

# **DEFENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE SERVICES (DACOWITS)**

## **Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

**13–14 June 2017**

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) held a quarterly business meeting on June 13 and 14, 2017. The meeting took place at the Association of the United States Army Convention Center, 2425 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22201.

**13 June 2017**

### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Ms. Jessica Myers, DACOWITS Acting Director, opened the June quarterly business meeting by reviewing the Committee’s establishment and charter. Ms. Myers then turned the meeting over to Gen (Ret.) Janet Wolfenbarger, DACOWITS Chair. Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger welcomed the public to the meeting and asked all Committee members and meeting attendees to introduce themselves.

### **Status of Requests for Information**

Ms. Myers reviewed the status of the Committee’s requests for information (RFIs). The Committee received responses to eight of its RFIs. The response to RFI 6, related to the Marine Corps’ potential decision to fully gender-integrate recruit training, will be provided at the September quarterly business meeting; the Marine Corps’ study of this topic was still ongoing at the time of the June meeting. Ms. Myers added that, on the second day of the June 2017 meeting, the Committee will also be briefed on the findings from the focus groups the Committee members conducted in April and May 2017. The Committee will also receive a special briefing from the Marine Corps on its response to the inappropriate use of social media by some of its members.

### **Panel Discussion: Assignments to Key Developmental Positions (RFI 3)**

DACOWITS heard from a senior leader that the Air Force is exploring the “Rooney Rule” in screening and assigning junior officers to key developmental positions. The “Rooney Rule,” first used in the National Football League, requires that a qualified minority candidate be included on the slate of consideration for key jobs. The Committee requested a briefing from the Military Services on techniques like the “Rooney Rule” that the Services are using to provide a broader look into creating a more diverse force. DACOWITS inquired whether any ideas or approaches for growing a diverse force were being inhibited by legal interpretation.

Army: Ms. Susan Gordon, Chief Diversity Officer, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Diversity and Leadership

Ms. Gordon began her briefing with an overview of the “Rooney Rule.” She said the Army uses practices similar to this rule to ensure diversity is a consideration when staffing senior-level positions as well as developmental positions in the leadership pipeline. She noted that the “Rooney Rule” had evolved over time and indicated that some organizations in corporate America have used approaches similar to the rule to increase the number of women or to diversify certain positions, whereas other organizations have applied such approaches more broadly. She explained the Army based its diversity inclusion strategy on the overall Army mission and readiness strategy. The Army examined the “Rooney Rule” and comparable practices to determine whether they effectively increase diversity and what will be effective in the future. She noted that the population is changing and that experts have predicted that by 2050, there will be no racial or ethnic majority or minority in the United States.

Ms. Gordon then discussed the techniques the Army is using to create a more diverse and inclusive work force. She described how the Army has established an active diversity council led by the Secretary of the Army and the Army’s Chief of Staff. The Army Diversity Council is responsible for inclusion, engagement, accountability, and results throughout the Army. Ms. Gordon said it was a best practice to have senior leaders visibly directing the effort to promote it throughout the organization. There is also an Army Diversity Working Group, which is led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Diversity and Leadership Warren Whitlock. The working group is composed of colonels and GS-15-level civilian employees nominated by the Army Diversity Council. The working group’s responsibility is to inform senior leaders about its activities and to recommend diversity-related topics for consideration by the Army Diversity Council. The Army also has a Core Diversity Leadership Group, which is also led by Mr. Whitlock. It is composed of general officers and senior executive Service members. This working group develops policy within the legal, human resources, and talent management fields and adds another layer of engagement and accountability as the Service implements its Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

In 2010, the Army developed its first Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan to serve as a roadmap for and increase awareness of diversity and inclusion. This strategic plan is what led to the formation of the Army Diversity Council and the working groups. Ms. Gordon explained that the Army is updating the strategic plan to ensure it includes best practices for increasing diversity. The Army is also drafting an implementation plan to make sure it is gradually increasing diversity; the implementation plan will include a review of year-over-year improvements during the next 5 years. Developing the implementation plan has included identifying key developmental positions needed to reach the senior levels of leadership for military and civilian Army staff. The Army Diversity Council and the working groups are reviewing the implementation plan to ensure it is aligned with the future needs of the Army.

Marine Corps: LtCol Scott O. Meredith, Manpower Management Officer Assignments

LtCol Meredith began his briefing by reiterating the Marine Corps’s diversity policy, which is to ensure equal opportunity in assignments for all Marines without regard to gender. He explained that a merit-based system is used to assess all Marines. LtCol Meredith discussed the three key components of the Marine Corps’ approach to ensure a diverse force: it maintains centralized selection boards, provides centralized counseling to help Marines make important career-related

decisions, and ensures the appropriate provision of key assignments. The selection boards for education and command positions are centralized to prevent local bias and ensure equal consideration for all Marines because these positions are the most critical assignments to build the foundation for promotion in the Marine Corps. The selection boards follow a formal process and include a diverse range of members to ensure that all who are considered are evaluated properly. All eligible Marines are considered and briefed at these boards. Each Marine selected by the board is then given a comprehensive evaluation by the career field monitors to determine the best location, assignment, or education for that Marine.

LtCol Meredith acknowledged that junior Marines might not be aware of the key assignments needed for promotion later in their careers. To address this, Headquarters Marine Corps offers career counseling services in addition to local commander mentorship. This counseling allows Marines to understand their career options and be aware of key assignments to allow them to make good career decisions.

Key assignments such as joint assignments, executive positions, or positions in which Marines could be exposed to senior leadership are nominative and highly visible. Diversity is a consideration in nominating Marines for these key positions. Integrating women into ground combat arms specialties is also part of this diversity effort. The Marine Corps now has a plan in place to ensure all Marines have an opportunity to serve in those roles.

The final item LtCol Meredith addressed was annual command visits. LtCol Meredith explained that after junior Marines are assigned to a command, it is up to the commander to assign those Marines to individual positions. To help commanders understand the best methods of assigning junior Marines to positions that will facilitate their careers, the Marine Corps sends enlisted and officer monitors to visit each major-level command each year and communicate with commanders about this topic.

*Navy: CDR Chris Chadwick, Washington Liaison Officer, Navy Recruiting Command*

CDR Chadwick explained that the selection process for key developmental positions in the Navy is competed through distribution channels. The Navy considers the needs of the Service, the desires of the individual, and Armed Forces Qualification Test scores to determine job assignments. All positions are open to everybody. After the Navy determines what each Sailor is qualified for and what positions are available, it tries to assign Sailors to jobs of interest to them. The Navy recognizes that interest in one's work is an important factor in retaining Sailors and encouraging their progress in the Navy. For officer accessions, the "Rooney Rule" is not applicable since the selection boards are diversified by law and all Sailors are considered on merit. He explained that when it comes to detailing officers, the Navy is similar to the Marine Corps except that junior and senior officers are detailed to specific positions.

Promotions in the Navy are blind to demographics; centralized boards at Navy Personnel Command evaluate candidates based on past performance, job requirements, and qualifications. To generate awareness and interest among potential female recruits, the Navy uses imagery in advertising. The Navy uses strategies such as female-led meetings to keep female recruits interested after they are recruited and while they await initial entry training. CDR Chadwick concluded by noting the Navy has a sustained 25-percent female accessions rate.

*Air Force: Ms. Emi Izawa, Deputy Chief, Military Force Management Division, Directorate of Force Management Policy, Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower, Personnel, and Services*

Ms. Izawa began by reading the definition of diversity in the Air Force, which states that diversity is a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities consistent with the Air Force core values and mission. The four tenets of diversity in the Air Force are demographic diversity, cognitive/behavioral ability, organizational/structural diversity, and global diversity. The Air Force instituted its current diversity and inclusion initiatives in 2015, though many of its diversity practices, such as centralizing selection and assignment boards, have been ongoing for the last decade or more. Prior to implementing its current initiatives, the Air Force employed three strategies to promote diversity: the Service (1) established development teams to examine how the Air Force develops its officers, enlisted members, and civilians for their careers, and conducted an analysis of potential barriers to diversity; (2) distributed a memorandum to the promotion boards that included language on the value of diverse backgrounds and thought; and (3) created the career intermission program. Regarding promotion, Ms. Izawa stated that the Air Force promotes based on merit but believes that having a diverse pool of candidates strengthens the selection boards.

In March 2015, the Air Force introduced six new diversity initiatives: the Service (1) reserved 500 Officer Training School slots for enlisted Airmen; (2) moved rated height screening to summer field training for those in Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs to counteract a practice that was found to hinder women from getting waivers; (3) established civilian hiring panels for all civilians hired to positions at the GS-13 level and above; (4) increased the target accessions goal for women to 30 percent from the historical accessions rate of 25 percent; (5) added an improved data collection tool for the centralized mentoring program to personalize the mentorship experience; and (6) implemented a 12-month operational deferment option.

In September 2016, the Air Force announced 13 additional diversity and inclusion initiatives. For example, the Service created a human capital analytics office; increased diversity in command selection boards; began recruiting in new markets to increase geographic diversity; began targeting women and minorities in career fields that lacked diversity; required each career field without diversity to develop a plan to increase diversity; implemented additional provisions to keep dual-military couples together when possible by requiring a general officer to sign off on any assignment decisions that would involuntarily separate dual-military couples and offering the career intermission program where applicable; extended the postpregnancy separation decision to 12 months after birth (the previous policy required mothers to make that decision prior to giving birth); created processes to ensure people with disabilities are accommodated; increased civilian participation in the career development teams; introduced unconscious bias training for a larger audience (the previous training was given only to promotion boards); and established a program to recognize efforts to promote diversity and inclusion.

Ms. Izawa further discussed two diversity initiatives in the Air Force that are similar to the “Rooney Rule.” The first was a letter from the Air Force A1 to all major command (MAJCOM) commanders encouraging them to ensure they nominate a diverse group of Airmen for recruiting duties beginning with the fall 2017 selection boards. She also indicated that beginning in August 2017, recruiting commanders will be given the authority to place recruiters in regions and communities where they will have the largest impact based on their demographics and backgrounds. The second initiative Ms. Izawa discussed was establishing diverse slates for key

developmental positions above the wing level (i.e., high-level positions). The Air Force Personnel Center will ensure that at least one qualified minority candidate is included on each slate. This initiative will affect two STARNOM positions (e.g., aide to the Vice President of the United States and aide to the President of the United States) and 28 CAPNOM positions (e.g., positions that have direct contact with the White House, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), or the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force).

*Coast Guard: CDR Tim Margita, Career Counseling Branch Chief, Office of Personnel Management*

CDR Margita indicated the Coast Guard is similar to the other Services regarding its diversity initiatives. The selection board process for promotion is merit and performance based. Member demographics are masked for the boards. The Coast Guard ensures that members on the education and promotion boards reflect a diverse cross section of the Coast Guard workforce, including diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, accessions source, specialty, year group, and geographical experience. The process is similar for command screening panels and senior education fellowship programs. CDR Margita also noted that all Coast Guard billets are open to everyone, and the Service's Personnel Service Center monitors billets to ensure adequate representation of women and minority candidates in key developmental billets.

CDR Margita stated that the Coast Guard's Career Counseling Branch offers roadshows, webinars, career counseling, and record reviews to ensure that members are competitive. The branch also talks to members about key developmental positions and conducts proactive outreach to officers during their first, third, and eighth years to make sure they are hitting the targets needed for promotion.

*Discussion*

Maj Gen (Ret.) Sharon Dunbar inquired about the lessons learned from the barrier analysis conducted by the Air Force. Ms. Izawa (Air Force) replied that the Air Force has created initiatives based on that analysis. As an example, Ms. Izawa mentioned that the Service is looking at the pregnancy policy for Squadron Officer School (SOS). The current policy states that Airmen are not allowed to attend SOS if pregnant; the Air Force is seeking to eliminate that restriction. Ms. Izawa explained that she was not prepared to discuss other details of the lessons learned from the analysis but that she could report back to the Committee with the information.

Ms. Monica Medina thanked all briefers and commented that the Air Force briefing was excellent. She requested more information on the initiatives in the Air Force and inquired if the other Services have similar diversity initiatives. CDR Chadwick (Navy) responded that since the RFI asked specifically about initiatives similar to the "Rooney Rule," he was not prepared to discuss other diversity initiatives in the Navy, but noted that the Navy is implementing several other such efforts. Ms. Gordon (Army) replied that the Army is 40 percent diverse. It does a good job in bringing a diverse group of Soldiers into the Service but needs to focus more on promoting diversity at the senior levels. To address this, the Army is taking a more strategic approach to ensure that diversity and inclusion is integrated into everything it does. For example, the Army is examining its leadership development programs to ensure they reflect those values. The Army sees diversity as part of what leaders do rather than just an initiative. The Army is also researching factors that contribute to the dropoff in diversity at the senior levels and has learned that mentorship, transparency, and trust are important. LtCol Meredith (Marine Corps) said that the Marine Corps strives to increase diversity at both the senior and junior levels.

CSM (Ret.) Michele Jones asked the briefers if the criteria they use to define “best qualified” have changed now that all positions are open for women and the barriers preventing women from holding those positions have been removed. She noted that some of the criteria used in the past were gender specific. LtCol Meredith (Marine Corps) indicated the criteria have not changed, but having more women in previously closed positions will increase the number of Marines who meet those criteria, which will allow more Marines to be competitive. All Marines have the ability to compete for key assignments. CDR Chadwick (Navy) stated that the policies for promotion and selection are based on selecting those who have the best record regardless of their gender or other background. Ms. Izawa (Air Force) replied that all Services have a definition of “best qualified” for promotions. Ms. Izawa noted that the diversity of the promotion and selection boards is required to reflect the population meeting that board and that the Air Force checks the demographics of each board to ensure this criterion is met.

Col (Ret.) John Boggs said the spirit of the “Rooney Rule” is to ensure minority candidates will be considered. He noted that the Air Force seems to be the only Service that seeks out diverse candidates for the tough jobs. He indicated that if there is no conscious effort being made to consider diverse candidates, the Services are not upholding the spirit of the “Rooney Rule.” He inquired about what efforts are being made to identify that diverse candidate for that tough job rather than simply finding enough qualified candidates to fill the position. Ms. Gordon (Army) stated the Army has identified the positions that are key to moving up the ranks and is in the process of identifying the best ways to ensure diversity within those positions. She acknowledged that something happens in the pipeline that causes the diverse entry-level pool to become less diverse as they climb the ranks and indicated the Army is trying to identify the barriers creating this issue and resolve it. The Army is taking a broad look at the issue and recognizes that it may be a problem with culture, procedures, or policy rather than recruitment.

