

DEOMI News Highlights

DEOMI News Highlights is a weekly compilation of published items and commentary with a focus on equal opportunity, equal employment opportunity, diversity, culture, and human relations issues. DEOMI News Highlights is also a management tool intended to serve the informational needs of equity professionals and senior DOD officials in the continuing assessment of defense policies, programs, and actions. Further reproduction or redistribution for private use or gain is subject to original copyright restrictions.

Here's How Each Service Is Tackling Poor Military Base Housing Conditions [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 25 February 2019]

- Each of the military services this week has announced plans to conduct inspections of [base housing](#) and interviews with families to discover how badly service members have been impacted by unhealthy living conditions.
- In the wake of recent reports of neglected facilities and hazardous living conditions, as well as [ongoing pressure from lawmakers](#) to rectify the problem, the services issued directives on how they plan to address problems, including black mold, rodent and bug infestations, water damage, radon contamination, and faulty wiring.
- Issues over the safety of privately managed military housing were exposed last year in several months-long investigations by Reuters, titled "[Ambushed at Home](#)." They included reports of children poisoned [by lead](#) in older homes and families falling ill as the result of [mold growth](#) in new construction.

[Here's How Each Service Is Tackling Poor Military Base Housing Conditions](#)

Transgender Troops: Proposed Policy Is Discriminatory, Would Hurt Readiness [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 28 February 2019]

- A [proposed Pentagon policy](#) on transgender troops and potential recruits is discriminatory and would diminish military readiness and lethality if implemented, a panel of transgender service members told a congressional subcommittee Wednesday.
- Testifying before Congress in civilian clothing because they were restricted under a Defense Department policy that limits uniform wear for non-military functions, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Blake Dremann and Hospitalman 3rd Class Akira Wyatt, Army Staff Sgt. Patricia King, and Army Capts. Alivia Stehlik and Jennifer Peace told House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee members they have encountered [little pushback](#) from their units since transitioning and consider themselves highly effective leaders and members.
- The policy, drafted in February 2018 by then-Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, effectively would overturn one instituted in 2016 that allowed transgender troops to [transition](#) to the opposite gender while in the military and serve openly.

[Transgender Troops: Proposed Policy Is Discriminatory, Would Hurt Readiness](#)

Worries grow about White nationalism in the ranks [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 25 February 2019]

- Lawmakers want to know if military and homeland security leaders are doing enough to monitor the armed forces for signs of White nationalism and other dangerous extremism in the wake of the arrest of a [Coast Guard lieutenant](#) with radical views who was plotting mass murder.
- In a letter to leaders at the [Departments of Defense](#) and Homeland Security on Monday, the group of Democratic House members said they want assurances that the recent case is not "indicative of a larger, systemic issue within the United States Armed Services." They also said they are concerned with reports of [other racist activity in the ranks](#).
- Nearly 1 in 4 troops [polled by Military Times in 2017](#) said they had seen examples of White nationalism among their fellow service members. Among non-White members of the military, the figure was more than 40 percent.

[Worries grow about White nationalism in the ranks](#)

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Culture

National Memorial to Gulf War Veterans Moves Forward with Site Dedication

By Richard Sisk

Military.com, February 26, 2019

The dedication of a first-of-its kind national memorial to veterans of the First Gulf War Tuesday in Washington, D.C. drew dignitaries including former Vice President Dick Cheney, who oversaw Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield in his role as defense secretary.

In his remarks at the ceremony, Cheney, 78, said the site on the National Mall, off Constitution Avenue and by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, is a fitting tribute to veterans of the war, who were "welcomed home with the gratitude and respect they earned," in contrast to Vietnam veterans.

Veterans of the first Gulf War who spoke at the ceremony also said that the lessons of Vietnam were on their minds as Operation Desert Shield began in early August 1990 to protect Saudi Arabia from Iraqi invasion and begin the assembly of a coalition force of more than 600,000 for the liberation of Kuwait.

Operation Desert Storm began in January 1991 with ferocious air and naval bombardments that lasted five weeks and cleared the way for the ground campaign that drove the Iraqis from Kuwait in 100 hours, culminating in a cease-fire on Feb. 28, 1991.

"The dire predictions of thousands of casualties never came to pass, with the ensuing rapid and resounding victory putting to rest the doubts about our all-volunteer force," Scott Stump, a Marine veteran of Desert Storm/Desert Shield and president of the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association, said.

The Pentagon lists 383 U.S. troops as having been killed in action in Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Stump said the concept for a memorial on or near the National Mall began to take shape in 2010. President Barack Obama authorized construction in 2014; President Donald Trump approved construction near the Mall in 2017.

One of the sites originally suggested was along the Potomac River, but the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Park Service in June 2018 finally approved the site off Constitution Avenue, just across 23rd Street NW from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and down the rise to the Lincoln Memorial.

No date has been set for a groundbreaking ceremony, but Stump said the grand opening for the memorial is planned for Veterans Day 2021.

The task now is to raise the estimated \$40 million for construction of the memorial. The association has about \$8 million already donated, he said.

In his remarks at the dedication ceremony, retired Air Force Gen. Chuck Horner, a Vietnam veteran and architect of the Desert Storm air campaign, several times gestured over his shoulder to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to make his point that Vietnam and Desert Storm were "inextricably linked" in the different ways they were fought.

The senior leadership in Desert Storm "gave the military a mission" and "didn't impose rules of engagement on us. So we were blessed" and able "to avoid the stupidity that led to that disaster over there," he said, gesturing again to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/26/national-memorial-gulf-war-veterans-moves-forward-site-dedication.html>

"We fought it with our hands untied," Horner said, adding he was "glad we had the leadership that decided victory was the answer and allowed us to do it."

Cheney, who became a lightning rod for critics of the 2003 Iraq invasion and occupation when he served as vice president, said the conflict that liberated Kuwait in 1991 restored the nation's pride and confidence in its military, which had been shaken by Vietnam and its aftermath.

Based on the "crucial lessons learned in Southeast Asia," he said that he and then-President George H.W. Bush prepared for swift victory and had an exit strategy in mind in rallying a coalition to repel the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

"For all the risk involved," the mission was vital, Cheney said. "We had to show him that the world doesn't work that way anymore, and we did."

Cheney said that he and his wife, Lynne, visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Jan. 16, 1991, the night before the air campaign in Desert Storm began, to sense the responsibility that the senior leadership was about to undertake from the more than 58,000 names of the fallen listed on the memorial's iconic Wall.

"We knew, of course, that some of them would not return," he said of those who would go into battle in Desert Storm. "We wanted to make sure we got it right this time."

Other Desert Storm veterans who attended the ceremony had their own takes on the lessons learned from Vietnam.

Wayne Gunther, 54, of Strum, Wisconsin, who retired as a warrant officer but was a sergeant with Golf Co., 2nd Battalion, Third Marines, during Desert Storm, said of Vietnam veterans that "those were the guys that taught us" how to fight.

Gunther said he was assigned to clear paths through the Iraqi minefields for tanks and mechanized infantry and eventually reached Kuwait City in the offensive.

"It was staggering, it was so quick," he said.

He had heard all the scuttlebutt that "it was gonna be awful, we were gonna go through a meat grinder." He said it probably "would have been a slugfest without the air campaign," but "it never came to that ugliness."

Former Air Force Master Sgt. Jim Ayres, who serviced refueling tankers with the 1709 Provisional Air Wing, said it was "the greatest honor ever" to have the Desert Shield/Desert Storm Memorial in proximity to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the World War II Memorial.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Kyle Leggs, 54, of Baltimore, a board member of the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association, served with the 200th Movement Control Team.

"It was intense to be in a war not knowing what to expect," he said, including the possible use by the Iraqis of chemical and biological weapons. He was in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, when it was hit by an Iraqi Scud missile that killed 28 U.S. troops. He said the memorial is partly "about those who didn't come home."

However, Leggs echoed other board members in stating that the memorial, when it is complete, "should not be about mourning," but more of a place "to appreciate a U.S.-led victory" that was a "turning point in our military history."

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SEE ALSO:

[Desert Storm memorial marks an 'atonement' for Vietnam War mistakes](#) [2019-02-26]

Tuskegee Airman discusses ‘the art of justice’ at Fort Bragg talk

By Rachael Riley

The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer, February 27, 2019



Retired Lt. Col. Enoch Woodhouse II, a former Tuskegee Airman, right, stands for the national anthem before addressing a group at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School on Monday. (Andrew Craft/The Fayetteville Observer)

Moments before retired Air Force Lt. Col. Enoch Woodhouse Jr. addressed a group at Fort Bragg on Monday, he described an instance when he was kicked off a train in the 1940s because of the color of his skin.

“That was one of the most embarrassing times in my life,” said Woodhouse, who is 92.

Woodhouse, a Tuskegee Airman, spoke to soldiers and guests at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School for Black History Month. The Tuskegee Airmen were the nation’s first black military pilots. They received their flight training from the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama when the U.S. entered World War II.

“Black history — it’s not black history to me. It is American history, our history,” Woodhouse told the crowd.

In an interview with The Fayetteville Observer prior to Monday’s event, Woodhouse recalled his mother’s words following the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor.

“She said ‘Sons, our country is at war. I want you boys to serve our country,’” Woodhouse said.

His brother would become one of the first black Marines at Montford Point, North Carolina.

After graduating from Boston English High School in 1944, Woodhouse enlisted in the Army with about 20 of his classmates.

The train incident soon followed when he received his first assignment to go to Texas.

Woodhouse said he traveled from Boston to Chicago and from Chicago to St. Louis with no problem.

It was in St. Louis when the conductor tapped him on the shoulder and told him to get off the train — while he was in uniform.

A black porter asked him where he was from and if he’d ever been to the South before. Woodhouse is a native of Boston, where he currently lives.

“He said, ‘We don’t ride that train,’ and said I’d have to wait for the next train,” Woodhouse said.

That next train was a cattle car that arrived about 10 hours later.

Woodhouse said he was considered absent without leave for not reporting to duty on time, and his white first sergeant didn’t allow him to explain.

“That was my first day. This is something I’ll never forget ... I never told my mom... my technique to survive was to suck it up and move on,” Woodhouse said.

<https://www.fayobserver.com/news/20190225/tuskegee-airman-discusses-the-art-of-justice-at-fort-bragg-talk>

Woodhouse said while in the Army Air Corps, he was assigned to Squadron F, which had a housekeeping mission to shovel snow, refuel aircraft or peel potatoes.

He said leaders were white, and he never saw a black noncommissioned officer until about a year into his Army service.

By the age of 19, Woodhouse attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as a second lieutenant. His next assignment was with the 332nd Fighter Group of the Army Air Corps.

He was discharged from the Army in 1949 and joined the U.S. Air Force Reserves. He was assigned to the Air Force Judge Advocate General office in 1956 after earning his law degree. He retired from the Reserves as a lieutenant colonel in 1972.

Addressing Monday's crowd, Woodhouse spent little time talking about himself. Instead, he focused on two others: Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr., a 1936 West Point graduate and commander of the Tuskegee Airmen, and Navy Capt. Thomas J. Hudner Jr., who was white.

Woodhouse titled his speech "the arc of justice," and used what happened to Davis and Hudner as a way to illustrate its theme.

Woodhouse said Davis had the "burden of suffering" four years at West Point, which would later name its barracks after him.

"As Americans — black, white, Asian, no matter what — somehow, somewhere we get our act together and we do the right thing," Woodhouse said. "I'm 92. It takes a long time to wait, but if you have faith, which I have, that's the only thing that got me through this thing."

He also spoke about Hudner.

Hudner's wingman was a fellow Annapolis classmate, Jesse Brown, who was black, Woodhouse said. Brown was involved in a crash in Korea, and Hudner attempted to rescue him. Brown died in the mountains with frostbite, and Hudner's plane also crashed.

Woodhouse said Hudner was chewed out once he returned to his naval carrier and threatened with a court-martial for destruction of government property.

Hudner's mother intervened and spoke to a senator, who spoke to President Harry Truman, who told the chief of naval operations to write orders for a Medal of Honor for Hudner, Woodhouse said.

Years later, Hudner would ensure that Brown's daughter and granddaughter had money to go to school and asked that the Navy christen a vessel in Brown's honor instead of his own, Woodhouse said.

"We all have situations that force us to, that compel us to use our God given talent and what our innate abilities call upon us to do," he said.

As for Woodhouse, he practiced law for more than 50 years and served as a diplomatic courier for the U.S. State Department in Europe, Africa and South America after his military service.

In 2007, he and fellow Tuskegee Airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by then-President George W. Bush.

Brig. Gen. Harrison Gilliam, deputy commanding general of the special warfare school, said Woodhouse served his country with distinction and honor.

"When his fellow countrymen didn't see fit to treat Woody as they would others, he held his head up high, he made no excuses, and he did what his job called to do," Gilliam said.

Discrimination

ACLU: Records show police racially profiled, mocked U.S.-born Latino veteran detained by ICE

By Niraj Warikoo, Detroit Free Press

USA TODAY, February 27, 2019



Jilmar Ramos-Gomez was a lance corporal in the Marines and received awards for service in Afghanistan. (Photo: Michigan ACLU)

The Grand Rapids Police Department has [reprimanded an officer who called former Marine Jilmar Ramos-Gomez](#), who is Latino, "loco" and "mad" after his arrest in November.

Tuesday evening, interim Grand Rapids Police Chief David Kiddle said at a Grand Rapids City Commission meeting [broadcast online](#), that type of "unprofessional language" doesn't represent the culture of his department.

Ramos-Gomez was arrested after he set a fire and gained access to the heliport at Spectrum Butterworth hospital in Grand Rapids, police said. Although he was a U.S. citizen, police [contacted ICE](#), which then detained him for three days before his mother and attorney convinced the federal immigration agency to release him.

The Michigan branch of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Michigan Immigrant Rights Center released on Monday documents related to the arrest of Ramos-Gomez. They say the documents show police racially profiled the 27-year-old man.

Kiddle said his officers don't focus on enforcing immigration laws and they would be reviewing their policies on contacting ICE. Kiddle defended the officer's actions in contacting ICE, saying the officer was concerned about potential terrorism and feared he could later be released from jail.

Ramos-Gomez suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that he developed after serving in Afghanistan. The Spanish word "loco" (crazy) is an offensive term used for a person with mental illness, said the ACLU.

What police did was "racial profiling compounded by ridicule of a person who experiences post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of his service to our country," said Miriam Aukerman, senior staff attorney at the ACLU of Michigan. "We are deeply troubled by such callous disregard for the terrible situation Jilmar was in."

During the meeting Tuesday night, protesters chanted "cops and ICE go hand in hand" and "let us speak." Immigrant advocates say that the FBI, not ICE, is the proper federal agency to contact for terror concerns.

"It was perfectly appropriate for GRPD (Grand Rapids Police Department) officers to contact the FBI during their investigation because that's the relevant federal agency," said Michigan Immigrant Rights Center attorney Hillary Scholten. "But there was absolutely no reason to contact ICE."

Scholten said that Grand Rapids Police Capt. Curt VanderKooi has trained with the FBI, but he didn't call on them. He called on the federal agency responsible for deporting foreign citizens. To suggest that Captain VanderKooi was investigating terrorism, when he asked ICE only about Mr. Ramos-Gomez's 'status' and did not follow up despite not receiving a response for two days, doesn't pass the laugh test. This was racial profiling pure and simple."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/02/27/aclu-police-racially-profiled-latino-veteran-detained-ice/3002351002/>

One of the emails obtained by the ACLU show that a Kent County prosecutor, Daniel Helmer, expressed concern about ICE taking custody of Ramos-Gomez.

After he was told ICE was jailing Ramos-Gomez, prosecutor Helmer wrote in an email to a Grand Rapids police officer: "I am confused. Didn't his property have a US Passport in it? And he was a veteran?!"

The Grand Rapids officer, Adam Baylis, says: "Who knows, not sure it was a US passport. I am not sure about the vet thing."

In another email, an ICE official said they had determined Ramos-Gomez was living in the U.S. illegally after interviewing him.

Also on Tuesday, Grand Rapids Police released the report of their Internal Affairs investigation into how their police operated.

"The officer, who is assigned as our department's liaison to ICE, had concluded that Mr. Ramos-Gomez's actions met the criteria of a potential act of terrorism," said the internal investigative report posted on the city's website.

The internal report says that the officer who alerted ICE, VanderKooi, followed protocol. The report said "Grand Rapids Police Department policy requires employees to report any suspected criminal activity, including those pertinent to the Department of Homeland Security — of which ICE is a part."

Kiddle said in the report that "ICE has resources for tracking the travel of citizens and non-citizens to countries associated with terrorist activities" and that "the national Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) initiative — a post 9/11 joint effort — encourages information sharing between local law enforcement agencies, the FBI and Department of Homeland Security."



Passport of Jilmar Ramos-Gomez (with some information redacted by ACLU Michigan). Ramos-Gomez of Michigan is a US-born citizen, but was detained by ICE for a few days in Nov. 2018, drawing criticism from the ACLU and Michigan Immigrant Rights Center. (Photo: ACLU Michigan)

During the meeting, Kiddle shared a message of regret from officer VanderKooi: "It was not my intention to disrespect Mr. Gomez or offend anyone in any way."

"I regret" my choice of words, he said, in a statement [read by Kiddle on his behalf at the meeting](#). "I'm sorry for any hurt this has caused Mr. Gomez."

Kiddle stressed that at his department "we do not enforce immigration laws."

According to the ACLU and Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, here's a timeline of what happened on Nov. 21 with Ramos-Gomez:

- At 8:32 a.m. Nov. 21, Ramos-Gomez is arrested at Spectrum Hospital for trespassing after he damaged a keypad. Some burned items are found in his backpack. A police report shows he had a passport in his bag.
- Later that morning, police "quickly realize that he has mental health issues," said the ACLU.
- At 11:42 a.m., a Grand Rapids Police Sgt. texts a FBI agent "Vet, PTSD, But not a FBI issue."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/02/27/aclu-police-racially-profiled-latino-veteran-detained-ice/3002351002/>

- At 7:40 p.m., Captain VanderKooi is at home watching the news on WOOD-TV and sees a story about the arrest of Ramos-Gomez. He then emails an ICE officer responsible for deportations of immigrant with criminal convictions, writing: "Could you please check his status?"
- On Nov. 23 (the day after Thanksgiving), the ICE officer forward the email to ICE deportation officer Matthew Lopez with its Enforcement and Removal Operations division. Lopez emails: "I was able to interview that subject at Kent County this morning, and he is a foreign national illegally in the U.S. Thank you for the lead he will be coming into our custody when he is released from his criminal case. Let me or (ICE officer) Derek know if you ever have any other good leads."
- The morning of Nov. 26, VanderKooi sends an email with the subject line: Spectrum Helicopter Pad Loco." He writes "It is not clear what mad intent was involved in this breach of hospital security but here is the report."
- That afternoon, a county prosecutor raises concern about the ICE detention of Ramos-Gomez.

The case of Ramos-Gomez highlights tensions over how local police should deal with federal immigration authorities amid a tightening of immigration enforcement under President Donald Trump.

Last month, Kent County Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young said her department will no longer hold immigrant detainees for federal immigration officials without a judicial warrant.

ICE maintains that Ramos-Gomez had told him he was living in the U.S. illegally.

Detroit ICE spokesman Khaalid Walls reiterated on Tuesday an earlier statement released by ICE on his case:

"On November 23rd, ICE officers interviewed Jilmar Ramos while he was in the custody of local law enforcement," said ICE in their statement. "Mr. Ramos claimed in verbal statements to be a foreign national illegally present in the U.S. Based on his statements, ICE lodged a detainer with local authorities. On December 14th, ICE took Mr. Ramos into agency custody after he was released from local custody. On December 17th, an attorney for Mr. Ramos contacted the agency and provided documentation suggesting that he is a U.S. citizen. ICE reviewed the documentation and authorized Mr. Ramos' release. No further action will be taken."

Diversity

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/26/no-women-dont-have-sign-draft-yet-heres-whats-next.html>

After Court Ruling, Here's What's Next for Women and the Draft

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, February 26, 2019



U.S. Marine Corps recruits with Platoon 4030, Papa Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, execute a rifle salute during an initial drill evaluation June 25, 2018, on Parris Island, S.C. (U.S. Marine Corps photo/Dana Beesley)

A [federal judge's decision Friday](#) that the law requiring men -- but not women -- to register for a U.S. military draft is unconstitutional has no immediate impact on women or the U.S. Selective Service System.

But it does revive debate about whether the country needs a military draft system and, if so, whether all 18-year-olds, regardless of gender, should be required to register.

