FROM LADY SOLDIERS TO BROTHERS IN ARMS: WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES, 1972-1992

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ABSTRACT

As the Vietnam War extended into the 1970s, concerns arose in Washington about the decreased number of men enlisting in the armed services. Conscription kept the ranks full temporarily, but the draftìs end precipitated a crisis. Due to the increased need for humanpower, the military broke with precedent and disbanded its female auxiliary organizations, admitting women as full-fledged members. This dissertation explores the first twenty years of womenìs service after integration, from 1972 (the year that the last draft calls were issued) to 1992 (just after the First Gulf War) to examine the experiences of American women in uniform and how they affected a gendered military structure. In doing so, it argues that servicewomen were seen as both îladiesï and îbrothers.ï It explores how these contradictory identities affected womenìs military experiences, striving to tell this story in the voices of the women involved by drawing on previous interdisciplinary scholarship, supplemented by archival research and oral histories

Womenìs experiences in the United States military were inherently different than menìs. This dissertation seeks to determine how concepts of gender changed in the military, and how those changes impacted servicewomenìs experiences. Just as important is an assessment of how female veterans viewed their own experiences after they returned to civilian life. Sexual harassment and assault will loom large as examples of some of the gendered obstacles women faced. Since those two transgressions concern power, not sex, most of these incidents involve men exerting control over women. This dissertation therefore looks at the ways in which sexual harassment and assault affected the lives of servicewomen: how the military and the women themselves conceptualized their experiences as gendered or not.

Despite the marked change in servicewomenìs status, the Defense Department maintained a policy that pretended there was no role for them in combat. The United States would rather cling to the fantasy that women had not served under fire than admit that they were in dangerous situations. This dissertation offers case studies that challenge the fiction that women did not enter combat until the 21st century. Beginning with the invasion of Grenada, women saw themselves as warriors in a combat zone, regardless of the militaryìs blinkered point of view. In exploring womenìs service during the 1980s and the First Gulf War, I am contributing to the recent historiographical trend that challenges the idea of women as noncombatants. These womenìs roles, in fact, blurred the line between combatant and noncombatant.

Setting the creation of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) in the context of liberalized womenìs participation in the armed services, this dissertation explores the unappreciated changes that transformed the military during the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. While the AVF marked the beginning of increased opportunities for women in the United States military, the backlash against women that occurred in the 1980s did not impact only civilian affairs. The military therefore reflected both positive and negative changes that swept the civilian world. This dissertation will assess how women navigated those changes and explore why they occurred by attempting to create a comprehensive historical narrative of womenìs military experiences that traces the service and lives of military women from the end of Selective Service through their active involvement in the First Gulf War.

This dissertation is dedicated to the women who have been erased from history and to those who tell their stories.

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I acquired my love of studying servicewomen while a Women and Gender Studies major in college. I began to hone my craft as a MA student in history at Rutgers University: Newark, with the help of staff, students, and faculty, especially Dr. Beryl Satter, Dr. Susan Carruthers, and Christina Strasburger. Temple University's tremendous History Department got me to this point. I would never have survived graduate school without the support and friendship of Vangie Campbell. I am grateful for the assistance Dr. Petra Goedde gave me in the early days of my Ph.D. Dr. Katya Motyl took over from her, as a wonderful guide in women's history and theory. Dr. Harvey Neptune always gave the best big picture perspective. Dr. Heather Stur's work inspired me long before I met her, and I am honored that she agreed to join my committee. I would especially like to thank Dr. Gregory J.W. Urwin, who took a risk with a student of the servicewomen in the late twentieth century and pushed me every day to do better. Thank you.

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INTRODUCTION
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During the Vietnam War, the military relied on the societal construction of gender and femininity being tied directly to the mythos of straight white American femaleness. While the military allowed some women to advance their careers and education, it held steadfastly to traditional ideas of gender. Therefore, when the dominant narrative concerning the Vietnam War includes servicewomen, it highlights their roles as caregivers: as mothers, wives, sisters, and lovers. The militaryìs strong emphasis on traditional femininity created a tension in the lives of servicewomen. And yet their very existence within the military structure challenged some of the î traditionsï that the military was attempting to enforce. It was within these precarious parameters that servicewomen lived their lives as the military began to transform to the All-Volunteer Force: balancing between what was expected of service personnel and î ladies.ï

As the Vietnam War extended into the 1970s, concerns arose in Washington about the decreased number of men enlisting in the armed services. Conscription kept the ranks full temporarily, but the draftìs end precipitated a crisis. Due to the increased need for humanpower, the military broke with precedent and disbanded its female auxiliary organizations, admitting women as full-fledged members. This dissertation explores the first twenty years of womenìs service after integration, from 1972 (the year that the last draft calls were issued) to 1992 (just after the Gulf War) to examine the experiences of American women in uniform and how they affected a gendered military structure. In doing so, it argues that servicewomen were seen as both î ladiesï and î brothers.ï It

explores how these contradictory identities affected womenìs military experiences, striving to tell this story in the voices of the women involved by drawing on previous interdisciplinary scholarship, supplemented by archival research and oral histories. This work attempts to create a comprehensive historical narrative of womenìs military experiences that traces the service and lives of military women from the end of Selective Service through their active involvement in the First Gulf War.

On June 11, 1970, Army Chief of Staff Gen. William Westmoreland pinned stars on Col. Anna Mae Hayes, Chief of the Army Nurse Corps, and Col. Elizabeth P. Hoisington, Director of the Womenìs Army Corps, making them the first female generals in the United States military. According to Brigadier General Hayesì remembrance of her promotion ceremony:

> After he pinned on my stars, he leaned over and gave me a kiss, very much to my surprise. Well, this was very unusual, because every time I had ever spoken to General Westmoreland in his office, I had always been at strict attention. Then, he went on to say that he had established a new protocol for promoting ladies to the grade of brigadier general.[1]

Westmoreland repeated the gesture the following year during the promotion of Col. Mildred Inez Bailey, who said îGeneral Westmoreland kissing the lady generals just caught on like wildfire.ï[2] This insistence on using the term îladiesï to refer to even the highest-ranking women in the U.S. Armed Forces separated them from the men who

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[1] Col. Amelia Jane Carson, "Senior Officers Interview Program: Project 83-10 Anna Mae McCabe Hays, Brigadier General, USA, Retired," 1983, Box 1 Folder 2: Oral History for Brigadier General Anna Mae McCabe Hays, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 179.

[2] Lt. Col Rhoda M. Messer," Recollections and Reflections: Transcripts of Debriefing of Brigadier General Bailey, 1978," Box 1: Volume II, Section VI, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 34.

earned the same rank. If even generals were ladies, not soldiers, what about military and naval women of interior grade? American servicewomen found their lives governed by gendered expectations and rules. This dissertation examines how these expectations evolved, or did not, as military policy changed between 1972 and 1992. It explores how those changes occurred and thus how women and gender shaped the military. Did servicewomen remain îlady soldiers,ï did they become îbrothers-in-arms,ï or were they somehow both?

Setting the creation of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) in the context of liberalized womenìs participation in the armed services, this dissertation explores the unappreciated changes that transformed the military during the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. While the AVF marked the beginning of increased opportunities for women in the United States military, the backlash against women that occurred in the 1980s did not impact only civilian affairs. The military therefore reflected both positive and negative changes that swept the civilian world. This dissertation will assess how women navigated those changes and explore why they occurred.

Despite the many undeniable contributions of women in uniform, American society often perceived military service as a masculine enterprise. This reflects the long-recognized concept of private versus public spheres, wherein men occupied space in the outside world and women were relegated to the home, a divide that was emphasized in the post-World War II years and continued into the 1960s.[3] Instead of challenging

[3] While this understanding of the differing roles of men and women applies mostly to middle-class persons, it was also an ideal to which the working class was expected to strive.

traditionally feminine roles, the military adapted them, and the women who fit them, to the public sphere. According to Joshua S. Goldstein, an authority on war and society, îmenìs participation in combat requires the psychological construction of a nurturing ífemininеì domainï in order to îmake the trauma tolerable.ï Furthermore, women must îfulfill their feminine roles in the war system, reinforcing soldiersì masculinity.ï [4] Therefore the separation of male and female emphasized the feminine domain in opposition to the masculine domain, yet expected the former to reinforce masculinity in ways that reflected the gendering of frontline versus the home front. In many ways, the creation of the All-Volunteer Force further challenged this strict binary, but in other ways, the military itself reinforced its masculine versus feminine rhetoric through the 1960s and 1970s.

The military has functioned historically as a gendered institution and warmaking relied on gendered constructions of societal roles. The term gender refers to a cultural and social category, different from the biological category, îsex.ï In this case, gender also refers to an oppositional relationship between masculinity and femininity, as fears concerning womenìs military participation were frequently fueled by the belief that women would disrupt the martial masculinity necessary for warfare.[5] This dissertation needs to understand the construction of gender within the military structure to understand

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[4] Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 301.

[5] See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999) for more on gender as a performance and Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-75, for more on using gender as an analytical framework.

the impact of the female presence in the ranks. Furthermore, by exploring fears concerning women in war, readers will grapple with larger societal anxiety about gender roles and expectations. Feminist International Relations theorists Laura Sjolberg and Sandra Via argue that î gendering is a constant feature of 21st-century militarism.ï War î requires and produces gender inequality,ï the pair contends, and î generates gendered roles, ideologies, and expectations.ï [6]

The U.S. military functioned as a protective institution during the 20th century. The Vietnam War came during an era of containment and the Cold War, a time that emphasized the nuclear î traditionalï family and democracy, a time that relied on rigid gender roles. As the Vietnam War was partially framed as an intervention to prevent the spread of communism, and thus protect capitalism, military men were tasked with protecting î the American way of life.ï Part of this î way of lifeï included î traditionalï gender roles: women as homemakers, men as breadwinners. Framing war in terms of paternalism and national security allowed servicemen and political leaders to view the military as an institution to enforce paternalism. While this position evolved somewhat over time, the gendering of the military was essential to its very existence.

Goldstein argues that duality, in this case masculinity and femininity, forces categorization as a tool that creates an oppositional relationship between male and female. Ann Fausto-Sterling agrees, stating that dualisms result in an imbalanced relationship of power and privilege.[7] Creating this hierarchical and oppositional system

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[6] Laura Sjolberg and Sandra Via, introduction to *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 10-11.

[7]Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 252 and Ann Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 21.

allows a military organization to use femininity as an insult and feminized qualities to describe those that are considered lesser beings, characterizing femaleness as naturally inferior.[8] Masculinity, therefore, is in a constant battle with feminization. Servicemen are constantly fighting to be seen as the epitome of the heroic-warrior figure, framing themselves as dominant and powerful, and equating failure with weakness and femininity. This was reinforced by the idea of women as too delicate or too weak to survive a combat zone, an idea that was disproved two decades earlier, as had the belief that they would not last in Asia (even though women had been stationed in India and China during World War II).[9] The military itself, and the officers in charge, readily forgot this fact. As Col. Sandra Whitt remembered: îI have learned to laugh at this having to continuously prove my credibility -- a response which has not always been easy.ï [10]

In an oral history recorded in 1983 as a part of the Army War Collegeìs oral history project, Brig. Gen. Anna Mae McCabe Hayes recalled a conversation she had in 1956 with President Dwight D. Eisenhower at Walter Reed Army Hospital in which he

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[8] V. Spike Peterson, "Gendered Identities, Ideologies, and Practices in the Context of War and Militarism," in *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives,* edited by Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via. (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 19.

[9] Jeanne Holm, *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution* 2nd ed. 1992. (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1982), 208. (Maj. Gen. Jeanne Holm was the Director of the Women's Air Force from 1976-1973).

[10] Brenda H. Andrews, "Profiles in Commitment" *Commanders Call: Women in the Army 1945-1982,"* July-Aug 1982, 4-9, Box 4, Evelyn P Foote Papers, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 7. Colonel Whitt, who was commissioned in 1968 was interviewed in 1982. At that point, she was a lieutenant colonel and logistics staff officer, as well as a graduate of the Army's Command and General Staff College. She had been selected to command a battalion starting the following summer (1983).

asked, î Do you mind if I call you Miss McCabe? I donìt like to call you Captain. I used to call the nurses íMissì when I was a cadet at West Point. Do you mind if I call you íMissì since I like you?ï [11] At that point Hayes, a World War II and Korean War Army veteran, was head nurse of the Radioisotope Clinic and one of three nurses assigned exclusively to Eisenhower during his stay. Despite Hayesì 14 years of service and two deployments, President Eisenhower referred to her by her gender, not her rank.[12] A former Army nurse identified only as Lily, who was commissioned in 1967, stated in her oral history that she was a î nurse first, a woman second, and an officer last, third.ï [13]

Allowing women to participate in a traditionally masculine enterprise like the military required their participation in a dualistic gendered system. They were forced to accept, and in fact embrace, traditional gender roles, both as individuals and as a group. The Womenìs Army Corps (WAC) specifically advertised itself as a gendered institution. An officer candidate brochure published in 1966 asked, î Is military life compatible with femininity?ï It countered that military service î in no way interferes with the fact that sheìs a woman. Far from losing femininity, WAC officers gain the poise, self assurance, and dignity that comes from holding a responsible job and holding a position of

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[11] Carson, "Senior Officers Interview Program, 82.

[12] Lisa Tendrich Frank, *An Encyclopedia of American Women at War: From the Home Front to the Battlefields* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 280. Hayes went on to serve as the Chief of the Army Nurse Corps and was one of the first two women promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. For more information, see chapter two.

[13] P. Lough O'Daly, "Survivors Project: Women in Uniform During the Vietnam War," P. Lough O'Daly Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 218.

respect.ï [14] While this statement does acknowledge the roles of women in the public sphere, it also emphasized femininity as central to the roles filled by female officers. Other recruitment materials, especially from the 1940s through the late 1960s, emphasized attractiveness and femininity, with pictures of perfectly coiffed and made-up women, in tailored uniforms (including skirts) and heels. These ads placed an emphasis on femininity, respectability, and morality.[15] General Hayes herself, who was forward thinking in terms of servicewomenìs promotions, careers, and pay, even espoused these views. In discussing the use of the public eye to attract graduate nurses to the Army Nurse Corps, she mentioned Maj. Susan Phillips, the first female social aide to the White House, claiming that î she was a beautiful girl and a very fine representative of our Corps.ï In discussing the uniform worn by Army nurses as of 1971, General Hayes objected to the perceived masculinity of the pantsuit: î I didnìt like the thought of a female nurse wearing slacks on duty.ï [16] The insistence on presenting a beautiful appearance and the argument against pants served to reinforce the femininity and respectability of the Army nurse. Marilyn Roth, a typist who served in Vietnam, summed this up succinctly by saying, î We were called: ladies. We werenìt called soldiers.ï [17]

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[14] "Meet Today's WAC Officer" (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966) NARA RG 319.

[15] Beth Bailey, *American's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). 149-53.

[16] Carson, "Senior Officers Interview Program," 148 and 173.

[17] Ron Steinman, *Women in Vietnam* (New York, New York: TV Books LLC, 2000), 229.

Mary, a WAC who enlisted in 1974 near the end of the Vietnam War and served during and after the dissolution of her corps, recalled that î nothing was ever said but you felt a little below them.ï She went on to explain that Army womenìs titles were part of this perception: î Being a WAC . . . they were called ísoldierì and you were not a ísoldierì you were a WAC.ï [18] Despite having chosen a nontraditional MOS (Military Occupational Specialty), she was profoundly aware of the line drawn between military men and women. No one needed to say it out loud, WACs knew that they were valued less than their male comrades.

Out of the approximately 7,500 to 10,000 military women who deployed during the Vietnam War, somewhere between 60 and 80 percent were nurses from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines.[19] Many military men, as well as male American civilians, felt that female nurses had answered a higher calling; they were medical professionals first and service members second, which was frequently more acceptable to the military than nonmedical military women.[20] Furthermore, nursing, as a form of care work, has been understood as an extension of womenìs maternal role since after the Civil War. It is

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[18] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 433.

[19] This number is widely debated since military records did not always track gender. While the gender of officers was recorded, enlisted personnel were frequently only labeled as "enlisted," not as male or female. These estimates are the most common. Additionally, these numbers are specific to military women. It is estimated that about the same number of civilian women (7,500) were in Vietnam during the war. These civilian women include non-profit organization volunteers, civilian nurses, "Donut Dollies," (Red Cross volunteers who ran recreation centers before the USO arrived, wrote and conducted recreation programs for men in the field, and brought cheer to the hospitals), and USO workers. (These USO workers included women who staffed recreation centers and clubs, as well as entertainers.)

[20] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 34.

an extension of her place in the private sphere. Allowing women to deploy but relegating them to roles understood to be a part of the female sphere allowed the military to enjoy the support it needed in theater without challenging the ideas of gender.

While non-medical women were deployed to war zones, every military branch maintained an unofficial policy of paternalism and believed women needed protection, regardless of their military status. In the military, protection was framed in terms of defending the îweakerï sex from their enemies in combat, as it was commonly believed that women were too delicate to be stationed in a war zone, much less in Asia. The possibility that military women would need protection from their fellow servicemen went unaddressed. Additionally, many men in the military questioned the ability of women to serve, not to mention their qualifications and their worth. Many male officers felt that a woman could not serve in the military like a man could: she lacked what it took to fill his position. The decision to assign women to Vietnam was often left up to major field commanders who preferred men to women for almost any job. While some officers were open to the idea of putting a military woman in a desk job, many other felt that îany military woman in a combat zone would be more trouble than she was worth.ï [21]

By 1972, where this dissertation begins, the military had evolved somewhat, and many servicewomen started to demand the same opportunities afforded to men in terms of education, occupation, and pay. Joining the military, especially the nursing corps, was a way for women to get a better education than they could have ever afforded on their own. In addition, it gave them a chance to move up economically and begin a career that

[21] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 206-12.

they might be able to pursue for the rest of their lives. The military frequently recruited nurses at nursing colleges or even in high schools using educational funding as the main draw, as the military would pay for a nurseìs college degree if she would commit an equal amount of time to the military immediately following her graduation.[22] By joining the military instead of becoming a civilian nurse, women could take more advanced and specialized classes. The military advertised itself as being the one place that would really challenge nurses because the military cared about their intellectual development. By becoming a military nurse, a woman would be î a dedicated professional.ï [23]

These new advertisements appealed to women by dangling promises of educational, career, and personal advancement, claiming that women would be able to combine their inherent need to fulfill feminine roles with their demand for equality by becoming military nurses. Soon, restrictions regarding motherhood and career were lifted, which appealed to many women who wished to be more than their mothers but did not want to give up the dream of having a family after their service. It gave them a way of demanding respect while young while still embracing the most traditional of feminine roles: motherhood. And while military nurses were commissioned officers, and therefore often equal in rank to servicemen, or sometimes their superiors, the military found a way to avoid eliminating the gendered idea of nursing by linking it to traditional gender

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[22] June A. Willenz, *Women Veterans: America's Forgotten Heroines*, (New York, New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1983), 110 and Karen Dixon Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman: The Army Corps in the Vietnam War* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press, 2010), 31-42. If the woman was starting a four year nursing degree, she would serve for four years after. If she was halfway through her degree already, she would serve for two years.

[23] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*, 32.

norms: a military nurse was î an officer, a nurse, *and* a woman.ï Kara Dixon Vuic argued that a nurse was î still needed for her touch, smile, and reassuring beauty. She was still needed to restore a sense of domesticity to the troops.ï [24]

Meeting the demands of women regarding limits on their careers, however, had more to do with the need for more nurses than feminist ideology, due to a nationwide nursing shortage.[25] The removal of rules regarding marriage and children also allowed the military to embrace the ideals of femininity and displayed the traditional domesticity that the nursing corps wished to convey. By eliminating these regulations, the military could portray itself as upholding equal rights without actually challenging traditional gender roles. As historian Allan BÎ rubÎ put it, î both advanced and constrained the position and image of women in the military.ï [26]

The service of wives and mothers also counteracted the common stereotypes of military women as lesbians or promiscuous, stereotypes that had existed since at least World War II, when the first non-nurse military women officially served in the Army. The first of these stemmed partially from the perception of military women as î masculine,ï and the belief that any woman who embraced the masculinity of the military had to be gay. Feminine women would not want to join the military. Furthermore, a late 1942 study of motivations for joining the WACs revealed what the military considered

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[24] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*, 25-32.

[25] Evelyn Monahan and Rosemary Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women: America's Military Women from World War I to the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan* (New York: Knopf, 2010). 60.

[26] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*, 135.

îmasculine or lesbian motives,ï such as loving a uniform, seeking female companionship/friendship, or having always had a desire to join the military.[27] While many would argue today that these motivations do not really reveal any îabnormalï impulses, at the time they constituted proof of homosexuality. Additionally, a 1944 scandal at the WAC Training Center in Georgia reinforced an increasingly prominent stereotype. It began when the mother of a young female private found some loving letters from a WAC sergeant to her daughter. The mother claimed that the Womenìs Army Corps was îfull of homosexuals and sex maniacsï and threatened to go public. The War Departmentìs investigation claimed that there were many lesbians in the service, despite the fact they were hard to identify.[28] These stereotypes lived on for decades. As nursing was traditionally a feminine role, however, even in a sphere as masculine as the military, the recruitment and deployment of military nurses over non-medical women served partly to counteract the idea of a military woman who was trying to be a man. The nurse was a woman and happy to be one.

When a soldier was injured and arrived at a hospital, his nurse was often the first woman he had seen since his deployment. This gave that servicewoman responsibility for more than just his physical health. Judy Hartline Elbring recalled, îI was their mother, their sister, their girlfriend.ï [29] General Hayes spoke of similar responsibilities, mentioning that during her tours of hospitals in Vietnam she was îparticularly impressed

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[27] Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 30.

[28] Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 31-32.

[29] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 147.

by the nursesì dedication; compassion; enthusiasm, which was always bubbling over; indifference to the hardships; professional competency; and determination to maintain the Armyìs traditional high standards of nursing care.ï Hayes stated that she î vividly remember many patients in their late teens and early twenties receiving the compassion they needed so badly. The nurses knew they had to be those comforters.ï [30] Nurses were given the role of the caregiver over the physical and mental manifestations of illness, injury, and war, and thus acted as the mother of her patients.

Men who had spent so much time in the company of other men saw military women, known as î round-eyesï to GIs engaged in the Vietnam War, as not only objects of desire, but as every woman they ever loved. 2nd Lt. Julian Grabner Haskell, an Army nurse commissioned in 1968 remembered: î Many timesÜ the guys would wake up and say, íDid I die, did I die and go to heaven? Youìre the first round-eyed woman I have seen in months.ìï [31] In many ways, this compelled the nurses to keep their balance on the pedestal where men had placed them. Even Brigadier General Hoisington, Director of the Womenìs Army Corps from 1966-1971, remarked upon this in a post-promotion interview on the possibility of women in combat: î The men of America wouldnìt let us Ü they still want to keep women on a pedestal.ï [32] The characterization of military women as î round-eyesï was a racist characterization. Not only did these military men

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[30] Carson, "Senior Officers Interview Program," 128-29.

[31] Tom Weiner, *Forever a Soldier: Unforgettable Stories of Wartime Service* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2005), 127.

[32] "Men, Don't Give up the Ship" June 20, 1970, *New York Times, Edition 4*, Box 4, Evelyn P Foote Papers, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 1416.

place an emphasis on a nurseìs gender, they also stressed her whiteness, drawing a deep divide between American women and Vietnamese women. In this way, they defined beauty by terms of skin color, reinforcing American ideals of femininity and purity.[33] P. Lough OìDaly, an Air Force veteran who then researched American womenìs experiences in the Vietnam War, interviewed a nurse identified solely as Lily. That veteran briefly discussed the challenges she faced as an Asian-American in Vietnam: îWe would be walking along the compound in civilian clothes and guys would assume we were whores. And they would say a lot of obscene things to us.ï [34] Reminiscent of historical trends that îotheredï native women and positioned them as promiscuous in contrast to îpureï white women, Lilyìs experience highlights the racialization and sexualization of Vietnamese women, as well as non-white women in the United States military.