VADM (Ret.) Carol Pottenger mentioned that the Committee asked about key developmental assignments rather than selection or promotion boards in the RFI because such positions—for example, serving as an aide to a general—are what allow Service members to fast-track their careers later. VADM (Ret.) Pottenger asked to see the list of key developmental positions the Army has developed. She also asked each Service to indicate whether it believed the “Rooney Rule” was a good approach to increasing diversity and if each Service would consider using such an approach. CDR Margita (Coast Guard) indicated the Coast Guard tries to ensure diversity when filling high-visibility jobs and issuing letters of recommendation, but for many of these jobs, the Service member must first put together an application package. The Coast Guard tries to provide the selection boards with a diverse group of applicants. LtCol Meredith (Marine Corps) said that when Headquarters receives requests for nominations for assignments, it strives to achieve diversity when filling the positions, but the effort is a balancing act between ensuring junior Marines gain proficiency in their chosen occupational specialties and allowing them to hold the high-visibility positions that take them out of their career fields for a time. He also indicated the Marine Corps’ procedures are biased toward filling operational assignments first, which sometimes hinders the ability to put Marines forward for the nominative assignments. As a process, the Marine Corps does consider diversity in nominative billets and high-visibility assignments.

MG (Ret.) John Macdonald indicated the Committee needed to rewrite the RFI to request information on additional techniques the Services are using to increase diversity. He commended the Coast Guard for masking gender and ethnicity for the boards and commended the research

contractor on the written response it provided on the “Rooney Rule” to address the Committee’s RFI 4. MG (Ret.) Macdonald asked the Services to review the response to RFI 4 and respond to it. He also inquired about any legal barriers the Services face in achieving greater diversity and how the Committee might aid the Services in addressing those barriers. LtCol Meredith (Marine Corps) indicated he was not aware of any legal or policy issues preventing the Marine Corps from broadening assignments and positions to all Marines. Ms. Izawa (Air Force) indicated OSD has a policy that creates a barrier to diversity because of how it affects how enlisted Service members are assigned. She reported that OSD created a working group to look at enlisted policy assignment rules to better maximize talent. Ms. Gordon (Army) said that the Army has a working group that is examining such barriers and that she would report back to the Committee on the issue.

Mr. Brian Morrison suggested it is acceptable for the Services to have different approaches to increasing diversity because the repeal of the ground combat exclusion policy has affected each Service differently. He asked the Marine Corps and the Army if they have altered their definitions of what it means to be most qualified; for example, a Service could wait for a qualified female Ranger to progress to the point at which she were eligible to be selected as a lieutenant colonel for the Rangers, or the Service could think creatively about the definition of “most qualified” to determine how to allow a woman to fill that role earlier without sacrificing the mission. Ms. Izawa indicated the Air Force has looked at this issue and is reviewing what characteristics are most valued in those positions to determine what makes a person qualified, whether those valued skills be leadership, communication skills, writing, familiarity with MAJCOM, or other factors. Ms. Gordon indicated the Army has also been reviewing this issue. She noted that it takes years to build leaders and cautioned that minorities and women want to be promoted because they are the best qualified rather than having the stigma of being promoted simply to achieve diversity. LtCol Meredith (Marine Corps) responded that the Marine Corps considers the ability to lead and the responsibility that the Marine has been given when it compares men to women or compares individuals across different occupational specialties. He further acknowledged that the ability for women to compete in combat arms will allow them more opportunities to compete against men.

Ms. Therese Hughes remarked that the bottom line is to determine the changes that need to take place in the Services to recruit more diversity. She commented that the definition of diversity is unclear, and that the Services should think carefully about what diversity means. She felt diversity initiatives should address the challenges Service members face when they think “Nobody looks like me.” She also noted that the qualifications used in recruitment may need to change. She suggested the Services look at best practices implemented in healthcare policy to increase the number of women in medical schools.

Lt Gen (Ret.) Judy Fedder noted that the impact of the “Rooney Rule” goes back to the definition of diversity and that the Services seem to have varying definitions of diversity. She said that the Committee’s follow-up RFI should include a request for each Service’s definition of diversity. She asked the Air Force how it captures diversity factors such as socioeconomic status and cognitive/behavioral diversity when developing the slate of candidates for key positions. Ms. Izawa (Air Force) replied that this is a variable the Air Force is struggling to define. She explained that the Air Force is trying to capture diversity markers with human capital analytics. Under the current process of developing slates, a person who represents at least one of the four characteristics of the definition of diversity is considered to be representative of diversity.

### **Panel Discussion: Pregnancy and Parenthood Survey Data (RFI 8)**

The Committee requested a briefing from the Navy on the results of its 2016 Pregnancy and Parenthood Survey. It also requested briefings from the Army, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard on any data collection efforts similar to the Navy's biennial survey on pregnancy and parenthood. The Committee received briefings from all Services except the Air Force; the Air Force instead provided a written response that indicated it does not collect data of this type.

*Navy: LCDR Richard McDevitt, Navy Office of Inclusion and Diversity*

LCDR McDevitt presented the results from the Navy's "2016 Pregnancy and Parenthood Survey." The survey addressed family planning, birth control, pregnancy trends, parenthood trends, parenthood policies as retention tools, and retention influencers. LCDR McDevitt said the 2016 findings are consistent with trends from the 2014 survey. He noted that the survey data has been collected, analyzed, verified, and forwarded to Navy leadership, who will delegate the findings to subject matter experts for action.

In terms of family planning, women reported the best time to have children is while on shore duty. One-quarter of Service members expressed interest in freezing their eggs or sperm. In terms of birth control, most Service members reported safe birth control behaviors. LCDR McDevitt reported that work/life balance trends were consistent with previous years. Nearly 75 percent of women reported pregnancies to command in accordance with policy requirements, and the majority of women became pregnant while on shore duty. Regarding postpartum recovery, more female officers (55 percent) than enlisted women (39 percent) reported that 6 months was sufficient time to recover from pregnancy. A larger proportion of female officers (81 percent) than enlisted women (53 percent) also reported passing the Body Composition Assessment and the Physical Fitness Assessment after pregnancy. In terms of breastfeeding, almost all women reported breastfeeding or pumping. However, more female officers than female enlisted reported breastfeeding or pumping after returning to duty. The primary reason reported for stopping breastfeeding was the need to focus on other obligations.

Regarding parenthood trends, more male Sailors than female Sailors reported being parents. Single-parent rates were similar to previous years, with divorce reported as the primary reason for single parenthood for all groups (enlisted women, enlisted men, female officers, and male officers) except enlisted women, for whom single parenthood was more often a result of the mother being unwed when her child was born. Women reported having custody of children more often than in previous years. LCDR McDevitt reported that the Navy's maternity, paternity, and adoption leave policies as well as the postpartum operational deferment, egg/sperm freezing, and the Career Intermission Program have all had positive effects on retention. Men and women provided similar reasons to either stay in or leave the Navy, and these results have remained stable over time. LCDR McDevitt concluded that overall, the results of the survey were positive and encouraging, and said the next step will be to translate the results into actions. He said the next survey will be administered in 2018.

*Army: COL Cynthia D. Sanchez, Headquarters, Army Medical Command (MEDCOM, HQ)*

COL Sanchez began by providing statistics on pregnancy and postpartum breastfeeding and then discussed survey efforts in this area. COL Sanchez noted there was a slight decrease in the total number of female Army beneficiaries from fiscal year (FY) 2015 to FY 2017. The percentage of the total Army population giving birth, however, has remained consistent at 6 percent of the total



population of active duty Service members. The active duty enlisted population accounts for 80 percent of the active duty births. There has been a slight upward trend in the total number of postpartum appointments for lactation consultation; however, a greater percentage of officers make these appointments compared with enlisted members. COL Sanchez indicated the upward trend was likely because of required breastfeeding training for all staff members working in perinatal or pediatrics and support for Service members who breastfeed at the military treatment facilities. COL Sanchez also mentioned that in March 2016, the Army changed the maternity leave policy to provide 12 continuous weeks of postpartum leave to allow a mother to bond with her baby and establish her milk supply.

COL Sanchez explained that the Army does not conduct a comprehensive survey comparable to the Navy's but that it asks Service members who participate in the Army Pregnancy Postpartum Physical Training (P3T) program to complete self-assessment surveys. Service members complete one survey between 37 and 40 weeks of pregnancy and another survey after postpartum participation in the P3T program prior to returning to the unit for regular physical readiness training. The Army will be fielding a quantitative outcome evaluation of the P3T program beginning in late June 2017. This survey will be used to determine the effectiveness of the P3T program on measures of medical and physical readiness. The Army is working to raise awareness of the survey. Lastly, COL Sanchez noted the Army was part of a National Defense Authorization Act of 2017, Section 747 working group that will lead to the inclusion of family planning questions in DoD's "2018 Health Related Behaviors Survey."

*Marine Corps: LtCol Karen Morrisroe, Family Advocacy Program Section Head*

LtCol Morrisroe explained that the Marine Corps does not conduct a survey like the Navy's. She discussed the Marine Corps' New Parent Support Program, which is a voluntary support program that offers parenting education and home visits to expectant parents and parents with children younger than age 3. The program was recently expanded to include parents of children up to age 5. Marines can self-refer to the program or be referred to the program. The program provides parent education and support through intensive home visits, office visits, classes, and group activities. Each installation has the autonomy to select which classes best meet the needs of its particular population, but Headquarters Marine Corps provides guidance. LtCol Morrisroe also discussed the school liaison program, which links parents to resources in times of transition. She mentioned that in 2016, maternity leave was reduced from 18 to 12 weeks. She provided statistics on the total number of female Marines, the number assigned to limited duty for pregnancy, and the number assigned to limited duty for maternity annually for FY 2015 through FY 2017.

*Coast Guard: CDR Patti Tutalo, Gender Policy Advisor, Coast Guard Office of Diversity and Inclusion*

CDR Tutalo noted that the Coast Guard does not conduct a data collection effort similar to the Navy's. However, the Coast Guard does have two ongoing data collection efforts: the "Maternity Leave Assessment" and the "Career Intentions Survey." Results for these efforts were not available to present at the time of the briefing. CDR Tutalo also mentioned that three Coast Guard officers had recently conducted a study on women's retention in the Coast Guard. The report, which was released in January 2017, discussed reasons women stay in or leave the Services, including family choices and work-life balance. The "Maternity Leave Assessment" is an informal study through which the Coast Guard reaches out to women who went on maternity

leave before and after postpartum leave was extended from 42 days to 84 days. CDR Tutalo noted that the Coast Guard is so small that this study will survey only 60–80 people. The assessment is looking at the impact of maternity leave on female Coastguardsmen who take leave, on their families, and on the units operationally. The assessment will include interviews with the women’s commands to look at the operational effects of maternity leave. In particular, CDR Tutalo indicated the Coast Guard is interested in how taking such a long maternity leave affects the women’s qualifications. She noted the leave currently has to be taken continuously and indicated the Service hopes to capture data on any unintentional consequences of taking the leave continuously. The study has a target completion date of October 1, 2017. The “Career Intentions Study” is an ongoing survey given to both those who stay and those who separate to determine the reasons for their decisions. Through this study, the Coast Guard hopes to determine the underlying reasons why people choose to leave the Coast Guard. CDR Tutalo acknowledged that this effort is likely to yield superficial reasons regarding why members choose to stay or leave and that the Coast Guard hopes to use this data as a baseline but to eventually conduct a more in-depth study to gain additional insight into the reasons behind each decision.

### Discussion

Mr. Morrison noted the divergence between officers and enlisted Sailors in regard to birth control, postpregnancy passage of the Body Composition Assessment and Physical Fitness Assessment, and breastfeeding and inquired about the reasons behind this divergence. LCDR McDevitt responded that the Navy is examining this divergence but that he is not able to address the reasons behind it. This is one example of a case in which the Navy is passing along this information to stakeholders learn more about the issue.

Ms. Kyleanne Hunter commended the Coast Guard for looking for potential second- and third-order effects of women taking maternity leave. She asked what the other Services are doing to capture data on this, including data on the attitudes of the individuals who screen Service members for command positions and promotions. COL Sanchez replied that the Army is not conducting any efforts specifically to collect this data. On a smaller scale, MEDCOM is looking at what the Army is losing in terms of readiness and skills when women take leave and hopes to apply that information to the larger force. LCDR McDevitt reported the Navy is not conducting any data collection efforts to target that issue. He indicated the Navy is focused on efforts to help women and families through policies such as rotations to shore duty, freezing eggs/sperm to facilitate families throughout their Naval careers, and the Career Intermission Program.

Maj Gen (Ret.) Dunbar inquired about the availability of birth control while deployed. COL Sanchez indicated the Army is looking to provide a means for Service members who are deployed or down range to access birth control. COL Sanchez said the Army attempts to ensure that active duty members have an adequate supply of birth control when they leave for deployment because sometimes it can be hard to obtain while deployed. The Army has also developed contraception education programs for its healthcare providers to better educate them on women’s options for birth control while deployed. LCDR McDevitt (Navy) responded that contraception is available on ships during deployment periods. CDR Tutalo (Coast Guard) indicated the Coast Guard rarely deploys for extended periods of time. She acknowledged, however, that Coast Guard ships are limited in what they can provide if they deploy for long periods but added she has never heard of this being a problem for women. LtCol Morrisroe (Marine Corps) noted Navy Medicine would have more information about this, but indicated she

would expect small unit leadership to have mentorship programs and communicate regularly with women deploying for the first time regarding such issues. Maj Gen (Ret.) Dunbar commented that the Committee should look into this further and get firmer answers from the Services.

VADM (Ret.) Pottenger commented that the ultimate reason for undertaking such survey initiatives is for retention and to measure effectiveness. She asked the Army and Marine Corps to discuss what actions they have taken based on the data presented during the briefings. COL Sanchez (Army) responded with an example. She indicated that the Army has found that breastfeeding has many benefits for babies and mothers, including improving the mother's health and readiness by decreasing the risk of breast cancer, increasing weight loss, and reducing work time lost for the mother by decreasing the number of sick child doctor visits for the baby. LtCol Morrisroe (Marine Corps) stated she was not aware of anything the Marine Corps is contemplating as a result of the data presented.

Ms. Sharlene Hawkes mentioned the statistic the Navy presented that indicated 75 percent of women reported pregnancies to command in accordance with policy requirements and inquired about the other 25 percent. LCDR McDevitt (Navy) indicated the requirement is to report the pregnancy to leadership within 2 weeks of learning of it. The main reason women did not meet this requirement was concern about reporting the pregnancy and then having a miscarriage.

Ms. Hawkes also inquired about the difference between officers and enlisted women in the Army in making breastfeeding appointments. COL Sanchez (Army) stated she believed the gap was a result of education as well as age. Officers tend to have children at an older age than enlisted women. She indicated the Army has been trying to reduce this gap through its Centering Pregnancy educational programs, which are offered at 10 military treatment facilities.

Ms. Hawkes asked the Marine Corps for an explanation regarding the much lower number of women assigned to limited duty for pregnancy or maternity in FY 2017 compared to FY 2015 and FY 2016. LtCol Morrisroe (Marine Corps) noted the FY 2017 number is an incomplete number since the fiscal year is still ongoing.

