

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.

Air Force JAG says commanders may invoke God at change of command ceremonies, sparking protest [Kent Miller, *Air Force Times*, 27 March 2019]

- A little publicized [legal opinion](#) that addresses commanders' rights to [mention God](#) at change of command and promotion ceremonies, issued by the Air Force judge advocate general in December, is now drawing [protests](#) and [praise](#).
- The opinion, dated Dec. 19, addresses whether commanders who [invoke a deity](#) at their official change of command ceremony, and also at the promotion ceremony that often follows a change of command, violate the 1st Amendment's Establishment Clause and Air Force Instruction 1-1.
- "We conclude a commander may: briefly thank a Supreme Being (either generally, such as Providence, that Almighty Being, our Lord, or the Supreme Author of All Good; or specifically, such as Allah, Brahman, Christ, Ganesh, God, Yahweh, or even Beelzebub); have an invocation, and choose whomever he or she would like to provide the invocation," the opinion states.

[Air Force JAG says commanders may invoke God at change of command ceremonies, sparking protest](#)

Pentagon to move forward on limits for transgender troops as final legal hurdle falls [Tara Copp, *Military Times*, 27 March 2019]

- The Pentagon's new [transgender policy](#) cleared a final legal hurdle Tuesday, meaning new limits on whether troops who identify as other than their biological sex may serve may be implemented within weeks.
- On Tuesday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit removed the last of four court injunctions lower federal courts had issued on the [new policy](#), which had until today kept the Defense Department from prohibiting forces from serving who experience gender dysphoria, which is a discomfort with one's biological sex. Transgender personnel who are willing to serve according to their biological sex, or who have already completed their transition to their preferred sex and are stable would be allowed to remain in the military.
- With Tuesday's decision and removal of that last injunction, "at the moment, there is no [legal barrier](#) to the [government's intended plan](#) to start enforcing the ban on April 12," said Perry Sacks, a spokesman for the various attorneys representing transgender clients.

[Pentagon to move forward on limits for transgender troops as final legal hurdle falls](#)

Marine Commandant Personally Invites MARSOC Trailblazer to Become an Officer [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 22 March 2019]

- The commandant of the Marine Corps personally challenged a sergeant who made history last year when she reached a major training milestone to rethink leaving the service and instead consider a career as an officer, *Military.com* has learned.
- Gen. Robert Neller called Sgt. Bailey Weis, the first female Marine to complete second phase of the intense selection process for special operators, to encourage her to attend Officer Candidates School. The call followed [Military.com's story about Weis](#) after she completed the physically demanding Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command training, which no woman had passed before.
- Neller has called on Marine leaders to help the service [retain](#) its top talent throughout his time as commandant. In a Marine Corps-wide message, Neller said the service must attract, develop, promote and retain the "best talent the nation has to offer in order to more effectively operate across the range of military operations."

[Marine Commandant Personally Invites MARSOC Trailblazer to Become an Officer](#)

DEOMI News Highlights

Culture

[Alaska Native servicemen finally honored as Code Talkers](#)
[The Necessary Impact of Captain Marvel on the Military](#)
[‘Rosie the Riveter’ Recounts Women’s World War II Service](#)
[‘A very deep kind of patriotism’: Memorial to honor Native American veterans is coming to the Mall](#)

Discrimination

[Colorado Springs hotel employees fired for making, displaying sign disparaging military](#)
[Justices Display Divisions in New Cases on Voting Maps Warped by Politics](#)
[Public universities focus their recruitment on wealthy and White students, a study finds](#)

Diversity

[First Enlisted Woman to Try for Air Force Special Operations Weather Career](#)
[For the first time, a state’s National Guard command staff is made up of all women](#)
[GI Jane Was a Fairy Tale: Fighting for Respect in the Marine Corps \[OPINION\]](#)
[House votes to condemn Trump ban on transgender military service](#)
[Marine Commandant Personally Invites MARSOC Trailblazer to Become an Officer](#)
[More Military Children Seeking Transgender Medical Care, Report Finds](#)
[Pentagon to move forward on limits for transgender troops as final legal hurdle falls](#)
[Recruits with first partially gender-integrated Marine boot camp company earn the title Marine](#)
[What the US Army can learn from the Brits’ ‘snowflake’ recruiting campaign](#)
[Why NASA’s historic all-female spacewalk isn’t happening](#)

Miscellaneous

[Citizenship question on U.S. Census would cause Hispanic undercount by millions: study](#)
[Coast Guard Eyes Changes to Physical Standards, Tattoo Policy to Retain Troops](#)
[Controversial Military Malpractice Policy May Be Closer to Overturn Than Ever](#)
[Here are a few lessons for military recruiters straining to make mission from a civilian sales expert](#)
[If your military housing is contaminated, who pays your mold-related expenses?](#)
[Navy OKs New Slacks, Skirts, Shoes and Other Uniform Items for Female Sailors](#)
[Top Sustainment Official: Housing Privatization ‘Right Thing to Do’](#)
[The U.S. Military Is Creating the Future of Employee Monitoring](#)
[Vets Are Out-Representing Non-Vets in STEM Jobs: Report](#)

Misconduct

[Coast Guard Officer’s Alleged Terror Plot Highlights Need for Intrusive Leaders: Schultz](#)
[Lawmakers want Navy SEAL released from the brig ahead of war crimes trial](#)
[Troxell is back: The military’s top enlisted adviser is reinstated to duty after investigation](#)

Racism

[Guilty plea to hate crimes in deadly car attack at rally](#)
[Military Investigating After Report Links Troops to White Nationalist Group](#)
[Smollett saga shook public trust, heightened racial tensions](#)

Religion

[Air Force JAG says commanders may invoke God at change of command ceremonies, sparking protest](#)
[First Air Force JAG officer to wear hijab featured in short NBC documentary](#)
[This Muslim Fort Carson soldier is still getting questions about her hijab](#)

Sexual Assault/Harassment

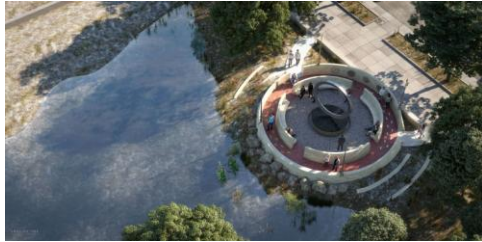
[A campaign against sexual harassment in the entertainment industry — 100 years before #TimesUp](#)
[Here’s what happened to the officer who tried to arrange sex with a deaf child](#)
[‘I, Too, Was a Survivor’: Senator McSally Ends Years of Silence](#)
[Midshipman faces sexual assault, obstruction of justice charges in court-martial](#)
[Sailor charged with trading explicit images with 13-year-old girl](#)

Culture

‘A very deep kind of patriotism’: Memorial to honor Native American veterans is coming to the Mall

By Dana Hedgpeth

The Washington Post, March 28, 2019



A rendering of a memorial that will be built on the Mall outside the National Museum of the American Indian. (Courtesy of Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian)

A \$15 million memorial will open next year in [Washington](#) to honor Native American military service members and veterans, more than two decades after planning began.

The steel and stone structure, called the “Warriors’ Circle of Honor,” will be built outside the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall. The memorial will honor the more than 156,000 active military service members and veterans who are Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Plans for a memorial to Native American service members have been in the works for years and design details are still being finalized. A groundbreaking ceremony is set for September, followed by a dedication on Veterans Day in November 2020, when the memorial will open to the public.

Veterans and tribal leaders said a memorial dedicated to Native Americans’ contributions dating to the Revolutionary War is long overdue. Clifford Takawana, of Fletcher, Okla., who served three tours in Vietnam, said the memorial will ensure the service of Native Americans isn’t forgotten.

“When we go to D.C., we go to the World War I and World War II memorials and to the Korean War Memorial,” said Takawana, who also is secretary of the Comanche Indian Veterans Association. “There’s nothing that gives tribute to Native Americans’ service to this country, until now.”

According to the Department of Defense, American Indians and Native Alaskans make up about 1 percent of active duty members. That compares to roughly 17.3 percent who are African American, about 15.5 percent who are Hispanic and 4.5 percent who are of Asian descent.

Congress passed legislation in 1994 mandating a memorial be built at the National Museum of the American Indian, which opened 10 years later, but it didn’t allow the museum to raise money for it. In 2013, new legislation allowed fundraising to begin.

In the past year, the museum has raised \$7.6 million from private donors and Native American tribes to fund the memorial.

“The idea was to honor the long tradition of service among Native Americans in the armed forces,” said Rebecca Trautmann, the museum’s curator for the memorial. “Most Americans don’t realize that Native Americans have served since the Revolutionary War and in every major war at a high rate.”

Harvey Pratt, a Cheyenne and Arapaho, was selected to design the memorial after a nationwide competition. Pratt, who served three years in Vietnam as a Marine and is a traditional Peace Chief — the Cheyenne Nation’s highest honor — said the memorial is meant to be a place of “gathering, remembrance, healing and reflection.”

The “Warriors’ Circle of Honor” will be a 12-foot tall, stainless steel circle balanced on a carved, stone drum. The circle represents “the hole in the sky where the creator lives,” Harvey said.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/a-very-deep-kind-of-patriotism-memorial-to-honor-native-american-veterans-is-coming-to-the-mall/2019/03/27/6cfcfe44-4b04-11e9-b79a-961983b7e0cd_story.html

A flame can be lit for ceremonies, while four lances will be placed around the edges of the memorial to allow veterans, family members and tribal leaders to tie cloths for prayers and healing — a Native American tradition.

For some, the military was a way to honor generations of Native American service members in their tribes. For others, it was a stable career path or a chance to follow in the footsteps of grandfathers, fathers, mothers, brothers, aunts or uncles.

“Natives have long stepped up to serve their country. It goes back before there was a United States,” Takawana said. “We’ve had to be warriors to defend our homeland, whether it was defending our hunting grounds from other tribes or from when nonwhites came in.”

For Native Americans, the decision to serve came as they saw their tribal governments defend their sovereign nation status against the federal government, while simultaneously being on the front lines helping to defend the country.

Museum officials said they spoke to about 1,200 veterans and tribal leaders in forums across the country while planning the memorial. Kevin Gover, who is a Pawnee and director of the American Indian museum, said he learned through information sessions with tribal leaders of the commitment Native Americans have to the “well-being of the U.S.”

“They are perfectly aware that they are serving a country that had not kept its commitments to Indians, and yet they chose — and are still choosing — to serve,” he said, adding that it “reflects a very deep kind of patriotism.”

Chuck Boers, a Lipan Apache war chief who served in Iraq as an Army combat photographer, said his family has a long tradition of military service.

He had two, great- great-great uncles who served as Apache Scouts, and a great- great-great grandfather who was a scout for the Texas Rangers. They served during the Apache Wars in the mid-1800s and often translated for whites and Apaches.

Boers, an advisory committee member for the memorial, served 26 years in the Army and received three Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars. Growing up, he said he would hear stories of relatives in the military and ask his family, “why do we serve?”

He was taught a lesson.

“This was our home and we need to defend our home as well as our way of life,” Boers said. “We had to prove and show that we are part of this nation, the U.S., because it is our community and land that we are defending.”

SEE ALSO:

[A Native American war memorial is coming to Washington. Here are six Native veterans you’ve never heard about.](#) [*The Washington Post*, 2019-03-27]

Alaska Native servicemen finally honored as Code Talkers

By Rachel D'Oro

The Associated Press, March 27, 2019



In this Monday, March 18, 2019 photo, family members of brothers Mark Jacobs Jr. and Harvey Jacobs observe a moment of silence during a ceremony honoring Tlingit code talkers in Juneau, Alaska. Five long-deceased Alaska Native servicemen are being hailed by the state of Alaska for their life-saving efforts during World War II. Alaska lawmakers this month passed a formal citation honoring the Tlingit men for using their Native language to help the military outsmart the Japanese with codes they could not break. (Alex

McCarthy/The Juneau Empire via AP)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Army veteran Richard Bean Sr. died without anyone knowing that he and four other long-deceased Alaska Natives had used their Tlingit language to outsmart the Japanese during World War II.

Now, they are finally being hailed in their home state for their lifesaving efforts as servicemen.

Earlier this month, legislators passed a formal citation honoring the Tlingit Code Talkers. State flags were flown at half-staff and later presented to the men's families.

Bean and the others had been forbidden to speak Tlingit as schoolchildren in their southeast Alaska villages. Later, they used it to provide the military with unbreakable codes, as did their more well-known peers, Navajo Code Talkers.

The language of the Alaska Natives had been suppressed by missionaries and teachers trying to “civilize” them, said Rosita Worl, president of the Sealaska Heritage Institute. The Juneau nonprofit works to preserve and enhance the cultures of southeast Alaska's Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian tribes.

Punishments for students who spoke Tlingit included having their mouths washed out with soap and their hands struck with rulers, Worl said.

“We're finally ecstatic that there is this recognition that our people served this country, even served this country that wasn't always good to them,” she said.

The men's contributions went undisclosed for decades because the U.S. military had kept the unbroken codes secret in case they were needed in future wars.

“Their orders were not to talk about it,” Ozzie Sheakley, an Army veteran and Tlingit leader, said about the five Alaska Natives. “They took those orders seriously.”

Even their closest relatives had no clue about the wartime endeavors of Richard Bean Sr. of Hoonah and Robert “Jeff” David Sr. of Haines; Sitka brothers and Navy men Mark Jacobs Jr. and Harvey Jacobs; and Sitka resident George Lewis Jr., who served in the Army.

Bean's wife died before Congress posthumously recognized the men. His 85-year-old nephew, Ron Williams, never knew either, even though the two were close.

Williams said there was only one hint. His uncle told him a platoon leader had overheard him speaking Tlingit with Jeff David while the two served together in the Philippines. They were in the same company but different platoons.

<https://apnews.com/36bf9881f08442028facc02f2fcbaa81>

The Army official asked how the men would like to handle communications then gave each a walkie-talkie.

That was all Bean said, and Williams never pushed for more, sensing his uncle didn't want to talk about it. Richard Bean died in 1985.

"Even the guys that knew him all his life, you know, they didn't know what he did either because he never said anything about it," Williams said.

David never said anything about the wartime duties to his son, Jeff David Jr., either.

"He just said he was in special services," the son said.

The military declassified the Navajo Code Talker program in 1968. But it was decades before recognition came to the Tlingit servicemen, after the passage of the Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008.

Sheakley, commander of the Southeast Alaska Native Veterans, got a call from Department of Defense officials.

They told him the five Alaskans had been identified as Code Talkers from the Tlingit tribe, along with others from 32 Lower-48 tribes. Soon they would get the recognition long afforded the Navajos, who made up the largest group of Code Talkers.

In 2013, Congress recognized the Code Talkers, who were posthumously awarded silver medals. Sheakley also received a Congressional Gold Medal on behalf of the entire Tlingit tribe.

Alaska state Rep. and Tlingit Vietnam veteran Bill Thomas thought state recognition would soon follow.

"I just waited and waited and waited," Thomas said. "I finally said, 'Hey, it's time to pay tribute to these men.'"

State lawmakers agreed after Thomas and the Sealaska Heritage Institute pushed the idea.

The role the men played in history was a stunning discovery for the family of George Lewis Jr.

His son, Ray Lewis, was born after the war and never knew his father was in the military.

"I'm very proud of it," Ray Lewis said of the new recognition. "My father was instrumental in saving a lot of lives out there."

Follow Rachel D'Oro at <https://twitter.com/rdoro> .

The Necessary Impact of Captain Marvel on the Military

By Emma Moore

Military.com, March 21, 2019



Brig. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt, Air Force Recruiting Services commander, tours the STEM demonstration prior to a screening of the movie "Captain Marvel" in Washington, D.C., March 7, 2019 (U.S. Air Force/Staff Sgt. Rusty Frank)

Emma Moore is a research assistant at the Center for a New American Security.

"Captain Marvel" is behind the times for the military and for superheroes; and it is the movie we deserve. It tells us what we already knew: that women serve (admirably, successfully); that white women, black women and single moms are patriotic and want to serve in the military; that women save the day even when they are sassy, irreverent and confused. The movie's [critical](#) and [box office](#) success points out trends the military must acknowledge: women and girls want to push themselves and want to serve.

Without deliberate efforts to recruit and retain women, half the population will remain out of reach and the military will miss out on top talent.

"Captain Marvel" [fills a gap](#) in the Marvel and film universe: everyone deserves to be told they can be a superhero. Carol Danvers (DBA Captain Marvel) is not set up to be, and doesn't try to be, a *female* superhero à la Wonder Woman, who is enigmatic, just, and selfless. Grounded in [warrior ethos](#), Carol "[scoffs at authority](#), drives herself to extremes and sometimes loses her temper ... and she is not here to play." She is angry, she is confused, and she is much more relatable for those emotions. This runs counter to the criticism that "[what's missing](#) [in Captain Marvel], though is what helped make 'Wonder Woman' an exemplary figure of female empowerment two years ago: unforced warmth, along with strength, and flashes of delight."

In short, Carol experiences a cocktail of emotions not unfamiliar to many young girls and women, but she perseveres. Captain Marvel's origin story not only demonstrates a woman finding herself but finding her power (after all her call sign is 'Avenger'). Carol is neither romanticized nor sexualized, either wearing the same flight suit (Kree or Air Force) as her teammates or in normal civilian clothes. She wants to win, and she wants to do it her way: higher, further, faster.

Not only is "Captain Marvel" the film girls need, it is one the military community needs. The film instills the idea of military service: [50 percent](#) of young women say they have never considered military service. The Air Force has been toting the film as their "Top Gun" with superheroes, releasing a complementary campaign "[origin story](#)" that features female pilots. The Air Force has provided [significant support](#), hosting [screenings](#) attended by the Secretary of the Air Force and inviting the cast and crew to [Air Force Bases](#).

However, the film is not truly congratulatory toward or critical of the military. First, very little aircraft or Air Force training is shown. Second, the movie is pretty clear-eyed about [sexism](#) in the [aviation](#) community (including [taunts](#) of "you know why they call it the cockpit, right?"). Women have been able to fly combat missions [since 1993](#), though at the time Carol and her best friend Maria Rambeau go through training they are limited to test-flying planes. The film never fully addresses the shift in policy, instead focusing on the adversity the two friends faced while getting their wings. As a result, hope that the film can serve as a recruiting tool may be misplaced.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/21/necessary-impact-captain-marvel-military.html>

Each of the services should make concerted efforts to capitalize and latch onto Captain Marvel. Only [18 percent](#) of young women think "people who become officers are people like me."

"Captain Marvel" shows two female warriors (one white, one black) achieving success despite hurdles. Young women desire a job where they can succeed and make a difference, but do not see the military as such an opportunity. The military services must respond to growing interest among young women by sharing knowledge and making themselves relatable.

Hollywood should be more willing to produce movies on the real life experiences of women in combat. Possibilities could include a female version of "Top Gun", accounts of combat search-and-rescue pilots, a pararescue "G.I. Jane," and films featuring linguists, Female Engagement Teams, and Cultural Support Teams.

When Hollywood does make blockbusters highlighting military women, the services should follow the Air Force's lead in promoting such stories and what they represent to women and society. [Fans](#) clearly identify with "Captain Marvel" characters; the services must demonstrate there is a place for these girls and women in the military by continuing to put forward [female recruiting teams](#) and include [female stories](#) in advertisements.

-- The opinions expressed in this op-ed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Military.com. If you would like to submit your own commentary, please send your article to opinions@military.com for consideration.

‘Rosie the Riveter’ Recounts Women’s World War II Service

By David Vergun

Defense.gov, March 21, 2019



Air Force Lt. Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost, director of staff, Headquarters Air Force, right, points out a Pentagon display to Mae Krier, center, March 20, 2019. With them is Dawn Goldfein, wife of Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein. DOD photo by David Vergun

WASHINGTON—Mae Krier is on Capitol Hill today, hoping to get Congress to recognize March 21 as an annual Rosie the Riveter Day of Remembrance.

Rosie the Riveter was an iconic World War II poster showing a female riveter flexing her muscle.

Krier also advocating that lawmakers award the “Rosies” — as women involved in the war effort at home came to call themselves — the Congressional Gold Medal for their work in the defense industry producing tanks, planes, ships and other materiel for the war effort.

During a visit to the Pentagon yesterday, Krier told Air Force airmen that like her lifelong mission is to inspire the poster’s “We Can Do It!” attitude among young girls everywhere.

The spry 93-year-old walked around the Pentagon’s Air Force corridors, gazing at pictures and paintings of female airmen who were pioneers, telling every airman she met -- both men and women -- how proud she is of their service and giving away red polka-dotted Rosie the Riveter bandannas.

Humble Beginnings

Krier said she grew up on a farm near Dawson, North Dakota. “Times were hard for us and for everyone else,” she said, noting that it was the time of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression in the 1930s.

On Dec. 7, 1941, Krier said, she and her sister had gone to a matinee. Upon their return home, they found their parents beside the radio with grave expressions. They had just learned that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

She said she remembers never having heard of Pearl Harbor. “Nobody had,” she said.

Call to Duty

Young men in Dawson and elsewhere were soon streaming away from home to board vessels that would take them to Europe and the Pacific war theaters, she said.

Among them was her brother. After seeing him off at the train station and returning home, she said, she saw her father crying -- something he never did. The war “took the heart out of our small town and other towns across the country,” she said. “People everywhere were crying.”

Krier’s brother served in the Navy and survived a kamikaze attack during the Battle of Leyte Gulf in 1944. “Our family was lucky that no one was killed during the war,” she said.

Adventures in Seattle

<https://dod.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1791569/rosie-the-riveter-recounts-womens-world-war-ii-service/>

As a restless teen seeking adventure in 1943, Krier said, she set off by train to Seattle. She recalls the windows of her train being stuck open, with snow flying in.

The big city life was exciting to the farm girl. She said she loved to listen to big-band music. She also loved to go to the dance hall, and was particularly fond of the jitterbug.

While dancing the Jitterbug one day in 1943, she said, she was charmed by a sailor, whom she would marry in 1944. He, too, was lucky, she said. He participated in the Aleutian Islands campaign in Alaska, where the Japanese had landed on the islands of Attu and Kiska.