Simone de Beauvoirìs work defined men as the îOne,ï those who are the active subject, and women as the îOther,ï those who embody the traits rejected by the subject

[33] While women of color served during the Vietnam War, they were few and far between. Additionally, many historical accounts and oral history collections do not address race and there are few records of women discussing the impact of racism. Chief Warrant Officer Doris "Lucki" Allen speaks partially toward the challenges faced by Black women but lumps her race and gender together. Both Lilly Jean Adams and a woman identified only as "Lily" speak briefly about the challenges of being partially Asian-American (which is the term she used to describe her race) but does not elaborate. There is no way to verify whether they are the same person, especially as Lily's interviewer, P. Lough O'Daly, frequently used pseudonyms and there was at least one other Lily (Lee Adams) who was interviewed by Kathryn Marshall in her oral history, *In the Combat Zone*. While this spelling is more consistent with O'Daly's, she was described as a lifer, whereas O'Daly's 'Lily" spoke extensively on her experiences nursing in a civilian hospital.

[34] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 195.

and are viewed as a secondary figure that exists partially to define the î One,ï which creates a gendered hierarchy.[35] This theory can be applied to race as well, as it was historically a tool of empire used to justify colonial projects and warmaking. Philippa Levine argued that in the military, the sexualization of î nativeï (or non-white) women was necessary in the politics of colonialism, or, as the case may be, occupation, as î nativeï women î had trouble containing their natural and destructive impulses.ï This theory served to both create and perpetuate a military sanctioned (or simply ignored) system of Asian prostitution during the U.S. occupation of Japan and the Korean War. Therefore, while the î otheringï of Asian women as sexualized objects had begun many years earlier, this form of racism tied directly to gender thrived during the Vietnam War. The native woman as an î Otherï was portrayed as anatomically female, but not a î womanï in the traditional sense, as she lacked idealized white femininity.[36]

The emphasis servicemen placed on military women as love objects and the association they placed on servicewomen (both enlisted and commissioned) as a reminder of î homeï characterized military women as white women first and foremost, separating them from the enemy in terms of gender as well as race. Nurses took on the figurative roles of both mother and lover and allowed these roles to define both their job and their personal identities, reflecting the post-World War II and containment era ideas of gender.

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[35] Simone de Beauvoir. *The Second Sex: The Classic Manifesto of the Liberated Woman.*, trans. H.M. Parshley (New York: Knopf Books, 1952.), XIX-XXV.

[36] Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Rutledge, 2003), 161-198. See also: Katharine H.S. Moon. *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987) and Yoshimi Yoshiaki. *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*, trans. Suzanne O'Brien (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000) for more information.

Nursing was understood as an extension of the womanìs role as a caregiver in the private sphere, which reflected the militaryìs reticence in challenging gender roles, and when military women allowed themselves to be defined by the roles to which they had been relegated, they acceded to traditional ideas of femininity. While nurses were often confined to these roles by the structure of the military at the time, some leaned into the *status quo*. Lily characterized servicewomen as the î caretakers of the patriarchyï who needed to steer the military î in the right direction.ï [37] Lynda Van Devanter saw this as a wider societal problem that was reinforced by the military:

> Itìs real hard for somebody who is a care-giver to change roles. When weìre little kids the take the little boys and put the on one side and they give them guns and trucks. And they take the little girls and put them on the other side and give them dolls. And they teach the little girls how to nurture and give care. Then the little girls grow up and they send them to nursing school and reinforce that nurturing, care-giving roleÜ So she becomes this totally care-giving person and doesnìt know how to turn it off.[38]

Like Lilly, CWO Doris î Luckiï Allen spoke of the discrimination she faced as a woman of color in the Army. CWO Allen, who served in South Vietnam interrogating prisoners of war and then as an intelligence analyst, spent seventeen years in the military before she was deployed.[39] She readily admitted that she faced problems for much of her

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[37] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 225.

[38] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 278. Ellipsis in original.

[39] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 244. CWO Allen does not mention her work as an interrogator in the oral history collection *Piece of My Heart* by Keith Walker. Additionally, she only mentions work with male prisoners of war (POWs) and states that she asked them "where they came from and where they were going" (Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 244). CWO Allen makes no mention of any other methods of interrogation, especially not more extreme methods that were commonly used. About her reassignment to intelligence analyst, she only said that her superior officers "decided those

military career, starting with her attempt to join the Womenìs Army Corps band as a trumpet player in 1950 after basic training. She met with rejection because î they couldnìt have any Negroes in the band.ï Allen summed up that experience by stating, î That was my real touch with how they want you but they donìt want you.ï [40] She insinuated that the WAC accepted Black women to meet its recruiting quotas, especially after the number dwindled following World War II. They were needed, however, not necessarily wanted, and therefore they received fewer opportunities than their white counterparts.

Despite this early confrontation with racial prejudice in the military, CWO Allen was not prepared for the discrimination she faced once deployed with mostly white men:

> What they did made me feel ignored. Being black. Being a woman. Being a WAC. Being in intelligence. Black. Woman. Very tough. And at the time I was a specialist. These prejudices, I know theyìre going around in my brain, black, woman ó got no business here. WAC, youìre not supposed to be in the army ó this is a manìs job. Intelligence, ah. Oxymoron. Specialist. Youìre a specialist, youìre not a sergeant, youìre not a master sergeant, youìre not an NCO, but thatìs what I was. I was all of those things. They would look at me and try not to show disdain for who I was. I was all those things. But I could tell how they felt. I could see it in their eyes.[41]

CWO Allenìs statements reveal that she was aware that she was considered worth less than the men with whom she served because she was both female and Black. She understood that her gender and her race counted against her, but together they worked to

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interrogations were not expeditious." (Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 244). CWO Allen does not attribute this reassignment to racial or gendered motives.

[40] Walker, *A Piece of My Heart*, 247. It is important to note that CWO Allen was not promoted to this rank until years after her return to the United States. I used the title that she retired with after about 30 years of military service. Also, this is an excerpt from her first published interview with Keith Walker for *A Piece of My Heart* (1985).

[41] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 244.

position her as worth less than both military men and white women. While there is no doubt that racism permeated the military, CWO Allen linked the racial discrimination faced by Black servicewomen to their gender.

Similarly, Sgt. Maj. Grendel Thomas discussed the attitudes towards Black women in the military. After enlisting in 1956, she left in 1962 after she îbecame disillusioned with its discriminatory racial attitudes.ï Nevertheless, she chose to return to active duty in 1965. By the time of her interview in 1982, she believed that over the course of her career she had faced îmore of the kind of discrimination you couldnìt prove, if your life depended on it, as a woman than as a black.ï By this point, Sergeant Major Thomas was the Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge (NCOIC) of *Stars and Stripes: Tokyo* and believed that she was the only female sergeant major in the Army stationed in the Pacific, which lead to a sort of îaweï amongst enlisted men and officers alike.[42]

Despite the marked change in servicewomenìs status, the Defense Department clung to a policy that pretended there was no role for them in combat. As Keith Walker asserted, îwe think of men in combat, and women safely in the rear echelon in offices and hospitals.ï The United States would rather cling to the fantasy that women had not served, Walker argued, than îadmit the possibility that women were indeed in dangerous

[42] Brenda H. Andrews, "Profiles in Commitment" *Commanders Call: Women in the Army 1945-1982,* July-Aug 1982, 4-9, Box 4, Evelyn P Foote Papers, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 7. *Stars and Stripes* is a news outlet for military members and civilians. While it is an independent organization, half of its funding comes from the Pentagon (that funding is mostly used to distribute it in war zones) and it is technically a part of the Pentagon's Defense Media Activity/ Servicemembers can be assigned to their offices as writers and staff. "FAQ," *Stars and Stripes: Tokyo*, 2023, https://ww2.stripes.com/help/miscellaneous-faq.

situations. If we didnìt think of them being there, then they werenìt in danger.ï [43] This dissertation offers case studies that challenge the fiction that women did not serve in combat until the 21st century. Beginning with the invasion of Grenada, women saw themselves as warriors in a combat zone, regardless of the militaryìs blinkered point of view. In exploring womenìs service during the 1980s and the first Gulf War, I am contributing to the recent historiographical trend that challenges the idea of women as noncombatants. These womenìs roles, in fact, blurred the line between combatant and noncombatant.

Womenìs experiences in the United States military were inherently different than menìs. This dissertation seeks to determine how concepts of gender changed in the military, and how those changes impacted servicewomenìs experiences. Just as important is an assessment of how female veterans viewed their own experiences after they returned to civilian life. Sexual harassment and assault will loom large as examples of some of the gendered obstacles women faced. Since those two transgressions concern power, not sex, most of these incidents involve men exerting control over women. This dissertation therefore looks at the ways in which sexual harassment and assault affected the lives of servicewomen: how the military and the women themselves conceptualized their experiences as gendered or not. Sexual assault and harassment will serve as just one way to illustrate gendered power dynamics in the United States military.

American servicewomen found their lives governed by gendered expectations and rules. This dissertation examines how these expectations evolved, or did not, as military policy changed. It explores how those changes occurred and thus how women and gender

[43] Walker, *A Piece of My Heart*, 2.

shaped the military. Though inspired by secondary literature, this inquiry will tap previously unused archival resources to build its arguments. This inquiry focuses on the common servicewoman and employs feminist methodologies, international relations theory, and historical scholarship as a basis to explore the oral histories and memoirs pertinent to this topic. Currently, no single book explores womenìs military service between the creation of the AVF and the First Gulf War. That is the gap this dissertation fills in the historiography.

Starting with the Vietnam War, *Sisterhood of War: Minnesota Women in Vietnam* by Kim Heikkila and Kara Dixon Vuicìs *Officer, Nurse, Woman: The Army Nurse Corps in the Vietnam War* make excellent use of the stories of military women, but both limit their scope to military nurses. Similarly, Gary Kulikìs work on servicewomen in *î War Stories,ï* also addresses military nurses almost exclusively. Oral histories about military women other than nurses provide a more complete view of womenìs service. To date, published oral histories pertaining to military women focus mainly on the Vietnam War. Oral historians such as Ron Steinman, Keith Walker, Dan Freedman and Jacqueline Rhoads have striven to unearth stories that are often untold, occasionally struggling to even contact them due to lack of information or î fragile threads of communication.ï [44]

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[44] Kim Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War: Minnesota Women in Vietnam*, (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011); Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*; Gary Kulik, *"War Stories" False Atrocity Tales, Swift Boaters, and Winter Soldiers What Really Happened in Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009); and Walker, *A Piece of My Heart*, 3. See also Dan Freedman and Jacqueline Rhoades, *Nurses in Vietnam: The Forgotten Veterans* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987) and Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*. When these three books were published, there was almost no written record of women's military service during the Vietnam War. In fact, there was little record of women's previous service in any of the wars, even in government records, and absolutely none in common library records. June A. Willez, *Women Veterans: America's Forgotten Heroines*, (New York, New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1983), xii.

They do not, however, engage with the existing historiography on womenìs military service or the Vietnam War in general, and thus lack historical context. They do not integrate womenìs experiences into the larger picture of the conflicts they explore. Rather, they tell individual stories of specific experiences. Furthermore, oral history collections are highly edited selections of longer interviews, with some oral historians, such as Walker, allowing interviewees to approve transcripts before publishing.[45] Since most works address only womenìs experiences up to 1973, this dissertation will utilize archival sources to extend its coverage over the next two decades.

In addition to the scholarship devoted to women who served in Vietnam, several books explore the creation of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF). I engage directly with these texts, most importantly Beth Baileyìs *Americaìs Army: The Making of the All-Volunteer Force.* While Bailey explores the roles of women in the newly created AVF, that is just a part of her larger story on the ways the military conceived of the AVF and attracted people to enlist. She situates womenìs service in the context of the î all-volunteer army in the broader American societyï by î analyzing how the army and its civilian overseers dealt with the changes that followed from the end of the draft and tried to imagine and create a force that was capable of responding effectively to rapidly changing and complex international situations.ï[46] By contrast, this dissertation will situate womenìs service in

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Furthermore, these compilations rely solely on the voice of the interviewees, with only a few comments from the interviewers. It is important to note, however, that they were certainly shaped by the interviewer's choice of questions, in addition to editing choices.

[45] Walker, *A Piece of My Heart,* 3.

[46] Bailey, *America's Army,* x-xi.

the AVF as a part of the larger narrative of womenìs military service. Additionally, Tanya L. Rothìs *Her Cold War: Women in the U.S. Military, 1945-1980* also covers the years following World War II, through the creation of the All-Volunteer Force and the effects of the social movements of the 1970s. Roth effectively traces the ways in which ideas of gender equality in the military were conceptualized, defined, and implemented. In telling the story of î womanpowerï during the years of the Cold War, she explains the ways in which the U.S. military evolved due to the work of the servicemembers themselves, looking at individual actions and experiences as agents and catalysts of change.[47] This inquiry expands on Rothìs research by studying servicewomen as combatants.

Official histories play a large part in how the story of the AVF has been written thus far. For instance, *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force* by Robert K. Griffin, Jr., looks at how the elimination of conscription reformed the United States military. Griffin provides little, however, on womenìs roles in the AVF. Other official histories, such as Bettie J. Mordenìs *The Womenìs Army Corps, 1945-1978*, Nancy P. Andersonìs *The Very Few, The Proud: Women in the Marine Corps, 1977-2001* look specifically at womenìs service during this period. Typical of the genre, however, these studies promote the military establishmentìs point of view, as opposed to that of the common servicewomen they purportedly cover. In other words, they tell the story that the military wants the reader to believe, as opposed to the one servicewomen actually lived.

[47] Tanya Roth, *Her Cold War: Women in the U.S. Military, 1945-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

While much scholarship on the years between the end of Selective Service through the First Gulf War focuses either on the early or later part of that period, Jeanne Holmìs *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution* explores the same period that this dissertation does. Holm covers womenìs participation in every major U.S. military intervention since the Vietnam War. A retired major general in the U.S. Air Force, Holm delineates the ways women navigated military careers. Originally published in 1982, *Women in the Military* was revised ten years later. Hence, it does not benefit from newer research on American military women and military documents that have been declassified over the last quarter century. Furthermore, Holm prioritizes the voices of politicians and officers in telling her story, not rank-and-file servicemembers.[48] While *Women in the Military* is well contextualized by starting with how women experienced the military in the American Revolution, the chapters on women during the 1970s into the early 1990s are not well historicized and would benefit from non-elite female voices.

Francine DìAmico and Laurie Weinsteinìs *Gender Camouflage: Women and the U.S. Military* and Sara L. Zeigler and Gregory G. Gundersonìs *Moving Beyond G.I. Jane: Women and the U.S. Military* follow a similar course by analyzing recent debates on the experiences of military women. Produced by political scientists, these works are not grounded in the historiography that they supplement. Nevertheless, they add to the debates concerning the accepted roles of servicewomen, DìAmico, Weinstein, Zeigler, and Gunderson act in keeping with their discipline by focusing on institutions to the

[48]Holm, *Women in the Military*.

detriment of the experiences of the female rank-and-file.[49] In *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives* edited by Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via, various contributors, propose some theoretical devices to explore the roles women and gender have played in the military, which they support with evidence from international conflicts, most of which occurred over the last 30 years. Sjoberg repeated this approach in *Gender, War, and Conflict*. On the other hand, *War and Gender: How Gender Shaped the War System and Vice Versa* by Joshua Goldstein supports its argument with examples that span several countries and centuries.[50] Yet these theories on the ways in which the military was structured around certain gender norms can also be used to examine the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. The existing scholarship referenced here provides a basic understanding of the roles filled by female servicemembers.

Archival resources and oral histories fill the gaps left by the existing literature, beginning with the P. Lough OìDaly papers in the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College. OìDaly enlisted in the Air Force in 1974 and was trained as a jet mechanic. She was honorably discharged after six years and began working as an activist, co-founding ATHENA: Organization for Womenìs Veterans, in 1981, which merged with W.V.I.N. (Women Veterans Information Network) in 1982. Her activist work and experience at the Vietnam War Memorial helped open her eyes to the number of women who served in the

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[49] Francine D'Amico and Laurie Weinstein, *Gender Camouflage: Women and the U.S. Military* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 1-9 and Sara L. Zeigler and Gregory G. Gunderson, *Moving Beyond G.I. Jane: Women and the U.S. Military*, (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc, 2005), v-vii.

[50] Sjoberg and Via, *Gender, War, and Militarism*, 1-13; Laura Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); and Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 1-9.

military. According to the 1980 census, there were then 1.2 million women veterans in the United States. She wanted to explore some of these stories by studying the women who served in the Vietnam War. Between 1982 and 1984, she compiled the oral histories of ten women who served in the Vietnam War in conjunction with the Smith Scholars Project, to educate the world about the service of military women and help some female veterans heal from their wartime experience. These women were all given pseudonyms and rarely disclosed such details as their ranks, although some stated their MOS or described their work.[51]

OìDalyìs papers include her thesis, written at Smith College in 1984, î Survivors Project: Women in Uniform During the Vietnam War,ï which combined historical scholarship with her oral histories. As a Vietnam-era military woman and activist for female veterans, OìDaly left materials that can be used to unveil stories not told in other oral histories. This collection has been rarely used in Vietnam War scholarship. While OìDalyìs thesis concerned the Vietnam War, her larger collection of papers included quite a bit on female veterans in the late 1970s and 1980s. To supplement these papers, this dissertation also uses archival collections from Schlesinger Library, including the Women in the American Military Oral History Project, as well as several other online oral history projects and blogs written by female veterans and servicewomen.

This dissertation also delves into archival holdings at the Army History Education Center at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, including oral history interviews with these retired general officers: George S. Blanchard, Evelyn P. Foote,

[51] The author has yet to find the O'Daly papers listed in any bibliography. It seems they have rarely been used. "P. Lough O'Daly Papers," Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

Roscoe Robinson, Jr., Charles A. Hines, Volney F. Warner, Mildred C. Bailey, Anna M. Hayes, J. Milnor Roberts, Jr., and Edward M. Flanagan, Jr. Most of these collections also contain official documents, newspaper clippings, or personal correspondences related to the integration of women from auxiliary units into the All-Volunteer Force or womenìs participation in military conflicts of the 1980s and early 1990s. In addition, the author combed through a wide variety of online interviews and blogs of servicewomen and supplemented the archival research with newspaper articles across the United States.

Chapter One picks up where this introduction leaves off, showing how the military reframed and expanded the utilization of servicewomen, arguing that this decade became a turning point in the cultural makeup of the military. While that began prior to the creation of the AVF in 1973, this chapter focuses on legislative changes throughout the 1970s as women were integrated from auxiliary corps into the AVF. Due to these legislative changes, the number of women on active duty rose from 45,003 in 1972 to 96,858 by 1975 at the end of the Vietnam War.[52]

The next chapter explores the lives of female Vietnam veterans after the war, arguing that servicewomen were expected to uphold certain standards that servicemen were not, showing the differing expectations, perceptions, and experiences of men and women in the military, including veterans. These expectations shaped how the United States remembers the contributions of servicewomen. In examining the experiences of female Vietnam veterans, including alcohol and drug use, sex, sexuality, and sexual

[52] "Female Active Duty Military Personnel, Officers and Enlisted, 1945-2015," Department of Veteran's Affairs, Data.gov, last modified November 23, 2021. https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/ female-active-duty-military-personnel-officers-and-enlisted-1945-2015.

assault, medical issues and PTSD, and female veteransì issues after the war, it shows that the gendered differences affected in the stories veterans could tell.

In 1981, 184,651 women served on active duty, with many more in the reserves and National Guard. The administration expected to recruit a further 91,000 by 1986. With President Jimmy Carterìs election loss to Ronald Reagan, everything changed. The Reagan administration planned to raise military strength by 10 percent (200,000 people) by 1985, relying entirely on volunteers. Though Reagan often claimed to believe in legal and economic gender equality, many people questioned if he would be committed enough to stand up for women. The military tested this early on in a campaign to blame servicewomen for lack of military readiness. The Army led the charge, beginning the îwomanpauseï of the early 1980s.[53] In 1986, 218,889 women served on active duty, a far cry from the Carter administrationìs goals. Simultaneously, the Vietnam Veteranìs Memorial Fund began planning the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the first of three memorials or statues on the National Mall commemorating the Vietnam War.[54] Chapter Three addresses the memorialization projects of the Vietnam War in the context of this îwomanpause,ï arguing that the fight for the memorialization of servicewomen echoed their fight for recognition.

Chapter Four covers the rest of the 1980s, examining the experiences of women who served in Grenada, Libya, and Panama. Of the 197,878 women serving on active duty in 1983, about 200 deployed to Grenada. Six servicewomen participated in the

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[53] "Female Active Duty Military Personnel" and Holm, *Women in the Military,* 385-87.

[54] National Park Service, *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2011), 2.

bombing campaign in Libya in 1986 and around 800 servicewomen, of the 232,823 women on active duty in 198, deployed to Panama.[55] This chapter argues that the deployment of servicewomen during these three military actions challenged administration views and congressional policies on women in the AVF, as well as the Combat Exclusion Policy. These challenges reflected important changes in military and foreign policy in the 1980s.

By the end of Operation Desert Storm, more than 40,780 women, about 8 percent of all deployed servicemembers, had served in theater in all but directly combat-related specialties. About 22 percent of servicewomen believed they filled combat roles, regardless of official policy. They received imminent danger pay during their deployment, the same as servicemen.[56] According to the Combat Exclusion Policy, however, they were all noncombatants. Chapter Five analyzes the experiences of servicewomen who served in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm understanding them as combatants, regardless of military policy.

Chapter Six studies congressional debates over the combat exclusion policies, the bonding experiences of servicemembers, and the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment in the military to explain how servicewomen were seen as both îlady soldiersï and îbrothers-in-armsï up through the First Gulf War and how they navigated these seemingly contradictory identities. Despite changes in military policy through the 1970s and 1980s, servicewomen were still seen as îlady soldiers,ï although what it meant to be a lady changed. In keeping women outside of the îcombatï sphere and attempting

[55] "Female Active Duty Military Personnel."

[56] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 356.

to differentiate their service combat sphere, the military reinforced the differences between a servicewoman and a serviceman.

Chapter Seven focuses entirely on the 1991 Tailhook Convention. It examines the disastrous events of the weekend, including the numerous cases of sexual assault and harassment against servicewomen, female government officials, and civilian women. The events of Tailhook 1991 did not exist in a vacuum. The recent congressional hearings on the roles of women in combat certainly stoked the flames, as did the copious amount of alcohol and recent first Persian Gulf War victory. It was the prevailing sexist nature of the military that was really to blame, however, that caused the Navyìs investigative failures. As long as this sexism prevailed, servicewomen would never be î brothers-in-arms.ï

CHAPTER 2

"THIS WOMAN'S ARMY": THE CREATION OF THE AVF

The first steps in transforming the military to the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) began long before the Selective Service Act, referred to colloquially as the draft, expired in 1973. The military started to institute changes to the roles of servicewomen before the Vietnam War with the creation of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) in 1960, which played a key role in all issues involving women in the military over the next few decades. The committee's first success was Public Law 91-30 (which removed restrictions on the number and ranks of military women in 1967.[57] While this law was partially enacted because of the increased need for nurses (like the removal of restrictions related to marriage or children discussed earlier), the removal of restrictions on rank resulted from the lobbying of DACOWITS and other groups. The possibility of promotion to the highest level was an attempt convince women that the military was open to gender equality but served as a successful tool in convincing women to serve. Without Public Law 91-30, women would not have had the same opportunities during the early years of the Vietnam War.[58] The 1970s, however, became the biggest decade of change for servicewomen.

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[57] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 310, and Bailey. *American's Army*, 140-141. Please see the introduction for more information about the creation and roles of DACOWITS.

[58] While it did take a few years after the law passed for women to reach flag rank (these officers must be nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. They are known as "flag officers" because they are permitted to fly their own command flags), the longer it took for the law to pass, the longer it would be before women were promoted to brigadier general or rear admiral.

Over the course of the 1970s, the United States military reframed and expanded women's roles. The decade itself can be seen as a turning point, not necessarily in military culture, but in the cultural makeup of the military. This chapter explores the legislation surrounding the roles of servicewomen during the 1970s. While the story begins prior to the creation of the AVF in 1973, this chapter focuses on legislative changes throughout the 1970s as women were integrated from auxiliary corps into the AVF. It seeks to illuminate how those changes affected the lives of servicewomen.