FLTCM (Ret.) JoAnn Ortloff noted how the Navy indicated the primary reason women reported they stopped breastfeeding was "other obligations." She inquired what the specific reasons were. LCDR McDevitt (Navy) indicated those reasons were work, childcare issues, and a lack of time to breastfeed despite being provided lactation spaces. He noted that this trend is consistent with the civilian sector.

Ms. Pat Locke asked the Army about the methodology for its assessments of the P3T program, including if it is done as a command survey or if parents are asked individually to provide feedback. COL Sanchez (Army) reported that the surveys are carried out by the P3T training groups in collaboration with MEDCOM. Ms. Locke then asked how many surveys had been completed. COL Sanchez stated she would have to report back to the Committee with that information.

Ms. Medina commented that she was surprised the Air Force did not provide a briefing. She requested information from that Service even though it does not conduct a survey similar to the Navy's.

Ms. Hughes asked the Services about any efforts to address postpartum depression (PPD). She noted that PPD can occur 1–18 months after delivery and that it can be difficult to identify and

talk about. COL Sanchez stated the Army uses the Edinburgh PPD scale to screen for PPD and indicated PPD is discussed during the last prenatal visit and during postpartum visits. The topic is also discussed frequently as part of the Army's Centering Pregnancy programs. The Army also has a new parent support program to assess mothers in the home to determine if things are going as they should. Moreover, military treatment facilities now conduct postpartum follow-up calls to check on the health of the infant and the mother. LtCol Morrisroe (Marine Corps) reported the Marine Corps uses similar methods, including the Edinburgh PPD scale and a family needs assessment with home visits. If the Edinburgh scale indicates the mother and infant have additional needs, those individuals are referred to resources. CDR Tutalo (Coast Guard) indicated the Coast Guard screens for PPD and for depression in general at every medical visit. The Coast Guard also offers a 24/7 support hotline. CDR Tutalo also stated that health professionals are available to speak to units on various topics, including PPD. She indicated that women and commands are becoming more proactive on the topic. Ms. Hughes asked if what the Services do to address PPD is effective or if there is room for improvement. COL Sanchez (Army) commented that there is always room for improvement and that she would have her office further examine the topic.

Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger asked the Army to describe the P3T program. COL Sanchez (Army) stated the program is for active duty Soldiers. Women begin the program as soon as they find out they are pregnant, and it is a command-directed program. The program includes physical training appropriate to the women's gestational age and fitness levels 4 days per week and classes on pregnancy or life skills 1 day per week. Women are able to continue with the P3T program until they return to duty, but they are not required to participate in the program during the postpartum period. Ms. Hawkes asked if Army Reservists could participate in the program. COL Sanchez indicated Reservists could join the P3T program only if they were activated. She added she would provide a response at a later time regarding why Reservists are not otherwise allowed to participate. Sgt. Major (Ret.) Preston asked who runs the P3T program. COL Sanchez responded that if a Reservist were activated she would fall in with the unit and participate in the P3T at the unit. CSM (Ret.) Jones commented that this issue needs to be addressed in the Reserves and that not providing a program such as this in the Reserves and National Guard seems inconsistent with the goal of being prepared when activated. SMA (Ret.) Preston stated that at Fort Hood, the Army conducts physical training for pregnant Soldiers in a separate facility, and those Soldiers have master fitness trainers who work with them specifically. COL Sanchez reported that master fitness trainers do lead the P3T program groups and that they conduct P3T training separately from other groups.

Ms. Hunter commented on the importance of the timing of pregnancy in a woman's career that the Navy mentioned as part of its findings on pregnancy during shore duty versus sea duty. She noted that the other Services also have operational requirements that require women to plan when they will become pregnant. She asked the panel whether their offices advised training commands to discuss this issue with Service members early in their careers and whether they believed having an early discussion about this would help servicewomen. She also asked the panel members if their Services were examining how fatherhood affects training and readiness. COL Sanchez replied that the Army has examined pregnancy timing in relation to birth control and family planning and is considering educating Service members on this issue during advanced individual training. The Army already educates its healthcare providers on the best birth control methods to suggest to women. LCDR McDevitt reported the Navy's Office of Diversity and Inclusion does not work with training commands on pregnancy and parenthood issues. The office

recognizes that retention is key and focuses on empowering leaders and educating them to ensure their crews are ready to deploy. LtCol Morrisroe responded that the Marine Corps' behavioral health branch works regularly with training commands, but she was not sure if the branch staff were having those types of conversations with the commands. She suspected those conversations were likely happening at the small unit level but indicated she would confirm whether this was the case and report back to the Committee. CDR Tutalo (Coast Guard) replied that the Coast Guard works closely with training commands and will occasionally receive questions about the requirements for safe training for women who become pregnant and what they need to do to complete the training. Career counselors are also available to answer questions and have an open dialogue about the potential career implications of becoming pregnant. CDR Tutalo also shared that the Coast Guard has noted that the medication used for fertility treatments can cause weight gain and that her office is looking into how to tweak policy to account for that.

Ms. Locke noted that the Army used the term "menstrual suppression" in its briefing and asked if the other Services have something like that as well. She also asked about the long-term impacts of menstrual suppression. COL Sanchez (Army) explained that a woman can prevent, or suppress, her menstrual cycle by taking birth control. She did not have information on the long-term effects immediately available but offered to report back about evidence-based studies on outcomes and effects. She commented that anecdotally, she has heard women indicate it was a good option for them down range. CDR Tutalo indicated she has never been offered menstrual suppression but could not speak to whether that is something the Coast Guard offers. LtCol Morrisroe (Marine Corps) deferred to Navy Medicine for a response. LCDR McDevitt (Navy) indicated he had never heard the term. COL Sanchez (Army) explained that women do not have to choose menstrual suppression but that it is offered to them. FLTCM (Ret.) Ortloff stated it is offered in the Navy as an option for women on shore or sea duty and it is frequently used. Ms. Hunter commented anecdotally that several of the Marines she deployed with took advantage of menstrual suppression and were later successful in having children. Ms. Myers commented that there was an initiative in the Navy a few years back to offer long-acting reversible contraception to women and inquired if LCDR McDevitt knew anything about the status of that initiative. LCDR McDevitt (Navy) replied that he did not know but that he would obtain the information from Navy Medicine.

### **Overview of 2017 Focus Group Findings**

Between April and May 2017, Committee members conducted 54 focus groups at 5 military installations with 563 participants. These discussions targeted military personnel across all ranks and Services and centered on five areas of interest: propensity to serve, gender integration, mid-career retention, parental leave, and childcare. The Committee requested a briefing on the findings from these focus group discussions to preview the findings in advance of the release of the comprehensive focus group report.

#### **Ms. Rachel Gaddes, Insight Policy Research**

Of the 54 focus groups the Committee conducted, 26 groups were composed solely of women, 25 groups were composed solely of men, and three were of mixed-gender composition. There were 19 groups of officers, 19 groups of senior enlisted Service members, and 16 groups of junior enlisted Service members. Each focus group had approximately 10 participants who were recruited by the staff at each installation. The data were coded using verbatim transcripts and

mini-surveys. Qualitative analysis software was used to examine the trends among different subgroups. Ms. Gaddes explained that focus groups as a methodology have certain strengths and limitations. They are an interactive way to gauge participants' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs; however, the results cannot be generalized and cannot be quantified because each question was not asked of each participant. Demographically, focus group participants were nearly equally split between men and women (56 percent and 44 percent, respectively) and were roughly evenly split among all of the Services except the Coast Guard, which was less represented than the others. Two percent of participants were from the National Guard or Reserves.

### **Propensity to Serve**

The Committee asked focus group participants when they first started to consider joining the military and what put the military on their radar as a possible career option. People considered joining at a range of ages from early childhood through adulthood. Often, those who were young when they first considered joining came from military families. Most participants first considered joining during high school, and this was sometimes because of military advertising or outreach efforts. The Committee also asked participants how they decided which Service to join. Recruiters played an important role when selecting a Service. Some participants talked about positive recruiting experiences that attracted them to a specific Service, but others mentioned negative recruiting experiences that deterred them from joining a specific Service. In the mini-survey, participants were asked to rate how important a selection of factors was when deciding to join the military. Educational opportunities and benefits were the most common motivating factors; more than half of the participants rated these as extremely important. Other common motivating factors were the desire to get away and travel the world, the desire to change their lives, and pay. A lack of available jobs at home and bonuses were less important factors.

The Committee also asked participants what options other than the military they had considered. Most participants had considered college as an alternative to the military; however, participants also mentioned a wide variety of career interests. The most commonly mentioned careers were in healthcare, law enforcement, and aviation—all of which are careers that can be pursued in a military context. The Committee asked participants about their concerns when joining the military, and the most commonly expressed concern was a fear of failure. Other common concerns were leaving one's home and family, fear of the unknown, and concerns about war or death. In interpreting these findings, however, Ms. Gaddes cautioned the Committee to remember that these responses came from participants who ultimately made the decision to join and may thus differ from the thoughts of people who considered joining the military but ultimately decided not to join. When participants were asked more specifically about whether they would advise young people to join the military, most said it would depend on factors such as the person's motivations, personality, expectations, choice of Service, plan to join as enlisted or officer, and gender. A few said they would be more cautious in encouraging women to join. Some held the perception that young people would prefer the life of an officer versus an enlisted Service member.

The Committee asked participants whether any recent changes to policy could influence the propensity to join. Participants suggested a variety of changes they believed might have an impact. Some policy changes, such as those related to tattoos and parental leave, were perceived to have a positive impact on propensity. Some people with larger or a greater number of tattoos were now eligible to serve, and people were happy with the new parental leave options. Other changes, such as those to the retirement policy, increased opportunities for women, and policies

regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender Service members received mixed reviews. Some thought they could positively impact propensity, but others thought they might have a negative impact and could steer people away. When the Committee asked participants what recruiters or senior leaders in their Services could do to interest more people in joining, the most common suggestions were to better explain the diversity of career opportunities the military offers, better advertise the officer or ROTC options, and make recruiting more personalized.

### Discussion on Propensity to Serve

Ms. Hawkes asked if participants mentioned anything about recruiters offering misleading information or promising things did not come to pass. Ms. Gaddes responded that there would be more on this issue in the forthcoming focus group report.

VADM (Ret.) Pottenger asked for clarification regarding the data input on the slide that showed motivations for joining the military. She was intrigued that equal employment opportunity was ranked low. Ms. Gaddes explained that the question was asked using a series of Likert scales through which participants ranked each factor individually. VADM (Ret.) Pottenger commented that the low ranking for equal employment opportunity and the finding that gender integration was believed to have a mixed impact on propensity were interesting since the Committee has strongly emphasized the benefits of gender integration. Ms. Gaddes noted that the question was about participants' motivations to join, which required some of them to think back to their motivations from several years earlier to respond.

Ms. Hughes commented that the length of time the participants were in the Service may have affected their responses regarding the ability of equal employment opportunity to serve as a motivation to join. Ms. Gaddes indicated the data for this question could be analyzed in many ways and the focus group report could examine motivations broken out by Service members who had been in the Service for varying lengths of time. She further suggested the Committee could consider including this question in the mini-survey in future years to look for trends over time.

FLTCM (Ret.) Ortloff commented that she would like to see the data on motivations to join broken out by gender. She stated she was particularly interested in whether women saw equal opportunity as an issue when they joined.

### **Mid-Career Retention**

Ms. Gaddes introduced this topic by noting that only senior enlisted participants (E5–E8) and officers were asked the questions on mid-career retention. The mini-survey asked participants about their plans regarding staying in or leaving the military. Slightly more than half of all participants reported they planned to stay in the military until they were eligible for retirement or longer. Fewer than 1 in 10 said they were definitely leaving after their current obligations. Many also indicated uncertainty. About 10 percent indicated they would probably leave after the current obligation, another 10 percent planned to stay beyond the present obligation but not necessarily until retirement, and about 11 percent said they were unsure. Finally, about 6 percent shared plans to leave the Active Component to join the National Guard or Reserve.

The Committee asked participants about the reasons that they had chosen to stay in the military as long as they had and about the pros and cons of staying versus leaving. Factors that influenced the decision to stay fell into two major categories: personal and professional. Participants indicated that families influenced retention in various ways. Although the majority cited tension in terms of balancing their personal lives and their career progression, many reported that

benefits for their families were a primary reason they stayed in the military. In addition to the personal factors, there were also a range of professional factors that influenced retention. Participants described how some of these factors had a positive effect on retention, some had a mixed effect, and others had a negative effect. On the positive side, many reported being motivated by the possibilities for promotion and career advancement. There were a few factors that had mixed results on retention. Those who felt in control of the pace of their career progression were motivated to stay, but those who lacked control were not. Moreover, whereas the perception that there are better jobs in the civilian sector might typically be seen as a motivation to leave the military, and networking opportunities might typically be seen as a reason to stay, how these factors were perceived varied a great deal depending on occupational specialty, rank, etc. Finally, on the negative side, many were discouraged that training was not available or prioritized—a few noted that when it was available, it was not career enhancing and did not focus on skill building.

Finally, the Committee asked participants what else DoD could do, if anything, to help convince members to stay in the military. Common suggestions included allowing greater flexibility to increase work-life balance; improving the alignment between job descriptions, training, and daily job tasks; and increasing the funding or adjusting spending allocations to allow for pay raises and equipment upgrades.

#### *Discussion on Mid-Career Retention*

Ms. Hughes asked if there were differences between officers and enlisted in regard to suggested improvements to work-life balance or greater alignment between job descriptions and daily tasks to increase retention. Ms. Gaddes replied that unless otherwise called out, it was a theme that arose across all groups.

Ms. Hunter asked for a breakout of officer versus enlisted participants regarding intentions to stay in or leave the military. Ms. Gaddes stated that the breakout could be included in the full focus group report.

Mr. Morrison commented that the Committee had heard there was a low level of interest in fertility treatments and egg/sperm freezing based on the briefings and thought it might come up in the focus groups on retention since it is a huge issue in the corporate world. Ms. Gaddes responded that the issue was not discussed during the focus groups.

Ms. Hawkes asked if Ms. Gaddes could provide data to compare participants' reported career intentions to reality. SMA (Ret.) Preston stated that in reality, only 18–20 percent of Service members remain in the Service until retirement.

Ms. Medina asked if participants mentioned being recruited away from the military, particularly in occupational specialties that require special skills. Ms. Gaddes commented that for careers in high demand, people had expressed less desire to stay in the Service because there are more viable options outside the military.

Lt Gen (Ret.) Fedder asked if the data was available to look at trends in career intentions across years. Ms. Gaddes replied that the question had been asked in past years as well and that the trends could be included in the full focus group report.



