

DEFENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE SERVICES (DACOWITS)

Quarterly Meeting Minutes December 5, 2023

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) held a quarterly business meeting December 5, 2023. The meeting took place at the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Conference Center, 2425 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia, 22201.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The DACOWITS Military Director and Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Lieutenant Colonel Samantha J. Frazier, Army, opened the December quarterly business meeting (QBM) by reviewing the Committee's establishment and charter. LTC Frazier reminded those in attendance that any comments made during the meeting by Committee members are their personal opinions and do not reflect a DACOWITS or Department of Defense (DoD) position. Panelist and speaker remarks are not verified for accuracy. LTC Frazier then turned the meeting over to the DACOWITS Chair, Ms. Shelly O'Neill Stoneman.

Ms. Stoneman welcomed everyone to the QBM and asked all Committee members and meeting attendees to introduce themselves.

Awards Ceremony for Departing DACOWITS Members

An award ceremony was held to honor the service of two departing Committee members: Lieutenant General (Ret.) Kevin W. Mangum, Army, and Brigadier General (Ret.) Allyson R. Solomon, Air National Guard. The Honorable Ashish S. Vazirani, the Acting Under Secretary for Defense Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), conducted the awards ceremony and offered words of recognition and thanks to LTG (Ret.) Mangum and Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon for their dedicated service on the Committee. After receiving their awards, LTG (Ret.) Mangum and Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon shared departing remarks.

Status of Requests for Information

LTC Frazier reviewed the status of the Committee's requests for information (RFIs). The Committee received responses to all six RFIs. Responses to the RFIs were published on the DACOWITS website.

Panel Briefing: Retention Initiatives (RFI 2)

The Committee requested a briefing from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and National Guard on (1) annual retention rates for each paygrade and by gender between fiscal year (FY) 19 and FY23; (2) the identification of the military occupational specialties (MOSSs) with the lowest retention rates for women and men and factors that affect the retention of women in the military; and (3) the efforts undertaken to improve the retention of

women, the mechanisms used to identify factors that impede the retention of women, the top 10 reasons Service members leave the military by gender and rank, and how each Service reviews exit survey data to ensure nuanced reasons for leaving the military are understood and addressed.

Army

Sergeant Major Tobey J. Whitney, Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) Senior Army Career Counselor, and Major David E. Degenhardt, HQDA Diversity Planner, briefed the Committee for the Army.

SGM Whitney explained the Army has experienced success retaining Soldiers in recent years. Between FY19 and FY23, the Army retained a minimum of 77.7 percent of Soldiers in FY23 and a maximum of 83.9 Solders in FY22. Between FY19 and FY23, servicewomen were retained at a slightly higher rate than servicemen in the Army. SGM Whitney recognized that retention rates among E-4 Soldiers are low but advised that the Army transitions nearly 7,000 E-4 Soldiers from the Active Component to the Reserve Component and the Army National Guard each year. SGM Whitney highlighted three MOSs with the lowest retention rates for female Soldiers in FY23: carpentry and masonry specialist, diagnostic equipment maintenance, and unmanned aircraft repairer. Alternatively, Criminal Investigation Division (CID) special agents, diagnostic equipment maintenance, and cable systems installers-maintainers were the MOSs with the lowest retention rates for male Soldiers in FY23. However, SGM Whitney cautioned that each of these MOSs has a smaller population than many other MOSs, so individual Soldiers leaving the Army have bigger impacts on the overall retention rates for these MOSs. The CID special agent population is being downsized as the Army restructures its CID into a civilian-driven workforce. The Army is otherwise unsure why these MOSs have lower retention rates for servicewomen and servicemen, but the Service has reached out to each respective area for information on factors that reduce retention rates.

SGM Whitney highlighted various initiatives the Army has undertaken in recent years to improve the retention of female and male Soldiers. The Army does not have any retention policies that apply differently to servicewomen, servicemen, or any other minority population of Soldier. The Army takes pride in its diversity and offers equal access to retention opportunities across the Force. SGM Whitney highlighted that the Army “removed unnecessary barriers to increase Soldiers’ ability to change their MOS,” and he clarified the barriers removed were not based on gender or any other demographic criteria. Instead, the Army removed policies that required Soldiers to change their duty station if they wanted to change their MOS, and required them to complete the Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT) to change their MOS. The Army Combat Fitness Test addresses this factor and makes the OPAT unnecessary. The Army is trying to make it easier for Soldiers to stay in the Army by allowing them to choose another adventure. SGM Whitney also explained, “Soldiers exempt from wearing the ASU/AGSU [Army Service Uniform/Army Green Service Uniform] while pregnant or postpartum will not be prohibited from participating in any personnel action, such as the semi-centralized (E-5/E-6) promotion board,” clarifying the ASU/AGSU refers to the Army’s dress uniform.

SGM Whitney indicated the Army uses the Department of the Army Career Engagement Survey (DACES) as its primary mechanism for determining factors affecting retention. Senior leaders and commanders use information captured through DACES to make informed decisions about retention policies. The Army is also currently developing a separate, more simplistic, 5 to 7-question survey that will focus on Soldiers in their window for retention and provide near-real-

time data to leadership. This survey will enable the Army to better understand current sentiments from younger Soldiers because only 18.6 percent of DACES respondents between May 2020 and November 2023 had less than 5 years of service in the Army, and only 9.2 percent of respondents had a rank of E-1 to E-4. SGM Whitney emphasized the new survey will help the Army better understand factors that influence Soldiers with limited experience to leave.

SGM Whitney highlighted the top 10 reasons Soldiers indicated were extremely important reasons to leave the Army in the DACES. However, he cautioned that not all the Soldiers who answered the DACES actually left the Army. The Army believes many factors listed as important reasons to leave the Service are not exclusive to the Army. However, the Army is continuously working to address these factors. For example, the Army is committed to providing high-quality housing and Child Development Centers (CDCs) to reduce negative sentiments about the impact of military service on the well-being of families. The Army is also working to improve how it schedules and executes training to provide families more predictability, and the Army changed its retention policy to allow Soldiers who reenlist to stabilize at their current duty station for 30 additional months.

SGM Whitney also highlighted the top 10 reasons Soldiers stay in and leave the Army by gender. Specifically, he noted the effects of deployment on family or personal relationships were the most important reasons both female and male Soldiers leave the Army, while opportunity to serve their country was the most important reason both female and male Soldiers stay in the Army. Additionally, SGM Whitney emphasized a briefing slide that lists the top reasons female and male Soldiers leave the Army by rank, including enlisted, officer, and warrant officers. Seven of the top 10 reasons for leaving the Army for male and female Soldiers combined are the same across each of the ranks.

SGM Whitney explained the Army makes every effort to use information from the DACES, townhalls, and feedback from career counselors to improve its retention efforts. The Army understands being a Soldier is not easy. The Army has been working with the RAND Corporation and the Army Research Institute (ARI) to better understand how its retention program can be improved. However, recommendations have not been made as of this time.

SGM Whitney concluded his briefing.

Navy

CAPT Michael G. Wheeler, Director, Comprehensive Analytics, and Mr. Morris L. Akers, Statistician, Navy Survey Office, briefed the Committee for the Navy.

CAPT Wheeler explained gender diversity is important to the Navy. CAPT Wheeler highlighted the proportion of female Sailors composing each rank between FY19 and FY23 and indicated female Sailors trended upward over this period among both officer and enlisted ranks as a whole.

CAPT Wheeler reported the Navy defines retention as continuation of service, usually in 1-year increments. He displayed the Navy's marginal continuation rate for female and male enlisted Sailors and officers between FY19 and FY23. On average, enlisted servicemen are about 1 percent more likely to renew their service than enlisted female Sailors, while female officers are slightly more likely than male officers to continue their service.

CAPT Wheeler noted the Navy would like to keep all its Sailors for 30 years. Initial enlistment contracts in the Navy vary between 4 and 6 years in length, and Sailors' behaviors vary significantly depending on where they are in their career and barriers or challenges that might be associated with their career at that time. For example, Service member retention trends dip at about 20 years of service as Sailors begin to retire. These varying factors at different points of Sailors' careers encourage the Navy to look at retention within a continuation-of-service context.

CAPT Wheeler explained four ratings are common among the lowest continuation rates for female and male Sailors, including D111: electronics technicians (nuclear), A103: aviation boatswain's mate, D101: electrician's mate (nuclear), and A102: aviation boatswain's mate (fuel). CAPT Wheeler suggested that, because 4 of the 10 ratings with the lowest continuation rates are common among female and male Sailors, this indicates retention policies and continuation rates are gender neutral. He noted a few factors might make these ratings less likely for continuation, including that nuclear trained personnel are highly trained, but the Navy is statutorily limited in how much it can pay those personnel, so many of these Sailors leave the military for higher pay in the civilian sector. The boatswain's mate rating is 70 percent composed of Sailors ranked E-5 and below, and the Navy does not intend to keep higher ranked Sailors in that rating.

Mr. Akers reported the top reasons female Sailors leave the Navy are health-related concerns, impact on family, work-life balance, and leadership; 54 percent of the female Sailors who provided responses to the Navy's Exit Survey included these reasons as top factors that influenced their decision to leave. The top reasons for male Sailors were work-life balance, leadership, career assignments, and other. About 45 percent of male Sailors selected these reasons as top factors that influenced their decision to leave. The top reasons to leave for all enlisted Sailors were leadership, work-life balance, health-related concerns, command climate, and career assignments. About 56 percent of enlisted Sailors listed these reasons as major factors that influenced them to leave the Navy. The top reasons to leave the Navy for officers were work-life balance, impact on family, promotion opportunities, career assignments, and other. About 59 percent of officers listed these reasons as major factors that influenced them to leave the Navy. Male officers cited promotion opportunities, impact on family, work-life balance, career assignment, or other as the top reasons to leave the Navy; 61 percent of male officers listed these reasons as major factors that influenced them to leave the Navy. Female officers cited work-life balance and leadership as the top reasons to leave the Navy. Female and male enlisted Sailors cited work-life balance, leadership, and health concerns as top reasons that influenced them to leave the military.

Mr. Akers explained the Navy's Office of Women's Policy (OWP) advocates for female Sailors throughout the enterprise to advise the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP) on policies and programs to advance Navy culture and enhance the recruitment and retention of women in the Navy. These policies include reproductive healthcare, pregnancy and postpartum, uniforms and grooming standards, and parenthood. The OWP also coordinates with the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), Office of Women's Health, the DoD's Women in Service Working Group (WISWG), and Women's Initiative Teams (WIT) from other Military Services. OWP plans to launch a Navy WIT to identify and remove barriers to service and retention for female Sailors.

Mr. Akers noted the Navy distributes two monthly surveys, the Milestone Survey and the Exit Survey, as part of its Retention Survey Program. The Milestone Survey is distributed to Sailors

who are within a year and a half of their soft end of service obligation, while the Exit Survey is distributed to Sailors who are within 6 months of their estimated date of loss to the Navy. Results from these surveys are displayed in a dashboard that is updated each time a survey is completed. The dashboard can be filtered by gender, rank, and community. The dashboards have been briefed to the Navy's career counselors and will be briefed to psychologists within the Force that supports different commands in the near future.

Mr. Akers explained the Navy's Exit Survey provides 16 options describing factors that influence Sailors to leave the Service, including an "other" category. The top 10 factors that influence separation decisions are essentially the same for all demographic breakouts of Sailors, while the top 5 factors are more variable across demographics. Specifically, work-life balance, leadership, and impact on family are commonly in female and male Sailors' top five reasons for leaving the Navy.

Mr. Akers reported Sailors are asked in the Exit Survey to rate how heavily various factors influence their decision to stay in or leave the Navy on a scale from 1 to 7. Participants rate factors lowly if they believe the factor influences them to leave the Navy and highly if the factor influences them to stay in the Navy. Sailors who choose work-life balance as the top factor that encourages them to leave the Navy are asked eight follow-up questions, which indicated balance between work and personal time and schedule changes and unpredictability are the strongest work-life balance issues encouraging female and male Sailors to leave the Navy, while stress at home was cited as less of an issue. Female Sailors cited the lack of balance between work and personal time as a bigger influence than servicemen to leave the Navy. Female and male Sailors reported in follow-up questions to leadership that overall trust in Navy leadership and Navy leadership communication were major factors that influenced them to leave the Navy.

CAPT Wheeler and Mr. Akers concluded their briefing.

Marine Corps

Major Mark A. McGee, Enlisted Retention Planner, Manpower Plans and Policy, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, briefed the Committee for the Marine Corps.

Maj McGee explained the Marine Corps does not retain Marines by pay grade or rank but instead by contract cohorts by FY. The Marine Corps has two cohorts per FY, including first term alignment plan (FTAP), composed of Marines who are eligible for their first reenlistment, and subsequent term alignment plan (STAP), composed of Marines who are between the ranks of E-6 and E-9 and are reenlisting for at least the second time in their career.

Maj McGee reported female Marines in the FTAP cohort reenlisted at an 8-percent higher rate than male Marines between FY19 and FY23, while female Marines in the STAP cohort reenlisted at a 4-percent higher rate than male Marines between FY19 and FY23. Female officers were retained at the same rate or higher than male officers between FY19 and FY23.

Maj McGee explained the Marine Corps has 188 MOSs. The lowest retention rate by MOS for enlisted male Marines is infantry at 16 percent, while the lowest retention rates by MOS for enlisted female Marines are mechanics, avionics, and ground combat MOSs. The Marine Corps has 94 unrestricted officer MOSs. The lowest retention rates by MOS for female officers are

infantry and KC-130 aircraft commanders at 84.6 percent, while the lowest retention rates by MOS for male officers are also KC-130 aircraft commanders.

Maj McGee noted the Marine Corps surveys enlisted Marines in the STAP cohort by asking them what made them decide to reenlist in the Marine Corps. Of the top five reasons Marines provided, four of them are similar across enlisted female and male Marines, including retirement benefits, pay/compensation, medical/dental benefits, and opportunity for promotion. Enlisted female Marines indicated the tuition assistance program was their fifth highest reason for reenlisting, while servicemen indicated the deployment opportunities were the fifth highest reason for reenlisting. Maj McGee also reported that the Marine Corps does use any specific programs, policies, or benefit adjustments to improve the retention of female Marines, and the Marine Corps does not use any mechanisms to identify factors affecting the retention of female Marines specifically because the Service focuses on retaining all Marines.

Maj McGee noted the Marine Corps also surveys Marines by asking them the top 3 reasons for leaving the Service, which respondents can answer by selecting up to 3 of 16 factors. Maj McGee explained the top three factors for female Marines in order were dissatisfaction with command climate, family, and other, while the top three factors for servicemen in order were family, dissatisfaction with command climate, and accepted or found job other than Active Duty military. The briefing slides also provide responses by rank and by rank and gender.

Maj McGee explained the Manpower Studies and Analysis Branch is responsible for reviewing exit survey data by gender, race, ethnicity, MOS, and duty location.

Maj McGee concluded his briefing.

Air Force

Colonel Joshua B. Hawkins, Chief, Military Policy Division, briefed the Committee for the Air Force.

Col Hawkins explained the Air Force's retention rates for enlisted personnel and officers have remained strong for the last 10 years, including a range of 86.9 to 91.1 percent for enlisted personnel and 89.7 to 94.1 percent for officers. The Air Force examines retention through a snapshot each week using a rolling 12-month average to account for seasonality. Retention rates for enlisted Airmen and officers are relatively parallel for servicewomen and servicemen, retaining approximately 85 fewer female officers than male officers in FY23. The Air Force on average retires or separates 6,050 officers per year out of 60,500 officers. The Air Force reviews retention data at the O-6 level weekly, at the O-7 level every other week, at the O-9 level monthly, and at the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force level every 2 months.

Col Hawkins noted that aggregate retention by grade is relatively consistent between FY19 and FY23. However, he highlighted that retention rates were at least 5 percent higher for male Airmen at the E-5 and E-9 levels in FY23, resulting in the loss of about 1,520 more female enlisted Airmen than male enlisted Airmen. For context, the Air Force retires or separates an average of about 30,400 enlisted Airmen each year based on data from FY21 and FY22. Retention rates for O-6 women and men remained consistently lower than O-5 and below ranks between FY19 and FY23.

Col Hawkins explained the Air Force believes lack of upward job mobility may be a factor in higher retention rates for female enlisted Airmen and officers. Many of the Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs) with disproportionately lower retention rates for female enlisted Airmen and officers have higher ratios of women to men, such as optometry and nursing, while many of the AFSCs with disproportionately lower retention rates for male enlisted Airmen and officers have higher rates of men to women, such as flight engineers and aerospace medicine physicians. Many of the AFSCs with lower retention rates have much smaller inventory requirements, so single digit changes in retention can significantly affect the retention rate.

Col Hawkins reported the Air Force distributes an annual Exit Survey and Career Intentions Survey to inform retention policy and improve retention rates where necessary. The 2022 Exit Survey and Career Intentions Survey of more than 50,000 randomly sampled Airmen and Guardians indicated that both servicewomen and servicemen cited leadership, job stress, and overall job satisfaction as the factors that most influenced them to leave the Air Force. The margin of error calculated for this survey was under 0.41 percent.