They would be married for 70 years. He died recently at 93.

Becoming a Rosie

Krier said she doesn't remember the exact details of how she ended up as a riveter, but she found work doing just that in a Boeing aircraft factory in Seattle, where she riveted B-17 Flying Fortress and B-29 Superfortress bombers.

"We loved our work. We loved our flag. We all pulled together to win the war," she said. "It was a good time in America."

Meeting Air Force Leaders

Krier said she enjoyed her visit to the Pentagon and meeting dozens of leaders and enlisted personnel. Among those she met were Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein and his wife, Dawn.

Goldfein gave Krier a hug, and she exclaimed that she could now say she hugged a general. Goldfein replied: "Now I can say I hugged a Rosie the Riveter."

Krier also met Air Force Lt. Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost, director of staff, Headquarters Air Force, who, along with Dawn Goldfein, led her around to see the various wall exhibits in the corridors. Krier was pleased to hear that Van Ovost was an aviator as are so many other female airmen today.

"Women have come a long ways," she said.

Discrimination

<https://www.denverpost.com/2019/03/22/colorado-spring-sign-disparaging-military/>

Colorado Springs hotel employees fired for making, displaying sign disparaging military

The incident happened March 14 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Colorado Springs.

By Kieran Nicholson

The Denver Post, March 22, 2019



So last night we took over 600 people to the #doubletreecoloradoSprings and paid over \$50 a person. They came in and shut down our traditions. Treated us like crap, refused to leave food for guests in the bathroom or chatting. They said when they are seated they will be served. They charged us over \$12 a drink which we all paid. And then left this sign on the bar! This event was a post deployment ceremony! These men and women where being honored for serving our county, but I guess serving them at the double tree is too much! Just so you know, we did not damage the building and there was no reason to treat us this way!

3/20/19

PS I totally understand that Double Tree has fired the two employees responsible for their thought provoking decision to do this.

👍 1.6K 💬 102 ➔ 28K

Two employees of a Colorado Springs hotel have been fired after making a sign critical of military personnel and displaying the sign at a military ball, hotel officials said.

The incident happened March 14 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Colorado Springs, according to the hotel's general manager, Daniel Kammerer.

Kammerer was apologetic about the sign, which said: "No longer serving military personnel & their guest(s)."

The sign was created and displayed by two supervisors of the hotel and displayed at a post-deployment event, with more than 600 people, who were honoring and celebrating military service and sacrifice, [as reported Friday by CBS 4](#).

"Our property has a proud history of hiring veterans and welcoming the military as our guests," Kammerer said in a Facebook post the day after the incident. "Last night two of our team members acted without the proper authority to close and exclude military guests from our hotel's bar. This action is inconsistent with our values, and we

humbly apologize."

Kammerer, who has a brother who serves in Navy, went on to say that the two employees have been fired and that their actions are not representative of the hotel and its staff.

"We deeply regret any offense to the service members and their guests and have implemented a retraining of our employees to ensure this does not happen again," Kammerer said. "We are honored and proud to support our military community and their families and look forward to continuing to serve those who serve us."

Justices Display Divisions in New Cases on Voting Maps Warped by Politics

By Adam Liptak

The New York Times, March 26, 2019



Last year, the Supreme Court sidestepped the question of whether partisan gerrymandering ever violate the Constitution. (Credit: J. Scott Applewhite/Associated Press)

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court [returned to the subject](#) of [partisan gerrymandering](#) on Tuesday, appearing largely divided along ideological lines as it considered for a second time in two years whether drawing election maps to help the party in power ever violates the Constitution.

Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh, the court’s newest member and the one who may possess the decisive vote, expressed uneasiness about the practice.

“Extreme partisan gerrymandering is a real problem for our democracy,” he said. “I’m not going to dispute that.”

He added, though, that recent developments around the nation — including state ballot initiatives establishing independent redistricting commissions, proposed legislation in Congress and State Supreme Court rulings — may make action from the United States Supreme Court less necessary.

“Have we really reached the moment, even though it would be a big lift for this court to get involved, where the other actors can’t do it?” he asked.

Much could hang on Justice Kavanaugh’s opinion: A ruling that limited partisan gerrymandering could transform American politics, reshaping House maps in several states, often but not always to the benefit of Democrats.

Justice Kavanaugh was an exceptionally active participant in Tuesday’s arguments, asking probing questions of both sides and displaying particularly detailed familiarity with the geography and voting districts of Maryland, his home state. But his record as an appeals court judge provides few hints about how he will approach the issue.

The other justices seemed largely split along the usual lines, with the more conservative ones wary of announcing constitutional limits on partisan gerrymandering and the more liberal ones prepared to try.

There was certainly no consensus on how to fashion a legal standard that would separate acceptable partisanship from the kind that is unconstitutional. Justice Stephen G. Breyer proposed a numerical test, but it did not seem to gain traction with his colleagues.

Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, on hearing one lawyer’s proposed standard, said it amounted to “I know it when I see it.”

Last year’s cases, from Wisconsin and Maryland, raised the possibility that the court might decide, for the first time, that some election maps were so warped by politics that they crossed a constitutional line. Challengers had pinned their hopes on Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, who had expressed ambivalence on the subject, but he and his colleagues appeared unable to identify a workable constitutional test. The justices instead [sidestepped the central questions](#) in the two cases.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/26/us/politics/gerrymandering-supreme-court.html>

When Justice Kavanaugh replaced Justice Kennedy, many election lawyers said the prospects of a decision limiting partisan gerrymandering dropped sharply. Justice Kavanaugh's questioning on Tuesday complicated that assessment.

On Tuesday, several justices repeated a question Justice Kennedy had asked in earlier cases: Would it be permissible for state lawmakers to make giving their own party an advantage an express legal requirement in drawing voting maps? Justice Kennedy [had written](#) that the answer had to be no.

Paul D. Clement, a lawyer for North Carolina lawmakers who had insisted on just such a requirement, said it was proper and in some ways desirable. "The answer — sort of obviously given who I'm representing — is, 'Absolutely, yes, that's not a problem, and, by the way, I think actually being candid about it probably serves accountability principles in the long run.'"

The North Carolina case, *Rucho v. Common Cause*, No. 18-422, was an appeal from [a decision in August](#) by a three-judge panel of a Federal District Court in North Carolina. [The ruling found](#) that Republican legislators there had [violated the Constitution](#) by drawing the districts to hurt the electoral chances of Democratic candidates.

The judges noted that the legislator responsible for drawing the map had not disguised his intentions. "I think electing Republicans is better than electing Democrats," said the legislator, Representative David Lewis, a Republican. "So I drew this map to help foster what I think is better for the country."

The plan worked. In 2016, the court said, Republican congressional candidates won 53 percent of the statewide vote. But they won in 10 of the 13 congressional districts, or 77 percent of them.

In 2018, the statewide vote was about evenly divided, but Democrats again secured only three seats. (After [evidence of election fraud](#) and [the death last month](#) of a longtime incumbent, two seats are open.)

Like Justice Kavanaugh, Justice Gorsuch cited recent ballot initiatives creating nonpartisan redistricting commissions as a reason for the Supreme Court to hold its fire.

A lawyer for one set of challengers in the North Carolina case, Emmet J. Bondurant II, said such initiatives were not a complete answer. "The vast majority of states east of the Mississippi, including specifically North Carolina," he said, "do not have citizen initiatives."

Nor is it clear that independent redistricting commissions will remain available. In 2015, the Supreme Court [upheld Arizona's commission](#), which was challenged by the state's Legislature. The vote was 5 to 4, with Justice Kennedy joining the court's four more liberal members to form a majority.

Mr. Clement, the North Carolina lawmakers' lawyer, had [represented the Arizona Legislature](#) and did not seem reconciled to his loss in the case. He said the framers of the Constitution had contemplated having election maps drawn by state legislatures, not commissions.

The Maryland case, *Lamone v. Benisek*, No. 18-726, was brought by Republican voters who said Democratic state lawmakers had in 2011 redrawn a district to retaliate against citizens who supported its longtime incumbent, Representative Roscoe G. Bartlett, a Republican. That retaliation, the plaintiffs said, violated the First Amendment by diluting their voting power.

Mr. Bartlett had won his 2010 race by a margin of 28 percentage points. In 2012, he lost to Representative John Delaney, a Democrat, by a 21-point margin.

Last year, after the Supreme Court returned the case to the United States District Court in Maryland, a three-judge panel of that court [ruled for the challengers](#), barred state officials from conducting further congressional elections using the 2011 maps and ordered them to draw new ones.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/26/us/politics/gerrymandering-supreme-court.html>

Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. said the First Amendment may have a role to play if states draw districts to harm voters based on their political viewpoints.

“It does seem that this is a situation where the state is taking retaliatory action against Republicans who were in that district and had a more effective vote,” he said, “and penalizing them for exercising their right to vote by moving them out to a different district.”

Steven M. Sullivan, Maryland’s solicitor general, said the challenged district had been drawn for reasons unrelated to politics. Justice Kavanaugh seemed unpersuaded.

“I don’t think you should run away from the obvious,” Justice Kavanaugh told Mr. Sullivan.

In the North Carolina case, Mr. Clement warned the court about the perils it faced in taking on partisan gerrymandering.

“Once you get into the political thicket,” he said, “you will not get out and you will tarnish the image of this court for the other cases where it needs that reputation for independence so people can understand the fundamental difference between judging and all other politics.”

Allison J. Riggs, a lawyer for a second set of challengers in the North Carolina case, said the real danger was in not acting: “The reputational risk of doing something is much, much less than the reputational risk of doing nothing, which will be read as a green light for this kind of discriminatory rhetoric and manipulation in redistricting from here on out.”

Follow Adam Liptak on Twitter: [@adamliptak](https://twitter.com/adamliptak).

.....

[U.S. Supreme Court divided on partisan electoral maps](#) [Reuters, 2019-03-26]

[Supreme Court wades back into partisan gerrymandering](#) [The Hill, 2019-03-26]

[The Supreme Court takes on gerrymandering. A cottage industry wants to prove it's gone too far](#) [USA TODAY, 2019-03-26]

[Engineering elections? U.S. top court examines electoral map manipulation](#) [Reuters, 2019-03-22]

Public universities focus their recruitment on wealthy and white students, a study finds

By Michelle Lou and Saeed Ahmed

CNN, March 27, 2019



The University of Alabama made 3,957 visits to high schools outside of Alabama in 2017. Most of the trips were concentrated in wealthy, predominantly white communities.

Earlier this month, federal investigators blew the cover of wealthy parents who allegedly [went too far](#) to buy their children a ticket to college.

But that case was only a piece of a larger picture. A [report](#) released Tuesday has provided more insight into how rich people are advantaged in the college admissions process.

Researchers from UCLA and the University of Arizona found that public universities' trips to attract potential students systematically favor those who come from wealthy families. During these recruitment trips, college representatives typically try to sell the school to students by discussing campus life, academic programs and the application process.

But the study found that representatives from these public universities -- which are often strapped for funding -- prioritize recruiting prospective students from affluent and white communities.

The national debate on access to higher education "often blames first-generation or low-income students for not having the right achievements," said Ozan Jaquette, one of the study authors.

"(But) universities are purposely recruiting middle-achieving, high-income students because they need tuition revenue."

The researchers gathered a comprehensive list of recruitment events for 15 public research universities. The Joye Foundation, which advocates for education and racial equity, commissioned the report.

The study found that out-of-state recruitment visits were concentrated in high schools that served affluent communities -- generally, in which the median income was over \$100,000.

In addition, the universities "consistently exhibited racial bias" in their out-of-state visits. Admissions representatives, who made most of their recruiting trips out of state, were significantly less likely to go to high schools with a high percentage of black, Latino and Native American students, the researchers found.

State universities rely on tuition from nonresidents

The schools' focus on affluent, out-of-state students are in response to [state cuts on higher education](#).

"As public universities have faced funding cuts, they have to make that money up somewhere and what has happened is that they've gone to other states to find wealthier students who can pay full tuition to make up for the budget cuts," said Sameer Gadkaree, a senior program officer at the Joye Foundation.

Out-of-state recruitment visits vastly outnumbered in-state trips, the report found. Nearly half of the public universities the study looked at made more than twice as many out-of-state visits as in-state visits.

The University of Alabama was the worst offender of all the schools researchers looked at, Jaquette said.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/27/us/public-universities-recruitment-disparity-trnd/index.html>

In 2017, the school made 4,349 recruitment visits. Only 392 of the visits occurred in Alabama, and recruiters largely neglected high schools in what's known as Alabama's "Black Belt," which enrolls the largest concentration of students of color.

The out-of-state visits followed a similar trend, focusing on schools in affluent and predominantly white areas.

The University of Alabama said in a statement that high school visits are not the school's only student recruitment method.

"UA's out-of-state population has had a positive effect on providing additional financial support and enrollment growth that has expanded our student body, enhanced our honors college and highlighted student achievements," a University of Alabama spokeswoman said in the statement, sent Tuesday to CNN. "The growth also supports our goal of enriching a learning environment that attracts and supports a diverse student body."

UMass Amherst, also mentioned in the report, said in a statement that some schools "lack the resources to consistently hold college fairs."

"We work directly with counselors to identify potential students, build strong partnerships with community-based organizations who serve these students, and have created programming to bring more (underrepresented minority) students to our campus for extended periods to help them envision a future as a college student, especially as a UMass Amherst student," a school spokesman said. "We need to do more, but we believe we are on the right path."

They're missing out on underrepresented groups

Gadkaree, of the foundation that commissioned the report, said state universities are engines of mobility that are crucial to low-income and minority students. But the study showed access to these institutions is heavily skewed.

"Public universities have a really important role to play in that college degrees are increasingly the path to a stable job with good wages," Gadkaree said. "Access to those universities is really important."

Wil Del Pilar is the vice president of higher education policy at The Education Trust, an educational equity advocacy group. He encouraged higher education institutions to "be intentional about going to schools where they haven't traditionally gotten students."

"Schools continue to perpetuate inequality by going to the same schools over and over again instead of exploring schools that may not have a good counselor" or don't receive as much state funding, Del Pilar said.

He added that recruiters should also provide opportunities for students to receive application-fee waivers and help them understand the application process.

SEE ALSO:

[The Implicit Punishment of Daring to Go to College When Poor](#) [*The New York Times*, 2019-03-28]

[OPINION]

Diversity

First Enlisted Woman to Try for Air Force Special Operations Weather Career

By Oriana Pawlyk

Military.com, March 22, 2019



A member of an Air Force Special Operations Weather team. (U.S. Air Force)

The Air Force officially has its first enlisted woman attempting the special operations weather career field.

The female airman, unidentified for privacy reasons, recently graduated basic military training and the special warfare prep course but has yet to begin assessment and selection, known as A&S, Air Education and Training Command spokeswoman Marilyn Holliday told Military.com on Thursday.

Additionally, the next female airman to attempt battlefield training for the Tactical Air Control Party career field officially began AETC's special warfare prep course on March 18, Holliday said.

The two women mark the eighth and ninth enlisted women to try any kind of battlefield training in the Air Force since the Defense Department opened combat career fields to all in December 2015.

The breakdown: AETC has had seven women pursue TACP training, one try for pararescue training, and now one attempt special operations weather, Holliday said. The command does not track recruits who are interested in the special warfare career fields until "they've officially entered the technical training portion," she said.

Officials said in January the airman who entered the pararescue (PJ) training pipeline was injured during the first week of training and had to drop out. While the woman is expected to come back at a later date, Holliday on Thursday said she hasn't returned. She has been the first candidate to seek out PJ training.

Last month, the Air Force's deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services revealed another female airman would attempt TACP training.

Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, in written testimony before the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on personnel, said the service was hopeful the candidate makes it through, but added that attrition in these career field pipelines has been high because of the grueling training.

Attrition across the elite training pipelines ranges between 40 and 90 percent, depending on specialty, Kelly said.

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

-- Oriana Pawlyk can be reached at oriana.pawlyk@military.com. Follow her on Twitter at @oriana0214.

SEE ALSO:

[In a first, enlisted woman aims to become special operations weather airman](#) [*Air Force Times*, 2019-03-26]

For the first time, a state's National Guard command staff is made up of all women

By Samantha Schmidt

The Washington Post, March 28, 2019



Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh, right, Maryland's adjutant general, is seen at the Pentagon with Brig. Gen. Janeen L. Birckhead, left, assistant adjutant general for the Army; Brig. Gen. April D. Vogel, second from left, assistant adjutant general for Air; and Command Sgt. Maj. Perlisa D. Wilson, senior enlisted adviser for the Maryland National Guard. (Sarah L. Voisin/The Washington Post)

It wasn't until the Cold War, in the mid-1950s, that women were allowed to join the National Guard — as medical officers. It would take four more decades for a woman to rise to the level of a state adjutant general, the top commander of a state's military forces.

Now, for the first time in the nation, a state National Guard — Maryland's — is led by a command staff of all women. As of last fall, the top four leaders in the state's National Guard are all women — three of them African American — and all mothers.

Since 2015, Maj. Gen. Linda L. Singh has served at the helm of Maryland's military, the first African American and first woman to hold the role of adjutant general for the Maryland National Guard.

In June, Brig. Gen. Janeen L. Birckhead took over as assistant adjutant general for Army, and in August, Brig. Gen. April Vogel began serving as assistant adjutant general for Air. Then, in December, Command Sgt. Maj. Perlisa D. Wilson became senior enlisted adviser for Maryland's National Guard.

The female-powered staff was, in many ways, entirely unintentional, Singh said. When the positions opened up, Singh by no means was seeking an all-female leadership team — she simply wanted the most qualified candidates available, she said.

“I didn't even realize that it was going to line up this way,” she said. “It's not like I engineered it for all of them to end up in these positions. It just so happened that these talented ones started rising to the top.”

The elevation of women within Maryland's National Guard comes as women across the country continue to rise in the ranks of the military, taking on roles that were previously only filled by men. It was just over three years ago that women were granted the right to serve in combat posts in the U.S. military.

Since then, the first women have graduated from the Army's most physically challenging training, the Ranger School, and from the Marine Corps' Infantry Officer Course. For the first time, a woman is leading an infantry platoon in the Marines. And in February, amid a long-running debate over whether women should be included in the draft, a federal judge ruled that a male-only draft is unconstitutional.

But even in Maryland, the military continues to be a field overwhelmingly dominated by men. Before Birckhead was promoted to brigadier general, she was one of about 25 colonels in the Maryland Army National Guard — and she was the only woman.

“What I didn't want is to have a female leadership team that's not competent,” Singh said. “They had to be competent — just as competent, if not more competent, than their peers.”

These female leaders have also been tested in ways many of their male counterparts haven't.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/03/28/first-time-states-national-guard-command-staff-is-made-up-all-women/>

Growing up in Baltimore, Singh ran away from home as a teenager after being sexually abused by her brother, she said. She was homeless and dropped out of high school but went on to earn a bachelor's degree and multiple master's degrees. Over 30 years in the military, she served in Kosovo and Afghanistan and was awarded the Bronze Star. In her civilian capacity, she also served as a managing director for consulting firm Accenture.

In college, during Birkhead's Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) training at Hampton University, she said, a professor of military science began making inappropriate advances toward her, asking her to redo land navigation training alone with him at night. Birkhead filed a harassment claim, and the professor was removed from the position, she said.

Wilson recalled how, about 15 years ago, she struggled to get promoted to sergeant, which at that time required appearing before a board. "Every time I went, I was the only female," she said.

She appeared before the board twice and wasn't selected. "One time I went before the board that morning and won soldier of the year for the battalion, and later that day I went for a promotion and didn't get selected," she said.

Each of the women credited other female National Guard leaders for noticing their talent, helping elevate them, and for urging them to aim higher. Wilson recalled when, early in her career, she was promoted to private second class, and she watched as a female superior was promoted to staff sergeant. At the promotion ceremony, the staff sergeant told the first sergeant she wanted to someday reach his rank.

At that same promotion ceremony, as Wilson received her private second class pin, she told the first sergeant: "I want to get to where she gets."

Both women ended up far exceeding their goals. When Wilson ended up being promoted to sergeant major, the other female leader was there to pin her at her ceremony.

"I started seeing talent in these particular individuals years and years ago," Singh said of her female leadership staff. "If I have a seat at the table, how can I be their champion to ensure that they're getting the opportunity?"

Having women at the helm of the National Guard has proved essential, not only to recruiting and elevating women, but also to retaining women — particularly mothers, said Vogel, who is also an Air National Guard adviser to the secretary of the Air Force.

As mothers, Vogel and the other female leaders said they can empathize with soldiers seeking advice for balancing motherhood with their military careers.

"It's nice to have somebody who's been there," Vogel said. "I can't tell you the number of young women who have asked to speak with me and said . . . 'How did you handle this? What do you do when you're being questioned because you have to go home to take care of your kids?'"

In the few months since the four women took the helm of Maryland's military, they have already noticed a shift in leadership style. "I definitely think that as women, we are a lot more detail-oriented. We like to get all of the details; we get meticulous into the processes," Wilson said. "We are a little more nurturing when it comes to the position or to the people."

But most of the time, the gender makeup of the command staff is far from their minds.

"When you see a male leadership team, you don't think anything of it," she said. "That's the point we need to get to, where it becomes the norm. And we're not quite there yet."

GI Jane Was a Fairy Tale: Fighting for Respect in the Marine Corps [OPINION]

By Anuradha Bhagwati

Military.com, March 26, 2019

*Anuradha Bhagwati served in the Marine Corps from 1999 to 2004, rising to the rank of captain and becoming only the second woman to graduate Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor trainer school. Following her service, she became the first executive director of the Service Women's Action Network, an advocacy organization that, among other accomplishments, lobbied successfully for the end of the Pentagon's ground combat exclusion policy regarding women. The following is an excerpt from her new memoir, *Unbecoming: A Memoir of Disobedience*. It hit shelves Tuesday.*

Bristol's nose was crooked from years of being smashed against fists, knees, floors, and walls. His white skin was roasted from years of patrolling beneath the sun. He was the size of Godzilla, each leg a mighty column leveling the ground beneath him. I was one-third his mass, making me the goddamned queen of underdogs.