## Parental Leave

Ms. Gaddes began this section by providing an overview of the Services' parental leave policies. Across the Services, maternity leave is 12 weeks, with the option for additional leave if a medical provider deems it necessary; adoption leave is 21 days, and only one member of a dual-military couple is entitled to take this leave; and parental leave is 10 days. She noted that there are pending updates to the adoption leave and parental leave policies and that parental leave currently applies to fathers and same-sex couples. Most participants had some direct experience with parental leave either from taking it themselves or from working with others who have taken leave. Approximately 9 out of 10 participants indicated they had worked with someone who had taken parental leave. Thirty-five percent of participants had taken leave themselves; of those individuals, 92 percent took the maximum amount of leave they were allowed. Many participants had taken leave under past policies. This included some who had taken leave under more generous policies (18 weeks) and others who had taken leave under policies that allowed shorter amounts of leave time (6 weeks).

Maternity leave was the best known parental leave policy overall, but the specifics of the policies were particularly well known among female groups. Most knew that the policies had changed recently. Some participants were uncertain of the exact details of maternity leave, such as whether it could be broken up into different segments of time, the exact amount of days available, etc., but most had at least had some general awareness of the policy. Leave policies for fathers were also quite well known, though there was some confusion around the pending changes to increase the length of leave for fathers. Some people thought the policies had already changed, or knew that changes were expected but did not know the details. Some also questioned eligibility requirements, such as whether a father had to be married to the mother to be eligible for leave. Most groups were uncertain about policies for adoptive parents and same-sex parents. There was also a perception that leaders made the ultimate decision about how much leave could be taken depending on the needs and circumstances of the unit. For example, some participants believed leaders could call a father back from leave sooner than the allotted 10 days if the unit was getting ready to deploy. Although plenty of participants discussed the challenges of parental leave, they generally approved of efforts to increase the amount of time parents were allotted and noted how critical this time was to a family.

Despite improvements and increases to the leave policies in recent years, many participants still considered leave to be inadequate. Most groups, and especially male groups, saw fathers' leave as far too short. They thought 10 days was not enough time for the family to establish a routine and for fathers to support mothers after childbirth and provide care for children born with special healthcare needs. When asked what a more appropriate amount of leave might be for fathers, several suggested 1 month or more. Other populations faced challenges on a case-by-case basis. Some examples included longer leave needed for mothers after giving birth to multiple children, mothers facing healthcare complications or PPD, and same-sex couples struggling to arrange childcare after adopting a newborn.

Many factors affect parents' experiences with leave and their needs in this area. Participants described how each family is different and how the circumstances surrounding a child's arrival can vary widely. The personal factors that affected their experiences and needs included the health of the baby and the mother and the availability of family and childcare support. On the work-related side, individuals in small units said it was harder to take leave because there were not as many people to cover for a Service member who was out. Conversely, people from larger

units often said it was not too challenging for them to go on leave because there were plenty of people to cover, and people went on leave all the time. People in units preparing to deploy, or that deployed frequently, and those about to embark on a training exercise often found it more challenging to take leave. Parents in highly specialized positions also sometimes had more difficulty finding someone to cover for them.

The support of leaders helps. Several people spoke positively of leaders who were parents themselves and therefore understood the importance of leave from a personal standpoint. Senior-level Service members were most likely to discuss how rank affects leave, though they had varying views. Several thought taking leave was harder as parents climbed the ranks and took on more responsibility, but a few thought that being in a leadership role gave parents more power to control their environment and made it easier to take leave. Regardless of the challenges leave might bring to a unit, many participants expressed the sentiment that the military was responsible for contingency planning. Several likened parental leave to any other type of absence the military routinely must cover—for example, when individuals leave for an extended training, get injured, or take a vacation. Being able to move forward seamlessly was seen as part of the military's job.

When asked about the benefits of parental leave, participants cited benefits for both families and the military. They talked about the mother's physical recovery and how the time off allows families to bond and establish new routines. They also talked about benefits to the military, indicating that if Service members take leave, they will be able to focus better when they report back to work. Participants stated offering adequate leave time could also help secure the individual's commitment to the military.

Despite having generally positive views of parental leave, participants acknowledged the downsides and were realistic about potential negative impacts. There were stereotypes about women getting pregnant to avoid work they did not want to do or to avoid deployment. Many believed that although taking leave should not negatively affect evaluations and career progression, it could have that effect, most commonly for women. For example, women cannot perform hazardous or dangerous but career-enhancing jobs while pregnant and must take leave during critical times. Many parents also felt pressure to take less leave than allotted. This was particularly common among mothers, given the longer leave available, but was also true for fathers. Even for those allotted only 10 days of leave, there were some examples of fathers being asked to come back before their time was up.

The Committee also asked participants what they would say if a female colleague asked whether she should take the full maternity leave. The majority of participants said they would recommend taking at least some of the permitted leave. The most common advice was to take the full amount of leave, but others suggested taking the leave necessary to allow for recovery time but to return earlier if possible, necessary, or desired for career purposes.

Finally, the Committee asked participants what suggestions they had for improving parental leave. They mentioned revisiting the policies and clarifying some of the gray areas; increasing leave allotments, particularly for fathers; and considering additional adjustments to better support Service members, such as thinking about better ways to cover members on leave, allowing Service members to split up their leave instead of taking it all at once, and generally improving communications about the policies.

### Discussion on Parental Leave

Ms. Hunter asked for the breakout of those who had taken maternity and paternity leave under the new policy. Ms. Gaddes indicated the data could be broken out by gender in the full focus group report and explained the majority took every day of leave they were allowed. However, the mini-survey did not capture the year leave was taken.

Lt Gen (Ret.) Fedder commented about the value and benefits of parental leave and whether participants noted whether there was a readiness impact on the unit. Ms. Gaddes responded that there would be additional information on that topic provided in the full focus group report.

Maj Gen (Ret.) Dunbar asked how the question on amount of leave time taken was asked. Ms. Gaddes indicated the question allowed participants to write in the number of days or weeks taken and the responses were then categorized for the presentation. She stated this data could be presented in more discrete categories in the full focus group report to link it to the range of policies.

### **Childcare**

One of the most common themes related to childcare was that participants felt torn between their families and their career. Obtaining childcare was also harder for some populations than others. Groups that had the most challenges with childcare included dual-military families, single parents who had a harder time arranging enough care for their needs, more junior Service members, parents of children with special needs, and parents who worked in jobs that did not have flexibility either to work from home or change their hours or rotate shifts when needed. Women were more likely than men to feel that challenges with childcare affected their careers. They felt that they were perceived as trying to avoid work. Both male and female participants discussed how women often missed physical training to work around operating hours of childcare facilities. A common theme was that work takes priority, and that is just the way it is in the military. Participants also indicated that men were not supported as caregivers and that it was considered the woman's job to take care of the kids.

Participants commonly believed that lack of childcare had an effect on unit readiness. Units had to scramble to deal with people being out, and it was especially hard when it was a repeated occurrence; it was easier to accommodate absences in larger units. Flexibility and support on behalf of leaders made a big difference. Some participants explained how their leaders required people to cross-train for other jobs so they could step in and fill gaps when people were out.

In the mini-survey, parents were asked, "Which services have you regularly used for full-time or part-time childcare?" and were able to select all options that applied to them. The most common response was friends or family (63 percent). Many people also used DoD Child Development Centers (CDCs; 37 percent) or civilian childcare centers (34 percent).

One of the most common factors that influenced whether people had positive or negative experiences with childcare included wait lists at DoD CDCs. This was a major struggle for many families. CDCs prioritize certain groups, such as dual-military families and single parents, for access to childcare; although participants reported this was helpful, many still faced challenges. Participants noted how wait lists were longer for certain ages and in certain locations around the country. Some participants said CDCs were unable to care for children with special needs, and some indicated that civilian childcare centers in their areas were also full.

Another factor that influenced satisfaction was the operating hours of childcare facilities. Many participants said they liked the operating hours for CDCs and felt they were conducive to military life; there were even 24-hour care options available in some locations. However, others felt the hours were limited and did not align with their working hours. Cost was another factor parents discussed. Most felt DoD childcare was affordable, but some did not like the pricing structure, which allows different ranks to pay different amounts for the same care. Parents also did not like getting charged, by the minute in some cases, for picking their children up late. However, participants generally liked the structure and programming of DoD childcare. Locations and convenience also played a role; participants liked nearby locations, but some struggled with childcare settings that were far away from work or home. Finally, the quality of providers and facilities also influenced satisfaction. Many felt CDCs were safe and secure, but others had health and safety concerns such as overcrowding or sending children outside without a jacket. Generally, with all of these factors in mind, many felt DoD childcare was a better option than civilian childcare.

Addressing childcare is an ongoing struggle for families. Participants frequently mentioned challenges associated with finding care for their children when they were sick and the difficulties presented when childcare facilities required parents to keep sick children at home. Some parents said that when there were no other options, they would bring their children to work with them. There were also a few stories of parents who left the military because of challenges with childcare.

When asked what resources were available to support them and their childcare needs, many were unaware of any resources available. A few suggestions participants mentioned to improve childcare were more communication and education about the resources that were available to them; more options for childcare, including 24-hour care options; and alternatives for sick kids. Participants also wanted increased capacity at CDCs to help cut down the wait lists.

### **Family Care Plans**

About 3 in 10 participants reported ever having a Family Care Plan (FCP). Participants also reported FCP implementation varied by Service. For example, one Service requires FCPs for all Service members, including those without dependents, whereas others require them only for Service members with dependents. The Committee asked participants about the utility and value of the FCPs and were offered a range of opinions. Many felt they were not helpful. They felt they did not reflect reality and were only a formality; these participants indicated the plans did not work as intended and were not helpful for short-term or day-to-day family situations. However, some did find the plans helpful in situations such as deployments, trainings, and emergencies. They also found them helpful for specific populations such as single parents and new parents because it forced them to do contingency planning. Leaders also found the plans helpful, especially if they took the time to verify the plans. Some described how the plans did not just relate to children but also applied to the care of ailing family members or other family needs.

Generally, participants faced challenges completing their FCPs. They found it difficult to find people they trusted to list as caregivers on their forms. Participants also reported difficulty with the restrictions regarding who can be listed on the FCP. It was hard for participants to keep the plans up to date, and they often felt they did not have enough time to complete the plans, especially after a move, and felt more training was needed on the proper use and purpose of the FCP.

Some participants believed their leaders implemented FCPs at their discretion. Many felt that their leaders did not understand FCP policies or proper use, and many shared stories of leaders misusing the FCP—for example, for parents to obtain childcare for sick children. Participants believed that male leaders were more likely than female leaders to misuse or misinterpret the FCP.

Participants also believed that FCPs can have an impact on careers. Male participants shared stories of Service members using the FCP to electively exit the Service, whereas women were more likely to share stories of leaders using the FCP to force people out of the Service. Participants believed these career implications disproportionately affected certain populations such as dual-military families, single parents, junior Service members, and women. Participants from two Services said the FCP had no real impact on their careers.

### *Discussion on Childcare and Family Care Plans*

Maj Gen (Ret.) Dunbar questioned one of the quotes included in the presentation in which a participant stated she had cross-trained to a different career field because of the FCP and asked why the FCP would create a need to do so. Ms. Gaddes responded that the participant who was quoted said that her leadership did not feel her family choices were conducive to that career field and that the quote also relates to the perception that leaders sometimes misuse or misinterpret the FCP.

### **Gender Integration**

Ms. Gaddes began by stating that the Committee studied the topic of gender integration for the past several years and that many of the findings in this section of the presentation were consistent with those of previous years. She further explained that the findings in this section came from the general comments section of questions asked at the end of each focus group as well as from four focus groups held as a case study of gender integration in action at Fort Hood.

In general, participants viewed gender integration positively, and several indicated the process seems to be going well thus far. This view was offered by participants who were directly involved in the gender integration process as well as participants who were not specifically involved. Several male participants stressed the importance of maintaining equal standards for men and women. Similar to views expressed in previous years, some participants believed the gender integration process would take time, but they envisioned successful gender integration in the future. Some participants, particularly men, felt gender integration would have minimal impact, and some made comparisons to initial concerns with repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell. However, a few noted that gender integration may be an issue among some older Service members but that the younger generation is not bothered by it. A few participants suggested not pushing too hard to achieve those first few successes but rather to let things play out naturally.

Participants also shared what they see as potential barriers to gender integration. Most of the concerns that were raised were common among male and female groups in past years. One concern was that women struggle to gain the respect of male peers and leaders. There were also concerns around the potential for sexual harassment and sexual assault; this included not only a fear that such events could happen but also that men could be falsely accused, which caused men to avoid interactions with women. Hygiene requirements for women were also mentioned as a barrier to gender integration. Finally, a few junior enlisted men raised a concern about the potential for women to negatively impact unit cohesion in special operations and combat-related

units that were previously male only. This concern was more commonly expressed in past years, though, suggesting that such worries may be lessening over time.

### **Fort Hood Case Study**

The Committee was invited to Fort Hood to conduct focus groups about recent gender integration efforts. DACOWITS conducted four focus groups with individuals with first-hand experience with gender integration; however, some of the findings were also echoed by participants outside of this case study.

Participants indicated the process was going well overall. A few reported that women were not being treated any differently than men, and a couple of participants provided specific success stories of women excelling. Despite the general positive feedback both from leaders in the integrating units and from women who were integrating, participants mentioned some process-related challenges. Ms. Gaddes cautioned the Committee to keep in mind that there were only four focus groups conducted for this case study and that participants' perceptions may not reflect the general experiences of all people at Fort Hood. She then discussed the challenges participants had mentioned. First, the requirement to have a minimum number of women in each unit has led to women joining only a small number of units and those units having a disproportionately high number of women. Despite this challenge, a few participants stressed the importance of having female peers in place in these units and thought it was a good idea overall. Second, a few participants mentioned a lingering misperception that standards were lowered. Ms. Gaddes noted that this was something the Committee frequently heard last year, and it is a rumor that has persisted. Third, the "leaders first" approach of integrating leaders before more junior Service members has led to the belief that qualified men are being passed over to place women in those roles. Despite this, some participants still stressed the importance of having female leaders in place for the junior Service members to look up to and turn to when problems or gender-specific questions arise.

When asked about any preparations that had taken place prior to gender integration, most observed efforts to ready either the units integrating or the women themselves. A few participants described taking part in sensing sessions, focus groups, or surveys to discuss potential challenges in advance of gender integration implementation, and a couple of participants described physical testing with men and women to review the standards and revise and update them. When asked about the initial communications received regarding gender integration, the findings mirrored those from past years—participants tended to hear about gender integration efforts from civilian sources first. A couple of people indicated they did not hear about gender integration from the Service at all. A few participants offered suggestions for ensuring the success of the women going into these newly opened career fields and units. A few suggested a need to remove the spotlight and put less pressure on the first women going through the newly opened training courses and into newly integrated units. A couple of other participants suggested first integrating female noncommissioned officers (NCOs) rather than female officers because junior enlisted women may feel more comfortable going to NCOs with questions or concerns.

### *Discussion on Gender Integration and Fort Hood Case Study*

There was no discussion about this section of the focus group findings.