Col Hawkins explained the Air Force and Space Force are working toward establishing assignment stabilization for servicemembers and their spouses undergoing fertility treatment. The Air Force will make a decision on this policy option before the end of 2024, but the Air Force is continuing to examine how it can allow Airmen to pursue assignment and temporary duty deferment or exclusion after their medical provider confirms they or their spouse is receiving fertility treatments. The Air Force is currently considering establishing stabilization timelines of 12, 24, or 36 months.

Col Hawkins concluded his briefing.

Space Force

Mr. Robert A. Kuster, Chief, Readiness, Headquarters U.S. Space Force (USSF), briefed the Committee for the Space Force.

Mr. Kuster explained the Space Force is in its fourth year of existence. The Space Force was established under the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) resulting from widespread signals that space is a national security imperative. The plan for Space Force's growth and structure was implemented in 2020.

Mr. Kuster summarized the Space Force's retention rates for enlisted personnel and officers by gender for FY22 and FY23. The Space Force could not provide 5 years of data as the other Service briefers did due to its limited years of existence, and Mr. Kuster explained it will take another 5 years to understand the retention trends associated with the Space Force.

Mr. Kuster reported retention rates for female and male officers between FY22 and FY23, highlighting the biggest variance among officers by gender in FY23 was female O-3 officers at 88.35 percent compared with male O-3 officers at 94.26 percent. Specifically, 23 female O-3 officers were either separated or retired from the Space Force in FY23. Mr. Kuster highlighted retention rates for female and male enlisted Guardians between FY22 and FY23, citing the biggest variance among enlisted personnel by gender in FY23 was E-9 female Guardians at 69.23 percent compared with E-9 male Guardians at 84.38 percent. Specifically, 4 female E-9 Guardians were either separated or retired from the Space Force in FY23, as compared with 36

male E-9 Guardians. Mr. Kuster noted the lowest retention rate by AFSC for female enlisted Guardians was space operations chief enlisted manager at 69.23 percent, which is a direct reflection of the female E-9 Guardians who stayed in the Space Force in 2023. Similarly, the lowest retention rate by AFSC for female officers was cyber effects operations at 91.89 percent. Mr. Kuster explained the Space Force does not know why female space operations chief enlisted manager personnel are leaving at higher rates but suggested cyber-related positions are highly sought after in the private sector.

Mr. Kuster noted the Space Force conducted a survey in FY22 to better understand its recently developed personnel ecosystem. Of the 5,142 Guardians surveyed, 1,037 responded and indicated spouse employment, work-life balance, and overall job satisfaction were the top reasons to leave for female Guardians, while compensation, assignment locations, and work-life balance were the top reasons to leave for male Guardians.

Mr. Kuster explained the Space Force has improved its collection of Service member life cycle data, implemented caregiver provisions, masked pregnancy records, assessed incentives to inspire Guardians to stay in the Space Force, and explored initiatives to address anticipated inventory gaps.

Mr. Kuster concluded his briefing.

Coast Guard

Commander Carlos M. Crespo, Minority Serving Institutions Liaison, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, briefed the Committee for the Coast Guard.

CDR Crespo explained the general trend in the Coast Guard between FY19 and FY23 is female Guardsmen have lower retention rates than male Guardsmen at lower pay grades and higher retention rates than male Guardsmen at higher pay grades. Overall, the retention rate for women has been higher than for men between FY19 and FY23. However, the retention rate for female enlisted Guardsmen is lowest in technical, administrative, and health-related ratings, and CDR Crespo noted fewer than 100 female enlisted Guardsmen in the entire Coast Guard hold the Aviation Survival Technician (AST), Electrician's Mate (EM), Electronics Technician (ET), and Information Systems Technician (IT) ratings. CDR Crespo explained officer specialty codes are not mutually exclusive, so a single officer could have multiple codes and would be counted within multiple retention rating categories on the briefing slide. However, officers with multiple specialty codes are counted only once in the overall officer retention rates reported in the briefing slides.

CDR Crespo reported various factors affect women's retention, including geographic stability, work-life balance, and leadership. The Coast Guard has conducted various efforts to improve the retention of women, including the expansion of maternity convalescence leave to 6 weeks, the expansion of parental leave to 12 weeks, and disallowing pregnant and postpartum Guardsmen from being assigned to ships or overseas units. The Coast Guard identified these factors through a RAND Corporation focus group study in which 164 focus groups were held across 10 Coast Guard installations with 1,010 female Guardsmen and 127 male Guardsmen. The Coast Guard established an Advisory Board on Women in FY21, currently composed of 50 members. The Coast Guard distributes a Career Intentions Survey with Guardsmen leaving the Coast Guard to better understand the reasons they are leaving. This survey indicated geographic stability and

work-life balance were key factors that influenced men and women across the Service to leave the Coast Guard in 2022. Similarly, the survey indicated geographic stability and retiring to pursue other employment opportunities were major factors influencing female and male officers to leave the Coast Guard, while geographic stability was a bigger factor for female enlisted Guardsmen, and retiring to pursue other employment opportunities was a bigger factor for male enlisted Guardsmen. CDR Crespo explained the results of the Career Intentions Survey are shared across the Coast Guard's human resources enterprise and Coast Guard leadership.

CDR Crespo concluded his briefing.

National Guard

Lieutenant Colonel Nini-Ashaka Kyrie' Antoine, G1 Talent Management Officer, Army National Guard, briefed the Committee for National Guard.

LTC Antoine explained her brief will cover both Army and Air National Guard. First, she highlighted retention rates by gender and by grade for the Air National Guard covering FY19 to FY23. Overall, there is only a 0.2-percent variation in retention among female and male Guardsmen in FY23 at 92.8 percent and 92.6 percent, respectively. LTC Antoine noted 8.2 percent of female enlisted Guardsmen in the Army National Guard were retained between FY19 and FY23, while male enlisted Guardsmen were retained at a 41.5 percent rate.

LTC Antoine reported the Air National Guard does not currently track retention data by AFSC, while Combat Arms MOSs have the lowest retention rate for both female and male Soldiers in the Army National Guard. The Air National Guard and Army National Guard have not identified any factors that affect the retention of women differently from men. Similarly, the Air National Guard has not designed a women-specific retention plan because its goal is to retain as many Airmen as possible, while the Army National Guard seeks to provide information to all Soldiers to demonstrate the value of continued service to improve retention.

LTC Antoine noted the Air National Guard views retention as a commander's program, and exit surveys are conducted at the wing level, while the Army National Guard combines data from exit surveys and retention surveys to better understand the satisfaction of Soldiers and to inform policies. Survey results indicated interference with civilian employment is the top reason many male Soldiers leave, while impact on family is the top reason many female Soldiers leave. Another factor affecting both female and male Soldiers is ineffective leadership.

LTC Antoine indicated the Army National Guard exit survey does not have a high enough response rate to conduct an analysis with high confidence. To address this concern, the Army National Guard is using heat maps to show State participation monthly to better understand the data at State levels and increasing the frequency of data reports to monthly.

LTC Antoine concluded her briefing.

Discussion

Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon asked whether each Military Service briefer had met previously to discuss retention across the military. SGM Whitney reported the briefers have not met previously to discuss retention, but he meets monthly with enlisted representatives from the Marine Corps

and Navy to discuss policies that are working for them, and for the Army to improve retention and other aspects of military service. Col Hawkins confirmed he meets with O-6 leaders from each Military Service monthly to discuss retention issues. Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon asked whether there are any opportunities outside of those currently being held to gather personnel from each Military Service to discuss retention-related topics. Mr. Kuster explained a joint recruitment conference is held annually with representation from all the Military Services. He noted that the event may offer opportunities to share information about retention initiatives and challenges. SGM Whitney noted a monthly meeting that started about 5 months ago where representatives from recruiting organizations across the Military Services meet to discuss initiatives and challenges.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon suggested the Military Services have their own terminology related to retention. She asked for guidance on how the Committee should investigate the core reasons for retention challenges without a common language across Services. SGM Whitney noted it would be helpful to have guidance from the DoD to define retention terminology. For example, he explained all the Services track retention differently; in the Army, a Soldier who was arrested for murder would not be counted as a retention loss, but they would be counted as a retention loss in some of the other Services. He suggested standardization about expectations of tracking retention from the DoD would be valuable. CAPT Wheeler suggested retention is about survival group analysis, including how many Service members were active at each time step and how those trends project over time. He noted survival group analysis is a fair basis of analysis independent of different Military Services and suggested using that language to address differences in language used across Services. Col Hawkins agreed with CAPT Wheeler, noting the operational research and systems analysis (ORSA) offices across Services are best equipped to establish a common language. He confirmed the Air Force's ORSA provides leaders a survival curve using a 12-month rolling average.

Ms. Stoneman highlighted that, along with different ways of describing quantitative aspects of retention across Services, each briefer also used different, broad terms to summarize the self-reported reasons Service members are leaving the Military. For example, she noted that SGM Whitney reported emotional demands of Army life as one of the reasons Soldiers leave the Service, but the definition of emotional demands of Army life is not clear, while CAPT Wheeler reported health-related concerns are a reason Sailors leave the Navy, but this response is broad and does not describe what made them leave specifically. She asked how the Military Services can examine common reasons Service members leave across Services without similar categories. SGM Whitney noted he was unsure how the Army Talent Management Task Force defines emotional demands of Army life. Mr. Akers responded the Navy has improved its exit and retention surveys in the past year by adding follow-up questions to gather more nuanced data on the reasons Sailors leave the Navy. Col Hawkins explained the Air Force has made progress in understanding barriers to the progression of servicewomen's careers, but qualitative data collection may be a better mechanism to gather nuanced data as opposed to exit surveys.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked what percentage of MOSs receive retention bonuses. SGM Whitney confirmed the Army adjusts bonuses quarterly based on projected end strength of each MOS. Currently, the Army gives retention bonuses to 42 percent of Soldiers who reenlist. The Army received an exception to the policy from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to address challenges retaining first-term Soldiers; the exception allows them to pay a \$5K flat rate bonus to Soldiers who choose to reenlist for 3 or more years. The Army has seen an increase in retention

since implementing this bonus. However, SGM Whitney noted the \$5K reenlistment bonus is not sustainable, so the Army will need to investigate other nonmonetary options. CAPT Wheeler said he is unsure what percentage of Sailors received a reenlistment bonus but noted reenlistment bonuses in the Navy are based on skill. Maj McGee explained the Marine Corps is targeting technical MOSs to meet future personnel requirements. The Marine Corps' reenlistment bonus changes every FY, and 17 percent of reenlisted Marines received a reenlistment bonus in FY23. Col Hawkins said about 25 percent of enlisted Airmen are eligible for reenlistment bonuses, while about 20 percent of officers are eligible for reenlistment bonuses. However, he noted the officer numbers are skewed by aviation bonuses. The Department of the Air Force's (DAF) retention survey indicated compensation is not a top reason Airmen and Guardians decide to stay in or leave the Air Force or Space Force. Col Hawkins confirmed the Air Force is offering bonuses only to its critical skill AFSCs, such as cyber, pilots, and special warfare. He noted assignment stability is the most requested accommodation for both officer and enlisted personnel, so the Air Force is focused on using stability as a retention initiative. He noted officers are averaging between 3.0 to 4.5 years on station, and enlisted personnel are averaging 4.5 years on station. Col Hawkins reported the Air Force is about to submit its FY23 Experienced Aviator Retention Incentive (EARI) program report, which summarizes impacts of using congressional authority to increase the bonus from \$35K to \$50K, and he noted the Air Force saw a significant increase in retention among aviators after implementation. Dr. (Colonel Ret.) Samantha A. Weeks asked whether Col Hawkins could provide the percentage increase of pilot retention from EARI program. Col Hawkins confirmed he can provide follow-up information to the Committee on the impacts of the program by gender. He explained that, through the EARI program, the Air Force allowed cohorts of rated Airmen with 8 and 9 years of undergraduate flying training to be eligible for the bonus, whereas Airmen in aviation AFSCs were previously required to have 10 years of undergraduate flying training to be eligible for the bonus. The Air Force was able to contract 65 percent of Airmen in aviation AFSCs in the 9-year cohort eligible to leave the Service in FY22. Additionally, aviators who contract with the Air Force earlier in the contracting process are eligible for higher bonuses and greater lump sums than other aviators.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon asked how the Services are working to gather information in real time about factors influencing Service members to leave the military, considering exit surveys capture this information only after Service members have decided to leave. Col Hawkins explained the DAF aspires to put all of its human resource data into the DAF data fabric to conduct predictive analytics. However, implementing this process will require major resources and must be addressed in the context of other competing resources. However, he confirmed the Air Force began work in 2017 to transition more than 100 data systems into a single data system, but this process is not completed yet. He noted the Air Force will eventually host performance evaluation data in a network that enables it to conduct predictive analysis to determine which Airmen are likely to leave the Service. SGM Whitney noted the Army is working on a study that will use QR codes posted across installations to receive real-time sentiments from Soldiers based on their location on base, and this data is likely to help the Army improve retention programs.

Vice Admiral (Ret.) Robin R. Braun asked how often each Service conducts retention surveys and how often these surveys are revised. SGM Whitney noted the DACES survey is conducted annually, and the survey is revised slightly each year based on feedback from leadership on the type of information needed. Mr. Akers explained the Navy's Exit Survey and Milestone Survey are distributed monthly to Sailors who are within 6 months and a year and a half of their

obligated service, respectively. He noted the surveys were formerly hosted through the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS), but this system was relatively standardized and difficult to update, so the surveys are now hosted through Qualtrics, which is easier to update. However, he noted the Navy does not want to make significant changes to the surveys each year because that makes it difficult to measure changes in responses over time. Maj McGee said he is unsure how often the exit surveys are distributed and updated. Col Hawkins noted the Air Force executes the exit surveys for the Air Force and Space Force. The exit surveys are distributed and updated annually, and all Airmen and Guardians with a date of separation will receive the exit survey for a 100-percent sample. Alternatively, the Career Intentions Survey samples random Service members throughout the Air Force and Space Force and is updated every 2 years and runs for 16 months upon implementation. CDR Crespo noted he is unsure how often the Coast Guard conducts exit surveys. LTC Antoine explained the National Guard is increasing the frequency of its exit and retention surveys to monthly in all 54 States and territories. The National Guard also implemented a combined survey in August 2023 to inspire States to increase their response rates from Service members.

Ms. Stoneman asked how often Services discuss retention issues, when retention issues are discussed across the Services, and how often retention data is broken down by gender. SGM Whitney noted discussions focused on retention broken down by gender are usually held at the Army G1 level, and these trends may be discussed with other Services at lower levels once they are identified to determine whether the trends are carrying across Services. Col Hawkins agreed, noting he does not often highlight retention trends by gender or race in his bimonthly cross-Service meetings. However, trends among enlisted personnel and officers are often discussed. CAPT Wheeler noted he and his team are focused more on workforce planning and making sure the Navy has enough personnel to meet mission, and then gender, race, or other demographics are considered to determine whether Navy policies might be biased toward or against a certain type of Sailor. Mr. Kuster agreed, noting gender and racial trends are generally not discussed during monthly meetings, but instead the Space Force is focused on filling any gaps it might have in general. CDR Crespo said he is unsure if the Coast Guard meets with other Services to discuss retention issues. LTC Antoine noted the National Guard's unique structure requires regular calls with all States and territories. However, gender and racial trends are not always discussed because it depends on the needs and challenges of the States.

Colonel (Ret.) Nancy P. Anderson asked whether the Services could provide denominators for each percentage provided in the briefing because small denominators may be significantly affected by a few Service members leaving the Service. MAJ Degenhardt confirmed he could provide the denominators for each MOS by gender to the Committee if requested officially.

Brigadier General (Ret.) Jarisse J. Sanborn asked CAPT Wheeler and Mr. Akers what different types of healthcare concerns influenced Sailors to leave the Navy. Mr. Akers explained Sailors have between 8 and 10 follow-up choices to choose from once they select healthcare concerns as a major reason to leave the Navy. However, he was unsure how these follow-up choices are defined other than mental and physical.

Dr. (Captain Ret.) Catherine W. Cox asked Col Hawkins whether the low retention rates for female nurses in the Air Force is related to the downsizing of the Defense Health Agency (DHA). Col Hawkins said he is unsure if the downsizing of DHA affected the retention of nurses but will discuss this question internally.

Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks asked Maj McGee to describe what MOSs are classified as unrestricted. Maj McGee noted unrestricted MOSs refers to the ranks from lieutenant up to general. He clarified that the restricted and unrestricted MOSs are not related to Marines' gender nor previously closed MOSs.

Dr. Trudi C. Ferguson asked who designs follow-up questions and detailed selections for the Navy's Exit Survey. Mr. Akers noted psychologists in the Navy help design these questions. Additionally, the Navy reviews write-in "other" responses to determine whether another response option should be added to the survey.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon referenced the removal of the wellness physical fitness assessment for postpartum Sailors in the Navy with qualifying birth events. She asked what types of birth events are categorized as qualified. CAPT Wheeler was unsure what constitutes a qualifying birth event in the Navy to take advantage of this recent policy change.