Bristol was a master manipulator of human emotions. I was spellbound, and wary of letting him in. Rumor was he had delved deep into psychological warfare and special operations, and mastered the grisly stuff American moms and dads never knew about and congressional intelligence committees took to their graves. This made him legendary. A prior enlisted infantryman, he'd been in the Corps more years than I'd been alive, and spent several of those years manhandling America's enemies overseas.

We had circled my squad three times now, I his nonconsensual partner in a dance that had no clear mission. I was trying to breathe as his shoulder cut into my gut. Upside down, I saw my squad, still inching forward. Whatever he was up to, I couldn't stand that I was getting a break from my squad's collective agony. I had to earn my respect.

Bristol was lecturing me on nothing in particular, but then started talking about my role here, informing me that I was responsible for my roommate's poor performance. He was talking about Riley, the PhD from OCS who'd been responsible for our leg-shaving orders, and the only other woman in the black belt program. She had a temper like a maniac, and was just not cutting it physically. He wanted me to know that if she had a problem, it was my problem, too. This was no feminist motivation speech about women lifting one another up. He was insulting Riley and taunting me at the same time. This was all a game to him.

I thought, *Goddamn it, put me down, mother-----r.*

Eventually, he did. I yes Sir'd everything under the blazing sun and scurried back to my squad.

Bristol was eager to prove that I was different. It wasn't enough for me and my squad to know that I was a woman. He had to show us.

We were on the obstacle course early one morning. Bristol had been shadowing me that day. Officers did this often, calling it supervision, but sometimes I wondered. He was like a mosquito in my ear, whispering tales about each obstacle in the evolution, giving me tips that I didn't need on this course that I knew in my sleep, while I heaved and pulled myself along with my squad. At some point I thought I'd lost him, and I exhaled a bit under my flak jacket. Moving as a unit, we began to traverse the wooden hurdles. Suddenly Bristol was there.

He stopped our squad and approached me, casting a shadow over the course. He reached his enormous arm behind my head and grabbed my hair in one giant fist, pulling my skull back, slowly, as if to make sure my

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/26/gi-jane-was-fairy-tale-fighting-respect-marine-corps.html>

face would be seen. I saw the men in my squad as though I were seeing them for the first time. I do not know if the same was true for them.

I wasn't looking for protection. If he was going to use me as a prop, I wanted witnesses. Bristol could only execute this sort of thing in front of the guys. My guys. Humiliation of women had a particular flavor when executed before silent men.

"*This* is what they'll do if they get their hands on you. What are you going to do then, Lieutenant?" My face was frozen but my brain was operating on rapid fire now.

The smart-ass in me totally agreed.

Uh, I don't know--buzz my head, Sir, but the Corps won't let me.

The other side was goading him.

Say it, Sir, say what they'll really do to me. Or just f---king do it. Or are you scared I might cry? I was preparing for his next move, which I knew would happen without any warning. I was no hero in a Ridley Scott movie. *G.I. Jane* was a fairy tale. There were no comebacks with Bristol.

He eventually let go. Maybe it was the quiet stink in my eyes, or the steadiness in my presence. I had learned by now to hold and wait for him to shift gears. When he moved on, we went back to training as if nothing had happened.

I was a lightweight compared to the hulking guys in my course. They responded to me in different ways. The other officer in my squad, a major and a helicopter pilot who treated me like a daughter as much as a training partner, pissed me off to no end when we partnered up in ground fighting. A former competitive wrestler and a push-up champion, he just sat there beneath me, refusing to offer any resistance for me to practice my guard or mount techniques.

"Come on, fight me, Sir!" I hollered at him.

Another time, I was matched with a dude twice my weight, and after rolling around for a bit back and forth he just straddled me, sat down on my pelvis, and checked out. The guy was practically taking a cigarette break. I couldn't move out from under him to save my life, though I was making a hell of an effort to. Bristol walked by, unamused by my wriggling.

"You're not going to win like that, Lieutenant. Figure it out."

A few days later, I was summoned into a boxing ring to spar with one of our instructors, a beefy Midwestern staff sergeant whose back and chest threatened to swallow my skinny Indian skeleton whole. I took a fighting stance, ready to pound on him and receive whatever punches he threw at my rib cage and gut. I summoned my adrenaline and braced for impact. Whatever I lacked in size and brawn I tried to make up in willpower and capacity to take a pounding. But he refused to meet me in the center of the ring, saying, "I need you to put on a flak jacket, Ma'am."

I paused. (Pausing was a luxury occasionally afforded to officers, a relative privilege that only sometimes made up for the fact of being female.) Something wasn't right here. The men in my squad who fought before me in the ring had not worn flak jackets. Why would I strap an extra sixteen pounds onto my chest and back to take on the Incredible Hulk when he already outweighed me by 125 pounds?

Pauses were risky when you were physically exhausted but not nearly done with whatever physical pain lay ahead. Pauses broke your momentum and messed with the chemicals that were short-circuiting your better instincts not to hit someone twice your size. I was spent from having my ass kicked for days on end,

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/26/gi-jane-was-fairy-tale-fighting-respect-marine-corps.html>
indoors, outdoors, and every which way by very large Marines, on one good leg no less. I was exhausted just trying to walk straight.

I was the only woman in this squad. And I'd experienced just enough to know the difference between safety and bulls--t. The staff sergeant was a Muscle Milk-guzzling machine-gunner whose main education in life came from Marine Corps infantry. He was our lead instructor and an expert on tearing humans limb from limb. I couldn't possibly adopt a separate training uniform and be padded up like some princess.

The rest of my squad, a group of infantrymen, a reconnaissance Marine, and a massive former cook, grew still, sweating profusely, watching this drama unfold.

"Ma'am, it's standard safety gear for females."

"But I don't need any safety gear."

"Ma'am, it's --"

"Staff Sergeant, the guys don't have to wear this. So why should I have to wear it?"

"Ma'am." He paused, and summoned a poker face for me, the female officer, who, despite any natural laws he thought ruled the order of things between men and women, technically outranked him.

He said this cautiously.

"It's for your protection, so you don't get hurt." He blushed. *Oh lord.*

The idea that this burly staff sergeant and his cadre of tough guys had given enough thought to consider the safety of my breasts stunned me. It meant he'd actually considered that I had breasts. I quickly shook the thought from my head.

What female weakness was it this time? Was it breast cancer, or baby making? Or, god forbid, was it simply cosmetic, that they didn't want my boobs to suffer the indignity of bruising?

I didn't believe that the Corps gave a rat's ass about the health of my breasts or any infant's chances of successfully breastfeeding. They were *my* goddamned boobs, and little did they know that I did not consider myself either a milk production machine or a cautionary tale for oncologists. Being forced to wear breast protection gear, among a sea of hardened dudes with rock-solid chests, was like few other humiliations I'd endured in uniform.

Everyone was waiting. My squad knew I was feisty and strong-willed, but they didn't know how far I'd take this. Some of these guys tiptoed around me, these enormous, hulking men, treating me like a doll. *I* had to toughen *them* up. A few were blessed with common sense, and I respected them for it. My favorite instructor was a short, stocky infantryman, Sergeant Doyle, who wasn't afraid to kick me hard in the gut and send me flying across the room to get me to learn something. He didn't believe in coddling me.

This was not that Marine. But I was fed up and getting nowhere, and the embarrassment was slowly taking over any will I had to hold out. What was I going to do, complain to Bristol, who had likely orchestrated the whole thing in the first place? I slung the jacket over my precious chest and swung as hard as I could.

-- From "*Unbecoming*" by Anuradha Bhagwati, published by Atria Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc., a division of CBS. Copyright © 2019 by Anuradha Bhagwati. Reprinted by permission.

House votes to condemn Trump ban on transgender military service

By Mike DeBonis

The Washington Post, March 28, 2019



Protesters at the White House in July 2017 after President Trump announced his transgender military ban. (Paul J. Richards/AFP/Getty Images)

The House voted Thursday to strongly oppose President Trump’s ban on transgender people serving openly in the military, a symbolic rebuke led by Democrats angry at Trump’s reversal of a policy established under President Barack Obama.

The [resolution](#) condemns the ban as discriminatory and rejects “the flawed scientific and medical claims upon which it is based,” but it does not move to actually change the policy. It instead “strongly urges” the Defense Department to not implement the ban and to “maintain an inclusive policy” on allowing qualified transgender people to serve in the military.

The resolution passed 238 to 185, with five Republicans joining Democrats in backing the measure. There is no indication the GOP-majority Senate will take up the measure, though binding changes to the policy could be debated as part of the yearly defense authorization process.

Speaking on the House floor Thursday, Democrats lambasted Trump for reversing the Obama policy. Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) called the move “bigoted.”

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith (D-Wash.) pointed to statements from military leaders — including Army Gen. Mark Milley, the incoming chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — indicating that there were no indications that transgender troops had affected morale or readiness.

“What this policy is primarily based on is ignorance and bias against the transgender community,” Smith said. “This is unfair discrimination, and it’s also harmful to national security.”

The Pentagon said this month that it would [begin enforcing](#) the transgender troop ban for new applicants starting April 12. That announcement followed a January Supreme Court ruling backing Trump’s authority to roll back the previous policy.

Under the new Pentagon policy, applicants with a history of gender dysphoria would be disqualified unless they have been stable in their biological sex for 36 months and are willing to follow military rules for that gender. People who have already transitioned away from their birth gender would not be eligible for service.

Those who are already in the military or under contract to join before April 12 are covered under the Obama administration’s policy, which allowed people who have transitioned to join the military and allowed those already serving to transition as well.

Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.), the top Republican on the Armed Services Committee, dismissed the Democratic measure as a “messaging bill” and said he was concerned that the partisan measure could undermine the traditional bipartisan working relationship on military matters.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/house-votes-to-condemn-trump-ban-on-transgender-military-service/2019/03/28/fa1b6056-515b-11e9-8d28-f5149e5a2fda_story.html

Another Republican on the committee, Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-Mo.), said it was unfair that some Americans were being excluded from military service based on conditions such as asthma and bunions while transgender people — who, she said, carried a similar risk of being unable to fight for medical reasons — were allowed to serve.

“We should not carve out exceptions for an entire population,” she said. “Military service is a privilege, not a right.”

Opponents of the transgender service ban continue to fight it in federal court, but the Trump administration has shown no indication of changing course on the policy — first announced publicly in a July 2017 tweet from the president.

“After consultations with my Generals and military experts, please be advised that the United States Government will not accept or allow Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military,” Trump wrote. “Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail. Thank you.”

SEE ALSO:

[House votes to condemn Trump’s transgender military ban](#) [*The Associated Press*, 2019-03-28]

[House rebuffs Trump on transgender troop ban](#) [*Politico*, 2019-03-28]

[House passes resolution opposing Trump's transgender military ban](#) [*CNN*, 2019-03-28]

[House votes to condemn Trump's transgender military ban](#) [*The Hill*, 2019-03-28]

[The 5 Republicans who voted to condemn Trump's transgender military ban](#) [*The Hill*, 2019-03-28]

Marine Commandant Personally Invites MARSOC Trailblazer to Become an Officer

By Gina Harkins

Military.com, March 22, 2019

The commandant of the Marine Corps personally challenged a sergeant who made history last year when she reached a major training milestone to rethink leaving the service and instead consider a career as an officer, Military.com has learned.

Gen. Robert Neller called Sgt. Bailey Weis, the first female Marine to complete second phase of the intense selection process for special operators, to encourage her to attend Officer Candidates School. The call followed [Military.com's story about Weis](#) after she completed the physically demanding Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command training, which no woman had passed before.

"Sgt. Weis has the leadership, grit and resolve to be a Marine officer," said Col. Ricco Player, a spokesman for Neller. "This is all about talent management."

Neller has called on Marine leaders to help the service retain its top talent throughout his time as commandant. In a Marine Corps-wide message, Neller the service must attract, develop, promote and retain the "best talent the nation has to offer in order to more effectively operate across the range of military operations."

Weis could attend OCS as soon as this summer, a Marine with knowledge of her case said. Reached by phone, Weis declined to comment, saying she wanted to remain focused on her future career options.

After completing Phase Two of Assessment and Selection Course, Weis was not chosen to move ahead in the training pipeline. It's not uncommon for some Marines who pass the highly secretive and physically demanding training not to be selected, according to MARSOC officials, but the reasons they're not selected are highly guarded.

Since Weis made that far into MARSOC's training, she's not eligible to repeat it. The thinking is that she knows too much about what to expect, which could give her an advantage over other candidates. Weis, an aviation maintenance controller, told Military.com in the fall that she would be leaving the Marine Corps, since a MARSOC career was no longer an option for her.

Instead, she said she planned to complete a master's degree in international relations, and work toward earning a commission in the North Carolina National Guard.

"[MARSOC] would've been a nice option," she said. "But there are a lot of other opportunities out there."

That's when Neller stepped in. He called Weis, Player said, and challenged her to consider OCS and referred her to the Marine Corps' manpower division to determine whether she was qualified. She was, Player added.

Weis, who previously graduated from Infantry Training Battalion, called MARSOC's Assessment and Selection process one of the most challenging things she's ever done. She was the only woman in her training cycle, but she said she earned the other Marines' respect by doing everything with them.

"You really just push your body to the limit and then past it," she said. "You learn that you can do more than you thought you could."

-- Gina Harkins can be reached at gina.harkins@military.com. Follow her on Twitter [@ginaaharkins](#).

More Military Children Seeking Transgender Medical Care, Report Finds

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, March 28, 2019



In this Sept. 7, 2016, photo, Dr. David Klein, an Air Force major and chief of adolescent medicine at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, left, speaks with Amanda Brewer and her daughter Jenn Brewer, 13, during the teenager's regular monthly appointment for monitoring of her treatment at the hospital in Fort Belvoir, Va. Brewer is transitioning from male to female. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

The number of military children receiving transgender-related care within the military health system increased significantly following a Defense Department policy change that gave them access to non-surgical treatment, [according to a report published Monday in JAMA Pediatrics](#).

Between October 2009 and April 2017, 2,533 young people out of the roughly 1.7 million eligible for medical care through the military health system received transgender-associated care, increasing from 135 in all of 2010 to 528 in the first four months of 2017 alone.

In October 2016, the DoD began providing coverage to dependents and military retirees for mental health counseling and hormone therapy for gender dysphoria, the clinical diagnosis for those for whom identifying with their birth gender causes significant distress.

According to the study, the majority of youths seeking transgender treatment under the military health program were born female (65 percent) and the median associated age for gender-related treatment was 17 years old. But roughly a quarter of the children seeking gender-related care were younger than 14.

While the policy went into effect in late 2016, patients previously could seek treatment by requesting a waiver. Under the policy, military medical facilities and [Tricare](#) provide hormone treatment and counseling. Surgery is authorized only when deemed medically necessary, such as in cases of ambiguous genitalia.

According to the study, of those receiving hormone therapy, 4 percent were prescribed puberty suppression treatments at a median age of 15; 11 percent were given female hormones (median age 19); and 20 percent were administered testosterone therapy (also a median age of 19).

Co-author Dr. Elizabeth Hisle-Gorman of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, [told Reuters Health that the study shows](#) "transgender care, which was only officially available to military dependents in 2016, is used and needed."

"We hope to explore how changes in availability of transgender-related care can impact the overall health and well-being of military connected children," she said. "We also think it is important to understand how other factors related to military life, including parental deployment and frequent moves, may affect these children and adolescents."

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

Pentagon to move forward on limits for transgender troops as final legal hurdle falls

By Tara Copp

Military Times, March 27, 2019



In this Feb. 27, 2019, file photo, from left, transgender military members Navy Lt. Cmdr. Blake Dremann, Army Capt. Alivia Stehlik, Army Capt. Jennifer Peace, Army Staff Sgt. Patricia King and Navy Petty Officer Third Class Akira Wyatt, listen before the start of a House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington. (Manuel Balce Ceneta/AP)

The Pentagon's new [transgender policy](#) cleared a final legal hurdle Tuesday, meaning new limits on whether troops who identify as other than their biological sex may serve may be implemented within weeks.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit removed the last of four court injunctions lower federal courts had issued on the new policy, which had until today kept the Defense Department from prohibiting forces from serving who experience gender dysphoria, which is a discomfort with one's biological sex. Transgender personnel who are willing to serve according to their biological sex, or who have already completed their transition to their preferred sex and are stable would be allowed to remain in the military.

DoD had previously announced it would move forward with its new policy, but retracted that when it became clear the final injunction was still in place.

With Tuesday's decision and removal of that last injunction, "at the moment, there is no legal barrier to the government's intended plan to start enforcing the ban on April 12," said Perry Sacks, a spokesman for the various attorneys representing transgender clients.

Shannon Minter, an attorney for the National Center for Lesbian Rights who represented clients in two of the four federal lawsuits, said they still have until Friday to seek a rehearing on this issue, but that rehearing request has no significance now that the final injunction has been lifted.

Those advocacy groups may still pursue other legal options, including seeking a new injunction through the Court of Appeals or other avenues, Minter said.

"We are weighing all those options," Minter said.

However, Thursday's ruling in some respects seemed to be a chapter ending on a policy fight that began unexpectedly in summer 2017 with a tweet from President Donald Trump. In the more than year and a half since, the Pentagon has refined its transgender policy and seen some legal setbacks on the issue, which impacts approximately 9,000 service members.

Minter said that policy "is already wreaking havoc in the lives of dedicated transgender troops who must now face the grim choice of suppressing their identity or leaving military service, to the detriment of their fellow service members and national security."

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/03/22/recruits-with-first-partially-gender-integrated-marine-boot-camp-company-earn-the-title-marine/>

Recruits with first partially gender-integrated Marine boot camp company earn the title Marine

By Shawn Snow

Marine Corps Times, March 22, 2019



Recruits with November Company, Fourth Recruit Training Battalion, listen to a Medal of Honor citation between events during the Crucible on Parris Island, South Carolina, Feb. 22. (Sgt. Dana Beesley/ Marine Corps)

The Marines of India Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, the first partially [gender-integrated company](#) in the Corps' history, earned the title Marine on March 16 aboard the recruit depot Parris

Island, South Carolina, according to Marine Corps officials.

Wrapping up the 54-hour physical demanding event of recruit training known as the crucible and completing a culminating 9-mile hike, the Marines were handed Eagle, Globe and Anchors — marking the transformation from recruit to Marine.

The Marines are now set to attend graduation on March 29, and after they will be spirited off to various follow-on combat training and job schools.

The company is the first quasi-gender integrated company in the Corps' history. The unit kicked off boot camp on Jan. 5 to a fanfare of media attention as the company included one female platoon and five male platoons.

Traditionally, male and female units are separated on Parris Island, with 4th Recruit Training Battalion consisting as the sole female recruit unit aboard the recruit depot.

The Corps previously has said the recent integration effort at Parris Island was merely done for efficiency, and that it decided to “incorporate the 50 female recruits into the historically all-male battalion because the recruiting classes are typically much smaller in the winter months,” according to a Marine Corps statement.

Nonetheless, the Corps says it will still assess the partially integrated effort.

The integration effort at Parris Island was only a partial integration. Female Marines merely lived in a separate squad bay but had their own female drill instructors.

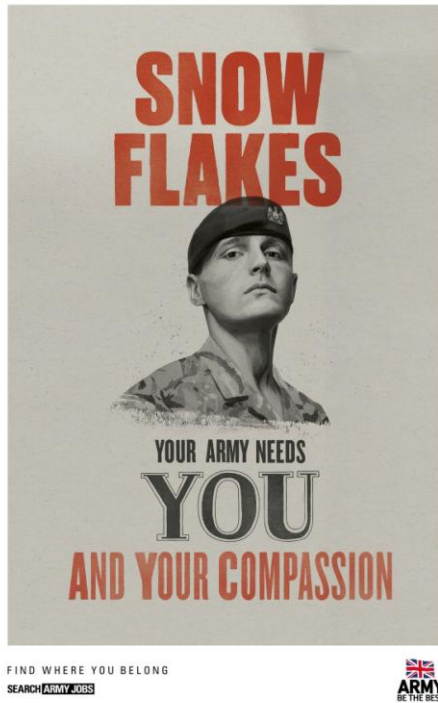
The Corps is the only branch to not have a co-ed boot camp — an issue the Corps has received much criticism for from female veteran advocacy groups that believe gender segregation molds disrespectful sentiments among male colleagues toward female Marines.

But the Marine Corps has routinely argued the importance of platoon-level training at the recruit depots, where drill instructors live with their recruits in squad bays.

What the US Army can learn from the Brits' 'snowflake' recruiting campaign

By Meghann Myers

Army Times, March 28, 2019



A British army recruiting poster targets younger generations. (British Army)

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — Earlier this year, the British Army unveiled a new poster [recruiting campaign](#) targeted straight at millennials and Generation Z: Glued to your phone, obsessed with posting selfies, easily offended? You're what we're looking for.

The images elicited snickers and groans from salty Americans and Britons alike, but it turns out they were part of an ongoing [marketing effort](#) that has been paying dividends for the United Kingdom, according to that country's director of operations for [Army Recruiting and Initial Training Command](#).

"The applications to join the Army as a regular soldier are on a rising trend, as a consequence of that campaign — much to the dismay, I have to say, of many dissenters out there — members of the public, media, veterans, who say, 'This is no way to recruit for the Army,'" Brigadier David Colthup said Tuesday at AUSA's Global Force Symposium.

Their statistics show that over the previous few years, applications have jumped in the tens of thousands.

"Belonging to something that is bigger than you, but that will accept you for you, was really resonating with the target audience that we've been trying to appeal to," Colthup said.

The idea began in 2016, with the British Army facing a manning shortfall of about 5,000 soldiers and multiple years of missed recruiting goals. Like in the U.S., a dwindling veteran population, a low unemployment rate and a rise in obesity rates were thought to be hamstringing their efforts.

Teamed with a private marketing firm, a plan coalesced around the idea of belonging.

"Actually, soldiers who serve for that sense of belonging, being together, that common purpose is really, really important," Colthup said.

Every January for the past three years, another phase of the campaign has rolled out. It started with "finding a place" in 2017, Colthup said, followed by "making that theme attainable," he added, which "was at that time, quite controversial."