In 1970, three years after the passing of Public Law 91-30, Col. Anna Mae Hays (Army Nurse Corps) and Col. Elizabeth P. Hoisington (Women's Army Corps) received promotions to the rank of brigadier general. They were the first women service members to attain flag rank. The following year, Col. Jean Holm (Director of the Women's Air Force) was promoted to brigadier general and in 1972 Cpt. Alene Duerck (Chief of Navy Nurse Corps) made rear admiral. In 1973, Brigadier General Holm was promoted to major general, becoming the first female officer in any service branch to earn a second star. Before the end of the Vietnam War, at least one white woman in each of the armed services had attained flag rank, although black servicewomen still had a ways to go, as Lt. Col. Margaret Bailey became the first black female to be promoted to colonel in 1970. It was not until 1979 Col. Hazel W. Johnson, Director of the Nursing Corps, received her brigadier general's star, that a black woman achieved flag rank, despite the fact that by 1978 over a quarter of Army women were African American.[59]

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[59] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 294-332 (see introduction chapter for details on their promotion ceremony); O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 286; and Bailey, *America's Army*, 135. General Johnson was also the first Army Nurse Corps chief to earn a doctorate, making her a pioneer in more ways than one.

Such unofficial restrictions on the rank of Black military women meant that many of the strides being made in the military toward equality were about white women being equal to white men.

Through the 1970s, Congress passed legislation on behalf of military women in rapid succession. In 1971, the Joint Armed Forces Staff College opened its doors to women and the Air Force, Navy, and Army ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) also admitted them. Meanwhile, the Navy opened the chaplain corps, civil engineering, and Naval War College to servicewomen and WACs were admitted to male drill sergeant programs and NCO academy programs.[60] That same year, General Westmoreland began an affirmative action program and created the Army Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). While both programs focused on race discrimination among servicemen, they also handled complaints in reference to sex discrimination. By 1972, Brig. Gen. Mildred I. Bailey (WAC Director) opened all but directly combat related MOS to WACs. According to a report by Col. Jeanette I. Sustad (the sixth director of Women Marines), the Marine Corps opened 23 noncombat MOS to women. The Marine Corps, as well as

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[60] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 310 and Williams, *WACs*, 153. The Joint Armed Forces Staff College, part of the National Defense University, is an interagency and multinational program for men and women in national security that focuses on the operational aspects of joint forces. ROTC is a college-based program that trains future officers for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. In addition to regular coursework, ROTC cadets receive basic military and officer training during the school year and over the summer. Many attend college on a part or full scholarship in exchange for military service after they graduate. 1971 was the first year women were admitted into ROTC programs on a trial basis. The Army ROTC announced that it was admitting women, but the first women entered the program in 1972 in ten colleges (Williams, *WACs*, 153). The Naval War College allows students from all branches of the military, as well as civilian military and government employees, to work toward a Master of Arts degree.

congressional policy, barred women from twelve MOS. When the Selective Service Act expired in 1973, the Coast Guard opened regular active-duty positions to women, the Navy opened aviation jobs on noncombat aircraft, and recruiting quotas for women were increased based on need.[61]

In March 1972, the House Subcommittee on the Utilization of Manpower called a hearing on the utilization of military manpower, more specifically, on women in the military and the inconsistencies in their roles among the services. Chairman Otis Pike (D-NY) said the hearings were focused on "what is right and what is wrong with the way we utilized our womanpower" while asserting that the issues within the military when it came to servicewomen reflected larger problems in American society, as "the way we utilize women in the service is also representative of the way we utilize them in America." This hearing addressed not only the current use of womanpower but also how it may be utilized in the future. The creation of the Pike Subcommittee called further attention to gender discrimination within the military. [62] The committee heard testimony from the women's services directors: Gen. Mildred C. Bailey (Army), Gen. Jeanne M. Holm (Air Force), Cpt. Robin C. Quigley (Navy), and Col. Jeannette I. Sustad (Marine Corps), as well as George A. Daoust Jr., the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

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[61] Bailey, *America's Army*, 154-155; Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 310; and Stremlow, *A History of the Women Marines*, 78. The Marine Corps considered 12 MOS to be combat: infantry, field artillery; electronic maintenance; construction equipment and shore party; air delivery; ammunition and explosive ordnance disposal; nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare; military police and correction; aviation ordnance; tank and amphibian tractor; and utilities. Women were also restricted from motor transport and band except during times of war.

[62] Roth, *Her Cold War*, 192-93.

(Manpower Research and Utilization) and head of the AVVF task force study on the utilization of military women. Members of the subcommittee leveled criticism at the attitudes and policies of all the services and the DOD surrounding the utilization of servicewomen. In June 1972, the Pike Subcommittee released its final report, stating:

> We are concerned that the Department of Defense and each of the military services are guilty of "tokenism" in the recruitment and utilization of women in the Armed Forces. We are convinced that in the atmosphere of a zero draft environment or an all-volunteer military force, women could and should play a more important role. We strongly urge the Secretary of Defense and the service secretaries to develop a program which will permit women to take their rightful place serving in our Armed Forces.[63]

Following the report's publication, Daust, acting on behalf of the DOD, directed all the services to develop contingency plans to increase the numbers of servicewomen and their utilization with the goal of doubling the women's programs in the Army, Navy, and Air Force and increasing the number of women in the Marine Corps by 40 percent by June 1977. These contingency plans soon turned to "plans of action" as the services believed the changes to be inevitable, according to General Holm.[64] Lt. Gen. Don Starry, then Commander of V Corps, agreed with this assessment in a message to Gen. George S. Blanchard, Commander of the U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Lieutenant General Starry said "it is inevitable at the Army will be forced to accept more women, either as a result of our inability to recruit sufficient men, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), or some law like it, or both."[65] The Navy and the Air Force set much higher goals

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[63] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 249-50.

[64] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 250.

[65] Message from Lt. Gen. Don Starry to Gen. George S. Blanchard, dated 07 April 1977, Box 4: Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Europe/Commander, Central Army Group, Central Europe Messages January 1977 to March 1979, Folder:

than Daust directed, aiming to at least triple their numbers, while the Army stated it would be able to meet the required goals, but did not expect to exceed them. The Marine Corps, on the other hand, did not believe it would be able to reach its goal, although this proved false. Combined, the services expected an increase of 170 percent. While these goals appeared ambitious at the time, all of the services exceeded them – by the time of the June 1977 target, over 110,000 line officers and enlisted servicewomen were on active duty.[66]

In September 1972, Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., Chief of Naval Operations, stated that the Navy planned to give servicewomen "an equal opportunity to contribute their talents and to achieve full professional status in the Navy." While this change would open more roles to servicewomen in the Navy, the Marine Corps was not prepared to do anything similar. The following week, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird directed each of the services to develop equal opportunity and affirmative action plans to focus both on race and gender, forcing the Marine Corps to develop an ad hoc committee chaired by Col. Albert W. Snell (the Snell Committee) with the stated goal of increasing "the effectiveness and utilization for all women Marines to fully utilize their abilities in support of Marine Corps objectives." Snell and his associates identified five objectives in particular: "to identify and eliminate all discrimination based solely on sex," to allow female Marines equal opportunity in noncombat MOS, to ensure them access to all levels of professional and technical training, to allow for equal career advancement, and to

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CINCUSAREUR/COMCENTAG Messages April 1977, George S. Blanchard Papers, Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

[66] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 317.

provide equal economic opportunity.[67] These goals, however, were problematic since Women Marines were excluded from any combat specialties.

The Marine Corps, along with the other services, agreed that women were not physically, mentally, and emotionally able to handle combat without testing that theory. Furthermore, there was no way to ensure equal economic opportunity for women Marines while they were restricted to noncombatant MOS, since they would thus be denied combat pay as well as opportunities for promotions that were tied to combat service. Meanwhile, the lofty goal of identifying and eliminating "all discrimination" would require a change in the mindset of individuals, which was unlikely to happen just because the Marine Corps ordered it.

Lieutenant General Starry was critical of the military's stance on restricting women from combat for physical reasons, stating:

> While we have long insisted that women cannot do the physical work that men can, and that would be required in combat battalions, we can't prove that. My own experience at Knox with women in our ROTC summer camp and eight hundred to a thousand working in the post complement was that the physical differential between our male and female populations today is much less than we conservative old men would like to believe. The trouble is that the Army really doesn't know; all we have is the visceral judgements of a bunch of conservative older people --men and women.[68]

Starry's criticism of the wider belief that women were physically incapable of reaching male physical standards were specifically related to his Army experience, but the reality was by 1972, none of the branches of service had tested that assumption.

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[67] Stremlow, *A History of the Women Marines*, 89.

[68] Message from Lt. Gen. Don Starry to Gen. George S. Blanchard, Blanchard Papers, 2.

Concurrent with the publication of the Snell Committee's objectives, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Central All-Volunteer Task Force on the Utilization of Military Women, headed by Col. Helen A Wilson, recommended that the Marine Corps increase recruitment efforts directed towards women, open more MOS, and address the fact that the Marine Corps' attrition rates for women were far higher than any other service. Meanwhile, a task force chaired by Rear Adm. Merlin Howard Sterling, Judge Advocate General of the Navy, recommended reviewing Title 10 and Title 37 of the U.S. Code which restricted the activities and pay of servicewomen. Taking all of this into account, the Snell Committee identified 17 tasks that were required to reach their equal opportunity goals and submitted them to several Headquarters agencies for review. Col. Margaret A. Brewer compiled their comments and recommendations and made modifications to the original proposals.[69]

Most of the recommendations made by the Snell Committee challenged Marine Corps policies that restricted women from certain fields or schools because of their gender. The Committee specifically recommended that the Marine Corps review policies barring women from aircraft maintenance, logistics, and military police and corrections immediately. They further recommended that the Marine Corps study all other noncombatant MOS, to evaluate what noncombatant meant. Additionally, the committee recommended revisions to the promotion boards, which would require legislative changes; a pilot program assigning Women Marines to Fleet Marine Services stateside; and removing the section of the Marine Corps Manual that "limits women officers to

[69] Stremlow, *A History of the Women Marines*, 89.

succeeding to command only at those activities which have the administration of Women Marines as their primary function." To the surprise of everyone on the Snell Committee, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Robert E. Cushman, Jr., approved all recommendations on November 14, 1973 writing on the final page "O.K.- let's move out!" [70]

The Air Force proved more resistant. In March of 1972, members of Congress questioned the Air Force's ban on female pilots during hearings of the Pike Subcommittee, especially as the Air Force required a large number of noncombatant pilots. WAF Director General Holm relayed this criticism to the Air Force Secretary and Chief of Staff, recommending that the service "step out in front" by opening noncombat flying training to servicewomen. She argued that if the Air Force did not take the lead, "the Navy under Zumwalt will, the Army will then jump on the bandwagon and the Air Force will be running to catch up." According to General Holm "both smiled graciously, but remained noncommittal." Her predictions were correct – Admiral Zumalt released Z-Gram 116, titled "Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women in the Navy" in 1972, an all-navy message outlining the expanded role of women in the Navy, including aviation, while the Air Force's first female pilot and navigator test program was created in 1975. Z-Gram 116 also started a pilot program opening some noncombat roles on naval ships to servicewomen, as well as the all-staff corps, thus making it easier for women to be promoted.[71]

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[70] Stremlow, *A History of the Women Marines*, 89-90. According to Lt. Col. Barbara Dolyak, a member of the Snell Committee.

[71] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 317-20.

In accordance with congressional conversations on effective utilization of womanpower, the Army discontinued the WAC Advanced Course, WAC Clerical Training Courses, and WAC NCO Leadership Courses at WAC School in June 1972, sending servicewomen henceforth to previously all-male schools. Yet, after General Bailey opened more MOS for women, the Army designated individual slots by gender: M, F, or I (interchangeable). While servicewomen could theoretically train for several positions, only 19,000 slots were designated "F" or "I" in the summer of 1972. The Army's need for humanpower did not always translate to an increase in womanpower. Beginning in 1973, the Army began to rethink these designations, attempting to balance the numbers of women and men but commanders had the last say in the assigned designation and the filling of all positions.[72]

The military continued to evolve, however, due to the pressures of Congress and the Supreme Court. For instance, in 1973, the High Bench ended the military's policy on dependent benefits, ruling that the practice of awarding men benefits for their wives and children, but requiring women to prove that they were solely financially responsible for their families, was unconstitutional while the Secretary of Defense prohibited the automatic discharge of servicewomen due to marriage. Both Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird (1969-1973) and Secretary of the Army Robert Froehlke (1971-1973) supported further legislation regarding equality within the military and the full integration of women into the Army.[73] Yet, pushback persisted.

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[72] Williams, *WACs*, 153 and Bailey, *America's Army*, 154-56.

[73] Bailey, *America's Army*, 154-60 and Williams, *WACs*, 155. The case referenced above, *Frontiero* v. *Richardson*, is discussed more in depth later in this chapter.

General Volney F. Warner, who retired from the U.S. Army in 1981, was interviewed in 1983 as a part of the U.S. Army War College/U.S. Army Military History Institute Senior Officer Oral History Program. He explained his opposition to women in divisions, as well as in service academies:

> It lowers the standards. It extends your branch choices into the non-combat arms so that women will have something that they can choose to go into. I still believe that if you go to a service academy, and all that expense is lavished on you for your education, then your commitment is expected to be in service to your country and that service ought to be in the combat arms. If you need to get people for other than the combat arms, they do it through ROTC. When women go to the service academies then that denies somebody else the opportunity to get a commission and serve in the combat arms.[74]

Despite these concerns, a significant number of slots became available to women across the armed forces as the military began to prepare for a postwar all-volunteer force. Recruiters were instructed to enlist women for nontraditional MOS and the number of spaces available to women in traditional fields was cut to facilitate this change. The first six female Naval aviators pinned on their wings in 1973. Second Lieutenant Sally Woolfrock graduated from a rotary-wing course and the multi-engine, fixed-wing course, becoming the first female Army aviator in 1974. That same year, Lance Corporal Harriett F. Voisine became the first Woman Marine MP since World War II. Between 1972 and 1978, the percentage of women in nontraditional MOS rose from 1.8 percent to 22 percent and defensive weapons training was added to women's training.[75]

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[74] "Oral History," Warner Collection, 214.

[75] Bailey, *America's Army,* 160; Williams, *WACs,* 155; and Holm, *Women in the Military,* 317.

In an oral history interview with Lt. Col. Rhoda M. Messer in 1978, General Bailey recalled some of the emotions that these changes aroused in the military. “Every day something came across my desk - first time a woman has ever been assigned as an instructor in motor mechanics, the first time a woman has done this, the first time a woman has done that,” General Bailey remembered. “We got to the point we almost had to downplay this sort of thing in order to not create resentment on the part of the men.” She highlighted some of the discontent exhibited by male Army aviators as an example of this resentment, speaking specifically of one senior male officer who was upset about the idea of female aviators: “Somehow the thought that a woman was going to do the same thing he did offended him, because those wings represented something that the average person couldn’t do. And if a woman was doing it, did that make it average?”[76]

These legislative changes went hand in hand with structural changes in the military. Each of the auxiliary units had their own female director and a separate administrative structure, including the Navy, which had been theoretically integrated since the dissolution of the WAVES in 1948. In practice, however, Capt. Robin Quigley, Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel for Women, was referred to as the “Director of the WAVES.” On February 23, 1972, Captain Quigley wrote a letter in her newsletter that went out to all women in the Navy, explaining that she dropped the term “director” from the header of that newsletter, stating “my intent is to make it quite clear that the unofficial title which had been attached to this billet … the Director of the WAVES … is just that,

[76] “Transcripts of Debriefing of Brigadier General Bailey,” 1978, Box 1, Mildred C. Bailey Collection, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA, Section VI1, 15-20 and Section VIII, 20.

unofficial, and I have stopped using it." Captain Quigley was the first female director to openly question the need for separate administrative structures and titles, calling on servicewomen to refer to themselves by "professional titles" without the WAVES modifier (for instance, "petty officer" rather than "WAVE petty officer"). Not everyone agreed with Captain Quigley's position on the matter, both within and outside of the Navy, especially considering the massive changes servicewomen were facing in the early 1970s. In March 1973, however, Captain Quigley was reassigned as Commander of the Service School Command in San Diego and the Director of WAVES position was retired.[77]

That same month, Col. Billie M. Bobbit became the Director of the Women's Air Force. She retired only two years later yet disagreed that integration meant that there was no need for a WAF director. Colonel Bobbit believed that the Office for Air Force Personnel was not adequately addressing the promotions of women, issues with integration of the Air Force Academy, and the problems servicewomen faced in nontraditional fields. Her office was overwhelmed by the need for personnel to manage the Air Force's increased number of servicewomen. Col. Bianca Trimeloni faced similar issues when she assumed the office in 1975. While WAF numbers were increasing exponentially, the WAF office had a very small staff. With air staff manpower numbers expected to decrease, Colonel Trimeloni decided it would be better to eliminate the office than attempt to continue without the necessary staff. In June 1976, barely a year after accepting the promotion to WAF Director, Trimeloni retired, and on her suggestion, the

[77] Quoted in Roth, *Her Cold War*, 196, and Holm, *Women in the Military*, 280-82.

director position, and the office, was dissolved. While Trimeloni believed that "the timing was bad. It was too soon because the Air Force had a lot of problems yet" she also accepted that there "was really no practical solution under the circumstances."[78]

The Marine Corps, the smallest of the services, placed the Director of Women Marines in the offices of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In the early years of the Women Marines, the director had more control over the program and was more directly involved in recruitment and training than in the other services. By the 1970s, the position was almost entirely advisory. Col. Margaret A. Brewer was the last Director of Women Marines, beginning in February 1973. In October of that year, Marine Corps headquarters reorganized and the director position was moved from the offices of the Commandant of the Marine Corps to the Manpower Division. Commandant Gen. Louis H. Wilson began the integration of women into all noncombat units and ordered that all Marines be recruited, trained, and assigned within the corps, not in an auxiliary women's unit. Colonel Brewer technically spent the next four years as the Director of Women Marines, but in the role of dismantling the office and dissolving the position by reassigning each of her duties to an appropriate office within headquarters and passing on the institutional memory of the Women Marines. In June 1977, the Marine Corps officially disbanded the Office of the Director of the Women Marines.[79]

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[78] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 282-83.

[79] Colonel Brewer became the Deputy Director of the Division of Information upon the dissolution of the Women Marines and integration of servicewomen into the standing Marine Corps and was the first woman to be promoted to brigadier general. Holm, *Women in the Military*, 287.

The process to dissolve the Women's Army Corps and the position of the Director of the Women's Army Corps was more complicated. The WAC was the oldest and largest of the women's auxiliary corps. Furthermore, Section 3071, Title 10 of the U.S. Code required the position of Director of the Women's Army Corps. Yet the Army was aware of the changes within that organization and larger society. In August 1972, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Creighton W. Abrams created a committee to study the possible effects of the Equal Rights Amendment on the Army, specifically to address whether the passage of the ERA would signal the end of the WAC. The report, released in December 1972, stated that the WAC would not be affected by the ERA, as "the existence of the Women's Army Corps does not in itself deny equal opportunity for women; conversely, the nonexistence of a women's corps does not insure equal opportunity."[80] The committee held to the idea that auxiliary corps for women were "separate but equal."

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense began drafting the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) in 1973 to standardize the management of officers across the services. The DOD recommended that DOPMA disestablish the WAC on the basis that the Army's requirement that all female commissioned officers outside of the medical field must be appointed created an inconsistency between the services. Then Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Lt. Gen. Bernard W. Rogers, advocated repealing Section 3017, but not the immediate elimination of WAC. General Rogers hoped this move would give the Army more flexibility with the use of womanpower. WAC Director General Bailey disagreed, fearing that if DOPMA repealed Section 3071, the Army might

[80] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 283-84.

eliminate advisory positions for women or remove any authority in the positions. General Bailey was concerned that the Army would prevent women from promotion to flag rank if DOD dissolved the WAC. On her recommendation, the DOD removed the repeal of Section 3071 from DOPMA.[81]

In October 1974, however, Army Secretary Howard H. Callaway wrote a memorandum to the staff of the Director of the Army, advocating for the elimination of the WAC, as "the increasing role being assumed by women and their integration into practically every aspect of the Army, less combat units, would seem to support this idea."[82] General Bailey immediately rejected this, arguing that the dissolution of the WAC required a long and detailed study and gradual changes, as "radical, overnight changes will promote 'women's lib in uniform' thereby, in all probability, forcing actions which would not be desirable."[83] General Abrams, then Chief of Staff of the Army, agreed with Bailey's assessment. While he supported the utilization of women in more roles, he also argued for moving slowly and with careful study.[84]

Congressional hearings on DOPMA convened in early 1975. While the DOD attempted to justify keeping the WAC as a separate entity within the Army, Senator Charles Melvin Price, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, called the

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[81] At that point, the Army had only promoted General Bailey and the previous Director of the Women's Army Corps, Brig. Gen. Elizabeth Hoisington, to flag rank. See introduction. Holm, *Women in the Military*, 284.

[82] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 285.

[83] Quotation from a memorandum to the Director of Personnel Management in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 285.

[84] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 285 and Transcripts, Bailey Collection, Section IV, 7-8.

WAC "a cover to provide the opportunity for continued discrimination." [85] In response, DOD retracted their earlier argument and recommended the repeal of Section 3071 and the elimination of the WAC command structure, with one senior officer retained as an advisor to the Army on servicewomen. On June 18, 1975, the Army approved the DOD's recommendation and DOPMA was amended to include the changes, directly after which General Bailey retired and was replaced by Brig. Gen. Mary E Clarke, the last Director of the Women's Army Corps. The Army set an approximate two-year timeline for the dissolution of the WAC. While General Clarke did not necessarily oppose the elimination of the WAC, she argued for the Army to retain a female general officer as a spokesperson for women in the military.[86]

In *WACs: Women's Army Corps,* Vera Williams claims that General Clarke failed in retaining a female general officer to protect the interests of servicewomen due to the death of General Abrams. General Adams, like Generals George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower, championed the WAC and supported it as an auxiliary organization. After the death of General Abrams, Army Secretary Howard Callaway successfully argued that "women should no longer be looked upon as a separately managed group with a limited role, but must be recognized for what they are, full and equal members of the Army in every sense." According to Secretary Callaway, full recognition required the elimination of the WAC. General Clarke, however, submitted numerous plans to keep a female spokesperson, each one of which was rejected, with one unnamed human resources

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[85] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 285 and "Committee Chairmen," House Armed Services Committee, https://armedservices.house.gov/about/committee-chairmen.

[86] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 285 and Williams, *WACs*, 135.

director responding that General Clarke's plans perpetuated "the myth that only a senior woman officer can advise on women's affairs" and accusing her of attempting to impede the integration efforts of the Army.[87]

While the Army was forging ahead with plans to integrate the WACs into the AVF, they were simultaneously limiting positions available to women. In 1976, the Army submitted a report to DOD entitled *Women in the Army Study* which argued against increases in servicewomen beyond that of the numbers agreed to following the Pike subcommittee's recommendations. The report claimed that servicewomen were economically ineffective, devoting a chapter to lost time due to pregnancy or sole-parenthood, while ignoring that servicemen had higher rates of lost time overall. In 1977 the Army created a system to limit the number of positions open to women, arguing that they should not be forced to increase the number of enlisted servicewomen above the 50,400 expected in 1979, insisting on a "systemic analysis of the effectiveness of women in Army units and their impact on mission performance under conditions of deployment or in time of war." The Army informed the DOD that it would adjust its numbers only after compiling and reviewing data on "the cost effectiveness of female soldiers." While the Army's data identified over 53,000 officer and 217,000 enlisted positions that were noncombatant (about 33 percent of the officer corps and 38 percent of the lower ranks respectively), the Army created a system of percentages to each unit based on possible proximity to the front line. Forward operating units, for example, were designated as 0 percent, as in no servicewomen, while units that would remain stateside were designated

[87] Williams, *WACs*, 135-37.

as up to 50 percent, as in up to, but not exceeding, 50 percent of those positions could be filled by servicewomen.[88]

The Army also imposed limits on the number of servicewomen in inarguably noncombatant positions, claiming that would provide acceptable flexibility under a system titled Women Enlisted Expansion Model (WEEM). For example, clerk-typists at headquarters and the Pentagon, E-4 (corporal) and E-5 (sergeant) positions, were technically open to both men and women. To allow servicemen's promotion to these positions, the Army reserved some noncombat E-3 (private first class) clerk-typists positions for men. The Army used WEEM, and other similar measures, to reduce the number of allowed servicewomen to 50,400.[89] According to Lieutenant General Starry, however, this system did not work:

> There are no conceivable guidelines with regard to where women can be assigned that have universal applicability. We started with MOS alone and found that to be inappropriate; we shifted to category units and now have found that to be equally confusing. We train female welders, mechanics, MP's, signal personnel, general repair persons, clerks, and others, many of whom are assigned to support element which operated with forward deployed combat units. There they are no less vulnerable to enemy action than men in the units they are assigned to support even though assigned to a CAT II unit. The "no girls forward of the brigade rear boundary" rule is unworkable. How about the girl welder in the ordnance maintenance unit that supports an armored cavalry squadron -- she is always forward of the brigade rear boundary, has to be to do her job. Or the girl radio operators in a divisional signal battalion -- who are always in some "forward area." The anomalies of this situation will be forever with us; they will forever make us vulnerable at least to criticism of our inability to draw up more universal guidelines, if not open to charges of discrimination.[90]

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[88] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 256.

