report sexual assault."

Kepner was finally removed as deputy brigade commander after the congressional complaint.

During his court-martial in September, he pleaded guilty to assaulting the lieutenant — albeit not sexually — as part of a deal with prosecutors. He was sentenced to four months in prison.

He has not been discharged from the Army but probably will be forced to retire after 22 years of service, including four deployments to Iraq.

"I made a mistake. I screwed up," he testified at trial. "I apologize for what I thought was a consensual relationship. I didn't mean to terrorize anyone."

Capt. Christopher Cusmano, an Army lawyer who served as a legal advocate for the victim, said he still cannot understand why the Army allowed Kepner to stay in a leadership post for so long. He said it was appalling that Kepner gave public remarks to promote Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

"What's happened in this case has just blown me away left and right," he said.

Senior officers at Fort Stewart declined interview requests.

In a statement, Lt. Col. Amanda Azubuike, a spokeswoman for the 3rd Infantry Division, said Fort Stewart leaders "take incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault very seriously and are deeply concerned and disturbed by what the victim had to go through."

In an interview, the victim said she was pleased with Kepner's conviction but unhappy that he wasn't automatically kicked out of the Army. The Post generally does not identify victims of alleged sex crimes.

The lieutenant said she put up with the harassment for months to protect her career. Even after she was assaulted, she said, she hesitated to file a complaint because she didn't think anyone would take her seriously. She said senior brass treated her like "a whiny" junior officer.

"My goal from the beginning was just to get him away from soldiers and out of a position of command authority," she said. "There's no system for senior officers to get investigated. It's all senior officers trying to protect themselves."

From bad to worse

Maj. Gen. William Gerety was trying to do the right thing. Concerned with perceptions that the military was struggling to cope with sexual-assault cases, the head of the Army Reserve's 80th Training Command organized a four-day symposium on the topic for hundreds of soldiers in September 2013.

The conference was held at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando. On the first full day, Gerety's staff informed him that one of his enlisted soldiers had been accused of raping a civilian woman the night before.

Gerety was furious. But instead of properly demonstrating how to handle such a case, the commander bungled the investigation, according to a report by the Army's inspector general.

Under Army regulations, sex-crime reports must be immediately referred as a law-enforcement matter to the Army Criminal Investigation Command. Nevertheless, several of Gerety's staffers testified to the inspector general that there was confusion over how

to proceed.

The alleged victim had already told deputies from the Orange County Sheriff's Department that she did not want to press charges. She said she had been sexually battered as a teen and "nothing was done about it," according to the deputies' report.

Meanwhile, the accused soldier told deputies that the encounter was consensual. There were no witnesses and no physical evidence; the soldier and the alleged victim both said he was too drunk to ejaculate.

Although there wasn't much to go on, Gerety and his staff were obligated to report the case immediately to Army criminal investigators.

One of Gerety's aides testified that they failed to do so because the general told them there was no need. Because the alleged victim did not want to press charges, according to the aide, Gerety told his staff that "technically, no crime has been committed" — an incorrect assumption under the law.

Another staff member came to the opposite conclusion. He told the inspector general that, under the Defense Department's definition of sexual assault, if someone is intoxicated and cannot give consent, then it is automatically a crime to have sex with that person. But that wasn't right either.

Yet another aide told the inspector general — also incorrectly — that the victim had "recanted" her story and, therefore, there was no sexual assault.

Others said they urged Gerety to refer the case to the Army's criminal investigators in accordance with regulations. Instead, he appointed a military nurse to conduct a commander's inquiry — a less serious step.

Five days later, a junior officer contacted Army investigators anyway, and they took over. After six months, agents concluded that there was "insufficient evidence" to press charges, primarily because the alleged victim did not want to cooperate.

After a separate inquiry, the Army inspector general determined that Gerety had mishandled the case and that his version of events — his attorney said the general had ordered his staff to notify criminal investigators immediately — was "not supported by the facts."

Gerety, who has since retired from the Army, did not respond to requests for comment.

The inspector general also gave a heavy dose of blame to managers of the 80th Training Command's sexual-assault-prevention program.

The managers, whose names were redacted from the inspector general's report, "did not fully understand what constituted a sexual assault" and "made incorrect conclusions that a sexual assault did not occur."

In an interview, the accused soldier said he was innocent of rape. He said he has since received a formal reprimand from the Army for adultery; although he is single, the alleged victim was married.

Asked what he was thinking to get drunk and have sex with a stranger at a sexual-assault-prevention conference, the soldier replied, "That's a fair question."

"It was a stupid situation to put myself in," he said. "I don't have a statement or answer for any of that."

The Post is not naming the soldier because he was not charged with a crime.

He remains in the Army Reserve.

'The do's and don'ts'

Army Col. Morris Turner had just finished a tour of duty in Baghdad last year when he learned that his new assignment would be at a military base on the Florida coast.

"I knew nothing about this job," Turner told the Florida Today newspaper. "I said, 'Where is this?' And I Googled and saw this little island. I said, 'Good location.' "

A field artillery officer, Turner had been selected to lead the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute at Patrick Air Force Base, near Cocoa Beach.

The institute has a staff of about 140 people who specialize in human relations. They train other Defense Department personnel on ways to prevent discrimination, sexual harassment and similar problems.

Among other things, the institute produces training videos on how to cope with “realistic workplace scenarios.” One video depicts a fictional boss named Miguel who can’t keep his hands to himself. Subordinates wince as he squeezes their shoulders, pinches their cheeks and caresses their hair.

When Turner took command of the institute, some female employees came to fear that their new boss had a similar habit. After a few months, the women confided in one another that Turner had rubbed their shoulders or touched them in ways that made them physically uncomfortable, according to interviews with three staff members and records compiled by Army investigators.

At the urging of her colleagues, a noncommissioned officer who worked closely with Turner filed a complaint against him with the sexual assault response coordinator’s office at Patrick Air Force Base on Dec. 10, 2014.

She accused Turner of giving her unwanted shoulder massages, touching her buttocks and making sexist remarks. In a handwritten statement given to investigators, she said she was worried that Turner would retaliate against her for reporting his behavior.

In an interview with The Post, the noncommissioned officer said the unwanted touching was a constant source of mental strain. “I don’t know how else to describe it, other than I felt like I had to hold my breath the entire time I was around him,” she said.

Turner, she asserted, clearly knew that the shoulder rubs were making her uncomfortable. “He’d say, ‘Does it bother you?’ I’d say, ‘Just stop.’ And at that point, he’d just dig his thumbs in all that much harder.”

The allegations triggered a rapid and intensive response by Army and Air Force criminal investigators. Over the next few weeks, they interviewed dozens of employees.

Seven women told investigators that Turner had hugged or touched them without their consent, documents show. Some said they viewed the contact as harmless, although perhaps not a smart thing for a commander to do, especially at an institute focused on stopping sexual harassment.

Others described the touching as clearly inappropriate, prompting investigators to label the incidents as suspected “abusive sexual contact,” according to the documents.

Turner told investigators that he recalled hugging or touching three of the seven women but said the contact was entirely benign. He said it was “in his ‘nature’ to communicate using his hands and touching the person he is talking to,” according to the investigators’ report.

In an interview with The Post, Turner described himself as an exuberant person and characterized his leadership style as that of a coach — a backslapper trying to make a tangible personal connection.

“I was in shock, complete shock, that anyone would perceive my genuine caring style as inappropriate,” he said.

“I know the do’s and don’ts,” he added. “None of the touching I ever did in my entire career has gone past that threshold.”

Turner questioned the motives of the women who told investigators that he had touched them. He said the institute was a dysfunctional workplace filled with malcontents who resented his efforts to turn things around.

His defense attorney, Gary Myers, accused the Army of grossly overreacting to spurious charges because the service was afraid of being perceived as soft on sexual misconduct.

“This whole thing is garbage,” Myers said. Army criminal investigators, he added, “would find that the pope engaged in sexual harassment by touching people.”

In the end, Army lawyers in Washington concluded that Turner had committed assault by placing his hands on two noncommissioned officers without their consent but that there was no basis to charge him with abusive sexual contact.

In June, he received a written reprimand from the Army for creating a “hostile” workplace culture and fostering an “environment of

intimidation and reprisal.”

The Army, however, agreed not to include the reprimand in Turner’s official personnel file, which effectively frees him to resume his military career.

He was removed as commander of the institute in October and is awaiting a new assignment with the Army.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/12/19/in-the-war-against-sexual-assault-the-army-keeps-shooting-itself-in-the-foot/?wpisrc=al_alert-national](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/12/19/in-the-war-against-sexual-assault-the-army-keeps-shooting-itself-in-the-foot/?hpid=hp_alert-national)

47. Military family pushes Supreme Court to consider malpractice claim

(21 Dec) Military Times, By Patricia Kime

Jorge Ortiz had his daughter's future in mind when he filed a medical malpractice suit against the government over her botched birth.

But when the case was dismissed by a lower court citing the Feres doctrine, and upheld in an appellate court, Ortiz petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court, hoping to change a rule that prevents his child from winning a birth injury suit solely because her mother is an active-duty service member.

"We've reached a point where people can see how unfair this is for children of military families," Jorge Ortiz said in a phone interview from his San Antonio home. "Isabella is the voice of these families."

Isabella was born March 16, 2009, to Air Force Capt. Heather Ortiz at Evans Army Community Hospital, Fort Carson, Colorado.

As her mother was prepped for a planned Cesarean section delivery, she was given a medication to which she had a known allergy—one that was noted in her medical records. When she was administered an antihistamine to counter the ensuing allergic reaction, her blood pressure plummeted, depriving Isabella of oxygen in the womb.

Isabella, now 6, suffered brain and nerve damage that requires her to get occupational and physical therapy each week. She wears leg braces and has special accommodations at school.