The 2019 effort strings "the last two years together, built upon them, so that because of belonging, someone like me — someone like them — can do something that really matters," Colthup said.

At the same time, they set out to bust some myths about serving, showing soldiers goofing off during training, socializing in their civilian clothes, practicing their faiths or expressing emotions.

Colthup showed a marketing video to an audience Tuesday, and U.S. Army Recruiting Command's Maj. Gen. Frank Muth reacted immediately.

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/03/28/what-the-us-army-can-learn-from-the-brits-snowflake-recruiting-campaign/>

“I personally want to include — because you saw that on the UK video, and I thought that was great — if I can advocate, I haven’t seen a commercial that had a soldier in civilian clothes, I think, since like 1979,” Muth said.

Army commercials tend to show a lot about soldier jobs, but almost nothing about the lifestyle that goes along with service, which is a defining part of life in the Army.

“Because we never show soldiers off duty. And we never show soldiers having families,” Muth said. “And I’ll tell you, some of the misperceptions among the Z Generation are, ‘Can we own a dog? Are we allowed to own a car? Do we always live in the barracks? Am I allowed to get married? Can I have children?’ And we don’t necessarily convey that.”

“Warriors Wanted”

The U.S. Army itself unveiled a new recruiting campaign last fall, with four commercials touting the new Warriors Wanted slogan.

The imagery is combat arms heavy, per Army Chief of Staff Mark Milley’s direction.

“Are you up to the task, are you to the challenge?” Muth said, describing the message. “A lot of recruiters will tell you — out of places like Chicago, Baltimore, New York, Boston—they don’t resonate in the cities.”

But another campaign, focusing more on science, technology, engineering and math is on the way, he added.

It will feature diverse subjects and Army jobs, he said, with the same narrative: An American youth graduating from high school, going to Army training, using their skills in the field, leaving the Army, volunteering in their communities, and finally, moving on to college.

Two commercials are completed and four more are in the planning stages, Muth said, under the “More in Four” slogan.

The idea being that spending four years in the Army offers more experiences and opportunities than another path, and in the end, you can still go to college — and it’ll be paid for.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2019/03/26/nasas-first-all-female-spacewalk-isnt-happening-blame-wardrobe-malfunction/>

Why NASA's historic all-female spacewalk isn't happening

By Lindsey Bever, Kayla Epstein, and Allyson Chiu

The Washington Post, March 26, 2019



NASA has aborted its first all-female [spacewalk](#) outside the International Space Station because there are not enough spacesuits of the best size to fit both female astronauts, the agency said.

Astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch had planned to conclude Women's History Month with a spacewalk Friday to continue work outside the space station.

But NASA spokeswoman Stephanie Schierholz said in an email Tuesday to The Washington Post that both women need a medium-size hard upper torso — the shirt of the spacesuit — and there is only one medium-size suit on the space station that is ready for use. NASA [said](#) astronauts Nick Hague and McClain completed the first spacewalk in the series earlier this month, so Hague and Koch plan to set out on the next one later this week.

Still, Schierholz said, "We believe an all-female spacewalk is inevitable."

NASA [said](#) the two female astronauts had prepared to continue work outside the International Space Station installing lithium-ion batteries for the space station's solar arrays.

Then there was a spacesuit problem.

Schierholz told The Post that McClain had trained in both large-size and medium-size suits, but, during her first spacewalk last Friday, she realized that the medium was the better fit. Koch also wears a medium, and Schierholz said that although there are two mediums on board, only one of them is in a "readily usable configuration."

"Koch will wear it," Schierholz said. "It is more efficient to swap spacewalkers than to reconfigure the elements of the spacesuit."

Schierholz explained that "spacesuits are not 'one size fits all.'"

"Astronauts typically describe spacewalks as the most physically challenging thing they do," she said. "Working in a pressurized spacesuit requires physical strength and endurance, and it is essential that the spacesuit fits as well as possible."

She added that "an optimally fitted spacesuit improves an astronaut's ability to accomplish the tasks. We do our best to anticipate the spacesuit sizes that each astronaut will need, based on the spacesuit size they wore in training on the ground, and in some cases astronauts train in multiple sizes. However, the sizing needs of crew members may change when they are on orbit, in response to the changes living in microgravity can bring about in a body.

Miscellaneous

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-census-undercount/citizenship-question-on-u-s-census-would-cause-hispanic-undercount-by-millions-study-idUSKCN1R32BV>

Citizenship question on U.S. Census would cause Hispanic undercount by millions: study

By Nick Brown

Reuters, March 22, 2019

NEW YORK - The Trump administration's proposal to ask a citizenship question on the 2020 U.S. census could lead to an undercount of some 4.2 million among Hispanics, costing their communities federal aid and political representation, according to a new study by Harvard researchers.

The study by the Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy is the first to assess the impact of the proposed question since U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced plans last year to reinstate it for the first time in more than half a century.

The study found the question could lead to census-takers missing between 3.9 million and 4.6 million Hispanics nationwide - or between 7.7 percent and 9.1 percent of the Hispanic population recorded in the last U.S. census, in 2010.

Demographers, data experts and even Census Bureau officials have said the question risks frightening immigrants into abstaining from the count in a climate of stepped-up immigration enforcement. Because decennial census data determines how congressional seats are apportioned - and how the U.S. government allocates \$800 billion a year in federal aid - an undercount could prove disastrous in some communities.

Harvard said it surveyed some 9,000 people, about half of whom were Hispanic. Researchers found the citizenship question would make all respondents - but especially Hispanics - more likely to skip key questions about race and ethnicity, and less likely to report Hispanic members of their households.

The study may have undersold the impact of the question, the researchers said.

"Not only are we university affiliated academic researchers, and not the U.S. Government... but our respondents were paid panelists and thus financially incentivized to complete the survey," they said.

The U.S. Commerce Department declined to comment.

Michael Cook, a spokesman for the Census Bureau, said in a statement to Reuters that the bureau is planning to spend \$500 million to market the census and promote participation. Cook called the campaign "the most robust marketing and outreach effort in Census history."

Although a citizenship question has routinely appeared on some Census Bureau surveys, it has not appeared on the mandatory, decennial U.S. census since 1950. Ross says it is needed to help the U.S. Department of Justice better enforce federal protections for minority voters.

Two federal judges have blocked the question for now, siding with Democratic states and cities that alleged Ross' reasoning was a pretext to repress immigrant participation. The U.S. Supreme Court is slated to hear an appeal on April 23.

The Census, estimated to cost taxpayers \$16 billion, becomes more expensive when fewer people respond, as the bureau must pay door-knockers to follow up with noncompliant households.

Ross has come under fire for not testing the citizenship question itself. The Census Bureau is planning to survey the effects of the question in July, to better understand operational needs "such as how many census takers may be needed to follow up and where they should be located," Cook said.

Reporting by Nick Brown; Editing by Bill Berkrot

Coast Guard Eyes Changes to Physical Standards, Tattoo Policy to Retain Troops

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, March 22, 2019



Petty Officer 1st Class Krystyna Duffy, a boatswain's mate assigned to Coast Guard Station Golden Gate in San Francisco, drives a 47-foot Motor Lifeboat near the Golden Gate Bridge, Feb. 8, 2018. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

A week before releasing results of a study on retaining women in the Coast Guard, the service's top leaders said they will institute a policy to better support families during parental leave and are considering changing weight standards they say disproportionately

affect females.

Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz also told reporters during a briefing Thursday that the service plans to study minority retention in order to grow -- and keep -- diversity in the ranks.

The Coast Guard last year hired Rand Corporation to explore why many women leave the Coast Guard after their first enlistment or officer obligation. In the first five years, Schultz said, women and men stay in the service at the same rates, but from after that, and through the 14th year, female retention drops, with up to a 14 percent gap between gender.

To address one retention concern, Schultz said members of the Coast Guard Reserve will now be used to backfill members while they are on maternity, convalescent or caregiver leave.

While the details have not been finalized, Schultz said he wanted men and women in the Coast Guard to see success in the service and also be successful parents and caregivers.

"There is policy work that needs to go into it. But ... I want the Coast Guard to be an employer of choice. I want the Coast Guard to be a place where you see a future, you see opportunity."

The service's top leaders said that because the Coast Guard is so small and its members are scattered across the United States and abroad in remote locations, there are no replacements for members -- men and women -- when they take leave related to childbirth, caregiving and convalescence.

The proposal to use Coast Guard Reserve members in their places is designed to ease anxiety and ensure that members take their full allotment of leave, Schultz said.

"I want men and women to see success as a Coast Guardsmen and success as a parent," he said.

The Coast Guard is 14.6 percent women and 17 percent persons of color, including 5.9 percent African-American. To address what Schultz called a disparity between the service and the general population regarding diversity, the Coast Guard plans to commission a study on retaining underrepresented minorities, similar to the report it will release next week.

It also is examining its tattoo restrictions, policies that prevent single parents from enlisting and physical standards based on body mass index that limit recruitment and retention.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/22/coast-guard-updating-parental-leave-protocols-improve-retention.html>

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Jason Vanderhaden explained that the Coast Guard's physical standards are largely based on body mass index, a measurement that doesn't account for fitness, ability to do one's job, muscle mass and overall body composition.

Acknowledging that Coast Guard men and women must maintain a level of fitness to perform their jobs, he said that the current BMI restrictions could be adjusted to ensure that the service retains those who are qualified and perform well.

"We've heard from women who said they left the service because they had so much anxiety every April and October [when the Coast Guard measures]. They were starving themselves or doing other things," Vanderhaden said.

Again, the service has yet to develop the policy but Schultz said the leadership team is exploring these "forward-leaning policy changes to recruit and retain a workforce reflective of the nation we serve."

After the commandant's speech, Ensign Abby Mann said she was excited about Schultz's proposals. A deck watch officer on the Fast Response Cutter USCGC Benjamin Bottoms, she called the Reserve replacement proposal a "great idea."

"I really like what he said to retain women ... right now, when you leave, it can be a real burden on a unit. If you knew someone was stepping in, it would give you more flexibility and definitely relieve anxiety."

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

Controversial Military Malpractice Policy May Be Closer to Overturn Than Ever

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, March 24, 2019



Sailors from Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD), currently assigned to USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) works on a mock patient during a mass casualty drill for Mercy Exercise (MERCEx) in December 2018. (Cameron Pinske/U.S. Navy)

In March 2014, at Naval Hospital Bremerton, Washington, Navy Lt. Rebekah "Moani" Daniel was admitted to have her first child. A labor and delivery nurse who worked at the facility, she was surrounded by friends and co-workers when daughter Victoria

entered the world.

But four hours later, the 33-year-old was dead, having lost more than a third of her body's volume of blood to post-partum hemorrhaging. Her husband's attorney argues that the doctors failed to deploy treatments in time to halt the bleeding, leading to her death.

Her baby, now 5, never felt her mom's embrace.

This Friday, the U.S. Supreme Court will decide whether to hear a petition from Moani Daniel's husband, Walter Daniel, [in his case against the Navy hospital where his wife died](#). Like every other service member, Daniel was required to get medical care from the U.S. military, but her family is prohibited from suing for medical malpractice, barred by a 69-year-old legal ruling known as Feres that precludes troops from suing the federal government for injuries deemed incidental to military service.

"Suppose you had two sisters. One was on active duty and the other was a military dependent. Both of them give birth in adjoining rooms at the same military hospital [by the same doctor]. Both are victims of malpractice. One can sue and the other one can't. How can that make sense?" asked attorney Eugene Fidell, a former Coast Guard judge advocate general and military law expert who lectures at Yale Law School.

While the issue has come back before the Supreme Court in previous years, it could now have a stronger chance of being taken up by the justices, a first step in what Walter Daniel and others hope will be a major policy overturn.

When Walter Daniel's case is distributed to the justices for conference, it will be the first Feres case before the court since 2016, when an Air Force captain settled with the federal government for an undisclosed amount in another malpractice case involving childbirth.

Distribution of a case for conference means the justices may discuss it among the hundreds of petitions to be considered and will decide whether to hear oral arguments from the parties involved.

The U.S. Supreme Court takes between 70 to 80 cases a year.

Unlike many previous Feres cases, the court in the Daniel case [ordered the U.S. government to file a response](#), an indication that at least one of the nine justices is interested in the case, explained Andrew Hoyal, Daniel's attorney.

Meanwhile, another veteran is also working to end Feres.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/24/controversial-military-malpractice-policy-may-be-closer-overturn-ever.html>

In March 2017, Army Sgt. First Class Richard Stayskal was training at the Army's Special Forces Underwater Operations School in Key West, Fla., when he noticed something amiss: In top shape, the Green Beret was having trouble with his health, unable to catch his breath.

Once Stayskal arrived home at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the symptoms continued, including wheezing, numbness and blurry vision. To find the cause, he went to several doctors, including one in the emergency room at Womack Army Medical Center, where he'd undergone his pre-dive training physical four months before.

Sent home repeatedly with diagnoses of asthma and pneumonia, Stayskal began coughing blood. On June 22, when he went to a civilian pulmonologist for answers, the doctor found a large tumor in his lungs. Stayskal later learned it was lung cancer -- and apparently, the suspicious nodule was clearly visible in his January pre-dive CT scan, a nearly 3-centimeter node that should have prompted follow-up care and more tests. Military doctors also had noticed it in May and recommended follow-up, but never told Stayskal.

Instead, the Army Green Beret and former Marine is dying of Stage IV lung cancer, the disease having spread to his spleen, liver, spine, hip joints and lymph nodes. His attorney says if he'd received proper care in January, he may have had a chance at defeating the deadly non-small cell adenocarcinoma.

If the Supreme Court justices decline to accept the Daniel case, Stayskal's attorney, Natalie Khawam of Whistleblower Law Firm in Tampa, has set the wheels in motion in Congress to change the law that many say is patently unfair.

"I could not imagine if this happened to my son. So, I took it on, saying that I'm just going to focus on fixing and changing this law, even if that's the last thing I do in law," Khawam said.

The History of Feres

The Feres ruling stems from three separate court cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1950 over the Federal Tort Claims Act, the law that permits citizens sue the government for wrongdoings by federal employees or agencies.

The widow of Lt. Rudolph Feres sued the Army for negligence after her husband died in a barracks fire caused by a faulty heater. The other two cases involved medical malpractice, including one in which a soldier sued the Army after learning that a 30- by 18-inch towel, with the words "Medical Department U.S. Army" on it, had been left in his abdomen during a surgery.

The Supreme Court ruled the government is not liable for injuries sustained on active duty or resulting from the negligence of other military personnel. The justices added that the ruling was needed to ensure that Congress was not "burdened with private bills on behalf of military and naval personnel."

In his case, Walter Daniel argues that the military health system has changed substantially since the initial Feres ruling, and the development and expansion of the non-combat military health care mission -- including treating dependents and hiring thousands of civilian health care providers -- makes the ruling "unjustifiable."

"The only difference in the two groups is that a member of one group has a uniform hanging in the hospital room while the other does not," Daniel's petition to the Supreme Court reads.

"Every person in the United States of America, even illegals, even inmates, can sue for malpractice insurance. The only people in the U.S. who can't sue for malpractice insurance are our soldiers. This is discrimination against a certain class of people -- the military," Khawam, Stayskal's attorney, said.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/24/controversial-military-malpractice-policy-may-be-closer-overturn-ever.html>

In the government's response to Walter Daniel's petition, the U.S. Solicitor General said that Feres has stood for more than 60 years and, shortly after the Federal Tort Claims Act was adopted, the ruling was decided, and it included the prohibition of medical malpractice claims.

Citing numerous cases, including a 1987 decision that involved medical treatment of an active-duty service woman who was pregnant, Solicitor General Noel Francisco argued that the petition should be denied.

He said the military has an established system for compensating malpractice victims and said the limits on malpractice help pay for health care for military dependents and retirees, and "abandoning Feres ... would upset the assumptions" on which Congress based the expansion of health care to those groups.

"Service members are entitled to generous, no-fault statutory benefits for injuries sustained as a result of medical services provided by the military," Francisco wrote.

When a person dies on active duty, their beneficiary receives a lump-sum payment of \$100,000 if the service member dies during hazardous duty or while training for combat, and \$12,420 for all other deaths. They receive a Service Member's Group Life Insurance policy payout of \$400,000, unless the service member requested in writing a lesser amount, and also are awarded unpaid pay and allowances. Surviving spouses also are entitled to a monthly annuity as well as dependency and indemnity compensation and education benefits. Children also are eligible for benefits, to include Social Security and scholarships.

"Because Lt. Daniel was on active duty at the time of her death, her heirs received (and continue to receive) numerous statutory benefits as a result of her death," Francisco wrote.

Advocates for military personnel suggest that the compensation package is not enough. Fidell said that while Feres should continue to be applied to battlefield malpractice, it should not be used to protect individuals, including military doctors and civilians employed by the Defense Department, from professional malpractice.

"Congress has not made provision for the kinds of damages that our society expects, particularly in medical malpractice [in the military]," Fidell said. "The compensation is robust, but it doesn't include the kinds of things Americans are used to in tort law -- pain and suffering."

Sentinel Events

In 2017, the military health system experienced 112 "sentinel events" across 78 medical facilities, according to the Defense Health Agency. A sentinel event is an unexpected occurrence involving serious injury or death as defined by the Joint Commission, a not-for-profit group that accredits U.S. hospitals.

The data appears not to be comprehensive, however: according to the 2017 figures, Womack Army Medical Center experienced zero "delays in treatment: Lab, pathology, radiology, referral."

Stayskal's case apparently didn't count.

Between 2016 to 2018, 196 administrative claims for malpractice were filed against the Air Force. The service did not say how many resulted in medical malpractice suits or settlements. During the same timeframe, the Navy had at least 48 cases of malpractice settled. (The exact number is not known because the Navy declined, for privacy reasons, to detail cases at facilities that had three or fewer claims filed against them). The Navy did not provide the total number of administrative claims filed.

The Army, which provided the information on request in 2016, referred a 2019 query for the same information to its Freedom of Information Act offices. Military.com has not yet received a response.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/24/controversial-military-malpractice-policy-may-be-closer-overturn-ever.html>

Hoyal, Daniel's attorney, remains hopeful the Supreme Court will hear the case. Before becoming justices, both Clarence Thomas and Ruth Bader Ginsburg expressed interest in reviewing Feres. Plus, there are several new additions to the court -- Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh -- who weren't present the last time a Feres case was petitioned and may have an interest in the legality of Feres for medical malpractice.

"Our petition presents the U.S. Supreme Court with legal and factual arguments not previously made or considered in prior cases challenging the Feres doctrine," said Hoyal, who practices law with Luvera Law Firm in Seattle. "In our view, the government's response simply fails to come to grips with these arguments."

But, Fidell explained, the request for the solicitor general to respond simply means one or more justices wanted to see the government's position "spelled out," Fidell said.

"That's all you can really infer from it. Is it better than nothing? Yes. Is it *much* better than nothing? We won't know until the orders list comes out," he said.

Seeking Help From Congress

Khawam, on the other hand, is tackling Feres from the legislative side. She has spent months walking the halls of Congress with Stayskal to meet lawmakers and push for a bill, either a single piece of legislation or one that will be included into the fiscal 2020 defense authorization bill.

Her and Stayskal's goal is to ensure that military patients have the right to sue, and that doctors in the military health system -- who are both uniformed and civilian employees -- can be held accountable for egregious mistakes.

Besides drafting bill proposals and making the rounds on Capitol Hill, Stayskal and Khawam are planning a march June 12 in Washington, D.C. to call attention to the Feres doctrine and what Khawam calls its' unfairness.

She said she is lining up celebrities and lawmakers to speak and has galvanized bipartisan support to change the law. If successful, she and Stayskal would achieve what many have not been able to -- people like the families of Air Force Staff Sgt. Dean Witt, who died in 2003 from complications of irreversible brain damage during a routine appendectomy; of Army Maj. Chad Wriglesworth, who died when his melanoma was diagnosed as an ingrown toenail; and of Air Force Capt. Heather Ortiz, whose baby suffered injuries during childbirth as the result of Ortiz receiving the wrong medication.

Stayskal isn't the first service member to convince lawmakers to introduce a bill overturning Feres in cases of medical malpractice. But Khawam says her client's story simply can't be ignored.

"He is a superstar and it's not from being a celebrity ... it's from being such a great guy, from his work to just being a good kid," she said. "It speaks volumes when people you know from grade school are calling your lawyer and saying 'I want to help.'"

Stayskal is on palliative care, meaning he is receiving treatment to keep him comfortable, but no longer fighting the cancer. While he has been in and out of hospitals, he remains strong and is trying to see every congressional representative and senator who will meet with him.

"People tell me that [Feres] is the law, but you know what? Separate-but-equal was the law and people had to ride in the back of buses. Gay people couldn't get married -- that was the law. Here's the thing: the law changes, and it only gets fixed when it's brought to the attention of everyone else," Khawam said.

Here are a few lessons for military recruiters straining to make mission from a civilian sales expert

By Todd South

Military Times, March 26, 2019

Jeb Blount lives sales and teaching people to be better at the business of selling. He's spent his career focusing his attention on services, products and expertise — all with a people-focus.

But even he was slightly puzzled when his office staff called him to tell him about bulk orders of 50 or more of his book "[Fanatical Prospecting](#)." Blount got curious and started making calls.

Those calls led him to visits to multiple military bases, sit-down interviews with top-level military recruiters and commanders to learn more about a culture that he'd always been around but never inside. And those visits led to his own short boot camp-style recruiting training sessions he began to deliver for military recruiters straining to make mission or simply find more and better recruits.

Military Times interviewed Blount about his recently published book, "[Fanatical Military Recruiting](#)," the first in a planned three-part series aimed at helping military recruiters, and their bosses, reach the widest audience to find the best candidates to serve in today's complex, fast-paced military.

Editor's note: The following Q&A with Blount was edited for clarity, context and includes excerpts from his book.

Q: Military recruiters have always had obstacles to finding enough qualified recruits to fill the ranks of an all-volunteer force. Why do you think the book and the training you're doing matter now?

A: Military recruiting is facing a perfect storm. Fewer people than ever before have a family member with military experience. The pool of prospects with family or geographic associations to military service is steadily evaporating. That makes it more difficult for recruiters to engage prospects and their parents.