Ms. Robin S. Kelleher noted the retention rates in each Service are relatively high; however, they are declining for most Services. She asked whether the Services' exit surveys and retention surveys are reflective of declining retention, and, if so, what are the Services doing to address the top three reasons Service members are leaving the military. SGM Whitney noted the Army saw many Soldiers stay in the military on short-term extensions during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to wait for the economy to normalize, but now the Army must readdress Service members who stayed in the Service for stability during that time. He noted the Army seeks to address each Soldier's major reasons for leaving the Army. CAPT Wheeler noted 2018 was the best overall year for retention in the Navy, but, moving forward, retention is about strategic workforce planning. He noted retention rates across the Navy is trending down toward historical norms, but the Service is monitoring retention trends among subpopulations, including gender, to inform policy decisions and monetary and nonmonetary retention initiatives. Maj McGee noted the Marine Corps is on track to meet its retention goals for FTAP and STAP retention cohorts but was unsure what the Marine Corps is doing to address the top three reasons Marines are leaving the Service. Col Hawkins noted the Air Force reviews retention data often, and he feels retention is currently trending toward historical norms. He noted the Air Force had peak retention rates in FY21 as a result of the impacts of COVID-19, including 94.5 percent retention for officers and 90.5 percent retention for enlisted personnel. The Air Force is announcing this month a higher tenure extension across enlisted AFSCs for E-3 through E-8 personnel to counteract predictive analysis trends showing a less than 0.5 percent decline in retention rates in coming years. Airmen report job stability as a top reason they stay in the Air Force, and retention rates may be negatively affected if job stability or compensation stability is compromised. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks highlighted the Air Force's female officer retention rates dropped significantly in FY23 compared with other ranks and genders. She asked Col Hawkins whether he can share any factors hindering the retention of female officers specifically. Col Hawkins shared that 85 fewer female officers separated or retired from the Air Force than male officers in FY23. However, he noted he would need to discuss factors affecting these trends in FY23 as opposed to other years internally. Mr. Kuster reiterated the Space Force does not have a lengthy history of retention rates to examine but suggested retention rates are high in the Service currently. CDR Crespo confirmed the Coast Guard's retention rates are high, but the Service is having significant challenges recruiting Guardsmen. CAPT Wheeler agreed, noting all Military Service chiefs are testifying on Capitol Hill today regarding recruitment challenges that all Services are facing. Col Hawkins reiterated the Air Force is conducting predictive analysis that indicates retention rates

are trending slightly down, but FY23 recruitment challenges will result in gaps in noncommissioned officers among enlisted personnel and O-3 officers in FY27 and FY28. The Air Force is working on strategies to address these gaps through promotion initiatives.

Ms. Stoneman shared that DACOWITS will be publishing an annual report, which includes findings from 2023 installation visit focus groups with Service members in spring 2024. She recommended the briefers review this report and discuss findings during cross-Service meetings.

The briefing discussion concluded.

Panel Briefing: Implementation of Women, Peace, and Security Requirements (RFI 3)

The Committee requested a briefing from the USD(P&R), Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)), Joint Staff, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Space Force on how each entity is progressing in implementing the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). The briefing should include how WPS strategy has been incorporated into senior leader training, professional military education (PME), and entry-level training curriculum at the Military Service level; data from USD(P&R) on the number of personnel serving in joint duty assignments (JDAs); progress made by OUSD(P) to implement WPS Defense Objective 1, which is to ensure “the Department of Defense exemplifies a diverse organization that allows for women’s meaningful participation across the development, management, and employment of the Joint Force”; and an overview of the Joint Staff’s gender analysis framework. DACOWITS also requested the Air Force provide an overview of its most recent independent disparity review report that identified racial, ethnic, and gender disparities, including an underrepresentation of women and minorities in leadership positions.

OUSD(P)

Ms. Erin S. Cooper, Acting Director for International Humanitarian Policy, Global Partnerships, Strategy, Plans, & Capability, briefed the Committee for OUSD(P).

Ms. Cooper explained the Global Partnerships group within OUSD(P) provides policy oversight for WPS and partnership building to strengthen U.S. and global security through cooperation with international partners, humanitarian assistance, informed disaster relief, global health engagement, and international humanitarian law support. Ms. Cooper indicated the DoD is doing important work to enable and encourage women to serve in the military and security cooperation fields, including recently expanding parental leave policies, family planning options, uniform policies, and other policies seeking to improve women’s experiences in the military. Therefore, OUSD(P) seeks to complement these DoD efforts by incorporating WPS into DoD operations and its engagement with allies and partners.

Ms. Cooper described the legal framework the DoD is required to fulfill related to the implementation of WPS. Two foundational statutory authorities and requirements initiated and guided the implementation of WPS, including Executive Order 13595 in 2011 and the WPS Act of 2017 (WPS Act). These authorities informed the development of the DoD’s Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan in 2020. Section 1210E of the FY21 NDAA authorized the implementation of the WPS Act, requiring the DoD to implement a Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan, establish DoD policies and programs to support the implementation of the

WPS Act, and integrate WPS topics into training curriculum for Service members across all ranks and security cooperation activities. Section 1210E of the FY21 NDAA also describes how the DoD can build Security Forces' capacity to advise on the recruitment, employment, development, retention, and promotion of women in National Security Forces. Ms. Cooper also highlighted the updated 2023 U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan on WPS. One of the administration's topical priorities within the updated Strategy and National Action Plan on WPS is advancing women's meaningful participation and protection in the defense and security sectors by removing barriers to recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in the Joint Force and by modeling accountability for gender-based violence within the U.S. Armed Forces. OUSD(P) is currently drafting an update to DoD implementation plans to reflect updates made in the U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan on WPS.

Ms. Cooper explained the Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan of 2020 designates (1) USD(P&R) and the Military Services as the primary actors to meet Defense Objective 1 and model and employ WPS and (2) combatant commands as the primary actors to meet Defense Objective 2, promote partner nation women's participation, and Defense Objective 3, facilitate partner nation ability to ensure security of their civilians, especially women and girls. However, Ms. Cooper explained there is overlap across each Defense Objective.

Ms. Cooper provided an overview of progress the DoD has made toward meeting the Defense Objectives outlined in the Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan. For Defense Objective 1, DoD released an Independent Review Commission (IRC) report on sexual assault in the military, which included two recommendations focused on ways the DoD can reduce instances of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The report also contains five WPS-related recommendations in the climate and culture pillar that explain how harnessing the WPS policy agenda and standardizing its workforce can act as a mechanism to initiate the internal cultural change necessary to address sexual violence in the military. Ms. Cooper explained that, when military personnel gain awareness of the gender dynamics shaping military operations, their interactions on an interpersonal level and their ability to participate within the military can change. Each Military Service has action plans and milestones to accomplish all recommendations from the IRC to be inclusive of WPS. For example, the IRC recommended the standardization of the gender advisory workforce within the Military Services, including gender advisors, gender focal points, and certain occupational specialties focused on the human domain. These positions advise and assist in the implementation of WPS concepts to align with the Defense Objectives outlined in the Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan. The DoD received funding for General Schedule billets to help standardize, retain, and institutionalize WPS expertise into the DoD, and hiring is currently underway to fill these positions with the goal of completing hires by FY27. The IRC also recommended the integration of gender analysis into military planning and operational frameworks and the integration of WPS priorities into PME.

Ms. Cooper explained that, as the DoD continues to model WPS principles in training and educational curriculum, other efforts are underway to apply these principles with partners and allies. For example, the DoD integrated WPS principles into multiyear security cooperation planning guidance that commands will use as a baseline to shape their outreach programs with partners. Two efforts are currently ongoing to further partner relationships, including the WPS Barriers Assessment and Pilot Program and integration of WPS into security cooperation workforce curricula at the Defense Security Cooperation University. The purpose of the WPS

Barriers Assessment and Pilot Program is to identify strategies to work better with partners and strengthen recruitment, employment, development, retention, and promotion of women in their Military Forces. This pilot program will be completed with one country per geographic combatant command and will be ongoing through FY24. In relation to the integration of WPS principles into the Security Cooperations Workforce Development Program, DoD will enhance training, education, and development of a competency-based curriculum that prepares the security cooperation workforce to meet the challenges of complex security environments.

Ms. Cooper provided an overview of a Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) focused on WPS and how this instruction will help further efforts to meet Defense Objectives 1 through 3. DoD is currently soliciting comments on the WPS DoDI prior to its adjudication, anticipated for March 2024. This DoDI will enable DoD to take various actions to address recommendations from the IRC related to WPS. Ms. Cooper explained the DoDI features a conceptual framework that describes objectives and activities undertaken at DoD to support the implementation of WPS from an institutional level to an operational level. The conceptual framework begins with activities meant to institutionalize WPS within DoD, including ensuring DoD has sufficient, qualified personnel to implement the WPS Act and integrate relevant WPS principles into the training curriculum. Thus far, more than 1,000 individuals have participated in the 100-level WPS course. DoD will also develop and implement policies at the institutional level to impact how the U.S. operates in theater to better understand the condition of the human terrain informed by partner nation context, including different gender roles and responsibilities. DoD will also use WPS principles to work with allies and partners at the operational level to expand opportunities for women in foreign Security Forces, build capacity to integrate gender analysis into security sector policy, and plan for partner and allied Forces.

Ms. Cooper defined Socium as the Security Knowledge Management System of Record. This system helps the Security Cooperation Enterprise plan, budget, collaborate, design, assess, monitor, evaluate, and report on security cooperation activities. Socium is the security operations program for all security cooperation activities, not just WPS, but DoD hopes to integrate WPS principles as much as possible into its work with partners and allies. Initiative design documents include sections on gender analysis to support significant security cooperation initiatives by planning DoD security operation activities for 5-year periods. OUSD(P) will work with the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) and the Defense Security Cooperation University to update Socium to include WPS FY23 NDAA Section 1208 authority, allowing DSCA and combatant commands to support program planning and execution workflows. Finally, DoD will implement the gender dynamics index, which uses open-source data to capture information related to security cooperation programming about levels of integration of women in peace and security activities in partner and allied nations. This information will be provided to security cooperation planners and policymakers to make decisions about programming and resource allocation.

Ms. Cooper highlighted critical actions OUSD(P) will lead in the near future. OUSD(P) will draft an updated DoD-specific implementation plan to reflect information in the 2023 U.S. WPS Strategy and National Action Plan, including information from the DoDI focused on WPS, WPS recommendations from the IRC on sexual assault in the military, and other sources. OUSD(P) will also continue working through the process of publishing the DoDI and integrating WPS security cooperation plans and programs into the broader DoD security operation processes. Ms.

Cooper noted that WPS is a marathon, not a sprint, and OUSD(P) will continue working to implement WPS.

Ms. Cooper concluded her briefing.

Joint Staff

Colonel Neil N. Snyder, Ph.D., Assistant Deputy Director, Counter Threats & International Cooperation, Joint Staff J-5, briefed the Committee for Joint Staff.

COL Snyder indicated the Deputy Director of Counter Threats and International Cooperation, Joint Staff J-5, works on 84 different policy issues affecting the Joint Staff, among which WPS is a focal point. About 20 percent of the Counter Threats and International Cooperation workforce is focused on WPS efforts, including a significant focus on developing and implementing a gender analysis framework. COL Snyder indicated the Joint Staff works closely with OUSD(P) on matters related to WPS.

COL Snyder indicated the gender analysis framework aligns with the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) frameworks to enhance international and interagency coordination on WPS. Over the last few years, DoD has focused on building the necessary structural components for a workforce to carry forth WPS policies and institutionalize process-oriented elements of WPS into Joint Staff and Joint Force policy. The Joint Staff's efforts are closely aligned with the efforts of the DOS and USAID to complement the DoD's interagency partners' efforts. The Joint Staff adapted the gender analysis framework from DOS and USAID efforts to ensure all agencies tasked in WPS legislation have the same baseline for gender analysis efforts.

COL Snyder explained the requirement to integrate gender analysis into WPS efforts was introduced in Section 1210E of the FY21 NDAA. Specifically, the NDAA asks relevant agencies to incorporate gender analysis and WPS priorities into educational and training materials and programs authorized by Section 333 of Title 10 in the *U.S. Code*. The WPS Act also indicates the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) will carry out activities consistent with the WPS Act to focus on gender analysis, meaningful participation of women in national security activities, and the relationship between such participation and security outcomes.

COL Snyder reported that a gender perspective forces the DoD to consider how military activities affect genders differently. This perspective gives the DoD a framework to organize this information to support and tailor military operations and determine how personnel should interact with and assess an environment and integrate gender perspectives into operational planning processes. Gender analysis is applicable to operational planning, steady state operations, and crisis responses and is conducted by mainstreaming the gender analysis methodology into existing DoD processes, such as intelligence collection, security cooperation, and joint operational planning. Gender analysis is necessary to comprehensively plan activities in the operational environment, provide key atmospheric information to inform military operations activities, and mitigate unintentional harm to civilians. Gender analysis must be an iterative process to inform operations as operational environments changes. Although gender analysis can be used as a stand-alone analysis, it is intended to complement existing processes, such as an operational barrier analysis.

COL Snyder indicated the gender analysis framework that the DoD, DOS, and USAID identified is intended to systematize gender differences across five different domains of social life and examine how those differences affect the lives of men and women. The gender analysis framework enables commanders and other staff to organize information about gender roles and relations during military planning processes. The five domains reflect society-level variables and individual behaviors and include 1) cultural norms and beliefs; 2) laws, policies, regulations, and institutions; 3) access to assets/resources; 4) gender roles, responsibilities, and time use; and 5) patterns of power and decision making. The cultural norms and beliefs domain enables staff to answer important questions, such as how socially acceptable behaviors differ between men and women in a given cultural setting, including occupations and clothing; whether men and women behave differently in public; and how rigid these cultural norms and beliefs are. This type of analysis would complement traditional joint intelligence preparation of the battlefield. The laws, policies, regulations, and institutions domain investigates how men's and women's formal and informal rights, including differences in legal rights by gender, affect the operational environment and how similar or dissimilar impacts of government policies affect men and women. The access to assets/resources domain includes analysis of information on gender relations and how gender affects access to resources necessary for men or women to be productive participants in communities and nations. This domain identifies information such as the informal or formal rules for who has access to resources, including tangible assets such as land and intangible assets such as education, information, and healthcare, and how access varies by gender. The gender roles, responsibilities, and time use domain focuses on the norms that influence men's and women's behaviors and the types of activities they engage in related to their responsibilities in different cultures, such as capacity to engage in economic, social, and political activities. This domain identifies the different occupations and responsibilities men and women have in different cultures and differential economic impacts by gender. The patterns of power and decision making domain identifies which types of individuals can use authorities to acquire and use assets, including whether a person can take advantage of opportunities, exercise rights, and enter into legal contracts. This domain intersects heavily with the other four domains. COL Snyder indicated the gender analysis framework highlights how these domains affect patterns of activities, such as gender-based violence, and emphasizes the need for consultation with local women to gather valuable gendered perspectives on crosscutting issues related to gender.

COL Snyder explained that personnel are expected to gather information using the gender analysis framework, distill relevant factors, and provide meaningful conclusions to commanders or personnel leading operational planning. At the conclusion of the gender analysis process, a gender advisor or gender focal point will make recommendations on how military operations should adapt to incorporate gender perspectives in their operational environments.

COL Snyder reported that the Joint Staff's role is promulgating gender analysis into the Joint Force through training and developing the gender advisory workforce. More than 1,100 personnel have been trained on gender analysis since 2018, and the Joint Staff has developed and made available two joint-knowledge online courses related to WPS, a 100-level course for gender focal points, and a 200-level course to train gender advisors. The Joint Staff also set up a mobile training team in FY23 that delivered 14 courses with DoD components in 2023, and the team plans to complete 18 to 20 courses in FY24 to continue building a WPS workforce. In FY21, Congress authorized the DoD to incorporate gender analysis into security cooperation activities, including the addition of a gender analysis section to submissions for security cooperation activity notifications to Congress. To support the promulgation of WPS into policy

and doctrine, the DoD has incorporated WPS into 15 doctrine publications and plans to publish a Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) following the publication of the DoDI focused on WPS and integrate gender analysis into the Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment processes, Joint planning processes, and Joint education and training processes.

COL Snyder concluded his briefing.

USD(P&R)

Lieutenant Colonel Diamond D. Cookson, Assistant Director for Joint Officer Management Policy, briefed the Committee for USD(P&R).

Lt Col Cookson explained JDAs include Active and Reserve Component positions designated as JDA approved by USD(P&R) in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. JDAs allow the DoD to develop qualified officers with joint perspectives. The DoD must develop joint qualified officers to lead three- and four-star joint organizations, including agencies, activities, and combatant commands.