Anticipating Isabella's lifetime medical needs, Jorge Ortiz filed suit against the Army hospital.

But the district court dismissed the case, citing the Feres doctrine, which bars claims against the federal government by members of the armed forces and their families for injuries that stem from activity "incident to military service."

On appeal, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the "genesis test" for Feres applied in this case, meaning Isabella's injuries were directly related to her mother's injuries and thus Feres was appropriately invoked.

But Jorge Ortiz believes this extension of the Feres doctrine to children who have never worn a uniform is wrong.

He remains hopeful that the Supreme Court will consider Isabella's petition, given that his daughter's case also reflects what he says is discrimination against military women.

"It's a great opportunity to add some clarity and understanding to the Feres doctrine," Ortiz said.

The Feres doctrine stems from a 1950 case, *Feres v. United States*, in which the Supreme Court ruled that active-duty military personnel are not covered by the Federal Tort Claims Act, which allows persons wronged by government employees to sue the government over their injuries.

It has remained a controversial provision ever since, generating complaints from patient advocacy groups, military service organizations and troops who feel they have no legal recourse when something goes awry at a military hospital or clinic.

The Supreme Court, however, has refused to hear previous petitions against Feres, most recently in 2011 in the case of a Marine whose surgery for a routine appendectomy went awry, leaving him in a vegetative state and eventually leading to his death.

Jorge Ortiz, an Air Force veteran, said that when he entered the service, he was aware of the doctrine and understands that restrictions are needed to ensure military leaders and personnel are not sued for decisions made in the line of duty or for injuries sustained during training or war.

But he does not believe Feres should apply to egregious medical errors made in military hospitals. "I think a line should be drawn," he said.

The family's petition to the Supreme Court was filed on Oct. 13. The federal government had until Dec. 18 to file a response but requested, and was granted, a 30-day extension.

Joe Bennett, a Colorado Springs, Colorado, attorney who represents the family, said the court could decide in March whether to schedule oral arguments in the case.

Ten groups have filed briefs supporting the Ortizes and urging the Supreme Court to consider the case, including the American Legion, the National Organization for Women, several veterans law clinics and law schools.

The Supreme Court receives at least 10,000 petitions each year and hears between 75 and 80 cases. Ortiz said he knows the odds are slim that the justices will accept his daughter's case, but remains optimistic.

"I hope the Supreme Court can look at this and realize that ... Feres is not just being applied to military members. Isabella's case may be extreme, but there needs to be clarity," he said.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/21/military-family-pushes-supreme-court-consider-malpractice-claim/77500274/>

48. Coast Guard courts-martial, firings from April to June 2015

(21 Dec) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers

The Coast Guard released its good order and discipline data for the third quarter of fiscal year 2015 in a Dec. 11 service-wide message.

The cases include courts-martial, administrative action, firings and non-judicial punishments for officers, senior enlisted and junior enlisted. Punishments are represented in bold.

Officers

Courts-martial:

1. An O-3 was convicted by a general court-martial of using a Coast Guard work station to engage in sexually explicit conversations with a coworker, making false official statements, unlawfully pushing a coworker, adultery and disobeying a lawful command from a superior officer to cease and desist all inappropriate personal contact with a coworker. **600 days confinement.**
2. An O-1 was convicted by a general court-martial of attempting to establish a prohibited relationship with an enlisted member, sexual harassment, engaging in a sexual relationship with another enlisted member, touching the buttocks of an enlisted member without consent, manufacturing MDMA, possession of approximately ninety-two pills of MDMA with intent to distribute, distribution of an unknown amount of MDMA, possession of LSD, use of MDMA, Psilocybin, LSD, and cocaine, failure to arrive at appointed place of duty, sleeping during the workday, and conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline. **10 months and dismissal from the service.**

Administrative Action:

1. An O-4 resigned in lieu of involuntary board action as a result of exposing their genitals to colleagues and junior enlisted members, and inappropriately touching a subordinate.
2. An O-4 resigned in lieu of an involuntary board action as a result of three separate documented alcohol incidents.
3. An O-4 resigned in lieu of involuntary board action as a result of failing to comply with a third consecutive semi-annual weigh-in and third probationary period within 14 months for non-compliance.

4. An O-3 retired in lieu of an involuntary board action as a result of a conviction at a civil court proceeding for theft in the fourth degree after unlawfully obtaining approximately \$250 in merchandise from a commercial retailer.
5. An O-3 resigned in lieu of involuntary board action as a result of submitting falsified qualifications and forging a senior officer's signature.
6. An O-1 resigned in lieu of involuntary board action as a result of an alcohol incident in which the officer failed to exercise sound judgment by drinking to excess and trespassing on private property. Additionally, the officer was removed from primary duties after again consuming alcohol and failing to maintain professional boundaries with subordinates within the workplace.
7. A CWO3 retired in lieu of involuntary board action as a result of engaging in an adulterous relationship with the spouse of an enlisted member, knowingly making a false official statement during an investigation, and communicating a threat to the enlisted member for bringing the adultery to the command's attention.

Relief for cause:

1. An O-6 was relieved for cause as a result of loss of confidence for mismanagement of personal affairs to the discredit of the service.

Non-Judicial Punishment

NJP was imposed 11 times, accounting for 22 charges, covering a wide range of UCMJ offenses. The total punishments included 30 days arrested in quarters in one case, admonishment or reprimand in 11 cases, 30 days of restriction imposed in one case, and forfeitures totaling \$1,513 in pay imposed in two cases.

Senior enlisted

Courts-martial

1. An E-8 was convicted by a summary court-martial of conspiracy with others to obstruct justice by lying to investigators, making false official statements, violation of general orders by transmitting sexually explicit or sexually oriented language through the Coast Guard communicator system, the maltreatment of multiple members by making sexually suggestive statements to them, adultery and obstruction of justice. **Reduction in rank to E-7, forfeiture of 2/3 pay for one month in the amount of \$3,009 and 60 days restriction.**
2. An E-7 was convicted by a special court-martial of wrapping their arms around another member, kissing the member on the cheek, striking the buttocks of a different member, unlawfully touching multiple members, and drunk and disorderly conduct. **Reduction in rank to E-2 and confinement for five months.**
3. An E-7 was convicted by a summary court-martial of making a false official statement and failure to abstain from alcohol consumption for 12 hours prior to firearms handling or shooting activities. **Reduction in rank to E-6 and forfeiture of \$700.**
4. An E-7 was convicted by a summary court-martial of making false official statements, failure to obey lawful general order by engaging in sexually intimate behavior with a subordinate on board a cutter, failure to obey a lawful order to cease and desist all contact with said subordinate, and after being restricted to the unit the member wrongfully broke the restriction. **Reduction in rank to E-6, and restriction for 30 days.**
5. An E-7 was convicted by a summary court-martial of willfully disobeying a direct order to remain on base and not operate their vehicle, and making a false official statement concerning the amount of alcohol consumed. **Reduction in rank to E-6 and a reprimand.**

Reliefs for cause:

1. An E-9 was relieved when a mishap investigation determined they did not operate navigation standards prior to the cutter's grounding.
2. An E-7 was relieved as EPO of a cutter for unsatisfactory performance of duties and failing to maintain necessary certifications.
3. An E-7 was relieved as EPO of a station for inability to pass the boat crew fitness test and certify on station platforms.

Military Administrative Action:

One senior enlisted member was administratively discharged for misconduct: Discreditable nature.

Non-Judicial Punishment:

NJP was imposed six times accounting for eight charges. The total punishments included admonishment or reprimand imposed in four cases, and forfeitures totaling \$8,531 in pay in three cases.

Junior enlisted

Courts-martial:

1. An E-6 was convicted by a special court-martial of making a visual recording of the private areas of another member without their consent. **Reduction in rank to E-1, confinement for six months, and a bad-conduct discharge.**
2. An E-6 was convicted by a summary court-martial of dereliction of duty for failing to abstain from consuming alcohol after 11 p.m. prior to coming to work the following day. **Reprimand.**
3. An E-6 was convicted by a summary court-martial of violating a lawful order by engaging in a prohibited instructor/student relationship and adultery. **Reduction in rank to E-5 and restriction for thirty days.**
4. An E-6 was convicted by a summary court-martial of maltreating and sexually harassing four subordinates by making repeated offensive communications of a sexual nature to them. **Reduction in rank to E-5, forfeiture of \$500 pay for two months and a reprimand.**
5. An E-6 was convicted by a summary court-martial of dereliction of duty for negligent failure to adhere to Coast Guard purchasing policies, and stealing over 500 dollars of softball equipment. **Reduction in rank to E-5 and a reprimand.**
6. An E-5 was convicted by a general court-martial of making false official statements, wrongfully providing alcohol to a member under the age of 21, committing a sexual act on a member who was incapable of consenting to the sexual act, and disobeying a lawful order by engaging in sexual acts with multiple members of the unit. **Reduction in rank to E-1 and confinement for six months.**
7. An E-5 was convicted by a general court-martial of making false official statements. **Reduction in rank to E-4.**
8. An E-5 was convicted by a special court-martial of failing to maintain operational security, and making false official statements. **Reduction in rank to E-1, confinement for 90 days and a bad-conduct discharge.**
9. An E-5 was convicted by a special court-martial of making a false official statement, the theft of \$650 a month in Overseas Housing Allowance for 7 months, forgery of a lease and using anabolic steroids, a schedule III controlled substance. **Reduction in rank to E-2 and confinement for thirty days.**
10. An E-5 was convicted by a special court-martial of using and possessing marijuana on divers occasions. **Forfeiture of \$1,000 pay for three months and a bad-conduct discharge.**
11. An E-5 was convicted by a special court-martial of setting fire to an automobile with intent to defraud the insurance company. **Reduction in rank to E-3, restriction for 15 days, and hard labor without confinement for 45 days.**
12. An E-5 was convicted by a special court-martial of unlawfully touching the chest of another member with their hand and requesting explicit visual recordings from another member. **Reduction in rank to E-3 and confinement for 30 days.**
13. An E-5 was convicted by a special court-martial of drunk and disorderly conduct, and hitting a person in the face with their fist. **No sentence.**
14. An E-5 was convicted by a summary court-martial of dereliction of duty for negligent failure to adhere to Coast Guard purchasing policies, and stealing over \$500 of softball equipment. **30 days restriction and a reprimand.**
15. An E-5 was convicted by a summary court-martial of violating a lawful general order and engaging in sexually intimate behavior with another member aboard a Coast Guard vessel. **Reduction in rank to E-4.**
16. An E-4 was convicted by a special court-martial of unlawfully pressing their body against another member by laying on top of them. **Reduction in rank to E-1 and five months confinement.**
17. An E-4 was convicted by a summary court-martial of unlawfully touching a civilian with their hands and mouth, and for unlawfully touching the leg of another member. **Reduction in rank to E-2, and confinement for 30 days.**
18. An E-4 was convicted by a summary court-martial of stealing money from six other members. **Reduction in rank to E-1 and confinement for one month.**
19. An E-4 was convicted by a summary court-martial of unlawful touching of another member and failure to obey a lawful order by speaking about an ongoing criminal investigation with another member when ordered not to do so. **Reduction in rank to E-1, confinement for 15 days and forfeiture of \$1,020 dollars.**
20. An E-3 was convicted by a general court-martial of making false official statements and providing alcohol to a member under the age of 21. **Reduction in rank to E-1, confinement for 30 days, and forfeiture of \$500 dollars.**
21. An E-3 was convicted by a special court-martial of knowingly inhaling a synthetic cannabinoid compound (Spice), possession of cocaine, use of cocaine and marijuana, and introduction of cocaine onto a military installation. **Reduction in rank to E-2 and confinement for three months.**
22. An E-3 was convicted by a special court-martial of wrongfully using heroin, cocaine, marijuana and oxycodone. **Reduction**

in rank to E-1 and confinement for 30 days.

23. An E-3 was convicted by a summary court-martial of conspiracy with other members to purchase and possess MDMA, a schedule I controlled substance from a drug dealer, the wrongful use of cocaine, MDMA and Xanax, the introduction of MDMA into a military installation, and engaging in a prohibited relationship with an officer. **Reduction in rank to E-1 and 30 days confinement.**
24. An E-2 was convicted by a general court-martial of using marijuana. **Reduction in rank to E-1, confinement for 30 days, forfeiture of \$1,020 for three months and a bad-conduct discharge.**

Military Administrative Action:

Six junior enlisted members were discharged under other than honorable conditions in lieu of trial by court-martial. Eighty-four junior enlisted members received administrative discharges for misconduct: seven for bad conduct, 44 for conduct of a discreditable nature, five for fraudulent enlistment, and 28 for involvement with drugs.

Non-Judicial Punishment:

NJP was imposed 138 times accounting for 207 charges. The total punishments included 21 arrested in quarters imposed in one case, admonishment or reprimand imposed in 10 cases, seven days of extra duty imposed in one case, 2,233 days of restriction imposed in 93 cases, forfeitures totaling \$71,057 dollars in pay in 43 cases, and reduction in rank imposed in 48 cases.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/21/coast-guard-courts-martial-firings-april-june-2015/77432396/>

49. Department of Defense Forwards to Congress Proposed Changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice

(28 Dec) DoD News, Press Operations

Today the Department of Defense forwarded to Congress a legislative proposal to reform the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the statutory framework of the military justice system. The proposal is based on the recommendations of the Military Justice Review Group, which conducted a detailed analysis of each article of the UCMJ, including the historical background of the UCMJ, current practice, and comparison to federal civilian law.

In October 2013, former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, in response to a request from the senior uniformed leadership, directed the review of the UCMJ and its implementation in the Manual for Courts-Martial. He also directed the review to consider the recommendations of a separate, congressionally-established panel that examined the systems used to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate adult sexual assault and related offenses in the military. Each of the military services detailed military personnel to serve as members of the Military Justice Review Group. Andrew S. Effron, former chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, serves as director of the MJRG.

“The services assigned a highly talented group of individuals to the MJRG,” said Effron. “Their comprehensive recommendations will contribute to the positive evolution of the military justice system.”

The department’s proposal is the first comprehensive military justice reform package submitted to Congress by the Department of Defense in more than 30 years. The proposed legislation includes 37 statutory additions to the UCMJ, and substantive amendments to 68 current provisions of the UCMJ. Among the major reforms, the proposed legislation would:

- Strengthen the structure of the military justice system by: establishing selection criteria for military judges and mandating tour lengths; authorizing military judges to handle specified legal issues prior to referral of a case to court-martial; establishing the authority for military magistrates to preside over specified pre-referral matters; establishing a military judge-alone special court-martial similar to the judge-alone forum in civilian proceedings, with confinement limited to a maximum of six months and no punitive discharge; requiring issuance of guidance on the disposition of criminal cases similar to the United States Attorneys Manual, tailored to military needs; and mandating additional training for commanders and convening authorities focused on the proper exercise of UCMJ authority.
- Enhance fairness and efficiency in pretrial and trial procedures by: facilitating victim input on disposition decisions and providing for public access to court documents and pleadings; expanding the authority to subpoena documents during criminal investigations; replacing the current variable panel (military jury) sizes with a standardized number of panel members (military jurors) and a consistent voting percentage in order to convict in noncapital cases (75 percent); and requiring learned defense counsel in capital trials and appeals.

- Modernize military sentencing by: replacing the current sentencing standard with a system of judicial discretion guided by parameters and criteria; ensuring each offense receives separate consideration for purposes of sentencing to confinement; and providing for effective implementation of sentencing reforms by establishing sentencing by military judges in all non-capital trials.
- Streamline the post-trial process by eliminating redundant paperwork and requiring an entry of judgment by the military judge similar to federal civilian practice to mark the end of a court-martial.
- Reform military appellate practice by: providing service members, like their civilian counterparts, with the opportunity to obtain judicial review in all cases; transforming the automatic appeal of cases to the service Courts of Criminal Appeals into an appeal of right in which the accused, upon advice of appellate defense counsel, would determine whether to file an appeal; focusing the appeal on issues raised by the parties and placing the burden to demonstrate factual insufficiency on the accused; establishing standards to review errors in guilty pleas similar to that in federal criminal cases; and permitting the government to appeal a sentence under conditions similar to those applied by federal civilian courts of appeals.
- Update the punitive articles by proposing new offenses, including Article 93a (Prohibited activities with military recruits and trainee by person in position of special trust; Article 121a (Fraudulent use of credit and debit cards); Article 123 (Offense concerning government computers); and Article 132 (Retaliation); and aligning the definition of “sexual act” in Article 120 with federal civilian criminal law.

The department looks forward to working with Congress as lawmakers consider the recommendations.

The full report of the Military Justice Review Group, the legislative proposal forwarded to Congress, and a section-by-section analysis of the legislative proposal can be found at www.dod.gov/dodgc/mjrg.html.

<http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/638095/department-of-defense-forwards-to-congress-proposed-changes-to-the-uniform-code?source=GovDelivery>

50. Defense Department Proposes UCMJ Changes

(28 Dec) DoD News, Defense Media Activity

Following a two-year review of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Defense Department today forwarded to Congress a legislative proposal outlining a number of reforms.

The UCMJ is the statutory framework of the military justice system, according to a news release announcing the proposed changes. The proposal is based on the recommendations of the Military Justice Review Group, which conducted a detailed analysis of each article of the UCMJ, including the historical background of the UCMJ, current practice, and comparison to federal civilian law.

In October 2013, then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, in response to a request from the senior uniformed leadership, directed the review of the UCMJ and its implementation in the Manual for Courts-Martial, the release said. Hagel also directed the review to consider the recommendations of a separate, congressionally-established panel that examined the systems used to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate adult sexual assault and related offenses in the military.

Each of the military services detailed military personnel to serve as members of the Military Justice Review Group. Andrew S. Effron, former chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, serves as director of the MJRG.

“The services assigned a highly talented group of individuals to the MJRG,” Effron said. “Their comprehensive recommendations will contribute to the positive evolution of the military justice system.”

The department’s proposal is the first comprehensive military justice reform package submitted to Congress by the Defense Department in more than 30 years. The proposed legislation includes 37 statutory additions and substantive amendments to 68 current provisions of the UCMJ.