In the midst of this, the military apparatus continues to tighten qualification standards, needing even more adept thinkers who can also meet physical standards not expected of them elsewhere. It's no wonder so many recruiters are strolling. It's no wonder that recruiting leaders are frustrated and more stressed out than ever.

Q: There are more than two dozen chapters in this book with tips, research and advice. But what would be at least an initial focus that recruiters and their commanders should tackle first for success?

A: Time discipline. The greatest threat to meet mission is how they use their time.

For a noncommissioned officer-in-charge, the best thing they can do is sit down and help recruiters block out their calendar. Identify specific tasks and plan the day around them. Put the most time and energy on getting prospective recruits into the "funnel" and moving that applicant through the process to get them shipped to basic training.

It's about maintaining attention, control and focus on those activities that make that happen. Block time into small chunks and focus on those things one at a time.

When they do this, it's transformational for recruiters. Not only does it help their numbers on the job, it helps them at home because they're more proficient with their time and productive so they have more time at home with their family.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/03/26/here-are-a-few-lessons-for-military-recruiters-straining-to-make-mission-from-a-civilian-sales-expert/>

Q: There are a lot of platforms out there for reaching young recruiting prospects, from social media to advertising to face-to-face interactions, but you spend a lot of the book talking about a sometimes neglected technology, the phone call.

A: The military has data that would be the envy of any sales person in the industry about their target audience.

But recruiters have to be proactive in reaching as many people in that audience as possible in the most efficient way that makes a direct connection. Fewer young people make calls now than before; many text or use social media.

I was on a base doing training with recruiters. It was 0800 on a Saturday and I told them you have 15 minutes to make 15 dials. They said, ‘you’re out of your mind, nobody’s going to answer the telephone.’ Twenty minutes later they had set more appointments in 15 minutes than they had in the previous two weeks. They were stunned they got so many interviews. No one had ever picked up the phone that early in the morning to call prospects.

Young people sleep with their phones. While the phone is important, face-to-face can be tremendous. I always send recruiters in my training to get at least two contacts during a lunch break, forcing them to approach people wherever they go. They almost always bring back a number and they’re just so surprised.

Q: Last year the Army announced that it was increasing the number of recruiters it had in urban areas. Experts noted that most of the recruiting was being done in traditional rural areas, mostly in the American South.

But that’s not keeping up with the needs of the service. What might help recruiters in urban areas versus their comfortable stomping grounds?

A: This goes to getting the message out. You can’t be discouraged. Yes, you’re going to get a lot more rejection in urban areas than in rural areas because you’re a new entity. That’s true for commercial sales too.

Typically, urban residents are more skeptical because they’re always being sold to. But I have a recruiter I follow on Instagram who’s based in Manhattan, New York. He’s doing everything possible to recruit these kids. He’s on the phone, posting videos, on YouTube, going to coffee shops. He makes mission.

As a society we’ve create this gap between civilian and military. Southern states are providing more proportionately than other areas. The military has got to do a better job of selling what an amazing career the military offers. That’s an advertising, marketing thing. That does not negate the responsibility of the recruiters to go get out on the street. They’ve got to be better prospectors, better at engaging people.

It’s always going to be harder in some parts of the country. But there are recruiters in those locations making mission.

Blount’s book, “[Fanatical Military Recruiting](#),” is available both in hardcover and as an eBook through [Amazon.com](#) and other book sellers. It is the first in a planned three-part series on military recruiting.

.....

SEE ALSO:

[How the Navy got to be 6K sailors short at sea](#) [*Navy Times*, 2019-03-25]

If your military housing is contaminated, who pays your mold-related expenses?

By Karen Jowers

Military Times, March 22, 2019



The Lenz family found mold in the ductwork in their privatized housing at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, says Traci Lenz, after their ducts were reportedly cleaned in the previous two to three days. (Courtesy of Traci Lenz)

After six months of living with [mold](#), amid concerns about their children’s ongoing medical issues that began after they moved into their house, Traci Lenz and her Air Force husband moved off base in January.

“My home was not safe and has caused my family to suffer from ongoing illnesses, unnecessary expenses, and we were forced to move off base in order to protect our children,” said Lenz, who lived in Harbor Bay at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

The Lenz family and [other military families](#) have felt compelled to move out of their homes in [government or privatized housing](#) because of serious health issues and concerns that they attribute to the mold. In many cases, that’s also an expensive financial burden, in addition to the health issues they believe have resulted from the mold.

Lenz calculates that by the time everything is factored in, including moving costs and costs to replace mold-contaminated belongings, rental deposits, mold testing and medical expenses that weren’t covered by insurance, they will have paid more than \$33,000.

Who pays for mold damage to personal property in privatized housing? In this case — and a number of others — it appears it’s the military family.

The Lenz family hasn’t been reimbursed by Harbor Bay, the privatized housing company, for any of the costs, although Harbor Bay paid for their stay in temporary lodging while technicians replaced one duct and installed new vent covers. But when the family returned, they found mold, and moved out to a hotel at their own expense. Lenz said she and her husband, an Air Force master sergeant, asked Harbor Bay to pay for some of their expenses, including their costs to move off base, but the company declined.

In a number of cases, like the Lenz family’s situation, the landlord doesn’t agree that there is a mold problem, and contends it’s safe to live there, so expenses aren’t reimbursed.

And because the mold was not the result of a major water intrusion, their USAA renter’s insurance policy didn’t cover the loss of their belongings, Lenz said. It appears that generally, renter’s insurance doesn’t pay for damage caused to belongings from mold, unless the mold results from a covered event, such as a burst pipe or a storm, for example.

“There have been families who have requested the insurance [reimbursement] with no luck,” said Crystal Cornwall, a Marine wife who is founder of the nonprofit Safe Military Housing Initiative, formed in response to the many concerns she has heard from military families.

For example, there is an exclusion in the Armed Forces Insurance Exchange Renters Insurance policy for “dampness of atmosphere or extremes of temperature; rust; mold; wet or dry rot,” said Mike Nixon, senior

<https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2019/03/22/if-your-military-housing-is-contaminated-who-pays-your-mold-related-expenses/>

vice president of Armed Forces Insurance. “If mold damages the property with no other covered event occurring, the damage would be excluded” from being covered, he said.

“There would be coverage if there was a covered loss like a pipe burst or storm event that damaged the home or apartment and allowed water in to damage the personal property items, and mold also developed,” he said.

Nixon said he hasn’t heard of the issue of mold coming up as a stand-alone issue. “If the question comes up, it is usually in reference to mold after flooding or a pipe-burst-type event,” he said.

USAA’s position is similar. “Most, but not all states provide some limited coverage for mold that results from a loss that is covered under the policy,” said Tiffany Edmonds, a spokeswoman for USAA. “This applies to both homeowner’s and renter’s policies. We always encourage everyone to check with their insurance professional on specific aspects of their policies,” she said.

Service members should seek reimbursement, with help from their government housing office, according to DoD officials.

“There are procedures in place through which service members can seek and potentially receive reimbursement for damaged household goods,” said DoD spokeswoman Heather Babb. “Service members who experience damage to personal property in their homes, whether on or off-base, are encouraged to request assistance from their installation’s government housing office.”

Her answer was in response to a question about whether a service member can file for reimbursement when household goods are damaged because of issues with their government housing or their privatized housing — such as mold, water leakage or mice infestation.

In the case of the Lenz family, Harbor Bay officials contended there was no mold-related problem, based on inspections by a third-party licensed mold inspector. Lenz and her husband disagreed, and paid for an additional inspection which found high levels of mold, indicating occupancy of the house was “ill-advised” until further remediation of the mold, according to the report provided by Lenz.

Ron Hansen, president of Michael’s Management Services, the property manager of Harbor Bay, said he can’t discuss the Lenz family situation because of privacy issues. But in general, he said, their policy is that if damage has happened to a tenant’s property because of the company — such as a maintenance person damaging an item — the company will pay for the item if they can’t repair it or clean it.

“The question is, is it damaged by mold? And can it be cleaned or does it need to be replaced?” he said. In general, if a resident sees what they think is mold, the company sends out a maintenance technician who specializes in mold, and if more remediation is needed, they call in a company that specializes in dealing with it. If a resident’s property is damaged by mold, the company can bring in professional cleaners to clean it.

“If the cleaners couldn’t clean the property, or degraded it in the cleaning process, we’d buy it,” he said.

“No one should be out of pocket for things that have to be replaced because of mold or any kind of damage,” Hansen said.

There are many property management companies managing privatized military housing, and Crystal Cornwall said she has seen that it’s far more common for families to pay out of pocket. “It is not common for the [privatized housing company] or the government to replace, clean, or otherwise, when it comes to the damaged items families must dispose of when contaminated by mold,” she said.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2019/03/22/if-your-military-housing-is-contaminated-who-pays-your-mold-related-expenses/>

“I only know of a handful of families who have had their items professionally cleaned, partially replaced, or even disposed of by the [privatized housing company] or the government,” Cornwall said.

Don't rule out this option

The military relief societies consider requests on a case-by-case basis.

Army Emergency Relief has helped at least one soldier whose housing unit at Fort Lee, Virginia, had a mold problem, said retired Command Sgt. Maj. Charles Durr, chief of assistance at that relief society's headquarters.

The staff sergeant reported that he didn't know what caused the mold to build up while he and his family were on vacation, because he was careful to ensure the house was well ventilated and air vents were open. Fort Lee privatized housing officials inspected the property and determined that the mold was no fault of theirs, and so they wouldn't replace his damaged furniture. Nor did his USAA policy cover the mold.

Army Emergency Relief provided the soldier an interest-free loan for \$2,072 to replace the damaged furniture, to be paid over 25 months.

Navy OKs New Slacks, Skirts, Shoes and Other Uniform Items for Female Sailors

By Gina Harkins

Military.com, March 25, 2019



A recruit from participates in her final uniform inspection from Fleet Quality Assurance Inspector Petty Officer 1st Class Moses Brathwaite on Nov. 18, 2016 at Recruit Training Command. (U.S. Navy/Chief Petty Officer Seth Schaeffer).

The latest updates to the Navy's uniform policy include a host of changes for women, including improved slacks and skirts for some ranks, flats authorized for optional wear, and a nursing top for new moms.

Navy leaders approved several uniform changes Monday, including [the end of red service stripes](#) and ratings badges for sailors who have served 12 years or more. The changes, officials said, are the result of feedback from the fleet.

Several of the announced changes, which were approved by Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Robert Burke and detailed in Navy administrative message [075/19](#), will affect only female sailors and officers.

Here's a look at what has been approved:

New slacks and skirts for some. The Navy has been testing better-fitting slacks and skirts for female officers and chief petty officers. Those evaluations are complete, according to the NAVADMIN, and women can now purchase the new items, labeled New Fit, at some Navy exchanges.

"The improved slacks design incorporates a lower waist, reduced rise (top of inseam to waist) and reduced zipper closure length," the message states. "The improved skirt incorporates a straight line design."

New Fit items are currently available at the main exchange or uniform centers in Norfolk and Arlington, Virginia, or the fleet stores in San Diego and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The items can also be purchased online.

Flats for certain uniforms. Effective immediately, women are authorized to wear flat shoes with their service and service dress [uniforms](#), according to the NAVADMIN. They must be black, brown or white with rubber outsoles that provide some traction and quarter- to half-inch heels.

The shoes can be made from leather or synthetic materials but must be smooth slip-ons with rounded toes. Heels and toes must also be closed, and there can be no decorative stitching or other ornamental designs. Additional rules are listed in the NAVADMIN.

"Flats shall be worn in the same manner as dress shoes to include hosiery," the new policy states.

Ponytail updates. More than eight months after the Navy [approved ponytails for women](#) wearing service, working or physical training uniforms, service leaders are clarifying some of the rules. Confusion and questions from the fleet prompted the changes, according to the NAVADMIN.

"Ponytail hairstyles shall not interfere with the proper wearing of military headwear and equipment nor extend downward more than three inches (approximate length of a Common Access Card) below the lower edge of the collar (shirt/blouse, jacket or coat) while sitting, standing or walking," the message states.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/25/navy-oks-new-slacks-skirts-shoes-and-other-uniform-items-female-sailors.html>

Ponytails also can't extend outward from the back of the head more than 3 inches, and the accessory used to secure the hair can't be visible from the front.

Shirts for nursing moms. Also effective immediately, the Navy approved a new optional-wear T-shirt for nursing sailors. They're available in long- and short-sleeves and can be worn with service or working uniforms and flight suits.

The shirts' authorized colors depend on the uniform with which they're worn, and since they're not 100 percent cotton, are not authorized in some working environments. Additional details are available in the NAVADMIN.

-- *Gina Harkins can be reached at gina.harkins@military.com. Follow her on Twitter [@ginaaharkins](https://twitter.com/ginaaharkins).*

.....

SEE ALSO:

[New rules for gold crowns](#) [*Navy Times*, 2019-03-26]

[Sailors Will No Longer Need 12 Years of Good Conduct to Sport Gold Stripes](#) [*Military.com*, 2019-03-25]

Top Sustainment Official: Housing Privatization ‘Right Thing to Do’

By C. Todd Lopez

Defense.gov, March 27, 2019

WASHINGTON—Despite reports of poor conditions in some privatized military family housing across the continental United States — about 200,000 homes in all — the Military Housing Privatization Initiative was a good idea, the assistant secretary of defense for sustainment told lawmakers yesterday.

Robert McMahon said the initiative was focused on “improving the quality of on-base housing and providing the necessary long-term investment our personnel deserve.”

He spoke during a hearing of the House Appropriations Committee’s subcommittee on military construction, veterans’ affairs and related agencies.

McMahon acknowledged that deficiencies in military family housing must be addressed and told lawmakers that the Defense Department will work with both housing privatization partners and Congress to “provide the best housing possible” to service members and their families.

Mitigation Efforts Underway

In submitted testimony to the committee, McMahon said efforts are already being made to ameliorate the issues that have been raised.

“I am increasing the oversight my office provides to ensure the military departments fully and effectively exercise their responsibilities to ensure that privatized housing is managed in a manner protective of human health and the environment,” he said.

“This includes establishing new reporting requirements and programmatic reviews regarding military department monitoring of potential hazards in privatized housing, such as reporting on the number of child falls from windows in both privatized and military-operated housing,” McMahon said.

A “Resident Bill of Rights,” is the start of an increased effort by DOD and housing privatization partners to ensure military families have a positive experience in privatized housing, he said.

“Through increased engagement, we will better educate military families about their roles and responsibilities to help identify any issues with housing conditions, and the roles and responsibilities of the privatized partner and the installation housing teams,” McMahon said.

About 99 percent of military family housing in the United States has been privatized, he said, and the effort to do so has “dramatically improved the quality of on-base housing and has facilitated the long-term investment necessary to maintain high quality housing.”

New Housing

McMahon was on the Hill as part of a series of hearings on the fiscal year 2020 defense budget request.

Within that request is about \$1.3 billion targeted toward DOD’s worldwide family housing inventory — which includes 34,000 government-owned and 7,100 leased family housing units.

About \$293 million of that total is targeted towards construction of new housing, and about \$1 billion is targeted at operation and maintenance of DOD’s government-owned and -leased family housing units and oversight of privatized housing on U.S. installations.

<https://dod.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1797816/top-sustainment-official-housing-privatization-right-thing-to-do/>

Additionally, DOD requested about \$674 million to support construction and renovation projects to support unaccompanied service members, including nine such projects that are expected to improve the living conditions of more than 3,900 trainees and permanent party individuals.

Major projects include \$73 million for the second phase of a training barracks at Fort Sill, Oklahoma; \$164 million for a barracks complex at Navy Base Guam; \$110 million for recruit barracks at Joint Base San Antonio; and \$134 million for a barracks project at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Honolulu.

“Our modernization effort includes a focus on improving privacy and access to amenities that are important to our unaccompanied personnel,” McMahon said.

The U.S. Military Is Creating the Future of Employee

Monitoring

By Patrick Tucker

Defense One, March 26, 2019



U.S. Air Force cyber security technicians with the 355th Communications Squadron review work orders at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base Ariz. in September. Airman Frankie D. Moore/Air Force

The U.S. military has the hardest job in human resources: evaluating [hundreds of thousands](#) of people for their ability to protect the nation's secrets. Central to that task is a question at the heart of all labor relations: how do you know when to extend trust or take it away?

The office of the Defense Security Service, or DSS, believes artificial intelligence and machine learning can help. Its new pilot project aims to sift and apply massive amounts of data on people who hold or are seeking security clearances. The goal is not just to detect employees who have betrayed their trust, but to predict which ones might — allowing problems to be resolved with calm conversation rather than punishment.

If the pilot proves successful, it could provide a model for the future of corporate HR. But the concept also affords employers an unprecedented window into the digital lives of their workers, broaching new questions about the relationship between employers, employees, and information in the age of big data and AI.

The pilot is based on an urgent need. Last June, the Defense Department [took over](#) the task of working through the security clearance backlog — more than 600,000 people. Some people — and the organizations that want to hire them — wait more than a year, according to a [September report](#) from the National Background Investigations Bureau. Those delays stem from an antiquated system that involves mailing questionnaires to former places of employment, sometimes including summer jobs held during an applicant's adolescence, waiting (and hoping) for a response, and scanning the returned paper document into a [mainframe database](#) of the sort that existed before cloud computing.

In addition to being old-fashioned, that process sheds light on an individual only to the degree that past serves as prologue. As an indicator of future behavior, it's deeply wanting, say officials.

This effort to create a new way to gauge potential employees' risk is being led by Mark Nehmer, the technical director of research and development and technology transfer at DSS' National Background Investigative Services.

This spring, DSS is launching what they describe as a "risk-based user activity pilot." It involves collecting an individual's digital footprint, or "cyber activity," essentially what they are doing online, and then matching that with other data that the Defense Department has on the person. Since "online" has come to encompass all of life, the effect, they hope, will be a full snapshot the person.

"We anticipate early results in the fall," a DSS official said in an email on Tuesday.

The Department of Defense already does some digital user activity monitoring. But the pilot seeks a lot more information than is currently the norm.

<https://www.govexec.com/defense/2019/03/us-military-creating-future-employee-monitoring/155835/>

We are putting these into a construct so that we can detect minute changes in behavior across an entire pattern of life, so that we can detect stress.

Mark Nehmer, DSS' National Background Investigative Services

“In the Department of Defense, user activity monitoring is typically constructed around an endpoint. So think of your laptop. It’s just monitoring activity on your laptop. It’s not looking at any other cyber data that’s available” — perhaps 20 percent of the available digital information on a person, Nehmer said at a November briefing put on by company, [C3](#), a California-based technology company serving as a partner on the pilot.

The pilot seeks a much fuller spectrum of digital information and then combines it with other data within the Defense Department and beyond, using machine learning algorithms to derive insights. “Once constructed fully, it will look at the bulk of the cyber data you generate,” said Nehmer. “It’s IP-based with a date time stamp on it. There’s no name associated with it; you actually have to go to a different set of logs to marry those two things up.”

The pilot will also bring in material that a person put on their Standard Form 86 — basically forms that people seeking a security clearance fill out, and other data not related to cyber activity. “Let’s not just look at what you’re doing on your individual computer because there’s all this other information that we have available to us that we’re not looking at just because it’s hard,” he says, meaning that the data is not in a format that’s easily digestible by machine learning programs. “There’s this other human behavior data that’s not indicated in the cyber world.”

That data will join data from what’s called [continuous evaluation](#), a current effort to monitor life events related to clearance holders, such as getting married or divorced, entering into a lot of debt or getting a sudden windfall, tax returns, arrests, sudden foreign travel, etc. Over a million military personnel are currently enrolled in the existing continuous evaluation system.

The eventual goal, said Nehmer, is a system that can sense not just impending insider crime but also far more intimate states of being; pre-crime, if you will. “We can begin to add whether or not the activity that the individual is producing is increasing, decreasing, or staying within a fairly normative range. If it’s staying within a normative range then as long as there are no business rules that are broken, likely we don’t have a problem. If their activity dramatically increases there is likely stress. But there are a lot of ways to measure activity. If it significantly decreases, it’s likely that there is some external controlling factor on that.”

In other words, it’s a window not just into a person’s past but their present state of mind, or what Nehmer calls “micro changes” in behavior.

“We are putting these into a construct so that we can detect minute changes in behavior across an entire pattern of life, so that we can detect stress,” he said. “Fundamentally, we are there to look out for micro changes in behavior that might indicate that a person is interested, or disinterested, in continuing their affiliation with the Department of Defense, or discontinuing their affiliation with life,” he said, referring specifically to the epidemic of veteran suicides. “If we do our jobs right, we can help prevent suicides, data breaches, or things that people, when they’re under stress, things that they do,” he says.

We don’t want to lose our valuable employees. We want to help our valuable employees remain our valuable employees.

Mark Nehmer, DSS' National Background Investigative Services

<https://www.govexec.com/defense/2019/03/us-military-creating-future-employee-monitoring/155835/>

Of course, not everyone is happy with the idea of their employers detecting “micro-changes” in their behavior, especially if they believe that they might be punished for what those changes indicate. That goes for people who are exchanging their privacy for the immense privilege and power that comes with holding a secret or top-secret clearance. It's a tradeoff, but not an easy one.

Nehmer is acutely aware of this. He's adamant that the objective isn't to slap the cuffs on people; it's to reveal changes in mood, outlook, or behavior before punishment becomes necessary, before the employee starts to hate where they work or what they're doing.

As Nehmer describes it, the best outcome is a conversation between employee and manager well before there is a crime, when any workplace issue is in its earliest state; or “to detect changes in life pattern that might indicate that an individual is moving into a position where they may need some intervention. That intervention, if we are doing our jobs right, is most likely to just be a person talking to them, having a conversation,” he says. “We don't want to lose our valuable employees. We want to help our valuable employees remain our valuable employees,” he says.

Reaching that goal will take a lot of data; and data collection within the Defense Department isn't a straightforward process. “At least a couple of years ago, there were 15,000 major systems across the Department of Defense, each one configured differently, each one putting out different types of data. That's just the systems. Then you have all of these different things related to personnel, and each one of them describes a single event in a different way,” said Nehmer.