## **General Comments**

When time permitted after the standard focus group protocol was completed, participants were asked a few general questions. Participants were asked to name the greatest challenge women in the military face and to offer one recommendation to share with the Secretary of Defense. In light of recent events involving the improper use of social media among Service members, participants were also asked to discuss any guidance they had received related to this issue as well as recommendations for ensuring Service members use social media appropriately. The majority of focus groups were able to address at least two of these three general questions.

The findings regarding the greatest challenges for servicewomen echoed findings from past years. Common concerns included work-life balance and raising a family, joint spouses, breastfeeding support, military culture, gaining respect as a female Service member, risks of sexual harassment and sexual assault, difficulty obtaining certain positions, and the perception of an inability to meet the physical standards.

Most of the participants indicated they had received training on social media, but the topics of the training varied somewhat. In some Services, the training specifically focused on what content not to post on social media; in other cases, the training was more broadly focused on how to portray the Service in a positive light. For a few participants, the only social media training they received was related specifically, and solely, to operational security. However, several participants reported a concern that Service members should be more careful about what information they post on social media. Many of these participants believed younger Service members were more likely to post inappropriate information on social media. A few participants also noted that Service members have less freedom than civilians in terms of what they can and cannot post to social media. Several participants, particularly from one Service, expressed the opinion that nothing can be done to stop the improper use of social media by Service members. Finally, the need for both stronger repercussions and more consistent enforcement and punishments for improper use of social media was the most commonly mentioned suggestion. Several participants also suggested additional training and guidance on social media use, though some feared that frequent training may cause people to become immune to it. Participants from one Service in particular wanted additional training beyond what they had received, which was only to sign a statement acknowledging the policy.

The most common suggestions participants had for the Secretary of Defense were to increase leave for fathers, improve staffing issues surrounding pregnancy, normalize interactions between men and women, limit uniform modifications, improve the performance review system (this issue was specific to one Service), increase the amount and availability of job-specific training and specific jobs within each career field (this issue was also specific to one Service), revisit the height-weight standards, ensure better screening during recruitment, and extend childcare hours.

### *Discussion on General Comments*

VADM (Ret.) Pottenger commented that there seemed to be a disparity between the number of warrant officers and officers in the participant demographics presented in the backup slides. She cautioned that the data was skewed more towards mid-grade enlisted and that the Committee should be careful when drawing conclusions. Ms. Gaddes indicated she would revisit the data to ensure the numbers reported were correct.

MG (Ret.) Macdonald noted his surprise that the misperception of lower standards has persisted. He indicated he thought more people were beginning to understand the difference between occupational and physical standards.

**Public Comment Period**

Ms. Meyers first reminded the audience that all public comments were vetted by the Committee Chair and DACOWITS staff prior to being admitted and that inclusion in the public comment period did not indicate that DACOWITS recommended or agreed with the comments. She then stated that the Committee had received two written public comments. The comments were not read or discussed during the meeting.

Ms. Meyers closed the public meeting period for the day.



14 June 2017

### **Morning Remarks**

Ms. Myers, DACOWITS Acting Director, re-opened the meeting to the public and introduced the agenda topics for the day. Ms. Myers reminded those in attendance that comments made by individual Committee members during the meeting were their own and did not necessarily reflect the thoughts of the full Committee. DACOWITS Chair, Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger, asked all Committee members and meeting attendees to introduce themselves.

### **Gender Integration (RFI 2)**

The Committee requested a briefing from the Services and the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) on their progress with the gender integration implementation plans. Specifically, the Committee requested information on their plans for the next 18 months to implement any remaining integration initiatives; how these plans have been released, promoted, and made available for review by Service leadership, personnel, and the public; if the Services have discovered any known limitations that may stall integration; the number of graduations or completions for women going through any specialty schools since March 2016; and the historical attrition rates, by gender, from January 1, 2017, to May 1, 2017 for candidates/students in schools, programs, or specialty courses that have integrated since December 3, 2015.

*Army: LTC Christine Rice, Chief, Women in the Service Assignments Policy/Soldier 2020, Headquarters, Department of the Army G-1*

LTC Rice began by providing an overview of the Army's implementation plan. The plan has five lines of effort: transforming accessions, talent management, unit fill plans, education and communication, and assessment. Under the first line of effort, the Army has developed the Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT), which was designed to be used at accessions locations to ensure the Service is recruiting individuals for jobs they are capable of performing. The Army is considering implementing noncognitive testing/personality testing into the accessions strategy in the future. Regarding placing women into infantry and armor positions, the FY 2017 and FY 2018 strategy is not to force women officers into these branches. For FY 2019, the Chief of Staff will decide whether to continue with this approach.

Under the second line of effort, talent management, the Army uses the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and the OPAT but is considering adding a third predictor. The Service is conducting a file review of the women who have been accessed into these newly opened career fields to assist with this. LTC Rice indicated the Army has also partnered with the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) and the 75th Ranger Regiment to look at predictors of high-performing talent to add to their selection processes. She noted that at present there is one woman in the Ranger Regiment and that others will move forward into the unit this year. For the third line of effort, the unit fill plan, the Army has designated three units at Fort Hood and three units at Fort Bragg to integrate the first women into infantry and armor. These units recently received the first graduates from One Stop Unit Training (OSUT), the Army's training course for these positions. For education and communication, the fourth line of effort, the Army is focused on professional military education programs in the U.S. Army

Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Across the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), there is a focus on units doing integration to provide real-time evidence, data, and support. For the communications strategy, the Army works with the media to report stories of success, look at potential fake news, and provide regular updates to members of Congress. The fifth line of effort, the assessment phase, is a long-term plan that will extend beyond 2020. The Army plans to look at the cognitive, physical, and cultural-social aspects of integration. It will work toward gender integration without tokenism moving forward.

Regarding the timeline, the Army is using a four-phased approach. LTC Rice indicated the Army recently entered phase three, assignment to operational units, and that it will be fully into this phase on July 7, 2017, when the first tank crew members will graduate. This is the last conventional occupation in the Army to graduate women. LTC Rice noted that TRADOC has fully integrated all training courses, including Airborne Ranger training. In phase four, the Army will examine the integrated units for sustainment and optimization.

LTC Rice provided the numbers of women in each newly opened occupational specialty that are assigned to FORSCOM/Army National Guard (ARNG), in training, or pending initial military training. She clarified that those in the pending training status are in the enlisted delayed entry program or are FY 2017 cadets that recently commissioned and are awaiting training seats based on availability. LTC Rice stated the Army is no longer holding women to meet the “leaders first” approach; that target has been met in all of the units scheduled to receive women. She reported that officers are in all of the Army’s initial military training pipelines for Infantry and Armor, and the Army is well ahead of schedule in assigning female leaders to the units.

In terms of limitations and concerns, LTC Rice addressed issues with propensity and attrition, attaining the needed number of female cadre at training bases, equipment sizing and inventory, and geographic disbursement for ARNG. For propensity, she reported that out of the 400 seats available to women in the infantry and armor courses for FY 2017, there were approximately 200 women who attempted the courses. Integrating women at the training bases requires having enough female cadre and separate facilities at initial military training. LTC Rice indicated that by October 2017, the Army expects to have 40 female drill sergeants assigned to these training bases. Regarding equipment sizing and inventory, the Army is working to ensure enlisted training bases have enough equipment in sizes extra-small and small, and have the female-focused improved outer tactical vest and armored plates, to accommodate all of the women going through training. The women at Fort Benning now use that equipment, and sizing is not a problem. Within ARNG, the units are dispersed, making meeting the “leaders first” strategy difficult. She indicated ARNG is looking to request an exception in August focused on reducing the requirement to one female leader and using leaders from other branches as well.

Lastly, LTC Rice provided data on attrition rates for men and women in the occupations opened to women during the past 2–5 years. The Army has seen approximately twice the rate of attrition for women as for men. She was not able to provide attrition data for armor and infantry because of the low numbers of women completing these courses but hopes to be able to obtain and report on trends in those fields soon. The Army’s first course had a 23-percent attrition rate, which was comparable to attrition rates for women across the Army as a whole.

#### Marine Corps: Maj Emma Wood, Manpower and Reserve Affairs Integration Section

Maj Wood reported that all actions for the Marine Corps’ implementation plan either have been completed or have been put into action as enduring efforts; there are no additional actions to be

initiated in the next 18 months. The primary outstanding element is the first-year assessment, which began in April 2017 and should be completed by the end of the year. That assessment will highlight any areas for future improvement. The Marine Corps released its gender integration implementation plan online, and its public affairs office has released a number of press releases about the plan. A series of mobile training teams were also dispatched to inform Marines of the plan. Marine Corps leadership has been involved every step of the way, and briefings to leaders are given regularly. Regarding limitations that may stall integration, Maj Wood noted that the availability of assignable leaders to meet the requirement of having two female leaders at each previously closed unit limits the amount of units that can receive junior enlisted female Marines but that the Marine Corps is working to increase female representation. She provided the numbers of women who are in the entry-level training pipeline or who have completed the pipeline for the previously closed occupational specialties, including the number at the schools, the number who have graduated, and the number who have been reassigned to a different occupational specialty broken out by those who failed to meet occupational specialty-specific physical standards and those who were reassigned for other reasons. Across the various occupational specialties, there were 103 enlisted women and 22 female officers, of whom 64 enlisted and 9 officers had graduated, 33 enlisted and 2 officers had been reassigned to a different occupational specialty, and 6 enlisted and 11 officers were still completing their training at the schools. Historical attrition rates for men and women in these previously closed occupational specialties were not available at the time of the briefing; Maj Wood said the Marine Corps would share that information with DACOWITS once it has been fully captured and adequately assessed.

*Navy: CAPT Christian Dunbar, Naval Special Warfare Center School House*

CAPT Dunbar began by stating that his briefing would cover Sailors in the following career fields: enlisted and officer Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) teams and enlisted special boat operators. The Navy is fully prepared for gender integration—all barriers have been removed. The Naval Special Warfare Center is constantly self-assessing, including having female cadre and junior enlisted Sailors on staff shadow across the training environment to ensure no potential barriers are being overlooked. The integration plan was communicated via all-hands meetings, status updates, policies, commander's guidance, leadership meetings, and through the Navy's public affairs office. Every major commander speaks 2–4 times a year at all-hands meetings communicating the Navy's plan for gender integration. The Navy has been integrated for several years and does not view gender integration as a major cultural issue. The majority of the conversations and communications emphasize that a SEAL is a SEAL, regardless of gender. CAPT Dunbar reported that the center graduates six SEAL classes per year and five classes per year for special boat operators. To date, no women have accessed, graduated, or completed training for SEALs or Special Warfare Combatant Craft operators. Historical attrition rates are 73 percent for SEALs and 63 percent for special boat operators. CAPT Dunbar explained that selection for these positions is done by ranking all candidates on the basis of their ASVAB, physical fitness test, and special operations resilience test scores and then selecting the most highly competitive candidates. Because of this, the Navy does not anticipate seeing high rates of attrition in the early phases of training. It expects that those at boot camp now will make it to and through the training. He indicated that propensity is a concern; so far, only one female officer has applied for SEALs training in FY 2018. She is on the training grounds to go through the SEAL assessment and selection process in July 2017 to compete with 160 Sailors for 100 training spots available. To date, no female enlisted SEAL candidates have come from the recruiting depots.

Three enlisted women have been recruited for Special Warfare Combatant Craft operator positions, and two of them have been accessed.

*Air Force: LtCol Charles Bris-Bois, Personnel Recovery Branch Lead, Headquarters Air Force*

LtCol Bris-Bois began by stating that he is the board president for the combat rescue officer selection board. During the next 18 months, the Air Force will continue its efforts begun last year with the standup of the Battlefield Airman (BA) Training Group to fix production issues. This includes starting a BA prep course for all candidates going through BA training rather than the previous method of having one prep course for each specific Air Force specialty code. The first 8-week combined course began in June 2017. Physical preparation is the most demanding component, but mental preparation is also difficult for Airmen. The Air Force has brought in two operational psychologists to help Airmen build the mental fortitude needed for the training. Both are women and will hold the additional duty of serving as female support cadre.

The integration efforts are being tracked through General Officer Steering Groups that are held quarterly and led by the Deputy Director of Operations in A3. It is also being tracked through an annual assessment of the full integration of women. LtCol Bris-Bois reported there are no known limitations that would stall integration. Some units have requested facilities updates, but none have indicated the lack of these updates will be a barrier to integration. Regarding equipment, the Air Force just launched the Battlefield Airmen Rapid Refresh and Replenishment program, which is a computer-based system that allows Airmen to go online and select original or replacement equipment and have it shipped to them.

No women have graduated from any Air Force specialty schools in the newly opened career fields, but there are two in the training pipeline for Tactical Air Control Party (TACP). Both have several weeks of training to complete: one has 9 weeks, and the other has 21 weeks. The attrition rates for men in the newly opened Air Force specialty codes are as follows: Combat Rescue Officer, 8 percent; Pararescue, 85 percent; and TACP, 67 percent. LtCol Bris-Bois explained that combat rescue officers attrite at a lower rate because they undergo a 1-week prep course prior to the training.

*LtCol Jeff Pavelko, Chief, Readiness Division, Directorate for Joint Special Operations Forces Development, Headquarters USSOCOM*

LtCol Pavelko began by stating that USSOCOM's gender integration plan was approved on March 9, 2016, and was published on OSD's webpage for the Women in the Services Review. The plan contains four lines of effort: accessions, talent management, communication, and assessment. Phase I of the plan was the preparation phase, which included opening accessions for women, assigning female cadre, and preparing a longitudinal assessment. Phase II includes the commencement of training at the various selection points, managing the initial assignments, continuing communications plans, and preparing the units to receive their first female graduates. LtCol Pavelko indicated USSOCOM is in phase II of the plan. Women have entered some but not all of the special operations courses. To date, no female candidates have successfully completed the selection process and the training course. Once they begin the course, it will take 18–24 months to complete.

USSOCOM and the Service components have not identified any limitations. There are continuous course assessment processes to identify and address any issues. To date, one woman has gone through the Army Ranger Assessment and Selection Program; she was selected to join

the Regiment and arrived in March 2017. Two female enlistees are scheduled to attend the Special Warfare Combatant-Craft (SWCC) course, and four enlisted women are slated to attend Army Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) this winter. One female NCO and two female officers attended SFAS, but none were selected to attend the Special Forces Qualification Course. No women have attempted the SEAL or SWCC qualification courses. Two women attempted the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command Assessment and Selection, but neither completed it. For the Air Force, three female candidates attempted the Special Tactics Officer Assessment and Selection, but all attrited; no women have attempted the Combat Controller course or the Special Operations weather selection. LtCol Pavelko provided attrition rates for each course, including the data on the limited number of women who have attempted each course to date.