Lt Col Cookson described the number of JDA positions by gender and pay grade. Positions in the grade of O3 make up about 4 percent of JDA positions, and women fill about 18 percent of O3 JDA positions. Comparatively, women make up about 22 percent of all O3 positions. Positions in the grade of O4 make up about 32 percent of JDA positions, and women fill about 16 percent of O4 JDA positions. Comparatively, women make up about 20 percent of all O4 positions. Positions in the grade of O5 make up about 41 percent of JDA positions, and women fill about 14 percent of O5 JDA positions. Comparatively, women make up about 17 percent of all O5 positions. Positions in the grade of O6 make up about 20 percent of JDA positions, and women fill about 12 percent of O6 JDA positions. Comparatively, women make up about 16 percent of all O6 positions. Positions in the grade of O7 make up about 1 percent of JDA positions, and women fill about 13 percent of O7 JDA positions. Comparatively, women make up about 14 percent of all O7 positions. Positions in the grade of O8 make up about 1 percent of JDA positions, and women fill about 5 percent of O8 JDA positions. Comparatively, women make up about 11 percent of all O8 positions. Positions in the grade of O9 make up less than 1 percent of JDA positions, and women fill about 8 percent of O9 JDA positions. Comparatively, women make up about 10 percent of all O9 positions. Positions in the grade of O10 make up less than 1 percent of JDA positions, and women fill about 8 percent of O10 JDA positions. Comparatively, women make up about 8 percent of all O10 positions. Overall, women currently fill about 14 percent of the total JDA positions. Comparatively, women make up about 20 percent of officers in the grades of O3 through O10.

Lt Col Cookson concluded her briefing.

Army

Colonel Jonathan T. Drake, Chief, Peace Operations, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI), briefed the Committee for the Army.

COL Drake explained the PKSOI has been the delegated lead for WPS since April 2020. PKSOI is located at Carlisle Barracks and is part of the Combined Arms Center (CAC), which is part of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). The structure and location of PKSOI

is important because many of the training impacts associated with WPS occur within the TRADOC structure and because the Army is currently reviewing the organization of WPS to optimize ownership of the WPS portfolio.

COL Drake noted the Army views WPS as a necessity to improve readiness, operations, and strategic engagement with other nations. For example, WPS principles support the readiness of the Army by enabling the Service to recruit a diverse workforce from the United States' entire pool of eligible individuals. WPS also supports the Army operationally because women's participation in the military increases the Service's operational effectiveness and reduces operational blind spots, as evidenced by the success of cultural support teams and female engagement teams used in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army also sees WPS as a strategy to support better interoperability and strengthen relationships with partner and allied nations. PKSOI has aimed to raise awareness of WPS principles and policies and how they benefit the Army. The Army has also begun to develop a workforce with knowledge of WPS principles and gender analysis, including gender advisors, gender focal points, and a broad community of individuals interested in WPS. These individuals communicate WPS principles across commands, especially through TRADOC. The Army currently has 28 gender advisors and 276 gender focal points, which COL Drake cautioned is updated from the numbers provided on the briefing slide. The Army conducted its first Army-focused 100-level WPS course in 2023 and plans to expand access to this course in 2024 along with the implementation of a 200-level WPS course. COL Drake indicated doctrine is the foundation of everything in the Army, so incorporating WPS into Army doctrine, such as frameworks for thinking about the operational environment, is an important step that needs to be taken. PKSOI is continuing its efforts to incorporate WPS principles into various Army doctrine and materials.

COL Drake noted the CAC oversees 10 Army Centers of Excellence, including 32 Army schools, which are critical areas where WPS principles must be institutionalized into training. Half of the gender focal points designated in CAC completed training, while remaining personnel will gain certifications in 2024. Gender focal points are working to integrate the principles of WPS into the training curriculum of their respective commands and organizations. Additionally, many commanders across the Army have implemented a female mentoring and morale program to support women's meaningful participation in the military.

COL Drake explained that Army University is the Army's PME. Army University oversees the education of more than 150,000 Soldiers at 70 centers. COL Drake noted the Army believes its PME institution is the largest in the world. The Army University point of contact leads a DoD working group on incorporating WPS principles into PME. Command and General Staff College Schools have 18 gender focal points, and the Army is continuing to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion and WPS principles into instructor courses. In February 2024, the Army will initiate professional development activities on WPS for instructors at Army University Schools through the Faculty and Staff Division.

COL Drake reported the U.S. Army War College is the premier institution for senior leader education, focused on building the future brigade commanders and general officers of the Army. Efforts to incorporate WPS principles into senior leader education curriculum within the Army War College are led by a WPS Steering Committee. The Army War College reviewed all educational programs to ensure WPS principles were incorporated throughout the curriculum and revised the master of arts in strategic studies program to include electives related to WPS.

COL Drake noted the U.S. Military Academy at West Point is the Army's largest precommissioning educational institution, and 20 percent of cadets are female. Eleven current and historic academic courses include WPS principles and support WPS principles through clubs and cadet activities geared toward women's meaningful participation at West Point, including women's mentorship events; the Society of Women Engineers; and the Coaching, Unifying, Mentoring, Leading, and Strengthening (CURLS) program, focused on supporting minority women.

COL Drake concluded his briefing.

Navy

Commander Jared M. Wilhelm, Women, Peace, and Security Program, Gender Focal Point, briefed the Committee for the Navy.

CDR Wilhelm noted he was the Chief of the Security Cooperation Office from 2020 to 2023, and he completed the Navy's 100-level WPS course in June 2023 to become a gender focal point. As Chief of the Security Cooperation Office, CDR Wilhelm worked with the combatant command for the Allied Special Operations Forces Command (SOFCOM) to operationalize the WPS program and witnessed firsthand how gender analysis helps advance national security strategy.

CDR Wilhelm explained the Navy is proud of Admiral Lisa Franchetti's confirmation in November 2023 by the Senate as the first woman to serve as CNO and on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Additionally, Admiral Michael Gilday, the previous CNO, designated Rear Admiral Tom Moniger, Director of Plans, Policy & Integration, as the WPS flag lead for the Navy.

CDR Wilhelm noted the U.S. Naval War College (NWC) has been around since 1884 but has been at the forefront of investigating international issues related to WPS since 2009. The Navy's goal is to leverage the NWC's mature and successful WPS program for lessons learned and best practices as WPS principles are integrated across the Navy. The Navy has trained and designated nine gender focal points as of June 2023 and plans to train additional gender focal points in 2024. The NWC established its WPS program in 2009 with support from the NWC's provost, Mary Ann Peters, and designated Ambassador Swanee Hunt Chair of WPS in 2011.

CDR Wilhelm indicated the Navy's strategy to integrate WPS principles is to include crosscutting WPS curricula into core NWC courses establishing multiple points throughout the curriculum to emphasize WPS principles. More than 500 NWC students completed these core courses in 2022, from ranks of O3 to flag officer and civilians.

CDR Wilhelm explained the NWC hosts an annual WPS Symposium, beginning in 2015. The symposium encourages international partner involvement. For example, the NWC has an International Military Education and Training Program funded by DOS but implemented by the SecDef. Funding from this program is provided to each security cooperation office to select and invite the best and the brightest leaders from partner nations to attend the NWC. Leaders from other countries can study alongside American students at the NWC, access curricula addressing WPS principles, and better understand American culture and build alliances for the future.

The NWC offers three electives officers can select related to WPS, including the WPS Individual Directed Research Elective taught by Dr. Saira Yamin, the current Ambassador Swanee Hunt Chair of WPS. The NWC also requires students to attend lectures of opportunity and WPS special lectures.

CDR Wilhelm noted the NWC features WPS student presentations that give students from partners nations and American students the opportunity to share their experiences related to WPS. The NWC also offers an annual WPS writing award for students who are thought leaders in the WPS field. CDR Wilhelm reiterated the Navy is using lessons learned from the integration of WPS principles at the NWC to expand these principles across the Navy.

CDR Wilhelm concluded his briefing.

Marine Corps

Lieutenant Colonel Stephen L. Draper, TECOM G-3 Branch Head, and Dr. Lauren B. Mackenzie, Professor of Cross-Cultural Competence, Marine Corps University (MCU), briefed the Committee for the Marine Corps.

LtCol Draper explained there are two initial venues for senior leader training, including the capstone course for new general officers and the cornerstone course for new commanding officers at the O5 level. These are both multiday courses and cover various topics, including new and updated policies and directives and trainings on diversity, equity and inclusion, equal opportunity, and sexual assault prevention. Although WPS itself is not mentioned during these trainings, WPS principles are covered throughout both trainings, and participants receive a book edited by Dr. Mackenzie and Dr. (LtCol) Dana Perkins titled *Women, Peace, and Security in Professional Military Education*; the book highlights WPS work completed by students from Military Service War Colleges. LtCol Draper also noted battalion executive officers, commanding officers, and sergeants major discuss equal opportunity trends and topics occurring at the battalion level every 2 or 3 weeks through formal and informal meetings. Marine Corps Community Service (MCCS) also develops trainings at the local level for battalion commanders, battalion executive officers, and sergeants major to address these issues. The Marine Corps also uses the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), which all Marines can access, at least once a year and sometimes more often if changes in command necessitate. These surveys enable Marines to share information about their experience in their units and whether they feel as though their voices are being heard by leaders.

LtCol Draper explained entry-level training includes the two Marine Corps Recruit Depots (MCRDs) for enlisted personnel and Officer Candidate School and the Basic School for officers. The Marine Corps Skills and Readiness Manual acts as a guideline for the training of Marines. This manual is 286 pages and is updated every 2 years, including most recently in January 2022 when WPS initiatives and principles were incorporated. A working group was convened in July 2022 to revise the structure of the Marine Corps Skills and Readiness Manual, and the output from the group was approved in April 2023. The revised Marine Corps Skills and Readiness Manual dedicates 45.5 hours toward core values entry-level training for both enlisted and officer personnel, including WPS-related topics such as the rules and laws associated with armed conflict and sexual assault prevention. Marines are taught other WPS-related principles after they progress through MOS schools, including incorporating gender analysis into operational environment planning.

Dr. Mackenzie noted the MCU has offered WPS-related courses, lectures, and faculty development opportunities for many years. She reiterated Ms. Cooper's comment that WPS is a marathon, not a sprint, but it is also a relay race that takes collaboration across various departments and agencies to be successful. The Marine Corps offers a WPS writing award, established in 2017, to attract and reward student research and writing related to WPS. Award winners are highlighted at the MCU commencement ceremony and awarded a monetary prize funded through a partnership with the National Naval Officers Association. Additionally, the MCU partnered with the Army War College to offer a "best of the best" writing award competition by soliciting papers from students across all Military Service colleges and universities and gathering a panel of experts from each institution to judge the papers and select the best paper. The cross-Service WPS writing award also comes with a monetary prize. Finally, all award-winning papers are compiled into an edited volume each year titled *Women, Peace, and Security in Professional Military Education*, available for free at www.usmcm.edu. This book highlights the work students at all the Military Service colleges and universities are doing related to WPS.

Dr. Mackenzie also noted the MCU features various colleges that may become siloed at times, including captain school, major school, and lieutenant colonel school. To address this, the MCU has offered a WPS Scholars Program for the last 3 years that brings together faculty and students from across the university to meet monthly and discuss various topics related to WPS. Twelve students participated in the first and second years of the WPS Scholars Program, while 36 students participated in the program this year, including more men than women and more Marines than members of any other Service. The WPS Scholars Program was renamed this year to the Reynolds Scholars Program in honor of retired Marine Corps Lieutenant General Loretta (Lori) E. Reynolds. Dr. Mackenzie explained the Marine Corps closed its Culture Center recently, and she believes that renaming the program with LtGen Reynold's name will help maintain its staying power.

LtCol Draper and Dr. Mackenzie concluded their briefing.

Department of the Air Force

Ms. Nannette E. Howard, DAF Program Manager, Women, Peace, and Security, briefed the Committee for DAF.

Ms. Howard indicated she was unable to brief the Committee on the Air Force's most recent independent disparity review report focused on identifying racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in the Air Force because the Service's response to the report will be provided in about a month.

Ms. Howard said DAF has at least 9 gender advisors and more than 170 gender focal points as of the briefing. Ms. Howard explained the Air Force took an administrative approach to integrating WPS, including looking at data to identify where WPS principles are embedded within Air Force training and education, examining the capacity of Air Force faculty and instructional designers, and investigating how resources and instructors will be funded. DAF continues to make progress integrating WPS principles into PME, technical schools, and senior leader training.

Ms. Howard referenced the DAF Learning Committee and the DoD-level Common Military Training workgroup. The DAF Learning Committee acts as a gatekeeper of training and education in the Air Force, so the DAF WPS program had to brief the DAF Learning Committee on WPS objectives and was not approved to build new PME programs to incorporate WPS principles until 2022. To inform the development of WPS PME courses, the WPS program team conducted a gap analysis and determined few PME courses were teaching WPS principles identified by the 100-level WPS course developed by the Joint Staff. These principles included understanding WPS concepts and how they are operationalized, roles and responsibilities of gender focal points, and applying gender analysis. To address this issue, the Chief Learning Officer of the Air Education and Training Command (AETC) recommended the program team develop a 100-level WPS training for AETC faculty and trainers to inform them about WPS principles and help them incorporate these principles into their curriculum. DAF executed its first 100-level WPS Gender Focal Point Course in June 2023 at Maxwell Air Force Base. Sixty AETC faculty and trainers graduated from this course. Ms. Howard indicated DAF's goal is to have all enlisted personnel and officers take the 100-level WPS Gender Focal Point Course in the future. Additionally, Air University and Space Training and Readiness Command (STARCOM) Delta 13 are currently identifying opportunity areas where they can incorporate WPS principles into PME curriculum and provide scenario-based trainings related to multiple topics, including PME. For example, there are competing priorities for incorporating WPS principles and climate-based topics into AETC curriculum, so addressing both in scenario-based trainings may lighten the burden of incorporating both topics into the curriculum.

Ms. Howard explained DAF's executive working group meets quarterly and identifies senior leaders to take part in a Senior Leader 101 training related to WPS. Thus far, DAF has trained more than 56 senior leaders under this training. DAF is also planning to expand this training in length and topic coverage to a 200-level course to create WPS buy-in as DAF moves forward toward training the Total Force. DAF also plans to incorporate WPS principles into commanders courses.

Ms. Howard indicated that, similar to PME courses, the WPS program team conducted a gap analysis for entry-level training and identified that WPS principles were not incorporated into entry-level training curriculum and that faculty were unclear on WPS principles. However, the WPS program team learned that a faculty member at the Jeanne M. Holm Center at Air

University developed a curriculum integrating WPS principles into current coursework and is pending Air University approval.

Ms. Howard noted the next step for technical training will entail the participation of career field managers in the Air Force and Space Force. The Air Force plans to begin this process with two specialty positions, Foreign Area Officers, and Security Forces. The Air Force released the DAF WPS Strategic Action Plan in 2023. Ms. Howard indicated that barriers limit the incorporation of WPS principles into Air Force activities and curriculum, including competing topics, such as climate, sexual assault, and implementing Great Power Competition frameworks.

Ms. Howard concluded her briefing.

Discussion

Command Master Chief (Ret.) Octavia D. Harris noted there seems to be various lines of effort related to WPS, such as joint billets, training curriculum, and gender analysis, and asked how these efforts align together. Ms. Cooper explained Executive Order 13595 established the U.S. National Action Plan for WPS in 2011, but much of DoD's WPS work did not commence until the publication of the WPS Act. DoD has been able to lean on partners to support the development of trainings and strategies for integrating WPS within the Department, including Australia and the Nordic Center for Gender Perspectives. DoD has also created significant WPS programs at all combatant commands, but DoD is currently trying to perfect Joint Trainings and the institutionalization of WPS to ensure Forces in theater are prepared with detailed context of their environment. Ms. Cooper noted OUSD(P) will be focused on helping the Military Services expand the evolution of WPS.

Col (Ret.) Anderson asked how gender focal points are trained on the various domains of gender, including the more objectively focused domains of (1) cultural norms and beliefs and (2) laws, policies, regulations, and institutions and the more subjectively focused domains of (3) access to assets/resources; (4) gender roles, responsibilities, and time use; and (5) patterns of power and decision making. COL Snyder explained the 100- and 200-level WPS course instructors receive active feedback from participants, but the strongest feedback DoD receives comes from combatant commands when they periodically report on how they are implementing WPS holistically in theater. Additionally, the Joint Staff assess combatant commands and help inform OSD and policymakers on what various Military Services are doing to implement WPS. Ms. Cooper explained the 100-level WPS course lasts a week and discusses high-level concepts related to WPS, including gender perspectives and how those relate to military activities. However, she cautioned that DoD wants participants to understand high-level concepts related to WPS and how to apply those concepts to their position and activities. To ensure participants learn how to apply WPS concepts to their positions, the courses include scenario-type trainings using fake countries in which participants will have to apply concepts to key leader engagement or security cooperation activities based on their position. Participants also design a workplan during the course to plan for how they can use WPS concepts in their job and within their Military Service or component. Col (Ret.) Anderson clarified her question and asked whether one single instructor is responsible for instructing all five domains of gender, and, if so, how they move between teaching more objective domains and more subjective domains. Ms. Cooper explained the mobile training team has one lead instructor part, but instructors will be dependent on each individual course. For example, OUSD(P) aims to bring previously certified gender focal points back to teach courses to be as relevant as possible to their component or Military

Service, but one person oversees this process from the Military Service being trained. However, one person is responsible for providing gender analysis training. COL Snyder noted gender advisors and gender focal points are supporting one another and working together, including at North Atlantic Treaty Organization events, and instructors of WPS courses work together closely; frequent collaboration strengthens the WPS program.

Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks asked how the DoD or Military Services are using the gender analysis framework internally to improve internal activities. Ms. Cooper agreed DoD and Military Services need to hold themselves accountable in these areas to ensure they have credibility when talking to partner and ally nations. WPS has historically had an outward lens toward affecting change elsewhere, but Ms. Cooper noted the IRC report on sexual assault in the military is a good example of how DoD and Military Services can look at themselves for areas of improvement. However, because WPS focuses primarily on operational frameworks outside DoD, much work must be done before gender analysis can be operationalized internally within DoD and the Services. COL Drake explained the Army has tried to adapt gender analysis to MOSs where a better understanding of operational environments in civilian society is necessary. Additionally, the Army has not decided how many gender focal points will be trained due to training resource requirements.

Dr. Ferguson asked for an example of how the implementation of WPS goes in theater. VADM (Ret.) Braun also asked whether combatant commands have any WPS-specific exercises with partner nations or whether WPS principles are integrated into existing exercises. CDR Wilhelm explained the U.S. Southern Command under General Laura J. Richardson would integrate a WPS event into all key leader engagements with delegations. COL Drake noted WPS is integrated into many combatant command exercises and scenarios, emphasizing it is important to understand local society before developing and implementing a peace transition plan or other activity. However, he explained he is unaware of any WPS-specific exercises. Ms. Cooper explained Operation Allies Welcome marked the first gender advisor deployment in which gender advisors were deployed to each of the safe havens where Afghanistan evacuees were located. Gender advisors helped the safe haven commanders determine how to structure the village and informed them about important gender dynamics. Ms. Cooper reiterated DoD wants WPS to be integrated into various aspects of DoD and Military Service security cooperation activities.

The briefing discussion concluded.

Overview of Public Written Comments

LTC Frazier reviewed the Committee's receipt of written public comments. DACOWITS received one public comment submission for this QBM.

The written public comment was provided by a former DACOWITS member, Rear Admiral (Ret.) Cari Batson Thomas, Coast Guard, on increases in sexual assault and harassment in the Military Services.

This public comment is available for review and download on the DACOWITS website.

The Committee took a 60-minute recess for lunch.

Panel Briefing: Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Abuse (RFI 5)

The Committee requested a briefing from the Office of Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP) via the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) office, as well as from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, DAF, and Coast Guard on various topics related to domestic abuse. For example, the Committee asked the FAP office for information on policies, policy definitions, and recent changes to data collection and reporting procedures. The Committee asked the Military Services to provide information on data for abuse incidents for FY12–FY22, practices for military protection orders (MPO), procedures to ensure removal of dangerous weapons from households, and resources available for military abuse victims.

MC&FP

Ms. Kathleen H. Chiarantona, Associate Director, Coordinated Community Response, Military Community Advocacy Directorate, and Dr. Valija C. Rose, Associate Director, Data and Research, Military Community Advocacy Directorate, briefed the Committee for MC&FP via the FAP office.

Ms. Chiarantona explained the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) was established to address the need for a sustained coordinating function that brings together all entities with a role in responding to domestic abuse or intimate partner violence cases. CCR coordinates and organizes efforts to share communication and ensure two goals are met, including victim care and safety and abuse accountability. CCR also addresses the historic overreliance on FAP to answer questions related to the full response system of domestic abuse, which has been recognized as a challenge in DoD for several years. CCR is made up of FAP, legal, law enforcement, medical, command, nonmilitary community partners, and other entities that may interact with a victim or an alleged abuser. CCR is still early in the process of being implemented, so the Services do not yet mirror this model.

Ms. Chiarantona explained she and Dr. Rose work under Military Community Advocacy, which is a new directorate within MC&FP, which also houses FAP. Ms. Chiarantona noted law enforcement, Military Criminal Investigative Organizations, DHA partners, and other members of CCR have policies in addition to those FAP owns or governs. A key goal of CCR is to ensure those policies interact with one another, share the same messaging, and facilitate wraparound services. DoDI 6400.06, *DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military And Certain Affiliated Personnel*, is the most comprehensive policy and covers all members of CCR and describes the actions that each entity should take in response to a domestic abuse or an intimate partner violence case. Ms. Chiarantona differentiated between domestic abuse and domestic violence by highlighting domestic abuse encompasses behaviors that do not constitute a crime, whereas domestic violence refers to behaviors tied to criminal charges.

Ms. Chiarantona explained that, in 2019, Congress added Article 128b to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) on domestic violence. This article supports the abuser accountability goal of CCR. No Federal laws address domestic violence, so this article was a significant step for the domestic violence community as a whole. Ms. Chiarantona clarified the Executive Order 14062 that instituted this change passed in 2021, bringing it to the forefront and allowing domestic violence to be charged properly, including mandatory sentencing. Since this charge is relatively new, the legal community is still training to implement it. However, with the standup of the Offices of Special Trial Council and the move of domestic violence prosecution

responsibilities away from command to an independent prosecutorial authority, more attention is given to how this charge is used.

Ms. Chiarantona noted that, with the reissuance of DoDI 6400.06 in 2021, the definition of intimate partner violence was expanded to include unmarried individuals who are dating, are in relationships, or otherwise meet certain indications of a romantic or intimate partnership. Ms. Chiarantona acknowledged a 2019 recommendation from DACOWITS helped initiate this change in definition and thanked Committee members for their support. The expanded definition closes a very important gap, particularly for Service member victims who did not meet the previous, more stringent, definition of having a child in common, having a common domicile, or being a former spouse. These Service members were previously unable to receive services through FAP on base, but now they can.

Dr. Rose began by explaining the information reported in the annual DoD “Report on Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse in the Military” comes from the DoD central registry. Each Military Service inputs information into its central registry, which feeds into the DoD central registry, so the data represent reports made only to FAP. Policy dictates reports known to other entities should be referred to FAP, and FAP is the reporting point of contact; only that which is known to FAP can be reported through the central registry. Dr. Rose added both the Service level and the DoD level have quality assurance processes to ensure the data is as accurate as possible. Dr. Rose’s department also collaborates with Military Service data leads for FAP.

Dr. Rose explained some reporting calculations have changed over time, and the data reflect those improvements. The most recent calculation changes stemmed from the Government Accountability Office Report to Congressional Committees (GAO-21-289), “Domestic Abuse: Actions Needed to Enhance DoD’s Prevention, Response, and Oversight.”. This report detailed DoD’s response to domestic abuse and included several data-related recommendations, one of which was to change the calculation method used for reports of abuse. FY21 and FY22 reflected the new calculation method, which enables data to be stratified by the type of abuse specifically (e.g., number of reports of physical abuse).

Dr. Rose described the general trends in domestic abuse data, noting domestic abuse reports have reduced over time, which has largely been driven by a statistically significant reduction in the number of spouse abuse reports. Dr. Rose noted this change is both an absolute and relative reduction; the raw numbers of spouse abuse incidents are decreasing, but the rate of spouse abuse has also decreased. Because the military does not collect data on the total number of Service members in intimate partner relationships, FAP cannot calculate rates of intimate partner abuse in the same way it can for spouse abuse because the denominator cannot be identified. Dr. Rose also noted an increase in intimate partner abuse over time, with 8.4 percent of all reports of domestic abuse being intimate partner abuse in FY12 compared with 18.4 percent of all reports in FY22. This trend mirrors the change in marital status within the Services over time. Dr. Rose highlighted there is a higher proportion of sexual abuse incidents among intimate partners compared with the proportion of sexual abuse incidents among spouses. Dr. Rose clarified these numbers include both servicewomen and civilians who are dependents or intimate partners of Service members. About 22 percent of all spouse abuse victims are servicewomen, while 42 percent of intimate partner abuse victims are servicewomen, highlighting the importance of the expanded definition.

Ms. Chiarantona reiterated the reissuance of DoDI 6400.06 was the first update in 7 years to incorporate many policy and legislative changes. The key point with this reissuance was that MC&FP assumed leadership of the DoD's CCR to bring together those entities and organize them. Ms. Chiarantona noted a significant area for improvements is training. FAP created a law enforcement working group as part of CCR to build a rule-based law enforcement training that helps on-base law enforcement respond to domestic and intimate partner abuse at every level. This effort is underway in addition to training for commanders. Ms. Chiarantona clarified this training is no longer referred to as "family advocacy training" but is instead called "training on domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect." This change is significant in moving away from the historic overreliance on FAP.

Ms. Chiarantona noted FAP has improved functionality and access to the Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate (DAVA) locator. The locator is on the Military OneSource website, and after improving communications and access to this tool, it has seen increased traffic indicating more people are able to seek out their DAVA. Ms. Chiarantona added that a logic model has been developed for CCR, which is focused on several areas for enhancements. FAP is also working with community partners by contracting with a national organization of victim assistants to help with victim advocate training. FAP expects this effort to lift the military's DAVA professional force and to support interactions with civilian CCRs to help bridge the gap among military and civilian entities.

Ms. Chiarantona and Dr. Rose concluded their briefing.

Army

Ms. Tanya M. Juarez, HQDA Family Advocacy Program Manager, briefed the Committee for the Army.

Ms. Juarez shared the Army provides an overall CCR based on DoD directives and is also moving forward to codify the CCR into policy. FAP is focused on addressing the safety of women in the services and in the community through policy changes, victim safety, and strategic lines of effort. Specifically, FAP is the Army's integrator for prevention and response to domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, and problematic child sexual behavior. FAP seeks to identify instances as early as possible and provide treatment for affected family and Service members. Ms. Juarez clarified the Army has a bifurcated FAP, different from other Services. This means that prevention, education, training, and some interventions are housed under the installation command side of the Army, encompassed under the organization of the Army and community services. Assessment and treatment services are located in Military Treatment Facilities.

Ms. Juarez identified several policies and directives that changed significantly during FY22 and FY23, starting with Army Directive 2021-26, *Family Advocacy Program Incident Determination Committee and Clinical Case Staff Meeting*. The Army FAP completed a full transition of the case review committee to the Independent Determination Committee (IDC) and Clinical Case Staff Meeting (CCSM). This Army Directive established the policies and procedures toward this transition to ensure implementation across the entire Army enterprise. In 2021, Army Directive 2021-27, *Installation Response to Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth*, also addressed installation responses to problematic sexual behavior in children and youth, which was a significant change to support communities and families. Army Directive 2022-10, *Safe-to-*

report for Victims of Sexual Assault, addressed safe reporting for victims of sexual assault. Although Army Directive 2022-10 is not a FAP policy, it directly affects how FAP implements its CCR approach and enables victims to come forward and report to FAP more comfortably.

Ms. Juarez added the Army has made other policy improvements, including multiple fragmentary orders in 2022, two of which were Executive Orders. Executive Order 156-21 clarified instructions, quality assurance measures, and training implications for IDC implementation. The Army FAP office is also undergoing policy changes, which include finalizing Army Community Service (Army Regulation 608-01). This regulation provides clarity and a more refined certification process to ensure the FAP office is adhering to all laws and standards implemented by DoD and the Army. Additional changes were implemented as a result of the IDC. Ms. Juarez noted these changes have established more open-door opportunities for victims of domestic violence to come forward and seek FAP services.

Ms. Juarez shared an overview of Army data on domestic and intimate partner abuse for FY12 through FY22, noting a 33 percent decrease in female spouse victims and a 25 percent decrease in male spouse victims over time. Ms. Juarez also highlighted a 22 percent decrease in female spouse abusers and a 34 percent decrease in male spouse abusers, but a significant increase for female and male intimate partner abusers. Ms. Juarez explained a few potential reasons for this increase, including the expanded intimate partner definition, delayed reporting due to COVID-19, and increased reporting due to awareness campaigns. Ms. Juarez added the expanded intimate partner definition has been very helpful to allow all victims to seek FAP services and receive support in a way that best meets their needs. FAP has increased the domestic violence awareness campaign throughout the Army and all Services, so all Services may see an increase in these numbers. Ms. Juarez explained the uptick in reporting is likely a result of this campaign, which includes a strong social media element. Ms. Juarez added that most abuse incidents are physical abuse by an intimate partner.

Ms. Juarez transitioned to sharing information about MPOs in the Army, noting FAP does not handle them, but rather this information was provided through consistent and close collaboration with key stakeholders, including nonprofit organizations (NPOs). Ms. Juarez referenced five policies that govern MPOs, including Army Command Policy (Army Regulation 600-20), which is concerned with implementation. Ms. Juarez shared that 3,734 MPOs were issued in the last 10 years to safeguard female Soldiers. Ms. Juarez also clarified the Army is unable to identify unique cases from this data, meaning one individual may have multiple MPOs.

Ms. Juarez explained that, related to lethal means safety in homes, the Army has prevention and awareness efforts for suicide prevention; this information is incorporated into all leadership trainings. While not required, Service members who live off installation are encouraged to register their weapon, though the Army cannot mandate this action. If an incident occurs, victims are advised an MPO will not prohibit the purchase of a firearm. The Army has provided a toolkit for senior leaders and social media websites where family members can share information and resources that address lethal means safety.

Ms. Juarez noted several initiatives are currently being implemented for immediate safe housing. The most critical component is a continuous collaboration among CCR stakeholders, specifically between command and FAP staff, to understand and monitor risks and to support safety planning actions for unrestricted incidents. Safety plans are always tailored to victims' specific needs to avoid future instances of violence. The Army has emergency shelter housing and a 72-hour

separation barrack to provide space for the victim Soldier. If those facilities are not available, each installation must develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a safe house or another nonprofit in the community to facilitate safe housing.

Ms. Juarez concluded her briefing.

Navy

Ms. Sonia C. Smith, FAP Policy Manager, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) N17, Navy Culture & Force Resilience Office, briefed the Committee for the Navy.

Ms. Smith explained the Navy's definitions for intimate partner and dating partner violence are consistent with all DoD required definitions. The Navy conducts mandatory trainings with Sailors that list the available resources, reporting options, safety strategies, and risk factors. OPNAV Instruction 1752.2C (Navy Family Advocacy Program) and Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 159/22 (Family Advocacy Program Policy Updates) align with the DoD policies and their definitions. In addition to having these policies in place, education and awareness are very important to the Navy. Ms. Smith explained the Navy strives to be extremely conscientious and to provide training about domestic abuse that is convenient, easily accessible, and tracked by leadership. Following the publication of DoDI 6400.06, the Navy published several NAVADMINS to comply with DoD requirements, including updating relevant definitions to include intimate partner violence. In July 2022, the Navy issued an administrative message that identified the risk assessment tools required and used by victim advocates, case managers, and clinical providers. By taking this action, the Navy improved its ability to assess risks for victims of domestic abuse and to identify the needs for critical safety measures for the CCR. The Navy also updated its case management system to be aligned with DoD requirements.

Ms. Smith reported the Navy has seen fluctuation in overall numbers of domestic abuse incidents in recent years. For example, the Navy saw a slight increase in domestic abuse incidents in FY22. However, various factors could have contributed to this increase, including expanded definitions of intimate partners or late reporting due to COVID-19. The Navy also implemented a new process that monitors how allegations of abuse are screened at the installations, which ensures all qualified domestic abuse allegations are presented to the IDC.

Ms. Smith noted there continues to be a decrease in the number of unique spouse abuse victims. Unique victims are described as individuals who have experienced one or more incidents of abuse. The number of unique intimate partner abuse victim reports spiked in FY22, which can be attributed to rigorous education and awareness campaigns. The Domestic Violence Prevention - All Hands application is a training and resource tool that provides easy access to information and instructions about the prevention of domestic violence and child abuse. The application includes information about healthy relationships, intimate partner abuse, and reporting options. The mobile application is available on the Navy App Locker, the Apple Store, and Google Play. This training was mandatory for all Active Duty Sailors in FY22 and FY23. Again, while the overall numbers of abuse incidents fluctuate, there continues to be a decrease in the total number of unique spouse abusers. The Navy has continued to provide the One Love Escalation Workshop to 18 to 24-year-old Sailors across the fleet. This training clarifies abusive behavior and provides a list of resources.

Ms. Smith explained Navy commanding officers have the authority to issue MPOs and are required to notify civilian authorities if an MPO is established. Commanding officers place all active MPOs in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) detection order file. This is for the duration of the order, regardless of whether an incident takes place on a military installation. Navy commanders have the authority to issue protective orders to protect victims, prevent or stop abuse, and regulate the behavior of the offender. Ms. Smith noted alleged abusers must comply with civilian protective orders and MPOs. The National Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) reports MPOs to the NCIC. However, the Navy NCIS started reporting MPOs to the NCIC in only 2021; therefore, limited data on the effectiveness or need for these orders exists. NAVADMIN 263/14 (Guidance for Reducing Access to Lethal Means Through Voluntary Storage of Privately-Owned Firearms) allows commanders and health professionals to inquire, collect, and report information about assailants who had arms, ammunition, or any other weapons when there is concern about suicide or harm to others.