It also requires data that's not within the Defense Department as an institution but is available in other ways, through data sharing partnerships with other governmental and commercial entities. Nehmer didn't want to say exactly which entities but it's all data that the Department has legal access to as part of its screening and counter-intelligence activities. Still, getting those entities to share data for new pilot employee monitoring applications requires a lot of legal negotiation. If a data sharing partnership has to be renegotiated to allow for continuous evaluation or user activity monitoring, it can take nine months. And there are a lot of data-sharing partnerships to work through. Nehmer says that a lot of time is spent working with lawyers to keep the pilot in-line with the law and get the data it needs to be effective.

It's still an open question as whether the pilot will create the sort of “snapshot” that DSS is looking to build. If it is, it will have set a new standard for using data to predict and manage employees.

When you are seeking a job with highly sensitive national secrets, you agree to give up a lot of information about yourself. So it's not clear how well user activity monitoring will transport to private companies that don't have a national security interest. But if it works, companies in the future may want to implement something similar, creating a new norm for employee monitoring.

The appeal of a system like the one Nehmer describes to outside companies depends, of course, on several factors: whether that snapshot actually results in improved performance, rather than just decreased risk; and, most importantly, whether employees perceive a reward in participating in such monitoring, how willing they are to be a part of it.

In some instances, where the result of the program really is less stress, better work, better relationships with managers, etc. a happier work life, then the rewards, perhaps, will justify the exposure in the mind of the employee or job applicant. In industries like tech, where firms compete hard for qualified applicants, it's difficult to imagine talented workers signing up for a job where their data is always used against them. But equally competitive employees might be attracted to program where their data worked for them (so long as they understood how the system functioned.)

<https://www.govexec.com/defense/2019/03/us-military-creating-future-employee-monitoring/155835/>

In other instances, where managers choose to use monitoring to increase costs for bad performance without offering rewards, future employee monitoring will probably feel truly Orwellian. And there are other concerns. It's not clear how wide-scale adoption of user activity monitoring would effect, for instance, the ability of officials to communicate with the media on background, or engage in whistleblower activities, or other behavior that is morally and ethically justified but may have an immediate negative effect on the organization.

But none of those outcomes is the direct result of the technology so much as the discretion of future managers. Some bosses are good. Some are bad. In the future, each will be empowered to be more truly what they are.

But that, too, will be impossible to conceal.

Vets Are Out-Representing Non-Vets in STEM Jobs: Report

By Richard Sisk

Military.com, March 25, 2019



An Army Reserve Soldier with the 863rd Engineer Battalion, poses in a lab environment at the Argonne National Laboratory in Darien, Ill., as part of a photo shoot that promotes Citizen-Soldiers in the science, technology, engineering and math industries in 2014. (U.S. Army photo/Michel Sauret)

Employers increasingly are finding that veterans are the right fit for jobs in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, according to a study by Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF).

Working off data from the American Community Survey of the Census Bureau for 2012-2016, the IVMF researchers concluded that military service was a main factor contributing to job growth for veterans in emerging technology fields.

Jobs requiring STEM expertise have grown 34 percent in recent years, the IVMF report said, and "veterans and transitioning service members represent a valuable, skilled talent pool from which to help meet this critical need."

Another contributing factor has been the Defense Department defining the need for more investment in STEM fields as a national security issue, said Dr. Nicholas Armstrong, senior director of Research and Evaluation at IVMF. "This has been framed for the last decade as a national security issue," he said in an interview last week. "There's a demand for and growth in STEM jobs."

Armstrong, an Army veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, noted that the military already has many jobs in STEM fields, particularly in cyber security.

The IVMF report examined veteran participation across 49 distinct STEM occupations, grouped into five clusters: engineering; information technology and computer science; life and physical sciences; mathematics; and supervisor/management.

"The top two STEM occupation clusters for veterans were the information technology and computer science cluster (43 percent), followed by the engineering STEM cluster (38 percent)," the study states.

The research found that "veterans are actually overrepresented, compared to civilians, in STEM jobs," Armstrong said, adding that "eight percent of all veterans in the workforce are in a STEM field, compared to six percent for civilians."

By the raw numbers, about 696,000 veterans are in the STEM workforce, or 8.1 percent of all employed veterans, he said. Veterans in STEM fields are also earning more than their non-veteran counterparts, Armstrong said. Veterans of all eras are making just shy of \$94,000, on average, in STEM jobs, compared to \$86,000 for civilians, he said.

The report cautioned that veterans' continued success in STEM fields "would be dependent upon the capacity for local networks to identify high-growth STEM occupations that connect to military transferable skills, as well as the degree of collaboration between post-secondary institutions and employers in leveraging these skills in diverse career pathways."

The full IVMF report, "Enhancing Veterans' Access To STEM Education and Careers," can be seen [here](#).

Misconduct

Coast Guard Officer's Alleged Terror Plot Highlights Need for Intrusive Leaders: Schultz

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, March 26, 2019



This image provided by the U.S. District Court in Maryland shows a photo of firearms and ammunition that was in the motion for detention pending trial in the case against Christopher Paul Hasson. (U.S. District Court via AP)

The case of a Coast Guard lieutenant who purchased firearms allegedly to commit an act of [domestic terrorism](#) and also was accused of holding white supremacist views demonstrates that officers and enlisted leaders should be more "intrusive" when it

comes to knowing the people they lead, the service's commandant, Adm. Karl Schultz, said March 21.

In his first public statement on the Feb. 15 arrest of acquisitions officer Lt. Christopher Hasson on drug and weapons possession charges, Schultz said leadership should be "very alert and aware in our workplace," and the Coast Guard must be more proactive in promoting diversity across its ranks.

"People can have a work life and an outside-work life. It heightens all our awareness about keeping our senses, being intrusive leaders," Schultz said.

Hasson, who worked at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., was arrested in Maryland on charges of illegal possession of firearms and ammunition and possession of Tramadol, a Schedule IV pain medication to which he was allegedly addicted.

But according to court documents, the 49-year-old also identified as a white nationalist who hoped to attack people and maintained a list of journalists, Democratic lawmakers and judges. He was, court documents, say, "bent on committing acts dangerous to human life that are intended to affect government conduct."

The case comes as the Coast Guard plans to launch a major effort to recruit and retain more women and minorities. The service, which is 85 percent male and 80 percent Caucasian, "doesn't look as representative of our nation as it should be," Schultz admitted.

During a speech on the state of the Coast Guard at the Port of Los Angeles-Long Beach, California, the admiral said the service will introduce a policy designed to better support women who need to take maternity, caregiver or convalescent leave; launch a study on minority retention; and review its weight standards and tattoo policies as part of an overall effort to recruit and retain quality personnel. "We have to continue to lean in. We've got to make sure we are setting all people who want to serve up for success," he said.

Schultz said the Coast Guard is looking for opportunities to promote women and minorities to higher ranks and attract a more diverse recruiting pool, and should not be measured by the views of an alleged criminal.

"I would say, judge us on the fiber of our character. We are an organization that is embraced by the nation. We saw some of that in the shutdown," he said.

SEE ALSO:

[Neo-Nazi gang members charged with murder, racketeering in Alaska](#) [Reuters, 2019-03-28]

Lawmakers want Navy SEAL released from the brig ahead of war crimes trial

By Leo Shane III

Navy Times, March 28, 2019



Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., third from right, speaks at a rally on Capitol Hill supporting Special Warfare Operator Chief Edward Gallagher, facing war crimes charges for actions in Iraq. With him are Gallagher's wife, Andrea; his brother, Sean, third from left; Rep. Ralph Norman, R-N.C., second from right; and Rep. Steven King, R-Iowa (right). (Leo Shane III/Staff)

A group of 40 lawmakers is urging Navy officials to free [Special Warfare Operator Chief Edward “Eddie” Gallagher](#) from confinement ahead of his trial on [war crimes charges](#), calling his imprisonment an insult to the sacrifices his family has made.

“(Gallagher) risked his life serving abroad to protect the rights of all of us here at home,” Rep. Ralph Norman, R-N.C., said at a Capitol Hill rally on Thursday. “He had not one deployment, not two deployments, but eight deployments ... We urge this be fixed In light of his bravery, his patriotism and his rights as an American citizen.”

[Gallagher](#) is charged with a host of crimes connected to his 2017 deployment to Iraq with SEAL Team 7, including stabbing to death a wounded Islamic State prisoner of war and shooting at innocent civilians with his sniper rifle.

The war crimes case has expanded beyond his team to the larger special operations community, with allegations that Gallagher urged fellow SEALs to obstruct justice or retaliate against junior sailors who spoke to law enforcement officials.

Gallagher was arrested last September and has been held in San Diego’s Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar “with sex offenders, rapists and pedophiles,” according to lawmakers.

A petition by his legal team to release him to his home or a less restrictive environment was denied in January.

The lawmakers want that idea revisited.

“We ask you weigh this decision, given the terrible message Chief Gallagher’s confinement sends to our warfighters, that they can be confined behind bars away from their family, legal defense and community for nine months before their day in court,” the letter to former Navy Region Southwest Rear Adm. Yancy “Lurch” Lindsey states.

“To confine any service member for that duration of time, regardless the authority to do so, sends a chilling message to those who fight for our freedoms.”

Family members who attended Thursday’s event charged that Gallagher has been denied medical treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder during his confinement.

His wife, Andrea, labeled it “unlawful overreach by the government.”

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/03/28/lawmakers-want-navy-seal-released-from-the-brig-ahead-of-war-crimes-trial/>

The letter does not speak to Gallagher's innocence or guilt, but says his confinement is harming his ability to build a defense against the charges.

But several of the lawmakers who signed the message expressed confidence in Gallagher's innocence, calling him a "warrior hero."

Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., and an Iraq war veteran, continues to call on President Donald Trump to intervene in Gallagher's case.

"I would ask for this whole case to be dropped," he said. "It's time we stop persecuting our warriors who go overseas and do what we ask them to do. Maybe if we persecuted them less, we wouldn't be in Afghanistan 18 years later, still with no end in sight.

"There's a reason we're not winning these wars, and it's because we go after our own guys."

Gallagher's trial initially was slated to begin in February, but the case has been postponed until May 28.

SEE ALSO:

[War crimes case expands to SEAL Team 6](#) [*Navy Times*, 2019-03-27]

Troxell is back: The military's top enlisted adviser is reinstated to duty after investigation

By Tara Copp

Military Times, March 28, 2019

Army Command Sgt. Maj. John W. Troxell, the senior enlisted adviser to chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford, [is back](#).

Troxell was temporarily suspended from his duties in September while the Army Inspector General looked into allegations of misconduct. Those allegations were never specified, and for months Troxell has not been allowed to discuss the case.

According to a statement released by Dunford's office, the violations included "the improper use of U.S. military personnel to conduct tasks not associated with their official duties, such as personal errands, and improper endorsement of commercial fitness and nutrition products on official SEAC social media platforms."

However, importantly, "Troxell received no personal or monetary gain from these endorsements," Dunford said.

Troxell maintains an active social media presence that is centrally focused on getting forces to meet fitness standards, and many of his online posts included shots of workout gear or workout recovery food or drink.

His most well known post, however, involved a shovel and a warning.

During [a 2017 visit to the troops](#) over the holidays and under the hashtag #ISIS_SurrenderorDie, Troxell posted a video to Facebook of his pep talk to the troops.

"If they choose not to surrender, then we will kill them with extreme prejudice, whether that be through security force assistance, by dropping bombs on them, shooting them in the face, or beating them to death with our entrenching tools," Troxell said at the time.

In the months that followed, hundreds of visiting soldiers, veterans — even the Military Times — sent E-Tools to Troxell.

Dunford said the violations were weighed against the entirety of Troxell's 37-year career, and took "appropriate administrative action and made the decision to reinstate CSM Troxell to his position as the SEAC."

"I carefully weighed the gravity of CSM Troxell's ethics violations against his 37 years of dedicated military service and superb leadership — to include 19 years as a sergeant major," said Dunford.

"Appropriate corrective action has been taken and I'm confident that SEAC has learned from this experience. I am equally confident in his competence and capability to continue serving as our senior enlisted leader, which is why I reinstated him to his duties as SEAC. Now it's time to move on and get back to the important work we have before us."

This story is developing and will be updated.

Racism

Guilty plea to hate crimes in deadly car attack at rally

By Denise Lavoie

The Associated Press, March 27, 2019



This undated file photo provided by the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail shows James Alex Fields Jr. Fields who was convicted in a deadly car attack on a crowd of counterprotesters at a white nationalist rally in Virginia is expected to change his plea to federal hate crime charges. An online court docket updated late Tuesday, March 26, 2019, says Fields is scheduled to appear in U.S. District Court in Charlottesville on Wednesday for a change-of-plea hearing. (Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail via AP, File)

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — In a case that stirred racial tensions across the country, a self-avowed white supremacist pleaded guilty Wednesday to federal hate crime charges in a deadly attack at a white nationalist rally in Virginia, admitting that he intentionally plowed his speeding car into a crowd of anti-racism protesters, killing a woman and injuring dozens.

James Alex Fields Jr. of Maumee, Ohio, pleaded guilty to 29 of 30 federal charges stemming from the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville on Aug. 12, 2017.

Under a plea agreement, federal prosecutors will not seek the death penalty against Fields and will dismiss the one count that carried death as a possible punishment. The charges he pleaded guilty to call for life in prison under federal sentencing guidelines.

Fields appeared stoic, with his hands folded in front of him for much of the hearing. He repeatedly responded “yes, sir,” when U.S. District Judge Michael Urbanski asked him if he was pleading guilty knowingly and voluntarily.

Under a “statement of facts,” Fields admitted that he “expressed and promoted” white supremacist ideology through his social media accounts and engaged in white supremacist chants during the rally in Charlottesville. He also admitted driving his car into the ethnically diverse crowd of anti-racism protesters because of their race, color, religion or national origin.

Urbanski scheduled sentencing for July 3.

Fields, 21, was convicted in December in a Virginia court of first-degree murder and other state charges for killing anti-racism activist Heather Heyer and injuring dozens of others who were protesting against the white nationalists.

The rally drew hundreds of white nationalists to Charlottesville to protest the planned removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. Hundreds of counterprotesters demonstrated against the white nationalists.

President Donald Trump sparked a national uproar when he blamed the violence at the rally on “both sides,” a statement critics saw as a refusal to condemn racism.

After Tuesday’s hearing, U.S. Attorney Thomas Cullen said he hoped the plea agreement would help the victims move on with their lives.

“The defendant’s hate-inspired act of domestic terrorism not only devastated Heather Heyer’s wonderful family and the 28 peaceful protesters ... but it also left an indelible mark on the city of Charlottesville, our state and our country,” Cullen said.

<https://www.apnews.com/012289b56fab456daaa47fa9b53aab53>

Heyer's mother, Susan Bro, said she and Heyer's father agreed they did not want prosecutors to seek the death penalty.

"There's no point in killing him," she said. "It would not bring back Heather."

Cullen said prosecutors had been in talks with Fields' lawyers for months about a potential plea agreement, but did not seek to finalize a deal until U.S. Attorney General William Barr last week authorized him not to seek the death penalty if Fields agreed to plead to 29 counts.

The car attack by Fields came after violent brawling between the two sides prompted police to disband the crowds.

During his state trial, prosecutors said Fields — who described himself on social media as an admirer of Adolf Hitler — drove his car into the crowd because he was angry after witnessing earlier clashes between the white nationalists and the counterprotesters.

The jury rejected a claim by Fields' lawyers that he acted in self-defense because he feared for his life after witnessing the earlier violence.

During the plea hearing Wednesday, Fields — responding to questions from the judge — said he has been treated for mental health issues since he was 6. He said he is currently on medication for bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, schizoid disorder, explosive onset disorder and ADHD.

More than 30 people were hurt in the car attack. Some who received life-altering injuries described them in anguished detail during the state trial.

Jurors in Fields' state trial recommended a life sentence plus 419 years, although a judge still has to decide on the punishment. Sentencing is scheduled for July 15.

A reporter asked Bro if she thought her daughter's death had served some purpose, such as opening a discussion of race relations. She answered: "Sadly, it took a white girl dying before anyone paid attention to civil rights around here ... Heather's death is at least a catalyst for change."

Bro said she wouldn't have chosen that catalyst and added, "I wish we would have woken up sooner."

SEE ALSO:

[Killer of Heather Heyer pleads guilty to hate crimes tied to Virginia riot](#) [Reuters, 2019-03-27]

[Neo-Nazi sympathizer pleads guilty to federal hate crimes for plowing car into protesters at Charlottesville rally](#) [The Washington Post, 2019-03-27]

Military Investigating After Report Links Troops to White Nationalist Group

By Oriana Pawlyk

Military.com, March 28, 2019



White nationalist demonstrators use shields as they clash with counter demonstrators at the entrance to Lee Park in Charlottesville, Va., Saturday, Aug. 12, 2017. (AP Photo/Steve Helber)

After the Huffington Post publicly identified five military service members and two Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets as part of a well-known white nationalist organization earlier this month, military officials say they're investigating the allegations, and broadening the probe to see whether other troops might be involved.

In a [March 17 story](#), the publication named an Air Force airman, two Army ROTC cadets, two Marine reservists, an Army reservist and a member of the Texas National Guard as members of Identity Evropa, which has been labeled a white nationalist organization by the Anti-Defamation League.

Huffington Post reported that it had linked the troops to the organization through online chat logs.

So far, military officials say they are not ready to punish or process out any of the troops named in the story, but they continue to investigate.

The Office of Special Investigations at the 39th Air Base Wing at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, is still investigating Airman First Class Dannion Phillips, who was identified as being involved with Identity Evropa.

Lt. Col. Davina Petermann, a spokeswoman for U.S. Air Forces Europe-Africa, could not say what actions the service has taken in regard to Phillips.

The U.S. Air Force has not found any other airmen tied to the alt-right extremist group, officials said.

The service "has not been made aware of any other members tied to this group," spokesman Maj. Nick Mercurio told Military.com on Wednesday.

The National Guardsman allegedly linked to the group was identified as 25-year-old Joseph Kane, the Huffington Post said.

"We can confirm that Joseph Ross Kane is a member of the Texas Army National Guard, assigned to the 636th Military Intelligence Battalion," Texas Guard spokeswoman Laura Lopez said in a statement Tuesday. "He joined the Texas Guard in June 2016. We are looking into this matter and remain committed to excellence through diversity."

"Participation in extremist organizations and activities by Army National Guard personnel is inconsistent with the responsibilities of military service," added Master Sgt. Michael Houk, a National Guard Bureau spokesman. "It is the policy of the United States Army and the Army National Guard to provide equal opportunity and treatment for all soldiers without regard to race, color, religion, gender, or national origin."

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/03/28/military-investigating-after-report-links-troops-white-nationalist-group.html>

The Huffington Post story also identified Army reservist Lt. Col. Christopher Cummins as a physician who allegedly bragged about putting up Identity Evropa posters in southern states. The Reserve did not respond to Military.com's request for additional details by press time.

Maj. Roger Hollenbeck, spokesman for Marine Forces Reserve, said the service's investigation into Lance Cpl. Jason Laguardia and Cpl. Stephen Farrea -- both identified by the Huffington Post -- was still underway as of Wednesday.

"The Marine Corps is investigating the allegations and will take the appropriate disciplinary actions if warranted," Hollenbeck said in an email. "Because the investigation is ongoing, it would be premature to speculate and further comment on the outcome or the timeline."

He continued, "Should an investigation substantiate that any Marine is advocating, advancing, encouraging or participating in supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology, or causes, including those that advocate illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex (including gender identity), religion, ethnicity, national origin, or sexual orientation, or those that advocate the use of force, violence, or criminal activity, or otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights, then they will have violated the Marine Corps Prohibited Activities and Conduct Order."

Anyone in violation of those rules "would be subject [to criminal prosecution](#) and/or administrative separation," Hollenbeck said.

He did not say whether the investigation has identified other Marines with ties to Identity Evropa.

The Army identified one of the ROTC cadets as Jay Harrison of the Montana Guard, but did not offer additional information. Huffington Post identified the other cadet as Christopher Hodgman, a member of the Army Reserve.

The individuals named in the article were looking to connect with other group members or spreading anti-Semitic speech or other racial or derogatory content, according to the published logs.

The news comes as U.S. officials and experts who track violent extremism have seen an upward trend in white nationalism and its rhetoric in the U.S. and overseas, including the military.

Earlier this year, the Anti-Defamation League said that domestic extremism killed at least 50 people in the U.S. in 2018, up from 37 in 2017, [The Associated Press reported](#).

[A Military Times poll](#) last year demonstrated the uptick of extremism in the ranks.

According to the survey, roughly 22 percent of service members have witnessed white nationalist behavior while on duty. Roughly 35 percent of those surveyed in the fall of 2018 said they believed white nationalism poses a significant threat to the country and national security, Military Times said in February.

Coast Guard Lt. Christopher P. Hasson, who previously served in the Army National Guard and the Marine Corps, [was arrested Feb. 15](#) on drug and gun possession charges, and was accused of plans to "murder innocent civilians on a scale rarely seen in this country."

According to documents filed in Maryland District Court, Hasson created a targeted list of media personalities, as well as prominent lawmakers such as Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-New York; Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Massachusetts; Sen. Cory Booker, D-New Jersey; and Sen. Kamala Harris, D-California.

Hasson appeared to blame "liberalist/globalist ideology for destroying traditional peoples, especially white. No way to counteract without violence," he allegedly wrote, according to the documents.

Smollett saga shook public trust, heightened racial tensions

By Errin Haines Whack

The Associated Press, March 28, 2019



Actor Jussie Smollett listens as his attorney, Patricia Brown Holmes, speaks to reporters at the Leighton Criminal Courthouse after prosecutors dropped all charges against him, Tuesday morning, March 26, 2019. (Ashlee Rezin/Chicago Sun-Times via AP)

In the two months since Jussie Smollett reported a late-night attack by assailants shouting racial and anti-gay slurs, the “Empire” actor and activist went from victim to defendant. Police and many in the black community rallied to his defense before condemning his

account as a hoax.