Judge Gray Miller of the U.S. Southern District of Texas [ruled Friday that the Military Selective Service Act discriminates on the basis of gender](#). He said the U.S. Selective Service System's arguments in defense "smacked of 'archaic and overbroad generalization about women's preferences.'" The arguments, as interpreted by Miller, included concerns that a draft for both genders would have a negative impact on military recruiting because women might believe they will be forced into combat positions if they enlist.

"At its core, the defendant's arguments rest on the assumption that women are significantly more combat-averse than men," Miller wrote.

The ruling does not order the federal government to change its policy on who must register, nor does it make any recommendation to Congress, which would have to change the laws governing the Selective Service System to require women to sign up.

Miller's decision comes as a congressional commission [weighs the future of national service, including draft registration for women and men](#). The National Commission on Military, National and Public Service is expected to release a report next year on recommendations for the Selective Service System and other opportunities for young people within the federal government.

Dr. Joe Heck, a former Nevada congressman who chairs the commission, said Monday that Miller's ruling was not unexpected, but that his 11-person commission will proceed unaffected with its mandates, which include making recommendations on the future of the draft registration system.

"The first question that we need to answer is, do we need the Selective Service System at all? We are looking at it very closely," Heck said. "[The United States is] spending \$24 million a year to maintain a system we haven't used since 1973, so one of the things we want to review is, are there other ways? In a national emergency that requires a mass mobilization, are there other alternatives?"

A system for conscription has been used off and on since the Civil War. The Selective Service System was created in 1917 to ensure that the federal government had the ability to draft all eligible men as needed for war. The draft was abolished in 1973 by President Richard Nixon, and registration for the Selective Service System was suspended in 1975. However, under the administration of President Jimmy Carter in 1980, it was revived to ensure rapid mobilization in an emergency.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/26/no-women-dont-have-sign-draft-yet-heres-whats-next.html>

Support for women registering for the system gained steam after the Defense Department abolished all restrictions on women serving in combat positions in 2013. Several plaintiffs, including the National Coalition for Men (NCFM), subsequently filed lawsuits challenging the "men-only" requirement of Selective Service. In 2016, Congress created the blue-ribbon panel to study the issue.

On Monday, Harry Crouch, president of the NCFM, called Miller's decision "momentous" and said it is likely to place pressure on the commission and elected representatives to consider changing the system.

"If they want to keep the Selective Service System, we are OK with that, but it has to be fair for everybody because right now, it's not. You have men, if they fail to register, lose their right to vote; they can lose their driver's license; they can be imprisoned. I don't think they have been, but it's on the books ... they really can be disenfranchised."

In a statement on [its Facebook page](#), the Selective Service System said no change to the process can occur without new legislation. The system "does not make policy and follows laws as written. As such, until Congress modifies the Military Selective Service Act or a court orders Selective Service to change our standing operation, the following remains in effect," referring to the requirement that men ages 18-25 register, while women are not required to do so.

Defense Department officials have told Congress they support preserving the Selective Service System and welcome the inclusion of women. In a report to Congress in 2017, they argued that a future draft likely would focus on highly technical skills that are in short supply in general and, accordingly, "targeting a draft to only 50 percent of the available population would severely limit" the department's capabilities in a national emergency.

Regarding Miller's ruling, Air Force Lt. Col. Carla Gleason, a Pentagon spokeswoman, referred request for comment on the case to the Justice Department. She added, however, that the Defense Department "needs and appreciates every qualified patriot who is willing and able to serve."

The Justice Department declined to comment on the ruling.

Heck said the ruling underscores the importance of his panel's work, adding that the group is holding public hearings throughout the country in the coming months, including meetings in Washington, D.C., on April 24 and 25.

He also encouraged Americans to weigh in on the issues [via the commission's website](#).

"We have looked at a range of options regarding Selective Service since we began. ... What, if any, modifications are necessary to better reflect the needs of a 21st-century Department of Defense, to include whether women should register; should the registration be more skills-based; should there be periodic re-registration or updates. These are the questions we have been considering."

If the Justice Department appeals Miller's ruling, the case would be considered in the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Heck said the commission's final report is expected in March 2020, and it will then be up to Congress to decide whether to implement the group's recommendations, which could include requiring all 18-year-olds to register, eliminating the system entirely or introducing volunteer registration.

A representative for the Service Women's Action Network, an advocacy group for female troops and veterans, said the organization believes the entire system should be abolished. But, added retired Navy Capt. Lory Manning, a SWAN spokeswoman, the group supports Miller's ruling as long as the Selective Service continues to exist.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/26/no-women-dont-have-sign-draft-yet-heres-whats-next.html>

"It's about time women register for Selective Service too," she said.

-- *Patricia Kime can be reached at Patricia.Kime@Military.com. Follow her on Twitter at @patriciakime.*

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SEE ALSO:

[Q&A: A judge has ruled the male-only military draft unconstitutional. What happens now?](#) [*USA TODAY*, 2019-02-25]

[Judge rules against male-only military draft, but no changes imminent](#) [*The Associated Press*, 2019-02-25]

[Federal judge rules male-only draft is unconstitutional](#) [*CNN*, 2019-02-25]

[Drafting Only Men for the Military Is Unconstitutional, Judge Rules](#) [*The New York Times*, 2019-02-24]

[With women in combat roles, a federal court rules male-only draft unconstitutional](#) [*USA TODAY*, 2019-02-24]

[Judge rules men-only military draft unconstitutional in court win for San Diego men's group](#) [*The San Diego Union-Tribune*, 2019-02-23]

Air Force May Have Its First Female Battlefield Airman This Spring

By Oriana Pawlyk

Military.com, February 28, 2019



U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Control Party Airmen with the New Jersey Air National Guard's 227th Air Support Operations Squadron communicate with A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft during close air support training on Warren Grove Range, N.J., Jan. 31, 2019. (U.S. Air National Guard photo/Matt Hecht)

The U.S. Air Force is hopeful it could have its first female battlefield airman this spring.

In written testimony before the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on personnel, Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services, said one woman is making her way through the grueling challenges of Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) training.

"Currently, we have one female in Tactical Air Control Party training with a potential graduation date later this spring," he said.

"To date, 10 female airmen have entered into special warfare training, but none have yet to qualify and graduate," [Kelly](#) added.

Attrition is high in this elite training pipeline, ranging between 40 and 90 percent across the specialties.

"Consequently, we do not foresee large numbers of females in operational units in the near term," Kelly said.

Since the Defense Department opened combat career fields to women in December 2015, few female airmen have qualified for Air Force special warfare training. Some have self-eliminated or sustained an injury; others have not met the standards of a particular program.

Recently, a female candidate entered the pararescue (PJ) training pipeline, but was injured during the first week of training and had to drop out, Air Education and Training Command (AETC) officials told Military.com in January.

The woman is expected "to return at a later date to try again," AETC spokeswoman Jennifer Gonzalez said last month.

"We are fully committed to the integration of women into combat positions, [and] have increased targeted marketing to further attract female recruits," Kelly said.

The service has placed a female cadre within these training units, he added.

The Air Force has had a tough time attracting candidates for special operations, particularly in the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and survival, evasion, resistance and escape (SERE) pipelines. Kelly said the service missed its recruiting goals for these specialties in three of the last four months.

While the service missed those goals, Kelly said special warfare overall has seen early successes through its new recruiting squadron. The service established its first Special Operations Recruiting Squadron last year to find next-generation combat airmen.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/28/air-force-may-have-its-first-female-battlefield-airman-spring.html>

"This past year, we established a new training group and new recruiting squadrons focused on critical warfighting career fields, such as special warfare airmen," Kelly said.

Recruiters and mentors train the candidates in a step-by-step, streamlined program to get a better sense of what type of airmen are needed for the next dynamic conflict.

"The Air Force is committed to improving how we recruit and prepare airmen to succeed," Kelly said.

This story will be updated.

-- Oriana Pawlyk can be reached at oriana.pawlyk@military.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@Oriana0214](https://twitter.com/Oriana0214).

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SEE ALSO:

[First female TACP could graduate this spring](#) [*Air Force Times*, 2019-02-27]

Chicago will elect first black female mayor; Lightfoot and Preckwinkle advance to runoff

By Amer Madhani

USA TODAY, February 27, 2019



Mayoral candidate Lori Lightfoot and her daughter Vivian Lightfoot appear with supporters at EvolveHer in Chicago Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019. Former federal prosecutor Lightfoot, who could become the first African-American woman to lead the nation's third-largest city, was the top vote-getter in a field of 14 that included a member of the Daley family that has dominated Chicago politics for much of the last six decades. (Photo: Erin Hooley, Chicago Tribune via AP)

CHICAGO – Former federal prosecutor Lori Lightfoot and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle are headed to an [April 2 runoff](#) to decide who will become the nation's third-largest city's next [mayor](#), topping a crowded field of 14 candidates.

The winner will become Chicago's first black woman mayor, and will make Chicago the largest U.S. city to be led by one. If Lightfoot prevails, she will also be the city's first out LGBT mayor.

Lightfoot had 17.5 percent of the vote and Preckwinkle had 16 percent with 96 percent of precincts counted. Neither achieved the outright majority needed to forestall a runoff.

Former U.S. Commerce Secretary Bill Daley, who had 14.8 percent of the vote, conceded late Tuesday and congratulated Lightfoot and Preckwinkle.

Lightfoot, 56, grew up in Ohio and came to Chicago to attend law school at the University of Chicago.

"This is what change looks like," she said. "It's true that not every day, a little black girl in a low-income family from a segregated steel town makes the runoff to be the mayor of the third-largest city in the country."

Preckwinkle, 71, a former alderman and head of the Cook County Democratic Party, has long been a force in Chicago politics. As she celebrated moving on to a runoff, she aimed to tie Lightfoot to the administrations of Mayor Rahm Emanuel and former Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Emanuel appointed her to the Chicago Police Board and the city's Police Accountability Task Force. Daley named her in 2002 as chief administrator of the Office of Professional Standards, a disciplinary arm of the Chicago Police Department that has since been abolished.



Chicago mayoral candidate Toni Preckwinkle speaks at her election night event in Chicago on Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019. (Photo: Ashlee Rezin, Chicago Sun-Times via AP)

Preckwinkle also jabbed at Lightfoot's lack of experience in electoral office.

"It's not enough to stand at a podium and talk about what you want to see happen," Preckwinkle said. "You have to come to this job with the capacity and capability to make your vision a reality."

Polls leading up to the vote Tuesday showed at least six candidates with a serious shot at finishing in the top two, but none coming close to a majority.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/02/26/chicago-mayor-election-2019-toni-preckwinkle-lori-lightfoot-bill-daley/2991807002/>

The top contenders going into Tuesday included Preckwinkle, Lightfoot, Daley, Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza, former Chicago school board president Gery Chico and businessman Willie Wilson. Daley, Chico and Mendoza conceded within three hours of the polls closing.

"Tonight's results were not what we hoped. But we cannot dwell on what could have been," Daley told supporters. "We must look forward to how we can help shape our city's future.

"Chicago is a part of me. It always will be. While I may not be its next mayor, I won't stop fighting to move our city forward."

A victory by Daley, the son and brother of mayors, would have meant the return of one of the nation's most famous political clans to the fifth floor of City Hall. His father, Richard J. Daley, and his brother, Richard M. Daley, served a combined 43 years.

Lightfoot raised about \$1.2 million for the campaign, least among the top three. Preckwinkle raised \$4.6 million; Daley raised \$8.7 million.

Together, the 14 candidates and independent groups hauled in nearly \$30 million to besiege Chicagoans with an inescapable loop of television and digital advertising, campaign calls and mailers.

Also on the ballot were races for city council, clerk and treasurer.

Preckwinkle cast her ballot at an elementary school in the city's Hyde Park neighborhood.

"This is a historic moment for the city," she said. "I am proud of the work of my campaign and feel optimistic as we head into tonight."

Election officials said turnout was low. Only a third of the city's 1.58 million registered voters cast a ballot.

Most of the field, including Preckwinkle, entered the race after Emanuel announced in September he would not seek a third term. Lightfoot announced her candidacy before Emanuel's announcement, boasting that she didn't fear taking on "Goliath."

Emanuel, a former congressman, White House chief of staff to President Barack Obama and cabinet secretary under President Bill Clinton, is a prodigious fundraiser who amassed \$10 million in campaign contributions before announcing he wouldn't seek reelection.

He had become a polarizing figure in the city.

The Chicago Teachers Union called a 7-day strike in 2012, the first work stoppage in the school district in 25 years. Emanuel drew criticism for closing 50 Chicago Public Schools during his first term, the vast majority impacting black and Latino children.

And he saw his standing plummet in the city's African-American community after the court-ordered release in late 2015 of chilling police video that showed Jason Van Dyke, a white officer, firing 16 shots at Laquan McDonald, a black teen.

Emanuel had resisted releasing the video. It spurred weeks of protests.

The next mayor will inherit major challenges, including unusually high levels of gun violence, a woefully underfunded municipal workers pension program, and a shrinking population.

Chicago recorded 561 homicides last year, an improvement over the previous year but far more than in larger New York and Los Angeles. The city suffered nearly 2,000 homicides from 2016 to 2018, a period when most of the nation saw homicide rates near historic lows.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/02/26/chicago-mayor-election-2019-toni-preckwinkle-lori-lightfoot-bill-daley/2991807002/>

Some voters remained undecided right up until they arrived at their polling places. Juan Toletino, 63, said he was torn between Daley, Mendoza and Chico.

Whoever wins, he said, must address the killings and shootings.

“The first thing I want to see them do is deal with the gun violence,” Toletino said. “We got to get it under control.”

The city is also weighed down by roughly \$28 billion in unmet municipal worker pension obligations. At the same time, the population has plummeted – Houston is on pace to pass the city as the nation’s third largest in the next decade – while the chasm between rich and poor has grown.

In 1970, about half of Chicago’s census tracts were classified as middle-income areas, according to a study by the Voorhees Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Only 16 percent of the tracts were classified as middle income in 2017, according to the study.

The difficulties are particularly notable in huge swaths of the city’s South and West sides, predominantly African-American neighborhoods that have lost the most population.

The race was shaken up last month when federal authorities announced charges of [attempted extortion against Alderman Ed Burke](#), a powerful 50-year veteran of the city council.

Burke, who won reelection to another four-year term Tuesday, is accused of shaking down the operators of Burger King restaurants in Illinois. He has pleaded not guilty, and is running for re-election.

Four of the top candidates, including Preckwinkle, had ties to the alderman and found themselves scrambling to distance themselves.

Preckwinkle received more than \$100,000 from a Burke-sponsored fundraiser last year. Mendoza was married at Burke’s home. Burke endorsed Chico, who worked as an aide to the alderman 30 years ago. Daley’s family has received about \$30,000 in political donations from Burke over decades.

While political corruption has grabbed headlines, financial stability was cited by 18 percent of voters as the top issue facing the city – a higher concern than any other issue, according to a 270 Strategies poll published Sunday.

Betsy Tavizon said she voted for Preckwinkle – the “least worst” of the choices.

Tavizon, 29, said she was looking for a candidate who spoke to her concerns about the rising cost of living in the city. She thinks about leaving Chicago because she finds it difficult to imagine a scenario in which she’d ever be able to become a homeowner.

“It was a difficult decision,” Tavizon said. “I didn’t make my choice until last night.”

Dane Lopez, 41, was most concerned about the impact gentrification was having on his neighborhood, Humboldt Park. His neighborhood, home to one of the country’s biggest Puerto Rican communities, has become more affluent over the last two decades, and rising real estate prices, rents and property taxes have made it difficult for many of his longtime neighbors to keep up.

He decided to vote for Mendoza, in part because she was the only candidate to visit his church and ask for the community’s support.

“She said she’s going to put the focus in the community,” Lopez said. “It was difficult sorting out who to vote for, but she was one that connected the most to my values.”

NASA renames facility for real-life 'Hidden Figures' hero

Katherine Johnson

By Holly Yan

CNN, February 24, 2019



Katherine Johnson (in blue dress) was honored by "Hidden Figures" actors Janelle Monáe, Taraji P. Henson and Octavia Spencer during the Academy Awards in 2017. Henson played Johnson in the movie.

For half a century, [Katherine Johnson](#)'s heroics within NASA were largely hidden from the outside world.

Now, her name and legacy will stay front and center at a NASA facility that epitomizes her work.

The Independent Verification and Validation Facility has been renamed the [Katherine Johnson Independent Verification and Validation \(IV&V\) Facility](#), NASA said.

"The facility's program contributes to the safety and success of NASA's highest-profile missions by assuring that mission software performs correctly," the space agency said.

The renaming couldn't be more apt for Johnson, who hand-calculated the trajectory for America's first manned trip to space.

In the 1950s, before computers were widely used and trusted, [human mathematicians were called "computers."](#) And NASA's "[Computer Pool](#)" relied heavily on the extraordinarily complex, hand-written calculations of black female employees.

Any little error could spell disaster. But Johnson and the Computer Pool made calculations for groundbreaking, successful space missions, including Alan Shepard's 1961 voyage -- which made him the first American in space -- and John Glenn's 1962 mission, which made him the first American to orbit Earth.

But Johnson's contributions, like those of many female "computers," were often overlooked in history. That was until 2016, when the best-selling novel and movie "Hidden Figures" shined a light on their work and the challenges they faced -- including racial segregation at NASA.

A pivotal scene in the film features Glenn nervously preparing for his flight. Computing machines were so new, Glenn was skeptical of their calculations. So Glenn requested that Johnson -- whose brilliance was known within NASA -- independently confirm the calculations by hand before he felt comfortable enough to start his trip three times around the Earth.

But Johnson's rise within NASA wasn't easy.

She was born in 1918 in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, where education for black people ended in eighth grade.

But her parents recognized her talent for math, so they sent her to get a high school education on the campus of West Virginia State Institute, a black college 100 miles away. It paid off, and she graduated from high school at 14 and then graduated from West Virginia State in 1937 at 18.

Like many women of her time she became a teacher -- but her sights were set on becoming a research mathematician.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/24/us/nasa-katherine-johnson-facility/index.html>

Following an [executive order](#) prohibiting racial discrimination in the defense industry, Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory began recruiting black people with college degrees in the 1940s for the computer pool.

For years, the women occupied a segregated wing, "West Area Computing," and used separate facilities. That's where Johnson started in 1953.

After just two weeks, she transferred to the facility's Flight Research Division. She worked there for years until the Soviet satellite Sputnik kicked off the space race between the United States and the USSR.

Johnson pushed her way into briefings traditionally attended only by men and secured a place in the inner circle of the American Space Program.



President Barack Obama gives the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Katherine Johnson in 2015.

Her work helped map the moon's surface ahead of the 1969 landing and played a role in the safe return of the Apollo 13 astronauts. Johnson retired in 1986.

Three decades later, the head of NASA said it's only appropriate to rename a facility in Johnson's honor in her home state of West Virginia.

"I am thrilled we are honoring Katherine Johnson in this way as she is a true American icon who overcame incredible obstacles and inspired so many," NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said.

The facility is in the process of planning a rededication ceremony.

CNN's Rebekah Riess, Saeed Ahmed and Emanuella Grinberg contributed to this report.

SEE ALSO:

[Hidden Figure no more: NASA honors pioneering math genius Katherine Johnson](#) [*USA TODAY*, 2019-02-24]

[Katherine Johnson, at age 100, is telling her life story](#) [*The Associated Press*, 2018-12-20]

https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/roma-made-yalitza-aporicio-a-star-now-shes-giving-a-voice-to-her-indigenous-fans/2019/02/21/d003f3da-2ef8-11e9-813a-0ab2f17e305b_story.html

‘Roma’ made Yalitza Aparicio a star. Now she’s giving a voice to her indigenous fans.

By Javier Cabral

The Washington Post, February 21, 2019



Yalitza Aparicio had never acted before landing the lead role in Alfonso Cuarón’s “Roma,” a Netflix drama nominated for 10 Academy Awards. (Amanda Lopez/For The Washington Post)

Long before Yalitza Aparicio became the [first indigenous woman](#) nominated for best actress at the Oscars, she applied for a retail position at a clothing store in her hometown of Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca.

She didn’t get the job. Aparicio, now in the same conversations as Glenn Close and Lady Gaga, recalls the store manager’s exact words: “It’s your skin color.”

She wasn’t surprised. It isn’t unusual for people with indigenous features to face discrimination in Mexico. But now Aparicio, who had never acted before landing the lead role in the critically lauded “Roma,” has gone from aspiring public school teacher in a city of less than 18,000 to the first indigenous woman [on Vogue Mexico’s cover](#). Fans tout her as the face of indigenous Mexico. Trolls leave racist comments on her social media. And at just 25 years old, she’s wrestling with the rewards and burdens of fame.