Among the major reforms, the proposed legislation would:

- Strengthen the structure of the military justice system by: establishing selection criteria for military judges and mandating tour lengths; authorizing military judges to handle specified legal issues prior to referral of a case to court-martial; establishing the authority for military magistrates to preside over specified pre-referral matters; establishing a military judge-alone special court-martial similar to the judge-alone forum in civilian proceedings, with confinement limited to a maximum of six months and no punitive discharge; requiring issuance of guidance on the disposition of criminal cases similar to the United States Attorneys Manual, tailored to military needs; and mandating additional training for commanders and convening authorities focused on the proper exercise of UCMJ authority;
- Enhance fairness and efficiency in pretrial and trial procedures by: facilitating victim input on disposition decisions and providing

for public access to court documents and pleadings; expanding the authority to subpoena documents during criminal investigations; replacing the current variable panel (military jury) sizes with a standardized number of panel members (military jurors) and a consistent voting percentage in order to convict in noncapital cases (75 percent); and requiring learned defense counsel in capital trials and appeals;

-- Modernize military sentencing by: replacing the current sentencing standard with a system of judicial discretion guided by parameters and criteria; ensuring each offense receives separate consideration for purposes of sentencing to confinement; and providing for effective implementation of sentencing reforms by establishing sentencing by military judges in all non-capital trials;

-- Streamline the post-trial process by eliminating redundant paperwork and requiring an entry of judgment by the military judge similar to federal civilian practice to mark the end of a court-martial;

-- Reform military appellate practice by: providing service members, like their civilian counterparts, with the opportunity to obtain judicial review in all cases; transforming the automatic appeal of cases to the service Courts of Criminal Appeals into an appeal of right in which the accused, upon advice of appellate defense counsel, would determine whether to file an appeal; focusing the appeal on issues raised by the parties and placing the burden to demonstrate factual insufficiency on the accused; establishing standards to review errors in guilty pleas similar to that in federal criminal cases; and permitting the government to appeal a sentence under conditions similar to those applied by federal civilian courts of appeals; and

-- Update the punitive articles by proposing new offenses, including Article 93a (Prohibited activities with military recruits and trainee by person in position of special trust); Article 121a (Fraudulent use of credit and debit cards); Article 123 (Offense concerning government computers); and Article 132 (Retaliation); and aligning the definition of "sexual act" in Article 120 with federal civilian criminal law.

The release said that the Defense Department looks forward to working with Congress as lawmakers consider the recommendations.

The full report of the Military Justice Review Group, the legislative proposal forwarded to Congress, and a section-by-section analysis of the legislative proposal can be found at <http://www.dod.gov/dodgc/mjrg.html>

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/638108/defense-department-proposes-ucmj-changes?source=GovDelivery>

51. Navy releases 20 courts-martial verdicts for November

(29 Dec) Navy Times, Staff Report

The Navy handed down 20 verdicts via courts-martial in November, with charges ranging from cruelty to a subordinate to stalking and wire fraud.

These are the November verdicts via general and special court-martial, arranged by region. The Navy withholds accused's identity in cases where they were found not guilty.

NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC

General Court-Martial

- In Norfolk, Virginia, Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Airman Warren D. Brown pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to sexual assault and wrongful use of marijuana. On Nov. 18, the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a Dishonorable Discharge, to forfeit all pay and allowances, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 86 months. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, confinement greater than 18 months will be suspended and remitted.

Special Court-Martial

- In Great Lakes, Illinois, Information Systems Technician 3rd Class Chasity M. Thomas pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to false official statements, stalking, general disorder and the following assimilated federal offenses: wire fraud, communicating a threat, using a telecommunications device to threaten or harass, and attempting to utilize a telecommunications device to threaten or harass. On Nov. 4, the military judge sentenced her to a bad-conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-3 and confinement for six months. The pretrial agreement had no effect on her sentence.
- In Norfolk, Virginia, an E-6 was tried for failure to obey a lawful order and assault consummated by a battery. On Nov. 6, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty.
- In Norfolk, Virginia, Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Joshua W. Abshire pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to violation of a lawful general order, false official statement, sale of military property, larceny and attempted larceny. On Nov.

18 , the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a bad-conduct discharge, to forfeit two-thirds pay and allowances per month for eight months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for eight months. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, the forfeitures will be waived/disapproved, and the bad-conduct discharge is to be suspended and remitted pending administrative discharge. The suspended punitive discharge may be ordered executed, and the waived/disapproved portion of the sentence may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.

NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST

General Court-Martial

- In Pensacola, Florida, Master Chief Hospital Corpsman Shanon Best was tried for rape and obstruction of justice. On 5 November, the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty to all charges and sentenced him to be discharged with a Dishonorable Discharge and confinement for 30 years.
- In Jacksonville, Florida, Hospitalman Joseph E. Harris pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to aggravated assault, violation of a lawful order, and fleeing the scene of an accident. On Nov. 20, the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a Dishonorable Discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for three years. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, confinement greater than 30 months is to be suspended and remitted. The suspended confinement may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.

Special Court-Martial

- In Jacksonville, Florida, Hospitalman Sharon Meinders was tried for false official statement. On Nov. 18, the panel of members returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced her to a fine of \$1,030 and confinement for four months.

NAVY REGION NORTHWEST

General Court-Martial

- In Bremerton, Washington, Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuels) 1st Class Robert E. Miller pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to sexual abuse of a child. On Nov. 2, the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a dishonorable , reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 15 years. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, confinement greater than 12 years is to be suspended and remitted. The suspended confinement may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.
- In Bremerton, Washington, Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class Mark J. Winiecki pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to rape and sexual assault of a child, child endangerment and obstruction of justice. On Nov. 10, the military judge sentenced him to be discharged dishonorably, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 25 years. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, forfeitures are to be waived/disapproved for the benefit of the family and confinement greater than 258 months, or 246 months if the accused successfully completes an offered sex offender treatment program, is to be suspended and remitted. The waived/disapproved and suspended portions of the sentence may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.
- In Bremerton, Washington, Aviation Support Equipment Technician 2nd Class Adam Walker pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to assault upon a child under the age of 16 years. On Nov. 13, the military judge sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-3, and confinement for six months. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.
- In Bremerton, Washington, Culinary Specialist Seaman Victor I. Gargurevich pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to possession of child pornography. On Nov. 13, the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a bad-conduct discharge , reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for four years. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.

Special Court-Martial

- In Bremerton, Washington, Interior Communications Electrician 1st Class Adam J. Ravenscraft pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to wrongful disposition and larceny of military equipment of a value more than \$500. On Nov. 6 , the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a bad-conduct discharge , reduction in rank to paygrade E-3, and confinement for one year. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.
- In Bremerton, Washington, Operations Specialist 2nd Class Durell L. Griffith pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to making a false official statement and larceny. On Nov. 18 , the military judge sentenced him to be discharged with a bad-conduct , reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 12 months. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.

- In Bremerton, Washington, Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 1st Class Robert L. Theel pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to stalking, indecent viewing and recording, and assault consummated by a battery. On Nov. 30, the military judge sentenced him to confinement for five months. The pretrial agreement had no effect on his sentence.

NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST

General Court-Martial

- In San Diego, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Nelson J. Mejia was tried for aggravated sexual abuse of a child, abusive sexual contact with a child, and fleeing from law enforcement. On Nov. 19, the panel of members returned a verdict of not guilty to aggravated sexual abuse of a child and abusive sexual contact with a child, but returned a verdict of guilty for fleeing from law enforcement. The panel of members sentenced him to reduction in rank to paygrade E-5 and restriction for 60 days.

Special Court-Martial

- In San Diego, Aircrew Survival Equipmentman 1st Class Joseph A. Quintero pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to assault consummated by a battery and disorderly conduct (drunkenness). On Nov. 16, the military judge sentenced him to forfeit \$1,000 pay per month for three months, a fine of \$2,475, and confinement for 90 days. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, confinement greater than 31 days is to be suspended and remitted. The suspended confinement may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.
- In San Diego, Airman Danton A. Oliver pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to unauthorized absence, wrongfully using cocaine, alprazolam, amphetamine, oxymorphone, and marijuana, and wrongfully distributing cocaine. On Nov. 24, the military judge sentenced him to a bad-conduct discharge, to forfeit \$120 per month for 12 months, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for 10 months. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, confinement greater than 90 days is to be suspended and remitted. The suspended confinement may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.

NAVY REGION JAPAN

General Court-Martial

- In Yokosuka, Japan, Fire Controlman 1st Class Jonathan A. Dodd pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to possessing child pornography. On Nov. 17, the military judge sentenced him to be discharged dishonorably, to forfeit all pay and allowances, reduction in rank to paygrade E-1, and confinement for eight years. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, the dishonorable will be commuted to a bad-conduct discharge, forfeitures greater than two-thirds pay per month for 12 months will be waived/disapproved, and confinement greater than 12 months is to be suspended and remitted. The punitive discharge may be approved as adjudged, and the waived/disapproved and suspended portions of the sentence may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.

Special Court-Martial

- In Yokosuka, Japan, Boatwain's Mate 2nd Class Ahmann W. Brooks pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to a violation of a lawful general order and possession and use of a controlled substance. On Nov. 24, the military judge sentenced him to a bad-conduct discharge, reduction in rank to paygrade E-3, and confinement for 90 days. Pursuant to the pretrial agreement, the bad-conduct discharge will be suspended and remitted pending an administrative discharge and confinement greater than 40 days is to be suspended. The punitive discharge may be approved and the suspended confinement may be served if the service member violates the terms of the pretrial agreement.

NAVY REGION EUROPE, AFRICA, SOUTHWEST ASIA

Special Court-Martial

- In Naples, Italy, Chief Personnel Specialist David L. Woods pleaded guilty pursuant to a pretrial agreement to violation of a lawful general regulation and cruelty and maltreatment of a subordinate. On Nov. 5, the military judge sentenced him to forfeit \$2,400 per month for 2 months, reduction in rank to paygrade to E-6, and restriction for two months.

<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/12/22/navy-releases-20-courts-martial-verdicts-november/77750230/>

52. USAF launches new strategy to curb sexual assault

(30 Dec) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

After years of mixed results with its sexual assault-prevention strategy, the Air Force is rolling out a new program that will do less lecturing and more encouraging of bystander intervention.

The Air Force has contracted with the non-profit organization Green Dot etc. to provide violence prevention tools to all airmen over the next three years, as its first step in the five-year strategy to decrease interpersonal violence across the service. From January to March, the first 1,500 volunteer trainers will attend one of 22 Green Dot preparation sessions worldwide so they can learn how to teach other airmen these strategies.