On Tuesday, Smollett was a defendant no more after prosecutors dropped the criminal case that had loomed over him for weeks. He expressed gratitude to fans and maintained his version of events.

“I am a man of faith, and I am a man that has knowledge of my history. And I would not bring my family, our lives or the movement through a fire like this. I just wouldn’t,” he told reporters after an emergency court hearing that cleared his record.

The decision to drop charges has sparked a backlash that prompted the actor’s [attorney to issue a blistering statement](#) Wednesday accusing Chicago officials and police of trying to “smear” Smollett even after the case is closed. “We are disappointed the local authorities have continued their campaign against Jussie Smollett after the charges against him have been dropped,” said attorney Patricia Brown Holmes, “We should all allow Mr. Smollett to move on with his life as a free citizen.”

Smollett’s bizarre saga has shaken the public trust, exposed the country’s deep racial wounds and damaged his acting career and his advocacy for African-Americans and LGBT issues. Left behind are hurt and blame and many questions that will likely go unanswered.

“Black people will see this as a black mark,” Georgetown University sociologist Michael Eric Dyson said. “Given what the consequences are, this does not help anybody. It doesn’t help the police department. It doesn’t help black activism. It doesn’t help Mr. Smollett. Everybody loses and nobody wins.”

Smollett, who is black and gay, reported to Chicago police that he was attacked around 2 a.m. on Jan. 29 on his way home from a sandwich shop. He said his attackers threw some kind of chemical on him, looped a rope around his neck and beat him up while hurling slurs and yelling “This is MAGA country,” a reference to President Donald Trump’s campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again.”

The initial reports were frightening for many people, prompting a rush to judgment led in large part by black Americans and fueled by social media, with politicians, entertainers and the general public weighing in. “Social media allows all of us to be skeptics, and it allows all of us to ask questions and probe in public,” said Rashad Robinson, executive director of the online civil rights organization Color of Change. “There’s the incentive to be first, to be loud, to be different in order to drive your visibility. The information that first came out was so visceral and scary for so many.”

Within days, a new narrative emerged. Investigators claimed Smollett made a false report to police because he was unhappy with his pay on the Fox television show and believed the attention would promote his career. Since the charges were dropped, many of those same voices have been reserved, reluctant to chime in or exhausted by the whiplash developments. Their silence stood in contrast to both outgoing Chicago

<https://www.apnews.com/5979b83326c045f59a8823294c38e9c7>

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson, who blasted Smollett as an opportunist who conjured a hate crime to enrich himself at the expense of the city and actual victims.

“This casts a shadow of whether they’re telling the truth, and he did this all in the name of self-promotion,” Emanuel told reporters at a news conference. “And he used the laws of the hate crime legislation that all of us collectively over years have put on the books to stand up to be the values that embody what we believe in. This is a whitewash of justice.”

It was a surreal moment for some activists still angered over Emanuel’s handling of the 2014 Laquan McDonald case in which a Chicago police officer fatally shot a black teen 16 times and city officials withheld video footage of the killing for months. The shooting and cover-up were on the minds of many in the black community who questioned whether Smollett would be treated fairly by the department.

But Tuesday’s developments left some observers wondering if, in the end, Smollett’s celebrity trumped his race. Prosecutors dismissed all 16 felony counts and expunged his record. In return, authorities said, he agreed to forfeit the \$10,000 he put up to get out of jail, and he completed community service.

“Only black celebrities, and only occasionally, are treated with the same kind of privilege that white people who are anonymous can take for granted,” Dyson said. “Due process would be to let the facts come out. We had a public hearing with little evidence.”

Without a resolution by jury, the case returns to the court of public opinion. Conservatives are already decrying what they perceive as hypocrisy from Black Lives Matter supporters. Fox News host Tucker Carlson addressed the situation in his Tuesday night monologue: Smollett “may claim to fight for marginalized people, but he is not one of them. In fact, he occupies the highest rank of privilege in our society. He is above the law.”

“Increasingly, there seem to be quite a few people like that in this country,” Carlson continued. “You will recognize them because they are the ones always lecturing you about how bigoted and unfair America is. What they don’t understand is that they are proving that point.”

Whack is The Associated Press’ national writer on race and ethnicity. Follow her on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/emaravelous>. Check out the AP’s [complete coverage](#) of the Jussie Smollett case.

SEE ALSO:

[President Donald Trump says FBI will look into Jussie Smollett case](#) [USA TODAY, 2019-03-28]

[Trump calls Smollett case 'embarrassment,' announces review](#) [Reuters, 2019-03-28]

[Anger over Jussie Smollett's charges getting dropped lead to Chicago's mayor and Trump promising action](#) [CNN, 2019-03-28]

[Chicago prosecutor defends dropping charges in Jussie Smollett case](#) [Reuters, 2019-03-27]

[Jussie Smollett isn't the problem. We are](#) [CNN, 2019-03-27] [OPINION]

[Chicago police union wants a federal investigation into Smollett case](#) [CNN, 2019-03-27]

[Chicago's image is muddied by crime and inequity. The Jussie Smollett case doesn't help](#) [USA TODAY, 2019-03-26]

[Jussie Smollett: How did prosecutors go from indictment to wrist slap?](#) [USA TODAY, 2019-03-27]

[Chicago mayor demands answers after Smollett hoax charges dropped](#) [Reuters, 2019-03-27]

[Jussie Smollett Charges Dropped, Angering Chicago Mayor and Police](#) [The New York Times, 2019-03-26]

[Here's What Jussie Smollett's Community Service Looked Like](#) [The New York Times, 2019-03-27]

[Jussie Smollett legal team: Prosecutors flip-flopping on why they dropped charges](#) [USA TODAY, 2019-03-27]

[The many twists and turns in the Jussie Smollett investigation](#) [CNN, 2019-03-26]

[Jussie Smollett's case may still cast a shadow over his career](#) [CNN, 2019-03-26]

Religion

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/03/27/air-force-jag-says-commanders-may-invoke-god-at-change-of-command-ceremonies-sparking-protest/>

Air Force JAG says commanders may invoke God at change of command ceremonies, sparking protest

By Kent Miller

Air Force Times, March 27, 2019

A little publicized [legal opinion](#) that addresses commanders' rights to mention [God at change of command and promotion ceremonies](#), issued by the Air Force judge advocate general in December, is now drawing protests and praise.

The opinion, dated Dec. 19, addresses whether [commanders who invoke a deity](#) at their official change of command ceremony, and also at the promotion ceremony that often follows a change of command, violate the 1st Amendment's Establishment Clause and Air Force Instruction 1-1.

"We conclude a commander may: briefly thank a Supreme Being (either generally, such as Providence, that Almighty Being, our Lord, or the Supreme Author of All Good; or specifically, such as Allah, Brahman, Christ, Ganesh, God, Yahweh, or even Beelzebub); have an invocation, and choose whomever he or she would like to provide the invocation," the opinion states.

"If the commander holds a personal promotion ceremony on the same day, a significant break must occur between the change of command and promotion ceremony in order for the commander to be freer in expressing his or her [personal religious beliefs](#)," the opinion continues. "If a break does not occur, the commander must limit his or her religious comments to comments that are appropriate at the official change of command."

The opinion was provided to Air Force Times by Mikey Weinstein, founder and president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation. A spokesman for the Air Force confirmed that it is authentic.

The foundation is objecting to the Air Force JAG's interpretation of the law and Air Force regulations and has asked the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to hold a hearing on the foundation's concerns and overrule the opinion.

In a March 21 [letter to the commission](#), Weinstein notes that in the 1974 Supreme Court case *Parker v. Levy*, the court "concluded that First Amendment freedoms (such as the religious Free Exercise Clause) are restricted when such speech begins to [degrade morale](#), good order and discipline in the Armed Forces."

"Heretofore, the USAF has always concluded that speeches given at change of command and promotion ceremonies are, as a matter of law, official "state speech" which may not endorse particular religious affiliations or lack thereof," Weinstein writes to the commission. "Such state speech would predictably have a deleteriously corrosive effect on the morale, good order, discipline, and unit cohesion of airmen in attendance who are not affiliated with the commanders' personally expressed religious beliefs and affiliation."

Weinstein also points to Air Force Instruction 1-1, paragraph 2.12 — Balance of Free Exercise of Religion and Establishment Clause: "Leaders at all levels must balance constitutional protections, for their own free exercise of religion, including individual expressions of religious beliefs, and the constitutional prohibition against governmental establishment of religion," it states. "They must ensure their words and actions cannot reasonably be construed to be officially endorsing or disapproving of, or extending preferential treatment for any faith, belief, or absence of belief."

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/03/27/air-force-jag-says-commanders-may-invoke-god-at-change-of-command-ceremonies-sparking-protest/>

The JAG's legal opinion contradicts the Supreme Court ruling, Air Force precedent and the Air Force instruction, Weinstein argues.

Mike Berry, director of military affairs for First Liberty Institute, a national religious liberty organization that has represented numerous service members and veterans, disagrees.

"This looks like a desperate attempt by Mikey Weinstein to reverse good religious liberty law and policy," Berry said. "The [U.S. Commission on Civil Rights] should not grant Weinstein's inappropriate demands to harass the Air Force because of an internal policy memo that simply applies the Constitution and Supreme Court precedent to the Air Force.

"At a time when our military needs more religious freedom, we can count on Mikey Weinstein to be the first to complain when the Air Force does something right," he said.

Weinstein believes the weight of evidence suggests that airmen "who do not share the incoming commander's religious affiliation will question the impartiality of a commander who went out of his way at his change of command ceremony to state his loyalty and affection for a deity not shared by those airmen who hold affiliation with another deity or with no deity."

Weinstein also takes issue with the idea that by waiting at least 10 minutes between a change of command and a promotion ceremony, the latter becomes a personal, rather than official, event.

"To suggest that the promotion ceremony, which symbolizes an officer's promotion in grade to the Air Force community, is somehow "unofficial" ignores the obvious fact that his or her promotion is the result of state action on multiple levels," he wrote.

In the Air Force, promotion ceremonies typically occur on federal property, in aircraft hangars and officers' clubs," he wrote. "The airmen who attend are in uniform, on "official duty" and accordingly paid by the U.S. taxpayers. They are not on personal or administrative leave. The honor guard, narrator, presiding official and the officer to be promoted are likewise each on active duty."

It is unclear whether the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will grant MRFF's request for a hearing.

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/03/24/first-air-force-jag-officer-to-wear-hijab-featured-in-short-nbc-documentary/>

First Air Force JAG officer to wear hijab featured in short NBC documentary

By Kent Miller

Air Force Times, March 24, 2019



Capt. Ouza Maysaa, chief of legal assistance at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., and the first JAG Corps officer to wear hijab, is featured in a new NBC documentary. (Courtesy ACLU)

Capt. Maysaa Ouza, the first Air Force Judge Advocate General Corps officer to wear hijab, is featured in a new [short documentary](#) from NBC's Left Field this week.

Ouza, chief of legal assistance at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., is the daughter of Lebanese immigrants who migrated to Dearborn, Michigan, home to the country's largest mosque.

When she graduated law school, Ouza knew she wanted to serve in the armed forces and began exploring her options.

As the daughter of immigrants, she was called to defend "the very freedoms and liberties that have afforded her and her family so many opportunities," wrote Heather L. Weaver, senior staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union's Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief.

Ouza was told by Air Force recruiters that she could seek [a religious accommodation](#) and so entered the competitive process to become a JAG officer. But when it came time to sign her contract, she was told she could only request a religious accommodation after going through officer training, and that the granting of [religious accommodation](#) was not guaranteed.

"If that sounds familiar, it should," Weaver wrote in the [ACLU's Speak Freely Blog](#) in May 2018.

"The [Army made the same argument](#) a few years ago when it refused to grant a Sikh college student a religious accommodation to enroll in ROTC with his religiously-mandated beard and turban. We sued, and in a landmark victory, a federal court ruled in 2015 that the Army couldn't legally justify denying our client a religious accommodation.

"Highlighting the court's decision in that 2015 case, the ACLU, ACLU of Michigan, the ACLU of the District of Columbia, along with the law firm of Hammoud, Dakhllallah & Associates PLLC, sent a letter to the Air Force on behalf of ... Ouza urging officials to reconsider their policy," she wrote..

"To the credit of the Air Force, they reversed their decision and allowed ... Ouza to join the JAG Corps with a religious accommodation. They also took steps toward approving and implementing a new policy that, once finalized, will hopefully help future recruits who need religious exemptions avoid the same dilemma."

Air Force Capt. Rafael D. Lantigua, a Muslim chaplain also featured in the documentary, views himself and Ouza as bridge builders.

"The idea that people are just going to [do away with their prejudices](#), that is not a realistic expectation, he said. "You've got to open the door to allow other people to experience who we are."

That process began immediately for Ouza.

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/03/24/first-air-force-jag-officer-to-wear-hijab-featured-in-short-nbc-documentary/>

“At officer training, I was the first Muslim that most of my colleagues had ever met,” she says in the documentary, noting that her fellow airmen peppered her with questions about being a Muslim and wearing hijab.

When she was awarded the “Airman of the Week” honor, her fellow trainees and instructors described her as “a true leader who will greatly contribute to the Air Force and anything she pursues.”

"Islam and the Air Force have more similarities than people think, Ouza said. “Discipline. Modesty. Justice. Valor. So, in a way, the hijab and the uniform both represent the same thing.”

This Muslim Fort Carson soldier is still getting questions about her hijab

By Meghann Myers

Army Times, March 22, 2019



Sgt. Cesilia Valdovinos filed a complaint after her command sergeant major accused her of being out of hair regulations and ordered her to remove her hijab. (Military Religious Freedom Foundation)

A Fort Carson, Colorado, brigade commander has found no issue with the way a command sergeant major attempted to enforce [hair regulations](#) with a [Muslim soldier](#) earlier this month, according to a Friday statement to Army Times. Now her attorney is considering filing a federal lawsuit.

[Sgt. Cesilia Valdovinos](#) met with Col. David Zinn, who leads 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, to discuss her equal opportunity complaint on Thursday, her attorney told Army Times, hours after 704th Brigade Support Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Kerstin Montoya again accused Valdovinos of wearing her hair down underneath her hijab.

“A commander’s inquiry found allegations against a senior non-commissioned officer were unsubstantiated regarding discriminating against Sgt. Cesilia Valdovinos,” Zinn said in the statement. “The inquiry concluded that the senior noncommissioned officer acted appropriately by enforcing the proper wear of the hijab, in compliance with Army regulations.”



This illustration shows proper wear of a hijab in uniform.

But she has in the past and continues to tie her hair up in a bun underneath the head covering, she said in a Thursday email, and now feels that her senior enlisted leader is targeting her.

“This is an absolutely quintessential example of some of the worst anti-Muslim bigotry, prejudice and harassment that we have seen,” Mikey Weinstein, founder of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, which represents Valdovinos, told Army Times on Friday. “That’s because it’s so blatant.”

Having exhausted her administrative remedies, he added, MRFF is considering filing a federal lawsuit on her behalf, in light of the “hostile work environment” her command as created.

Valdovinos filed the complaint after a March 6 incident in which Montoya pulled her aside, ordering her to remove her hijab — for which she has a religious accommodation waiver — to verify her hair was in regulation. On March 21, she said, the same CSM, in the presence their paralegal, took her aside and again accused her of being out of regs.

“Well I don’t believe it is, go to the restroom and put it up over your shoulders,” Valdovinos said, paraphrasing the conversation.

She asked her first sergeant, who saw the interaction, what she should do. The paralegal told her to go to the bathroom and act like she was fixing her hair, she said.

“At this point I feel harassed by CSM Montoya, as if she’s just looking for reasons to find a way for me to get in trouble,” Valdovinos said.

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/03/22/this-muslim-fort-carson-soldier-is-still-getting-questions-about-her-hijab>

Her hair was always up, she added.

“I don’t have long, thick hair,” she said. “My hair is thin and short, so because she doesn’t see a full bun sticking out of my hijab doesn’t mean I don’t have it in a bun.”

The Army authorized the hijab for wear in uniform in early 2017, in a directive that also authorized Sikh turbans and patka coverings. To wear them, soldiers must have brigade commander authorization, and their hair must be kept off of their faces and tied up according to existing regulations for long hair.

Later than afternoon, she met with Zinn to discuss the findings of his commander’s inquiry.

“Our leaders are committed to supporting Soldiers’ freedom of religious expression,” Zinn said in his statement. “I have, and will continue to, take all reports of soldiers disrespecting religious beliefs, observances, or traditions very seriously.”

Valdovinos said the commander told her he would have their chaplain train the command teams on approaching religious situations. She asked for a transfer, she said, “because I feel I am being targeted. He said he would consider it.”

Weinstein reached out to the deputy commanding general of 4th ID on Thursday, he said, but has not received a response.

Sexual Assault / Harassment

A campaign against sexual harassment in the entertainment industry — 100 years before #TimesUp

How the struggle to end harassment led Kitty Marion to fight, violently, for women's rights

By Fern Riddell

The Washington Post, March 28, 2019



Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (D-Conn.) adjusts her "Time's Up" lapel pin ahead of President Trump's State of the Union address in January. (Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP)

A dark office. An agent, holding a contract that could change a young woman's life forever. The following, unforeseen sexual assault. Today we are acutely aware of the dangers for women in the entertainment industry. The exposure of powerful men such as Bill Cosby as sexual predators and accusations of sexual assault against others such as Harvey Weinstein have led to the incredible #TimesUp campaign, championed by women across the United States and around the world.

But 100 years ago, another woman was fighting for the same cause. Her story teaches us that if society and government are not responsive to the earnest pleas from women to clean up the subjugation they confront, they risk radicalizing women with violent results.

Just 19 years old, Kitty Marion stood on Waterloo Bridge, looking down at the Thames below her. This huge river slices London in two, wiggling through its center, the rise and fall of the tide matching the ebb and flow of city life. The evening's glow, from gaslight at the end of the 19th century, would turn the water a deep black.

A few moments earlier, Marion had stumbled out of the offices of a theatrical agent on the other side of the river. She had been invited to sign her first music-hall contract — a skilled singer and dancer, she was determined to become a star, a woman who earned her independence through hard work and talent. But when Marion had arrived to see her agent at the appointed time, she found the office empty apart from a junior partner, the man she would only ever refer to as "Mr. Dreck." He knocked her unconscious and attempted to assault her.

When Marion gained consciousness, she was horrified. "My whole being revolted against even the possibility of such an outrage happening in a world in which I had been taught to trust everybody," she wrote in her unpublished autobiography.

As she staggered to the bridge, Dreck's words rang in Marion's ears. He claimed that it was "only a harmless little kiss" and that "most girls liked it." Most damning of all, he told Marion she would have no future in the music halls if she didn't accept and agree to engage in sex in return for legitimate work. Like many women who struggle with feelings of guilt and shame surrounding a sexual assault, Marion was acutely aware that she hadn't cried out for help as the attack began, scared it would bring unwanted publicity and ruin her reputation. Staring down at the water, Marion contemplated throwing herself in.

This horrific double standard still exists today. The women who bravely step forward to hold their assailants to account are aggressively demonized and exposed to public ridicule, while the perpetrators find

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/03/28/campaign-against-sexual-harassment-entertainment-industry-years-before-timesup/>

themselves stridently defended. Few women forget the first time they were attacked. The first time someone decided they have the right to touch, to kiss, to take without asking.

Marion's rejection of Dreck had given her an unkind lesson in the reality of workplace sexual harassment. It was an experience she found repeated multiple times throughout her career on the stage, by many agents and managers, who all believed in and supported the culture of abuse that working women experienced at the time.

Like many women subjected to such violence and violation, Marion was driven to a dark place. But she was resilient. Walking away from Waterloo Bridge, she decided to "develop the courage of a woman, and somehow, some time avenge the insult I had experienced."

For the next 20 years, Marion campaigned to protect women in the entertainment industry. She made it a union issue, forcing an investigation into the conditions working women faced and the universal sexual harassment they experienced simply for pursuing their independence. But the industry refused to listen to the women, and the government saw no reason to change the laws.

By 1907, and now in her 40s, Marion was a widely recognized star. She had appeared on the same bills as Harry Houdini, and her letters exposing the harassment suffered by women on and off the stage appeared in newspapers across the country. But the government, as well as wider society, still wouldn't listen.

Refusing to accept defeat, Marion joined the Suffragettes, the name given to the members of the Women's Social and Political Union, and aligned herself with the organization's new motto, "Deeds, Not Words." Within a few years she had become one of England's most notorious suffragists, responsible for a nationwide bombing and arson campaign that led to her being imprisoned and repeatedly force-fed, for attacks on public transport, government ministers' houses, popular public parks and racecourses. After decades of peaceful campaigning by nonviolent suffragists, the WSPU and its Suffragette members chose a new and violent path.

Radicalized by government-sanctioned force-feedings and police brutality, the Suffragettes decided to meet violence with violence. They believed the fight for the vote was a civil war, to be won by any means necessary. The story of these violent women has remained hidden in the archives, until now.

The blinding anger resulting from assault, abuse and an industry unwilling to protect her transformed Marion. Her rage fueled her political violence, and by joining the Suffragettes, she found a group of women who also were determined to fight back. The British government considered Marion so dangerous that they used the outbreak of World War I to force her to leave the country for the United States, hounded by accusations that her violence was not for the rights of British women but because she was a double agent, planted in Britain by Germany to destabilize society. Forced to abandon her friends and the sisterhood that had given her life purpose, Marion found refuge in the new birth-control movement in the United States, quickly becoming its most recognizable face.

Hers is a unique life, linking the United States and the United Kingdom, and the two most important and powerful issues women still face today — the right to a voice in politics and the right to bodily autonomy.

Marion spent her whole life battling against a culture of sexual abuse that has little changed in the past 100 years. Powerful men, when faced with the opportunity to manipulate women into positions of sexual subjugation in return for their right to work, rarely act against their worst nature and, rarer still, face any serious punishment when their actions became public knowledge. Even the revelation of grotesque audio recordings featuring reality-TV personality Donald Trump bragging "I don't even wait. And when you're a

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/03/28/campaign-against-sexual-harassment-entertainment-industry-years-before-timesup/>

star, they let you do it. You can do anything. . . . Grab them by the p---y. You can do anything,” did little to stop his ascent to the presidency.