Ms. Smith highlighted the Navy is building a culture of excellence. This is a Navy-wide approach to empower the fleet to warfighting excellence across the psychological, physical, and emotional competencies, providing organizational trust and transparency and ensuring inclusion and connectedness among Sailors. For example, Navy commanders take a 20-hour training course that provides information on healthy command climates. The Navy provides resources and real-time assistance resulting in reduced risk associated with unaddressed stressors.

Ms. Smith explained the Navy provides resources and information based on the initial assessments and the urgent needs of victims. The FAP DAVAs offer victims information about identified needs, emergency services, housing, child care, clinical resources, and transitional compensation. In response to one of the requests from Navy Victim Advocates, the Navy developed a standardized safety plan that includes information on technology abuse. This technology component of the safety plan helps victims examine how their abusers might misuse technology. The safety plan also includes a comprehensive set of resources and tools victims can use to protect their privacy.

Ms. Smith emphasized that being prepared to navigate the challenges of abuse within the context of military service is unique. The MyNavy Family application was developed at the recommendation of Navy spouses and provides information from many websites in a single convenient app for families and, most importantly, includes emergency contact and care resources. Navy families have access to websites and phone numbers for many organizations such as the National Suicide Prevention Hotline, sexual assault crisis support, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline. As of November 6, 2023, the app had 34,389 downloads. Ms. Smith noted the Navy is extremely proud of its efforts regarding this application.

Ms. Smith concluded her briefing.

Marine Corps

Ms. Leanne G. Knop Lemons, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps (HQMC) Marine Forces Command (MFC) Family Advocacy Program Section Head, and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Eric R. Peters, Marine Corps CID Head, briefed the Committee for the Marine Corps.

Ms. Lemons explained that, prior to December 15, 2021, an intimate partner was defined as an individual who was married, ever married, had a child in common, lived together, or ever lived

together. On December 15, 2021, that definition was expanded to include dating relationships and other social relationships of an intimate nature. The expansion of this definition allowed FAP to reach a broader network of victims. Ms. Lemons noted, based on her personal experience, prior to this change, FAP would still provide services to any intimate partner victims, but it would not be included or reported in the Navy's data. The expanded definition of intimate partners from DoDI 6400.06 allows the Marine Corps to cast a wider net for data reporting. Ms. Lemons noted an increase in intimate partner abuse in FY22, concurrent with the definition expansion.

Ms. Lemons noted the Marine Corps has recently standardized FAP websites across all installations. Previously, each installation's website featured different information, and some were difficult to navigate. The Marine Corps asked FAP managers about the information and features most helpful at their installations and used this information to revise installation FAP websites.

CWO5 Peters explained he works with the NCIS for Marine Corps domestic abuse reporting. The Marine Corps has a new board that consolidates all criminal justice information, including finger printing, criminal DNA, MPOs, national instant criminal background check system indices, and the sex offender registration notification app. The Marine Corps is working to consolidate all information into one policy that will include all updates over the past several years, including requirements from DoDI 6400.06.

CWO5 Peters indicated both interim policies in process require commanding officers to report MPOs to local law enforcement. MPOs must be reported to the Provost Marshal's Office, which will report the MPO to local civilian law enforcement. CWO5 Peters referenced the criteria for MPOs shared by other Service representatives on the panel and noted the Marine Corps has similar criteria for issuing an MPO.

CWO5 Peters explained NCIS has been inputting MPOs into its system only since 2021. The Marine Corps did not have a policy requiring commanding officers to provide MPOs to military law enforcement agencies until 2020. As a result, Provost Marshal Offices were required to submit MPOs into NCIC to ensure that any contact from law enforcement is documented. Local law enforcement agencies would also be able to see MPOs in place through the system, but MPOs are not enforceable in a civilian jurisdiction.

CWO5 Peters noted interim policies for dangerous weapons are in place. However, these policies are limited. The priority for a commanding officer is to make the abuser understand they can no longer have a weapon. If the restriction is permanent, commanding officers will provide guidance on how to dispose of the Marine's weapon properly in coordination with the local Provost Marshal's Office and local law enforcement. If the restriction is temporary, the commanding officer may offer Marines the opportunity to place their firearm into the unit armory until the restriction ends. CWO5 Peters clarified commanding officers do not have jurisdiction beyond the base.

Ms. Lemons and CWO5 Peters concluded their briefing.

Department of the Air Force

Colonel Christian J. Smith, Air Force Director of Psychological Health, Air Force Medical (AFMED) Agency, briefed the Committee for DAF.

Col Smith explained policy AFI 40-301 describes all the FAP rules and specifications. Col Smith clarified that victim relationships are defined on a spectrum with “dating” on one end and “intimate partner” on the other end, and there can be a fine line as to whether someone is considered dating or an intimate partner. If a victim is ruled to be dating and not an intimate partner, cases would fall under the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program. Once a case falls into the category of intimate partner abuse, it becomes a FAP case. Every case is reviewed regardless of how victims are categorized; the Air Force wants to make sure the appropriate staff member sees the case. Col Smith explained the Air Force’s definitions pertaining to domestic violence are based on DoDI 6400.06.

Col Smith noted there have been important changes and updates to the Air Force FAP and resources for domestic violence and abuse victims. Col Smith explained that AFI 43-01 is under review to ensure the policy is up to date and comprehensive in covering everything needed for abuse victims. Efforts are underway to establish an MOU with the National Children’s Alliance, which is the accrediting body for child advocacy centers.

Col Smith explained that, in January 2023, the Secretary of the Air Force directed an extensive review of FAP. A 90-day cross-functional team reviewed the program and ultimately made 15 recommendations to the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF). The SecAF, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and several other key leaders reviewed these recommendations during a briefing and discussed how they could be implemented. All the recommendations were approved for implementation, and some recommendations are currently being implemented. One effort currently underway is establishing DAVAs at every base. The Air Force was able to fund five more DAVAs this year at overseas bases to improve access for victims stationed outside the contiguous United States (OCONUS). Over the next year, the Air Force hopes to establish 19 more DAVAs, which will result in at least 1 DAVA at every base. The plan for FY26 is to fund another set of DAVAs to ensure each base has at least two DAVAs, and some bases that have more domestic abuse incidents will have more DAVAs. The Air Force thinks the increased number of DAVAs will significantly benefit victims of abuse. Col Smith explained the Air Force also established a CCR, which is happening at the Secretary of the Air Force level of the organization.

Col Smith noted that, in addition to increasing the number of DAVAs, the Air Force has discussed translating all resources into Spanish and other commonly spoken languages to ensure everyone has the same benefits and the same opportunity to access resources. Another recommendation was to exercise a domestic violence case annually at every base, which has not been done previously. The cross-functional team also recommended increased training for commanders to make sure they are aware of all FAP programs and needs.

Col Smith reported the Air Force was not able to acquire estimates of the number of domestic violence incidents in time for the DACOWITS QBM, but the Air Force has requested the data from various organizations and will provide it to the Committee as soon as it is available.

Col Smith noted MPOs allow the Air Force to leverage mandated counseling, disposal of firearms, and the ability to limit communication for Airmen who are subjects of criminal investigations or prosecutions. Col Smith explained this has been beneficial to many victims. For individuals under MPOs, investigations are conducted to review safety factors, including whether the person has access to dangerous weapons. If the individual has access to weapons, commanders and law enforcement are notified, and they can go into those locations and secure any weapons if necessary.

Col Smith explained the Air Force follows relevant DoDIs to secure safe housing for domestic abuse victims. Each installation is slightly unique because every location has different benefits. For overseas locations, the Air Force tends to put individuals in the dorms or housing units away from their spouses and put them on an MPO so that communication is limited until safety is determined. For locations within the contiguous United States (CONUS), the Air Force works with local shelters and organizations to provide safe housing.

Col Smith concluded his briefing.

Coast Guard

Commander Carlos M. Crespo, Minority Serving Institutions Liaison, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, briefed the Committee for the Coast Guard.

CDR Crespo explained the Coast Guard FAP takes a CCR and risk management approach to domestic abuse and violence cases. This approach is accomplished with cooperation from commands, other Military Services, civilian social service agencies, medical personnel, and military and civilian law enforcement. The Coast Guard's FAP aligns with DoD policy.

CDR Crespo noted the Coast Guard's FAP is distinct from other Services' in some ways, including that the Coast Guard is not installation centric. The Coast Guard has many small units spread throughout the United States, many of which are geographically remote. The Coast Guard has 20 licensed clinical family advocate specialists attached to the Health, Safety, and Work-Life Regional Practices (HSWL RP) across 9 districts. These specialists provide regional FAP and clinical services in addition to victim advocacy. CDR Crespo reported that family advocacy specialists currently provide regional nonmedical clinical services related to domestic violence and abuse.

CDR Crespo explained the Coast Guard's FAP does not receive the same funding as DoD programs. However, the Coast Guard's FAP follows the same domestic abuse definitions that DoD has defined.

CDR Crespo noted, in FY20, the Coast Guard stood up Behavioral Health Services Commissions to offer services in each geographic district. In FY23, legal assistance program attorneys were trained to assist victims of domestic violence and abuse, expedite special victim counsel referrals, and provide victims with equal representation. Also, in FY23, the Coast Guard signed an interagency agreement to use the DoD electronic case management system to enhance data collection, accuracy of reporting, and case management.

CDR Crespo shared an overview of domestic abuse statistics from FY12 to FY22, noting offenders are predominately male, and the most frequent type of abuse was physical abuse,

followed by emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. CDR Crespo highlighted that intimate partner abuse increased in FY20.

CDR Crespo explained that, under 10 U.S.C. §1657a, the commander must notify civilian authorities within 7 days of an MPO or issuance when it is changed, terminated, or transferred. The MPO must also be entered into the NCIC restraining order file. Detailed information and guidance related to the circumstances that might necessitate an MPO are described in chapter 5 of the Coast Guard's Discipline and Conduct Manual.

CDR Crespo noted the Coast Guard seeks to ensure no weapons are in the household in a domestic abuse case. During the safety risk assessment, FAP specialists are required to ask whether any weapons are in the home, and the standard is to remove weapons if safety is at risk. If commanders issue an MPO within a dual-military couple, the offender is removed from the household and provided quarters on base. Coast Guard mutual assistance has a safe locker program, which provides victims with temporary funding, low-interest loans, food, an additional compensation program, shelters, and national domestic violence hotlines.

CDR Crespo concluded his briefing.

Discussion

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked about root causes of abuse and whether there are commonalities across incidents of abuse, such as age, alcohol use, or returns from deployment. Dr. Rose noted information on root causes of abuse is limited, but there is an association between age and pay grade for both victims and abusers involved in domestic abuse incidents. Those who are younger in age, which corresponds typically to E-1 to E-3 grades, tend to be most overrepresented in the data. Dr. Rose highlighted this is an association only and does not imply causation. The data source for this information is the DoD central registry, which is guided by policy DoD manual 6400.01 Volume 2, *Family Advocacy Program (FAP): Child Abuse and Domestic Abuse Incident Reporting System*. The central registry is limited to relatively few data fields; it is a static repository and is less robust than the individual Service case management systems. While the central register contains an indicator for alcohol abuse, it does not contain case notes or robust enough information to provide context for domestic abuse incidents.

Ms. Stoneman referenced Dr. Rose's and Ms. Chiarantona's report that many changes have occurred in domestic violence policies in the last 2 to 4 years. Ms. Stoneman described how in the past, there seemed at times to be a conflict between family advocacy and victim protection, whether keeping the family together or keeping victims safe took precedence. Ms. Stoneman asked Ms. Chiarantona and Dr. Rose to describe how the policies have evolved to address this tension. Ms. Chiarantona noted, victim safety is always the highest priority. FAP has never had a mission focused on keeping families together. However, victims of domestic abuse often choose to remain with their partner after multiple instances of domestic abuse. A victim may make seven to nine touch points with FAP before they decide ending the relationship or finding safety away from their partner is the best choice for them. Allowing a victim to retain that choice and that empowerment is paramount. Ms. Chiarantona explained that domestic abuse at its worst version is about taking power and control away from the victim. Victims have good reasons for choosing to stay with their partner, including choosing to keep a family together, financial support, child care, and child support. In the most dangerous of cases, it can be very unsafe for a victim of domestic abuse to leave their partner, because domestic abuse victims who leave their partners

are at a higher risk for fatality. FAP's goal is to take those risk factors and the victim's choice into consideration and to support the best decision for the victim at that point. Ms. Chiarantona clarified FAP's mission may have not been communicated clearly because it has been so entangled with the missions of other entities. Ms. Chiarantona referenced the historic overreliance on FAP, noting FAP has been looked to for both victim care and abuser accountability in the past, when the truth is that its primary focus is on victim care and safety.

In reference to the previous question from Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn about root causes of domestic and intimate partner violence, Dr. Rose added it is important to remember that domestic abuse and violence are worldwide problems. The military community is just a microcosm of this larger problem, and this must be taken into consideration when thinking about and measuring abuse. Dr. Rose explained that Ms. Chiarantona's comments reminded her about the complexity of abuse and the various factors involved. Ms. Chiarantona added that FAP would welcome the DoD's attention, resources, and support for any additional research on domestic abuse for military members and military families. Ms. Chiarantona clarified that research on domestic abuse in military families is limited. Dr. Rose added that Congress mandated an independent analysis on domestic abuse in the military in Section 549C of the FY21 NDAA. Results from the first part of that study are currently available, and subsequent aspects of the study are currently underway, including a survey to look at domestic abuse risk factors. An independent research organization is conducting this study with input from FAP.

Dr. Ferguson asked whether Ms. Chiarantona and Dr. Rose had any hunches that could stimulate thought for this group about underlying causes of domestic abuse that need to be further researched and investigated. Dr. Ferguson also asked what FAP does when safety and the victim's preferences are in conflict. In reference to the first question about underlying causes, Ms. Chiarantona responded that military life can be challenging and that it might be valuable to look at any unique factors connected to military life that could be contributing to the issue. To do that, multiple data sources would need to be combined to get that information or qualitative studies would need to be conducted. Ms. Chiarantona reiterated Dr. Rose's point that the causal factors of domestic abuse are not widely known in the military or civilian environments. The factors stem from historical oppression of women because women are still the primary victims of domestic abuse, though there are cases of domestic abuse where men are the victims. Ms. Chiarantona indicated this is an area that would also be valuable to conduct more research. Aside from the historical oppression of women, it is very hard to know what factors are involved with domestic abuse. While diagnostic factors or other mental health criteria could be involved, those would likely be implicated in the civilian world as well. That kind of research could be beneficial to the domestic violence field as a whole.

In reference to Dr. Ferguson's second question of what happens when safety and the victim's preferences are in conflict, Ms. Chiarantona explained FAP staff primarily trust that victims know their abuser better than anybody else. While FAP has tools to determine risk factors and safety, FAP always looks to the victim to know what will keep them safe. In the military, if FAP feels safety concerns are not recognized, command can take steps against the abuser if they are a Service member. What is important to note for DACOWITS is that, because the Committee is primarily interested in servicewomen, command has control only if the alleged abuser is a Service member. If the abuser is a civilian out in the community, the military has no control. The only thing the military can do in that case is offer the victim safety options. For example, FAP can pull the victim onto the base, house them, or get them resources. If the abuser is a Service

member, the command can issue an MPO, and command can stop those two individuals from engaging with each other. Even if the victim does not want an MPO to be put in place, the command can still issue one if it feels it is warranted. Although defying an MPO would be an UCMJ Article 92 violation, MPOs can only go so far to protect victims. FAP would rely on command to make decisions with victim advocate support, the CCR, and law enforcement to figure out what to do to keep the victim safe.

Captain (Ret.) Kenneth J. Barrett referenced the expanded definition of intimate partner violence, which was supported by the 2019 DACOWITS recommendation, and asked whether FAP has the resources and assets to handle the increased level of reported incidents. Ms. Chiarantona explained there is a DAVA shortage, and FAP wants to improve victim advocacy resources, which are very important. Within the department, FAP is undergoing a staffing review, the results of which are expected in 2024 and should reveal staffing gaps. Ms. Chiarantona added the RAND Corporation study Dr. Rose mentioned previously should also help identify what resources may be needed to continue to serve victims now that more people are learning of the expanded definition and are able to report.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted the numbers reported during the briefing are based on unrestricted reports and asked whether reports can be restricted for any kind of abuse or violence. She also asked what happens when safety is a concern but a victim would like to restrict the report. Ms. Chiarantona noted that, if the victim is in imminent danger, there is an exception to restricted reporting, but what constitutes imminent danger is subjective. FAP works in connection with the installation staff judge advocate (SJA) to determine whether to offer a restricted report. If FAP staff receive a restricted report, they are going to be the first individuals who take that case and conduct a risk assessment. They talk to the victim to understand the case and risks. The only other entity that may be involved is medical, and although medical personnel might enforce a restricted report, they must send that victim to FAP to make the ultimate decision. If a victim elects a restricted report and FAP is concerned the victim is in imminent danger, meaning a threat to life, FAP will approach legal in a confidential manner and get a consultation on whether the case meets the threshold to not offer a restricted report. This is challenging because FAP wants victims to have the ability to come forward and to recognize that they may be placed in more danger when the case becomes publicly known to the abuser. If a case is unrestricted against the victim's will, it goes to law enforcement, then to all other entities of the CCR, and it will ultimately become known to the abuser.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked whether reports can still be restricted if law enforcement is the first to know about an incident. She added this is often the case because the call is made immediately after the assault. Ms. Chiarantona answered that, if law enforcement or command finds out first, the report is immediately unrestricted. The only time a report could be restricted is when the victim goes through FAP or through medical to FAP.