### Discussion

Lt Gen (Ret.) Fedder noted the large disparity in attrition rates between combat rescue officers and the other Air Force special operations roles, which LtCol Bris-Bois (Air Force) indicated was the result of a training preparation course for combat rescue officers. She asked all of the Services if any were making an effort to reach back into precommissioning programs to better prepare cadets or to generate propensity. LTC Rice (Army) reported the Army sends members from Ranger Regiment and USASOC to the advanced camp for ROTC and branch week at West Point but added that the newly commissioned officers are not eligible for special operations units until they have completed time in the conventional force. For SFAS, officers are not able to attend until they are first lieutenants; for the Ranger Regiment, officers must first have performed a leadership role in a conventional command before they can perform a leadership role in the Ranger Regiment. CAPT Dunbar (Navy) indicated that most of the Navy's special operations candidates are recruited off the street and that the Navy is responsible for this recruiting effort. The Naval Special Operations Center has a tie to the Navy Recruiting Command; the center has a dedicated team (known as a cell) to profile candidates for the recruiting command. The center also has a public-facing website and directs all candidates to that website. The site contains nutrition plans, workout plans, etc., to help candidates prepare. To increase propensity, the cell also does outreach events with the recruiting command. As an example, the center held a SEAL challenge of high school boat crews; this year, teams were required to have a gender-integrated crew. The center is also attending female and male wrestling events. The center has a great relationship with ROTC units. It is looking at maximizing its model of attending regional events rather than reaching out to individual ROTC programs to do as much as it can while maximizing efficiencies. LtCol Bris-Bois stated the Air Force is revitalizing its recruiting effort during the next 18 months. It recognizes that if it can bring individuals with the mental fortitude and physical ability into the pipeline, those individuals will perform better in the courses. The type of individuals who tend to do well in these courses tend to be water polo players, wrestlers, and baseball players. LtCol Bris-Bois (Air Force) reported that recruiting has been challenging because the Air Force could not provide BAs to go to recruiting events, and the average recruiter did not know what BAs do or how to promote that type of position. To address this, the Air Force is compiling a core team at Air Force Recruiting Service and has signed contracts to bring in former BAs who are now retired or no longer in the Service to assist with recruitment. Maj Wood (Marine Corps) reported the Marine Corps is revamping its recruiting efforts toward women specifically. However, she was not aware of any specific efforts to prepare women for entry into previously closed positions.

Ms. Medina inquired about the “leaders first” program and how it is structured. She stated that some have called the Army’s program a pilot, which she felt was odd given that the decision to integrate has already been finalized. She wondered if instead the Army is simply starting small and scaling up. She also noted that there are few Reserve Component women in the newly opened Army occupational specialties and inquired why. She further commented that although all of the Services stated there were no barriers to integration, the fact that so few women have volunteered may indicate that there are some barriers, at least in attracting women. LTC Rice (Army) explained that the “leaders first” strategy is for infantry and armor specifically. In selecting this approach, the Army looked at initiatives in other recently opened fields to set the conditions for success by having leaders integrate the fields first. She reported the Army has integrated fields at the battalion level in the Active Component and in most of ARNG as well. The Army’s focus is now at the company level; it is starting with officers and NCOs first to allow it to perform an assessment to ensure cultural issues are not a concern and ensure the standards are operationally relevant. Ms. Medina asked about the plan to scale up. LTC Rice (Army) stated that phase IV of the gender integration plan will be scaling this approach out Army-wide. The Army first plans to study an integrated unit to gain lessons learned over time; to do this, the Army needs units that include more than one woman. The Service expects that in FY 2019, this program will go Army-wide. ARNG is still looking at how it wants to move forward and will present its plan in August 2017. Ms. Medina was surprised that ARNG did not have a plan in place already. LTC Rice (Army) explained that ARNG was following the Army’s plan previously and was tasked with developing a suitable approach to implementing the “leaders first” strategy, given the wide geographic diversity of the ARNG.

Ms. Hunter inquired about the Services’ efforts to train the women being recruited into these newly opened positions during their initial training to a standard that will make them physically competitive in the follow-on training. Having different standards for men and women in basic training but then requiring the women to adhere to the male standards in the follow-on training would be detrimental to their success. CAPT Dunbar (Navy) responded that enlisted candidates are partnered with mentors in recruiting districts to guide them through the training plan prior to arrival. In ROTC units and at the Academy, candidates prepare on their own but with support from unit leadership so they can model the physical programs for the jobs they want to do. At boot camp, the Navy has a specialized plan that provides 27 extra physical training sessions. The barrier the Navy still must overcome is integration at boot camp; it still runs split-gender training sessions. To address this, the Navy has all female candidates come together to complete those extra 27 sessions. He stated there are 12 or 14 women at boot camp right now following that plan. All of the candidates also go to prep school right after boot camp to prepare them for their training. LtCol Bris-Bois (Air Force) reported that along with the new 8-week BA prep course, the Air Force also now has the ability in basic training to pull interested candidates aside to provide mentorship and additional physical training; previously, Air Force special operations was not allowed to reach out to enlistees at all during basic training. LtCol Pavelko (USSOCOM) stated that the Service components all have prep courses to prepare members to attend the assessment and selection courses. Maj Wood (Marine Corps) stated that in the enlisted pipeline, there are now standard tests that are gender-neutral so that from the moment they are ready to ship to boot camp, women are held to the same high standards as men. For officers, the pipeline is the same except for the Physical Fitness Test and Combat Fitness test (PFT and CFT). She acknowledged that it is hard to balance the physiological differences with gender equality.

VADM (Ret.) Pottenger noted the large disparity in attrition rates in newly opened positions for women in the Army (around 24 percent) compared to women in the Marine Corps (around 50 percent) and asked why these rates are not more similar. LTC Rice (Army) indicated the attrition problem is among enlisted personnel rather than officers. She further commented that iron deficiency is one problem commonly seen among women at basic training; women now receive an iron supplement to address this. Another barrier the Army is working to address is how to prepare women for the OPAT; the United States Army Recruiting Command is studying this as part of the first year assessment. Maj Wood (Marine Corps) stated the Marine Corps has seen improvement in the pipeline for many of the previously closed positions. She referenced the presentation slides and indicated that some of the women who received an occupational specialty reassignment were reassigned because of administrative errors; for example, 13 of the women in this category did not meet the height standards for one newly opened occupational specialty. Addressing that issue is a part of the ongoing assessment.

Col (Ret.) Boggs stated his concern that the Army reported female attrition rates on par with the men in ground combat units, but the Marine Corps presented much higher attrition rates for women. Maj Wood (Marine Corps) responded that the Army is not the Marine Corps, and the training pipeline for the two is not the same. She again mentioned the ongoing effort to identify the challenges for women. Col (Ret.) Boggs said it would seem logical for women to be completing the Infantry Officer Course (IOC) program at the same rates as men unless the Marine Corps is recruiting less qualified women.

Maj Gen (Ret.) Dunbar was concerned about the high attrition rates for the Air Force's special operations positions and the cost it adds to the Service. LtCol Bris-Bois (Air Force) acknowledged this concern and stated that the Air Force hopes the new efforts to work with Airmen at basic training will result in lower attrition rates. The program began 1 month prior to the June meeting, so it was not yet possible to determine a difference in attrition rates. He also noted that the RAND Corporation (RAND) conducted a study nearly 2 years ago that concluded that training accurately mirrors requirements on the battlefield. Therefore, LtCol Bris-Bois (Air Force) said he believes the answer is to recruit candidates with the right mental fortitude and physical ability coming in. He referenced the challenges in doing this, however, and noted that the Services are not recruiting in the way a Division I college football program would; rather, the Service is essentially opening these fields to anyone interested, which is why a better scouting program is needed to bring in the right people who will be successful in these training pipelines. Maj Gen (Ret.) Dunbar then asked about prescreening. LtCol Bris-Bois (Air Force) stated the Air Force implemented a scout recruit and development program 1 year prior; interested individuals are assigned to the program and provided a mentor and coach to help with physical training. He explained that Airmen need to pass a basic physical aptitude test as well but that it is not a good predictor of success in the pipeline. The program is based heavily on what the Navy is doing. CAPT Dunbar (Navy) stated the SEAL-specific counter-attrition efforts have been effective but they must constantly be assessed. The Navy aggressively pursues counter-attrition efforts and is becoming more efficient. However, he noted the success rate of officers has dropped because the Navy's need to replenish its ranks has led it to accept some of the lower ranking applicants.

CSM (Ret.) Jones advised the Services to look back at the attrition rates for career fields that opened to women 10–15 years ago for reference. She also suggested the Army make it clearer in its presentation that there is only one infantry unit in ARNG.

Ms. Hawkes inquired what is being done to identify the different training methods required to achieve the standards while also acknowledging the physiological differences between men and women. LTC Rice (Army) stated the Army is looking into that and has found that making sure women have the opportunity to do training they would not normally do rather than training solely to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test has proven successful.

SMA (Ret.) Preston inquired about the purpose of the female sports psychologists in the training group for the Air Force. LtCol Bris-Bois (Air Force) stated that the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful candidate is 90 percent mental. Passing the physical fitness test is one thing, but it takes a lot of mental fortitude to complete the training pipeline. The psychologists' job is to help candidates develop that mental fortitude. The purpose of the female support cadre is to be that first line against hazing; serving as the female support cadre will be an additional role for these psychologists. SMA (Ret.) Preston asserted that avoiding hazing begins with squad leaders taking ownership of the Service members within their squad and enforcing standards.

### **Physiological Gender Differences (RFI 5)**

The Committee requested a briefing from the Military Services on any approved and published additional training for combat arms, combat communities, and combat Airmen personnel; what the Services are doing to ensure women are prepared to successfully complete their occupational specialty producing school; and how the Services are incorporating science and new technologies into improving the training methodologies.

#### **Army: Mr. McConnell, Headquarters TRADOC**

Mr. McConnell began by describing two studies. The first was the physical demands study that included 500 Soldiers randomly selected from units at eight brigades and five installations. The second study was the gender integration study. The ultimate goal of these studies was to create a more ready Army; that is TRADOC's obligation to the Army and to all taxpayers. The studies resulted in a transition from gender-normed standards to criterion-based occupational standards. The occupational tasks do not change based on the gender of the Soldier, so the standards to do that occupation should not vary by gender either. The physical demands study allowed the Army to determine what it takes physically to complete common Soldier tasks. Out of the common tasks required of each of the seven combat arms occupational specialties, three were identified as being common to all of the occupational specialties. Once the tasks were identified, TRADOC determined the best methods of simulating each task, and the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine developed data to correlate between task simulations and the tasks themselves. This resulted in the development of the four-task OPAT.

The intent of the OPAT is, in part, to ensure the Army accesses Soldiers who are predictably capable to be trained in their respective occupational specialties and succeed. Since January 2017, the OPAT has been tested on approximately 45,000 potential recruits. Recruits must meet the OPAT threshold before they can ship to basic training. There is a waiver process in place, but so far, no waivers have been requested. Early indications show the OPAT has greatly reduced attrition rates, which is significant given that on average, the Army spends more than \$70,000 per recruit from entry to arrival at the first unit.



Mr. McConnell then described three additional training and preparation initiatives being carried out. While the goal is to use the OPAT to ensure that recruits arrive at training physically prepared, the Initial Physical Resiliency Enhancement Program is an additional assessment carried out at the reception battalion to examine physical resiliency. Those who do not pass this assessment are pulled out of the training pipeline to complete a 3-week program for flexibility, aerobic fitness, and strength development. Implementing this program has reduced attrition rates by 8 percent, which amounted to a savings of approximately \$5.6 million in FY 2016. The next initiative is the performance and recovery nutrition bar. The bar provides calcium to reduce the risk of stress fractures and keeps food in the recruits' stomachs, which makes them less susceptible to heat injuries. The last training and preparation initiative described was the use of iron supplements for female Soldiers. Twenty-five percent of women who begin Army entry training have an iron deficiency. After several weeks of training, the deficiency can double to 50 percent. This lack of iron hinders the body's ability to carry oxygen to vital organs and can thus affect physical and cognitive performance. The Army now provides women iron supplements to address this. Testing indicates the iron supplement can reduce a woman's 2-mile run time by about 2 minutes.

Next, Mr. McConnell discussed science and technology efforts to improve training. With developments to the improved outer tactical vest, sizing has evolved from three size options—small, medium, and large—to nine size options to ensure a better fit for all Soldiers, male and female. Fit matters when a Soldier is carrying an average load of between 77 and 89 pounds. Moreover, female drill sergeants and platoon sergeants are now incorporated into infantry and armor One Stop Unit Training (OSUT). Female cadre provide female recruit role models and an opportunity to see gender integration working at that initial point in recruits' training. The Army has also started reducing the weight carried by recruits during tasks that do not require a heavy load, such as qualifying their weapons under the "Soldier's Load Task Force Initial Entry Training/Initial Military Training" initiative. The next initiative discussed was Red Phase Optimization. Red phase is 3 weeks long and is the first of four phases of training at OSUT. TRADOC is now taking a more measured approach to running and ruck marching during this initial phase and helping the cadre understand that men and women are built differently, particularly in the hip structure, which requires developing methods to reduce injuries. The final initiative mentioned was to enhance leader decision making. This initiative aims to help move away from the "badge of honor" mindset of a high attrition rate being a good thing to seeing that they can achieve the same standards with a different approach.

*Marine Corps: Mr. Brian McGuire, Deputy Director, Force Fitness Division, Training and Education Command*

Mr. McGuire stated the Marine Corps' initial entry training is the same for all Marines, regardless of gender. Officers going to combat arms occupational specialties then go to IOC, which is one of the Marine Corps' most physically demanding schools. The Basic School (TBS), the initial training for all Marines, is 6 months long. Marines who determine during TBS that they want to go to IOC can complete additional training to prepare them for IOC. Civilian certified athletic trainers are available to provide individualized training, functional movement screenings, and so on. Occupational specialty selection happens at the 4-month mark at TBS. After this point, there is a more deliberate approach to prepare those going to IOC. These students participate in a specified preparatory training with the IOC Marines Awaiting Training platoon.

The Marine Corps is taking steps to ensure women are prepared to successfully complete their occupational specialty producing schools. There are limitations on what recruiters can do with recruits in the delayed entry pool; longer time in the delayed entry pool actually leads to greater attrition. The Marine Corps screens recruits using gender-neutral testing before they ship to boot camp to see who has the capacity to go into the combat-related occupational specialties. They then must also pass occupational specialty-specific physical standards (MSPS) during occupational specialty school. This process has been in place for almost 2 years. The physical training programs in place for the entry-level training that occurs prior to occupational specialty school progressively increases the tasks in terms of load, duration, time, and intensity. Civilian athletic trainers are on hand at all entry-level training to support the cadre. Recruits who have difficulty passing the MSPS during occupational specialty school are given remediation training. Recruits are allowed three attempts to pass the MSPS before they are recycled; they are then permitted an additional three attempts before being reclassified to another occupational specialty. Since beginning the enhanced physical screening and MSPS on October 1, 2015, 99.5 percent of male Marines and 86.4 percent of female Marines have passed the MSPS.