Soft-spoken and quick to smile, she says she doesn’t consider herself an indigenous activist, though she hopes to better express herself publicly about these issues in the future. Yet when the camera turns on, she gazes straight ahead, exuding the confidence that made her on-screen character, Cleo, so effortlessly realistic. “I never liked being in front of a camera. I was a scaredy-cat, very reserved and not very social,” Aparicio said in Spanish, of her life before “Roma.” “I never thought I would leave my hometown, but here I am.”

Since its release by Netflix in December, “Roma” has [racked up accolades](#) around the world, including [10 Academy Award nominations](#). It has also inspired innumerable features focused on Aparicio’s character, Cleo, a domestic worker from Oaxaca inspired by writer-director Alfonso Cuarón’s real-life childhood nanny. Cleo, who speaks a combination of Spanish and Mixtec on screen, represents the [more than 2.4 million domestic workers](#) across present-day Mexico, more than 95 percent of whom are female and from indigenous areas. The black-and-white film, set in the early 1970s, depicts the dynamic between Cleo and her employers with startling intimacy, presenting her inside and outside of the home where she lives and works.

Luis Rosales, the casting director for “Roma,” said Cuarón gave him only two directives as Rosales searched for their star. The first: Whoever got the role needed to physically look like the person on whom Cleo is based. Second, he said in an email, “she had to feel like her, too.”

“We interviewed over 3,000 women for the role of Cleo,” Rosales said. “Yalitza got our attention since her very first audition.”

Aparicio, who auditioned at the urging of her older sister, was familiar with the role. Her mother is a domestic worker, so she easily identified with Cleo. “For some scenes, I interpreted the memories I have of my mom,” she said.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/roma-made-yalitza-aparicio-a-star-now-shes-giving-a-voice-to-her-indigenous-fans/2019/02/21/d003f3da-2ef8-11e9-813a-0ab2f17e305b_story.html

Aparicio had never heard of Cuarón or seen any of his films before “Roma” — let alone watched many movies growing up. The only film memories she has are kung-fu scenes from the Bruce Lee movies her father loved. The only TV she remembers seeing as a kid was “Inuyasha,” a Japanese anime about a schoolgirl who’s transported to the social and political upheaval of the Sengoku era.

“I never watched much TV as a kid because no one else looked like me on the screen,” she said.

Instead, like other kids in Oaxaca, one of the poorest states in Mexico, she took on the responsibility of financially contributing to her family from an early age. While she was in elementary school, she sold toys and clothes in the streets with her family. Growing up, she empowered herself by talking openly about the color of her skin, taking it as a point of pride when people on the street said, “¡Hola morenita!” — a common greeting that’s meant to be endearing, although it translates to the brash-sounding, “Hi, dark-skinned one.”

“In my family, I’ve always had the darkest skin,” she said. “I always joked with my siblings that it was because I was made of chocolate.” That perseverance comes through on Aparicio’s magazine covers, fan selfies and black-and-white billboards plastered on the streets of West Hollywood. On her [Instagram account](#), where she has 1 million followers, she posts powerful handwritten letters from her fans, many of whom also have indigenous backgrounds. A few weeks before the Oscars, she posted a note written on a torn-out piece of composition paper: “Dear, Yalitza. Thank you for giving us a voice in a world where they want to silence us and make us disappear. Wishing you all the luck.”

Her success has brought increased attention to the 68 indigenous nations in Mexico, where up to 14 percent of the population is indigenous. “If Yalitza wins the Oscar, it will be a reminder to the entire world that indigenous people are alive and very much still existing in the world in the 21st century,” says Odilia Romero, the national coordinator for Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales, an association that oversees indigenous affairs in the United States and Mexico.

Not everyone has celebrated Aparicio’s success. In December, when Aparicio appeared on the cover of *Vogue Mexico*, she faced racist vitriol in the comments section. In January, the digital news site [Sin Embargo reported](#) that a group of Mexican actresses had allegedly tried to prevent Aparicio from winning a Mexican Academy of Film Award, considered by many to be the “Mexican Oscars,” because of her previous acting inexperience. The academy was quick to dismiss the claims, noting it had awarded past nominees with similar acting backgrounds. And, on Feb. 15, [a video](#) that appeared to show Sergio Goyri — a Mexican actor known for his work in soap operas — calling Aparicio a “pinche india” went viral. He has since apologized for using the phrase, which means “damned Indian.”

Despite these issues, Aparicio is quick to profess loyalty to her homeland, saying she is in love with Mexico and has no plans to move from Oaxaca. Up until the time of this interview, she had not received offers to work in other films. “I would love to have the opportunity to act again,” she said. “I dream about having a role that makes people reflect on themselves, but nothing has presented itself yet.”

After the Oscars, whether she wins or loses, she’s looking forward to returning home for a taste of the familiar — a big plate of her mom’s spicy mole negro. And as for her activism, she’s getting there. She urges those who use the derogatory term for an indigenous person in Spanish — “indio” — to think twice: “I am not an Indian,” she said. “I am indigenous.”

SEE ALSO:

[Oscars not so white? Academy Awards winners see big shift](#) [Reuters, 2019-02-25]

She may be Florida's first lawyer with autism. And she's out to change lives and minds

By Josh Hafner

USA TODAY, February 22, 2019



Haley Moss speaking at her law school's commencement ceremony at the University of Miami in 2018. (Photo: University of Miami)

Haley Moss is one month into her practice as a lawyer. So far, so good.

She has laser focus, a photographic memory and an extreme eye for detail — invaluable assets for poring over endless briefs and reports at Miami-based firm Zumpano Patricios.

And what's more, she just might be making history: In January, Moss raised her hand, took an oath and became known as Florida's first lawyer living openly with autism.

Her admission to the Florida Bar marked a key milestone in a life filled with them. Moss' diagnosis with autism, at age 3, came with warnings that she might not finish high school, get a driver's license or make a friend.

The Parkland native did all those things and more, earning two bachelor's degrees — in criminology and psychology — by age 20 before graduating from the University of Miami School of Law in May 2018.

Zumpano Patricios now calls Moss "one of the first documented autistic attorneys to join the Florida Bar and a major law firm," though firm co-founder Joe Zumpano believes "she may be one of the first nationally."

"I hired her the moment I met her," said Zumpano, who has a 16-year-old son with autism. In Moss, he saw "a brilliant person with a brilliant mind."

At the firm, Moss specializes in anti-terrorism and healthcare, fields that entail massive swaths of information. Cases can have a million documents, and Moss is tasked with remembering names, bank accounts and relationships along with deciphering "the games that are played" in healthcare cases, Zumpano said.

"So when you've got someone with an exceptional memory ability and an exceptional ability to connect people, places and things, that's a tremendous asset for any law firm," he said. "And Haley brings that to the table."

Moss looks forward to growing in her legal career and finds it easy to give her all at work, she said. It's not the job that's proved hard for her.

"The things that are hardest for me are actually outside of the office, such as driving and daily living skills," she said. "Starting a career is a huge transition for anybody, but is monumental for autistic people as it means we have to establish new routines."

Moss didn't use words until around age 4, a common symptom of autism. When she did speak, much of it was echolalia, an echoing repetition of others' words. "Kind of like a parrot," she said.

She could, however, put together 100-piece puzzles as a toddler. Her mother told her: "Different isn't bad. It's just different, and different can be extraordinary."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2019/02/21/haley-moss-may-first-autistic-lawyer-florida/2914135002/>



Leon Patricios, Judge Lisa Walsh, Rick Moss, Haley Moss, Sherry Moss and Joe Zumpano at Haley Moss' ceremony in January. (Photo: Courtesy of Haley Moss.)

Moss realized the power of her voice as a teen, when she spoke at an Autism Society of America event and saw how her story encouraged others.

She's since penned two books on her experiences: "Middle School — The Stuff Nobody Tells You About: A Teenage Girl with ASD

Shares Her Experiences," and "A Freshman Survival Guide for College Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders."

Moss' mother taught her to embrace her diagnosis. She learned her weaknesses, but also her strengths. She became more self-aware, more confident, she said, until she pursued law — a profession that leveraged her skills, her love of writing and her desire to help people.

Huge companies have taken steps to hire workers with autism in recent years, including JP Morgan, Microsoft, Ford and Ernst & Young, [CBS reported last year](#).

Zumpano hopes Moss' story can show that just because someone "is neurologically diverse doesn't mean that they may not have strengths greater than our own."

Follow Josh Hafner on Twitter: [@joshhafner](#)

Takano announces congressional task force to address challenges facing female veterans

By Nikki Wentling

Stars and Stripes, February 25, 2019



U.S. Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., poses for a photo shortly before taking over as the Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs in January, 2019. (Joe Gromelski/Stars and Stripes)

WASHINGTON – Rep. Mark Takano, the new chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, announced Monday that a new congressional task force will address barriers that women veterans face when trying to obtain Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and health care.

Takano, D-Calif., made the announcement during the American Legion’s national conference in Washington. He said he assigned Rep. Julia Brownley, another Democrat from California, to lead the task force.

“I’m pleased to announce that under my leadership we’ve established a women veterans task force to be led by Congresswoman Julia Brownley,” Takano said. “She’s going to be tasked with the known barriers to women accessing benefits. We want to be able to overcome those barriers, and we want to bring to the surface the barriers that we don’t know – the unknowns about our women veterans.”

The committee hired a female veteran to spearhead the effort, with the goal of identifying trends among women veterans and finding solutions for how the VA can provide them better service. Details about the makeup of the task force and the person hired for it weren’t available Monday.

As Takano took the helm of the committee last month, he promised more attention on the increasing diversity among veterans. He said he believed minority groups, including women veterans, have been overlooked.

About 10 percent of the roughly 20 million veterans in the United States are women, the VA reports. Pew Research Center estimates women veterans will increase to 18 percent by 2045.

Last year, the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine concluded a 4 ½-year study of VA mental health services. In it, the 18-member committee that conducted the study addressed some barriers unique to women veterans.

“Women face unique barriers to mental health care at the VA, largely related to challenges associated with being a woman in a traditionally male-dominated system,” the report reads.

The committee found women veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan are more likely than men to believe they aren’t entitled to or eligible for VA mental health services. Women also reported frustration with having to prove to VA employees that they were veterans.

Committee members conducted site visits to VA facilities in 2015. In Cleveland, one female veteran told them that VA employees assumed she was a spouse. Another veteran said VA workers didn’t believe she was a combat veteran. Many female veterans also experienced cat-calls in VA facilities, which was particularly unsettling for women suffering from military sexual trauma, according to the report.

<https://www.stripes.com/news/us/takano-announces-congressional-task-force-to-address-challenges-facing-female-veterans-1.570396>

“[A] clinician in East Orange, New Jersey, said: ‘I think there are many, many people who fall through the cracks and don’t want to come here because they associate it with the very culture that traumatized them. That’s a huge barrier to treatment,’” the report states.

Additionally, the committee found women sometimes had trouble finding child care in order to attend their VA medical appointments.

Earlier this month, the House acted to address the issue. The lower chamber passed the Veterans’ Access to Child Care Act, which would make permanent a pilot program the VA began in 2011 to provide child care for veterans who need the VA for intensive medical and mental health care, such as cancer treatment or care for post-traumatic stress disorder. Brownley introduced the bill.

“This is especially important for the growing population of women veterans who are more often taking care of young children,” Brownley said in a statement at the time.

At the American Legion conference Monday, Takano noted the high number of women veterans struggling with military sexual trauma. According to the VA, about one in five women seen at VA facilities respond “yes” when screened for MST.

The VA Office of Inspector General reported last year that the VA wrongly denied benefits in fiscal year 2017 to thousands of veterans who claimed they suffer from MST.

The agency denied claims from veterans without following proper procedure, the IG found. Inspectors blamed the incorrect denials on flawed, inadequate training for veterans service representatives who comb through veterans’ records for signs of sexual trauma and make decisions about their claims.

Based on the findings, the inspector general asked the VA to review the thousands of claims that it denied in fiscal year 2017 and correct any mistakes. The agency estimated it would complete the review by Sept. 30.

The new women veterans task force will be launched officially in coming weeks.

A congressional hearing is expected this week to focus on Takano’s plan to create a vision for the VA extending to 2030. More attention on women veterans is part of that, he said.

“VA 2030’ is a plan we are writing as we begin to surface how we need to be prepared by the year 2030 to have a VA that can truly serve our diverse veteran population,” Takano said. “That includes women, minorities and LGBT veterans.”

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Transgender Troops: Proposed Policy Is Discriminatory, Would Hurt Readiness

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, February 28, 2019



From left, transgender military members Navy Lt. Cmdr. Blake Dremann, Army Capt. Alivia Stehlik, Army Capt. Jennifer Peace and Army Staff Sgt. Patricia King, listen to an emotional committee member Rep. Debra Haaland, D-N.M. relate to the witnesses about her daughter who is gay during a House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, Feb. 27, 2019. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

A proposed Pentagon policy on transgender troops and potential recruits is discriminatory and would diminish military readiness and lethality if implemented, a panel of transgender service members told a congressional subcommittee Wednesday.

Testifying before Congress in civilian clothing because they were restricted under a Defense Department policy that limits uniform wear for non-military functions, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Blake Dremann and Hospitalman 3rd Class Akira Wyatt, Army Staff Sgt. Patricia King and Army Capts. Alivia Stehlik and Jennifer Peace told House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee members they have encountered little pushback from their units since transitioning and consider themselves highly effective leaders and members.

They said arguments against transgender troops serving, which include a perceived negative impact on unit cohesion and increased costs to the military health system, are specious.

Stehlik, a physical therapist who graduated from West Point in 2008 and served six years as an infantry officer, said her unit would not have deployed with a physical therapist to Afghanistan if she hadn't been serving.

The officer, who earned a Ranger tab and transitioned to being a woman in 2016, said the unit's assigned physical therapist had become non-deployable, so she volunteered to go. She treated more than 1,700 people during a nine-month deployment with 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

"My transition, as well as those of others, has dramatically increased the readiness and lethality of every branch of the armed forces," Stehlik said. "Has my transition made soldiers uncomfortable? Absolutely not. [On deployment], they opened up to me. ... I asked them why, and they said they valued my authenticity, my courage in being myself. It allowed them to do the same."

Peace, an intelligence officer who enlisted in the Army at age 19 and later was encouraged to attend Officer Candidate School, said transgender personnel simply want to serve their country.

"Readiness and morale were two of my primary concerns as a company commander. I would be the first person to kick out a transgender service member if they are not able to meet the standards," she said. "There should absolutely be no adjustment of standards for trans people. All we are asking for is the opportunity to meet and be held to those exact same standards."

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/28/transgender-troops-proposed-policy-discriminatory-would-hurt-readiness.html>

The hearing, called by subcommittee chairwoman Rep. Jackie Speier, D-California, came as a Pentagon policy on transgender service has been placed on hold pending injunctions related to litigation over the proposal.

The policy, drafted in February 2018 by then-Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, effectively would overturn one instituted in 2016 that allowed transgender troops to transition to the opposite gender while in the military and serve openly.

While the Pentagon argues that the proposed policy does not bar transgender members from serving, its restrictions effectively would keep individuals who want to serve as anything but their birth gender out of the armed forces.

Panel members also said it would reduce opportunities for individuals who are currently serving. They would be allowed to remain, but advancement opportunities would close, they said.

[According to the proposed policy](#), those with a history of gender dysphoria -- a medical diagnosis for those who experience significant distress or difficulty with their biological gender -- would be disqualified from serving unless they have been stable in their birth gender for three years before joining the military. Individuals who require or have undergone gender transition also would be disqualified from service, according to the proposal.

Retired Air Force Gen. James Stewart, acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, and Navy Vice Adm. Raquel Bono, director of the Defense Health Agency, told the subcommittee that the policy is needed because gender dysphoria is a medical condition incompatible with military service. They added that it can lead to other medical problems, such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse and suicidal ideation, which also are harmful to readiness.

"The department has concluded, based on its best military judgment, that sustaining the 2016 policy for the long term would degrade military effectiveness," Stewart said.

"With our transgender service members, their behavioral health visits are 22 per person, as opposed to two [visits] for non-gender dysphoric service members. We also see higher rates of suicidal ideation. We take these things into consideration as we are looking at the data," Bono said.

Military leaders, including members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, went on record last year as saying they had not seen any negative impact on morale or readiness following implementation of the 2016 policy.

Reports vary on the number of transgender individuals currently serving in the armed services, but a 2016 Defense Department survey found that 8,900 active-duty troops identified as transgender.

According to Stewart, 937 service members have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria.

The DoD has spent roughly \$8 million on transgender care since the 2016 policy was instituted, including \$2 million for surgeries, such as breast reduction, hysterectomies and testicle removal.

Speier called the transgender service members who testified "courageous" and said she would work to ensure that they can continue serving.

"I feel strongly that any transgender person who can meet occupational standards should be allowed to serve in the armed forces. I believe that the transgender policy is discriminatory, unconstitutional and self-defeating," she said.

Rep. Trent Kelly of Mississippi, the ranking Republican on the subcommittee, also thanked the troops for their service, praising them for their work and for meeting or exceeding military standards. He said that not

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/28/transgender-troops-proposed-policy-discriminatory-would-hurt-readiness.html>

everyone who wants to serve in the military can "meet the stringent medical and behavioral health standards needed to maintain a ready and resilient force."

However, he added, "it only makes sense that any individual who can meet these standards and is otherwise qualified should be allowed to serve."

-- *Patricia Kime can be reached at Patricia.Kime@military.com. Follow her on Twitter [@patriciakime](https://twitter.com/patriciakime).*

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[In first, transgender troops testify before House as Trump administration seeks to limit their service](#) [*The Washington Post*, 2019-02-27]

[Transgender troops tell Congress they excel in military](#) [*The Associated Press*, 2019-02-27]

[Retired officers express 'grave concern' with Trump's defense of transgender military policy](#) [*The Hill*, 2019-02-26]

When mom deploys

By Brianna Keilar

CNN, February 25, 2019



Bashir Jahan, a 22-year Navy veteran, has been a stay-at-home dad for almost six years now, caring for his three children. His wife A.J. is an active duty naval surface warfare officer.

Middle names of the children and some family members featured in this story have been used due to safety and privacy concerns.

Linda Albi looks at her phone, trying to make out her daughter's face as she tilts the screen toward her 2-year-old grandson, Michael, as he sits in her lap. The sun still isn't up where Sarah is, but she's already putting on her flight suit. Michael watches his mommy as she sings to him softly so she won't disturb her flight crew as she gets ready to walk across the tarmac to her plane.

This is how Michael often starts his bedtime routine on the West Coast while his mom, a pilot in the Navy, begins her day on the other side of the world. Every free moment Sarah has, she calls her son to check in. Her husband, also a naval pilot, usually answers the phone. He staggers his deployments with Sarah's to avoid being away from Michael at the same time. But even on shore duty he can work long hours or overnight, so Michael's grandmothers pitch in to fill the gaps. This day, Linda is holding down the house.

As she helps facilitate the video call between mother and child, she puts her own motherly instincts on hold.

"I am anxious to ask how is she really doing, but I know she needs to start her day with focusing on my grandson's face, not mine," Linda writes. "As her mom, I ache to talk to her, but as part of his nightly bedtime routine I am resigned to just being the resting perch for her squirmy toddler as he sings with his mom."

Today, women represent 16 percent of enlisted service members and 18 percent of the officer corps, according to the Council on Foreign Relations. That's increased since the end of the draft in 1973, up from 2 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

The Air Force has traditionally had the highest percentage of women but the Navy nearly caught up in 2016. In both branches, about one in five enlisted members and officers are women.

Bashir Jahan smiles mischievously and shows me the Valentine's Day card he has just given to his wife. "I'm So Blessed to Have You for My Husband," it says. Bashir is a full-time stay-at-home dad while his wife, A.J., serves in the Navy as a surface warfare officer. Most military spouses are women and he finds humor in the role reversal.

Bashir retired from the Navy in 2013 after 22 years of service. He and A.J. hoped to stay in the Navy together but after their first child, a boy, was born in 2012, they were unable to "co-locate," a military term for being stationed in the same place as your spouse.

Until their son was 7 months old, A.J. was stationed in Monterey, California, for graduate school, taking care of the baby by herself during the week. Bashir was stationed in San Diego, commuting hundreds of miles on the weekends to see his family.

"I'd see him cooing or sitting up and doing little things I wanted to be a part of," he tells me, describing video calls during the week. "I love my wife. I love the idea of having a family."

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/25/politics/home-front-when-mom-deploys/index.html>

The distance wasn't working for the couple so they considered their options. Bashir was eligible for retirement. His wife, nine years his junior, was not and her career was on an uphill trajectory. She stayed in the Navy and he retired the following year.