[89] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 257. The Army restricted women from all combat clerk-typist positions, but most clerk-typist positions were noncombat.

[90] Message from Lt. Gen. Don Starry to Gen. George S. Blanchard, Blanchard Papers, 3.

In a message to General Blanchard, General Starry recommended that USAREUR conduct a test in order to "settle the questions of female physical ability and degraded combat effectiveness of units with women assigned."[91] In this test, all MOS would be open to women, and would need to last long enough for all units to be trained and perform a wide range of unit activities, as well as be conducted in brigade sized combined arms force. All women participating needed to volunteer. A handwritten note on the message read "I am inclined to agree with Gen Starry [Signed B]," with General Blanchard later responding to General Starry, "I agree with your philosophy and we have substantially adopted it."[92]

The Army thus set up a series of studies and tests, named *The Women Content in the Army*, examining individual units under simulated combat conditions. The study involved two actual tests, the MAX-WAC (Maximum Women's Army Corps) and REF WAC (NATO REFORGER, Women's Army Corps). MAX-WAC was a three-day field exercise which examined women in the field by studying units that ranged from a zero percent servicewoman content to a thirty-five percent servicewomen content was intended was intended to test the performance of units with varying numbers of female soldiers. The test was thus expected to provide guidance to the Army on policies

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[91] Message from Lt. Gen. Don Starry to Gen. George S. Blanchard, Blanchard Papers, 3-4.

[92] Message from Lt. Gen. Don Starry to Gen. George S. Blanchard, Blanchard Papers, 3-4 and Message from Gen. George S. Blanchard to Lt. Gen. Don Starry, dated 18 April 1977, Box 4: Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Europe/Commander, Central Army Group, Central Europe Messages January 1977 to March 1979, Folder: CINCUSAREUR/COMCENTAG Messages April 1977, George S. Blanchard Papers, Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

concerning the utilization of servicewomen and possible limits on their inclusion. According to General Holm, "the test was expected to reveal what proportion of women in a unit would produce a deterioration in unit performance" and was operated on an "assumption that there is an upper limit to the proportion of women that even a noncombat company could contain as still function effectively." As the designers of the test set the limit on the number of servicewomen in a unit at thirty five, it can be inferred that they believed that this limit was somewhere between zero and thirty-five. The 1977 NATO REFORGER exercises were the second test of servicewomen's performance. REFORGER, a thirty-day sustained test, attempted to do the same as MAX-WAC but in simulated situations as close to combat as possible. [93]

NATO (short for North Atlantic Treaty Organization), formed in 1949, held its first series of military exercise in 1951, intending to train and test "the Alliance's newly created multinational military structures" and help "NATO forces develop from a collection of national units to an integrated military force under a single centralised command." The REFORGER tests in particular, starting in 1969, were intended to test the ability of North American troops to deploy to Europe (ReForGer meaning Return of Forces to Germany).[94] The 1977 exercises were the first to include women. In a message to General Blanchard, Gen. Walter T. Kerwin, Vice-Chief of Staff U.S. Army explained:

> The importance of collecting objective data on women soldiers during extended field operations cannot be overemphasized. Female content of units is one of the top issues we will face this year and next in the budget cycle. We have told OSD and Congress that we should hold to an FY 79

[93] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 257-8.

[94] "History of NATO Exercises," North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/222847.htm, accessed 20 January 2024.

> WAC strength of 50,400 until we have better data. We must be able to present some objective, supportable facts when we face the 79 budget. Reforger WAC (REF WAC) is a key element in our data collection. It represents our only attempt to address issues of endurance in a extended field environment.[95]

Army leaders, while willing to test the performance of servicewomen in simulated combat, expected that any test would support their previous conclusions and serve as data to justify their stated limits. They were incorrect. Instead, REF WAC proved that servicewomen in both support and combat support units, as well as in combat unit headquarters, had no effect on unit performance. According to the Army "women are proving to be good soldiers in the field, as well as in the garrison."[96]

By this time, progress on DOPMA stalled, forcing the Army and the DOD to attempt to enact separate legislation to repeal Section 3071. When this also failed, the DOD went to Secretary of Defense Harold Brown who had departmental organizational authority over the Army, as long as Congress was notified and allowed to respond to any changes. The DOD published an Army reorganization order on March 7, 1978. The very first section abolished the Office of the Director of the Women's Army Corps. This reorganization order functioned as congressional notification, giving Congress members 30 days to respond. When no one did, the office of the director of the WAC was officially eliminated. On April 28, 1978, after a short ceremony at the Pentagon, General Clarke

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[95] Message from Gen. Kerwin to Gen. Blanchard, dated 02 August 1977, Box 4: Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Europe/Commander, Central Army Group, Central Europe Messages January 1977 to March 1979, Folder: CINCUSAREUR/COMCENTAG Messages April 1977, George S. Blanchard Papers, Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 1-2.

[96] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 258.

was relieved of her command.[97] Secretary of the Army Clifford Alexander was the primary speaker at the ceremony, attended by former WAC directors, members of DOD and Army staffs, and the media, although Clarke received some time to speak. Despite her earlier concerns regarding the lack of a female spokesperson, General Clarke expressed a hope that the integration of women into the All-Volunteer Forces would lead to an increase in opportunities:

> This action today in no way detracts from the service of WACs who have been pioneers — in fact, it honors them. I view this action today as the culmination of everything the members of the Women's Army Corps have been striving for for 36 years. The significance of the abolishment of the Office of the Director… is the Army's public commitment… to the total integration of women in the United States Army as equal partners.[98]

Following the dissolution of the ODWAC, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) moved quickly, transferring General Clarke's staff elsewhere, moving the extra personnel spaces, as well as any residual duties of the WAC Office of the Director to the Directorate of Military Personnel Management. The Army assigned any representational duties formerly performed by the DWAC to Col. Lorraine A. Rossi, then director of the Army's equal opportunity programs, however, the DCSPER did not appoint a female officer to serve as advisor on women's issues.[99] Secretary of the Army Clifford Alexander worked with Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin to introduce the

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[97]Holm, *Women in the Military*, 285; "Secretaries of Defense," Historical Office: Office of the Secretary of Defense, https://history.defense.gov/DOD-History/Secretaries-of-Defense/, and Williams, *WACs*, 137.

[98] Morden, *The Women's Army Corps*, 465.

[99] Morden, *The Women's Army Corps*, 467. Colonel Rossi served as the director of the Army's equal opportunity program, located within the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, from 1977-1980. She was assisted by several female colonels.

legislation to dissolve the auxiliary corps and integrate all WAC members into the AVF. In his introduction to the proposed legislation, Senator Proxmire said "the Women's Army Corps is the last vestige of a segregated Military Establishment," echoing the previous statements of Senator Price. In July, Secretary of Defense Brown brought this legislation to Congress, and it passed quickly, despite earlier debates within Congress about the dissolution of the WAC. On October 20, 1978, President Carter signed PL 95-584 and the Women's Army Corps was officially disbanded. After three years, the approximately 52,900 members of the WAC were integrated into the regular army.[100]

In *A Few Good Women*, Evelyn M. Monahan and Rosemary Neidel-Greenlee claimed that the women of the newly integrated Army became a part of pilot programs and studies, in which they were once again required to prove their worth to the military.[101] Some servicewomen, however, disagreed with this characterization of their post-WAC role: "Finally I was being recognized for doing that job as an equal, not as a WAC," recalled Mary, who had originally enlisted in 1974 and served for two years and reenlisted after one year as a civilian. Before the integration, "it was always like you were below them. Being a WAC … they were called 'soldier' and you were not a 'soldier' you were a WAC."[102] CWO Alice Burgess echoed these sentiments: "When I became a chief

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[100] Bailey, *America's Army*, 158; Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 309-310; and Williams, *WACs*, 137. These debates were quelled by the earlier integration of the other branches of service.

[101] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 310.

[102] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 433.

warrant officer, I felt I was no longer a WAC. I was with the Army, and it was better."[103] Col. Doris Caldwell, who served as an administration officer for the Army Corps of Engineers and was deployed to Vietnam in 1967, agreed: "The deactivation of the WAC had to come if we were truly going to be 'IN THE ARMY.' You couldn't be a WAC and be in the Army."[104]

And yet Colonel Caldwell also expressed certain reservations about the dissolution of the WAC:

> But a loss was the espirit. They truly truly loved what they were doing and they policed themselves. If they had women who didn't live up to established standards, generally some other woman told her about it and got her back on track. Women had a tendency to take care of women. I was enlisted for four years and came in as a very young 18-year-old. The older women took care of me. I still have some of those friendships and I feel very fortunate. It's not that way anymore because the Army's not like that anymore. I think active-duty women miss that sort of camaraderie, because they don't have it in their units.[105]

Dorothy Love, who enlisted in the WAC in 1944, was more forceful in her disapproval, stating that she preferred the WAC as an auxiliary corps and that she would not be able to serve in the integrated Army as there was no longer any "womanly control" and that "male commanders for the most part are not qualified to be counseling women, guiding them, and training them." While former WACs did not commonly express this

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[103] CWO Burgess enlisted during World War II. After basic training, she was offered a spot in OCS or a "secret mission." She opted for the mission and was assigned as the office manager for the Joint Chiefs of Staffs for the entire war. Williams, *WACs: Women's Army Corps*, 139.

[104] Williams, *WACs*, 122 and 137. Colonel Caldwell also served as the last director of WAC recruiting.

[105] Williams, *WAC*, 137.

sentiment, plenty agreed with Love's other concern: "The Army refused to have a staff advisor for women, so they should be very nervous about the situation."[106]

Brig. Gen. Evelyn P. Foote, a former member of General Clarke's staff and a proponent of integration, expressed concerns with how the dissolution of the WAC was handled within the Army. While expressing similar support for female advisors as Love, General Foote was more concerned that the Army did not have any structures in place for full integration, stating that "when they had the structure of the WAC, they had an 'Old Girl' network that was magnificently orchestrated to help women all the way up and down the chain of command" and this network was unceremoniously disbanded with the integration of women in to the AVF. Foote, Clarke, and the other staff members of the ODWAC requested that the Army move slowly when it came to integration:

> When we had the women enclaved in the Corps, managed and directed by women, the men in the Army at large had very little knowledge of them and there were no working relationships. So when suddenly we say women are going to be assigned to units they've never been assigned to before-to divisional units, to the war fighting elements of the Army (although not in the war fighting capacity)-and when we make these decisions without preparing for the environment for a change of this magnitude, we naturally had a tremendous amount of turmoil and conflict.[107]

General Foote, who was the branch officer for General Clarke during the conversations about integration, believed that a lot of the hostility to servicewomen could have been

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[106] Williams, *WACs*, 137. The information given in Williams' book is in line with an obituary for Dorothy Lee Love, who retired from the WAC as a lieutenant colonel in 1970, although Williams did not indicate Love's rank. "Dorothy Lee Love Obituary," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 28, 2007, https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/orlandosentinel/name/dorothy-love-obituary?id=24442976.

[107] Williams, *WACs*, 140-41

prevented if both male and female servicemembers were better prepared and trained to work together. Of the integration, she observed, “For every success story I saw of an enlightened leadership, I saw five that were abysmal. They resisted and resented the presence of women.” According to General Foote, in 1978 integration only existed on paper.[108]

The Women’s Army Corps was the last of the women’s auxiliary branches to be formally disbanded. By this point, over 120,000 women served in uniform in the United States, equaling about 5.7 percent of total military strength. Each of the services had at least one female general, the last of which was the Marine Corps, which promoted Col. Margaret Brewster to brigadier general that same year.[109] The military had adopted the idea of equal opportunity, making weapons training mandatory for male and female recruits, starting mixed-gender basic training, and largely removing gender-based designations of roles, outside of combat at least. While outside pressures and changing ideas of gender roles in civilian society certainly played a role, the impetus for a lot of these changes came from within the military. It was servicewomen who pushed for the changes they wanted.

Tanya Roth argues that servicewomen created their own ideas of equality, not as it was defined by policymakers or by the feminist movement. In examining the influence of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) as an

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[108] Williams, *WACs*, 141.

[109] “Women of the Marine Corps,” Marine Corps University, accessed 1 March 2024, https://www.usmcu.edu/Research/ Marine-Corps-History-Division/People/Women-in-the-Marine-Corps/#:~:text=Women%20Marines% 20became%20a%20permanent themselves%20in%20two%20world%20wars.

advocacy group that bridged the military-civilian gap, bringing change to the Department of Defense (DOD) and the military institution from within throughout the Cold War, she acknowledges: "DACOWITS members never questioned the overarching femininity framework that shaped women's military experiences."[110] Those questions came from the servicewomen themselves, as well as changing ideas about gender in American society. The case of *Frontiero* v. *Richardson*, a 1973 Supreme Court case challenging the military regulations that prevented women from claiming a spouse or children as dependents except in extremely rare circumstances, is a perfect example of effect of both changing society and the roles that servicewomen played in creating equality within the military. This landmark case, successfully argued by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, challenged the provision of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act that "simultaneously prevented women from becoming heads of households while ensuring women's military service would not emasculate their husbands."[111] Women's Air Force officer Lt. Sharon Frontiero thus became an agent for change within the military.

Roth links *Frontiero* v. *Richardson*, an example of the ways outside forces affected womanpower within the military (in this case, a Supreme Court decision), directly to the changes caused by the feminist movement. Lt. Sharron Frontiero was not the first woman to argue against this provision of the Women's Armed Services Integration act. A major force in Lieutenant Frontiero's success was the context in which her case was heard. Roth notes three key factors: the end of the Selective Service Act, the

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[110] Roth, *Her Cold War*, 158.

[111] Roth, *Her Cold War*, 38. Ruth Bader Ginsburg later became a Supreme Court Justice and is interred at Arlington Cemetery.

expanding power and influence of the women's rights movement, and the progression of the Equal Rights Act (ERA). Despite the efforts the directors of the women's auxiliary corps took to distance themselves from the women's movement, it was one of the most influential of the external forces on the lives of servicewomen in the 1970s.[112]

Some scholars, civilians, and servicewomen argued that the feminist movement of the time had some impact on the progress of women's status in the military. While P. Lough O'Daly, who served in the Air Force from 1974-1980, understood that women were recruited because the AVF could not meet its personnel quotas with men alone, she also claimed that despite the feminist movement's anti-military stance, "Women's rights activists in groups such as NOW [National Organization of Women] and WEAL [Women's Equity Action League] took equal opportunity to the Armed Forces and applied pressure to open up traditionally male jobs to women."[113] In fact, NOW's Committee for Women in the Military's motto was "On land, on sea, and in the air- a woman's place is everywhere," a rallying cry that WEAL also threw its weight behind when pushing to end the combat barrier.[114] Additionally, both O'Daly and Beth Bailey credit the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) with forcing the nation to acknowledge the roles of military women. Despite the controversy that surrounded the bill in the later years, the ERA opened doors to military women and signaled a progressive outlook in the early 1970s.[115]

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[112] Roth, *Her Cold War,* 38.

[113] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 63-64.

[114] Bailey, *America's Army,* 163.

[115] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 131-134.

General Bailey, on the other hand, was concerned that the feminist movement took too much credit for the progress of women in the military. In 1978, she rhetorically asked Lieutenant Colonel Messer "why give credit to somebody outside the Army, when what the women in uniform -- not only the Army but the Navy, Air Force and others -- had done in those previous 31 years, as far as I was concerned, was responsible for what was happening?" While she acknowledged that wider societal changes played an important role in the advancement of servicewomen, General Bailey worried that both servicemembers and civilians would forget the contributions of individual military women.[116]

Roth also explores the effects of the women's movement and ERA on the military, arguing that the expected passage of the amendment forced the military to conduct its own assessments to address regulations and policies before the ERA was enacted. Throughout the debates over the ERA in the 1970s, many of which centered on women's military participation and the idea of servicewomen in combat, the military made changes allowing for increased opportunities for promotion, expansion of the Military Occupational Specialties women could hold, and the entrance of women into the service academies and high school Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs, leading the way for the disbandment of reserve units for women and integration into the standing military. In one notable example of these changes, Roth looks at Section 6015 of the Women's Armed Services Act of 1948, which stated that women could not be assigned to aircraft engaged in combat nor any naval ships outside of hospital and

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[116] Transcripts, Bailey Collection, Section VII, 5.

transport ships. In 1978, Judge John Sirica ruled in *Owen* v. *Brown* that this was unconstitutional, and issued a decision making it unenforceable, leading the way for the navy to further utilize womanpower. Roth argues that "equality, particularly in terms of equal opportunity, had become the watchword of the U.S. military as a result of both servicewomen's pushes for internal change and the external influences of feminist activists."[117]

The feminist movement as a whole, however, did not proffer a cohesive position on the status of military women, nor did all military women agree about the feminist movement, even when it came to what exactly was meant by equal opportunities in the military or the ERA's military implications.[118] For one thing, many servicewomen, like their civilian counterparts, were hesitant to call themselves feminists as they did not want to be labeled as "man-haters" or masculine women. Other women, such as Terry, felt alienated by the movement's anti-military leanings because of their status as veterans.[119] Chris stated that during the beginning of her service, "I found myself angry at women's lib for putting all these pressures on me."[120] She did not want to be the poster girl for the feminist movement or the military and believed that the movement sometimes made it worse for military women, as it gave male soldiers one more thing to harass servicewomen about. As P. Lough O'Daly wrote to a friend about her experiences at

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[117] Roth, *Her Cold War*, 192.

[118] This assertion stems from comparing and contrasting oral histories that touch on the women's movement, but it is laid out best in Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*, 155.

[119] P. Lough O'Daly Thesis, Sophia Smith Collection, 326.

[120] P. Lough O'Daly Thesis, Sophia Smith Collection, 451.

Smith College as a veteran: "People's reactions to women veterans and the kind of work I do have ranged from intimidation to political rhetoric about women 'who defend the patriarchy.'"[121] O'Daly, who considered herself a feminist, was keenly aware of the overall anti-military stance of the women's liberation movement, but credited the movement with some of the advances made by servicewomen in the AVF.

In an interview after her return from Vietnam, Spc. Karen Offut said she "just didn't see any differentiation between the men and the women as opposed to why should someone be putting their life on the line and not me just because I happened to be a female?" Specialist Offut claimed that she "didn't know anything about women's lib. I just knew that it didn't seem right for me not to go."[122] Whether or not Specialist Offut considered herself a feminist, the argument that women had as much of an obligation to put their lives on the line for their country, was fully in line with the second wave feminist movement's push for equal rights and freedoms between the sexes. Chris, who had resented the pressure she associated with the movement, went on to say, "I finally realized that the women on the outside who were doing what they were doing weren't doing it to affect me. They were just trying to right the system."[123] Using Chris' words to look at the motivations of the feminist movement, that they were "trying to right the system," allows a broader understanding of the roles of both NOW and WEAL in the fight on behalf of military women as a part of the larger war on behalf of all women.

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[121] Letter from P. Lough O'Daly to Elizabeth Harden, 26 January 1984, Box 1, P. Lough O'Daly Papers.

[122] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 256.

[123] P. Lough O'Daly Thesis, Sophia Smith Collection, 451.

Despite the positive impact the ERA had on the status of servicewomen, it also played a large role in the end of their progress. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter proposed that with the reinstitution of selective service registration, the ERA would make it impossible for the draft to only apply to men. Women would also need to be registered for non-combat service, as "there is no distinction possible," specifically "on the basis of ability or performance, that would allow me to exclude women from an obligation to register." President Carter had no hope that the proposal would make it to the floor, as conservatives such as Phyllis Schlafly had fought against the ERA for years.[124] The draft gave opponents of the amendment their strongest weapon as they painted vivid images of wives, mothers, and daughters "drafted and dehumanized, sent into combat, brutalized, maimed, raped, and killed."[125] As the conversation turned to debates about women's proper roles in society and sexist arguments about women's inferiority and inability to lead, conservatives played on this fear of motherless children and broken families.

Throughout the 1970s, much debate about the roles of military women was surrounded by misogynistic rhetoric. During the House debate regarding allowing women into national military academies, Representative Larry McDonald, a Democrat from Georgia, relying on the argument that these academies trained officers for combat, asked

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[124] Bailey, *America's Army*, 131-32. Phyllis Schlafly was a constitutional lawyer best known as a far-right conservative activist and anti-feminist who campaigned against the ERA from 1972 until it was narrowly defeated in 1982. She also spoke out against abortion, same-sex marriage, globalization, and immigration reform while embracing what she refers to as "traditional values." Schlafly infamously said that marriage means that a wife must submit to sex whenever her husband demands it, and therefore marital rape can never happen.

[125] Bailey, *America's Army*, 134.

if his colleagues could "seriously imagine an officer giving a lecture or leading a tank column but requiring a pause to breast-feed her infant?" While the measure passed, the sexist comments had just begun. Even recently retired General Westmoreland quipped that "maybe you could find one woman in 10,000 who could lead in combat," when interviewed the *Washington Post*, "but she would be a freak and we're not running the military academy for freaks."[126]

The conservative backlash against women in the military reached full power after the integration of the WAC into the regular Army. It was especially evident in November 1979 at hearings on servicewomen's equality, where supporters of women in the military used fact, law and logic and called for rational investigations, while opponents used personal experiences, "God's will" and the threat that women's military service would mean the "destruction of the God-given American way of life."[127] These opponents included James H. Webb, a 1968 Annapolis graduate and Marine Corps combat veteran of Vietnam, who argued vehemently against women in military academies and the Armed Forces in a 1979 article in the *Washingtonian* entitled "Jim Webb: Women Can't Fight."

> The mission of the U.S. Armed Forces to fight was being corrupted by women in the military and that the corruption resulted in grave consequences to the national defense [and military academies] prepare men for leadership positions where they may someday exercise that command which perpetuates violence on command [creating] combat leaders who can carry this country on their backs. […] No benefit can come from women serving in combat.[128]

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[126] Bailey, *America's Army*, 135.

[127] Bailey, *America's Army*, 167-168.

[128] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 317. Ellipses are in original.

Webb went on to claim that not only do "men fight better than women," but men also "fight better without women present," while furnishing no factual support.[129] These statements echoed previous claims laced with sexism and cloaked in terms of "inherent differences," "God's will," and the "American way of life."