"It's on all of us to take responsibility to prevent interpersonal violence in our Air Force," Brig. Gen. Lenny Richoux, director of Air Force services and chair of its Community Action Information Board, which will help oversee Green Dot, said in a Wednesday release. "There are more good airmen out there who want to take care of their wingman than there are predators seeking to inflict acts of violence inside our family, and I have confidence our airmen won't let me or each other stand alone against this criminal behavior."

In a Wednesday interview, Andra Tharp – the Air Force's expert on preventing sexual assault and other forms of violence – said the new Green Dot system will hopefully do more than just teach bystanders how to step in when they see, for example, a sexual assault about to happen at a bar or drunken party. She hopes it will lead to a cultural change in how airmen think about all forms of interpersonal violence – not just sexual assault, but also domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, child abuse, elder abuse and bullying.

"The misnomer of bystander intervention is that it focuses only on high-risk situations," Tharp said. "But a true bystander approach focuses on culture change, in addition to intervening in these high-risk situations."

By using Green Dot to address multiple forms of interpersonal power-based violence, the Air Force hopes to consolidate its multiple violence-prevention strategies, which were sometimes redundant, Tharp said.

It also uses everyday airmen who have been specially trained – but not the usual messengers such as leaders or people who work in sexual assault or other violence prevention – to deliver that message. Tharp said airmen are more likely to listen to such peer-to-peer instruction than authority figures.

And the program will acknowledge that asking airmen to be active bystanders – that is, stepping in and stopping a possible assault from happening – can be difficult, Tharp said. There can be many barriers to intervening, such as peer pressure, or the fear of worsening the situation and causing further violence, she said, and it aims to teach them safe and effective ways to defuse a situation.

Green Dot also represents the Air Force's attempt to move away from its previous methods of trying to stop sexual assaults from happening, which had unintended consequences, Tharp said.

Tharp said that the old strategies that ended up in the field generally focused on telling "potential victims" – usually female airmen – what not to do or drink to reduce their risk of sexual assault. That ended up having the unintentional effect of blaming victims who had suffered sexual assaults and reinforcing the idea that women are weak and need to be protected, she said.

On the other hand, Tharp said, field discussions on consent and preventing perpetration of sexual assaults largely focused on telling men what not to do. Tharp also said the Air Force heard complaints from the field that there was too much focus on not telling sexist jokes as compared to rape prevention in the old system.

"Potential allies and helpers are feeling alienated and defensive because that's the message they're hearing from these approaches," Tharp said. "Not intended, but that's what they're hearing. So what Green Dot does is it acknowledges that the majority of people are never going to be ... either the victim or the perpetrator. So you have all of these people that can [be] supportive, that can be engaged in other ways of prevention. That message of, 'What can I do ... to prevent an assault from happening?' ... seems to be more well-received."

The new Green Dot system seeks to avoid that kind of a lecturing scenario. Tharp said that it will instead teach airmen how to intervene, such as by subtly and safely stepping in to defuse an escalating situation – while also acknowledging that this can be

difficult.

For example, she said, one college student who went through Green Dot training at his school was once at a party where he saw his friend taking a clearly intoxicated woman into an isolated room. That student feared his friend might have been about to sexually assault her, so he yelled that the friend's car was getting towed. While the friend checked on his car, the student and others stepped in to bring the woman back out of the room.

The potential assault was stopped without the friend losing face in an embarrassing scene, which kept the situation from escalating, Tharp said.

Tharp said that as airmen learn these bystander intervention tactics, they will absorb the lessons on how to prevent sexual assault or other violence from happening to themselves, or that they shouldn't commit these kinds of assaults.

"That's what we see in the studies," Tharp said. "Individuals who receive Green Dot don't just say they will be more active bystanders, but it's actually tied to a reduction in victimization and perpetration."

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/12/30/usaf-launches-new-strategy-to-curb-sexual-assault/78080892/>

53. Army's breastfeeding rules prove need for DoD-wide personnel policies

(4 Jan) Army Times Editorial

Of all the services, the Army was the last to adopt an official breastfeeding policy. The intent was to give clear guidance to commands and ensure female soldiers would have a safe, secure place to pump at work.

The service's first attempt, released in September, was a failure.

The policy was deemed ambiguous at best, and harmful to moms at worst (bathrooms, for instance, were deemed a suitable lactation station). Facing strong objections from breastfeeding experts and moms in uniform, the Army rewrote its policy — and it's much better. What's troubling is that it took the Army two attempts to create a policy that in the end looks a lot like those of the other services.

So why did it take time, manpower and even lobbying from Congress to get this policy right? Because the services prefer to create personnel policies on their own terms — and are allowed to do so. This too often leads to sub-par policies that needlessly require debate, revisions and a lot of hand-wringing. It is a tremendous waste of resources, including taxpayer money.

Another recent example of branch-specific policies when a common solution would be the best practice: female hair standards. All the services were operating by their own rules. A Defense Department review in 2014 found the Army and Air Force had racially insensitive policies and too restrictive bans on styles such as braids and twists. The Marine Corps subsequently launched its own review and now has the least restrictive rules of the bunch. The Navy, meanwhile, booted a female corpsman for refusing to cut her hair.

Then there's maternity leave. The Navy and Marine Corps recently expanded maternity leave to 18 weeks; the Air Force seems likely to follow. The Army? Still reviewing. Defense Secretary Ash Carter claims the military is "going to march in lockstep" on this issue. Then it should be a no-brainer, but so far it's taken months of debate. The solution is simple. DoD needs to step in on personnel matters such as these and issue policies mandatory for all services. Continued failure to do so would be the height of irresponsibility.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/opinion/2016/01/04/commentary-armys-breastfeeding-rules-prove-need-dod-wide-personnel-policies/78256222/>

54. Soldiers often marry young, and for good reasons

(5 Jan) Military Times, By Katelyn Clark

The military forces people to grow up fast — especially when it comes to marriage.

That's what military wife Wesley Ann Wade said when talking about marrying young in the military.

Wade and other military couples said the "young marriage complex" has existed for years when star-crossed lovers eloped just before deployments. This still exists today, according to several Clarksville couples, but sometimes for reasons that are much different.

Almost 43 percent of active duty members are 25 or younger and 23 percent range from 26 to 30 years old, according to the Department of Defense Demographics Report. Over half (56.1 percent) on active duty are married.

Add to those statistics the fact that the Army has the highest percentage of married members at almost 60 percent, according to the report.

So, there are still a lot of young military lads and ladies getting hitched. But why?

"Most people in their 30s and 40s don't see the stuff a 20-year-old soldier sees," Wesley Ann said. "I think marriage gives them a feeling of stability. Soldiers' lives are constantly in danger and a lot of them have lost friends at such a young age, so a lot of them live for the present. If they find someone they love or they want to start a family with, they want to do it now."

Wesley Ann and her husband William dated only 10 months before they got married. He was 21 and she was 23.

Almost five years later, they are still married with no children. William is a sergeant based at Fort Campbell with seven years of service under his belt.

"Marriage at a young age is a little bit harder because you are still figuring out who you are. But if you want the marriage to work, both people really have to give 110 percent — but that goes for any marriage at any age," Wesley Ann said.

With a total of 18 months in combat over two deployments, the Wades have been together since William's first. Wesley Ann said she wouldn't change a thing if she had to do it over. She said she would still marry young.

"I don't think marriage gets easier when you're older, you just face different life problems," said Wesley Ann.

Psychology of it all

Adding science to the mix, Dr. E.C. Hurley from the Soldier Center said there's more of a need to marry that's embedded into soldiers.

"There's this need for belonging — this attachment issue," said Hurley. "It's in human nature, but it's more so for the military. They want people who love them to remember them. They want children to carry on their legacy because there's this uncertainty of coming back."

Hurley said after this need, there are varying reasons for marrying young in the military ranging from economic gain, security and love.

The biggest issue young couples have in the military is adjusting to expectations and ideals, according to Hurley.

"After you get married, there's an adjustment of expectations or what it means to be married," said Hurley. "The spouse has to go through these adjustments where the soldier's commitment is 24/7."

Hurley said the spouse needs to understand and adapt to the uncertainty of the soldier being able to drop everything or leave the job when the spouse needs them.

"Sometimes the needs of the military come first," Hurley said. "Soldiers are taught that this mission is the most important thing.

"The soldiers have to balance the reality of the mission with the priority of marriage."

Military service adds more challenges to a marriage than a civilian union, and older couples tend to have more experience with having to deal with these types of challenges, according to Hurley.

Hurley said all marriages and even romantic relationships go through predictable phases, but young marriages are different because

they have this idea of what they want.

"They are in this bubble of ideals about what their hopes and dreams are for marriage," said Hurley.

Hurley has spent his life dedicated to the military. After 33 years serving as an Army chaplain and part of that time actually enlisted, Hurley now runs the Soldier Center in Clarksville where he works with soldiers and military families.

A re-do would be different

Kayla and Kriscijan Radic have been together for almost four years and married for two with no children. They decided to take their vows when Kayla was 18 and Kriscijan was 19.

When asked what they would do if they had to do it over, both Radics said they would have waited to marry instead of marrying young right away.

"There would be more everything if you wait, especially if you stay with them awhile," said Kriscijan. "Yes, the Army causes problems like not enough family time. They stress that they care about families, but not enough time is given. I had 10 days to deploy. No time was given for family. I went home every night around 8 p.m. That's why most Army people complain about marriage because you work hard all day to either come home to a fight or not seeing your family awake."

Both were in college when Kriscijan decided to join the Army and asked Kayla to marry him. Kayla left school in Virginia to join her husband at Fort Campbell after his relocation.

"I didn't see a long-distance relationship working out in the Army without marriage," said Kriscijan. "The paperwork made everything official and made us happier."

Kriscijan said he joined the Army because he wanted to be a cop and wanted to be the first in his family to serve, among other reasons. His family immigrated from Bosnia and Croatia.