Bashir got a crash course in solo parenting with his son in Japan, where they lived while A.J. went on frequent deployments.

"Underprepared and overwhelmed" is how he describes that time period. "Overwhelmed is probably a gentle way to put it."

After the arrival of their second child, a girl, life at home became much more hectic.

"In Japan the dryers don't work," Bashir laments as he recalls his frustration hanging clothes outside to dry. "Do you know the maddening process of putting out small underwears — eight, 10, 15 of them — and then socks that are this big?" he gestures, illustrating very small socks.

"Big clothes, not a problem, but little people clothes," Bashir shudders.

Parenting while deployed

Parenting when you're deployed means shifting the provision of stability and support for a child to a spouse or other caregiver and trying to preserve the parent-child bond by seeing your child as often as possible.

For Sarah that can mean a FaceTime check-in with her son both morning and night.

"She gets up way early so she can call on our time zone," Linda says. "And I've been on the way to daycare and I have to pull over and get in the back seat so he can talk to her. When she calls me, I drop everything."



Linda Albi helps hold down the house while her daughter and son-in-law are in the Navy. Linda has to put her own motherly instincts on hold while she helps her 2-year-old grandson video chat with his mom. "I know she needs to start her day with focusing on my grandson's face, not mine."

Michael surprises his grandma, "Oma" he calls her, by his ability to adapt with ease to his mom being deployed.

"He realizes his mom is in the phone sometimes."

On a ship, communication is more difficult. A.J. can go a week at a time without access to email.

She has recorded herself reading children's books, so her kids can see her often.

"I think you recorded 25 books. You actually did one twice you were so sleep-deprived," Bashir says to his wife, laughing. "I thought, this book sounds familiar."

A.J. relies on Bashir to make her a constant presence in their kids' lives while she is deployed.

He begins the day with their children, giving mommy's photo on the fridge a good morning kiss, then watching the videos of her reading during the day and ending each night with another kiss.

Leaving a 6-week-old

Bashir and A.J. have three children now, a 6-year-old boy, a 3-year-old girl and a 10-month-old boy. A.J.'s current shore duty assignment allows her to spend a lot of time with her family, and they are enjoying being together.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/25/politics/home-front-when-mom-deploys/index.html>

A.J. is soaking up the time with her 10-month-old son that she never had with her middle child.

In 2015, when her daughter was just 6 weeks old, A.J. left her family to complete several weeks of training, followed by a rapid succession of deployments.

A.J. waived her operational deferment, the year without deployments the Navy provides for mothers after they give birth.

"From a personal standpoint I was thinking ... it's hard but it's going to be harder later," she says. "My thought was, (our eldest child) at 2 years old would see my car and would have his dad take him to it to look for me."

"I didn't want to leave (him) when he was 6 or 7 and (her) when she was 2 or 3."

A.J. pushed for an assignment in Japan and received it. It meant she would deploy often but for shorter periods of time, allowing her to come home to her kids more frequently, usually for about a month.

By the time her daughter was 2 1/2, A.J.'s longest stretch of time with her was six weeks.

"What I didn't take into account: that also means saying goodbye more often. I think it was actually harder than doing a longer, single deployment than it was doing all those little ones," A.J. says.

"It's confusing for a kid to ... get warmed up to you and then all of a sudden have to leave."

But many children are doing just that. There are 960,300 children of active duty members, according to a 2017 United States Military Demographics Report.

For deployed service members who are married, almost four in five had a child at home during their most recent deployment.

Missed moments

"You know that special time when you watch your child sleep," Linda Albi says with tears in her eyes. "She's across the world and I'm watching her son sleep."

Albi was a military spouse herself. Her husband is a former Navy SEAL, but he got out of the service before the couple had children.

Linda doesn't know how her daughter is able to cope with wanting to hold her child and not being able.

"I just can't imagine what it's like to have your arms ache and your heart hurt like that. To see him and press that little 'x' on your phone and he's gone."

For A.J., who estimates she sleeps about four hours a night on average while at sea, the pace of deployed life and her focus on her mission helps distract her.



Until their first son was 7 months old, Bashir's wife was stationed in Monterey, California, and taking care of the baby by herself during the week. Bashir was stationed in San Diego, commuting hundreds of miles on weekends to see his family. The distance wasn't working for the couple so they considered their options. Bashir was eligible for retirement, his wife was not. She stayed in the Navy and he retired.

"You're just so busy," she says. "It's not like you get a day off. So you are working 14 ... 20 hours a day sometimes."

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/25/politics/home-front-when-mom-deploys/index.html>

"You almost don't have time to think about it."

Her daughter ate solid food, sat up and crawled for the first time with her dad. She also said her first word — bus — while her mom was at sea.

Some missed moments still sting.

"I know she walked before (I saw)," A.J. says pointedly to her husband. "I know he was trying to make me feel better like, 'oh, this is the first time she's done that.'"

A.J. wasn't fooled.

"I know he lied to me!"

Bashir, years later, still keeps up the charade.

Reunited

During one of A.J.'s deployments, her ship was making a port call in the Philippines.

Bashir flew to Manila from their home in Yokosuka, Japan, with their eldest son, then 3 years old and their daughter, who was several months old at the time.

A.J.'s son was so excited to see her but her daughter was not.

"(She) was standoffish," says A.J. "She didn't want me to hug her."

"I expected her to be like that," A.J. adds stoically.

But Bashir remembers it differently.

"I could see the hurt and she was crying, like 'my own daughter doesn't want to come to me.'"

On day three, their daughter warmed up to her mom.

"But that's what all the guys face too," insists A.J. During our discussion she repeatedly makes a point of saying her experience isn't special because she's a woman.

Bashir isn't buying it.

"A mom's bond is different than a father's" he says, stressing that while he is a very active father he is no substitute for his wife's warm and nurturing parenting style.

The last time Sarah returned from a deployment, Linda wasn't there to watch her daughter reunite with her grandson.

She studied the video her son-in-law took of the moment.

"He kind of hesitated," she said, describing Michael's reaction to his mom's return.

"He was excited to see her but at the same time he's not sure that it's really her, that this person is now here and not in the phone."

When Sarah returns from a deployment she spends a lot of time just holding Michael.

"She told me, 'I don't want to put him down. I want to carry him. I want to always have him in my arms,'" Linda recounts her daughter saying.

Alone in their roles

In Eugene, Oregon, where Linda Albi lives, she has friends who are also grandmothers, but none have a connection to the military.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/25/politics/home-front-when-mom-deploys/index.html>

Linda has four children — two sets of twins. Sarah is one of the older twins. Like Sarah, her sister is also married to a service member.

"I almost won't even bring it up," she says. "I almost don't want to tell people I have a daughter and two sons-in-law in the military."

When Linda does mention to a friend or acquaintance that her daughter is a Navy pilot, she says the conversation often turns to military spending and questions about why the nation's defense budget is so large.

These are not the issues on Linda's mind.

When her daughter is deployed she is preoccupied with other concerns: Is Sarah's location secure? Where exactly is she flying? What happens if an engine fails? Would her daughter still be able to safely fly her plane?

And then there's the immense pride she feels.

"I have a hard time explaining to people what it feels like to be walking with my daughter (on base) when someone salutes her. I almost want to cry. It's such an intense feeling."

Bashir fervently supports his wife's military career. For him, it's an extension of his own calling to join the Navy.

His family was granted asylum in the United States in 1982 when he was 9 years old. They fled Afghanistan after his father was jailed for his vocal opposition to the Soviet occupation.

"There wasn't really anything else that I could think of doing that would give back to this country the way it gave to us," he says of his decision to join the Navy.

As proud as he is of his wife, his role as a stay-at-home dad makes him the odd man out among his closest male friends.

"We have nothing in common," he says, smiling.

Bashir remembers talking to his friends who were still in the Navy after he retired to be a full-time father.

"I was like, 'Dude, you cannot understand the complexity of what your wives have to go through to raise your children. The crying, the whining, the nonstop attention-seeking, the pulling at your pants where you have to shuffle like an old man. My hips hurt, my shoulders hurt, my back hurt.'"

"My guy friends know that I'm a feminist," he says.

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Misconduct

Miscellaneous

Fighter jock culture may be holding Air Force back, Rand study says

By Kyle Rempfer

Air Force Times, February 27, 2019



F-35A Lightning II pilots walk the flight line during Red Flag 19-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Feb. 4. (R. Nial Bradshaw/Air Force)

The Air Force has been long dominated by [fighter pilots](#) at its senior leadership levels, but as careers in the service have become more diverse, a change in promotion preferences may be required to foster the [innovation culture](#) that also defines the service.

As it stands, the mass of [fighter pilots in high-level leadership](#) roles creates a hierarchy within the service, with fighter pilots first, bombers second and other specializations after, according to a recent [Rand study](#) sponsored by the Defense Department's Office of Net Assessment.

"The more modern Air Force still demonstrates a preference for promoting fighter generals to the most-senior ranks of leadership, despite having a greater number of [non-fighter pilot] officers and a more technologically diverse set of missions," according to the report, which includes interviews with many unnamed uniformed and civilian Air Force officials.

One long-standing reason for the reliance on fighter pilots to fill leadership roles comes down to how the Air Force needs to be viewed by Congress and the Pentagon during political bargaining and budget battles: as a warfighting force on par with the other services.

"It is also important for the Air Force to be viewed as an equal service by the services that have had a more direct role in fighting on the ground since 2002 as it serves as a way of demonstrating and validating the Air Force's contributions," the Rand study said. "Part of the Air Force's strategy to establish itself as a warfighting service rather than a support service is its cultural emphasis on its fighter pilots."

According to a Rand analyst with a research specialization in Air Force culture: "There is a school of thought in the Air Force that pilots are in the best position to run the service because their situational awareness and multitasking skills translate to leadership, but it's not clear if they do."

In an era when space and cyber warfare are touted as the future of fighting adversaries like China and Russia by even the [chief of staff of the Air Force](#), it may be in the service's best interest to field more senior leaders from career fields involved in cyberspace and information warfare.

If the focus is on staffing leaders with a combat identity, rather than support operations, perhaps more [special tactics officers](#) from the Air Force's [most decorated combat community](#) since the end of the Vietnam War should be tapped for high-ranking positions.

The trend toward promoting fighter pilots began long before the Global War on Terror.

Col. Mike Worden traced the shift in his 1998 book, "Rise of the Fighter Generals."

"Shifts in Air Force doctrine and procurement toward tactical airpower in the 1970s meant fighter wings and pilots were growing at numbers disproportionate to other mission areas," the Rand study said. "Fighter pilots began to outnumber bomber pilots as early as 1968; from 1971 to 1982, fighter pilots outnumbered their bomber counterparts by four to one."

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/02/27/fighter-jock-culture-may-be-holding-air-force-back-rand-study-says/>

Rand also noted that a survey conducted for Jeffrey J. Smith’s 2014 book, “Tomorrow’s Air Force,” found fighter pilots at contention with the rise of unmanned aircraft. Non-fighter pilot officers, meanwhile, believed the Air Force should look toward procuring technologies outside the fighter realm, sometimes noting that drones may one day make fighter aircraft obsolete.

Many of those interviewed by Rand said that internal competition between the Air Force Specialty Codes, the separate career fields in the service, was greater than external competition between services.

A field-grade Air Force officer with joint-duty experience told Rand that it’s a commonly held notion among airmen that AFSCs “dictate [the service] food chains.”

“Each service prefers a hierarchy that puts [a particular specialty] at the tip of spear,” the officer said. “How do we make room for evolution of importance in the fight?”

The manned versus unmanned aircraft debate continues to permeate internal service insecurities, the Rand authors wrote, despite the proven reliance on drone warfare in the 21st century.

Airmen’s career choices also are increasingly tied to occupations that can help them when they hang up the uniform.

“People are now coming to an academy and choosing ISR and Office of Special Investigation after graduation. People are also choosing public affairs and strategic affairs,” an Air Force Senior Executive Service member told Rand. “These are the types of specialties that could help them post-military transition.”

“There will always be a view that pilot is a ticket to anything you want [from your Air Force career],” the Air Force SES member said. “How true will that remain? Depends on how leadership views diversity of skills. I would like to think the chief of staff and secretary would reach out to all airmen. The Air Force needs great leaders, irrespective of the specialty.”

As for the current leadership, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein has made it [one of his focus areas](#) to emphasize joint leadership in the service, ensuring that choosing joint duty staff positions doesn’t slow down career progression.

After all, any fight against a peer adversary or a rogue state — Russia, China, Iran or North Korea — would likely require a combined arms approach between services.

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SEE ALSO:

[Air Force Makes Readiness Gains Even as Pilot Shortage Continues](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-02-28]

[With months left on the clock, US Air Force sprints toward readiness goal](#) [*Defense News*, 2019-02-27]

Fleet Forces: Navy Short 6,200 At-Sea Sailors Now to Meet New Manning Requirements

By Sam LaGrone

USNI News, February 26, 2019



Sailors attend an all-hands call aboard USS Porter (DDG-78) in celebration of Independence Day July 4, 2016. US Navy Photo

CAPITOL HILL – The Navy is short about 6,200 sailors to meet its at-sea requirements for its current force, and that gap could grow as the service adds new ships to the fleet, the head of U.S. Fleet Forces Command told a House panel on Tuesday.

Those sailors will, in part, be used to plus-up crew numbers on each surface ship after the Navy had previously gone to a lower “optimal manning” crew size to save personnel costs, Adm. Chris Grady told a combined hearing before the House Armed Services readiness and seapower and projection forces subcommittees.

“As we sailed through that environment, we recognized that that was too few, and indeed since 2012 the number on a DDG was 240; in 2017 it’s about 270 and will be funded back up very close to the original size of a guided-missile destroyer in 2023 at about 318,” he said.

“Personnel is expensive, and that number did not work out well, and we’re now buying back to a larger size crew complement for a destroyer.”

According to the written testimony from Grady and U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. John Aquilino submitted for the hearing, the missing sailors are from the mid-grade and senior enlisted ranks that will take years to train and place in the fleet. The pair indicated there wasn’t a specific set of billets they needed to fill with the new sailors but rather that they were needed across platforms at sea.

That number could grow as the Navy adds ships to the fleet and personnel needs rise, Grady said. Growing sailors fast enough to the level of technical ability to operate the proposed 355 ships is set to be a major challenge for the service and a key focus of the Navy’s ongoing surface reform effort.

Acute manning problems were found to be a factor in the fatal collisions of USS *Fitzgerald* (DDG-62) and USS *John McCain* (DDG-56). For example, *Fitzgerald* did not have lookouts on the bridge wing immediately before the crash, and sailors aboard *McCain* weren’t qualified to use the helm controls which contributed to its collision.

In the short term, Aquilino said all surface ships in the Pacific are staffed to meet the minimum qualifications outlined in the surface reforms.

“All the forces on the Pacific side deployed meet the standard of 95 percent fill and 92 percent fit, which is the right job with the right person with right skills,” he told the panel. “That was one of the changes that we absolutely pulled up to the highest level to make sure that no one is out there well below a certain level and somebody didn’t know.”

Grady and Aquilino told the panel that fixing the surface forces after almost 20 years of neglect would take years of sustained effort and funds that would extend past the boost in spending of the last two defense budgets.

<https://news.usni.org/2019/02/26/fleet-forces-navy-short-6200-at-sea-sailors-now-to-meet-new-manning-requirements>

“We had a sizeable plus-up; you are saying those current sustained level needs to continue for years and years to do the job properly?” asked Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-Col.).

“Absolutely,” replied Aquilino.

While the pair highlighted the wins from the Navy’s reform efforts of the surface force, some members expressed frustration with how the service has kept the fixes to a list of 108 items found in the two reviews conducted in the weeks after the fatal collisions and not looked at broader changes.

“My fear is that the Navy will measure their progress against the comprehensive review and the strategic ready review checklist and will miss the fundamental overhaul necessary to right a sinking ship,” Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.) said during his opening statement.

“It’s apparent that senior leadership failed to put adequate systems in place to prevent these collisions. It’s apparent that senior leadership’s acceptance of unnecessary risk to meet [combatant commander] demands led to the deaths of 17 of our nation’s finest.”

Rep. Elaine Luria (D-Va.), a former guided-missile cruiser executive officer now in her first term in Congress, said the two reviews added to similar studies that issued similar warnings over the last decade, including the so-called [Balisle Report that warned of a systemic surface ship readiness shortfall almost a decade ago](#).

“We continue to be incapable of properly manning, training and equipping our surface forces, in my mind, to perform the most basic functions of seamanship and navigation, and for two decades we prioritized efficiency over effectiveness as is clearly delineated in the Balisle Report,” Luria said.

“We face yet again another damning report that we prioritize breadth over depth of experience.”

Here's How Each Service Is Tackling Poor Military Base Housing Conditions

By Oriana Pawlyk

Military.com, February 25, 2019



Under Secretary Ryan McCarthy visited the homes of Soldiers and their families at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Feb. 21, 2019. (U.S. Army)

Each of the military services this week has announced plans to conduct inspections of base housing and interviews with families to discover how badly service members have been impacted by unhealthy living conditions.

In the wake of recent reports of neglected facilities and hazardous living conditions, as well as [ongoing pressure from lawmakers](#) to rectify the problem, the services issued directives on how they plan to address problems, including black mold, rodent and bug infestations, water damage, radon contamination and faulty wiring.

The Air Force last week ordered commanders at all its bases worldwide to conduct a "100 percent review of the condition and safety of all military housing by March 1," Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson and Chief of Staff Gen David Goldfein [said in a joint statement](#).

Wilson plans to visit MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, Wednesday to speak with affected families and housing management leadership about what more can be done to corner the dilemma, the [Tampa Bay Times reported Monday](#).

The service will conduct home walk-throughs and interviews with families at all 74,500 family housing units across the Air Force, officials said. In addition to an immediate Air Force Inspector General review on how the service has been responding to housing complaints, senior leaders at bases "will be responsible for identifying and helping resolve a host of problems in housing where airmen and their families live," according to a Feb. 19 release.

Air Force officials told Military.com they would have to receive permission before entering any military family's home.

The Navy will conduct home inspections and reach out to "100 [percent] of Sailors living in government and Public Private Venture (PPV) family housing" to understand whether families are satisfied, the service said Feb. 23.

"Every Sailor residing in PPV or government housing will be afforded an opportunity for a visit from their command at their residence no later than April 15, 2019," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith said in a release. The visits will be voluntary and by invitation only.

"The purpose of these visits is to raise Navy awareness of family living conditions, to allow command leadership to personally observe any issues affecting the home and to understand any actions being taken to address them," officials said.

The visits will serve as an opportunity to help sailors and their families resolve any outstanding housing issues, they said.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/25/heres-how-each-service-tackling-poor-military-base-housing-conditions.html>

Richardson and Smith said additional information on how sailors and spouses can reach out to report a problem [will be published this week](#).

"This is unacceptable and will be resolved," [Richardson wrote on Twitter](#). "We are prioritizing efforts to better understand our Sailors' living conditions in on-base government family and PPV housing to ensure that as residents they are provided with the quality of life they have earned and deserve."

Echoing the CNO, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller said he "expects commanders to know how their Marines and Sailors are living and to advocate for them."

"Because we care, we have an obligation to be personally involved in the lives and welfare of our Marines and their families," [Neller wrote Feb. 22 on Twitter](#).

The Marine Corps [issued a "white letter"](#) to commanders and senior enlisted leaders to conduct voluntary home visits to all who reside in government quarters, privatized military housing or off-base civilian rental property by April 15, the service said in a statement.

Command teams will visit only those members "who accept the command's offer of assistance" but will still "provide information on how to address housing concerns," the statement said.

Officials could bring about more effective changes by holding government housing contractors in check, some Pentagon leaders said.

Last week, Army Secretary Mark Esper, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley and Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey [met with the heads of seven contracting companies](#) following a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on how Defense Department leaders plan to solve the widespread problems.

Esper, Milley and Dailey traveled to Fort Meade, Maryland, earlier this month to conduct their own inspection of the privately managed housing on the installation, where they observed what they described as "unacceptable ... deficient housing conditions."

Dailey traveled to Fort Belvoir, Virginia, last week while Army Under Secretary Ryan McCarthy conducted similar tours at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Fort Eustis, Virginia, the Army announced Monday.

"We will stop at nothing to make sure that we are doing the right thing by our Soldiers," McCarthy said in a statement. "It shouldn't take us going to stand in someone's kitchen to understand the extent of the problem."

Companies that met with the service include Balfour Beatty Communities, CRC Companies LLC, Corvias Military Living, Hunt Military Communities, Lincoln Military Housing, Lendlease Corp. and Michael's Military Housing.

The Army has also said it would step up inspections of all base housing and hold town halls across more than 40 installations for soldiers and families living in more than 87,000 homes, according to a service release.