The "American way of life" argument was reiterated by several other former military commanders during the hearings, including Gen. Elizabeth Hoisington, former director of the Women's Army Corps, who stated that women in combat was "not a matter of equal rights" but a matter of "whether we are going to preserve the things our Nation stands for…Our constitution, our flag, our family life." Retired Rear Adm. Jeremiah Denton called all proposals to use women in combat part of a "frightening system of a relatively new but rapidly worsening spiritual illness," claiming that "the traditional principles of this Nation are the key to our goodness and to our success as a Nation." Dr. Harold Voth, a psychiatrist, who claimed that servicewomen had an "antifeminity or masculinity complex" that caused them to "search for an identity and role which permits them to live out a pseudo-male identity" blamed the women's movement for social decline and the destruction of the family. According to Dr. Voth, "America was built on a good solid American family" and thus women's equality was also destroying the family. Charles Cade, operations director of the Moral Majority, agreed, calling women's integration a "moral corruption of false equality" that "gnaw[s]

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[129] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 321. Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee attempted to contact then-Senator Webb about his past and current stance on women in the military, how it has changed (or not) and why, but were not granted an interview or a written statement addressing these issues (318). Webb is also quoted in Bailey, *America's Army*, 165-66.

at traditional family roles" and arguing that "the bedrock of our Nation hangs in the balance."[130]

Most of the testimony by opponents to women in combat relied on ideas of morality and the natural roles of men and women that were sometimes heavily tied to religious faith. Rear Admiral Denton compared the idea of women in the military to a "godless Sodom and Gomorrah" poison, while Schlafly called the idea of servicewomen as "so ugly, that it almost sounds like a death wish for our species." General Westmoreland called the increased use of servicewomen "the first time that our nation has by its official policy sanctioned an immoral practice." In the final testimony of the hearing, Charles Cade stated that "leadership and authority" are "male attributes ordained by God." While other opponents of women in combat believed that servicewomen could have some limited roles in the military, Cade viewed even the idea of women in the military to be immoral, calling the integrated force a "self-indulgent and egocentric atmosphere."[131]

Despite their best efforts, opponents of women's military equality could not stop the wheels that had already been put in motion. In 1980, 229 women became the first to graduate from national military academies and receive commissions in their respective services: 14 women from the Coast Guard Academy, 55 from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, 62 from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and 98 from the U.S. Air

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[130] House Committee, *Women in the Military* quoted in Bailey, *America's Army,* 168-170. Bailey refers to Dr. Voth's testimony as "state-of-the-art 1950s analysis" which is quite accurate. It did not include any more recent psychiatric analyses.

[131] House Committee quoted in Bailey, *America's Army,* 169-170.

Force Academy. They made up 8 percent of graduates, same as male to female proportion in the military, and had a slightly higher attrition rate than male classmates.[132] Unfortunately, they would enter a military that was increasingly hostile toward women in an era that did not value women's military service.

In the changes that came with the disbandment of women's auxiliary corps, Roth argues that "removing the institutional structure of a segregated component system that functioned within the main military organization was one way to force male military leaders to pay attention to their policies on female utilization."[133] And yet, this was not entirely successful. Roth's book draws to a close in 1980, one year after women were allowed on Navy ships, with the *USS Norton Sound* and the investigation of 19 women accused of homosexuality. In the end, charges against 15 women were dropped, two were acquitted, and two were found guilty and discharged. While memory of the investigation faded from the media by 1981 and commanders argued for more women on board, the legacy of Section 6015 stood: "The navy was moving conservatively, as was the rest of the military." While it had seemed through the 1970s that the military was willing to expand its ideas of the roles of servicewomen, "it began to look as if their commitment to supporting women as they stepped into those opportunities had waned."[134]

In a 1977 report, Cmdr. Dr. Ricard W. Hunter, who was tasked by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to study the use of servicewomen, said: "The tradeoff in today's

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[132] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 316.

[133] Roth, *Her Cold War*, 198.

[134] Roth, *Her Cold War*, 214.

recruiting marked is between a high quality female and a low quality male," highlighting that servicewomen were smaller and weaker than servicemen, but more highly educated, smarter, and less likely to have disciplinary problems. As Brown elaborated:

> To put the question bluntly: Is recruiting a male high school dropout in preference to a smaller, weaker, but higher quality female erring on the side of national security, in view of the kinds of jobs which much be done in today's military? The answer to that question is central to the decision in how many women should be used in the various Services. Sometimes the answer will be yes, and sometimes it will be no, but the question continues to be relevant.[135]

Dr. Hunter did not make any recommendations regarding the numbers of women in the various services, but Secretary of Defense Brown directed the services to double their number of enlisted women by 1983 after reviewing all the reports and the MAX-WAC and REFWAC tests.[136] Integrated units were now the norm. In a 1981 article in *All Volunteer*, the Army recruiter's journal, Staff Sgt. Dave Pankey wrote that limitations placed on women were "a thing of the past" in "this woman's army."[137]

In 1978, General Bailey, while reflecting on the dissolution of the WAC, remarked, "In 1974 – even, I suspect in 1978 – you can meet a senior male in the Army and he has never worked on a daily basis with a female member of the Army." Until the WAC units were dissolved and women were integrated into the AVF, "we'd never get the man educated, and we'll never get him to accept this changing role." While Bailey still believed that women should not enter direct combat, over time she had come to believe

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[135] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 258.

[136] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 258.

[137] Pankey, "This Woman's Army," 4 quoted in Bailey, *America's Army*, 171.

that it was necessary for the services to be integrated in order for servicewomen to ever be considered equal to men. She was still concerned that dissolving the office of the Director of the WAC was premature, however, arguing that "Army women deserve and will continue to need a spokeswoman in a high level prestigious position who has the eye and ear of the Secretary and Chief of Staff."[138]

General Bailey retired in 1975 because she was "very, very tired of fighting the battles" and of "justifying my existence as a woman in the Army and the existence of all other women in the Army - we were still having to do that."[139] Yet, she also believed the Army was far ahead of wider society when it came to gender equality, despite institutional discrimination. As of 1978, she was still concerned that while the DOD had made great changes to address equality legislatively, the Army and the DOD needed to do more to address individual psychological bias. Bailey argued that the biggest obstacles to full equality and integration were "ignorance, and a lack of understanding about each other's lives and standards and capabilities and attitudes and needs, that fears and myths and stereotypes have plagued Army women from the beginning of their military association."[140] This psychological bias still existed and the "fears and myths and stereotypes" were further perpetuated by the November 1979 at hearings on military women's equality.

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[138] Transcripts, Bailey Collection, Section VIII, 22-23 and Section IX, 29.

[139] Transcripts, Bailey Collection, Section IX, 35.

[140] Transcripts, Bailey Collection, Section IX, 29.

In General Blanchard's End of Tour Report in April 1979, he reflected on his time at USAREUR.

> Women have been integrated fully. From a few hundred ten years ago, their number in USAREUR has grown to approximately 13,000. They occupy many MOSs other than the traditional ones, and they have moved from being an oddity to being a part of the normal situation. They are coming of age and acquiring rank, but they are still not fully accepted, and we have not solved all the problems. They major problem is that of the male leaders -- the NCOs and officers -- whose attitudinal adjustment has not been complete. They are gradually coming to realize that the female soldier is neither their daughter nor a sex object, but a soldier who must be treated as such. The key, I think, is problem solving and time; as problems are identified, studied, and solutions proffered, long-range goals remain the same."[141]

General Blanchard reiterated these views in an oral history recorded a few years later, pointing out generational differences pertaining to the treatment of women. He stated that his generation's belief that "male soldiers would automatically protect the women soldiers rather than concentrate on the mission," was what kept servicewomen from combat roles. In addition, General Blanchard pointed out that now "a woman can be recognized as an individual person as opposed to a sex object." With this in mind, he estimated that women would become a part of combat units within the next ten years.[142] He was wrong.

For the remainder of President Carter's time in office, plans to increase the number of women in the military continued with the eventual goal of about 250,000 women by 1985 (a jump from eight to twelve percent) and the more immediate goal of an

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[141] "Personal End of Tour Report," Blanchard Papers, 11.

[142] Lt. Col. James E. Longhofer, "Senior Officer Oral History Program," 1980, Oral History of Gen. George S. Blanchard Box 1A, George S. Blanchard Papers, Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 203-04.

increase in the Army from 65,000 to 100,000 in the early 1980s. These goals were not realized. Instead, when President Ronald Reagan took office on January 20, 1981, the pro-servicewomen era of the 1970s officially ended, and with it, the support for military women's equality. Soon the military, with the assumed backing of the new conservative Commander-in-Chief, began a "womanpause" and halted the recruitment of women.[143]

[143] Bailey, *America's Army*, 170-171.While Susan Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* does not specifically mention servicewomen, the backlash against military women's equality can be read as a part of the larger reaction Faludi described, as the advances were not only part of a liberal equality-based agenda, but also a feminist one.

CHAPTER 3:

"THE GOOD OLE BOY ARMY": STORIES OF VIETNAM-ERA SERVICEWOMEN AND FEMALE VETERANS

In 1983, former Lt. Linda Van Devanter, Army Nurse Corps, published *Home Before Morning*, the first memoir of a female Vietnam veteran. Lieutenant Van Devanter refused to shy away from the dark parts of her experiences, speaking about drugs and drinking among soldiers, nurses, and doctors, as well as consensual and nonconsensual sexual relationships. Her memoir drew immediate controversy. Nora Kinzer, who served as the special assistant on women's veterans for the Veteran Administration and members of Nurses Against Misrepresentation (NAM) accused Van Devanter of painting "the entire Army Nurse Corps in a disparaging light." Other veterans, such as Winnie Smith and P. Lough O'Daly rushed to her defense. "It seems to me that Miss Van Devanter was only discussing real-life events that can be found anywhere in civilian life, with the possible exception of a Girl Scout Camp or convent," O'Daly argued in a letter to the editor of the *Washington Post* regarding Kinzer's comments. "If the events Miss Van Devanter describes had been written by a male Vietnam veteran," she wrote, "there would have been no suggestion that his relationships, his use of drugs and alcohol or his profanity reflected in any way on the proud traditions of the service."[144]

O'Daly's remark about the ways that servicewomen were expected to uphold specific standards of the military, while servicemen were understood to speak only for themselves, is evidence of the differing expectations, perceptions, and experiences of men and women in the military. Some servicewomen played along with this – sanitizing

[144] P. Lough O'Daly, "Letters to the Editor 'War Story,'" *The Washington Post*, June 4, 1983 found in "P. Lough O'Daly Papers," Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

their experiences of wartime to uphold ideas of respectability. Gary Kulik, a former medic who served during the Vietnam War, argued that there were certain expectations of Vietnam veterans when they returned, certain lies they were expected to tell; not only to protect the military and themselves, but also because other veterans propagated these lies. He claimed that the most common of these lies among female veterans, and indeed forming the view of female servicewomen by the rest of the country, had to do with the "noble and innocent nurse betrayed by her country and its leaders, traumatized by her experience, saved by therapy."[145]

This expectation of female veterans has affected the collective understanding of servicewomen during the Vietnam War, and thus experiences that challenge this portrayal are rarely a part of the historical record. This chapter will explore those experiences, including alcohol and drug use, sex, sexuality, and sexual assault, medical issues and PTSD, and female veterans' issues after the war. While some of these affect both female and male military personnel, some are unique to servicewomen. As servicewomen started searching for their niche in the AVF, they found that the gendered differences still existed, both in the stories they were allowed to tell and the experiences that shaped their active-duty and post-military lives.

Van Devanter's memoir reflected many of the stories told by female Vietnam veterans about their own experiences coping with war. Lily, an Army nurse commissioned in 1967, remembered that "for most people it was either dope or it was alcohol, but we all needed some kind of crutch."[146] Lorraine Boudreau said, "My answer

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[145] Kulik, *"War Stories,"* 73.

[146] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 181.

to all this was that I drank myself silly; everyone had their way of coping. You used those things to survive. You had booze, you had drugs, you had sex."[147] Nurses, who spent their deployments dealing with the horrors of war, the blood and death, needed an outlet and solace. They searched for it constantly, and frequently found it in the bottom of a bottle or marijuana. While they had been trained, however insufficiently, to handle the work in the hospital, they were ill prepared to handle the traumatic effects of their jobs. "There are people in the military who do function well for 40, 50 or however many hours a week but quitting time means time to have a drink or two," Joan Waradzyn Thomas recalled, thinking specifically of one fellow nurse who "was one of those alcoholics who can work efficiently, but can't handle it outside of work."[148] They did not need alcohol or drugs to get through their work shifts, but to forget what they had witnessed and fall asleep without seeing the faces of the men they had tried to save.

"When you're together in a situation where you could be dead soon, it's like you live every minute to the fullest," said Lt. Shirley Mernard, a field hospital nurse during the Vietnam War. "We really lived in Vietnam when we were off duty. Oh yea, there was gambling, partying, drinking, eating, loving."[149] In their memoirs, former Army nurses Lieutenant Smith and Lieutenant Van Devanter recalled finding comfort in intimacy. Sometimes this was sexual in nature, but it was about intimate friendships and bonding just as much as sex. The military life and deployment created a comradeship that was a

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[147] Freedman and Rhoads, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 32.

[148] Freedman and Rhoads, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 157.

[149] Freedman and Rhoads, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 120.

necessary part of keeping sane. The partying and sex servicewomen described was about taking comfort in the warmth and friendship of other military men and women who understood the trials of deployment and living surrounded by death. Van Devanter spoke of many affairs, but when describing the first she said, "we were just tired and lonely and sick to death of trying to fix the mutilated bodies of boys […] all you want to do is lean against somebody and cry so they can hold you and love you and remind you that, after it's finished, you're still human."[150]

Female Vietnam veterans were often reticent to speak of their experiences with sex, sexuality, and sexual assault. More than other stories, these narratives have been largely unexplored by historians and theorists, and, in fact, rarely chronicled in well-known oral histories and interviews. While some collections make references to the love lives of female Vietnam veterans, they frequently refer to their affairs as "romances" or portray young military women as victims of broken love affairs with married men. Freedman and Rhoads' book allows for some discussion of sex as a coping mechanism, while Walker and Steinman avoid any references that may characterize military women as promiscuous or any discussions of sexual orientation. Ret. Air Force Maj. Gen. Jeanne Holm touches briefly on sexual harassment and assault in her book but does not discuss specific instances or cases. Unfortunately, it is these oral history collections that have become the best known and most frequently referenced. Therefore, most discussions on servicewomen's experiences during the Vietnam War leave out stories about sex, sexuality, and sexual assault.

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[150] Lynda Van Devanter, *Home Before Morning*, 105.

During the Vietnam era, many people believed that "good girls" did not join the military; they stayed at home and had a family. Society portrayed military women, both military nurses and enlisted women in less gender-traditional professions, as mannish lesbians or promiscuous women who had joined the military for the sexual opportunities.[151] "There's no two ways about it," Van Devanter remembered of the common perception, "because there's nothing else a woman would be doing in a place with five hundred thousand men."[152] This was typical of the Army's double standard in their treatment of men verses women, as military men were expected, and sometimes encouraged, to have sex with Vietnamese prostitutes. In her memoir, Van Devanter wrote:

> If we wanted to have a relationship, or to occasionally be with a man we cared deeply about, we were not conducting ourselves as "ladies" should. And if we might be unladylike enough to want birth control pills, which were kept in a safe and rarely dispensed, we could expect the wrath of God, or our commander, to descend upon us.[153]

The tendency of secondary sources to ignore the sexual experiences and sexuality of servicewomen writes this part of their lives out of their history and forces military women to pretend to conform to the military's ideas of "ladylike" behavior. Including these stories tells a more complete story of the military women who served during the Vietnam War. [154]

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[151] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 30 and Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*, 8.

[152] "P. Lough O'Daly Papers," *Sophia Smith Collection*, Smith College, 279.

[153] Van Devanter, *Home Before Morning*, 122.

[154] Ret. Air Force Major General Holm claimed that promiscuity was not a serious problem, but many women's memoirs and oral histories say otherwise, although these stories came to light long after Major General Holm's book was originally published.

Van Devanter's memoir was the first book that discussed the sex and sexuality of female Vietnam veterans, speaking specifically of her own experiences. Winnie Smith's memoir and P. Lough O'Daly's oral history interviews corroborated Van Devanter's account. Their work revealed that sex was more than a coping mechanism for Vietnam-era military women. Sometimes it was a search for love or an exercise in freedom during the sexual revolution. And while not all servicewomen were lesbians, some were, and they were no better or worse at their jobs or less of a military woman because of their sexual orientation.

Many servicemembers became "geographic bachelors" when deployed and began love affairs with nurses that would never last.[155] In her interview, operating room supervisor Jeanne Rivera acknowledged the fraternization between doctors and nurses and claimed not to care as long as she couldn't see it and work performance was not affected, but these relationships could not exist in a vacuum. There were frequently very real consequences: "there were broken love affairs … they were promised the world," Rivera explained. "There were a certain number of them who contemplated suicide. I had one close call, but she was not successful."[156] Not all in-country relationships ended on such a negative note, nor were all military women naïve enough to expect more than a

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This assertion is made in reference to World War II but is the only reference to promiscuity in her book. While Maj. Gen. Holm makes no allusion to anything regarding promiscuity in her discussion of the Vietnam War, reports of promiscuity in memoirs and oral histories are always, as far as I have seen, rejected by commanding officers, especially military women who reached flag rank (general). See: Holm, *Women in the Military*, 70.

[155] Freedman and Rhoads, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 70-71.

[156] Freedman and Rhoads, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 70-71.

fleeting affair. Winnie Smith wrote affectionately of her first affair with a married doctor in Vietnam: "I choose to have and lose true love rather than risk never having it at all. It is my first season of love, so long awaited." While she admits to having her heart broken when the doctor returned to his wife and family in the United States, Smith was happy to have found love in Vietnam, however briefly. This was the first of her affairs, none of which she painted as simply a form of intimacy and a coping mechanism. Instead, Smith wrote of love and attraction as her reasoning: "I long for the strength of a man's body under a scorched sun."[157]

During deployment, many women embraced a sexual freedom reminiscent of the sexual revolution in women's liberation. They were on their own, sometimes for the first time, and out of the watchful eyes of their fathers. The societal mores that constrained women's sexuality were not always applicable in-country. By embracing this freedom, many military women participated in their own sexual revolution, nine thousand miles away from home.[158] Lt. Judy Hartline Elbring said "sure I had romance, hand-picked, and some very special men. Yeah, I did. And I enjoyed it." She explained that "there was something about the danger, about the send-off, about the wondering if we had tomorrow, that I didn't want to wait […] I was running away from home and doing all the stuff I wasn't supposed to."[159] These love affairs were about sex, risk, reward, romance, and freedom.

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[157] Smith, *American Daughter Gone to War*, 306 and 204.

[158] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*, 142.

[159] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 158.

General Holm's book claimed that rates of promiscuity and homosexuality were "probably much less than in the general population."[160] Like heterosexual love affairs, however, homosexuality was a fact of military life. Most servicewomen expected that they would serve with at least one lesbian. Despite this, homosexuality was an incredibly taboo subject both during and after the war.[161] Some female veterans spoke of gay servicewomen with fear or hatred, at least at the beginning of their deployment: "More out of fear than loathing, I've kept a safe distance between us," Smith said of a fellow nurse that was thought to be gay. [162] Smith does not describe what she means by "fear," leaving readers to infer that this fear was due to either common beliefs that lesbian women were angry and/or looking to "recruit" straight women or fear of being associated

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[160] Holm, *Women in the Military, 70.* This quote is from Holm's chapter on World War II, although she insinuates this throughout the book. She never said what record she was referring to, nor did she cite her claim. It is possible she truly believed this, but also possible that she was protecting the reputations of military women, or herself as Women's Air Force Director (1965-1973), especially as the book first came out in 1982 when women were in the middle of their fight toward gender equality in the military. Even after the publication of the revised edition in 1992, servicewomen were nowhere close to equal to their male comrades. (Many would argue they still are not). Any proof supporting the stereotype of military women as promiscuous or homosexual would serve to hurt their cause, as well as their and Maj. Gen. Holm's reputation.

[161] Both Lynda Van Devanter and Winnie Smith mention gay servicewomen in their memoirs and P. Lough O'Daly's interviews delve more deeply into the subject. However, most oral history books make little to no mention of sexual orientation.

[162] Smith, *American Daughter Gone to War,* 65. It is important to note that Smith abandoned this fear after the woman, who was short (about to go home), asked her to take over working at a nearby orphanage. The servicewoman's work with Vietnamese orphans perhaps served to comfort Smith's fears about her "moral character," reassuring her that while she was gay, she was still a mothering, caring figure. (Homosexual servicemembers were accused of "questionable moral character," a designation that was used by the military to investigate suspected homosexual activities to confer a dishonorable discharge).

with someone thought to be have poor moral character.[163] Other women demonstrated understanding and acceptance. "There were far more important things than that to offend our sensibilities," Van Devanter explained. "Who could really care about two women finding comfort with each other when there were hundreds of boys dying every week?"[164]

O'Daly interviewed Chris, who enlisted in the Air Force in 1974 about her experiences with queer women at Chanute Air Force Base. Chris' interview revealed a fear of some lesbians, but not all. She differentiated by referring to some as "dykes" and others as "gay" or "lesbian." She phrased her fears, however, as phrased a safety issue: "Young girls would get there and their first or second night get beat up by 'dykes,' ribs smashed in," Chris remembered. Her commanding officer was a part of this "scene" and "one of the rougher lesbians on the base which is why the information stopped with her."[165] While Chris did not say that she was a victim of assault or harassment by fellow servicewomen, this story reveals a credible fear. She did not dread that a lesbian would proposition her, nor that homosexuality was particularly deviant, but fear of physical harm.

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[163] Both stereotypes are obviously false, although still exist today. Military-specific fear of association is left over from World War II policies regarding homosexuality that found people with gay friends were more likely to be investigated by psychiatrists and found to be guilty of homosexuality, although some civilians have similar fears. See: Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (New York, New York: Free Press, 1990).

[164] Van Devanter, *Home Before Morning*, 122.

[165] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 443. This is the only account of assault and harassment by gay women that I have found. I did not find any court or military records that prove its veracity.

Chris was careful to separate the violent women from other gay women: "there were a lot of lesbians on that base as well as the girls who were gay and didn't want to be a part of the 'dyke' scene." Unlike the dykes, "they weren't bothering anyone and would still be friends with you. You know they were gay but they didn't try to push their feelings on to you." Unfortunately, the actions of the violent women, especially participation of their commanding officer, affected the perceptions of lesbians by many of the women Chris served with: "it was uncomfortable for those who had gay friends like I did because they figured if they were gay they were 'dykes.'"[166] Most female Vietnam veterans who mention the presence of homosexuality, however, are factual and nonplused. In her interview, Terry, who enlisted in 1963 simply stated: "There was a lot of homosexuality going on in the barracks at the time … real blatant."[167] Other women, such as Van Devanter, viewed sexual orientation as completely unimportant considering the real nightmares that surrounded them. Loreen, who enlisted in the Air Force in 1970 and served on active duty for four years and in the Naval reserves for one, spoke candidly about her friendships with a lesbian who was not discharged, although she did know of two career military men who had been discharged for homosexual behavior.[168] She implied that while homosexuality was not particularly widespread, it was acknowledged and accepted by most military women.

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[166] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 443.

[167] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 301. Terry gives no indication of her MOS or rank except to state that she attended Corpsman school.

[168] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 380-381. Loreen gives no indication of her MOS or rank.

Homosexuality was still against military regulations, however, and being found guilty of "homosexual behavior" could result in a dishonorable discharge. Terry mentioned a woman from boot camp that turned in almost two dozen women for homosexual activity, including mostly women who were heterosexual. Terry was one of these women investigated by the Office of Naval Intelligence but received no official reprimand. She implied that reporting homosexuality was sometimes used as a tool of revenge, a witch-hunt typical of the military as it was used in World War II and the Korean War, although gay men were usually the targets.[169] Unlike other women P. Lough O'Daly interviewed, Morgan, who served in the Navy from 1973-1977, was an out lesbian for much of her time in the military. Her sexual orientation was a non-issue until she joined the National Organization of Women and investigated by the Naval Investigative Service as a "radical." After challenging the wrong superior officer, she was brought up on charges of homosexual activities when an ex-lover agreed to testify against her out of revenge for a failed relationship. Fortunately, Morgan's commanding officer

[169] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 306-307. Terry was discharged for medical reasons shortly after the investigation began. She did not elaborate on whether she was cleared or discharged before she could be brought up on charges. Until 1940, homosexuals had not been excluded or discharged from the military. After the Revolutionary War, the Army and Navy criminalized sodomy (defined as anal sex and sometimes oral sex between two men), but not homosexuality. However, due to the increased authority of psychiatrists and the large number of men registered for the draft, in 1940 the Selective Service was able to exclude certain people, namely blacks in the Marines and Army Air Corps, women, and homosexuals. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, many homosexuals enlisted, passing psychiatric evaluations that were used to keep gay men out of the military, but almost always had to keep their sexuality quiet, as to avoid receiving an "undesirable" discharge. Women rarely went through the same intense psychiatric exam, partially due to the invisibility in criminal law and partially to fill quotas. It was not until 1944 that any uniform psychiatric evaluation for lesbians was created and it was rarely used before the end of the war. Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 2-7 and 28-32.

was sympathetic, and processed her honorable discharge papers before the Navy officially charged her with homosexuality. She believed her sexual orientation was used against her as a tactic to discredit her "radical" activities and tendency to speak up about harassment and sexual assault.[170]

Even more taboo, and much more painful, was the ongoing issue of sexual harassment, attempted sexual assault, and sexual assault. These instances were rarely prosecuted or even acknowledged but were a definite part of the lives of many servicewomen.[171] The military's unofficial policy was that women needed to protect themselves from sexual harassment or rape, and frequently did little or nothing to stop it or punish the perpetrators. Servicewomen who experienced harassment or assault were often expected to maintain a code of silence to not only protect themselves from further harassment, but also protect the perpetrators and their families as well as the military. After a corpsman sexually assaulted Mary Bannigan, she discovered that there were rarely "repercussions for acts against women." Some women, like Jane Hodge, Army

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[170] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 476. Morgan gives no indication of her MOS or rank. She also claims she was the first enlisted woman to join NOW, but there is no way to verify this claim.