Now, Kriscijan is a military policeman currently serving a nine-month deployment to Liberia, Africa.

"Barely seeing your loved ones because of their work schedule or not being able to go back home at any time is the hardest part," said Kayla. "We struggle with that the most."

Marrying young in the military has its perks, apparently. Kriscijan said he thinks military guys get married young for the extra money and to stay out of the barracks so they can get their own houses.

But, it doesn't come without its hardships.

"Honestly, all people go through struggles with marriage at any time, no matter the age," said Kayla. "Yes, it may seem harder when you're young, but you just have to know that you're going to get through it together."

Local stats on marriage and divorce

From Dec. 1, 2012 to Dec. 10, 2014, there were 4,039 marriage licenses issued for Montgomery County. In those same years, divorce numbers averaged in the 600 range.

In 2014, Montgomery County recorded 520 divorces where the couple did not have children and 610 divorces where the couple did have children. The 2014 statistics do not include statistics from December, but according to Circuit Court officials, they appear to be steady.

In 2013 and 2012, those numbers ranged from 630 to 665 in both types of divorce. In Montgomery County, marriage and divorce statistics are not broken up by military affiliation.

One for the books

While a junior in high school in a little town in Texas, Jon Boring happened to see Stephanie at a football game. He knew her older sister, who introduced him to the soon-to-be freshman. After that introduction, they started dating. Jon and Stephanie continued their relationship throughout high school and after he graduated.

It wasn't until a few semesters of community college had passed that Jon decided to join the Army at Fort Hood.

Two months after Stephanie graduated high school, Jon took a four-day pass to travel back home and marry his high school sweetheart.

She didn't move with him to Fort Hood until that next January, six months after their union.

"It really wasn't a well thought out plan," said Jon. "But, we knew each other really well. We started with absolutely nothing and worked our way through."

Two years later, he was assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment at Fort Campbell where they've been ever since.

In his 22 years of service, Jon and Stephanie faced 14 combat deployments, the birth of their three children, Dylen (19), Jacey (10), Mirabelle (19 months) and numerous trips away for training.

Jon said he credits his successful marriage to strong faith, a strong family upbringing and trial and error without giving up.

When asked about a re-do on marrying young, his answer was almost instantaneously no.

"I tend to believe everything happens for a reason," he said. "There's nothing that I wanted to do that I didn't do. We experienced everything together."

Jon said he thinks young military members get married so quickly because of young love and the ability to grow up faster.

"The military is a way for you to start earning and providing for a spouse faster than earning a degree through college," said Jon. "I would attribute it to impatience."

But once you get married, Jon said things change.

Money, being young and immature and separation from family were the three struggles Jon said are common issues in young military marriages.

Jon said they're some of the hardest things to overcome when trying to build a household.

"It can be easy to blame the military for marital problems," Jon said. "Yes, it makes it more difficult and can be taxing on a marriage, but it's not to blame for divorce. If (divorce is) going to happen, it's going to happen."

For 21 years, Stephanie has been Jon's rock, but Jon said he would caution any young military couple wanting to tie the knot.

"I would say give it some time, give it a year," said Jon. "Let them see what it's like to be around you when you're deployed because everything changes. They have to have a complete understanding of what military life is."

"Research. Talk to people who've been there and let your spouse get to know the people in your unit. That would be my advice."

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/01/05/soldiers-often-marry-young-and-good-reasons/78296166/>

55. Family Support Class Reduces Symptoms of Anxiety, Depression: Report

(5 Jan) Military.Com, By Amy Bushatz

Troops and [family members](#) who participated in a military-run emotional support and family communication class had their anxiety and depression symptoms halved six months after leaving the program, according to a new report from the University of California,

Los Angeles.

Researchers examined military family members at 15 bases with high troop deployments who used the so-called Families Overcoming Under Stress, or FOCUS, program. About 3,500 adults and 3,810 children were examined in the report, which looked at data gathered between 2008 and 2013.

Of the family members examined, about 23 percent of adults were at risk for depression and anxiety symptoms when they started the program while 30 percent of children had behavior problems identified by their parents, the report states. At the six-month mark, however, those rates had dropped to 11 and 14 percent, respectively.

The eight-week program teaches communication skills to participants using a set curriculum developed by UCLA in 2008. Initially offered at a handful of [Marine Corps](#) and [Navy](#) installations, it's now used at 20 [bases](#) worldwide.

The effort is beneficial because it combines communication help with individualized support, according to Patricia Lester, who helped develop the program and co-authored the report.

"It's really reaching into the community, meeting people where they live, where they go to school," she said in an interview with Military.com. "It's not one-size-fits-all. It's where your family is at, what are your needs and really integrating that in a way that's useful to families."

Although researchers stopped their check-ins with families after six months, Lester said she expects that emotional health improvements likely leveled off over time, especially if the families continued to experience new stress and did not receive additional training or reminders about what they had been taught.

Still, she said, the report offers concrete, statistical evidence shows that the program and other, similar interventions are successful.

"Everybody always says 'These things sound nice, but where's the data?'" Lester said. "I think this helps make the case – yeah, people are using the program, they stayed in the program, they improved using it."

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2016/01/05/family-support-class-reduces-symptoms-anxiety-depression-report.html>

56. Air Force Academy athlete accused of groping female cadet faces Article 32

(6 Jan) Air Force Times, By Oriana Pawlyk

An Air Force Academy athlete accused of sexually assaulting a female cadet faces an Article 32 hearing Wednesday.

Cadet 3rd Class Jackson Spalding, a track and field athlete, is accused of "groping a female cadet's breast, fondling her genitalia and shoving his groin in her face while saying: 'You know you want to,' " according to court documents obtained by the [Colorado Springs Gazette](#). The incident allegedly occurred March 6 at the academy.

The hearing will determine if the charges are sustainable to head to court-martial.

Spalding was charged Dec. 17 with three specifications alleging sexual assault and abusive sexual contact in violation of Article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and one specification alleging conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman in violation of Article 133, according to an academy news release.

Two other cadets face courts-martial on sexual assault allegations:

- Cadet 2nd Class Mark Czerner will be court-martialed April 18, the Gazette said. On Aug. 26, Czerner [was charged](#) with two counts of sexual assault and one count of wrongful sexual contact in violation of Article 120 of the UCMJ. Czerner on or about Feb. 14 allegedly had sex with a woman and digitally penetrated her without her consent, and touched her breast and inner thigh without her consent.
- Cadet Zach Chubb will be court-martialed Feb. 8; Chubb was charged March 16 with one count of sexual assault and one count of abusive sexual contact in violation of Article 120 of the UCMJ. Chubb [allegedly penetrated](#) a woman with his finger and touched her buttocks without her consent on Oct. 18, 2014.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/crime/2016/01/06/air-force-academy-athlete-accused-groping-female-cadet-faces-article-32/78354148/>

57. Third Air Force Academy cadet headed to court over sexual-assault allegations

(7 Jan) The Gazette, By Tom Roeder

An Air Force Academy track and field athlete faces a Wednesday hearing on charges that he sexually assaulted a female cadet at the school.

Sophomore cadet Jackson Spalding earned four state titles in shot put and discus for Discovery Canyon High School before moving on to the academy. He's charged with groping a female cadet's breast, fondling her genitalia, and shoving his groin in her face while saying "You know you want to," court papers say.

Wednesday's hearing will examine whether there's sufficient evidence to court-martial him for the March 6 incident.

An all-conference offensive lineman on the Discovery Canyon football team, Spalding won 2014 state titles in shot put and discus.

"He is a great young man who has a great attitude as he tackles his rehabilitation," Discovery Canyon athletic director Sharon Lauer told in 2014 *The Gazette* as Spalding worked to recover from a torn knee ligament before winning the titles.

As a freshman at the academy, Spalding won the discus at the New Mexico Quadrangular and was one of the school's top shot putters.

The charges against him were issued Dec. 17. The academy said the three counts of sexual assault and single charge of conduct unbecoming an officer stem from a single incident.

He's the third academy cadet who will appear in court on sexual assault allegations in the coming weeks.

Cadet Zach Chubb is set for a Feb. 8 court-martial on allegations that he fondled a classmate and forced her to touch his genitalia in 2014. Cadet Mark Czerner is scheduled for court-martial April 18 on allegations that he raped a female classmate on Valentine's Day.

<http://gazette.com/third-air-force-academy-cadet-headed-to-court-over-sexual-assault-allegations/article/1567089>

58. Reports of Sexual Assaults Spike at Military Academies

(8 Jan) Associated Press, By Lolita C. Baldor

Reports of sexual assaults at the three military academies surged by more than 50 percent in the 2014-15 school year, and complaints of sexual harassment also spiked, according to Pentagon officials.

A senior defense official said that the sharp increases were due largely to students' growing confidence in the reporting system and expanded awareness programs that over the past several years have included training, videos and information sessions for both students and leaders. The programs have been aimed at making victims more aware of the reporting process and more comfortable seeking help.

But the dramatic increases raise nagging questions about whether criminal assaults and harassment are on the rise or if the numbers actually reflect a growing willingness of victims to come forward.

"I think it's appropriate for people to feel frustrated about hearing this in the news. Bottom line is that if this were an easy problem, we would have solved it years ago," said Nate Galbreath, the senior executive adviser for the Pentagon's sexual assault prevention office. "Unfortunately, this is a very hard problem to solve."

According to the report documents reviewed by the AP, there were 91 reported sexual assaults over the last school year at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, [Maryland](#), the U.S. Military Academy at [West Point](#), New York, and the U.S. Air Force Academy in [Colorado](#), compared to 59 during the 2013-14 school year.

Reports of assaults went up at all three of the schools, but the number nearly doubled at the Air Force Academy, jumping from 25 to 49.