In addition to oversight of housing and improved communication with the companies, Esper, Milley and Dailey said they had agreed to a tenant bill of rights that would suspend certain fees and let soldiers withhold rent payments if their housing issues aren't solved.

The Air Force and the Navy [said they too support a tenant bill of rights](#) that would provide troops with more protection with housing authorities, [according to a Reuters interview](#).

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/25/heres-how-each-service-tackling-poor-military-base-housing-conditions.html>

Issues over the safety of privately managed military housing were exposed last year in several months-long investigations [by Reuters, titled "Ambushed at Home."](#)

They included reports of [children poisoned by lead in older homes](#) and [families falling ill as the result of mold growth in new construction](#).

Patricia Kime contributed to this report.

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SEE ALSO:

[Personnel Chiefs Blame Unsafe Housing on Leadership Failures](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-02-28]

[Service chiefs to face tough questions on military housing failures](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-02-27]

[Army Under Secretary on Housing Crisis: 'It's Embarrassing'](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-02-27]

[Army Undersecretary says housing issues are an 'embarrassing' reflection on 'every leader in the Army'](#) [*Task & Purpose*, 2019-02-26]

[Military offers inspections, promises better service in reaction to substandard housing](#) [*Federal News Network*, 2019-02-26]

[The military is getting serious about putting eyes on your mold and other housing problems](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-02-25]

[What Big Navy will do to fix its housing problem](#) [*Navy Times*, 2019-02-24]

[Senior Army Leaders Begin Crackdown on Private Housing Problems](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-02-21]

Is VA shortchanging women's health programs?

By Leo Shane III

Military Times, February 28, 2019



Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Deven King speaks to sailors and Marines assigned to a female engagement team with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard the USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) on Jan 23, 2019. On Thursday, lawmakers expressed concerns that funding for Veterans Affairs programs on women's health aren't keeping up with the growing female veteran population. (Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kaitlyn E. Eads/Navy)

WASHINGTON — Veterans Affairs officials say they are facing a “tsunami wave” of [women veterans](#) entering their systems, but lawmakers worry that the department’s annual budget requests aren’t keeping up with that demand.

Funding for [health services specifically for women](#) in VA has increased about 16 percent over the last five years, totaling just over \$500 million in fiscal 2019.

But that figure is less than 1 percent of [overall veterans health spending](#), even though women veterans represent one of the fastest growing populations using department care. The number of women using Veterans Health Administration services has tripled since 2001, and is expected to grow even faster coming years.

“To me, that cries out for an increase in resources,” said Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., and chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee’s panel on veterans issues. “I don’t know how you don’t, given the explosion in women coming to VA.”

Her comments came at a committee hearing about two weeks before the expected release of the White House’s fiscal 2020 budget, one that President Donald Trump has publicly vowed will rein in spending on non-defense programs.

The VA budget broke \$200 billion for the first time last year, but department leaders and outside advocates have argued that additional monies are needed in fiscal 2020 to keep up with demands on the system.

About 10 percent of the veterans population in America today are women, but they make up nearly 16 percent of the active-duty military force. That points to a steady increase in the women’s veterans population in coming years.

VA officials at Thursday’s meeting on women veterans issues deferred on the possible budget requests for women-specific services but said they believe they have made significant progress in reforming the system in recent years.

Dr. Patricia Hayes, chief consultant for VA’s Women’s Health Services, said all VA hospitals nationwide and 90 percent of VA community outpatient clinics have on site at least two care specialists focused on women’s health. Mammogram and maternity services at VA facilities have been expanded significantly.

But Hayes also acknowledged “small but persistent disparities in access for women veterans, who overall are waiting longer for appointments than males.” Leadership is looking for answers to that problem, including accelerated hiring of staff and identifying locations with particular cultural challenges that could add to the problem.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/02/28/is-va-spending-enough-on-womens-health-programs/>

More than 40 percent of women veterans in the VA system have been diagnosed with at least one mental health condition, adding to the need for trained staff personnel to provide them assistance.

Lawmakers said they believe some of those issues could be solved with more funding.

“Be specific about what your needs are, where we can target extra money,” Rep. John Carter, R-Texas, and ranking member of the veterans panel, asked the VA officials. “We are serious about this. We have to get this right.”

Hayes said the department would evaluate in coming weeks whether those concerns from Congress would require a boost to the president’s already planned budget request for the department.

That budget draft is expected to be released the week of March 11. Lawmakers in the House and Senate are expected to debate the details throughout the spring and summer.

The Marine Corps is ‘paranoid,’ the Navy does not play with others. This new study analyzes the effects of service rivalries.

By Tara Copp

Military Times, February 28, 2019

Does this sound like your service?

The [Marine Corps](#) is a “middleweight” naval expeditionary force in readiness; perceives itself as adaptive, innovative, and frugal; and is institutionally paranoid.

The [Navy](#) is characterized by “hierarchical structure, deep branch distinctions, and a preference for operating forward and independently from the other services.”

The [Air Force](#) values “technology above all else,” is “experiencing an internal identity crisis” and is “highly effective in competing for resources.”

The [Army](#) feels “that it alone understands war, and that it is too selfless, taking on every task asked of it.”

Those were some of the conclusions reached in a new [think-tank study](#) by the Rand Corp. looking at competitiveness between the services and how their culture succeeds or fails in beating out the other services for resources.

“Service personalities are alive and well,” Rand found, not only in a competition for budget dollars, but also for influential joint assignments and for integral missions in military operations.

Some compete more than others, Rand found. The Navy no longer sees competition for budget dollars as a zero-sum game but instead has significant intra-service competition between its own varied shipbuilding and modernization demands. And as far as those joint billets go, “the Navy places less value on joint assignments than the Army does, with the exception of retaining command of U.S. Pacific Command,” Rand found.

The Army focuses heavily on ensuring that ground combat remains a central theme of future capabilities and has a ‘fallback’ goal of participation in every contingency,” Rand said.

“For the Army, there can be no war in which the Army does not play a role, whether that is serving as a task force headquarters or providing logistics and communication.”

“In some essential way, then, each of these services is constantly fighting to ensure its place in future war,” Rand found.

Conversely, the services compete even more intensely “not to be saddled with missions they find undesirable,” Rand said, citing the Air Force.

The Air Force spurned unmanned aviation for years, Rand said, “before finally becoming convinced it was a boon.”

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SEE ALSO:

[Report: If the military wants to hold on to special operators, they should do this](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-02-28]

[Here’s what Big Navy says it’s doing to fix the surface fleet](#) [*Navy Times*, 2019-02-28]

New fitness test presents challenges for Army Guard

By Lolita C. Baldor

The Associated Press, February 26, 2019



In this photo taken Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2019, U.S. Army troops training to serve as instructors participate in the new Army combat fitness test at the 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade compound at Fort Bragg, N.C. The Army National Guard is looking for nearly 5,000 fitness instructors and buying roughly \$40 million in workout equipment in the next seven months to help its soldiers meet new physical fitness standards being set by the military service. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army National Guard is looking for nearly 5,000 fitness instructors and buying roughly \$40 million in workout equipment in the next seven months to help its soldiers meet new physical fitness standards being set by the military service.

But even as commanders begin delivering the new 10-pound medicine balls, pull-up bars and hexagon barbells, they also worry whether America's 330,000 citizen soldiers will have the time and the drive to master the new, more grueling Army fitness test.

“For those who are already doing well on their physical fitness test and they have the routine figured out, I think they’re going to transition to this new test without any issues,” said Army National Guard Lt. Col. Brian Dean, who is responsible for implementing the new test across the Guard. “People who are in those parts of their life where they’re still kinda struggling to make the right time for fitness and do fitness in the right ways — this will feel significant.”

Could the new physical demands drive soldiers out of the Guard? “It’s a concern,” Dean said.

Spread out in more than 2,800 armories around the country, members of the Army Guard are required to do weekend duty once a month and a two-week stint during the year. A number of units are also tapped by state governors for help during hurricanes, wildfires, border problems and other events. And, during the peak of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, Guard units were routinely called up for active-duty deployments to fill needs that couldn’t be met by the overstretched active-duty troops in the battle zones.

Still, many Guard members see more limited duty, and are often focused on their full-time jobs and other commitments, which can be hundreds of miles from the nearest military base.

“Ninety percent of my soldiers are part-time,” Maj. Gen. Timothy Orr, the adjutant general for the Iowa National Guard, told The Associated Press in an interview. “I think there’s apprehension. There’s always the question of how are we going to do this with the time that we have, and the equipment we have.”

Orr, who has been in the Guard for 40 years, said that a key unanswered issue will be how soldiers with various permanent physical limitations will be treated, particularly those who have served for many years. Under the current fitness test, troops can arrange to substitute certain exercises for ones they can’t do.

For example, someone with a knee injury who can’t run two miles is able to substitute swimming or bicycling for part of the current fitness test. Orr said the Army is still working through the details, so it’s not clear yet how they will handle the matter and whether there will be alternate tests.

“I think we have committed troops today, committed leaders, and folks will step up to the challenge,” said Orr, who has about 8,600 Guard soldiers in his state. “There may be select individuals that will say, ‘Hey,

<https://www.apnews.com/77aac5b315be4e74822279b65c6ecf05>

I've had enough and I want to leave.' But I think we're a professional Army and this is just another of the many challenges we've had, especially over the last 18 years."

The Army's current physical fitness test, which is being replaced by a new more strenuous one, consisted of two minutes of push-ups and sit-ups and a two-mile run. By Oct. 1, Army soldiers will begin taking the new test, which takes about an hour and includes a deadlift, more difficult push-ups, a sled-drag, an array of other exercises, and ends with the two-mile run.

Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, all soldiers will have to routinely pass the new test in order to qualify for their military jobs.

Dean said the Guard wants to give its soldiers a full year to learn and train for the new test. So, all the equipment and trainers must be in place in all the armories by October.

"What we don't want is to have people who never trained on weight-lifting equipment grabbing that stuff and injuring themselves," Dean said.

Orr said he would like to see physical therapists assigned to each state that can help Guard soldiers prevent injuries or help them heal if they get hurt.

Dean said the Army is providing funding for the equipment and Guard leaders are working out how much of it has to be delivered to each armory and state training center. Since units across the country are different sizes and compositions, it will take time to figure out how much equipment each community needs.

The biggest challenge, said Dean, is the timeline — particularly identifying the thousands of trainers needed to staff all of the armories and work with soldiers on the new fitness regime. It takes about two days to get someone certified, and he said that so far only about 500 of the needed 5,000 trainers are in place.

Getting the rest, he said, "is a challenge, but it's not insurmountable."



SEE ALSO:

[These soldiers will be the first to take the Army's new fitness test for the record](#) [*Army Times*, 2019-02-22]

New uniforms revealed! Fashionable and FREE!

By Mark D. Faram

Navy Times, February 25, 2019



Operations Specialist Seaman Demetrus Jones from the guided-missile destroyer Truxtun shows how the black Gortex parka (with a second class petty officer tab) pairs with the flame-resistant, two-piece organizational clothing prototype in the navy blue variant. U.S. Fleet Forces Command will conduct a second test of the prototype later this year. The goal of the initiative is to provide a no-cost, safe, and comfortable organizational clothing option to the improved, flame-resistant variant (IFRV) coverall. (Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stacy M. Atkins Ricks/Navy)

NORFOLK, Va. — Six years after banning combustible Navy Working Uniforms from ships, officials are celebrating what they hope is the latest line of practical, comfortable and flame-retardant shipboard clothing.

Another round of wear-testing is slated for July, but if it pans out this two-piece uniform could become optional issued clothing when you report on board ship — no trips to [Navy Exchange](#), no money out of your annual uniform allowance.

And you can thank U.S. Fleet Forces Command, which is based here.

“The effort started as a safety issue and it still is,” [Fleet Master Chief Rick O’Rawe](#) told Navy Times. “But right now, the shipboard uniform for everyone is coveralls. But not all sailors want, or even need, coveralls. So finding an alternative based in common sense is what we need to get to.”

But Fleet Forces wasn’t merely hoping to hike safety with the new [Maritime Two-Piece Fire-Retardant Variant](#) uniform. Designers also wanted to improve the heavy-duty workwear’s fit, fashion and function.

Focus groups in 2016 revealed that 84 percent of surveyed sailors wanted to put on something other than the standard coveralls.

An initial round of wear-testing last year unleashed a flood of disgruntled feedback, telling designers that sailors also want to go from home to work and back in rugged comfort, too.

More than 70 percent of sailors liked the traditional color schemes of all-blue uniforms for pay grades E-6 and below, with khaki clothing for chiefs and above.

The “[throwback dungaree](#)” light blue shirt and dark blue trousers flopped and digital fabric patterns were often unpopular, too.

O’Rawe said many sailors want the sea service to “just move into something that looks like the Navy and not like you are in the woods.”

Sifting through the surveys, Big Navy found that shipboard sailors simply desire a uniform with the form, fit and function of the Type III, in colors that make sense to seagoing men and women.

“The pattern they’re using to cut the NWU Type III is the pattern they’re using to cut these uniforms,” said O’Rawe. “It’s just made out of a different material that’s fire-retardant and is a solid color, either solid blue or khaki.”

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/02/25/new-uniforms-revealed-fashionable-and-free/>

After testing four varieties of fabric, sailors also preferred a lighter “rip-stop” look but with better comfort and durability than what they found in their non-fire-retardant uniforms, according to Lt. Cmdr. Jennifer Biby, the assistant program manager for organizational clothing at Fleet Forces Command.



Yeoman 1st Class Kelly Pyron, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, and Force Master Chief Huben L. Phillips, Naval Air Force Atlantic, model the flame-resistant, two-piece organizational clothing prototype on board the aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman. The Navy will conduct a second wear test of the prototype later this year. (Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stacy M. Atkins Ricks/Navy)

Those in grades E-6 and below favored dark blue fabric because it better hid the smears and smudges hard-working sailors pick up on board a ship. But they didn’t want it to look like the [Coast Guard’s blue uniform](#).

“The blouse of the Coast Guard uniform is shorter, and the color is lighter, more of a royal blue,” Biby said. “And also, the cut of the NWU Type III is much different, so both the look to others and the feel by the wearer aren’t the same, either.”

Designers put all of that together into a prototype for sailors to try out this summer.

Yeoman 1st Class Kelly Pyron not only participated in the wear-testing trial last year but she donned the prototype daily in January to see how it fit.

“It mirrors the Type III’s looks, but it’s way more comfortable because the material is lighter,” she said. “I had to wear my Type IIIs for a couple of days recently and I just couldn’t wait to get back into this test uniform.”

As with the coveralls, Pyron’s prototype uniform is woven with fire-retardant fibers. There isn’t a coating that’s sprayed on and likely to wash away quickly.

In fact, Pyron’s prototype was designed to be worn without any ironing, straight out of the dryer. She praised it for providing “unity between the ship and shore look” while preserving the locations of the Type III’s pockets and other features “so there’s no getting used to something different.”

To O’Rawe, the fire-resistant fibers are vital. They give sailors the confidence to battle a blaze instantly without the fear of their workwear igniting, a worry they harbored about the Type I uniforms that finally get phased out on Oct. 1.

[Type I](#) clothing was banned on ships six years ago after investigators found it will [“burn robustly until completely consumed”](#) once exposed to flame.

The Navy’s goal is to provide a uniform that can be worn by sailors on flight decks, inside submarines or across the surface fleet. That’s why O’Rawe said the trousers don’t have buttons, all pockets close with Velcro and the fly is secured by a traditional zipper.

Free from creating foreign object debris, there’s now no need to buy flight deck pants.

“You’ll just remove the blouse and put on your flight deck jersey, float coat and cranial and go to work,” O’Rawe said. “Those who work the deck generally already wear flight deck boots anyway, so they’re all set.”

With the new uniform, sailors working in hot climates or tight spaces also can easily “deblouse” their tops. “The material is lighter anyway, so that helps, too,” said Pyron. “But being able to shed the blouse is huge and a feature sailors really like when I’m explaining the uniform to them on board ships.”

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/02/25/new-uniforms-revealed-fashionable-and-free/>

O’Rawe thinks the new uniform might win over a few of his fellow engineers, who have long worn coveralls as a point of pride.

“I think that many of our engineers will end up just wearing this because of the flexibility it has and the fact you don’t have to change into something else if you have someplace else to be or you are heading home,” he said.

Unlike coveralls, the new two-piece uniforms don’t have to come off before a sailor leaves the ship or pier.

“I’m not allowed out in town in coveralls, so I put a uniform on to go to work and then change into a uniform to do work in,” O’Rawe said. “Then I have to change back again because I have a dental appointment or something else to go, on or off base. But when I return to the ship, I have to again change back into a uniform to work in.”

O’Rawe said it boils down to time, a “precious commodity” he wants to give back to sailors.

And for those who want to keep the coveralls, they’re not going away. The two-piece is just an issued option. A moisture-wicking black undershirt comes standard with both uniforms.

Biby said that the dark T-shirt tested last year sported a neck that holds up well in the shipboard laundry, so it’s a keeper.

The new uniform is expected to pair well with the NWU’s existing accessories such as the optional all-weather parka, the fire-resistant fleece jacket and the ball caps sailors wear today.

“If you’re already invested in those optional items, it’s nice to be able to wear them with this new uniform, too,” said Pyron. “That wasn’t the case with the test uniforms last year.”

Although the prototype retains the Type III’s slip-on rank insignia worn on a blouse tab in the middle of the chest, other traditional markings are still being debated, O’Rawe said.

The new uniforms likely will be issued with the U.S. Navy tag over the right pocket instead of the left, similar to the issued woodland Type III clothing. Instead of sewn name tapes, sailors will affix Velcro patches over the left pocket, allowing them to swap between the new uniforms and traditional coveralls.

Designers are mulling several color schemes for this summer’s testing, but those details haven’t been worked out yet.

O’Rawe said other patches and a variety of “flags, command insignia and name tapes with warfare qualifications” also could be tried out, including subdued patches and those in full color.

Those details haven’t been hashed out yet, but they might get tweaked when about 100 sailors on warships, submarines and aviation squadrons start the 90-day test in July.

O’Rawe says officials want to see what three months of a ship’s laundry does to the new duds.

But even if the new uniforms ace every test, they likely won’t be widely distributed across the fleet before 2021.

“It’s a process that takes time,” O’Rawe said. “Even once contracts are in place, it will take time to build up an inventory that will allow you to start issuing and be able to support the uniform long-term.”



SEE ALSO:

[100 Sailors Set to Participate in New Navy Uniform Wear Test](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-02-27]

Supreme Court vacates appeals court gender-neutral pay ruling written by a deceased judge

By Richard Wolf

USA TODAY, February 25, 2019



The Supreme Court acted in a case involving pay equity between the sexes. (Photo: Jim Watson, AFP/Getty Images)

WASHINGTON – The Supreme Court vacated a federal appeals court decision Monday for a simple reason: It was filed after the judge who wrote it had died.

"Federal judges are appointed for life, not for eternity," the justices wrote in an unsigned, five-page opinion.

A California county had asked the Supreme Court to reconsider the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit ruling in part because it was written by Judge Stephen Reinhardt, who died March 29, 2018 at age 87. The ruling was filed 11 days later, on April 9.

"Deceased judges cannot decide cases," Shay Dvoretzky, the lawyer for the school district, argued in court papers.

The Supreme Court agreed, noting that Reinhardt's reasoning in the case was endorsed by just six of the 11 judges on the panel, which meant his vote was critical. Although the decision wasn't altered after his death, the high court said judges could have changed their votes, making it an active case until the decision was issued.

"Because Judge Reinhardt was no longer a judge at the time when the en banc decision in this case was filed, the Ninth Circuit erred in counting him as a member of the majority," the justices said. "That practice effectively allowed a deceased judge to exercise the judicial power of the United States after his death."

Reinhardt was a well-known liberal judge who served on the equally liberal appeals court for more than 37 years. He was the last appeals court judge in active service who was appointed by President Jimmy Carter.

The justices' order does not settle the central issue in the case – whether men and women can be paid differently for the same work [because of their prior salaries](#).

Fresno County hired a female math consultant at a lower salary than her male counterparts. School officials reasoned that salary history was a permissible, gender-neutral basis for determining pay rates under the federal Equal Pay Act of 1963.

The appeals court disagreed last year in an opinion written by Reinhardt, ruling unanimously that "prior salary alone or in combination with other factors cannot justify a wage differential" because it would perpetuate a pay gap between men and women.

Thirteen states, including California, and 10 local governments now prohibit employers from seeking job applicants' salary history. But federal appeals courts are split on whether prior pay can be considered along with other factors.