For women like Marion, the feminist campaigners of our past, the vote was supposed to bring about an almost instant utopia: Once women had access to positions of power, there was a belief that their influence and experiences would be valued and create a world free from sexual harassment, abuse and inequality. The reality of their legacy has fallen seriously short of those idealized hopes. It does not matter what rights are protected in law if our culture does not ensure they are accepted and enforced. This is why, 100 years later, we carry on Marion’s fight.

Dr. Fern Riddell is a historian specializing in sex, suffrage and culture in the Victorian and Edwardian era and author of "[Death in Ten Minutes: The Forgotten Life of Radical Suffragette Kitty Marion.](#)"

Here's what happened to the officer who tried to arrange sex with a deaf child

By Geoff Ziezulewicz

Navy Times, March 28, 2019



Lt. j.g. Michael D. McNeil of the destroyer Lassen was sentenced to 10 years in prison Monday after pleading guilty to attempted online enticement of a minor. (Clay County Sheriff's Office)

A Florida-based Navy officer was sentenced to 10 years in prison Monday for trying to arrange a sexual encounter with a 12-year-old deaf girl.

[Lt. j.g. Michael Douglas McNeil](#), 31, will also serve five years' probation upon his release and will have to register as a sex offender, according to a statement issued by the [U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida](#).

McNeil, who was assigned to the guided-missile destroyer [Lassen](#) at Naval Station Mayport, agreed to plead guilty in December to one count of attempted online enticement of a minor, according to federal court records.

As part of that deal, McNeil waived his right to a Navy board of inquiry hearing that would have decided his future in the service.

The agreement also notes that any discharge from the service will be under "other than honorable" conditions.

Officials with [Naval Surface Force Atlantic](#) did not immediately respond to queries regarding McNeil's current status.

The attorney listed for McNeil in court records, Michael Yokan, did not return a request for comment.

McNeil believed he was texting and messaging with the uncle of the 12-year-old deaf girl in August, but in reality he was communicating with an undercover Clay County Sheriff's Office detective.

It started when a detective posted a meme to an online forum with a message that read "my adopted niece and I are looking for family fun," the complaint against McNeil states.

McNeil responded on Aug. 27 by writing "share her with me."

The next day, McNeil repeatedly pestered the undercover agent for pics of the 12-year-old and said such an encounter had "been a fantasy of mine," court records show.

"She's deaf," the detective told McNeil. "And I haven't learned sign language."

"Lol, its just you and her?" McNeil replied.

"yeah, (sic) just us," the detective said.

"Lucky guy ;)" McNeil said.

The two exchanged about 239 texts from Aug. 29 to Aug. 30, and McNeil sent an explicit photo of himself, asked for pics of the child and queried about her sexual experience, according to court records.

McNeil went to meet the man he thought was the girl's uncle on Aug. 30 at a local Starbucks and was arrested.

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/03/28/heres-what-happened-to-the-officer-who-tried-to-arrange-sex-with-a-deaf-child/>

Once in custody, he told authorities he was “a well-intentioned ‘vigilante’” and was going to meet the uncle to identify “a potential criminal,” authorities indicated.

McNeil admitted he had sent an explicit photo of himself to the undercover officer, and detectives explained to McNeil why his vigilante alibi “didn’t make sense,” court records state.

The Navy officer then told authorities he “wouldn’t have went through with it,” prosecutors wrote.

“I’m just...(expletive) up,” McNeil said. “I’m a (expletive) idiot. I have a perfect life, perfect wife, perfect kid...curiosity got to me and...I (expletive) up. (Expletive) stupid. And now, you know, I could lose everything.”

A [Project Safe Childhood](#) task force composed of the Clay County Sheriff’s Office, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office jointly worked the case, which was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney D. Rodney Brown.

McNeil enlisted in 2006 and went to officer candidate school in 2016, according to service records.

He reported to the Lassen after receiving his commission.

As an enlisted student, McNeil had been assigned to Naval Technical Training Center Lackland in San Antonio for much of June 2011.

Located on [Lackland Air Force Base](#), the complex turned out [Navy Master-at-Arms](#) sailors, plus [Naval Corrections Specialists](#) and Navy Military Working Dog handlers.

Military records indicate that on Aug. 1, 2011, he joined the staff of the [Naval Consolidated Brig Charleston](#) and departed the command nearly three years later.

McNeil’s federal plea deal indicates he will serve time near Arkansas, his home of record.

‘I, Too, Was a Survivor’: Senator McSally Ends Years of Silence

Martha McSally became the first American woman to fly in combat. But years before, she had been attacked by one of her own.

By Helene Cooper, Dave Philipps, and Richard A. Oppel Jr.

The Washington Post, March 26, 2019



Martha McSally at Laughlin Air Force Base in Del Rio, Tex., in 1993. (Credit: Associated Press)

WASHINGTON — The Air Force of three decades ago was a challenging place for women, especially those ambitious few with aspirations of becoming fighter pilots.

There were lewd singalongs among the airmen. Pornography was strewn around. Sexual harassment, and worse, was rampant.

So when a promising young military servicewoman named Martha McSally was raped by a male superior officer on her journey to enter that distinct boys club, it was hardly surprising that she did not report the allegation up the chain of command.

The first woman to pilot an American warplane into combat, Ms. McSally was known for her outspoken ways. She hectored her superiors to waive the height requirement that stood in her way, sued the Bush administration for making her wear an abaya while on duty in Saudi Arabia, and wore a men's flight cap to her promotion ceremony in defiance of regulations.

But calling out colleagues for sexual assault was considered career ending for women back then, say people who served in the Air Force with her. And Ms. McSally has said that the negative response she received when she brought up, in general terms, what had happened to her traumatized her all over again.

Ms. McSally [did eventually raise her rape in public](#) earlier this month. Now a Republican senator from Arizona, she revealed the attack during a subcommittee hearing on sexual assault in the military. In remarks that she would later say were agonizing to prepare, she told other assault victims that she knew of their suffering.

The public announcement comes as Ms. McSally, who declined to be interviewed for this article, is fighting for her political life. Last month, Mark Kelly, an astronaut who is married to Gabrielle Giffords, the former congresswoman who survived a gunshot wound to the head, announced a bid to unseat Ms. McSally.

Senator Martha Elizabeth McSally has long been a complicated and contradictory figure. She was renowned for her historic first in the cockpit of an A-10 Warthog (known as a “gun with an airplane attached”); she was also mocked for once taking off with little fuel in her jet.

But never was her complexity more on display than on March 6, when she reported her rape to official Washington.

“Later in my career, as the military grappled with scandals and their wholly inadequate responses, I felt the need to let some people know I, too, was a survivor,” Ms. McSally said. “I was horrified at how my attempt to share generally my experiences were handled. I almost separated from the Air Force at 18 years over my despair.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/26/us/senator-martha-mcsally-rape-assault.html>

“Like many victims, I felt like the system was raping me all over again,” she went on. “But I didn’t quit. I decided to stay and continue to serve and fight and lead.”

And then, the woman who said she was raped by the system said that the same system should continue to handle cases such as hers. She said that she was opposed to Senate legislation to take the prosecution of sexual assault cases out of the hands of the military chain of command, endangering the bill’s prospects and confounding other sexual assault victims.

At a news conference on Thursday outside Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, she told reporters that she would press defense officials to come up with reforms for dealing with sexual assaults within the ranks and would herself sit on a new Pentagon task force on the issue.

A Fierce Will Amid a Masculine Culture

Friends of Ms. McSally’s describe how she learned to mask all vulnerability in order to survive an aggressively masculine military culture in which women were barely seen as equals, let alone capable of leading. That she achieved all that she did, they say, is testament to a fierce will.

When Ms. McSally arrived at the Air Force Academy in 1984 at the age of 18, sexual assault at the school was almost entirely unreported. Cases were not formally tracked. Between 1976 and 1992, the first 16 years that women attended the academy, the number of sexual assault reports at the academy was zero, according to the [2003 congressional testimony](#) of the secretary of the Air Force at the time, James G. Roche.

Enter Ms. McSally, an avid swimmer who used to get airsick as a child. As a first-year cadet, the diminutive Ms. McSally informed her flight instructor that she planned to be a fighter pilot. The flight instructor just laughed, she later told [Air Force Print News](#).

Not only were women not allowed to fly fighters at the time, but at 5 feet 3 inches tall, Ms. McSally was an inch too short to fly any plane at all.

That didn’t stop her. She pressured commanders to grant a waiver. She hung upside down to try to stretch herself out, and she even got a fellow officer to knock her on the head, hoping the ensuing lump would help her reach the height requirement, according to two of her peers.

Ms. McSally has not disclosed who raped or assaulted her. But when she was a junior officer in the Air Force, she had told friends that by the time she arrived at the academy, she had already been sexually assaulted in high school by a coach.

She hasn’t given details about the superior officer who raped her once she joined the military, but a friend, Rich Robinson, said she confided in him more than two decades ago about the assaults.

“It’s almost like you’re a wounded sheep in the field, and they sniff you out,” Mr. Robinson said of predatory officers in the military. “As you’re learning the situation, they gain your trust and then they violate that, and that’s when the abuse takes place. The betrayal is when you totally believe in someone, and then they took advantage of you for their own benefit.”

Many women of that era simply dropped out. During the early years of women at the academy, one in four left before graduating, an attrition rate at least double that of West Point and the Naval Academy.

One victim was Lynn Hall, who said she was raped in December 2001 while in her first year at the Air Force Academy. Already a civilian pilot when she entered the academy, Ms. Hall had been introduced to a senior upperclassman, who would go on to rape her on one of the upper floors of the academy’s library.

Ms. Hall contracted herpes from the assault, which led to a meningitis and encephalitis infection. A doctor asked her whether she was sexually active, but fearing what would happen if she reported the rape, she said

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/26/us/senator-martha-mcsally-rape-assault.html>

no. As a result, she said, she never received the right diagnosis or treatment. “It cascaded into all sorts of medical problems, and I didn’t get the medical care I needed,” she said.

She tried to stick it out, but left the academy in 2004 with a medical discharge.

Ms. McSally, during her senior year at the academy, finally got the height waiver she was seeking. It was the first such waiver in seven years.

In 1994, at the stick of an A-10 Warthog over the deserts of Iraq, she became the first American woman to fly in combat.

But even as she was making history, Ms. McSally was also making enemies.

Middling Skills or Professional Jealousy?

In 2014, in the heat of Ms. McSally’s campaign for Congress, two pilots criticized her publicly, including Lt. Col. Thomas Norris. He [told an Arizona radio host](#) that as a pilot, Ms. McSally displayed “incredible ineptness in the air” and was “under the highest level of supervision starting back in 1995, because she had severe lack of knowledge and credibility.”

Two other pilots said in recent interviews that Ms. McSally once took off with not enough fuel in her jet. And yet, they complained, she was often promoted ahead of her peers, despite what they described as middling pilot skills.

Ms. McSally’s allies say that much of the criticism about her stemmed from professional jealousy and an anti-female bias in the hyper-macho fighter pilot culture.

“She got extra attention, and that’s not right. But it wasn’t her fault,” said Don Bacon, a retired Air Force brigadier general who served with her at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson. “You’ve got a senator flying in, and they’d say ‘We want to see Martha McSally.’ If you’re a commander, you’ve got to protect someone like that. I don’t know that all of them did.”

Mr. Bacon, now a Republican congressman from Nebraska, remembered her as an effective leader. “I thought she was very competent as a commander and in how she treated people,” he said.

The grumbling grew steadily every time Ms. McSally was promoted, and every time she challenged the status quo.

And challenge it she did — again and again. In 2001, as a lieutenant colonel flying missions out of Saudi Arabia, she was required to wear the black head covering and long black robe known as an abaya whenever she went off base. She [filed suit](#) in federal court, saying the requirements were discriminatory.

Ms. McSally showed the same defiance in 2004 when she became the first woman to command a fighter squadron, the pilots said. The Air Force had just issued a regulation barring women from wearing men’s flight caps, which many women preferred over the women’s version. At the ceremony where she took command, she wore the men’s cap.

The Consequences of Speaking Out

Female former officers who served in the same time frame said that it was almost inconceivable that an officer with any ambition would have reported a sexual assault by another officer.

Not only would it have been clear from the outset that there was almost no chance of anything happening or any charges being pursued, but blowing the whistle on another officer — or even just reacting negatively to the routinely bawdy banter of pilots — would get you ostracized and harm your career prospects. Ms. McSally alluded to this retribution in a paper she wrote in 2007 while at the Air War College. “Blame must

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/26/us/senator-martha-mcsally-rape-assault.html>

be placed appropriately,” she wrote. “The assaulter is the one who degraded cohesion of the team, not the victim.”

The youngest pilots were often tasked with carrying around the squadron’s box of pornography. Squadron members sang group songs that included lyrics about raping women, ejaculating, and mutilation of women, and female officers and airmen were expected to tolerate it, if not sing along, said Jennifer Jones, who enlisted in the Air Force at 17, became an officer and then went to law school and rose to be a major in the Judge Advocate General’s Corps.

Women described laughing at bawdy jokes knowing that if they were not viewed as part of the team, they would not advance in their careers. And the quickest way to kill your military careers, they said, was to report. This retaliation against sexual assault claimants has long been military-wide.

Stacey Thompson was a young Marine lance corporal in Okinawa in 1998, when she said she was drugged and raped by her sergeant. She reported it immediately to the military chain of command that also, incidentally, included her sergeant. During the investigation, the military discharged Ms. Thompson’s sergeant. But they discharged Ms. Thompson as well, effectively ending her career in the military.

Nine years later, halfway around the world, after commanding a squadron, Ms. McSally graduated first in her class from the Air War College in 2007, and was in line to become a group commander. But she was passed over and eventually retired from active duty in 2010.

She had survived 26 years in the aggressively masculine culture of fighter pilots in the Air Force. She ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 2012, and then won in 2014. When Jeff Flake announced he was leaving the Senate, she ran unsuccessfully for his seat, losing to Kyrsten Sinema, a Democrat, in November. And then, Gov. Doug Ducey of Arizona put her in John McCain’s vacant seat, and in the sights of Mr. Kelly, the popular astronaut.

On Feb. 28, Ms. Thompson, the former Marine and sexual assault survivor, went to Ms. McSally’s Senate offices to try to get her to sign on to the congressional legislation that would take such cases out of the hands of the military. During a private meeting with other survivors, Ms. McSally disclosed that she, too, had been raped and mistreated by the military.

But Ms. McSally said that despite what happened to her, she still believed that the handling of such cases should be left in the hands of the military command structure.

Ms. McSally said that taking rape cases away would be letting commanders off the hook. She said that military commanders needed to know that they would be fired if they did not prosecute such cases. Critics of that logic say it ignores the tremendous influence male commanders have among their male colleagues.

“She kept saying, ‘We’re on the same side on this,’” Ms. Thompson recalled.

She said she left the meeting thinking about the contradictory nature of Ms. McSally. “Yeah, we’re both survivors,” she said. “But we are not on the same side.”

Helene Cooper reported from Washington, Dave Philipps from Colorado Springs and Richard A. Oppel Jr. from New York. Steve Friess contributed reporting from Battle Creek, Mich. Kitty Bennett and Alain Delaqu erie contributed research.

.....

SEE ALSO:

[Why McSally is right, and wrong, about military sexual assaults](#) [Air Force Times, 2019-03-25] [OPINION]

Midshipman faces sexual assault, obstruction of justice charges in court-martial

By Danielle Ohl

Capital Gazette (Annapolis, Md.), March 27, 2019



Midshipman First Class Michael J. Wallace has been charged with sexual assault and awaits trial at the Washington Navy Yard on April 8. (Courtesy Photo)

A midshipman is awaiting a court-martial on [sexual assault charges](#) stemming from a March 2018 incident in Pensacola, Florida, according to charging documents.

Navy investigators charged Midshipman First Class Michael J. Wallace, 23, with sexual assault, causing bodily harm and obstruction of justice after he allegedly sexually assaulted a female sailor enlisted in the Navy Reserve, on March 11, 2018.

Wallace, from Taylor, Michigan, was scheduled to graduate in 2018, as first reported in [Navy Times](#), and was headed to Nuclear Power School in Charleston, South Carolina to join the submarine community. But Wallace remains assigned to the academy pending the outcome of the trial, said academy spokeswoman Jenny Erickson.

A Naval Criminal Investigation Service probe found Wallace allegedly assaulted the sailor in Pensacola while she was sleeping, causing some bodily harm. Wallace was in Pensacola during free time off-base. Prosecutors said he attempted to obstruct justice by asking a second lieutenant to lie to NCIS agents and deleting communications from another sailor's cell phone.

After reviewing the case, academy Superintendent Vice Adm. Ted Carter convened an Article 32 preliminary hearing, similar to a civilian grand jury investigation, on Nov. 7, Erickson said.

Following the hearing, Carter referred the charges to a general court-martial.

The trial will begin April 8 and is slated to extend to April 12 at the Northern Judicial Circuit at the Washington Navy Yard.

The midshipman, according to his LinkedIn page, is a Trident Scholar, was a brigade academics officer and member of the academy's intramural soccer team. He was accepted into the Schwarzman Scholars Program at Tsinghua University in China, where he was scheduled to pursue a graduate degree in global affairs, economics and business.

Wallace is one of two midshipmen charged with sexual assault in the last two academic years.

Another midshipman, according to an annual Defense Department report on misconduct at the service academies, was charged and convicted of sexual assault in late 2017 after assaulting a female classmate. The male midshipman was dismissed from the Navy after a court-martial and sentenced to 30 months confinement. He also registered as a sex offender.

Erickson said Wallace and the other midshipman were the only two students to be charged with sexual assault in the last two school years, but could not immediately confirm the second midshipman's name.

This year, almost 60 percent of women and 20 percent of men attending the Naval Academy said they experienced sexual harassment, according to the Defense Department report, up from 44 percent of women

<https://www.capitalgazette.com/news/annapolis/ac-cn-wallace-sexual-assault-20190327-story.html> and 9 percent of men in 2016. Reports of sexual assault increased from 29 to 32 reports over the past two school years. The 32 reports mark the most the academy has received in more than a decade.

The academy enforces mandatory sexual harassment and assault prevention and awareness training through its office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response and the Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Education, or SHAPE, program. [Midshipmen](#) participate in the program during every year they attend the academy. Midshipmen attend one fewer session every year, beginning with four during their plebe year.

At a recent SHAPE session, Midshipmen First Class Nash Nickerson and Marissa Stinson stood in front of their second-class peers, prompting them to think about how, as newly-minted Navy officers, they might handle a subordinate reporting sexual assault.

“Can someone talk about the wrong things that happened?” Stinson asked, referring to a video the class watched, where sailors sexually assault their fellow seaman but a superior officer doesn’t take it seriously. To the contrary, she encourages a climate of harassment and disrespect toward the new sailor.

“She addressed him, but not in the right way,” one mid answered.

“She shot him down,” said another.

Midshipman receive some form of sexual harassment training every year, be it a peer-led session like the class with Stinson and Nickerson, or a guest speaker. At the SHAPE session, the midshipman focused on life after the Naval Academy and building a culture of respect. Stinson said she thinks the lessons sink in, especially because some of the same topics repeat over the years, but ultimately, individual midshipman have to make choices about their own conduct.

“From my experience, it’s how much you want to take it in,” she said. “Unfortunately, you will encounter this in your career. For people who don’t take it seriously, it’s going to hit them hard.”

The academy will host a National Discussion on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at America’s Colleges, Universities and Service Academies April 4-5. It will be attended by the secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force. The two-day event is designed to allow universities to share best practices and develop strategies to reduce sexual violence in higher education.

Despite increased harassment, reporting remains virtually nonexistent. Midshipmen made just two informal harassment complaints and no formal complaints, down from 12 informal complaints made last school year. Some didn’t think the problem was serious enough to report or said they took care of the situation by avoiding the person who assaulted them, according to the survey.

Based on responses to the survey, the Defense Department estimates about 254 midshipmen have experienced some sort of unwanted sexual contact. Rates of unwanted sexual contact did not change over the last school year, according to the report.



SEE ALSO:

[US Naval Academy midshipman charged with sexual assault](#) [*Navy Times*, 2019-03-26]

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/03/22/sailor-charged-with-trading-explicit-images-with-13-year-old-girl/>

Sailor charged with trading explicit images with 13-year-old girl

By Geoff Ziezulewicz

Navy Times, March 22, 2019

Fireman Apprentice Ethan Knez, 21, used a website and messaging app to begin communicating with the Michigan girl in February of 2018, according to a complaint filed Monday in [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois](#).

Knez's service record shows he was a student at [Training Support Center Great Lakes](#), a service school north of Chicago, at the time.

His court-appointed defense attorney, Robert Seeder, did not return requests from Navy Times for comment.

Last March, the girl's father alerted authorities that his daughter had sent and received pornographic images from adult men, according to the complaint.

The parents turned the girl's phone over to authorities, who found a messaging app account with the screen name "madnezz19" that they later linked to Knez, court records allege.

While Knez allegedly sent the girl explicit images of himself and she did the same, the child "talked about issues with her parents, the desire to run away, and alluded to taking pills in a possible suicide attempt," prosecutors wrote.

In one series of messages, the girl told Knez she had been sexually assaulted at school, the complaint states.

At one point, Knez sent the girl an intimate image of himself "while wearing a navy-color blue U.S. Navy shirt," according to the complaint.

The [Naval Criminal Investigative Service](#) got involved when Knez was determined to be a military member, the complaint states, and he told authorities in January that "he also instructed approximately 15 other females under the age of 18 to produce similar sexually explicit images and videos and that they sent these images and videos to him at his request."

"Knez said he believed the youngest victim was 15 or 16 years old," a NCIS special agent wrote in the complaint. "When I confronted Knez with (the 13-year-old girl's) age, Knez said, 'if that's what it says, then that's what it is.'"

An Indiana native, Knez enlisted in the Navy on Nov. 28, 2017.

He remains in custody, according to Navy and federal court records.

The story was first reported [by the Chicago Tribune](#).