At the same time, the number of sexual harassment complaints spiked by 40 percent, to a total of 28 during the last school year. According to the documents, the most sexual harassment complaints were at the Naval Academy, with 13. There were seven at West

Point and eight at the Air Force Academy.

Asked about the Air Force increases, officials said the decrease in assaults during the 2013-14 school year may have been an anomaly, and the latest totals were closer to the norm in previous years. Air Force cadets, they said, also seem to be much more aware of the sexual assault prevention and response coordinators on campus and may be more willing to file reports.

The Air Force, however, has seen a number of public sexual assault scandals in recent years, including incidents involving members of academy sports teams.

Galbreath said a key recommendation this year is for the academies to put more emphasis on sexual harassment prevention and training, because often harassment leads to assault. Discussions with focus groups and other studies found that while students are very familiar with how to report sexual assaults and how to treat victims, they didn't know as much about what makes up sexual harassment and what to do about it.

One problem is that sexual harassment is handled by the various military Equal Opportunity offices, while sexual assault issues are handled by the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Offices.

"That improved emphasis on sexual harassment will likely lead to prevention of sexual assault," Galbreath said. "We are smarter now and we know that a lot of other factors are beginning to play into prevention work."

He said that cadets and midshipmen need to be taught more about the connection between sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Senior Pentagon leaders have consistently argued for years that increased reporting is a good thing, because it suggests that victims are now more willing to come forward. Sexual assault in civilian and military society have historically been a vastly underreported crime because victims often fear reprisals or stigma, or they worry that they won't be believed or don't want to go through the emotional turmoil of a court case.

But officials acknowledged Thursday that it is often difficult to tell how much of the increase in numbers stems from more crime or more reporting.

An anonymous survey of military academy students during the 2013-14 school year showed that fewer students said they had experienced unwanted sexual contact than in previous years. Unwanted contact ranges from inappropriate touching to rape. The surveys are done every other year, so there wasn't one accompanying this latest report. One will be done this spring for inclusion in the next report.

Galbreath also said that the increased training and education on sexual assault prevention has led more students to come forward to report assaults that happened before they joined the academies. Of the 91 reports for the last school year, eight were for assaults that happened before the student entered the military service.

As part of the report, there were 10 focus group sessions in March and April — seven with students and three with faculty and staff. Almost 200 students and nearly 100 faculty and staff took part.

Officials said that the discussions with students, faculty and staff in focus groups revealed some progress in attitudes about harassment, including an increasing number of students who talk about taking a more active role in preventing or objecting to harassing comments, including those in online social media sites.

The 2013 anonymous survey revealed a broad culture of bad behavior and disrespect among athletes at the military academies, including widespread complaints that students often feel they need to put up with sexist and offensive behavior as part of their school life. Elizabeth Van Winkle, who coordinated the focus groups, said that similar complaints about sports teams were voiced during the focus groups, but it was unclear how current the problems were.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/reports-sexual-assaults-spike-military-academies-36158942>

59. Letter to Charter Members, Members and Supporters

(4 Jan) *Women in Military Service for America Foundation, By Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Wilma L. Vaught, USAF*

Dear Charter Members, Members and Supporters,

Greetings and happy New Year! As we enter 2016, the 30th year since legislation passed authorizing the Women's Memorial and the 19th year of the Memorial's operation, it seems a fitting time for reflection and decision on my part.

This past year marked my 29th year as president of the Women's Memorial Foundation—and I must say it has been an amazing and rewarding 29 years and one of the most gratifying times of my life. I knew, however, the time had come for the Foundation to transition to new leadership so that we capitalize on new technologies and strategies for business and communication and the enthusiasm and commitment of a younger generation of leaders. Like you, I want to assure our extraordinary Women In Military Service For America Memorial remains a viable center for learning about women's service to the nation and that there is a place where our individual stories are preserved and visible for generations to come.

I am grateful to announce that I will be leaving the Foundation in the very capable hands of retired Army Major General Dee Ann McWilliams. MG McWilliams is intimately familiar with the Foundation, having been a member of our board of directors since 2007 and serving as the board of directors vice chair since 2014. She took the helm as the Foundation president January 1, 2016. I'm confident you will be especially pleased with this extraordinary leader. Click [here](#) for an introduction to the general. We'll be updating the website with MG McWilliams' biography in the very near future.

In the meantime, I will be staying on at the Foundation with the title "president emeritus," assisting in the transition, working on a few projects and continuing to speak locally and around the country about the Memorial and the service of military women. MG McWilliams will be doing the heavy lifting and making decisions.

It has been a remarkable 29 years. I am very proud of what we've done. Thanks to many of you, we changed the face of monumental Washington, adding military women to those the nation honors. Today, the Women's Memorial is one of only three major edifices in the entire nation to focus on women—and the only one to focus on military women! I believe we helped give military women a voice and a presence in discussions about our armed forces and finally in our history books. We established our own publishing arm, Military Women's Press, publishing a handful of books, our annual calendar and Women's History Month posters. Our world-class archive of artifacts and memorabilia related to women's service is the largest of its kind in the world, along with our growing oral history collection, which is supported by a corps of nationwide volunteers. These and our small research library have helped countless scholars, historians, journalists, television and movie producers and writers of all kinds tell the story of women's service. As I write, 259, 224 women have taken their rightful place in history by registering their service with the Memorial. While it is less than 10 per cent of military women, past and present, it is still substantial. The registrations reflect military women's remarkable legacy of patriotism, service, commitment and bravery—a vital and important part of women's history, our military history and American history. For that reason, I will continue to urge women to register and hope you will too.

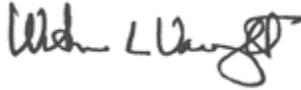
As I pass the torch to MG McWilliams, I ask for your continued support of the Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation. Thanks to your sustained support and donations, nearly 3 million visitors—some from nations where women aren't even permitted to drive—have learned of the service of women in our nation's defense; and boys and girls from across America have seen the accomplishments of their grandmothers, mothers, aunts and sisters honored in a major national memorial. It is a powerful statement.

I especially want to thank the World War II women for their deep and enduring support of the Women's Memorial Foundation as well as their trust in me. Without them and their immeasurable commitment of time, talent and monetary contributions, the Women's Memorial would never have come to be. My simple "thank you" just doesn't seem enough. Moreover, your service secured a permanent place in our nation's armed forces for the women who followed. You changed America and the world for women. Again, I thank you.

Lastly, I want to formally acknowledge and thank our small but talented and faithful Memorial and Foundation staffs for their commitment to the Memorial and military women. I am always amazed at how much we have been able to accomplish with so little, even as we continued to downsize to meet financial constraints. You are the best and I would gladly serve with you again.

My very best wishes to all of you. Let us look forward to a bright future for the Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation and a thriving Memorial.

Sincerely,



Brig. Gen. Wilma L. Vaught, USAF (Ret.)
President Emeritus

<http://www.womensmemorial.org/>

60. Female Army vet leads 'dream team' to fight ISIS in Iraq

(5 Jan) Army Times, By Oriana Pawlyk

Dozens of Americans [have left the comforts of home](#) fueled by atrocities Islamic State militants have ravaged against their countrymen in Iraq and Syria, but also in places like Paris, and most recently, San Bernardino, California.

Just south of the city of Kirkuk, Iraq, another group of Americans not sanctioned by the U.S. military have entered the battlefield. The small team, comprised of American and foreign fighters with various specialties, hopes to rescue injured Kurdish forces as they battle Islamic State aggressors in their area of Daquq.

A former Army officer who operates under the alias "Kat Argo", and five other volunteers make up "[Qalubna Ma'kum](#)," translated from Arabic to mean, "Our hearts are with you."

"In a lot of ways, I feel like I'm more effective here than I when was in the military," Argo said in a telephone interview with Army Times Dec. 22. "We have the liberty of movement here, and...we're not limited to U.S.-only expertise."

Argo requested Army Times not use her real name, citing security concerns. Army Times verified Argo's service background with the National Guard.

Argo has assembled what she calls her "dream team" with the few who have backgrounds in intel, marksmanship, humanitarian assistance, medical treatment and mechanics. Argo recruited a former Navy corpsman, Michael Wagnon, who's been by her side since they conceived the idea last year. "We also go to places in the area the U.S. military may not consider a payoff, but we think going to them is important. It's enough for others to trust us and cooperate with us," Argo said.

In 2004, Argo enlisted in the Army National Guard before commissioning as a junior officer in 2007. She deployed a few times to Afghanistan, and even after she left the Army in 2012, she worked as an intelligence contractor for NATO in Kabul and later for Central Command until 2013. She also spent almost a year on the eastern front of Ukraine, documenting the hostility between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian forces as a freelance journalist.

One separatist has since joined her in their fight to curtail the Islamic State because "ISIS is the universal threat," she said. "It's the one enemy that unifies everybody, and it's the non-controversial enemy to have."

The CASEVAC group has only been in Iraq four weeks, but have already seen fighting from the Islamic State group, also known as ISIL or ISIS. The first night they arrived to the undisclosed base operated by the Peshmerga — Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq — ISIS militants repurposed propane tanks on slingshots and "began flinging them at us," Argo said. The ISIS fighters aren't ever more than six miles away from their location; the front lines of fighting, even closer.

"Our group wants to emphasize the medical and training side," Argo said, even though their team carries weapons — AK and G3 rifles. "When you're fighting ISIS, you need to emphasize all of your training to be effective on the front, including that you know how to fight."

The Qalubna Ma'kum group is looking forward to opening new lines of communication. "I'm the first female in this sector," she said, giving a glimpse inside the Kurdish force structure, which she says her group has assimilated to while they operate out of their base. Even in a patriarchal society, it shows a female's willingness to help, and "boosts their trust," she said.