Dr. Ferguson asked whether Ms. Chiarantona and Dr. Rose had a sense of the number of cases that do not get reported. Dr. Rose reported she has not seen an indicator of the degree of undercount, so it is hard to have a sense of how many cases are not reported. However, she confirmed domestic abuse is definitely underreported, but it is not known how to measure how underreported it is. Dr. Rose noted many things are changing simultaneously, including changes in policy, expanding the definition to include intimate partners, and delayed reporting due to COVID-19. Simultaneously, communications and awareness campaigns have improved, so the data has increased, but it is unclear whether those increases represent what was an undercount

versus other factors. Ms. Chiarantona added it would be helpful to know how many cases are out there, but it may not be in the best interest for the victim for all cases to be reported. The victim's sense of danger at the time of the incident may be a good reason they are not reporting. Instead, it would be best to look at more well-rounded resources the victim can access earlier on. For example, communicating restricted reporting policies and options so that victims can come forward earlier before they are in an imminent danger situation is a top priority for FAP. Also, FAP is interested in any other resources or touch points in the community where victims can seek help without having to necessarily report.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked how CCR will be promulgated to the Military Services, given that currently the Services may still be handling cases their own way. Ms. Chiarantona explained the CCR is policy. The CCR model was benchmarked in the civilian sector in Duluth, Minnesota, in 1980, so it has been well known for the past 50 years in the domestic violence community as the best approach. FAP is currently working on how to organize the CCR and ensure a sustained coordinating function. The CCR was set up at the DoD level, and FAP is in close coordination with the Services to ensure the policy that is promulgated emphasizes the need for sustained coordination. The Services still have their own ability to determine how they are going to organize themselves, but FAP can provide guidance and advice and help model what an ideal CCR would look like.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked whether the IDC is a manifestation of the CCR. Ms. Chiarantona replied the IDC is designed to determine which cases of abuse meet the definitional criteria for entry into the central registry. It is comprised of CCR members. However, the purpose of the IDC is not as complete and well-rounded as the full CCR. The CCR should be looking toward victim care and safety and abuser accountability, while the IDC is primarily for data collection.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted some abusers offend repeatedly and asked how repeat offenders are handled, especially given that some reports are restricted. Ms. Chiarantona noted FAP is still able to view individuals implicated in unrestricted reports in their database. Domestic violence is also part of the Catch a Serial Offender (CATCH) program, which is supported by SAPR. The CATCH program allows individuals who file restricted reports to anonymously identify what they know about the abuser in the central CATCH system. The system can make a match without the victim being tied to the identification of that individual, which can keep the victim safer. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked whether the CATCH program applies only to sexual assault or to all categories of abuse. Ms. Chiarantona clarified the CATCH program applies only to sexual abuse within the context of domestic violence.

The briefing discussion concluded.

2023 Vote on Recommendations

The Committee voted on four additional recommendations for inclusion into the 2023 Annual Report for the Secretary of Defense.

A. Pregnancy in the Military (Recommendation 23)

The Secretary of Defense should direct the USD(P&R) to ensure DoD and Military Service parental leave and operational deferment policies do not adversely impact

servicewomen's career progression, including impacts on training and professional education opportunities, promotion, and performance evaluations.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn moved to adopt the recommendation. CAPT (Ret.) Barrett seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn stated this recommendation was informed by feedback from Service members during the Committee's 2023 focus groups. While recent positive changes have occurred, such as increasing parental leave and providing greater operational deferments for servicewomen, she noted these policies can also have an unintended adverse impact on someone's military career progression. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn shared the goal of this recommendation is to ensure these policies do not adversely impact servicewomen's careers.

Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks asked for clarification on the distinction between this recommendation and the next one (which had not yet been read). Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn responded the next recommendation presents specific ways to potentially mitigate career progression challenges. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks asked whether there is enough information or data to suggest parental leave and operational deferment policies adversely affect someone's career or whether more research needs to be conducted on possible adverse effects. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn responded DACOWITS' 2023 focus groups suggested servicewomen have reported adverse impacts related to the timing of having children on their career progression.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked whether current policies include language directing that parental leave and operational deferment will not adversely affect someone's career. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn stated some policies explicitly require that time off not impact women's career progress; however, others do not. LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked what the DoDI says. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn did not know about the DoDI specifically. She felt more work needs to be done to ensure these policies do not have an unintended effect of hurting servicewomen because of extended absences, such as missing opportunities that would enable them to promote.

CMDCM (Ret.) Harris asked whether there were discussions about combining the current recommendation and the next recommendation that will be voted on. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn responded it had been discussed, but that it is up to the Committee vote and discussions to determine. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn stated the next recommendation provides specific ways DoD could explore options to provide greater career progression flexibility for servicewomen. CMDCM (Ret.) Harris indicated she did not want the intent of the recommendations to get lost if they were to be combined but noted the recommendations are related. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn clarified the next recommendation to be discussed is not something DoD can implement on its own because it would require congressional action. CMDCM (Ret.) Harris felt that clarified the distinction for her.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon asked whether the intent of the recommendation currently being discussed is to address inadvertent adverse impacts. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn affirmed that is the intent—inadvertent impact. Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon suggested adding the word "inadvertent" into the recommendation.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum noted the two recommendations on this topic work in tandem but wondered whether the Committee is pointing out an issue without telling the Defense

Department how to fix it. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn felt the first one does not have an answer on how to fix it, while the next recommendation provides suggestions on ways to address these issues. LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked how the Defense Department would respond to this recommendation. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn responded she would ask manpower for ideas. Ms. Stoneman asked whether the recommendation should be focused on reviewing policies to ensure they do not inadvertently, adversely impact servicewomen's careers. LTG (Ret.) Mangum agreed and stated they should revise policies as necessary. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn emphasized ensuring no adverse impacts on training, promotion, and professional education. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks asked about the Career Intermision Program (CIP), which currently exists, as a potential solution rather than proposing solutions that may not yet exist. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn responded CIP is structured differently than those in the next recommendation, specifically because of the required payback time.

Dr. Ferguson moved to amend the recommendation to add "review" in replace of "ensure," add the word "inadvertently," and adjust to say "inadvertently have an adverse impact," and add "revise policies as needed" at the end of the recommendation. Col (Ret.) Anderson seconded the motion.

Proposed Amended Recommendation:

The Secretary of Defense should direct the USD(P&R) to review DoD and Military Services' parental leave and operational deferment policies do not inadvertently have an adverse impact on servicewomen's career progression, including impacts on training and professional education opportunities, promotions, and performance evaluations; and revise policies as needed.

Discussion on Amendment:

LTG (Ret.) Mangum stated the word "inadvertently" is problematic in that recommendation statement because these policies could directly have an impact. He recommended the language should read "do not have an adverse impact" because the word "inadvertently" could be distracting. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks noted that, if the policies purposefully have an adverse impact, they could choose to ignore the recommendation as it is currently worded, so she agreed "do not have an adverse impact" is better wording to get at the intent. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn suggested some of her previous language: "*The Secretary of Defense should ensure through proactive policy issuances and elimination of unnecessary career barriers and restrictions in DoD and Service policy that servicewomen's career progression (training, professional or educational opportunities, promotions, and performance evaluations) is not adversely impacted by parental leave absences and operational deferments.*"

Col (Ret.) Anderson liked the wording because it seemed to combine parts of both draft recommendations. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn stated the next recommendation to be discussed is separate and distinct because it requires legislative action. The intent of the current recommendation being discussed is to review policies presenting unnecessary barriers. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn provided an example of a recent policy change where pregnant servicewomen can now apply to Officer Training School. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks thanked Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn for reading the previous draft of this recommendation; it helped her clarify that she feels the current wording is stronger.

Vote on Amendment: The Committee voted unanimously to oppose the amendment.

- Favored: 0
- Opposed: 12 (Anderson, Barrett, Braun, Cox, Ferguson, Harris, Kelleher, Mangum, Sanborn, Solomon, Stoneman, Weeks)
- Abstained: 0

Discussion on Original Recommendation:

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn moved to amend the recommendation to add “review, and revise as needed” in place of “ensure,” and revise to read “ensure they do not adversely impact servicewomen’s career progression.” CAPT (Ret.) Barrett seconded the motion.

Proposed Amended Recommendation:

The Secretary of Defense should direct the USD(P&R) to review, and revise as needed, DoD and Military Services’ parental leave and operational deferment policies to ensure they do not adversely impact servicewomen’s career progression, including training, professional education opportunities, promotions, and performance evaluations.

Discussion on Amendment:

No discussion.

Vote on Amendment: The Committee voted unanimously to adopt the amendment.

- Favored: 12 (Anderson, Barrett, Braun, Cox, Ferguson, Harris, Kelleher, Mangum, Sanborn, Solomon, Stoneman, Weeks)
- Opposed: 0
- Abstained: 0

Discussion on Amended Recommendation:

No discussion.

Vote on Recommendation: The Committee voted unanimously to adopt the amended recommendation.

- Favored: 12 (Anderson, Barrett, Braun, Cox, Ferguson, Harris, Kelleher, Mangum, Sanborn, Solomon, Stoneman, Weeks)
- Opposed: 0
- Abstained: 0

Final Recommendation: *The Secretary of Defense should direct the USD(P&R) to review, and revise as needed, DoD and Military Services’ parental leave and operational deferment policies to ensure they do not adversely impact servicewomen’s career progression, including training, professional education opportunities, promotions, and performance evaluations.*

B. Pregnancy in the Military (Recommendation 24)

The Secretary of Defense should direct the USD(P&R) to study the feasibility of enabling servicewomen to: (1) transfer from the Active to Reserve Component for a temporary period; and (2) elect a later promotion year group to recover lost training, education, or operational opportunities resulting from pregnancy reassignments, operational deferments, and convalescent and parental leave absences. If feasible, the Secretary of

Defense should implement these options to mitigate potentially adverse impacts of pregnancy on servicewomen's promotion opportunities and career advancement.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn moved to adopt the recommendation. Col (Ret.) Anderson seconded the motion.

Discussion:

CMDCM (Ret.) Harris asked whether the recommendation should be written as “the Secretary of Defense should direct the USD(P&R) to conduct a study” because it is stronger language than simply saying “study.” Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted draft language on this recommendation was to direct a study, adding it could be conducted internally by DoD or contracted externally. CMDCM (Ret.) Harris agreed it could be conducted internally or externally but felt it would be more precise to say “conduct a study” and consistent with other recommendation language. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted a concern is whether DoD has the authority to implement these types of changes; therefore, there needs to be an assessment of the feasibility, consequences, and implications. CMDCM (Ret.) Harris reiterated the recommendation as written says to study the feasibility but not to conduct a study. Ms. Stoneman proposed wording such as “conduct a comprehensive review.” Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn replied her intent was to study the feasibility of what implementing actions would be necessary and to identify potential second- and third-order effects of these changes. Ms. Stoneman agreed and asked whether there is a reason not to say “conduct a comprehensive review” or “study.” Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn agreed that would work. CMDCM (Ret.) Harris concurred that would address her concern. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks shared several possibilities such as “conduct a study,” “conduct a comprehensive study,” “comprehensive review,” or “report on the feasibility,” emphasizing the need for a report at the conclusion of the study. VADM (Ret.) Braun asked Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn for the draft language she mentioned previously. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn responded, “direct a study on the feasibility of.”

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked whether the options outlined in the recommendation have the same purpose, asking how transferring from the Active to Reserve Component would allow servicewomen the ability to recover lost training and education opportunities. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn responded these recommendations serve different purposes. The purpose of the previous recommendation is to review existing policies, and the purpose of the current recommendation up for discussion is to examine new programs or policies addressing challenges Service members have raised. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn further noted the recommendation is focused on examining the feasibility of implementing these types of new policies that would allow servicewomen the option to step out of full-time duty for a period of time or a chance to recover lost training and evaluation time periods for promotion. LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked why the recommendation wording about transferring from Active to Reserve Component is specific to servicewomen rather than all Service members. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted this recommendation would be supportive of all Service members, but the wording specifies servicewomen because of the focus of DACOWITS. Dr. Ferguson agreed there are many ways in which pregnancy is not the only reason someone would want to transfer between the Active and Reserve Component more easily. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn reiterated how parental leave and operational deferment policies have led to absence from duty, which can have a detrimental impact on someone's career progression. LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked how

transferring to the Reserve Component would fix the issue. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted she did not know whether it would directly affect career progression challenges, but it would enable Service members to pause their Active Duty service. She also noted it could contribute to greater retention of servicewomen by providing an easier way to continue their service and get back into Active Duty when they want to.

Dr. (CAPT Ret.) Cox asked whether this recommendation is too prescriptive in nature given existing requirements in the Active and Reserve Components. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn stated the previous recommendation focuses on an examination of existing policies, while this recommendation provides options for them to consider in addition to requesting they study the feasibility. Dr. (CAPT Ret.) Cox felt a broader recommendation may be better, and she expressed concern the current recommendation may not be feasible. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted the goal is to identify ways DoD can enable servicewomen time to step away from full-time service or put their career on pause to catch up with a different promotion year, which may or may not be feasible. Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon emphasized transferring from the Active to Reserve Component is a process that has been suggested and studied for decades with no solution yet. She has not yet seen consensus on this type of arrangement, which would require legislative changes.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked whether DACOWITS had a previous recommendation about transferring between components. He stated he felt it is a good idea but worried it may be conflating two different issues in one recommendation. Dr. Ferguson suggested the recommendation could be worded to look at future changes in this area.

Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks asked about the CIP in the context of the discussion about transferability from the Active and Reserve Components. She asked Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn whether CIP's service payback time is an obstacle and whether the recommendation should ask the SecDef to review CIP and implement it Department-wide with a removal of the payback time. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn stated CIP was not something the subcommittee researched extensively enough to make a recommendation on it.

RADM (Ret.) Braun agreed with Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon's earlier discussion that transferability between the Active and Reserve Component is something that has been studied for decades. RADM (Ret.) Braun feels there should be a viable solution by now, and a recommendation would illuminate this outstanding issue. She feels there is merit in considering a different model than CIP, one that allows for Service members to transfer to the Reserves, which would not involve payback time. Additionally, she concurred with the idea of a flexible promotion group year. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks agreed but noted she is concerned about medical care, especially for pregnant servicewomen, because she has heard it can be complicated when transferring between Components. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn emphasized the purpose of the recommendation is to study the feasibility because it is unclear how or whether it would work. She stated retention is a significant issue among servicewomen; many leave the military because of child care and other issues even if they do not want to leave. This recommendation could begin to assess feasible ways to provide additional opportunities for flexibility in service. RADM (Ret.) Braun agreed medical care is an issue they would need to examine.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn moved to amend the recommendation to strike “the USD(P&R),” revise wording to “direct a study of the feasibility of and the implementing actions necessary to establish programs enabling servicewomen to,” and remove the last sentence, “If feasible, the Secretary of Defense should implement these options to mitigate potentially adverse impacts of pregnancy on servicewomen’s promotion opportunities and career advancement.” CAPT (Ret.) Barrett seconded the motion.

Proposed Amended Recommendation:

The Secretary of Defense should direct a study of the feasibility of and the implementing actions necessary to establish programs enabling servicewomen to (1) transfer from the Active to Reserve Component for a temporary period and (2) elect a later promotion year group to recover lost training, education, or operational opportunities resulting from pregnancy duty reassignments, operational deferments, and maternity convalescent and parental leave absences.

Discussion on Amendment:

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked how the reasoning language supports the first suggested option of enabling servicewomen to transfer from the Active to Reserve Component. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn responded the reasoning discusses career barriers related to pregnancy, including actions, policies, and events related to a birth event or adoption that may adversely impact servicewomen’s career progression. Service members in DACOWITS’ focus groups shared ways in which pregnancy leads to lost time or opportunities toward promotion. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn stated this recommendation proposes some talent management ideas about how to give women the opportunity to step away while maintaining their proficiencies. LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked whether the recommendation was related more to well-being and treatment or recruitment and retention. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn said it applies to both, and these are important considerations in both the corporate and military sectors as more women enter previously male-dominated careers or organizations.

Vote on Amendment: The Committee voted to adopt the amendment.

- Favored: 10 (Anderson, Barrett, Braun, Cox, Ferguson, Harris, Kelleher, Sanborn, Solomon, Stoneman)
- Opposed: 2 (Mangum, Weeks)
- Abstained: 0

Discussion on Amended Recommendation:

No discussion.

Vote on Recommendation: The Committee voted to adopt the amended recommendation.