Mr. McGuire reported that all Marine Corps training, including physical training, undergoes periodic review at least every 2 years. One example of a change resulting from that review is a reduction in running mileage and replacing it with shorter, harder, faster exercises. Nutrition is another effort the Commandant has emphasized. The Marine Corps has partnered with performance nutrition dieticians to enhance what it does at recruit depots; part of this is post-exercise nutrition supplementation. The Marine Corps partnered with the Office of Naval Research to use wearable wireless sensors to monitor performance during training to better capture biometrics and monitor for heat casualties. Mr. McGuire also noted that the MSPS were validated by RAND as being gender-neutral, occupation specific, and occupationally relevant. Finally, in 2016, the Commandant instituted a Force Fitness Instructor (FFI) program. FFIs are specifically trained staff NCOs with knowledge in performance training, injury prevention, and nutrition. To become an FFI, Marines attend a 6-week school. FFIs then implement training at the company, battery, or squadron level as a resource to enhance the already good physical training.

*Navy: CAPT Christian Dunbar, Naval Special Warfare Center School House*

CAPT Dunbar reported the Navy had two primary studies conducted to review physical standards and operational readiness. The first study was done by RAND and the Naval Health Research Center. The standards for Sailors in Naval Special Warfare (NSW) schools are based on testing performed in 2013–2014; no events in the pipelines have changed. NSW also has a mentorship program in conjunction with Navy Recruiting Command, and female candidates have a female mentor. NSW has a large outreach program to professional clubs as well. In terms of incorporating science and new technologies, NSW is heavily invested in research. It has research partners to do regular exchanges about what is the best and what is proven effective. CAPT Dunbar reported that NSW shares that information with its partners in the other Services as well. NSW schools have psychologists, athletic trainers, etc., to provide mass offerings to their recruits. As the recruits advance in their training and to their units, there is more specific testing and resources available. NSW has assembled a cadre of senior medical officer psychologists and athletic trainers. The leaders of the medical cadre are all women. On a monthly basis, as a cohort, NSW reviews the numbers and benchmarks; there is an advisory council that reviews the data. As an example, CAPT Dunbar mentioned learning about the iron deficiencies in women. NSW

has a no-supplements policy, but NSW is in a rapid-development cycle to create a policy through which Sailors would be assessed and prescribed the supplements they actually need. CAPT Dunbar said he appreciated the opportunity to listen and learn from other services during the DACOWITS panel briefings and to bring innovations back to the Navy for further testing.

*Air Force: Dr. Neal Baumgartner, Chief, Air Force Exercise Science Unit*

Dr. Baumgartner indicated physical training for Battlefield Airmen (BA) is guided by strength and conditioning coaches. There is also a blue banding procedure that allows BA to complete additional training and a new training course. Recruits for all BA positions complete one prep course, the new training course, whereas under the previous approach, there was a different prep course for each BA position. Dr. Baumgartner was unaware of any external content review or gender-specific training done as part of the physical training for BAs.

He then provided an update on the status of the testing currently underway with the Tier 2 Prototype Occupationally-Specific, Operationally-Relevant physical fitness test. The Air Force is preparing to finish the testing for Air Liaison Officers and TACP specialists will have the first meeting to translate the results into policy in July 2017. For Explosive Ordnance Disposal, the Air Force just finished the first step of the study, delineating 39 critical physical tasks; steps 2 and 3 will occur through the end of 2017. The Air Force is developing a Strength Aptitude Test. Dr. Baumgartner indicated the current test has been in use since 1976, so the Air Force is looking to update the test to link to Air Force specialty codes that will launch during the next few years. The Tier 2 prototype is very well liked in general and well accepted, especially by special operators. Dr. Baumgartner remarked that getting the culture to adapt to new methods of testing and away from activities such as pull-ups is a paradigm shift.

Dr. Baumgartner stated that behavior is more important than testing. Updating the Air Force Tier 1 test to address gender concerns and what is best for the overall force still needs attention. Dr. Baumgartner stated he was working with the San Antonio Military Medical Center on the number of Airmen diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, which is a behavior-based disease. They will link the 5,000 cases of type 2 diabetes identified in Airmen in the past 12 years to the Tier 1 fitness standards. The expectation is that those with type 2 diabetes are not performing well, especially in the run. They will look at gender differences there as well.

Next, Dr. Baumgartner illustrated the Battlefield Airman Operator tests and standards by presenting data from an actual operator collected a few weeks prior. The test is useful because it is a tool that provides feedback to the individual Airman and also provides information that enables the professional to help that Airman improve the lower scores as well as helps the commander and team leader determine the type of position the Airman is best suited to fill (e.g., someone who tested well in strength but not endurance would be assigned to carry equipment rather than perform long runs).

Dr. Baumgartner then addressed actions and recommendations. The first recommendation was to employ the Air Force Principles and Methods (EPM) course. This is a science-based exercise training course that has been used since the early 2000s and is constantly being updated. The course takes less than 1 week and first covers principles in an academic setting so students can become the experts for their units; it then allows them to execute the activities and has them design programs for sample individuals. The training includes sex-specific training methods/techniques. Dr. Baumgartner stated there was a lack of consistency in training, and members were being taught different things at different schools. For the Tier 1 test, the Air Force

would like members from operational units to come to San Antonio to learn and then bring information to units and update their processes periodically. Dr. Baumgartner stated that education, marketing, and communication is where the Air Force tends to fail in physical training and fitness.

Dr. Baumgartner concluded by providing sources, references, and relationships that may be of interest to the Committee in this area. He remarked that he had just come from a meeting on the topic that included a session on heat stress and wearable technology. He encouraged the Committee to monitor the International Congress on Soldiers' Physical Performance conference in November, the International Conference on Physical Employment Standards in July, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Human Factors Medicine Research Task Group 269 panel meetings. Dr. Baumgartner stated he has charts on studies comparing men and women across several different tests and task simulations that will be included in one of the chapters in the NATO product to be developed from the Human Factors Medicine Research Task Group 269 panel meetings.

### Discussion

MG (Ret.) Macdonald applauded the Army for providing percentages for the decreases in attrition rates and related cost savings and recommended the Army publicize that information. For the Marine Corps, he suggested looking into linking athletic trainers with master fitness trainers and suggested statistics and money will drive the culture change. Mr. McGuire (Marine Corps) responded that athletic trainers and strength coaches are at these sites and are linked with sports medicine and the gunnery sergeants that plan and implement PT.

Dr. Baumgartner (Air Force) stated he appreciates the comments on communication. The Services have done a great job of starting to resource these staff but making sure they maintain such staff in some type of central command to ensure Service members are receiving a consistent message is key.

Ms. Hawkes inquired about gender-specific training methods and techniques in the Services. Dr. Baumgartner (Air Force) responded that gender-specific techniques are addressed in the EPM course. As an example, he stated that women have roughly 65 percent of the shoulder strength of men and that during training, women can overtrain, which can lead to injury. The principles are common across gender but execution must be controlled. They want women to improve but not at the expense of losing the strength they already possess or experiencing injury. There are different techniques for leveraging the same task; task execution can be flexible as long as it is completed. If a woman uses more hip strength to do a dead man carry, that is acceptable. The Air Force has different training techniques, but it is primarily for the different strengths rather than gender differences. Dr. Baumgartner stated he can give more detail in written form.

Ms. Hunter asked how the Services are addressing the physiological differences to train individuals to their maximum capacity and at what points those differentials ensure people receive training to the same standard but in different ways. Mr. McGuire (Marine Corps) responded that it is important to delineate between the PFT/CFT and individual occupational specialty standards. On the former, including the endurance course, the goal is to break out high, intermediate, and low fitness levels. With the occupational standards, it is pass/fail. The Marine Corps has a remediation policy to work with individuals on the specific tasks with which they have difficulty. Dr. Baumgartner (Air Force) indicated the use of ability groups (categorizing individuals by ability and tailoring training to meet the groups' needs) is very important in

examining aerobic fitness, muscle power, and strength. The information from those tests can be used to tailor the training to individuals and ability groups. Mr. McGuire (Marine Corps) agreed that ability groups are very strongly recommended.

As a follow-up question, Ms. Hunter asked if the ability groups used in basic training are based on ability rather than gender. Dr. Baumgartner (Air Force) indicated they are for the Air Force. Mr. McGuire (Marine Corps) responded that the ability groups for the Marine Corps are done within each gender. CAPT Dunbar (Navy) stated NSW uses certified athletic trainers and the operator test to learn about the physical ability of individuals in the pipeline. After prep school, unit training is done together, so it is up to Service members to maintain the fitness plans they were provided at prep school.

### **United States Marine Corps Update**

The Marine Corps asked to address DACOWITS to provide an update on its Social Media Task Force. This was not in response to an RFI from the Committee. The task force was formed as a reaction to recent media accounts of the improper use of social media by several members of the Marine Corps.

#### **BGen William Seely III, Director Interim Social Media Task Force**

BGen Seely began by introducing those in attendance with him, including Gen Walters, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, who leads the full task force; Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) Special Agent Russel Alberty; LtCol Marts, branch head for military justice at Headquarters Marine Corps; and Ms. Melissa Cohen, the previous branch head for sexual harassment and sexual assault response and the person who will lead the permanent Social Media Task Force once established.

The Marine Corps' interim Social Media Task Force is composed of more than 75 members and has the mission of achieving an end to the factors enabling and fostering the disrespect that allowed inappropriate behavior to occur. The Marine Corps believes a subculture exists that allowed this abhorrent and degrading behavior on Service members by other Marines. The task force does not know how many members of the Marines United Facebook group personally saw the offensive posts, and it may never know how many viewed or uploaded images, but the fact remains that some number participated in this and did not feel the moral obligation to intervene. The Marine Corps sees this as a symptom of a larger issue that cannot be easily defined or eliminated and that encompasses bias and harassment. BGen Seely acknowledged that when a similar issue occurred in 2013, the Marine Corps did not respond correctly, but he stated the Service is committed to maintaining an organization in which each Marine is fully valued to enable the Marine Corps to reach the best members from across society, leverage each individual's strengths, and build capabilities to fight wars as a team. The biggest misperception among Marines is that the Marine Corps' diversity efforts are an act of political correctness; this is not the case. Diversity is the only way to achieve the force of the future. The task force aims to promote the understanding that Marines are expected to work toward eliminating bias.

The Service is also working to support the victims and improve accountability. The Marine Corps Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program has collaborated with NCIS to ensure the victims receive the proper care. There are headquarters victim services liaisons to facilitate a warm handoff to the providers of the victims' choice. The Marine Corps has established ways to

listen to the victims, including creating an organizational e-mail inbox to allow for anonymous input. It also disseminated a message to commanders to ensure all Marines receive formal counseling regarding this topic. The counseling is one of many first steps the Marine Corps will use to communicate its stance on online misconduct to its Marines. The Service also published a handbook to explain the new requirement that reports of online misconduct must be reported to Headquarters Marine Corps within 24 hours and that the report will then be tracked in a database. Based on the task force's guidance, Recruiting Command now has ways to educate members on these policies. All recruits now sign a contract acknowledging that they understand the Marine Corps policies on online conduct. These contracts will also be signed by recruiters to convey the importance of adhering to standards. The Marine Corps has also implemented follow-on training in small group discussions. On April 18, 2017, the Secretary of the Navy released a message for all Marines that nonconsensual sharing of photos may be punishable. On May 9, 2017, the decision was made that separation from the Service would be an option if the nonconsensual sharing was done for personal gain or to intimidate or harass someone else.

Training and policies have been implemented, but the Marine Corps knows it is only a starting point. The task force will soon transition to a permanent organization. Ms. Cohen will serve as the first leader for this permanent organization. She will ensure a smooth transition from the current temporary task force to a permanent agency. The new office will have continued oversight by Gen Waters and will be housed at Quantico. Example initiatives for this new organization include considering whether recruit training should be integrated, evaluating ways to increase the number of women in the Marine Corps, options to better prescreen recruits, and reviewing all leadership policies and doctrine to eliminate biases. Each project management team in the new organization will have stakeholders and experts. The teams will be assigned a change initiative led by a change leader and monitored by the permanent office. In the next few weeks, the first initiatives should be tasked to a project team while the Marine Corps works to stand up the new agency at Quantico. The Marine Corps will keep DACOWITS informed of the initiatives and improvements. It will stand up an external advisory committee or committees to make adjustments as needed. A principle focus will be accountability.

To investigate information provided by the victim reports, NCIS established a task force and brought in extra investigators to work nonstop in shifts. The Judge Advocate General also formed a team to ensure cases are opened as needed and distributed to commanders for disposition. All 75 members of this task force volunteered for this and are committed to seeing it through.

*Special Agent Russel Alberty, NCIS*

The task force is the military law enforcement response to this scandal, but social media is not new to NCIS. It became a focal point because of a story released on March 4, 2017. NCIS began receiving web-based tips that day and had received more than 70 by the end of the week. Social media cases are an enduring issue, and they cross Service boundaries. With that in mind, NCIS worked to create Task Force Purple Harbor, named such to remind victims of a safe harbor and the joint Service effort. Task Force Purple Harbor includes members from all over the country and from all Services. NCIS developed a mechanism for tracking cases. At its largest point, the task force had more than 25 people, at one point including 12 Marine agents. A 24-hour social media hotline and a dedicated Gmail address were established. By the end of March 2017, the task force had received and responded to more than 170 tips. Media and Congressional attention was helpful in driving tips, but this attention was challenging in that it also drove the perpetrators

underground. The illicit materials were contained on an invitation-only Google drive, and the task force was never able to access that. The site was taken down shortly after the first media article was published. Assisted by tips and victim reporting, NCIS was able to access 171 websites and review more than 130,000 images from those sites. Most images were considered consensual, meaning the victim was looking into the camera or the photo was a selfie (a self-portrait taken by the subject of the photo). Of these photos, 44 percent depicted women. About 22,000 pertained to DoD; this determination was made based on seeing military uniforms, dog tags, military-specific tattoos, or the settings of pictures. Approximately 10,000 photos were explicit in nature. All were sorted by Service branch, and the law enforcement entity for that branch assumed responsibility. Based on photo reviews and victim tips, the task force identified more than 100 victims. It can be difficult to identify a person from a photo. Successes came from instances in which a name tape was visible or the poster of the photo gave the victim's name. The task force spent days attempting to identify individuals from their social media presence. If civilians were involved, it was difficult to prosecute a case. There is no federal "revenge porn" law, but 37 States have such policies; in 16 of these States, crimes can be prosecuted as felonies, but require significant support. The task force has not had success in that regard to date. The pace of reporting has since slowed. There were 285 tips as of June 13, 2017. NCIS will have analysts and masters at arms working at Quantico. Both NCIS and the Criminal Investigation Division are moving toward normal operating procedures. More than 200 cases have been opened. NCIS is establishing a new electronic misconduct case category and has put out new guidance on how to handle and document these cases in the future.