Argo and her team believe they are risking their lives for the greater good. The Defense Department has not weighed in on former service members fighting the Islamic State on their own, but the State Department has repeatedly tried to discourage U.S. citizens

from doing so.

In the next few weeks, Argo hopes to train more Peshmerga fighters in basic medical assistance; with too many obstacles on the Syrian front, Qalubna Ma'kum plans to work solely in Iraq, and is asking for [donations](#) so they can effectively acquire more medical equipment, and a truck they anticipate will be their ambulance. They will provide evacuations from front lines to the Kurdish base, where they have three rooms to use as their clinic.

Argo said she has heard of some U.S. military being in the area, but hasn't seen them. She said she plans to send any legitimate information to former colleagues still in the Army if her team believes it will help.

"We want to push ourselves to the next level and become a mobile team — we can go in further, speed the injured to the rear faster, and get them all the way to a long term care facility and a sterile environment within the golden hour if necessary," Qalubna Ma'kum advocates on their IndieGoGo donations [website](#), where they wish to also acquire a drone for extra surveillance. "Our fighting unit can also be more aggressive, and participate in the fight."

Argo and her team will stay between eight and 12 months.

"Because it's voluntary, there's no harm, no foul if people can't stay the full time," she said. "But those of us who started this, we hope we can hand it off to someone else to keep it going. For me, my family has gotten used to the multiple deployments, and they're supportive of this project. They think this could lead to something good if we work hard enough."

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/2016/01/05/female-army-vet-leads-dream-team-fight-isis-iraq/77960606/>

61. This female pilot was denied equal pay during WWII. Now Arlington Cemetery bars her remains.

(6 Jan) The Washington Post, By Sarah Kaplan

Elaine Harmon and her comrades flew Army planes across the country. They helped train pilots on how to operate aircraft and instruments. They towed targets behind them while soldiers below fired live ammunition during training. Harmon was aware that her service could cost her life: For 38 other women, it did.

But few people in 1944 wanted Harmon or women like her to be part of the military. Not Harmon's mother, who believed that Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) "were all just awful, just probably loose women" and was ashamed that her daughter would be one of them. Not civilian male pilots, who felt threatened by the female recruits. And not Congress, which voted down a bill that would have granted the female pilots military status for fiscal and political reasons. As World War II drew to a close, the program was disbanded and largely forgotten. It wasn't until the Air Force began accepting women for pilot training in 1970 that anyone remembered women had flown for the military previously, and it was not until 1977 that the female pilots were finally granted veteran status.

Harmon, who helped campaign for WASPs to get that status, was at the first full veteran's funeral for a WASP in 2002. It was a world apart from the brief affairs she had attended before, when urns containing a woman's ashes were unceremoniously placed inside an outdoor structure at Arlington National Cemetery. It made Harmon proud to know that she also would be afforded full military honors when her time came — in [April of last year](#).

Which is why Terry Harmon, Elaine's 69-year-old daughter, was angered when Secretary of the Army John McHugh reversed the old rule and said that ashes of WASPs can no longer be inurned at Arlington Cemetery.

"These women have been fighting this battle, off and on, for over 50 years now," Terry Harmon told the [Associated Press](#).

Now Harmon's relatives are working to overturn McHugh's decision. A [Change.org](#) petition to incoming Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning asking him to make WASPs and other "active duty designees" eligible for inurnment at Arlington Cemetery has garnered more than 28,000 signatures as of Wednesday morning. Terry Harmon also hopes that Congress will bring the issue up at Fanning's confirmation hearing.

The WASPs were formed midway into World War II, when the huge numbers of service members being sent overseas meant the military was in need of pilots who could ferry planes across the country, test-fly repaired aircraft and help with combat pilot training. According to the [AP](#), General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, who commanded the Army Air Forces in World War II, created the WASPs

intending for the women pilots to gain full military status, but Congress never approved it.

Harmon, a 25-year-old from Maryland with a husband overseas, joined up in 1944.

The civilian pilot's training program needed to qualify for the WASPs required a parent's permission, which Harmon knew her disapproving mother would never grant. So she quietly sent the permission forms to her father's office, she said in a [2006 interview](#), and he signed them instead.

"Back in those days, women weren't expected do things like this, and so many people were against the idea of women flying, endangering their lives," she said.

During training in Sweetwater, Tex., Harmon and the other women in the roughly 1,000-person paramilitary program lived according to military standards. They slept in concrete barracks without insulation and dressed in the closest approximation of a uniform they could find. (The WASPs weren't issued uniforms by the Army until well into the program.)

"We fully expected — we'd been told we'd be taken into the military eventually," she [said in 2006](#). "We took the same oath of office that the men took. We drilled. ... We went to bed at night with taps, and we got up in the morning with reveille."

But the female pilots were not considered true members of the military. They earned less, for one. They weren't given insurance to fly. They got no G.I. benefits. During training, they paid for their own food, room and board. Harmon [recalled](#) how, when a woman in the program got into an accident and was killed, the other WASPs passed a hat around to collect money to send her body home — the Army wouldn't pay for it.

Throughout the summer of 1944, Congress was considering a bill that would have militarized the WASPs. But it seemed unlikely to pass.

"There was a lot of negativeness about taking us into the military because at that point there was a lot of politics, for one thing," Harmon explained in 2006. "We were told [to] keep our mouths shut, don't do anything. We were good little girls, and we did that."

"Today," she continued, "we wouldn't have done that."

By the time Harmon graduated from training in November 1944 and flew out to her station at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, it was clear that her days as a pilot were numbered. She was among the penultimate class of WASPs before the program was disbanded the following month.

Records of the WASP program were classified for 35 years after the end of the war, according to the [Baltimore Sun](#).

"She said the reason the program was kept secret was because the government was afraid if enemy nations found out the USA was 'so desperate' to allow women to fly planes, it would be seen as a weakness," Harmon's granddaughter, Erin Miller of Silver Spring, Md., told [the Sun](#) last year.

Whether that suspicion was correct, recognition was a long time coming for the WASPs after the war. They were not recognized as veterans until 1977. But in 2009, about 200 still-living WASPs were [awarded](#) the Congressional Gold Medal — the highest civilian honor bestowed by Congress.

She looked forward to being interred at Arlington Cemetery, among the women she served with, her family said.

But Army spokesman Paul Prince told the [Associated Press](#) that WASPs are only eligible for burial at cemeteries run by the Department of Veterans Affairs; Arlington Cemetery is run by the Army, and its superintendent had no authority to allow WASPs' remains into the cemetery, he said.

Arlington Cemetery, which is running out of room, faces increasing pressure over eligibility requirements for internment, according to the [Associated Press](#), and strict rules govern whose ashes can be laid to rest there. The rule that bars WASPs from internment also covers tens of thousands of others who served in paramilitary or other capacities. In fact, the most-affected group is the Merchant Marine, which had nearly 250,000 members serve during WWII.

But Harmon's family says the WASPs are just asking for what they've earned, and that the small number of WASPs remaining seems unlikely to strain the cemetery's capacity.

The WASPs "are a distinct group of women with the surviving 100-or-so women all in their 90s," Texas Woman's University history professor Kate Landeck told the [Associated Press](#). "It is just mean-spirited for the secretary of the Army to question their value to their country. Again."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/01/06/during-wwii-the-u-s-denied-this-female-pilot-equal-pay-and-gi-benefits-now-arlington-cemetery-is-barring-her-remains/>

62. Congresswoman fights ban on burying female WWII pilots at Arlington

(7 Jan) Air Force Times, By Stephen Losey

Rep. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., on Wednesday introduced a bill that would allow the cremated remains of women who flew non-combat missions during World War II to be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery.

The WASP Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act would overturn former Army Secretary John McHugh's decision earlier this year to not allow the Women Airforce Service Pilots, or WASPs, to be inurned at the storied cemetery.

McSally, a retired Air Force colonel and the first female fighter pilot to fly in combat, said that WASP pilots have been eligible for inurnments at Arlington since 2002, but McHugh revoked that eligibility in early 2015.

"This decision is simply appalling," McSally said. "At a time when we are opening all positions to women, the Army is closing Arlington to the pioneers who paved the way for pilots like me and all women to serve in uniform. It doesn't make sense."

In a Tuesday blog post, Arlington National Cemetery said that's not quite what happened.

The cemetery said that the confusion stemmed from a law allowing the secretary of Defense to declare certain groups as active duty to make them eligible for certain Veterans Affairs Department benefits, such as burial and inurnment at national cemeteries maintained by VA.

But Arlington is not run by VA, the cemetery said. The cemetery's administration made a mistake when officials misinterpreted that law and granted eligibility to some WASPs before 2010. McHugh clarified the eligibility issue in 2015, and said those who were mistakenly inurned there would remain.

And because space is extremely limited, the cemetery said, it must be more stringent on its eligibility criteria.

"WASPs have never been eligible either for inurnment or burial at Arlington," the cemetery said. "The service of Women Airforce Service Pilots during World War II is highly commendable and, while certainly worthy of recognition, it does not, in itself, reach the level of active duty service required for inurnment at Arlington National Cemetery."

McSally said the issue of WASP eligibility was brought up by the family of former WASP Elaine Harmon, who died in April. Harmon's family tried to inurn her in Arlington, but was rejected.

"This was our grandmother's last wish and we want to see this through," Whitney Miller, Harmon's granddaughter, said in McSally's release.

According to the Air Force's Historical Studies Division, the WASP program graduated 1,074 female pilots during World War II. The women ferried combat aircraft across the country, towed airborne targets for gunnery training, and trained combat pilots. Thirty-eight died during the war – 11 were killed during training, and the other 27 died during missions.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2016/01/07/congresswoman-fights-ban-burying-female-wwii-pilots-arlington/78377124/>