- Favored: 8 (Anderson, Braun, Cox, Ferguson, Harris, Kelleher, Sanborn, Stoneman)
- Opposed: 3 (Mangum, Solomon, Weeks)
- Abstained: 1 (Barrett)

Final Recommendation:

The Secretary of Defense should direct a study of the feasibility of and the implementing actions necessary to establish programs enabling servicewomen to (1) transfer from the Active to Reserve Component for a temporary period and (2) elect a later promotion year group to recover lost training, education, or operational opportunities resulting from pregnancy duty reassignments, operational deferments, and maternity convalescent and parental leave absences.

C. Gender Discrimination (Recommendation 25)

The Secretary of Defense should direct the USD(P&R) to: (1) conduct a comprehensive review of promotion rates of Service members from the last 10 years across the Military Services, Reserve Component and National Guard by gender, race/ethnicity, and occupational specialty/community to identify trends in servicewomen's career progression and promotion rates; and (2) conduct additional studies and research (e.g., via mock boards) to assess whether eliminating gender indicators in promotion board records reduces gender bias in promotion selection.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn moved to adopt the recommendation. Dr. Ferguson seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks stated she likes the specificity of the recommendation to conduct an analysis by component, gender, race/ethnicity, and occupational specialty. However, she wondered whether the second part of the recommendation should be limited to reducing gender bias in promotion selection or whether it should reduce other types of unconscious bias against race and ethnicity. Specifically, she mentioned the intersectionality faced by women of color. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn agreed about the importance of reducing other forms of bias but noted DACOWITS' charter focuses on women, and other Federal Advisory Committees examine other dimensions of diversity. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks emphasized it may be important for this recommendation to address women of color because they may have a unique experience in the military. Ms. Stoneman noted she has recently seen language such as "addressing bias against women, in all their diversity" which may address Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks' concerns. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks liked that language and reiterated White servicewomen may have different experiences of bias and gender bias than Black servicewomen. Brig Gen (Ret.) Solomon noted the issue of intersectionality has come up in DACOWITS' previous work.

Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks moved to amend the recommendation to add "race/ethnicity" to the last sentence so it reads "eliminating gender and race/ethnicity indicators" and adjust the final part of the sentence to read "reduces bias against women, in all of their diversity, in promotion selection." Col (Ret.) Anderson seconded the motion.

Proposed Amended Recommendation:

The Secretary of Defense should direct the USD(P&R) to conduct (1) a comprehensive review of promotion rates of Service members from the last 10 years across the Military Services, Reserve Component, and National Guard by gender, race/ethnicity, and occupational specialty/community to identify trends in servicewomen's career progression and promotion rates and (2) additional studies and research (e.g., via mock

boards) to assess whether eliminating gender and race/ethnicity indicators in promotion board records reduces bias against women, in all of their diversity, in promotion selection.

Discussion on Amendment:

Col (Ret.) Anderson stated sometimes items are too difficult to mask in promotion boards, such as height and weight, which can indicate gender. CMDCM (Ret.) Harris noted the Military Services use pass or fail on records now.

Vote on Amendment: The Committee voted unanimously to adopt the amendment.

- Favored: 12 (Anderson, Barrett, Braun, Cox, Ferguson, Harris, Kelleher, Mangum, Sanborn, Solomon, Stoneman, Weeks)
- Opposed: 0
- Abstained: 0

Discussion on Amended Recommendation:

No discussion.

Vote on Recommendation: The Committee voted unanimously to adopt the amended recommendation.

- Favored: 12 (Anderson, Barrett, Braun, Cox, Ferguson, Harris, Kelleher, Mangum, Sanborn, Solomon, Stoneman, Weeks)
- Opposed: 0
- Abstained: 0

Final Recommendation:

The Secretary of Defense should direct the USD(P&R) to conduct (1) a comprehensive review of promotion rates of Service members from the last 10 years across the Military Services, Reserve Component, and National Guard by gender, race/ethnicity, and occupational specialty/community to identify trends in servicewomen's career progression and promotion rates and (2) additional studies and research (e.g., via mock boards) to assess whether eliminating gender and race/ethnicity indicators in promotion board records reduces bias against women, in all of their diversity, in promotion selection

D. Gender Discrimination (Recommendation 26)

The Secretary of Defense should require the Military Services to provide education, in appropriate professional development courses, to Service members in supervisory enlisted and officer grades to prevent and reduce gender bias in performance evaluations and promotion boards. Curriculum should: (1) identify gendered language and descriptors, (2) describe how gender status expectations and biases can impact the way performance evaluations are written and rated, (3) indicate how to recognize and remediate unconscious bias and gender behavioral expectations, and (4) provide Service members the opportunity to participate in mock boards with post-exercise analysis to enhance their learning experience.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn moved to adopt the recommendation. Dr. (CAPT Ret.) Cox seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn stated this recommendation was prompted by research on gendered language, such as the way people describe the performance and behaviors of women as compared with men. For example, women are often described as more empathic and as taking a team-oriented approach, whereas men are characterized as being more agentic and decisional. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted much of these biases are unconscious but affect the way raters think of men and women and how evaluations are written.

CAPT (Ret.) Barrett asked whether the words “promotion board” should be removed from the recommendation because it seems to be about evaluations more than promotion boards. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn responded the language is relevant to evaluations, which is mentioned in the supporting reasoning for the recommendation. She also stated other documents have gender indicators, but some Military Services are working to anonymize these documents by removing gendered language. Dr. (Col Ret.) Weeks suggested wording such as “reduce gender bias in performance evaluations for career potential and progression,” agreeing that it is more than performance evaluations, as this also involves evaluations, school or training recommendations, career milestones, and broader ways in which servicewomen are adversely affected by gendered language. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn agreed evaluations are used for many purposes and also noted her research did not specifically look at command boards or other areas. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn suggested wording such as “performance in other career evaluations.”

VADM (Ret.) Braun stated she feels it is important to include the language of promotion boards in the recommendation. She feels it is important to educate Service members in supervisory roles, those who are not necessarily on the promotion or selection board, about unconscious bias and how expectations can affect performance evaluations. Col (Ret.) Anderson suggested replacing “promotion board” with “selection board” to be more encompassing of all boards.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum moved to amend the recommendation by replacing the word “promotion” in “promotion boards” to “selection.”

Proposed Amended Recommendation:

The Secretary of Defense should require the Military Services to provide education, in appropriate professional development courses, to Service members in supervisory enlisted and officer grades to prevent and reduce gender bias in performance evaluations and selection boards. Curriculum should (1) identify gendered language and descriptors, (2) describe how gender status expectations and biases can impact the way performance evaluations are written and rated, (3) indicate how to recognize and remediate unconscious bias and gender behavioral expectations, and (4) provide Service members the opportunity to participate in mock boards with postexercise analysis to enhance their learning experience.

Discussion on Amendment:

No discussion.

Vote on Amendment: The Committee voted unanimously to adopt the amendment.

- Favored: 12 (Anderson, Barrett, Braun, Cox, Ferguson, Harris, Kelleher, Mangum, Sanborn, Solomon, Stoneman, Weeks)
- Opposed: 0
- Abstained: 0

Discussion on Recommendation:

No discussion.

Vote on Recommendation: The Committee voted unanimously to adopt the amended recommendation.

- Favored: 12 (Anderson, Barrett, Braun, Cox, Ferguson, Harris, Kelleher, Mangum, Sanborn, Solomon, Stoneman, Weeks)
- Opposed: 0
- Abstained: 0

Final Recommendation: *The Secretary of Defense should require the Military Services to provide education, in appropriate professional development courses, to Service members in supervisory enlisted and officer grades to prevent and reduce gender bias in performance evaluations and selection boards. Curriculum should (1) identify gendered language and descriptors, (2) describe how gender status expectations and biases can impact the way performance evaluations are written and rated, (3) indicate how to recognize and remediate unconscious bias and gender behavioral expectations, and (4) provide Service members the opportunity to participate in mock boards with postexercise analysis to enhance their learning experience.*

Final Remarks

LTC Frazier, DACOWITS Military Director and DFO, stated the next meeting would be held March 19–20, 2024, at the AUSA Conference Center in Arlington, Virginia. Details will be published in the Federal Register. She thanked attendees and concluded the public portion of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Summary of Written Responses Received for December 2023 QBM

RFI 1	
<p>RECRUITMENT BARRIERS</p> <p>In accordance with DACOWITS’ Terms of Reference, the Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Subcommittee will assess potential recruitment barriers which inhibit the accession of women into the Military Services. In addition, the R&R Subcommittee will examine existing policies and procedures to determine whether current practices inhibit the recruitment of women, specifically assessing medical accession standards and the application of these standards.</p>	
<p>The Committee is concerned medical accession standards may have a disproportionate impact on the pool of women qualified to join the Military Services as compared to men. In June 2023, via RFI 2, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), via the Office of Military Personnel Policy (MPP), reported that 62.5% of all applicants with a diagnosis from the Military Accession Record Pilot (MARP) list of 49 conditions were able to enlist, with a reduced timeframe for disqualification. However, only 50% of female applicants were able to do so. In addition, MPP also stated less than 5% of women applicants were disqualified for women-specific health issues.</p> <p>The Committee requests a written response from the USD(P&R) on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide the number of applicants accessed through MARP in aggregate and by gender since its implementation in June 2022. b. Provide the percentage of applicants accessed through the MARP in aggregate and by gender (e.g., X% of applicants who joined since June 2022 have joined under MARP, X% of women who joined since June 2022 have joined under MARP, etc.). c. Identify any trends in the percentage of women and men assessed under MARP. d. Highlight any factors that may contribute to differences in the number of or rates of accessions for women and men under MARP. e. Provide the number of applicants accessed for each of the 49 conditions for which disqualifying time frames were reduced, in aggregate and by gender (e.g., X applicants with ADHD were accessed under MARP; X female applicants with ADHD were accessed under MARP, and X male applicants with ADHD were accessed under MARP). f. Provide the number of applicants accessed under MARP that have shipped in aggregate and by gender. g. Provide the number of applicants who were accessed into the military under MARP who have separated from their Service in aggregate and by gender. h. Identify whether medical conditions waived under MARP are related to their separation and if there are any differences by gender. i. Provide length of service for separated applicants by gender. j. Describe any positive or negative trends the Services have identified with the performance or outcome of applicants accessed under the MARP in aggregate, by gender, and by condition. 	
Organization	Description
USD(P&R)	USD(P&R) provided the Committee with a response.

IMPACT OF KEY INFLUENCERS ON SERVICEWOMEN'S CAREER PATHS

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the Employment and Integration (E&I) Subcommittee will examine female officer experiences with key influencers while at the Military Service Academies (MSAs), Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), or Officer Candidate School, that impact career selection into previously closed positions, such as special operations forces. In addition, the E&I Subcommittee will examine female enlisted experiences with key influencers that impact career selection into previously closed positions, such as special operations forces.

Over the last decade, DACOWITS examined women's career progression, resulting in numerous recommendations. In December 2015, the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) opened all remaining occupations and positions to women with no exceptions. As a result, the Defense Department opened approximately 213,600 closed positions and 52 closed military occupational specialties to women for the first time. Afterwards, the SecDef directed the Secretaries of the Military Departments and Chiefs of the Military Services to provide their final, detailed Gender Integration Implementation Plans no later than January 1, 2016. Once approved, the Military Services were tasked with executing their plans by April 1, 2016. The Committee continues to observe modest increases in the percentage of women joining the military and consistently low rates of women entering previously closed positions, such as special operations forces.

The Committee requests a **written response** from the **Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and National Guard** on the following:

- a. Provide information on key influencers and recruitment efforts for female officers currently attending the MSAs and ROTC to pursue careers in special operations forces (SOF) and other previously closed career fields.
- a. Provide information on key influencers and mentoring efforts

Organization	Description
Army	The Army provided the Committee with a response.
Navy	The Navy provided the Committee with a response.
Marine Corps	The Marine Corps provided the Committee with a response.
Air Force	The Air Force provided the Committee with a response.
Space Force	The Space Force Corps provided the Committee with a response.
Coast Guard	The Coast Guard provided the Committee with a response.
National Guard	The National Guard provided the Committee with a response.

RFI 6

FAMILY PLANNING

In accordance with DACOWITS’ Terms of Reference, the Well-Being and Treatment (WB&T) Subcommittee will examine existing Defense Department and Military Services’ institutional policies and procedures to identify gaps that potentially inhibit family planning, to include eligibility for fertility services. In addition, the WB&T Subcommittee will assess the demand for expanded fertility access within a constrained supply of resources and identify obstacles and challenges to obtain access to care.

In December 2022, via RFI 8, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) provided the Committee with an overview of Assisted Reproductive Services, which included preliminary information related to fertility. The Committee is concerned there may be inadvertent policy limitations which is inhibiting women’s ability to plan their family. Among the many issues of critical importance to military servicewomen is the ability to plan for and have families without sacrificing their ability to continue military service. Many servicewomen expressed concerns during the 2023 DACOWITS’ focus groups about the difficulty in planning pregnancies at a time best suited to their career progression goals, about the impact of delayed pregnancies on fertility, and about the lack of fertility services needed to assist them in balancing the demands of military service with their desire to have a family. The Committee is interested in examining institutional policies and procedures that may inhibit family planning and to assess the demand for and the availability of fertility resources for servicewomen.

The Committee requests an updated **written response** from the **USD(P&R), DHA, and the Military Services (Army, Department of the Navy, Marine Corps, Department of the Air Force, and Coast Guard)** on the following:

- a. **USD(P&R) and Military Services:** Provide copies of links to all DoD and Service instructions, regulations, and policies that address the subject of fertility services and availability to the military personnel.
- b. **USD(P&R) and Military Services:** What policy accommodations exist to provide for leave, travel reimbursement, or other measures to enable servicewomen to seek civilian fertility care when it is not available to them through the military healthcare system?
- c. **USD(P&R):** Provide detailed information about:
 - i. the range and nature of fertility services offered by DoD/Services to servicewomen;
 - ii. servicewomen’s eligibility for fertility services, conditions qualifying or disqualifying servicewomen from access to fertility services; and
 - iii. alternative options or avenues for servicewomen to access fertility services.
- d. **DHA:** Provide detailed information about what fertility services, if any, are available to servicewomen through Tricare and what costs they incur for such services.
- e. **DHA:** Is there any difference in eligibility for fertility services/treatment between female military dependents and servicewomen? If so, describe fully?

Organization	Description
USD(P&R)	USD(P&R) provided the Committee with a response.
DHA	DHA provided the Committee with a response.
Army	The Army provided the Committee with a response.
Department of the Navy	The Department of the Navy provided the Committee with a response.

Marine Corps	The Marine Corps provided the Committee with a response.
Department of the Air Force	The Department of the Air Force provided the Committee with a response.
Coast Guard	The Coast Guard provided the Committee with a response.

Report Submitted by:

Samantha J. Frazier
LTC Samantha J. Frazier, USA
DACOWITS Military Director &
Designated Federal Officer

Report Certified by:

Shelly O'Neill Stoneman
Ms. Shelly O'Neill Stoneman
DACOWITS Chair

DACOWITS Members in Attendance

Col (Ret.) Nancy P. Anderson, USMC
CAPT (Ret.) Kenneth J. Barrett, USN
VADM (Ret.) Robin R. Braun, USNR
Dr. (CAPT Ret.) Catherine W. Cox, USNR
Dr. Trudi C. Ferguson
CMDM (Ret.) Octavia D. Harris, USN

Ms. Robin S. Kelleher
LTG (Ret.) Kevin W. Mangum, USA
Brig Gen (Ret.) Jarisse J. Sanborn, USAF
Brig Gen (Ret.) Allyson R. Solomon, ANG
Ms. Shelly O'Neill Stoneman
Dr. (Col Ret.) Samantha A. Weeks, USAF

DACOWITS Members Absent

Ms. Marquette J. Leveque, USN Vet.
HON (Col Ret.) Dawn E. B. Scholz, J.D., USAF

DACOWITS' Executive Staff in Attendance

LTC Samantha J. Frazier, USA
Ms. Jessica C. Myers, USN Ret.

Mr. Robert D. Bowling, USAF Ret.
MSgt Courtney N. Reid, USAF

DACOWITS' Liaisons in Attendance

COL Caprissa S. Brown-Slade, USA
MAJ Robert D. Lindsey, USA
Chaplain (CAPT) Judy T. Malana, USN
Ms. Wendy D. Boler, USN
Col Paul M. Melchior, USMC
Capt Jesusah L. Olver, USMC
Col (Dr.) Jenise M. Carroll, DAF
CDR Carlos M. Crespo, USCG
Lt Col Daniel R. Rodarte, NGB

COL Calvin C. Hudson, SOCOM
Dr. Ramona J. Armijo, SOCOM
Ms. Erin S. Cooper, DoD WPS
Ms. Page W. Beavers, Joint Staff
Ms. Theresa A. Hart, DHA (virtual)
Ms. Kimberly R. Lahm, HA
Ms. Lindsay E. Reiner, MPP
Mr. Vesen L. Thompson, MC&FP (virtual)