The central issue in the case is whether salary history is a job-related factor, such as work experience, ability and performance. Because women historically have been paid less than men for the same job, the appeals court ruled that it was not.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/02/25/supreme-court-vacates-appeals-court-ruling-written-deceased-judge-gender-neutral-pay/2909718002/>

"If money talks, the message to women costs more than ... billions. Women are told they are not worth as much as men," Reinhardt wrote for six of the court's 11 judges, all of whom agreed with the result.

"Allowing prior salary to justify a wage differential perpetuates this message, entrenching in salary systems an obvious means of discrimination."

The appeals court now must consider the case anew, without Reinhardt's presence.

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SEE ALSO:

[U.S. Supreme Court nixes equal pay ruling due to judge's death](#) [*Reuters*, 2019-02-25]

Survey Says: Majority of Spouses Satisfied With Military Life

By C. Todd Lopez

Defense.gov, February 22, 2019

WASHINGTON—The latest survey of active-duty and reserve-component service members' spouses shows the spouses are, by and large, happy with the military lifestyles they lead.

Defense Department officials briefed reporters at the Pentagon yesterday on the results of the surveys, which were conducted in 2017.

The survey of active-duty spouses and a similar survey of National Guard and Reserve spouses showed similar results, they said. Among active-duty spouses, 60 percent claimed they are "satisfied" with their military way of life. Among the reserve components, 61 percent were satisfied.

While both surveys showed a slight decrease from the last previous survey, conducted in 2015, the 2015 and 2017 results both were higher than results from the same question on the 2008 survey, officials noted.

James N. Stewart, performing the duties of the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told reporters the surveys cover areas including satisfaction with military life, spouse employment, deployment and reintegration. Questions also touch on issues such as finances and the impact of deployments on families and military children.

Survey Results Inform Decisions

Results are used to inform decisions about how the U.S. military provides services to families, he said.

"These surveys allow us to identify areas of concern and understand what's working, and more importantly, what's not," Stewart said. "This information also helps our internal leaders evaluate programs, address issues and gaps, and determine the need for new services."

Paul Rosenfeld, the director for DOD's Center for Retention and Readiness, said positive results of the surveys included general spouse support for military members continuing to serve. Among reserve component spouses, for instance, 81 percent support continued service for their spouse.

Regarding financial matters, 71 percent of active-duty spouses report being comfortable with their financial situation, while 68 percent of reserve-component spouses say the same thing.

Of concern, Rosenfeld said, is that among active-duty spouses, 61 percent support continued military service for their spouse -- that's a drop from 68 percent in 2012. "Spouse support for service members staying on duty predicts actual member retention," Rosenfeld said.

Other points of concern revealed by the surveys are high levels of "loneliness" reported by spouses when military members are deployed and unemployment rates for active-duty military spouses. Among active-duty spouses, Rosenfeld said, unemployment sits at 24 percent. Among the spouses of junior enlisted members in the E-1 through E-4 pay grades, he said, that number sits at 29 percent.

It's All About the Kids

When it comes to military spouses, Rosenfeld said, family is most important, and children top the list.

<https://dod.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1765050/survey-says-majority-of-spouses-satisfied-with-military-life/>

"Child care continues to be a key need for active-duty families," he said, adding that 42 percent of active-duty spouses with children under age 6 report regularly using child care. It's 63 percent for spouses who are employed.

Carolyn S. Stevens, director of DOD's Office of Military Family Readiness Policy, said some 40 percent of military members have children. Of those children, she said, about 38 percent are under the age of 6.

Past survey results showed that availability of child care — in particular, hours of operation -- had been an issue for military families, Stevens said. Where hours of operation for child care may have affected service members' ability to do their mission, hours were expanded, she added.

Subsequent survey results show that now, among those who don't make use of child care on installations, only 2 percent say it's due to hours of operation, she said.

"We believe, then, that those responses are a confirmation that we've listened to a concern, that we've responded to that concern, and that in fact we've hit the mark," she said.

Also of concern when it comes to child care is cost and availability. About 45 percent of respondents on the survey say cost of child care is a problem for military families, Stevens said. She noted that in some situations, appropriated funds can be used to lower the cost of child care for families who use installation child care. And for some families, she said, fee assistance programs can be used to lower costs for those who use community-based child care.

Still, Stevens acknowledged, that's not possible for every family who needs it, and more work needs to be done. "We are unable to provide fee assistance to all of our families, and we continue to see this as an issue that requires more attention and focus as we try to find solutions for families," she said.

Next Survey: 2019

For the 2017 survey, about 45,000 active-duty spouses were asked to participate, and about 17 percent of those responded. Among reserve-component spouses, 55,000 were invited to participate, with a response rate of 18 percent.

Invitations to participate in the 2019 survey went out to reserve component spouses in January. An invitation will be sent to active-duty spouses in May.

A.T. Johnston, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy, said the results from the 2017 survey, and the now ongoing 2019 survey, will continue to be used to improve quality of life for military families.

"The research information we receive guides me and my team to ensure we provide the tools, information and services that military families need to be successful, fulfilled, and able to manage the challenges they may encounter during military service," Johnston said.

Go to <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/web/mos/reports-and-surveys> for full results of the 2017 surveys.

SEE ALSO:

[Spouses have more problems, less support during deployments, survey finds](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-02-22]

[Army Ends \\$18,000 Child Care Subsidy for Civilians](#) [*Government Executive*, 2019-02-22]

[Loneliness, Unemployment Among Top Concerns for Military Spouses, Survey Finds](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-02-21]

[Military services delay financial help for spouse employment](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-02-21]

Targeted Messaging: Military Recruiters Getting Creative to Reach Gen Z

By Oriana Pawlyk

Military.com, February 24, 2019



Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Rashad Archie, a recruiter assigned to Navy Recruiting District Jacksonville, uses virtual reality goggles to show members of Edgewater High School's Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps what it is like to serve in the Navy during Navy Recruiting Command's "Swarm" Orlando evolution. Eighty-one recruiters from Navy Recruiting Command, Navy Recruiting District Jacksonville and the Navy's virtual reality asset, the Nimitz, compile a "Swarming Team," which is a new recruiting strategy in support of the national policy to build a 355-ship Navy.

(Kyle Hafer/U.S. Navy)

Marine Corps Gen. Charles Krulak had just played for a room full of other top officers his service's next recruitment commercial -- a now iconic mini-drama depicting a young man who slays a fearsome dragon and becomes a Marine.

It was the 1990s, and Krulak, the 31st commandant, was interested in hearing what the others thought of the campaign to get more grunts to walk through the door. The initial reviews were mixed at best, and some even said they didn't like it very much.

"Well, that's just tough because it's not for you. It's for the generation we're trying to recruit, and it speaks to them, not to you," he reportedly replied.

It was a moment recalled by Jeffery Peterson, a retired Marine colonel who now works as a research lead at CNA, a data analytics and research organization outside Washington, D.C.

Peterson said he cites Krulak's thinking because recruiting strategies need to follow that model. In other words, it isn't about the service. Or the recruiter. Or a bunch of old guys in a room. It's about the young man or woman coming through the door or, these days, Skyping in or reacting to a message posted on Facebook or YouTube.

Military recruiters today face a daunting number of challenges: Fewer young people meet basic qualifications for military service, and the ones who do face competitive offers in the private sector, thanks to a booming economy. Many Americans don't fully understand military service, and recruiters often must win over not only the prospective recruit, but also skeptical or overprotective parents. On top of that, recruiters must tailor their message to a rising new generation -- young people with different priorities and means of communication than their predecessors. In response, the military services are getting more creative than ever before in devising ways to connect with prospective recruits and tell their story.

And when it comes to telling that story, the more tailor-made the message, the better.

"The most important language in the world is the language of the person you're trying to speak with," Peterson said in a recent interview with Military.com.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/24/targeted-messaging-military-recruiters-getting-creative-reach-gen-z.html>

Peterson, who commissioned in the Marine Corps in 1982, was a recruiting station commander in Montgomery, Alabama, between 1995 and 1998. He served in staff, commanding officer and chief of staff positions throughout the Corps' manpower, recruiting and training services for 30 years.

Military recruitment has had its challenges in recent years, with each service rebranding its strategy, from the Army's recently released soldier-created [rap video](#) to the Navy's new tagline, "[Forged by the Sea.](#)"

An improved economy, with more jobs available in the private sector, has been a major challenge to recruiting. Stepping up to serve may not be as appealing an option to some teens, experts told Military.com in recent weeks.

Other obstacles include a shrinking pool of qualified prospective candidates due to [rising obesity rates](#) and other health issues, and a lack of awareness of what an all-volunteer force does.

A lingering stigma about the military being too tough on kids during boot camp, or sending them off to war zones at a moment's notice, has some parents telling recruiters, "Thank you for your service, but this is not for my child," one recruiter said.

So what needs to be done to be effective in ushering in the next generation?

For one thing, eliminate the one-size-fits-all approach, Peterson said.

"People love to ask, 'Well, what works?' And to quote a friend of mine ... the key to recruiting is 'Why does somebody enlist?' And the reason they enlist is because they have a large number of impressions over a long period of time through different mediums," he said.

"There's always been this notion that we ought to save money by having joint advertising, but the reality is, each of the services have very different cultures and missions and characteristics," he added. "Converting interest into an enlistment is a big step."

More Awareness in the Information Age

Peterson said it's tough to tell whether certain campaigns -- a commercial, a branded logo at a sporting event -- are effective, because there's not much statistical evidence that shows they are. But "you have to try it" all, he said.

The retired colonel said the military operates like an all-recruited force. A relatively small number of aspiring young service members actually walk through the door knowing the military is for them from the end of their high school education, he said.

"The other 90 percent start from a position of indifference at best, and at worst they're a 'no,' and that's where the recruiters come in," Peterson said.

Generation Z -- including those born from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s -- is also a tough nut to crack. They are too young to have memories of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, only knowing what they read in history books or heard from family members.

"Perhaps more than their predecessors, 'Gen-Z' will expect and demand that civilian and military leaders explain America's role around the world -- both the persistent fights in the Middle East and our commitment to the liberal world order we've maintained over the last 70 years," Brendan R. Stickles, former U.S. Navy commanding officer and executive officer of Electronic Attack Squadron 130, [recently wrote in a Brookings Institution article.](#)

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/24/targeted-messaging-military-recruiters-getting-creative-reach-gen-z.html>

"No two members of Gen Z are alike, and their recruiting experiences won't be either," Air Force Recruiting Service officials said in a statement. "We look to generational cues to inform our tone, media channels and certain messaging priorities, but we take a more data-driven approach to each individual."

AFRS said the statement provided to Military.com could not be attributed to a single individual because multiple officials had contributed to it.

Older members of Gen Z -- those born after 1997 -- now represent "the true bullseye" of military recruitment, AFRS explained in the statement. But the Air Force is also thinking ahead.

"We are already looking to Generation Alpha (born after 2010) and what might be on the horizon as we position the Air Force for long-term success," AFRS said in an email. "Complementing broad-reaching media like television -- which still plays an important role -- with unique brand experiences like Augmented Reality, 360 video, gaming and personalized communications ensures we are meeting the needs of the audience to help them see the positive impact the Air Force can have on their life."

The more information in the information age, the better, Peterson added.

"We also think about all those influencers out there who have an effect on these youngsters," he said. "To make sure they have knowledge and information, that's a real challenge. To try to get that awareness up."

In 2016, the Navy took note of these hurdles when appealing to the next generation. The service began focus groups with input from 17-to-21-year-olds -- what it calls the "Centennial Generation."

"The research revealed that there was nearly 100 percent awareness of the Navy, but zero understanding of the Navy's full mission, reach and influence," said Capt. Matt Boren, chief marketing officer of Navy Recruiting Command.

It's something the Army in particular says it struggles with.

The service [missed its 2018 recruiting goal](#) by 6,500, adding 70,000 new soldiers. "But it's still the highest [number of accessions] we've had since 2010," said Lisa Ferguson, spokeswoman for U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC).

The other services reached their targets last year, but by a narrow margin.

The Air Force brought in 29,831 new enlisted airmen in fiscal 2018, as reported [by Air Force Times](#). The service slightly exceeded its goal of 29,700 new airmen.

The Navy and Marine Corps also exceeded expectations, although marginally. The Navy added 39,018 active-duty recruits, exceeding its goal of 39,000; the Marine Corps signed up 31,567 new members to surpass their 31,556 goal, [according to the Defense Department](#).

"There's a lot of factors that make someone ineligible to join," Ferguson said, referencing obesity and health concerns.

But roughly "50 percent of youth admits it knows little to nothing about military service in general," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Dodge, a recruiter and media relations noncommissioned officer for USAREC.

Fewer civilian communities are exposed to military members, said Jeb Blount, an author and CEO of Sales Gravy, a sales recruitment and training firm.

Blount has researched the cause-and-effect challenges in the war for talent for his next book, "Fanatical Military Recruiting."

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/24/targeted-messaging-military-recruiters-getting-creative-reach-gen-z.html>

He said that the mere 0.4 percent of the American population in the armed forces shows a declining trend in service.

"Military bases have consolidated or [closed]" in the last few decades, "and that means young people are less exposed to the military lifestyle, careers or opportunity than ever before," Blount said.

As a result, recruiters "have a massive weight on their shoulder, and they have to work harder than ever to go find these young people," he said.

Localizing Recruiting Efforts

Each of the services has relied heavily on enlisting recruits from [more rural areas](#) and southern states.

"The Army typically gets its recruits from the southeast," Dodge said.

But it's important to reach a [diverse](#) pool of talent, so the Army is expanding its reach, he said.

The service has begun a ["22 cities" initiative](#) to give areas where the service has had difficulty attracting recruits more attention, he said. That includes adding 700 new recruiters in urban areas across the country.

Ferguson said there's even a marketing pilot effort starting in Chicago that is so customized, it is reaching out to potential recruits by city blocks and neighborhoods because where someone grows up makes a difference in his or her worldview.

The pilot, Marketing-Recruiting Integration Pilot (M-RIP), began last fall. The targeted approach is relying on metrics to see if it resonates.

"We are using web analytics through the Army's advertising agency to determine [whether] web traffic increases based on targeted messaging in different areas," Ferguson said.

The Navy has similar efforts.

The service launched its new brand identity, tagline and marketing strategy in March 2018, Boren said, with an intentional shift from traditional marketing toward digital and online efforts.

"We've developed new online products like our video series, 'Faces of the Fleet' and our podcast, Sea Story, intended to make the Navy more tangible in the heartland, a place where often people may have never encountered a Navy sailor," he said in an email.

Faces of the Fleet, a documentary series, has tallied more than 135 million total impressions and led to 31 million engagements on social media, contributing to an increased Centennial engagement with the Navy's official Facebook page, up to 68 percent from 23 percent during fiscal 2018, the service said.

Boren continued, "We've also put a greater emphasis on community outreach. We've adopted a new process we are calling 'swarming,' which involves Navy partnerships with high-profile events to allow an enhanced Navy presence in targeted markets across the country. Our first swarm events, for example, were Miami Heat home games, where we brought in not only additional Navy recruiters, but also an Oculus Rift-based virtual-reality simulator experience, allowing participants to feel the adrenaline of piloting a high-speed assault craft to extract SEALs who are under fire."

Oculus Go virtual-reality headsets gave attendees the chance to experience 360-degree video on aircraft carrier flight decks, and to find themselves in the middle of other real-life Navy operations, he said.

The current engagement strategy has prospective new recruits asking more informed questions about the Navy lifestyle, Boren said.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/24/targeted-messaging-military-recruiters-getting-creative-reach-gen-z.html>

The Air Force Recruiting Service stood up its own "innovation cell" last July in conjunction with the AFWERX program -- a catalyst for "agile Air Force engagement across industry, academia and non-traditional contributors," according to the service -- to look for better, [more tech-savvy ways](#) to attract potential airmen.

For the Army, the key is to tell teens there are options -- that's "it's not just infantry jobs," Ferguson said. "A part of it is making them understand there are 150 jobs they can choose from."

And they must relay that message not only to the recruit, but the recruit's parents.

Dodge said he's encountered helicopter parents "numerous times." They're defined as overprotective or taking excessive interest in their kids, often keeping them on a short leash.

Another type, Peterson said, is the "lawnmower parent," who removes obstacles for their children to prevent them from facing hardships or failures.

"This, again, is because people don't understand what the Army is all about," Dodge said. "All they associate with the Army is ... war. So if a recruiter gets a chance to sit down with that parent, a lot of times we can combat that obstacle."

Peterson agreed. "There's nothing new in that. Regardless of where parents are in that spectrum of involvement, it's really important to bring parents into the conversation."

A lot of it is just being honest, the experts said.

"Be transparent, genuine and honest and be who you really are, because Gen Z and Millennials can see if you're not being truthful about something," Ferguson said. "Not everything is great, and not everything is awful either. It's rarely any extreme on the spectrum."

She added, "Trying new things is what's going to position us for the next five years," referencing how the Army is tackling various mediums, including virtual and digital recruiting teams.

Ferguson said some Army recruiters have worked as substitute teachers, volunteering to teach at high schools and be involved. "Old methods don't always work in every location. What works in Montgomery, Alabama, doesn't necessarily work in Orange County, California," she said.

Authenticity goes a long way, Boren said. "Centennials seek authenticity, and they quickly turn away from anything that is less than genuine or doesn't speak to them in compelling ways," he said. "When it comes to messaging, the Navy is competing with every brand that targets this generation. There is a lot of noise out there, and we remain focused on engaging with prospective sailors on their terms and providing compelling content on the platforms they most regularly use to gather information."

Tackling Perceptions

Blount said a looming threat most aren't thinking about is the growing civilian-military divide.

"It is an existential threat to our military," he said.

It's a broader problem that may not have an immediate solution, said Beth Asch, a senior economist at Rand Corp. who studies labor economics, defense manpower and recruitment of military personnel.

"There's evidence that shows that the general population [doesn't know what military service entails](#) ... and quickly they fall to the stereotypes: that people in the military aren't paid very much, or people who join the military are not very smart or, if you join, you have a high chance of experiencing [PTSD](#)," Asch said. "Data shows that none of these statements are true, or they're not as extreme."

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/24/targeted-messaging-military-recruiters-getting-creative-reach-gen-z.html>

Another notion is that those who join the military can't express ideas that may be considered innovative or "outside the box" because they will be seen as breaking rank.

Peterson said that's simply not true.

Last year, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Kaleth O. Wright said airmen who come up with solutions that can help the service achieve results shouldn't feel like they're boxed in. And failure is OK.

"Do you have a culture in your organization that allows airmen to fail?" Wright asked [during the Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium](#) in Orlando, Florida. "That's how we get there. Creative thinking. We have so many right airmen in our ranks that are just waiting to provide us ideas, innovative concepts, that are also waiting to be disruptive."

Peterson agreed. "This notion that the military is this very structured place -- you want people to say, 'Yes sir,' 'No sir' -- and we don't want you to get outside your box, we don't want you to be disruptive. The reality of it is, that's never really ever been true."

He continued, "There is always been a place for a youngster who comes in who has new and different ideas, who thinks in a way that perhaps the institution maybe hasn't thought about yet, and the idea that those types of people are beaten down or told to be quiet is more of a stereotype more than anything else.

"Those people, in my opinion, have been celebrated and encouraged," Peterson said.

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Vermont lawmakers chooses 35-year vet to lead National Guard

By Wilson Ring

The Associated Press, February 21, 2019



Vermont Army National Guard Adjutant General-elect Gregory Knight smiles as he speaks to reporters after his election at the Vermont Statehouse on Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019 in Montpelier, Vermont. Knight, a 35-year military veteran, promised to focus on changing the culture of the guard to make it more accommodating to women and recruit and retain more members. (AP Photo/Wilson Ring)

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — A 35-year military veteran elected Thursday to run the Vermont National Guard promised to win back the community’s trust and make the organization more welcoming to women after allegations the institution tolerated sexual harassment and other misconduct.

Vermont Army National Guard Col. Gregory Knight was overwhelmingly elected adjutant general out of a field of four candidates by a joint session of the Vermont House and Senate.

“The focus has to be people and that means recruiting and retention, putting people in and keeping them in and that telling the story of the guard, I think we could do a better job of that and getting back the trust of our community,” Knight said outside the House chamber minutes after his election.

Last fall, the online news organization VTDigger.org wrote a series of stories outline allegations the National Guard tolerated sexual harassment, alcohol abuse and retaliation against whistleblowers.

He said the vast majority of people in the guard were “amazing.”

“Where we run into problems and where I’m going to see change, is dealing with the folks who aren’t part of the solution,” he said. “It only takes just a handful of folks to make it bad for everybody and that’s been evident in recent reports.”

Knight said he hoped to meet with all the women in the National Guard to get their perspectives.