[171] Sexual harassment was mentioned by Smith and Van Devanter in their memoirs, as well as touched briefly upon in a few oral history accounts. P. Lough O'Daly's interviews are the only ones that really tell the stories of women who were harassed or assaulted. There are a few possible explanations. First, oral history books were highly edited, therefore, any examples of sexual harassment or assault could have been removed from the record or the interviewers did not ask questions that would lead to descriptions of sexual assault and harassment. It is also possible that female veterans were more likely to be open about their experiences when speaking to another woman, but also likely that O'Daly's status as a Vietnam-era veteran made other female veterans feel more comfortable. However, Jacqueline Navarra Rhoads was also a Vietnam-era veteran who, unlike O'Daly, was deployed during the war and her oral history collection reveals no evidence of sexual harassment or assault (possibly because she had a male partner.)

nurse, used the code of silence to their own advantage: "Sir, they spent the last six weeks teaching me that I'm an officer first, a nurse second, and a lady third" she informed him. "The officer has asked you to remove your hand, the nurse has told you to move it, and the lady is about to slap the hell out of you." When the colonel threatened Hodge with a court martial, she responded that a hearing would mean his family would find out. Thus, Hodge used the code of silence to avoid being brought up on charges, knowing that the military would not punish the colonel, but his family would.[172]

Other female veterans report similar instances of harassment, although many did not find the strength Hodge had to talk back. "I'm not sure which was worse," Banigan stated, "the assault itself or the humiliation and the code of silence."[173] P. Lough O'Daly wrote of her own experiences, as well as those of women she interviewed, demonstrating the thin line between assumed friendship and assault. Many of the victims of assault or attempted assault were acquainted socially with their assailants. Lily, an Army nurse commissioned in 1967, spoke of the attempts of the nurses she was stationed with to get hot water. They found GIs who could help them but "realized they wanted a little bit more than a party, I just told them to fuck off and we never got the hot water."[174] Other women were not so lucky, barely escaping from their fellow servicemembers:

> Pilots came down from IZ English and they wanted nurses to come up for a party. I thought that would be great- -just to get away for awhile […] I stumbled into this room full of mattresses, wall to wall. Right away my antennae go up. I thought, 'Uh-oh, I better warn the girls.' I go back and I say, 'Hey, you know there's a room full of mattresses back there and some

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[172] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman,* 143-44.

[173] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman,* 144.

[174] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 171.

> of the guys are getting the girls pretty drunk.' There was also a lot of opium and a lot of dope. 'We got to get out of here.' …Those of us who were reasonably sober practically carried the drunk ones to the chopper pad and tried to get someone to give us a ride home. The guys were furious. We thought it was a gang rape, that's how bad it was. I didn't think we'd make it out alive.[175]

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape shattered feelings of safety and security and affected military careers, as well as physical and mental health.[176] "The GI's called nurses round-eye tail, and suddenly that's exactly what we were," recalled O'Daly. "This was the enemy camp."[177] The term round-eye referred to both the racial and gender identity of military women as white females. The use of the word "tail," on the other hand, reduced servicewomen to their genitalia and sexuality: they were simply vehicles for a man's pleasure, removed of their own agency and defenseless against a military man's advances, consensual or otherwise.[178] With such feelings of vulnerability, it is no wonder that some deployed women reported being more afraid of sexual harassment and assault than the actual war and one nurse went as far as to keep a pistol in her room for protection from her own soldiers.[179] General Holm, who served as the Director of the

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[175] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 132.

[176] Sexual assault and rape are frequently used interchangeably but are not actually synonymous. Rape is a form of sexual assault that includes forced penetration while the term sexual assault covers all nonconsensual sexual contact and behavior. This section covers both and tries to use the terms that each woman used to describe her own attack or experience.

[177] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 132.

[178] "Tail" is crude slang for a woman's buttocks and/or vagina that is often used to imply attraction to the rest of her body. This derogatory term reduces a woman to a sexual object available for conquest.

[179] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*, 144.

Women's Air Force from 1965-1973, touched on the issue multiple times in her book. She quoted a corporal who stated that complaining to your commanding officer was useless because "he just shrugs it off as a joke" yet "you can't complain to the women officers because they are powerless to do anything about it, besides they get the same hassle from the guys-sometimes worse."[180]

While Lily said, "I did think of the fact that I could have been gang-raped and murdered and that would have been the end of me," most military women never imagined that their male comrades would take advantage of them; they believed that servicemen would be protective and supportive.[181] Even after experiencing sexual harassment, many servicewomen thought that there was a line that none of their "brothers" would cross. Sexual harassment could be written off as teasing, or simply a part of men and women working closely together, especially as the issue of sexual harassment was only recently addressed by the civilian United States. Unfortunately, too many servicewomen found out that some of their "brothers" would cross that line.

While in in corpsman school at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Terry was raped and beaten by a male comrade. Unlike many other servicewomen, she reported the assault to her CO after receiving treatment at the hospital. He responded:

> 'Terry, I'll give you your options. You can pursue this but you're going to get screwed.' So he went into the hospital and took the records that said I had stitches and possibility of rape. And I really believe to this day that it was for my protection. He said they would have crucified me and I believe him… to this day I believe him […] All they had to do, he said, was get seven guys to say they had been to bed with me. He said it just wouldn't

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[180] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 70.

[181] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 186.

> be worth it… even if the guy did get thrown out. The other thing that was said to me was 'Why ruin his (rapist) life?'[182]

While Terry believed that her commanding officer was protecting her, he was also protecting himself. A commander who was unable to prevent rape was considered unable to fulfill his office.[183] Terry's commander was also protecting the rapist, as evinced by the last line of the statement. As common at that time as now, part of this protection involved the dismissal of sexual assault complaints as false and/or superficial, as well as unimportant to the mental and physical safety of the troops, despite the threat of having a rapist deployed with servicewomen. This attitude was partially due to the previously stated widely held opinion that military men were more important and useful to the war effort than women and contributed to the belief that "any military woman in a combat zone would be more trouble than she was worth."[184] Furthermore, any argument against prosecution by bringing up the welfare and future of the rapist is not only sexist, but serves to trivialize sexual assault. Such a statement embodies the "boys will be boys" sentiment and decriminalizes rape.

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[182] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 304-305.

[183] This is still common today. Often times when a military woman reports sexual assault to her commanding officer, he will sweep the accusation under the rug to protect his own job. This will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven as well. [See also: *Invisible War*, directed by Kirby Dick (2012; Los Angeles, California: Cinedigm Corp, 2013), DVD.]

[184] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 211 and 206. This belief was part of Holm's explanation for the reticence the military displayed toward deploying women. However, it is also a part of the justification commanding officers used for not reporting sexual harassment or assault, as they would rather transfer or discharge a woman than lose a man.

During Morgan's interview, she spoke of not only her own experience with sexual assault, but also the stories she was told of young women who were raped and abused by recruiters, including one from Puerto Rico who cut a deal with her abuser: "She would act as a prostitute for a while and give him some income and he'd get her in the service. I mean he lived up to his end of the deal, but so did she."[185] While Morgan did not say whether the recruiter in question raped her friend, this was certainly a case of sexual abuse and abuse of authority. The recruiter leveraged his position of power to coerce a young woman into a dangerous job. She had the "choice" to work as a prostitute for a brief time and get the chance to achieve her military dreams or give up on the military all together. That is not an actual choice.

Later in Morgan's military career, she was sexually/physically assaulted by a German soldier at an enlisted men's club. She fought back and was tackled by a Marine who worked as a bouncer. Instead of sending her assailant to jail, the military brought Morgan up in front of her captain. Although the incident took place in a full view of multiple enlisted men, no one took her side and the Navy reprimanded Morgan for defending herself. Her experience further proves the futility of reporting sexual assault, as well as the ambivalent attitude many military men, and the military institution, harbored toward rape and sexual assault. Despite having witnesses, Morgan's allegation went no further than her commanding officer who stonewalled her, as was common when military women reported harassment or assault.[186]

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[185] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 466.

[186] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 485-86. Morgan spoke earlier of her experiences with sexual harassment while working at the club. She went on to describe her assault as both

Not all commanding officers, however, were more worried about their reputation and those of male officers than enlisted women. A captain who had a reputation as a "fixer" eventually replaced Morgan's original commanding officer. He was specifically sent to crack down on sexual harassment and assault. "We went from a lot of women being sexually harassed…. Openly sexually harassed … by their supervisors and the base Captain, to just … it was like night and day," Morgan recalled. He refused to tolerate harassment and developed a security team to prevent assault.[187] Morgan's captain was the exception, however, not the rule. Servicewomen who reported harassment or assault found that most commanding officers ignored these charges. As reports rarely reached top brass, they are rarely a part of the official military records.

The two veterans who described their experiences with sexual assault to O'Daly were in the United States or U.S. territories at the time of their respective attacks: Terry was raped shortly after her enlistment during training at the Naval Hospital Corps School in Illinois and Morgan was attacked at least ten years later while stationed at the U.S. Naval Base in Guam.[188] Vuic's book, on the other hand, makes mention of three women

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"physical" and "sexual." While she was not raped, her assault and experience with her commanding officer is just as important to acknowledge as the story of a rape victim.

[187] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 487-88.

[188] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 304 & 485. While both women were Navy, I do not believe that it can be inferred that the Navy had any more problems with sexual assault than any other branch. Terry enlisted in 1963 and medically discharged without ever being deployed (year of discharge is unknown). She did not say whether her medical discharge was a result of injuries sustained during her assault. Morgan enlisted in 1973 was attacked at some point during her four year enlistment. While the year is unclear, it can be assumed that the attack occurred early in her tour, before the "fixer" captain took command.

who were sexually assaulted while deployed to Vietnam, two of whom were raped. Vuic highlights the story of a nurse lieutenant stationed at the 93rd Evacuation Hospital who was raped by a captain on January 31, 1969. The lieutenant reported her attack to the hospital chief nurse, Mary A. Foley, but did not want to file a formal report because she believed nothing would come of the allegations and she did not want it publicized. According to Foley, the unnamed lieutenant "desired only that I protect the other girls and tell them to lock their doors." After several conversations with the lieutenant about the incident, the hospital chief nurse reported the assault to the hospital commander. At the first meeting, hospital commander John Kovaric told the victim that a psychiatrist believed that the nurse, as a homosexual, had made up the story to figuratively castrate men and went on to say that the nurse was just upset that she had not been paid for her services. Both statements were blatant lies, as Kovaric later admitted in his testimony. The hospital commander then called a second meeting, to which he invited the alleged perpetrator to clear the air and resolve the issue, as if rape can be mediated.[189]

Army officials later called the commander's lies "of questionable taste," but also claimed that the victim did not protest enough during the assault and therefore did not issue a ruling on whether rape had occurred. The report's summary went on to say that the lieutenant's refusal to bring charges against her assailant and "her subsequent actions leave 1LT____'s veracity and integrity open to question." Despite the testimonies of multiple nurses who stated that the captain had previously entered their quarters uninvited

[189] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman,* 144-45.

and made inappropriate sexual advances, investigators found the accused perpetrator was a "normal" man who "would not resort to forcing himself sexually on a woman."[190]

While this story takes place before the scope of this dissertation, the Army's response in this case serves as an example of why so few women reported sexual assault. The report's discussion of the lieutenant's integrity, and other character-based opinions reflected the tendency to blame the victim for the attack. The investigators' insinuations that the lieutenant's response was inappropriate, and the questioning of her allegation's veracity, were part of an attitude toward doubting reports of sexual assault and dismissing allegations. On the other hand, the captain's repeated sexual harassment was considered natural male behavior. Army nurse Lottie Jane stated "the good ole boy army did not discipline men for behaving like a normal male."[191] With this outcome, it is no wonder that military women were reticent to report sexual harassment or assault.[192] Additionally, a number of servicewomen blamed themselves, believing that they "brought their difficulties on themselves by volunteering to serve in a disreputable institution during a

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[190] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman,* 146. The names of the accuser and the accused were redacted from the report. (The full file and investigation records are in *Report of Investigation Concerning Alleged Rape and Other Matters in the 93rd Evacuation Hospital*).

[191] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman,* 144.

[192] However, while the military's response to sexual assault certainly suggests a sexist climate that was hostile toward victims, the civilian world was not much different. The women's movement of the 1960s and 70s pushed toward new laws and investigations of sexual harassment and assault. During the beginning of the Vietnam War, few laws about assault existed, allowing reports to be swept under the rug. As the war progressed, so did legislation regarding sex crimes, but these regulations rarely made a difference in the military, as evidenced by Morgan's assault sometime after 1973.

dishonorable war."[193] While it is common for survivors to blame themselves, a narrative that is enforced by the victim-blaming that is rampant in larger society, servicewomen's perception of who is to blame was further complicated by their choice to join the military.

It is important to note that sexual assault is about power, not sexual desire. Therefore, the captain's "natural" sexual behaviors and attractiveness should have played no part in the investigation or his defense. Psychologists identify four strategies used by perpetrators of sexual assault: "(1) the use or threat of physical force, (2) the exploitation of the other person's incapacity, (3) the use of verbal pressure, (4) the exploitation of authority."[194] The majority of the examples given here include the first one, use or threat of violence. During the Vietnam War-era, the Uniform Code of Military Justice established in 1950 governed the laws surrounding sexual assault and rape, described as "rape and carnal knowledge." According to the UCMJ:

> (a) Any person subject to this chapter who commits an act of sexual intercourse with a female not his wife, by force and without her consent, is guilty of rape and shall be punished by death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct. (b) Any person subject to this chapter who, under circumstances not amounting to rape, commits an act of sexual intercourse with a female not his wife who has not attained the age of sixteen years, is guilty of carnal knowledge and shall be punished as a court-martial may direct. (c) Penetration, however slight, is sufficient to complete either of these offenses.[195]

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[193] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 520.

[194] William T. O'Donohue and Paul A. Schewe, eds. *Handbook of Sexual Assault and Sexual Assault Prevention* (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2019), accessed November 28, 2023, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5962996.

[195] U.S. Congress. United States Code: Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. §§ 801-940 .1950 "§ 920. Art. 120. Rape and carnal knowledge," 1031.

The UCMJ's definition of rape therefore includes violence. While rape laws, both within the military and outside of it, now include other forms of coercion, common law in the early 1970s equated consent with force and judged force by resistance. Resistance was not technically part of the definition of rape, a survivor of sexual assault needed to prove resistance to the court by showing injuries received from forced penetration alone were not enough. The judicial requirement of showing resistance put the victim on trial. This requirement often codified in state law.[196] This not only explains the reticence of women to come forward if they were sexually assaulted, but also explains why when servicewomen spoke of sexual assault in the Vietnam-era, they talked about violent assaults, as opposed to other types of coercion, and include details about their injuries.

By 1975, studies on sexual assault showed that increased victim resistance escalated the amount of violence. That same year, the Michigan court system abolished resistance as a requirement and removed almost all lines of questioning related to the survivor's conduct. Most states did not eliminate as a requirement, some removed the amount of resistance required or allowed for less or no resistance, as long as the victim was in fear of severe harm or death, although the fear of rape itself, or fear of any physical harm, was not a good enough reason to not resist. Furthermore, common law defined rape specifically as penis-in-vagina intercourse, not oral copulation, anal intercourse, or penetration by any other object or part of the body. These laws slowly changed throughout the mid to late 1970s, state by state.[197]

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[196] Diane M Danne, "Rape Law Reform: How Far Have We Come?" The Prison Journal Volume 68 Issue 2 (Oct. 1988): 3.

[197] Danne, "Rape Law Reform: How Far Have We Come?," 3.

Unlike civilian courts, the UCMJ specifically outlawed anal intercourse, defined as "unnatural carnal copulation with another person of the same or opposite sex" although the military mostly used this statute to prosecute gay men.[198] Beyond that, the UCMJ reflected the common laws of the early 1970s. The UCMJ did not address any other kind of sexual assault, nor did it mention sexual harassment. Servicewomen wishing to press charges for harassment or assault had to use other recognized statutes. For instance, if the perpetrator was an officer, cadet, or midshipman, they could be brought up on charges of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman."[199] Enlisted men could be charged with "cruelty toward, or oppression or maltreatment of, any person subject to his orders," if the victim was his subordinate.[200] General Article 134 also allowed for the military to convene a court-martial against any servicemember for " all disorders and neglects to the prejudice of good order and discipline in the armed forces, all conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces" or for threatening another servicemember "with the intention thereby to obtain anything of value or any acquittance, advantage, or immunity."[201] Survivors who wanted to prosecute perpetrators

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[198] U.S. Congress. United States Code: Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. §§ 801-940 . 1950, "§ 925. Art. 125. Sodomy," 1032. For more on prosecution of gay men in the military, see Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire.*

[199] U.S. Congress. United States Code: Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. §§ 801-940 . 1950, "§ 933. Art. 133. Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman," 1034.

[200] U.S. Congress. United States Code: Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. §§ 801-940 . 1950, "893. Art. 93. Cruelty and maltreatment," 1026.

[201] U.S. Congress. United States Code: Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. §§ 801-940 . 1950, "934. Art. 134. General article," 1034.

for non-violent rape, other types of sexual assault, or sexual harassment got creative. These laws did not reflect the changes in civilian courts during 1970s. In fact, the UCMJ defined rape as "sexual intercourse with a female not his wife, by force and without her consent" until the 1990s.[202]

Many servicewomen were afraid to come forward about sexual assault or rape, as allegations of rape were frequently viewed to be the result of a woman changing her mind about sex. The military reflected the belief in larger society that a victim of assault was "asking for it" or "deserved it" because of her clothing or behavior. When a woman reported sexual assault, she was frequently thought to be a promiscuous woman who was reporting consensual intercourse as rape to avoid a bad reputation. The idea that any woman is every asking for sexual assault is related to the idea that sexual crimes are about sexual arousal, however, there is no direct link between sexual arousal and assault, rather rape is about assertion of power over another person, and often driven misogyny, not arousal. Rape therefore reinforced the patriarchal and gender-based hierarchy within the military. The lack of discussion related to this issue, along with sexual orientation and sexual relationships, served to protect military men from negative perceptions and the court of law and furthered the feminine and ladylike image of military women as failure to report kept reputations safe from accusations of promiscuity.[203] The lack of prosecution

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[202] U.S. Congress. United States Code: Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. §§ 801-940 .1950 "§ 920. Art. 120. Rape and carnal knowledge," 1031.

[203] Much of common perceptions regarding sexual assault were similar to the lies told by the hospital commander discussed earlier. See Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman,* 144-146. For more on rape as an assertion of power and a tool of domination, see Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 355-65.

and acknowledgement of sexual harassment and assault also meant that servicewomen could never be equal to servicemen. Women in the military had to manage not only fears surrounding deployment and warfare, but also fears of their so-called "brothers." Lt. Col. Patricia Murphy, Chief Nurse of the Army Nurse Corps in Vietnam, explained in her 1971 *End of Tour Report*, "very few female nurses worry or fear enemy attacks, rocket, sapper, or a real attack. The females are more fearful of assault by our own troops and with good reason from experience."[204]

Much like their male comrades, military women returning from Vietnam had to reacclimate to life in the United States, into a world that had changed and a place where they were safe from bullets and explosions. After their return to the United States, many servicewomen were angry and resentful. Their resentment, however, ran deeper than the classic Vietnam-era syndrome of betrayal by the government and country. According to O'Daly, "pain, the confusion, the anger and the disillusionment are the legacy of military service for women of the Vietnam generation." Servicewomen trained in nontraditional MOS were unable to find jobs in their fields in the private sector, as contractors would rather hire men and the military did not offer transitional training for female veterans.[205] Nurses had a different set of struggles. Lily spoke specifically the bitterness she felt as a nurse: "I had those problems when I came back from Vietnam and started working in civilian hospitals and having doctors order me about, I couldn't put up with that because I

[204] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman,* 143-4.

[205] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 520.

knew that they couldn't do this to me anymore, I knew who I was as a woman and as a nurse and I knew that I didn't have to put up with the bullshit, and I didn't."[206]

When they returned to civilian life, former military nurses became nothing more than glorified orderlies, expected to blindly follow doctor's orders. Civilian hospitals dismissed the responsibilities and authority they had during their time in the military as a fluke, and they had to start over. Jacqueline Navarra Rhoads put it simply: "How do you prevent yourself from doing things that came automatically to you for 18 months? How do you stop the wheels, and become the kind of nurse you were before you left?"[207]

Loreen understood the differences between nursing in theater and stateside very simply: "There was probably more [gender] equality in the military than outside."[208] In Vietnam, nurses had been trained as physician's assistants, helped during surgery, and were sometimes expected to be wholly responsible for a number of patients at a time. Their work was necessary to the war effort, and it empowered them and helped them feel strong and capable. Moreover, as commissioned officers, they were respected by the corpsmen stationed with them. As deployed nurses began as officers, or were commissioned while still in nursing school, they did not know any other way to nurse. Returning stateside, however, was a wake-up call for many servicewomen. "You come out of the service or even back to the states and your I.V. teams, you have dietary teams," stated Mary Ellen about her return to the civilian sector in 1971. "You don't touch

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[206] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 222.

[207] Freedman and Rhoades, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 22.

[208] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 383.

anybody. And it was, like, but I know how to do this." In addition, she complained, "I had a capability for a responsibility that I wasn't being given at that hospital." She moved from civilian hospital to civilian hospital for years before choosing to return to the Army in 1981, believing that her skills were best utilized in the military.[209]

Jeanne Rivera testified, "I have lived with that all my life… situations where I had no power. Vietnam was just about the only exception." Rivera was an operating room supervisor during her deployment, an officer with power over other nurses, corpsmen, and even doctors. By her own admission, she would never reach this level of power before or after her deployment.[210] The military gave Rivera an opportunity that civilian women would never have, an opportunity to be in control. Many Vietnam-era military women felt the same. Mary enlisted in 1974, just before the war ended, and served for two years in the Army, MOS 3lb. Field Radio Repair. As one of the first women to finish the class and enter an MOS that had just been opened to women, she was trained at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, one of four women on a post of about 600 men. When Mary was stationed in Miseau, Germany, she was the first woman on a post with no female barracks or bathrooms and was bused in from Landstuhl. Mary only spent one year as a civilian before deciding to reenlist. Even though she was unable to re-enter her previous MOS due to restrictions on the number of women and became a cook, she believed that the military would offer her more opportunities than she would find as a civilian. The Army gave Mary a chance to gain independence, financial security, maturity, education, and job

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[209] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 264.

[210] Freedman and Rhoades, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 73.

experience that allowed her to make the most out of her life. Mary's goal was to put in her 20 years in the military and 20 years in civil service, which would allow her to retire at 59 with two pensions, with plenty of her life ahead of her. From the kitchen, she moved up in the service, especially when "rumors circulated that females just couldn't recruit." Mary went on to say "naturally … I had to show them that we could!" At the time of her interview, she was the only female recruiter in western Massachusetts and incredibly successful, thus proving the naysayers wrong.[211]

Other career servicewomen spoke less of the opportunities the military afforded them and more of the possibilities their service gave them after they left the military and the dreams they believed they could achieve because of their military experiences. Cpt. Elizabeth Allen had earned her M.A. in psychiatric nursing before she received her commission. Unlike other nurses, her prior education gave her more choices after she left the military. She became South Carolina's State Director of Psychiatric Nursing yet felt unfulfilled. Captain Allen had earned a taste of her potential through her experience in Vietnam, as well as a thirst to fulfill that potential. She went on to receive a Ph.D. in elementary guidance, becoming the first African-American woman to earn a Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina and worked as a consultant to the Veteran's Administration and an advisor to the Congressional Black Caucus on African-American Veterans.[212] Without her military experience, Captain Allen would have likely been limited by both her gender and race. While she does briefly discuss the constraints on her

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[211] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 408-29.