*LtCol Marts, Branch Head for Military Justice, Headquarters Marine Corps*

When the Marine Corps was made aware of the problem, it took immediate steps. NCIS, in coordination with the other Services, initiated Task Force Purple Harbor. The investigation into participants in these cases was atypical. Normally, victims report such misconduct. In this case, the investigation began at the top and was then filtered down to commanders. In most cases, investigators did not know the identity of the individuals or the circumstances of the photos. The Marine Corps identified 87 subjects of investigation, 59 of whom had been sent to their commanders for disposition decisions. Thirty-three decisions had been made at the date of the briefing. The efforts began with the Marines United Facebook website but were expanded to other sites and platforms. The task force created a fusion cell, which is a team of individuals to assess criminality and propose options to commanders for disposition and to track decisions made by commanders. The Marine Corps also created a SharePoint site to track allegations and investigations and decisions by commanders. The fusion cell also tracks measures taken by the Marine Corps to address social media abuse. On March 10, 2017, a "white letter" was issued to all commanders and senior enlisted members to engage Marines on the appropriate use of social media. On March 14, 2017, All Marine Corps Activities (ALMAR) 008/17 (Social Media Guidance—Unofficial Internet Posts) was issued. One week later, another white letter was issued to provide training and documentation via a formal Page 10 document. That was augmented with Marine Administrative Message 168/17 (Social Media Misconduct Leaders Guide and Handbook) to establish mandatory reporting requirements to commanders. On April 18, 2017, All Navy (ALNAV) 021/17, paragraph 1168 on revenge porn, was added. This was a joint Navy and Marine Corps effort. On May 9, 2017, a modification to Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1900.16 Paragraphs 4103.2 and 6210.8 was issued to address those who violate paragraph 1168. There is also movement in Congress to address this issue. The fusion cell has become a social media awareness and response team, a permanently staffed office at Marine Corps Manpower

and Reserve Affairs. The cell has also seen a shift to a victim-based reporting model through which victims report to a commander. Such real-time allegations often include known victims, subjects, and timeframes. The Marine Corps faced a challenge in targeting nonconsensual distribution of images. Paragraph 1168 now provides a tool for commanders to use. The general nature of the initial report made it a challenge to investigate, with a large variety of unknowns. Despite this, the task force has made significant progress on this issue.

### Discussion

Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger opened the discussion by reminding the Committee and the public that this issue was identified by DACOWITS in the Committee's 2015 report, which included recommendations on social media. She then thanked the Marine Corps for briefing the Committee on its progress in this area.

Mr. Morrison asked LtCol Marts if the manual and/or the Uniform Code of Military Justice had to be modified to make this type of offense prosecutable. LtCol Marts responded that it is already prosecutable. These offenses can be considered under conduct unbecoming a Marine and willful dereliction of duty, or both, or considered under general disorder. Gen Walters stated that one problem the Marine Corps has encountered is that there is a misperception that this is a freedom of speech issue. The Marine Corps specifically stated that this is not a freedom of speech issue. The Service is communicating to commanders what is acceptable and what is not and educating commanders on their options in these types of cases. Thus far, the Marine Corps has not separated anyone who demonstrated this behavior from the Marine Corps—but the manual was changed to allow commanders to separate individuals for such inappropriate behavior.

Ms. Medina praised former DACOWITS Chair LtGen (Ret.) Fran Wilson for being instrumental in bringing this issue to the floor for DACOWITS several years ago. She further acknowledged the fine work of Mr. Aaron Casey, along with the Service Women's Action Network and other advocacy groups. She also acknowledged the work the Marine Corps has done to react to and act on this issue. Ms. Medina stated that these activities are troubling and indicated she remains very concerned as a member of DACOWITS. She was pleased that the Marine Corps came to address the Committee about this and indicated DACOWITS would like to be a constructive and productive partner in helping to address this issue. She acknowledged that this is not a military-only issue; society has some work to do here as well. She concluded by asking how DACOWITS and other advocacy groups can help the Marine Corps follow up with this issue. Gen Walters asked that the Committee give their blunt and honest opinion to Congress members if they reach out to the Committee about this issue. He also asked that members reach out to any contacts they have to help with this issue. He stated that if the Marine Corps responds to this situation correctly, it hopes to be able to use this model in colleges and schools. The Marine Corps is using this as an opportunity to further examine its culture and make changes, but it will take some time, and the Marine Corps will need some help. Gen Walters asked that the Committee not let the Marine Corps lose steam on this issue. This is why the Service established a permanent organization to address this issue. BGen Seely clarified that the Marine Corps has communicated with many advocacy groups and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs). They exchange information regularly and learn a lot from these interactions. He further indicated that the task force would love for members of DACOWITS to be part of the Marine Corps advisory committees on this issue as well. Special Agent Alberty asked that Committee members continue to advocate and reach out to potential victims to keep reporting.



Ms. Hunter followed up on the comments acknowledging that this is a culture problem rather than a social media problem. She stated it is the way society talks about women but also about anyone who does not fit that standard mold. This is a leadership issue. It starts with top-down leaders being held accountable. She asked what is being done to hold leaders accountable and correct them when they make inappropriate comments so the behavior does not trickle down to subordinates and to ensure the Marine Corps maintains an environment in which people are comfortable reporting. BGen Seely replied that the Marine Corps recognizes that just because it made a policy change does not mean things have changed. Part of achieving change is ensuring leaders clarify right from wrong. If there is a commander or junior Marine that does not know what right and wrong looks like, the Marine Corps will see that and let them know. The Marine Corps needs to do this at training and traveling symposiums but also throughout Marines' careers. It has to go across the entire continuum, from the day of enlistment to retirement and beyond. It is about task force staff addressing this issue with NCOs, captains, junior officers, and young Marines to make sure they know what right looks like and the importance of standing up when they see things that are unacceptable.

Gen Walters stated that in the 3 weeks prior to the date of the June meeting, three commanders had been relieved. To put that number in perspective, there were eight commanders relieved in all of last year. As soon as the first reliefs took place, it affected the entire organization. The Marine Corps brings in 36,000 Marines each year. If it responds to this situation correctly, then in about 3 or 4 years, people may start asking why the Marine Corps is providing training on social media; then the Service will know its efforts were successful.

VADM (Ret.) Pottenger noted the Marine Corps has focused heavily on exterior communications and suggested it not forget about interior communications. She suggested the Marine Corps tape this panel and distribute it to let Marines know what the Marine Corps is doing and where it is headed. They need to know the positive approaches as well as the disciplinary—the focus is on readiness.

Ms. Janie Mines commented that from a change management perspective, it sounds like the Marine Corps is headed in the right direction, moving from politically correct to a real change in the Marines. She highlighted that when Marines decide to do something, they get it done, and stated that if the Marine Corps has truly decided to do this, the Committee can expect results and a model to use and distribute to others. BGen Seely confirmed that the Marine Corps is committed. When it launched the task force, the Marine Corps acknowledged that the effort would not be easy, and the task force would not like what it found, but that only helped strengthen the commitment.

FLTCM (Ret.) Ortloff commented that social media is where this was born, though the issue existed before social media as well, and that social media is where it needs to get intercepted. She asked if the Marine Corps would have its leadership cadre post the 2-slide presentation provided to the Committee to their social media sites and indicated it could be very useful for leaders to use. Gen Walters responded that is in part why the Marine Corps met with VSOs, including a veteran students' group that posted the slides within an hour of the meeting. The Marine Corps is also reaching out to Facebook and Google—these organizations pushed back on collaborating originally, but have since started to rethink that approach. Gen Walters noted that the Marine Corps is working on an initiative to help those social media platforms enforce their own standards. He suggested the initiative will rapidly reach the halls of Congress, and although the issue of freedom of speech will be raised, there are many facets to this issue.

MG (Ret.) Macdonald noted that of the 65 Marine Corps subjects identified, there are 7 against whom no action has been taken, 20 with adverse administrative actions, and 22 civilians the Marine Corps is unable to assist. He acknowledged the task force is working hard and that the law can be limiting but asked what the briefers think about the subjects who are slipping through. He further inquired about making relief and disposition of special court martial implications public to change the perception of “I got away with it” to “These guys didn’t get away with it, and their life is very changed.” Gen Walters stated that a lot of the subjects are retired or no longer in the Service. The Marine Corps is looking into the ability to impact their VA benefits. A federal statute would be helpful. However, it still has work to do to achieve this. LtCol Marts responded that though the number of subjects may seem to be small, the task force is still receiving new reports. Due process requires all get a fair look, and the commander is essential to that process. The Marine Corps trusts commanders to make the right decision.

**Final Remarks**

Ms. Myers, DACOWITS Acting Director, thanked the attendees and closed the public meeting.

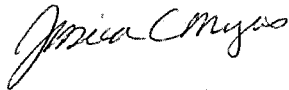
**Meeting was adjourned.**

**DACOWITS Written RFIs for June 2017**

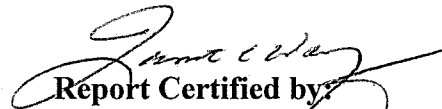
<b>RFI 1</b>		
<p>In 2016, as part of the Committee’s review of the Services’ gender integration efforts, DACOWITS examined strategic communication efforts relevant to the opening of all positions to women. The Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the images used on each Service’s primary website and recruiting website. Across all websites, only a small percentage of the images of people included women. Additionally, there were substantial differences in the imagery representation of servicewomen by Service. Of the images that included people, only 6 percent of those on the “.mil” sites and 4 percent of those on the “.com” sites portrayed women in nontraditional roles. Complete findings from the 2016 DACOWITS’ Annual Report are available online.</p> <p>The Committee requests a <b>written response</b> from the <b>Military Services and SOCOM</b> on progress that has been made in this regard, to include changes made to incorporate gender neutral language on Service branch controlled webpages, social media, recruiting outreach, retention outreach, training materials and other Service branch verbal and non-verbal environments to encourage recruitment, retention, and lateral moves into the combat roles opened to women since December 3, 2015.</p>		
<b>Responding Organization</b>	<b>Name/Credentials</b>	<b>Description</b>
Air Force	Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS)	AFRS provided the Committee with a summary of an extensive review of all still images and videos on the Air Force Website to evaluate the depiction of women. AFRS also provided commentary on the image review contained in the 2016 DACOWITS Annual Report.

<b>Responding Organization</b>	<b>Name/Credentials</b>	<b>Description</b>
Army	Mr. William Sharp; Mr. G. Scott McConnell; LTC Naomi R. Mercer	The Army provided the Committee with examples of recent media campaigns and efforts aimed at highlighting diversity in official Army publications and attached three examples of these efforts.
Coast Guard	Coast Guard Recruiting Command	The Coast Guard Recruiting Command provided the Committee with a summary of an extensive review of all images on the Coast Guard Website. The Coast Guard Recruiting Command also provided examples of current efforts to increase diversity in its media publications.
Navy	Office of the Chief of Navy Information (CHINFO); Navy Recruiting Command (NRC); Naval Special Warfare (NSW)	CHINFO provided the Committee with the reasoning behind images that appear on the Navy.mil Website. NRC provided the Committee with the reasoning behind images that appear on the Navy.com Website. NSW provided the Committee with a summary of the current media efforts to increase women's interest in the Navy SEAL & Special Warfare Combatant-Craft (SWCC) Scout Team.
Marine Corps	Capt. Philip J. Kulczeqski, Office of Marine Corps Communications (OMCC)	OMCC provided the Committee with summaries of current Marine Corps initiatives to highlight and promote Service-level gender-integration efforts within the Marine Corps. OMCC also provided example images of female Marines featured on Marine Corps platforms and Websites.
USSOCOM	Robert A. Karmazin, Brigadier General, U.S. Army Director, Joint Special Operations Forces Development	USSOCOM provided the Committee with a summary of a review of USSOCOM Websites and social media accounts. It also explained restrictions on sharing images of personnel because of security issues.

<b>RFI 4</b>		
<p>The Committee requests a <b>literature review</b> from the <b>DACOWITS Research Contractor</b> on how the “Rooney Rule” is being used in industries. Specifically, it requests research on companies that would most closely resemble the military in terms of junior employees being assigned to developmental positions in which they can be mentored and gain exposure/visibility to more senior leadership in the organization. (<a href="#">News Article Link</a>)</p>		
<b>Responding Organization</b>	<b>Name/Credentials</b>	<b>Description</b>
Insight Policy Research	Rachel Gaddes, M.P.H.	Insight provided the Committee with a literature review on the use of the “Rooney Rule” in civilian industries. Insight also provided information on other initiatives to increase workplace diversity being used in industries that resemble the military in terms of staff development.
<b>RFI 7</b>		
<p>The Committee requests a <b>written response</b> from the <b>Joint Advertising Market Research &amp; Studies (JAMRS) Office</b> on how JAMRS’ surveys on propensity are worded to prevent bias among respondents (i.e., bias for or against joining the military).</p>		
<b>Responding Organization</b>	<b>Name/Credentials</b>	<b>Description</b>
JAMRS	N/A	JAMRS provided the Committee with a summary of the methodology used in the “JAMRS Youth Poll” survey and how that methodology minimizes bias and survey error.
<b>RFI 9</b>		
<p>The Committee requests a <b>written response</b> from the <b>Office of Family Policy/Children and Youth</b> on the use of Child Development Centers (CDCs) by Service members vs. Civil Servants. Please provide the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy that addresses use of CDCs by Service members vs. Civil Servants.</li> <li>• Are there active duty Service members on the waiting list, while Civil Servants and their families utilize a CDC facility? If so, are there any provisions to address this situation?</li> <li>• What is the rate of utilization between Civil Service and active duty Service members?</li> <li>• How many CDCs authorize Civil Servants to utilize their facility?</li> </ul>		
<b>Responding Organization</b>	<b>Name/Credentials</b>	<b>Description</b>
Office of Military Community & Family Policy	Office of Military Family Readiness Policy	The Office of Military Family Readiness Policy provided the Committee with the information requested in each of the four areas laid out in the RFI. The Office also provided additional information on the DoD child development programs.



**Report Submitted by:**  
**Ms. Jessica Myers**  
**DACOWITS Acting Director**



**Report Certified by:**  
**Gen (Ret.) Janet Wolfenbarger, USAF**  
**DACOWITS Chair**

**Members in Attendance:**

Gen (Ret.) Janet Wolfenbarger, USAF, Chair  
SMA (Ret.) Kenneth Preston, USA, Vice Chair  
Col (Ret.) John Boggs, USMC  
Maj Gen (Ret.) Sharon Dunbar, USAF  
Lt Gen (Ret.) Judy Fedder, USAF  
Ms. Sharlene Hawkes  
SGM (Ret.) Norma Helsham, USA  
Ms. Therese Hughes  
Ms. Kyleanne Hunter, USMC Veteran

CSM (Ret.) Michele Jones, USA  
Ms. Pat Locke, USA Retired  
MG (Ret.) John Macdonald, USA  
Ms. Monica Medina, USA Veteran  
Ms. Janie Mines, USN Veteran  
Mr. Brian Morrison, USN Veteran  
FLTCM (Ret.) JoAnn Ortloff, USN  
VADM (Ret.) Carol Pottenger, USN  
Dr. Jackie Young