The adjutant general leads the guard, ensuring it’s ready for state emergencies and when called to active duty.

Vermont is the only state in the country where the adjutant general is not appointed by the governor. Lawmakers are working on legislation that would change the system.

The Vermont Air National Guard has an authorized strength of about 1,100 service members. The Army National Guard, with an authorized strength of about 2,550, has a number of combat and support units spread across the state.

The Air Guard is preparing to take delivery this fall of F-35 fighter planes, which will replace the aging F-16s it has flown for decades.

Knight said the guard has about 400 vacancies in the Army and Air Guard.

Misconduct

Marine gets 'adverse administrative action' for blaming statutory rape on underage girls

By Jeff Schogol

Task & Purpose, February 25, 2019

A Marine has received "an adverse administrative action and counseling" after [making comments](#) on Facebook that blamed pedophilia victims for being sexually assaulted, said Gunnery Sgt. Jason Fudge, a 2nd Marine Logistics Group spokesman.

Master Sgt. Mark McBride was assigned to the 8th Engineer Support Battalion when 2nd MLG received a complaint alleging that he had engaged in social media misconduct, Fudge told Task & Purpose.

Fudge could not say what type of "administrative action" that Master Sgt. Mark McBride received. Nor could he say if McBride, who is on terminal leave, will be retiring or separating from the Corps in March.

It was also unclear on Monday whether McBride was already expected to retire when he engaged in a Jan. 6 Facebook discussion about musician R. Kelly, who is now in jail following a documentary that examined allegations that he raped young girls.

"There would be no such thing as statutory rape if there weren't young girls WILLING to have sex with older Men there would only be Rape!" McBride wrote in one post.

After being criticized for his comments, McBride made a Facebook video later that day claiming that he was not blaming rape victims, but some young girls have sex with men "for some type of monetary gain."

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service looked into the matter and determined that McBride's comments did not warrant a criminal investigation, Fudge said.

"A separate investigation initiated by 2nd Marine Logistics Group was conducted, which concluded that McBride's comments were inconsistent with the high standard of professional conduct expected of all Marines," Fudge said. "This resulted in an adverse administrative action and counseling."

Since the 2017 "Marines United" scandal, all Marines have been required to complete social media conduct training and acknowledge in a Page 11 entry that they had read and understood the Corps' new social media policy.

"Marines represent the Marine Corps in both private and public arenas and will always be held accountable for their actions," Fudge said. "2nd MLG will continue to enforce the standard of professional conduct and we encourage and expect our Marines to exercise their best judgment to avoid engaging in behavior which may discredit the Corps, whether in public or private settings."

SEE ALSO:

[Second Marine NCO disciplined for Facebook comments defending R. Kelly and statutory rape](#) [Task & Purpose, 2019-02-27]

Supreme Court: Retirees Can Be Court-Martialed for Crimes Committed After Service

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, February 22, 2019



In this Oct. 5, 2018 photo the U. S. Supreme Court building stands quietly before dawn in Washington. (AP Photo/J. David Ake)

The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the Defense Department's authority to prosecute retired service members for crimes they commit, even after retirement.

The court on Tuesday chose not to hear the case of a retired Marine who was court-martialed for a sexual assault he committed three months after leaving the service in August 2015. By not accepting the case, *Larrabee v. the United States*, the court upheld the status quo: that military retirees are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The denial of Larrabee's petition marks the high court's second rebuff in a year of a case involving a military retiree accused of non-military crimes in retirement.

Retired Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Steven Larrabee was convicted of sexually assaulting a bartender, the wife of an active-duty Marine, at a bar in Iwakuni, Japan, where he worked as a civilian. He had been retired -- technically, placed on the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve status list -- for three months.

Following a general court-martial in which he wore civilian clothes, Larrabee was sentenced to eight years' confinement, a reprimand and a dishonorable discharge. In a pre-trial agreement, Larrabee's prison term was reduced to 10 months.

Larrabee served his sentence but tried to have his conviction overturned on appeal, arguing that he should have been tried in a civilian court, as the offenses occurred after he was retired.

The case closely resembles that of retired Gunnery Sgt. Derek Dinger who, also while living on Okinawa and on the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve list and, later, the Active Duty Retired List, was found to be in possession of and producing child pornography. He was arrested and initially indicted within the civilian courts, but his case ended up in the military court system, where he was convicted and sentenced to nine years' confinement and a dishonorable discharge.

Dinger appealed his discharge, arguing that the case should not have fallen under the military court system and that a dishonorable discharge should be reserved for "those who separated under conditions of dishonor."

His challenge also was petitioned to the U.S. Supreme Court. It was denied last June.

Attorneys for both Marines argued that the cases should have been considered by the U.S. Supreme Court because they have far-reaching consequences for military retirees. The law stipulates that "retired members of a regular component of the armed forces who are entitled to pay" and "members of the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve" are subject to court-martial jurisdiction.

The reasoning, the government argues, is that retirement is simply a change of military status and retired personnel are subject to recall should the need arise.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/22/supreme-court-retirees-can-be-court-martialed-crimes-committed-after-service.html>

But Stephen Vladeck, a University of Texas law professor who represented Larrabee, said that this argument no longer holds true with the rise of the reserve component. He called the idea that retirees are reserved for future service "anachronistic," adding that military retirees are no longer among the "pool of persons at the ready" and thus should not be subject to the UCMJ.

"Increasingly, the function has been performed by reserves, not retirees," he said.

Furthermore, Vladeck said in an interview with Military.com, there are articles in the UCMJ that could place many military retirees at risk for arrest, and the U.S. Supreme Court has an interest in weighing in on how cases involving retirees are handled.

He cited one provision in the UCMJ that makes "contemptuous words" used by a commissioned officer "against the president, the vice president, Congress" and others as punishable by court-martial.

"From Adm. Bill McRaven to Gen. Michael Hayden and Gen. Martin Dempsey, some of President Donald Trump's more visible critics of late have been retired military officers. And a provision of federal law ... makes it a crime, triable by court-martial," he wrote [in a blog post on Lawfare](#). "But does the Constitution really allow the government to subject to military trial those who have retired from active duty -- in some cases, long ago -- even for offenses committed *while* they are retired?"

Yes, it does, according to the Supreme Court, in its denial of Larrabee's and Dinger's writs of certiorari.

Retired Maj. Gen. Charles Dunlap, former deputy judge advocate general of the Air Force, concurs.

In a [Feb. 16 post on Duke University School of Law's Lawfire blog](#), Dunlap said Congress explicitly states that the UCMJ applies to retirees and that Vladeck's arguments about the impropriety of senior officers speaking out against the president, as well as the "anachronistic" idea that retirees can be recalled to active duty, aren't valid.

He added that the very act of receiving retired pay means that retired personnel are choosing to keep a relationship with the military and accept all that goes with the choice not to terminate their commission or request a discharge.

"As a retired service member subject to military jurisdiction, count me among those of my comrades-in-arms who believe it a small price to pay to maintain the connection with the armed forces," Dunlap wrote.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court's refusal to hear the Larrabee case may not be the end of the legal road for the retired Marine. According to Vladeck, Larrabee may consider suing for back pay in the Court of Federal Claims. Vladeck believes his client is entitled to do so under the Military Pay Act.

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Racism

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/25/upshot/doctors-and-racial-bias-still-a-long-way-to-go.html>

Doctors and Racial Bias: Still a Long Way to Go

It would be easy to look at a photo from the 1980s and conclude that things have changed. Many have not.

By Aaron E. Carroll

The New York Times, February 25, 2019

The [racist photo](#) in the medical school yearbook page of Gov. Ralph Northam of Virginia has probably caused many physicians to re-examine their past.

We hope we are better today, but the research is not as encouraging as you might think: There is still a long way to go in how the medical field treats minority patients, especially African-Americans.

A systematic review [published in Academic Emergency Medicine](#) gathered all the research on physicians that measured implicit bias with the Implicit Association Test and included some assessment of clinical decision making. Most of the nine studies used vignettes to test what physicians would do in certain situations.

The majority of studies found an implicit preference for white patients, especially among white physicians. Two found a relationship between this bias and clinical decision making. One found that this bias was associated with a greater chance that whites would be treated for myocardial infarction than African-Americans.

This study was published in 2017.

The Implicit Association Test [has](#) its [flaws](#). Although its authors maintain that it measures external influences, it's not clear how well it predicts individual behavior. [Another, bigger systematic review](#) of implicit bias in health care professionals was published in BMC Ethics, also in 2017. The researchers gathered 42 studies, only 15 of which used the Implicit Association Test, and concluded that physicians are just like everyone else. Their biases are consistent with those of the general population.

The researchers also cautioned that these biases are likely to affect diagnosis and care.

A [study published](#) three years earlier in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine surveyed 543 internal medicine and family physicians who had been presented with vignettes of patients with severe osteoarthritis. The survey asked the doctors about the medical cooperativeness of the patients, and whether they would recommend a total knee replacement.

Even though the descriptions of the cases were identical except for the race of the patients (African-Americans and whites), participants reported that they believed the white patients were being more medically cooperative than the African-American ones. These beliefs did not translate into different treatment recommendations in this study, but they were clearly there.

In 2003, the Institute of Medicine released a [landmark report on disparities](#) in health care. The evidence for their existence was enormous. The research available at that time showed that even after controlling for socioeconomic factors, [disparities remained](#).

There's significant literature documenting that African-American patients [are treated differently](#) than white patients when it comes to cardiovascular procedures. There were differences in whether they received optimal care with respect to a cancer [diagnosis](#) and [treatment](#). African-Americans were less likely to [receive appropriate care](#) when they were infected with H.I.V. They were also [more likely to die](#) from [these illnesses](#) even after adjusting for age, sex, insurance, education and the severity of the disease.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/25/upshot/doctors-and-racial-bias-still-a-long-way-to-go.html>

Disparities existed for patients with [diabetes](#), [kidney disease](#), mental health problems, and for those who were pregnant or were [children](#).

The report cited some systems-level factors that contributed to this problem. Good care may be [unavailable](#) in some poor neighborhoods, and easily obtained in others. Differences in [insurance access](#) and coverage can also [vary by race](#).

But the report's authors spent much more time on issues at the level of care, in which some physicians treated patients differently based on their race.

Physicians sometimes had a harder time making accurate diagnoses because they seemed to be worse at reading the signals from minority patients, perhaps because of cultural or language barriers. Then there were beliefs that physicians already held about the behavior of minorities. You could call these stereotypes, like believing that minority patients wouldn't comply with recommended changes.

Of course, there's the issue of mistrust on the patient side. African-American patients have good reason to mistrust the health care system; [the infamous Tuskegee Study](#) is just one example.

In its report, the Institute of Medicine recommended strengthening health plans so that minorities were not disproportionately denied access. It urged that more underrepresented minorities be trained as health care professionals, and that more resources be directed toward enforcing civil rights laws.

In practice, it endorsed more evidence-based care across the board. It noted the importance of interpreters, community health workers, patient education programs and cross-cultural education for those who care for patients.

All of this has met with limited success.

In 2017, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality issued [its 15th yearly report](#) on health care quality and disparities, as called for by the medical institute in 2002. It found that while some disparities had gotten better, many remained. The most recent data available showed that 40 percent of the quality measures were still worse for blacks than whites. Other groups fared worse as well. Measures were worse for 20 percent of Asian-Americans, 30 percent of Native Americans, and one third of Pacific Islanders and Hispanics.

Of the 21 access measures tracked from 2000 to 2016, nine were improving. Nine were unchanged. Three were worsening.

It would be easy to look at a racist photo from the 1980s and conclude that it was a different time and that things have changed. Many things have not. We know that racism, explicit and implicit, was pervasive in medical care back then. Many studies show that it's still pervasive today. The recommendations from the medical institute in 2003 still hold. Any fair assessment of the evidence suggests much work remains to be done.

Aaron E. Carroll is a professor of pediatrics at [Indiana University School of Medicine](#) who blogs on health research and policy at [The Incidental Economist](#) and makes videos at [Healthcare Triage](#). He is the author of ["The Bad Food Bible: How and Why to Eat Sinfully."](#) [@aaronecarroll](#)

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/house-speaker-busch-strips-democratic-lawmaker-of-leadership-position-over-racial-slur-allegation/2019/02/26/9bf09726-39e6-11e9-a06c-3ec8ed509d15_story.html

Maryland Del. Mary Ann Lisanti stripped of leadership post over use of racial slur

By Ovetta Wiggins

The Washington Post, February 26, 2019



Maryland House Speaker Michael E. Busch (D-Anne Arundel) (Patrick Semansky/AP)

A Maryland lawmaker who witnesses say [used a racial slur](#) to describe a legislative district in Prince George’s County has been stripped of her leadership position and will undergo sensitivity training, the House speaker’s office announced Tuesday.

Del. Mary Ann Lisanti (D-Harford), who is white, issued a public apology Tuesday afternoon, after addressing the executive committee of the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland on Monday night and the House Democratic Caucus on Tuesday morning.

“I deeply apologize . . . for my word choice several weeks ago,” Lisanti, 51, [said in a statement](#). “I am sickened that a word that is not in my vocabulary came out of my mouth. It does not represent my belief system, my life’s work or what is my heart.”

Lisanti used the slur in front of several colleagues at an Annapolis cigar bar in late January. She told another white lawmaker that when he campaigned in Prince George’s on behalf of a candidate last fall, he was door-knocking in a “n----- district,” said Del. Jay Walker (D-Prince George’s), who witnessed the comment and represents the district in question.

Questioned about the incident by The Washington Post early this month, Lisanti said she did not recall using the racial slur at the gathering.

But asked whether she had ever used the slur, she said: “I’m sure I have. . . . I’m sure everyone has used it. I’ve used the f-word. I used the Lord’s name in vain.”

Walker, who is black, initially declined to discuss the incident with The Post. On Monday, after The Post published an article about it, he said he addressed the slur with Lisanti privately.

While speaking to Black Caucus leaders Monday night, Lisanti again said she did not recall using the racial slur at the cigar bar, according to Del. Darryl Barnes (D-Prince George’s), who chairs the caucus. Barnes described Lisanti late Monday as contrite during that closed-door session. But Tuesday, he told reporters that her initial apology was “woefully inadequate.”

Barnes said he’d received numerous calls from colleagues and constituents demanding Lisanti’s resignation, removal from her subcommittee chairmanship and censure on the House floor.

House Speaker Michael E. Busch (D-Anne Arundel) said he told Lisanti she would no longer chair the unemployment insurance subcommittee of the House Economic Matters Committee. “Leaders in the House need to be able to bring people together — not tear them apart,” Busch said [in a statement](#).

Bob Ross, president of the Prince George’s County branch of the NAACP, questioned the decision by Walker to address the issue with Lisanti privately. He said Lisanti’s use of the slur should have been made public and brought to Busch’s attention sooner.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/house-speaker-busch-strips-democratic-lawmaker-of-leadership-position-over-racial-slur-allegation/2019/02/26/9bf09726-39e6-11e9-a06c-3ec8ed509d15_story.html

Many of Lisanti's colleagues are struggling to accept her apology, said Del. Charles E. Sydnor (D-Baltimore County), who sits on the executive committee of the [57-member Black Caucus](#).

"It's a privilege to be down here representing the citizens of the state of Maryland," he said. "When you characterize a segment of your community in that light, it really calls into question the decisions that you are likely to be making."

He said he has to assume that Lisanti is sincere in her apology.

"Many folks don't realize . . . the micro- and macro-aggressions and racial epithets we have to hear on a regular basis," said Del. Jazz M. Lewis (D-Prince George's). "And then to hear from one of our colleagues, who we assume values and respects us, it's very hurtful. It makes you question. . . . Do you view us all like that?"

Harford County, which is northeast of Baltimore County, is about 76 percent non-Hispanic white and 14 percent black, according to [U.S. Census Bureau estimates](#). Prince George's, the state's second-most populous jurisdiction, is about [65 percent black](#) and 13 percent non-Hispanic white.

Zilpha P. Smith, president of the Harford NAACP chapter, said the county's African American community has supported Lisanti in the past and was deeply hurt by the revelation of her remark.

"An apology is not enough," said Smith, who plans to call an emergency executive committee meeting to discuss how to respond. "It does call into question the kind of person I have known her to be. It is now making me feel you are a person who smiles in my face and calls me something else behind my back."

Del. Vanessa E. Atterbeary (D-Howard) said, "An immediate apology could have avoided all of this. . . . I was outraged that there is an individual who is also responsible for making policy for the state [and] felt that comfortable and open to calling an entire district the n-word."

Del. Cheryl D. Glenn (D-Baltimore City), a former chairwoman of the Black Caucus, said Lisanti "never quite admitted to what she did. . . . As long as you live, you are going to make a mistake, but you have to own it. And so this is more than a mistake; this shows racial intolerance."

Lisanti said in her statement that she has agreed to participate in sensitivity training and understands "that the use of inappropriate and insensitive language is not acceptable under any circumstance."

"I am sorry for the hurt I have caused and will do everything I can to help heal that pain and regain the trust of my colleagues and constituents," Lisanti said. "I pray for forgiveness."

Arelis R. Hernández contributed to this report.

SEE ALSO:

[Officials call for Maryland Democratic delegate to resign over her use of racial slur](#) [USA TODAY, 2019-02-28]

A newspaper editor urged the KKK to ‘ride again.’ A black woman is taking his place.

By Michael Brice-Saddler

The Washington Post, February 25, 2019



Goodloe Sutton, a newspaper editor from Alabama, speaks at a 1998 awards presentation in New York. (Stan Honda/AFP/Getty Images)

A black woman is the new editor and publisher of an Alabama newspaper after her predecessor stepped down following widespread condemnation of his [Feb. 14 editorial](#) that called for mass lynchings and of his comments that the Ku Klux Klan needed to “clean out” Washington.

“Time for the Ku Klux Klan to night ride again,” the editorial in the weekly Democrat-Reporter read. The text asserted Democrats, along with some Republicans, were planning to raise taxes in Alabama. “Seems like the Klan would be welcome to raid the gated communities up there,” it continued.

When confronted, the paper’s publisher and editor, Goodloe Sutton, [stood by his words](#), telling the Montgomery Advertiser that people who were upset could call him, write a letter or boycott the paper if they wanted. He inherited the publication, which is based in Linden, Ala., from his father in the 1980s.

On Thursday, however, Sutton had an apparent change of heart. He turned control of the Democrat-Reporter over to Elicia Dexter — an African American woman from Chicago who served as front office clerk for the newspaper, which has a circulation of about 3,000.

“Everything has been a little surreal, and there’s a lot going on,” Dexter said in an interview Saturday. “I’m grateful for this opportunity.”

“Good riddance Goodloe,” Sen. Doug Jones (D-Ala.) [wrote on Twitter](#).

Jones, who prosecuted two members of the Klan for their role in the 1963 Birmingham church bombing that killed four young girls, had called Sutton’s editorial “disgusting” and demanded his resignation. “I have seen what happens when we stand by while people—especially those with influence—publish racist, hateful views,” [he wrote](#) last week.

After Sutton was replaced, [Jones wrote](#): “His dangerous views do not represent Alabama or the small-town papers in Alabama that do great work every day. The good people of Linden deserve so much better than these racist rants and I am confident they will get it with new editor, Elicia Dexter.”

Dexter is a graduate of Eastern Illinois University, where she received a bachelor’s degree in speech communication, according to a news release announcing her appointment. She also received a master’s degree in human services from the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership in Chicago and a master’s degree in counseling from Argosy University in Virginia.

Dexter, 46, said she has worked at the paper for only six weeks and was disappointed when she saw the editorial. She has fielded phone calls, questions and emails from supporters of the newspaper who were dismayed over the editorial and negative publicity.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2019/02/23/newspaper-editor-urged-klan-ride-again-black-woman-is-taking-his-place/>

Dexter told The Post she had planned to leave if no change took place. She said that she and Sutton had an “open and honest” dialogue about his comments, in which he explained his decision to invoke lynchings and the KKK in the editorial.

“[He] took a group that has a lot of negativity associated to it, especially for people like me, of color,” Dexter said.

“There are different ways to communicate you wanted Washington to be cleaned up without using that particular reference,” she added.

Dexter said Sutton approached her Thursday to say he was resigning as editor and publisher. He told Dexter she could carry on the legacy of his family, which has operated the Democrat-Reporter for decades, by taking the paper in a “new direction.”

Sutton, who did not immediately return a phone call requesting comment, will maintain ownership of the Democrat-Reporter but will no longer oversee its day-to-day operations.

Rep. Terri A. Sewell (D-Ala.), who had called for Sutton’s resignation, applauded the decision, but said the newsman’s work wasn’t yet complete.