[212] Steinman, *Women Veterans*, 98-100.

during the beginning of her service, the civilian world was in many ways more conservative than the military. In the military, rank was more important than race or gender. As a Black woman in the civilian United States, Allen would not have enjoyed the same opportunities as she did in the military.

Captain Allen was one of many women who found herself working for the federal government on the status of veterans. Some nurses, such as First Lieutenant Garvet, worked for veterans' groups and the Veteran Administration to change the status of women as veterans and to force an acknowledgement of their service. Many of them, however, emphasize this work was a way to reach their potential that they were denied in civilian hospitals.[213] By challenging the system that wrote women out of the Vietnam War, female veterans forced changes within the Veterans Administration, regaining some of the power they lost when returning to civilian life.

Women in nontraditional MOS that chose to leave the military were severely limited in their choices. While their male counterparts were frequently recruited into the private sector by security firms or defense contractors, female veterans did not have the same opportunities. Their technical training did not translate into a job in the civilian world and there was little to no help for transition.[214] They returned from the military to find that they were expected to assimilate into civilian life without a support system. They had gained skills they would not have learned outside of the military but were not prepared by anyone to start over again. Some female Vietnam-era veterans chose to stay

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[213] Steinman, *Women Veterans*, 113-114.

[214] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 520.

in the military or re-enlist so that they could achieve their full potential while others left the military and tried to make their way in a civilian world, sometimes by challenging the very ideas of what a veteran was.

According to oral histories, some women transitioned from the military to civilian life without needing to confront what they had seen in country. Other women took years to recover, and some would say that they never completely did. Healing and reconciliation took many different forms and paths, from psychiatric therapy and veterans' groups (both female-only and mixed sex), to faith, to forgiveness of themselves and their comrades, to simple acknowledgement of the roles they had played. Each woman had a different story.

Like the men they served with, female veterans often avoided speaking of their experiences, for their own sake and for their families. "People didn't want to hear about it when I came home" Lt. Diana Dwane Poole recalled. "They didn't even know anything about it. My mother won't even listen."[215] The world had changed, and many women who had answered their nation's call were now hated for doing so.[216] "I learned not to wear my uniform anywhere off base and to have clothes over it when driving to and from work off base," Jackie Knoll remembered about her posting in northern California. "One evening coming off duty I went out to my car to find the headlights knocked out. Other nurses had missing batteries."[217] Lieutenant Elbring remembers traveling home from

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[215] Freedman and Rhoades, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 45.

[216] While Gary Kulik argued that the number of veterans who experienced verbal or physical abuse because of their service, the prevalence of such tales in oral histories means they must be mentioned and analyzed. (See: Kulik, *"War Stories,"* 79-97.)

[217] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 79.

Vietnam in uniform and arriving in the United States only to have "people [come] over to us and spit on me and [push] me and called me baby killer and called me names."[218] Other forms of discrimination were less criminal. In a letter to a friend, O'Daly spoke of the reactions during her time at Smith: "People's reactions to women veterans and the kind of work I do have ranged from intimidation to political rhetoric about women 'who defend the patriarchy.'"[219] Female veterans avoided discussing their military service, sometimes for years, to avoid the judgments that came with being a Vietnam War veteran. While many Vietnam-era male veterans felt the same, female veterans had their own struggles. Terry stated, "sometimes I wanted people to know and sometimes I didn't." While she received a medical discharge, she was embarrassed that she "wasn't as disabled as some of the guys coming back from Nam … I felt I wasn't deserving of it (because it wasn't a war wound)."[220]

The lack of recognition female veterans received from the military itself and the Department of Defense compounded servicewomen's feelings of betrayal and fears of judgement. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) did not recognize former servicewomen as veterans, and they were rarely welcome in veterans' groups. Even after the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) succumbed to years of prodding and finally accepted women in 1978, female veterans received little to no help. There was no data

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[218] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam,* 152.

[219] P. Lough O'Daly to Elizabeth Harden. January 26, 1984. "P. Lough O'Daly Papers," *Sophia Smith Collection,* Smith College.

[220] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 324-5.

from the Bureau of Census on female veterans, no information on use of the G.I. Bill from the Department of Education, no statistics from Veterans Affairs based on gender/sex until 1977, and little to no information available from the Department of Defense. According to O'Daly, veterans' organizations often blamed the female veterans, but the biggest problem was lack of outreach. Servicewomen were frequently misinformed or poorly informed about the benefits they were eligible for and stigma against servicewomen often kept them from looking for information.[221] Female veterans were abandoned by all except each other, and occasionally a sympathetic doctor, but sometimes that was not enough.

Former Lt. Judy Marron served eight years in the Army during the Vietnam War, someplace in the Pacific (possibly Hawaii), treating severely injured soldiers. During her tour, she experienced serious sexual harassment from at least one of the doctors. A manic-depressive, she turned to alcohol to cope after she left the military. Lieutenant Marron had been involved in the W.V.I.N. for a few months before she committed suicide. In an unsigned letter to O'Daly, a member of W.V.I.N. West related: "There's no doubt that what she was going through around dealing with her military experiences was a very big part of her life and no doubt a contributing factor in her decision." While Marron had gotten some therapy for manic-depressive disorder, the designation of

[221] Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*, 158 and O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 512-14. The 1977 report was invalidated by the 1980 census.

women as noncombatant/nonveteran had left her without the help she needed to recover from her wartime experience.[222] She was a casualty of war.

Many female Vietnam veterans attempted to forget, explain, or run away their experiences, and found themselves unable to do so. Lynn spoke of a search for "the truth" that turned her onto the occult. After failing to find that truth, she became a missionary in Haiti, far away from Vietnam, but unable to escape the war due to flashbacks.[223] Terry turned to painkillers to dull physical and mental pain. The first time she went for help, the doctors at the VA told her she wasn't addicted, and she became more self-destructive: "I lived on beer and coke, maybe a piece of bread."[224] For others, it was years before something brought them right back to the Vietnam War. While some women were triggered by something as simple as a helicopter or an emergency room, others found their memories arising because of military conflicts. Captain Allen served in the military for many years after the war. It was not until images of the first Gulf War appeared in newspapers and on television that she began to have flashbacks. Former Lt. Maureen Walsh, a Naval nurse, also remained in the military for a few years after the war ended, coping well until her service during the Iran Hostage Crisis. Former Army nurse Sara McVicker was first triggered by the Beirut Marine Barracks bombing in 1983 and the invasion of Grenada later that year.[225]

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[222] "P. Lough O'Daly Papers," *Sophia Smith Collection*, Smith College. Letter dated Saturday October 9, 1982. (Unsigned, possibly sent by Debra Debont who seemed to be O'Daly's West Coast contact.)

[223] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 229-231.

[224] O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 320.

[225] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 250, and Walker, *A Piece of My Heart*,121 and 216.

Today, this type of anxiety and flashback are usually understood as symptomatic of PTSD. However, PTSD was not recognized by the VA for ten years after the Vietnam War ended. In research surveys on the prevalence of PTSD and other anxiety-related disorders, female veterans were not included. When the VA began to treat PTSD among male veterans, female veterans found that "even after the public and Congress finally recognized the toll of that war upon the shattered lives of veterans, women were not included among the group considered to need help."[226] PTSD was associated with combat, and as the military claimed that women had not served in combat, they were not covered under the counseling programs.[227]

Female veterans sought help long before the military was forced to acknowledge them as veterans. Army veteran Rebecca McCauley spent a year in a VA hospital that lacked a woman's ward, where she was harassed daily by male patients and became afraid to even shower or go to the bathroom alone. Chris was warned by a female nurse not to enter the VA treatment center alone and recalled the dirty looks she and other female veterans received because as women they could not have been injured in a war, and therefore had no right to medical care through the VA. Veterans treatment centers were inhospitable to female veterans. In September of 1982, the Vet Centers developed a Working Group on Women Vietnam Veterans that confronted some of the assumptions about PTSD and male veterans. Gender specific programs started to develop, and the definition of PTSD expanded to include women as veterans. That same year, female

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[226] Willenz, *Women Veterans*, 192.

[227] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 125.

veterans sued the Department of Veterans Affairs and forced a congressional hearing that explored discriminatory practices against women, resulting in the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. VA hospitals began treating women the next year. Allowing female veterans to receive this help gave them the chance to receive psychiatric counseling and join veteran's support groups, a necessary step to recovery for many.[228]

In her memoir, *American Daughter Gone to War*, Lieutenant Smith spoke of the courage she found to tell her story and to begin reconciling her deployment experience with her stateside military and civilian life. She credited reading Van Devanter's memoir as the first time she began to allow her emotions to take over and really cry about her own experiences. That book was the catalyst that that led her to reach out for help by contacting Rose Sandecki at the Concord Vet Center, a Vietnam veteran who was willing to talk about her own experiences, admit her own feelings, and therefore allow other female veterans to open up about theirs.[229] Despite sinking into a depression fueled by

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[228] "P. Lough O'Daly Papers," *Sophia Smith Collection*, Smith College; O'Daly, "Survivors Project," 458-60; Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 129; Freedman and Rhoades, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 5; and Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*, 158. The fact that Lynda Van Devanter's memoir and Keith Walker's oral history collection were published during this time period (1983 and 1985, respectively) is unlikely to be a coincidence. These books forced the VA and the public to acknowledge that women had been a part of the war and were deeply affected by their experiences.

[229] Smith, *American Daughter Gone to War*, 296-302. Army Capt. Rose Sandecki, served as a head nurse at the 12th Evac Hospital at Cu Chi beginning, shortly after receiving her commission in 1968. Sandecki was appointed team leader of the Concord Veteran Center outside of San Francisco in 1981, becoming the first woman who served in-country to be named director of a veteran center. She also served on the Advisory Committee of the Readjustment Counseling Program of the Veterans Administration. Sandecki was mentioned in multiple oral histories and interviews and is acknowledge by veterans and civilians as an authority and advocate for female Vietnam veterans and has spoken at college campus and other events.

alcohol and marijuana, it was Van Devanter and Sandecki's candidness that allowed Smith to open up to her friends and family and, in a sense, come out as a Vietnam veteran. With the help of veterans' groups, both female only and co-ed, she began to reconcile her civilian life with her military experience.

When former Army Sgt. Linda J. McClenahan, Signal Corps, called her local vet center in the early 1980s, she found that it had been set up exclusively for male veterans. For another year or so, she continued to experience PTSD symptoms before giving the center another chance. After getting help for alcoholism, Sergeant McClenahan got involved with a women's Vietnam veterans' group. It was because of this group and the vet center that she began to heal:

> Now that I'm able to look at things again and allow myself to feel and re-experience some of them, I feel like I've made it home. I have finally accepted the fact that things that happened in the Vietnam War were not my fault. I couldn't have done anything more than what I did to help those people that I was able to help. I couldn't have done anything to change the fact that people died … people that I knew and cared about and loved, and strangers too … and for such a long time I kept thinking that I should have been able to do more.[230]

Most, when recalling their postwar experiences, spoke of the importance of having a support system of women who had been through similar situations.[231] Walker acknowledged this: "Once aware of the need—ten, twelve, fifteen years later—in an echo of their camaraderie in Vietnam, they take care of their own." Female veterans had no one else to turn to, so they helped each other heal. "This is a very real process, these

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[230] Walker, *A Piece of My Heart*, 27.

[231] For examples see: Steinman, *Women in Vietnam* and Walker, *A Piece of My Heart*, 330.

women reaching out to one another," he wrote, "and one that will take years before each will have made her own peace with the Vietnam War."[232] These "rap" groups/support groups were similar to the consciousness-raising groups that were popular among feminists. Consciousness-raising groups were a place where women "uncovered and openly revealed the depths of their intimate wounds" according to bell hooks. She argued this "this confessional aspect served as healing ritual." While the purposes behind consciousness-raising groups (to confront patriarchy) and veteran support groups were different, they worked in the same way: creating a separate space by and for women to share their pain and find others who understood. Both groups were about safety.[233]

While all servicemembers struggle with their experiences in war and their return home, but servicewomen and female veterans have a different set of struggles. These struggles were compounded by the gendered expectations the military placed on them to uphold certain standards of respectability. In the 1980s, books and memoirs by former servicewomen began to give the public a fuller understanding of the experiences they had during deployment and after returning home. In speaking candidly about sex, sexuality, sexual assault and harassment, and mental health, servicewomen began to tell their full story.

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[232] Walker, *A Piece of My Heart*, 6.

[233] bell hooks, *Feminism is For Everybody* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 2000), 8 and Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 133.

CHAPTER 4:

"WHICH ONE OF THOSE MEN IS A WOMAN?": WOMANPAUSE AND MEMORIALIZATION IN THE 1980S

In November 1982, the Vietnam War Memorial was dedicated to the people who had fallen in service to their country and the veterans who survived. The ceremony included a reading of the names of those who had died, including eight women. P. Lough O'Daly attended the ceremony with other female veterans. Her memories came out disjointed: "Occasionally, a woman would walk by in jungle fatigues or wearing a Vietnam campaign ribbon and be hugged by a sobbing male veteran" as she represented the nurse who had treated him. During the ceremony, she recalled, "Dolores and I stood in the back. I studied her face for a moment as she listened with the controlled impassivity of a survivor." O'Daly came to the Vietnam War Memorial to support the veterans, but also to hear the reading of the names. More specifically, the name of 1st Lt. Sharon Ann Lane. "That name," wrote O'Daly, "the only one we knew then of the eight women who had died in Vietnam, had come to symbolize the existence and sacrifice of the women in uniform in the Vietnam War."[234] In 1982, this memorial was the only federal project erected to commemorate the life of Lieutenant Lane, and the thousands of other servicepeople who lost their lives in the Vietnam War. Today this memorial, known colloquially as "the Wall," is the central edifice in a larger set of memorialization projects concerning the Vietnam War.

Memorialization projects are an important tool in the remembrance of wars, for both veterans and civilians. These projects can take many different forms, the most

[234] O'Daly, "Survivors Project,", 7-10.

prominent of which are the physical representations of memorialization. In Washington, D.C., the National Mall is filled with statues that commemorate those who lost their lives in wars and those who survived, focusing mostly on the sacrifices of male veterans. In Erika Doss's examination of memorializations of female veterans, she argues that "close attention to these 'women warrior' memorials, as many are increasingly called, reveals that gender issues remain central not only to the experiences of women in the U.S. military but to how they are remembered and commemorated. While these memorials recognize and pay tribute to women in the military, they elide its dominating masculinity."[235] While estimates concerning the number of women in the military during the Vietnam War are contested, the majority served in traditionally feminine roles. It is only these servicewomen who have been remembered and memorialized in memoirs and interviews, and various memorials around the country.

The memorialization projects of the 1980s coincided with the election of President Ronald Reagan and a conservative turn in society. President Carter's plans for the 1980s included a proposed increase in the number of women in the military with a target figure of about 250,000 by 1985. As it turned out, Reagan's inauguration on January 20, 1981, led to a postponement of a pro-woman era, and with it, support for military women's equality. Soon the military, with the assumed backing of the new conservative commander-in-chief, applied the brakes to the recruitment of women. While this only lasted for a few years, it shaped policy, perceptions, and rhetoric that affected

[235] Erika Doss, "Women Warrior Memorials and Gender in Contemporary American Public Art," *Public Art Dialogue,* Vol. 2 Issue 2 (September 2012), 190.

the recruitment and service of women throughout the 1980s.[236] This chapter will explore both the "womanpause" itself and the memorialization projects of the Vietnam War, focusing on the struggle to install the Vietnam Women's Memorial in the context of this womanpause. It will argue that both the physical memorials, and the rhetoric concerning memorials made it clear that servicewomen were still different than other veterans because of their gender.

Over the course of the Carter administration, 173,450 American servicewomen served on active duty, with many more in the reserves and National Guard. The administration expected to recruit a further 91,000 by 1986, but planned to keep military strength consistent, meaning that the proportion of women in the military would rise from 8.5 percent to 12 percent. With Carter's loss to Reagan, everything changed. The Reagan administration planned to raise military strength by 10 percent (200,000 people) by 1985, relying entirely on volunteers, preferably men. Many servicewomen feared that the services would try to enact new policies to reverse some of the gains women in the military made previously. While Reagan often claimed to believe in legal and economic gender equality, many people questioned if he would stand up for women. The military tested this early on in a campaign to blame servicewomen for lack of military readiness. The Army led the charge.[237]

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[236] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 285-87 and Bailey, *America's Army*, 170-71. Also see: Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York, New York: Crown Publishing Group, 1991). While Fauldi does not specifically mention servicewomen, the backlash against military women's equality can be read as a part of the larger reaction she described, as the advances were not only part of a liberal equality-based agenda, but also a feminist one.

[237] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 385-87.

Just after the November 1980 election, the Army and Air Force secretly sent proposals to the Reagan administration transition team that would halt plans to increase numbers of servicewomen, arguing that they needed to assess women's impact on force readiness. Both the Army and the Air Force requested that they hold recruitment goals for servicewomen to the minimum needed to meet overall recruitment goals for both 1981 and 1982. When the press questioned the Navy and the Marine Corps about these proposals, they expressed similar concerns, although they did not submit similar proposals.[238]

That same year, Congress authorized a site for the Vietnam Wall in Washington's Constitutional Gardens. The idea for a memorial was first proposed by Corporal Jan Scruggs, a former infantryman, and founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., The foundation was incorporated on April 27, 1979, in the District of Columbia by a group of Vietnam veterans. According to the National Parks Service (NPS), these veterans wanted "a tangible symbol of recognition from American society" that would "separate the issue of those who served in Vietnam from that of U.S. policy in war" to "begin the important process of national recognition." The fund posited four criteria for the memorial:

> 1. That it would be reflective and contemplative in character, 2. That it harmonize with its surroundings, especially the neighboring national memorials, 3. That it contain the names of all who died or remain missing, and 4. That it make no political statement about the war.[239]

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[238] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 381-97.

[239] National Park Service, *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2011), 2.

In the fall of 1980, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund announced a national contest to select the memorial's design. A group of internationally renowned artists and designers judged 1,421 design entries and unanimously selected the design of Maya Lin, a 21-year-old student at Yale University. Lin's design was intended to be "a park within a park," a space within the National Mall that would be separate but harmonize with its surroundings. The Wall consists of 140 panels of polished black granite of cascading height, literally reflecting the environment and surrounding memorials, as well as the people looking at the monument. It is inscribed with the names of the missing and the dead, with each name accompanied by either a diamond (to denote the deceased) or a cross (to denote those declared missing-in-action or assumed to be a prisoner of war).[240]

Meanwhile, the military was taking steps to limit the recruitment and use of servicewomen. Several servicemen of all ranks were resentful of the growing numbers of women in the AVF and saw the election of President Reagan as a chance to resist widespread changes. Many military leaders, including some women, questioned the credentials of those making policy decisions, as most of them had not served in the military. Civilian officials, concerned with the strength of the military, utilized women to meet personnel needs and issued political mandates to assure some sort of equality. The military resisted these efforts, with many senior leaders conceding that while policymakers meant well, they prioritized political expediency and cared more for equality than national defense. Gen. William Westmoreland argued that the military

[240] National Park Service, *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, 2. According to the NPS, there were 780 servicemen listed as MIA or POWs when the Wall was constructed. If a person returns alive later, a circle is inscribed around the cross. If their remains were found, a diamond is inscribed over the cross.

already relied on servicewomen more than they should and needed to stop their recruitment immediately to assess combat readiness.[241]

On February 26, 1981, before the Reagan administration could fully assess military needs, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel in the U.S. Army, Lt. Gen. Robert G. Yerks, and Acting Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, William D. Clark, testified in front of the Senate Armed Services Manpower Subcommittee that the Army was reevaluating the utilization of servicewomen. Clark testified that "most of them are doing a very fine job," and acknowledged that the Army knew and accepted that servicewomen would be killed and captured in the next war, calling that "a societal issue." Rather, the Army worried about the efficiency and readiness of a force containing numerous servicewomen. The Army did not provide data, instead citing the "feelings" of commanders. For instance, Yerks stated, he was not certain if 40 percent of women in a medical unit was too high of a ratio, but he had a "gut feeling" it was. Yerks also told the committee that the Army was conducting a study to assess the effects of pregnancy, sole parenthood, and what he referred to as "physical problems" to evaluate combat readiness.[242]

The Reagan administration, which had yet to fully staff its manpower/personnel team in the Pentagon, was taken off guard. Congress and the press reacted strongly on both sides of the issue, with Senator Roger W. Jepsen, the Republican Chairman of the Senate Manpower Subcommittee, stating that the military should not "provide the

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[241] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 382-88.

[242] Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 388-89.

foundation for any social experimentation." The Army hoped that bringing back the debate about servicewomen's effects on readiness would convince the Reagan administration to slow and/or halt the recruitment of women across the armed forces. Many leaders and manpower experts in Congress and the military were concerned that the AVF was a mistake, citing the issues encountered while recruiting men in the 1970s as an example of this. Holm suggested that it was more than just a bias against women, arguing that denigrating the success of servicewomen would allow the military to force a return to the draft. Sen. William Proxmire agreed:

> Women have made the All-Volunteer Force successful to date. So maybe what lies behind the Army's change of policy is the simple decision to restrict women recruits, accept the inevitable shortfalls in power levels, and then justify a return to the draft.[243]

Dr. Lawrence J. Korb, the newly appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Logistics, denied that this would happen, stating "no way we would ever leave a spot vacant rather than just taking a woman."[244] The Army had not cleared the recruitment pause with the DOD, with one anonymous insider describing the reaction of the new Reagan administration Defense officials as "incredulous." The Air Force's suspension of the female recruitment was in response to the Army's moratorium, as Air Staff planners were concerned that the Air Force would be expected to fill the gap in female recruitment. They attempted to convince the Reagan transition team that the Air Force could not take any more women with what Holm describes as "vague, unsubstantiated assertions about women having a negative impact

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[243] Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 389-90.

[244] Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 391.

on readiness," stating that they already had too many women in traditional fields. Unlike the Army, the Air Force did not take their case to Congress.[245]

On March 19, 1981, Deputy Defense Secretary Frank C. Carlucci directed Dr. Korb to begin an assessment of female accession and retention policies to examine the effect of servicewomen in mission readiness and capability, as well as the cost of recruiting men instead if standards were lowered. Each of the services could make their cases for increasing, retaining, or reducing the recruitment of women by allowing them to express their opinions on the effects of servicewomen on combat readiness. While final decisions would be made by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Korb also stated that it "wouldn't take a woman for the sake of taking a woman" but rather "we would take women who we felt would contribute to the overall effectiveness of the force in quality and quantity." The military took this as an opportunity to immediately cut back the enlistment of women. Between January and July 1981, the military reported 4,900 fewer female recruits. Its five-year budget programs put enlisted female recruitment goals at 60,000 less than that proposed by the Carter administration.[246]

In October 1981, the DOD's *Background Review: Women in the Military* concluded that the armed forces had been used by the previous administration to fulfill the Democratic Party's equality agenda at the expense of mission readiness. The review also stated that "each service has created detailed program development methodologies to accommodate its own mission and management considerations" that "appear to be

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[245] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 391.

[246] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 391-92.

reasonable means to determine end-strength and accession programs." The report thus justified the high command's desire to allow the services to set their own goals for recruitment without the intervention of the OSD. According to Holm, the services' methodologies were just complicated manipulations of data to set ceilings on the utilization and recruitment of servicewomen.[247]

The report also stated, however, that the military had not provided any documentation of the negative effects of servicewomen on either combat readiness or capability. The Army argued that it needed time to conduct a full policy review, which became the second Women in the Army Study (WITA).[248] While the report recommended that the Army be allowed to limit female enlistment until December to finish this review, it added that if the Army was unable to meet "total recruiting, end strength, or quality goals" it would be required to "demonstrate why female accessions should not be increased." After receiving the review, OSD set new five-year accession goals to level off at about 40,000 women annually. According to OSD officials, these were flexible objectives.[249]

The Army's General Staff believed that if it could provide sufficient evidence, the Reagan administration would agree to a draft, despite all the indicators pointing otherwise. In responding to President Reagan's military strategy, the Army set a new manpower requirement of 96,000 new soldiers, all men, by 1987. This growth spurt,

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[247] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 393-94.