Sewell [had earlier written](#): “For the millions of people of color who have been terrorized by white supremacy, this kind of ‘editorializing’ about lynching is not a joke — it is a threat.”

Two decades ago, Sutton was praised by his peers and discussed as a [contender](#) for the Pulitzer Prize after reporting that resulted in a sheriff being sent to federal prison on corruption charges.

News of the editorial disturbed many Democrat-Reporter’s readers, who “don’t want to be identified or defined by what he put in that paper,” Dexter said. However, longtime readers [pointed out](#) that it wasn’t the first time that the paper’s editorial page had endorsed extreme or openly racist views.

In [May 2015](#), an editorial stated that the mayor of a city “up north” had “displayed her African heritage by not enforcing civilized law.” Another, [published in June of that year](#), called for drug dealers, kidnappers, rapists, thieves and murderers to be hanged “on the courthouse lawn where the public can watch.”

Archives [reveal many more](#) examples. The contentious editorials ran without a byline, so it’s unclear which, if any, were written by Sutton.

Dexter said she did not know about the editorials before joining the paper but “started to hear little things” as she became familiar with the community. She moved to her father’s hometown of nearby Sweet Water, Ala., in December and joined the Democrat-Reporter shortly afterward.

“When that article came out, I saw what other people had seen years and years ago,” she said.

But the Feb. 14 editorial went viral and drew strong rebukes from Sutton’s peers, lawmakers and the head of the Alabama NAACP, who called for an FBI investigation. Sutton didn’t back away from his editorial, telling the Advertiser, “If we could get the Klan to go up there and clean out D.C., we’d all been better off. ... We’ll get the hemp ropes out, loop them over a tall limb and hang all of them.”

Dexter described Linden as a small, diverse town with traditional values. Moving forward, she said, she wants to broaden the paper’s scope and begin putting its stories online to highlight the “great things happening” in the community.

She knows it will take time to repair the paper’s image and restore faith in it for those who read it. An announcement on the leadership change was sent to subscribers of the paper.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2019/02/23/newspaper-editor-urged-klan-ride-again-black-woman-is-taking-his-place/>

“One thing that sticks out to me as we move forward is making sure the people of this community feel this paper represents them and their views,” she said. “Family, community looking out for each other — I would like to take a personal component moving forward, so people feel like it’s their paper, which it is.”

Antonia Noori-Farzan contributed to this report.

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SEE ALSO:

[Alabama newspaper at center of KKK outrage gets black female editor](#) [Reuters, 2019-02-23]

Worries grow about white nationalism in the ranks

By Leo Shane III

Military Times, February 25, 2019



White nationalist demonstrators walk into Lee park surrounded by counter demonstrators in Charlottesville, Va., on Aug. 12, 2017. In the wake of another white nationalist incident involving a service member, lawmakers are asking whether defense and homeland security officials are doing enough to monitor the problem. (Steve Helber/AP)

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers want to know if military and homeland security leaders are doing enough to monitor the armed forces for signs of white nationalism and other dangerous extremism in the wake of the [arrest of a Coast Guard lieutenant with radical views](#) who was plotting mass murder.

In a letter to leaders at the [Departments of Defense](#) and Homeland Security on Monday, the group of Democratic House members said they want assurances that the recent case is not “indicative of a larger, systemic issue within the United States Armed Services.” They also said they are concerned with reports of [other racist activity in the ranks](#).

“Beyond the extremes of domestic terrorism, we are additionally concerned with low level racism and other identity-based harassment that disrupts unit cohesion, impacts readiness, and degrades the ability of our servicemembers to protect our nation,” the letter said.

“Servicemembers who experience or witness racist or hateful behavior must be able to report such behavior without fear of repercussions.”

Coast Guard Lt. Christopher Hasson was arrested on Feb. 15 on charges of illegal possession of firearms and drugs. But investigators said they also uncovered plans by Hasson to conduct a large-scale, violent attack in the Capital region, developing a list of political and media targets he identified as “traitors” to America.

Hasson previously served in the active-duty Marine Corps and Army National Guard, moving frequently. Investigators have found evidence that he was a long-time white nationalist who held violently racist views even before his first enlistment in the military.

The lawmakers — California Democratic Rep. Jackie Speier and Maryland Democratic Reps. Anthony Brown, Elijah Cummings and Jamie Raskin — said those revelations come on the heels of previous investigations that found at least six active-duty troops or veterans took part in the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville in August 2017.

“The involvement of service members in these activities is cause for significant concern, particularly given their combat and weapons training,” they wrote in the letter, first made public by the Washington Post.

Nearly 1 in 4 troops [polled by Military Times in 2017](#) said they had seen examples of white nationalism among their fellow service members. Among non-white members of the military, the figure was more than 40 percent.

Pentagon officials in recent years have reiterated that extremist views are counter to military ethics and potentially punishable under military law.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/02/25/is-the-military-doing-enough-to-combat-white-nationalism-in-the-ranks/>

But in their letter, lawmakers are asking for proof that those views are being monitored and that recruits with dangerous views about other races or cultures are not being allowed to enlist. They also want to know how Hasson was able to avoid detection for years, amassing an arsenal of weapons and hatred without alerting military authorities.

Analysts from the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#) last November said the rate of far-right extremist attacks has risen steadily in recent years, and poses a greater threat to Americans than attacks from Islamic extremists.

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SEE ALSO:

[White nationalism remains a problem for the military, poll suggests](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-02-28]

[The Dangerous Spread of Extremist Manifestos](#) [*Defense One*, 2019-02-27]

[The Corps is investigating alleged blackface video involving Marines from 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing](#) [*Marine Corps Times*, 2019-02-27]

[Coast Guard officer accused of plotting terrorist attack charged with illegally possessing silencers](#) [*The Washington Post*, 2019-02-27]

[The Coast Guard Isn't Flagging All Employees Who Shouldn't Have Guns](#) [*Government Executive*, 2019-02-26]

[NCIS Launches Investigation into Marine's Alleged White Supremacist Posts](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-02-26]

[Another Marine is being investigated for neo-Nazi ties amid military concerns about white supremacy](#) [*Marine Corps Times*, 2019-02-26]

[He joined the FBI on the heels of a terrorist attack. Now he's retiring after working an investigation authorities think prevented one.](#) [*The Washington Post*, 2019-02-26]

[Thwarted Terrorist Attack Raises Questions About the Rise of White Nationalism and its Presence in the Military](#) [*New York Public Radio*, 2019-02-26]

[Trump gets briefing on lieutenant accused of having hit list](#) [*The Associated Press*, 2019-02-22]

[The Military Is Cracking Down on Immigrant Recruits. But Advocates Say It's Ignoring a White Nationalism Problem](#) [*Time*, 2019-02-21]

Religion

Supreme Court seems to seek narrow way to uphold cross that memorializes war dead

By Robert Barnes

The Washington Post, February 27, 2019



The Peace Cross stands at a busy intersection in Bladensburg, Md. (Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post)

A majority of the Supreme Court on Wednesday seemed to be searching for a way — a narrow one, most likely — to allow the [Bladensburg Peace Cross](#) commemorating World War I dead to remain where it has stood for nearly 100 years.

Conservative members of the court indicated they did not believe the Constitution’s prohibition on government establishment of religion requires the removal from public life of all symbols of faith.

Two of the court’s four liberals suggested the passage of time and the unique nature of World War I memorials may provide a way to accommodate the 40-foot-tall cross, which sits in a highway median in Maryland.

But more than an hour of [oral arguments](#) showed the difficulty the court faces when it tries to devise a test for anything more than a case-by-case examination of when a religious symbol on public land has an allowable secular purpose or is an unconstitutional embrace of religion.

It suggested the prospect of a narrow decision on the cross in question and splintered opinions on how to proceed in future cases.

The Bladensburg Peace Cross, made of granite and cement, was built in 1925 and paid for by local families, businesses and the American Legion to honor 49 veterans from Prince George’s County. But the 40-foot cross sits on land owned since 1961 by a state commission that pays for its maintenance and upkeep.

The legal challenge began with the American Humanist Association, a nonprofit atheist organization that has filed similar lawsuits throughout the country.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which inherited the monument, says the court need not break new legal ground to allow the Bladensburg landmark to remain.

The commission’s lawyer in the case, Neal K. Katyal, said the monument “is no ordinary cross.” At its heart is the symbol of the American Legion, at its base four words: Valor, Endurance, Courage, Devotion. Nearby are other memorials to veterans.

“Not a single word of religious content appears anywhere,” he said.

He added: “The easiest way to resolve this case is to say, in the wake of World War I, crosses like this one have an independent secular meaning.”]

Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg thought it not so easy.

Sotomayor said the size of the cross on government property could not be ignored.

“It’s the only thing that’s that high,” she said. “It dwarfs buildings. It dwarfs people.”

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/supreme-court-balances-history-and-religion-in-deciding-monuments-fate/2019/02/26/24688222-3a0e-11e9-a2cd-307b06d0257b_story.html

Asked Ginsburg: “Does the cross really have a dual meaning, Mr. Katyal? It is the preeminent symbol of Christianity. People wear crosses to show their devotion to the Christian faith.”

But in questioning Katyal’s counterpart, Monica L. Miller, another member of the court’s left, [Justice Elena Kagan](#), suggested there might be a way to separate crosses used to commemorate WWI veterans from others.

Kagan, who as President Barack Obama’s solicitor general had defended a cross in the Mojave National Preserve erected for that purpose, said the cross had become a symbol for that war.

“I really did mean to confine it to this World War I context, because I think there’s something quite different about this historic moment in time,” she said.

Justice Stephen G. Breyer twice brought up whether historical monuments might be different from new ones and could be left alone. “History counts,” he said.

He also added: “But no more. We’re a different country. We are a different country now, and there are 50 more different religions, and, therefore, no more.”

Miller said the monument did not have to come down but could be moved to another spot, or the land on which it sits could be returned to a private organization such as the American Legion.

But the way it towers over a busy intersection used by thousands of commuters each day sends an unconstitutional message that government favors one religion over another, she said.

She said the court should reject what she called the commission’s argument that the monument is “essentially a non-religious, non-Christian symbol that honors everyone, irrespective of their religion.”

Miller added: “I don’t think anyone here would deny that it would be unconstitutional and inappropriate to go into Arlington (National Cemetery) and place a Latin cross over the grave of every person there, every fallen soldier, irrespective of their religion.”

The monument’s defenders say a Maryland district court judge got it right when she noted that the cross had stood for decades without controversy and that it met the test that the Supreme Court has established for such controversies: that it had a secular purpose, that its “primary effect” was religious neutrality and that there was not excessive entanglement of government and religion.

A panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit looked at the same facts and the same test and concluded otherwise.

“The display aggrandizes the Latin cross in a manner that says to any reasonable observer that the commission either places Christianity above other faiths, views being American and Christian as one in the same, or both,” the panel [said in a 2-to-1 ruling](#).

It was when the court got beyond the specifics of Bladensburg that it had the most trouble.

Could a town today place a cross in front of a school to honor students and teachers killed in a mass attack, Ginsburg asked. Would a town *not* be allowed to erect a Star of David to honor students who were targeted because they were Jewish, countered Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr.

Would Native American totems need to be removed from public land because of their spiritual implications, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. wanted to know. Would allowing the Bladensburg cross to remain encourage other communities to erect their own crosses, asked Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/supreme-court-balances-history-and-religion-in-deciding-monuments-fate/2019/02/26/24688222-3a0e-11e9-a2cd-307b06d0257b_story.html

While neither the commission nor the association asked the court to adopt a new test, the American Legion and the Trump administration did: that religious symbols are allowed unless the government's action is "coercive" or involves "excessive proselytization."

They didn't seem to find much traction, even with conservative justices.

Justice Neil M. Gorsuch told Michael Carvin, the lawyer representing the American Legion, that the test was no more clear than the court's current jurisprudence.

Gorsuch wondered if it was too easy to challenge the symbols.

"There aren't many places in the law where we allow someone to make a federal case out of their offensiveness about a symbol being too loud for them," Gorsuch said. "We accept that people have to sometimes live in a world in which other people's speech offend them. We have to tolerate one another."

He noted the frieze above the justices in the Supreme Court.

"We have a Ten Commandments display just above you, which may be too loud for many," he said to Miller.

Kagan, who asked many of the questions and seemed to agree both that crosses have an intrinsic religious content and also that WWI monuments might be special, took a stab at one point in coming up with a legal test. It wouldn't involve "how people process these symbols and what messages they convey," she said.

Instead, "Does erecting a symbol like this align the government with a particular religion and not align it with every other religion?" she asked

The combined cases are *The American Legion v. American Humanist Association* and *Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission v. American Humanist Association*.

SEE ALSO:

[The Supreme Court's Peace Cross: Here's the important backstory](#) [*The Washington Post*, 2019-02-27]

[Supreme Court seems inclined to retain cross on public land](#) [*The Associated Press*, 2019-02-27]

[U.S. top court sympathetic toward Maryland cross in major religion case](#) [*Reuters*, 2019-02-27]

[Cross-shaped memorial pulls Supreme Court into church-state dispute](#) [*The Hill*, 2019-02-26]

Sexism

He Was Fired for Degrading Female Marines. Now He Wants Marines to Learn from His Mistakes

By Gina Harkins

Military.com, February 23, 2019



Lieutenant Colonel Taylor White (Marine Corps Photo)

Lt. Col. Taylor White and his colleague were not seeing eye-to-eye.

The two had butted heads in the past and, when she started complaining that his squadron wasn't offering enough support during a 2017 conference call, White lashed out. With the phone muted on his end, he called the woman a "dumb c---" and a "stupid b----."

It wasn't the first time some of the Marines in the room had heard him do this. After the call, one of them filed a formal complaint, kicking off a command-led investigation.

Two months later, [White was sacked from his job](#) as commanding officer of North Carolina-based Marine Wing Support Squadron 274 by Maj. Gen. Matthew Glavy, then-head of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing.

The investigation that led to White's relief, which Military.com obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, found that he had also made inappropriate comments about male superiors in front of his Marines, calling one a "boob" and others "idiots" and "stupid."

Marines told the investigator that White made a sexually explicit joke about a sign in their building. White denied those charges.

His relief came about four months after news broke that hundreds of Marines were under investigation for [allegedly sharing nude photos of their colleagues online](#) without permission using the now-defunct Marines United social media group. The scandal uncovered a troubling trend in the ranks of rampant disrespect many male Marines showed their female colleagues.

Over the next two years, White would become one of more than half-a-dozen Marine leaders fired for improper behavior toward women. Former Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Glenn Walters said at least [one other leader relieved in 2017](#) and [five more in 2018](#) were let go "because of how they treat people, how they treat people of different genders."

Walters, who ran a task force to end gender bias, harassment and other misconduct across the Marine Corps, called reliefs like White's "progress." But White says that, while he regrets his comments, he doesn't think they should have cost him his job.

"I believe I deserved counseling and mentorship, not relief of command," he told Military.com. "I made a very positive impact on MWSS-274."

Now the force engineer at Marine Forces Command in Norfolk, Va., White is on a different mission: sharing his hard-learned lessons with other Marines as the service works to combat a culture of sexism.

That, says Maj. Jessica Karlin, White's operations officer who heard his negative comments firsthand, is the real progress.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/23/he-was-fired-degrading-female-marines-now-he-wants-marines-learn-his-mistakes.html>

"When Marines United happened and the commandant said we all need to do better, that's really all [White's] doing now," Karlin said. "It would be an honor to serve with him in the future because he's a more mature, more professional leader today than he was then."

'Expressing My Frustration'

When the investigating officer interviewed more than two dozen officers and staff noncommissioned officers in White's command, few were aware that their commanding officer had made disparaging remarks about women.

Several said the behavior wasn't in line with his character, and that he routinely praised male and female Marines in front of the rest of the squadron.

White insisted the name-calling was not indicative of how he views female Marines or female commanding officers.

"While I am not sorry for expressing my frustration or disagreement, I would nonetheless be deeply sorry if I used any language at all during that conversation that would be construed as unprofessional," he said.

"And I would be deeply embarrassed if [the commanding officer] thought I said something unprofessional about her as a person or her abilities as a leader."

White's wife, Kelly, said the respect her husband has for women can be seen not only at work, but in his personal life, too.

"He has spent a career in the Marine Corps working alongside and leading female Marines," Kelly White told Military.com. "I am a career Navy civil servant, and he has worked with me for the last 20 years to ensure that his career choices would support my career. Those are not the actions of the man he was painted to be in the investigation."

Karlin and Capt. Lydia Fakes, a company executive officer and company commander with MWSS-274, say White never treated them differently than the male Marines in their squadron. "We were all held to the same standard," Fakes said.

White made the comments about the female CO behind closed doors with just a handful of other leaders in the room, including his operations officer, executive officer and sergeant major.

"I absolutely believe that in order to have trust among the leadership in the command, there must be a significant level of candor with the key players," White said. "...However, that level of candor still needs to be professional."

White was less apologetic about the other claims the investigating officer substantiated in the report. While he admitted to expressing frustration about some of his male superiors, he denied calling any senior officers idiots.

"In general, I do not spend my days frustrated or complaining about outside individuals or organizations," he said. "Despite occasional points of friction, we're all on the same team working toward the same goals."

Similarly, White denied making a sexually explicit remark in front of several Marines, who confirmed to the investigating officer that they'd heard him say it.

"This accusation is very upsetting to me because I do not talk like this and I don't believe I would've said those words," White said, according to the investigation.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/23/he-was-fired-degrading-female-marines-now-he-wants-marines-learn-his-mistakes.html>

Glavy ultimately concurred with the investigation, deciding to relieve White of command in July 2017, and said he would formally administratively counsel the lieutenant colonel, according to the report.

'A Reflection of His Character'

Karlin, who served on Walters' Marines United task force, said when she confronted White about the comments he made about women or others when they were with MWSS-274, he was only somewhat receptive.

Since his relief though, she said it's obvious that White has taken the experience to heart.

"I think the fact that he chose to serve after his name hit the headlines and he had a very traumatic event in both his career and his personal life – that's a reflection of his character," she said. "Him taking ownership of his mistakes and now being an advocate for change and professionalism in the workplace, I think that's a win."

If White had retired, Karlin said there would be one less field-grade officer trying to affect change in the ranks. What he was tone-deaf to before, she said, he now understands, which can leave a positive impact on his unit.

"I think that's an important part about what happens to commanders when they're relieved," she said.

White declined to discuss some of the lessons he's sharing with other Marines today, saying he'd rather keep the often-personal conversations between them. But his wife says they both continue learning from the situation.

"We have worked very hard to take the lessons from this experience and become better for it," Kelly White said. "But I will always wish that he had been afforded the opportunity to apologize and show his ability to change for the better."

White is an engaged leader who knows how to reach Marines, Fakes said. Having someone with those qualities share his experiences -- even negative -- with other Marines benefits the entire Marine Corps, she said.

"We all learn from the experiences we are a part of in this institution," she said.

It's not easy to see a commanding officer relieved, Karlin said, but leaders must be willing to set the right tone. Before Marines United, behavior that eroded unit cohesion or left some feeling ostracized was too commonplace.

White and others now have a chance to change that, she said.

"As leaders, and specifically commanders, if they tolerate that behavior, it further degrades the Marine Corps," Karlin said.

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Sexual Assault / Harassment

<https://www.apnews.com/2987186413544396a346a01401f0de87>

West Point sets aside day to confront sexual harassment

The Associated Press, February 25, 2019

WEST POINT, N.Y. (AP) — West Point suspended classes Monday so cadets could help address the persistent problem of sexual assault and harassment at the academy.

U.S. Military Academy Superintendent Lt. Gen. Darryl A. Williams ordered a full-day “stand-down” at the academy weeks after a Pentagon survey reported an increase in sexual assaults and harassment. Williams said results of the survey were “unacceptable.”

“Sexual assault and harassment have no place at West Point or in our Army,” Williams said in a prepared release. “It erodes readiness and the trust required to build cohesive teams and is contrary to West Point ideals and Army values.”

The day was to include an address by Williams to cadets, faculty and staff, facilitated discussions about behavior and culture at West Point and talks about possible solutions.

Samantha Ross, program manager for the academy’s response to sexual harassment and assault, said the focus will be on analyzing why sexual violence occurs and what each individual can do to create a better environment.

A Pentagon survey released last month found that the number of students at the Army, Navy and Air Force academies saying they experienced unwanted sexual contact increased by nearly 50 percent over the 2016 survey and that more than half of the incidents involved alcohol.

Sexual assaults at West Point increased from 43 in the 2016-2017 school year to 48 in 2017-2018. Sexual harassment — against both men and women — also increased at the academy.

West Point also is reviewing the access to alcohol at the academy.