[248] See chapter two for information on the first WITA.

[249] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 395.

according to the Army, "will require extraordinary manpower policies to include significant augmentation to the volunteer concept." While the proposal did not use the terms draft or conscription, the meaning of "augmentation to the volunteer concept" clearly implies the implementation of some type of Selective Service. In response, a spokesperson for Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger stated that "the draft is not anything anybody is considering." Holm called the proposal a "live grenade on the third floor of the Pentagon," reporting that an anonymous OSD official stated that the Secretary was "livid" at the Army's request. Many believed the report to be an act of collusion between members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who were proponents of the draft, and the Army. After President Reagan established a Military Manpower Task Force to evaluate manpower needs and increase effectiveness on July 8, 1981, it did not rule out the draft, but focused on ideas surrounding the volunteer force. According to Secretary Weinberger, these ideas included using civilians for certain jobs and more women in noncombat jobs. In a memorandum to all the service secretaries on January 14, 1982, Secretary Weinberger made the Reagan administration's intentions extremely clear:

> Military women are a very important part of our total force capability. Qualified women are essential to obtaining the numbers of quality people required to maintain the readiness of our forces. This administration desires to increase the role of women in the military, and I expect the Service Secretaries actively to support that policy.
> While we have made progress some institutional barriers still exist. I ask that you personally review your service policies to ensure that women are not subject to discrimination in recruiting or career opportunities. This Department must aggressively break down those remaining barriers that prevent us from making the fullest use of the capabilities of women in providing for our national defense.[250]

[250] Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 395-96.

In accordance with this, Deputy Secretary Carlucci instructed each of the services to report how they intended to remove institutional barriers, including examining how combat exclusion policies impacted servicewomen's careers. If servicewomen's careers were limited or restricted because of combat exclusion, the report needed to specify if it was due to the definition of combat, law, or policy.[251] In March 1982, Assistant Secretary Korb announced that the OSD planned to continue to increase the number of servicewomen in the future, although he did not state any specific numerical goals. The "womanpause" was short-lived, but its effects were felt by women in uniform. The arguments made by the military during this period echoed previous arguments about the utilization of servicewomen and were recycled during the 1980s and resurface even today.

That very same month, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was officially approved, and the construction began on March 26. Construction was completed in late October and it was dedicated on November 13, 1982. The actual celebration of the memorial began on November 10 and lasted for four days, ending with a service at the National Cathedral. The events began with a vigil where volunteers read every name on the mall, pausing for prayer every fifteen minutes from Wednesday morning until Friday at midnight. On Saturday, 15,000 veterans, led by General Westmoreland, marched down Constitution Avenue, cheered on by the crowd. The ceremony also included workshops, parties, and reunions. John P. Wheeler, a graduate of West Point and Harvard Business School and early member of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, recalled that "there was an

[251] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 396.

immense feeling of community. It was becoming apparent that we had been able to be instruments to something far greater than anything we had ever imagined."[252]

The Wall was highly contested even among veterans, however, sometimes because of its physical appearance, but also because it could be viewed as highly impersonal. Second Lt. Judy Hartline Elbring was one of these veterans:

> It was seeing all the names so carefully carved out. So much neater and cleaner than any of them died […] It was almost too neat, almost too precise, almost too lined up. It somehow can't reflect the horror of holding a young man while he dies. […] It's just a giant tombstone, with all the names on it, and there are too many.[253]

Other veterans, both male and female, found comfort in the Vietnam Wall. Its very existence provided an acknowledgement of their wartime service. But moreover, many found greater reassurance that their service had mattered when they visited the wall, both during the dedication and later. Lt. Col. Deanna McGookin believed that the creation of the monument changed the way the country viewed veterans: "It's almost as though the country is saying it's sorry that the whole situation occurred."[254]

Female veterans also saw the Wall, and the warm reception they received from male veterans, as a necessary part of reconciling their service with their non-veteran

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[252] National Park Service, *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, 2 and "History of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial," Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, (2024), https://www.vvmf.org/About-The-Wall/history-of-the-vietnam-veterans-memorial/.

[253] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 153.

[254] Freedman and Rhoades, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 102-3. At the time the oral histories in *Nurses in Vietnam* were recorded, Lieutenant Colonel McGookin had been in the military for 19 years and served as the Chief of the Department of Nursing at Kenner Army Community Hospital in Fort Lee, Virginia.

status after the war.[255] "Maybe this country didn't appreciate us, but the people that were the most important to me were the Vietnam vets," Lt. Lily Jean Adams remembered. "They appreciated what we did, and that's what was so significant." Lieutenant Adams also believed that the tactile Wall allowed for a different kind of reflection than traditional statues. "Everybody was touching the Wall. The names were so significant," Lieutenant Adams explained. "It wasn't a big statue where you're diverted from what it's all about, you're honing in on what this memorial is all about. It's about names, it's about people who lost their lives, or people who are missing in action."[256] The Vietnam Wall was not just about the men who led teenagers into battle, the ones that were more often memorialized in other statues, but about each man and woman who served and lost their lives. It was a form of remembrance that touched the hearts of the veterans.

According to the National Park Service, the Wall lists 58,267 names as of 2011, including the names of the eight women who were killed while deployed. The names are inscribed in chronological order, by the date of the received fatal injury or the day when the missing person was reported to be missing, and then alphabetically within those parameters.[257] Thus, the names of the eight women on the Wall are integrated with the names of thousands of men, serving to unite the women with their comrades. "The Wall

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[255] See previous chapter for more information.

[256] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam* 65-66.

[257] National Park Service, *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, 2 and Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 65.

was complete," Lt. Diane Carlson Evans stated, "because the men and women who died in Vietnam were together on the wall."[258]

While Maya Lin's memorial was supposed to represent the 2.7 million members of the United States military who served in the war zone, the fact that it memorialized the dead and not the living is significant. Despite reassurances by Lin and others that the memorial was meant to represent all Vietnam veterans, some believed that the survivors needed their own memorials for their sacrifices to be remembered by the American people. Furthermore, the disagreements over the physical design of the memorial, especially in the ways in which it almost resembled a gravestone, led veterans and lawmakers alike to contest the idea that it truly was representative of the survivors. "Well they're giving us one more kick," Lt. Valerie Buchanon carped in an interview with Kim Heikkila. "A black slab in the ground? This is going to be our memorial?[259]

Meanwhile, although the womanpause itself may have technically ended, the Women in the Army Study (WITA) dragged on. While the Army had said that the report would be submitted in December 1981, it proved to be more complicated than anticipated. Meanwhile, the Army returned to "gender pure" (single gender) basic training and denied women entrance due to ceilings on female enlistment. The Army also imposed new physical standards on all enlisted soldiers, which some officials admitted were used as "legitimate means" to limit the number of servicewomen. In September 1982, while the Army was still conducting the study, it announced that another twenty-

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[258] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 137.

[259] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 139.

three MOS would be closed to women. The official reason was "exposure to direct combat," but included carpentry and masonry, interior electricity positions, and plumbing, jobs that rarely carried any combat risk.[260] The report was finally released one day before the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was officially dedicated – November 12, 1982. But the Army only released the study after continuous pushing by DACOWITS, which was critical of not just the report, but the process involved in its creation. It appeared to them, and others, that the Army was stalling.

Within a week, Army Secretary John O. Marsh, Jr., announced that some aspects of the report required "further validation" (i.e., more studies) and opened thirteen of the closed MOS to servicewomen. He also announced a planned increase to around 70,000 women in the Army, promising "no qualified woman will be turned away" because of a lack of "available vacancies." It was perhaps too little too late. The morale of Army women had hit a new low, as had the Army's credibility among servicewomen. In a letter to Secretary Weinberger, DACOWITS Chair Dr. Mary Huey questioned "the merit of continual studying of women's military participation," pointing out that just "as a study reaffirms the positive performance and contribution" of servicewomen, "a new one seems to be ordered. This finally raises the question of whether objectivity or the 'right answers' is the purpose."[261]

In 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund began the process of erecting a sculpture depicting three male soldiers next to the wall, a statue that female veterans

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[260] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 401-02.

[261] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 402-03.

worried would depict the Vietnam War as a man's war and erase the contributions of women, especially in the context of the Army's recent limits on female recruitment. A response to the critics of the Wall, the new memorial would depict of flesh-and-blood servicemen in bronze. Designed by Frederick Hart at the same time as the names were being carved on the Vietnam Wall, the statuary group received approval from the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) approved the statue. This new addition became known as the *Three Servicemen* statue in 1983. It was unveiled on Veterans Day in 1984, with a dedicatory speech by President Reagan.[262] By adding the Hart statue to the larger memorialization project of the Vietnam Memorial, the VVMF attempted to appease those that found fault with the less traditional and abstract Lin memorial and preferred the realistic human figures featured on older memorials.

Hart designed *Three Servicemen* to physically represent the soldiers of Vietnam who returned from the war, changed in some way, but very much alive. The Wall focused on the dead and was as cold and unforgiving as the very ground in which their fallen comrades lay, but the *Three Servicemen* was for the living, a memorialization that allowed the war's survivors to point to it and say, "This is me. I was there." *Three Servicemen* was modeled as a realistic depiction of a unit in country, which Hart believed would allow his sculpture to speak for itself, insulating it from the myriad of interpretations that surrounded the Wall.[263] This statue of three soldiers faces the Wall,

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[262] Patrick Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (Boston, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009), 127-88.

[263] Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory*, 188-93.

directing the viewer's gaze towards the names of the dead, thus leading to the interpretation that the soldiers themselves were "coming out of the bush and upon seeing the Wall are frozen in time and space. Their eyes, set deep, revealing the toll that war extracts from innocence, are searching the black granite wall to see if their names have been etched."[264] The statue tells the narrative that the Wall does not, the stories of the men who come to visit Washington, D.C., to gaze upon this representation of themselves. According to Hart:

> They wear it on their uniform and carry the equipment of war; they are young. The contrast between the innocence of their youth and the weapons of war underscores the poignancy of their sacrifice. There is about them the physical contact and sense of unity that bespeaks the bonds of love and sacrifice that is the nature of men at war… Their strength and their vulnerabilities are both evident.[265]

Following the dedication of the Wall, and while the *Three Servicemen* statue was being approved, female World War II veterans met with Ohio Representative Mary Rose Oakar, a Democrat, about the lack of representation of female veterans in the memorialization projects in the United States. Congresswoman Oakar's research showed that servicewomen were rarely even considered in military memorials. That same year, a group of former servicewomen in the Minneapolis area, all of whom had served as nurses, created the Vietnam Nurses Memorial Project Inc. (VWNP) and worked with a sculptor to design a statue specifically to commemorate the role of servicewomen in the Vietnam War. The VWNP set out to educate the public about female veterans, find as many women who had served as possible, and create a memorial for military women next

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[264] Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory*, 191.

[265] National Park Service, *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, 2.

to the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington, D.C. The project was renamed the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project (VWMP), after the VWNP's inquiries unveiled the number of women who served in positions other than nurse.[266]

Unlike either the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* or *Three Servicemen*, which each took about two years from proposal to dedication, the effort to create the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* consumed about a decade. The fight for this memorial spanned three presidential elections and required the approval of two federal commissions as well as two acts of Congress. This movement was a grassroots campaign that involved hundreds of women across the country and triggered intense debates about gender and military service. But it was the female veterans themselves who headlined the project, which depended on a larger public grasp of women's roles during the Vietnam War. Similarly, the *Military Women's Memorial* took twelve years from its first proposal to be built, hindered by severe financial issues.[267] In order to convince lawmakers and the public of the importance of a memorial for female veterans, they had to come together to tell the world that they were there, that they served, and that their service was important, just as they had during the womanpause of the early 1980s.

Even as the VWMP and Congresswoman Oakar set out to publicize the existence and importance of female veterans, active-duty Army women were struggling. In an article in the *Washington Post*, Fred Hiatt quoted a Pentagon advisory group who warned Defense Secretary Weinberger that "women soldiers have been barred from so many

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[266] Heikkila, Sisterhood *of War*, 138-41.

[267] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 141 and "Our Legacy," Military Women's Memorial.

career specialties in the Army that their morale has sunk, endangering the volunteer army."[268] Journalist Dan Cragg spoke with a number of servicewomen, reporting:

> Until now, these hundreds of women have performed well in their jobs. They lack neither the physical or mental competence, nor the courage, to perform the duties for which the Army has spent large sums to train them. They are out because The Word has come down. For some it means the end of years of hard work and struggle and it smells strongly of coddling. Not all Army women are upset over the combat-exclusion policy. Some, perhaps, feel more comfortable in the so-called "traditional" jobs. Yet, those who think the policy unfair are not by any means feminist ideologues; they are just women who want their jobs back. The Army would be wise to restore the status quo ante bellum. I am dreadfully afeared that while trying to cure a problem that doesn't exist, the Army might end up shooting itself in the foot instead.[269]

Despite the backtracking by Army Secretary Marsh, at least 1,200 servicewomen were informed that they would be required to change MOS, while DACOWITS questioned the legality of this move, citing the limitations the Army was placing on servicewomen's advancement.[270] On July 15, 1983, the *Washington Times* reported a conversation between President Reagan and Secretary Weinberger, where Weinberger said "so what we've actually done is say that until there is an actual imminence of war, they will be grease monkeys if they want to and things like that but when it actually gets to combat they will be substituted." In response, the Pentagon stated there would be "no shift from policy," while Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Installations and Logistics, Dr. Lawrence Korb, said such substitutions "could not realistically happen

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[268] Fred Hiatt, "Army Job Limits Said to Lower Women's Morale," *Washington Post*, (July 11, 1983), 1.

[269] Dan Cragg, "Women in the Army," *Washington Times* (March 31, 1983), 2.

[270] Hiatt, "Army Job Limits Said to Lower Women's Morale," 2.

because under many circumstances you just don't have that much warning. Women are an integral part of units."[271] This would be tested only three months later, with the invasion of Grenada.[272]

While Dr. Korb may have assured servicewomen that they were an important part of their units, female veterans had not yet succeeded in building a memorial. Active-duty servicewomen were fighting for their jobs while female veterans were fighting for recognition. To that end, the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation (WIMSA) was incorporated in 1985. With the support of the American Veteran's association, who volunteered to reach out to the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs and various veterans' groups, Congresswoman Oakar introduced H.J. Res. 36, "to establish a memorial in the District of Columbia to honor women who have served in the Armed Forces."[273] She opened the hearings by stating, "In light of their distinguished service, women veterans have throughout history been largely overlooked by their male counterparts in the military and in the Government" arguing that servicewomen "performed with pride and courage in the defense of their country. They have suffered the dangers and agonies of war in combat, combat support and combat service support in many regions of the world." The bill had over 60 co-sponsors, with

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[271] Walter Andrews, "Weinberger trips over women's roles," Washington Times (July 15, 1983): 1 & 3.

[272] See Chapter 4 for more on the invasion of Grenada.

[273] June A. Willenz, "Women Veterans Memorial is on the Road," *Minerva* 4, no. 1 (Spring, 1986): 1-5. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/women-veterans-memorial-is-on-road/docview/1814082379/se-2.

both male and female veterans testifying, as well as legislators and representatives of the services. Dr. Korb, issued a statement of support, stating:

> Today, more than 200,000 officers and enlisted women are making an important contribution to our overall readiness and deterrent capability. They are fulfilling their many responsibilities with the same competence displayed by military men. These women are proud of the accomplishments of the women who have preceded them, and are determined to continue that impressive record. They have earned the respect of those with whom they have served. Now it is only right that they receive the recognition of the Nation they have so ably defended.[274]

The House of Representatives passed the resolution on November 6, 1985. Meanwhile Senator Paul Murkwoski, along with Senator Alan Cranston and 46 more co-sponsors, introduced S.J. 156 and the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, Reserved Water and Resource Conservation of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held hearings on October 29, 1985. According to Senator Lisa Murkowski, Republican from Alaska:

> For many women veterans, service to their country has been an experience they cannot ever forget. Though many suffered the agonies of war, all shared in the pride and courage of service. It is time to let these dedicated Americans know that we as a nation also remember, and we must not let their contributions be forgotten. The sacrifices of these women deserve commemoration, a memorial to their dedication and bravery to stand for all time. It is my belief that this recognition is long overdue.[275]

While legislators endorsed the bill, Deputy Director of the National Park Service, Dennis Galvin opposed the bill, arguing that it "purports to confer additional recognition upon women who have served in the Navy or who are Vietnam veteran" and thus was

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[274] Willenz, "Women Veterans Memorial is on the Road," 1-5.

[275] Willenz, "Women Veterans Memorial is on the Road", 1-5.

"duplicative of memorials already authorized."[276] The National Capital Memorial Advisory Committee, however, unanimously voted to support the memorial by allocating public land for it on November 14. President Reagan signed PL-610 on November 6, 1986, authorizing the creation of a memorial "on Federal lands in the District of Columbia and its environs to honor women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States." At Reagan's direction, WIMSA was put in charge of the campaign, including fundraising. [277]

Meanwhile, the female Vietnam veterans pressing for their own memorial had barely begun their campaign but were bolstered by the support of the larger veteran community. At the end of 1985, the VWMP had the support of five major veterans' organizations: the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled Veterans of America, and Vietnam Veterans of America. By this point, male Vietnam veterans played a large part in the efforts, especially those who had been hospitalized while deployed. Despite the disrespect and inequality women had experienced in the military, many servicemen acknowledged that military women had been a part of the war and were willing to fight for their right to be remembered. The VWMP was able to combat the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), the organization created to "advise the government on matters pertaining to the arts" due to the support of these organizations and male veterans.[278]

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[276] Willenz, "Women Veterans Memorial is on the Road," 1-5.

[277] "Our Legacy," Military Women's Memorial.

[278] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 145-46.

When the VWMP held its first hearing with the CFA in 1987, it lost its bid for the memorial by a vote of 4-1. The leader of the CFA, J. Carter Brown, justified the decision by stating "the Commission views the memorial in its present form as complete" as between the Wall and Hart's statue, the memorial represented "the part standing for the whole" and was "universally intended to include women."[279] After the CFA meeting, Brown stated that "the Park Service even heard from the Scout Dog Association" and would not bow to special interest groups.[280] In comparing the service of women to that of animals, Brown angered not only the members of the VWMP, but other veterans and lawmakers alike. While he believed that he was protecting the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* by preventing the creation of a women's memorial, he painted the women of the VWMP as a threat to both male veterans and memorials by phrasing his denial in terms of protection. [281] Brown's statements reflected 20th century beliefs in the military as an institution of protection. Brown's belief that the women of the VWMP were a threat to the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* reflected the threat many believed they made to the military institution and "the American way of life."[282]

Furthermore, Brown's assertion that the Hart statue was "intended to include women," rang false for many female veterans, including Lt. Diane Carlson Evans, who

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[279] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 146-47.

[280] Quoted by Fred T. Abdella, "Memorial to Women Veterans is Sought," *New York Times* (April 10, 1988).

[281] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 146-48.

[282] See previous chapter.

asked rhetorically, "well, which one of those men is a woman?"[283] Brown's statement on behalf of the CFA, and the vote that denied the VWMP proposal, were reminiscent of ideas of military service that privilege the sacrifices of men as the whole narrative, ideas that have been reflected in popular culture and the media, as well as previous memorializations. Thus, the VWMP's fight to build a memorial for female Vietnam veterans, and the struggles they faced along the way, are a part of a larger struggle for the recognition of women's military service. The years it took for the women's memorial to receive approval reflected the many years female veterans went without being acknowledged as veterans. The campaign for the VWMP was therefore symbolic of the struggles faced by the thousands of Vietnam-era servicewomen after the war.

In 1988, the VWMP received official authorization when Ronald Reagan approved the project and recommended that the women's memorial be erected on the grounds of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. In 1989, George H.W. Bush signed a bill guaranteeing the memorial a spot on the Mall and final approval was granted in 1990. It had been seven years since the project was first proposed by the Vietnam Women's Memorial Fund and official government approval, and the tacit agreement of the CFA, was not the end of the road. From this point, it took three more years before the sculpture was erected, as the committee scraped and pleaded for money and design approval.[284]

Meanwhile, the WIMSA foundation's memorial project was also underway. WIMSA selected the original main gate of the Arlington Cemetery as the site for this

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[283] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 147.

[284] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 151.

project and held a national design competition in 1989.[285] Dedicated by President Herbert Hoover in 1932, the original granite structure was never finished. Retired Brig. Gen Wilma Vaught, the first president of WIMSA, described the space as "the location with the semicircular structure with niches," stating in an official WIMSA progress report in 1988 that:

> The Hemicycle needs repair badly, and we would have to repair it as part of our project, and it would, of course, have to be incorporated into our design without basic structural design changes. The whole complex, however, offers the opportunity to establish a suitable, and impressive memorial. Further, by repairing the Hemicycle, we would also be enhancing the overall appearance of the entrance to Arlington Cemetery for the many, many visitors who come there each year.[286]

The memorial's design and the restoration of the old gate were only two pieces of the larger project. According to Brigadier General Vaught, WIMSA hoped to also have a visitor's center with an auditorium which would screen a documentary about the history of women in the military. In addition, they hoped to have a separate room that would allow people to pull up profiles and pictures of any female servicewomen who registered as veterans with WIMSA. They also hoped to have a shop for visitors to purchase some mementos and books from the memorial. These plans were included in the information given out to prospective designers.[287]

In 1989, a panel of female veterans and prominent designers reviewed 130 submitted proposals and selected a design by architects Marion Weiss and Michael

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[285] "Our Legacy," Military Women's Memorial.

[286] Wilma L. Vaught, "Women in Military Service for America Foundation, Inc. Reports Progress," *Minerva's Bulletin Board* 1, no. 2 (Jun 30, 1988): 2.

[287] Vaught, "Women in Military Service for America Foundation, Inc," 2.

Manfredi, the son of a female World War II veteran. The original design included "tall glass spires rising from the original semicircular retaining wall's upper terrace and which would glow softly in the night." After further conversations with all of the various parties that needed to approve the design, the architects revised the design to blend more with the original structure of the gate and the surrounding area. The new design instead was "an arc of glass tablets etched with quotations by and about military women, which would act as skylights running the entire length of the exhibit gallery" with the idea that the sun would project the quotations onto the walls of the gallery below.[288] It was here, however, that progress stalled.

The congressional legislation giving WIMSA the authority to create the monument had set a deadline of November 1993 and the foundation did not have the money to break ground. As of May 1993, WIMSA stated that they only had one million dollars towards the memorial. While WIMSA received a 9.5 million dollar grant from Congress for the restoration of the original main gate, they were still short around 4 million dollars.[289] On June 14, 1993, then First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton agreed to serve as an honorary chairman to bolster fundraising, stating that "promoting and highlighting the achievements of our women veterans and active-duty service women in

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[288] "Our Legacy," Military Women's Memorial.

[289] "Time is Running Out for Women in Military Service for America Women's Memorial," *Minerva's Bulletin Board* I, no. 2 (Jun 30, 1993): 7, https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/time-is-running-out-women-military-service/docview/231195019/se-2 and Joseph P. Ferry, "Backers Mobilize for War Memorial Women's Military Group Seeks Funding for Arlington Project: [Fifth Edition]," *Morning Call*, (Jun 13, 1994). https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/backers-mobilize-war-memorial-womens-military/docview/392613615/se-2.

the pursuit of a military career and national service is a most worthy cause."[290] In an interview on October 5, 1993, Brigadier General Vaught explained that the foundation assumed that with over 400,000 currently active servicewomen and 1.5 million women veterans, they would be able to fundraise 25 million dollars. Over the course of six years, however, WIMSA could only identify 100,000 female veterans. The records did not exist in the VA and most female veterans did not register with veterans' organizations, who had historically been unwelcoming to women. Even the Vietnam Veterans of America did not include women until 1978.[291] Thus, the military othered female veterans after their service just as they had during.

While the WIMSA memorial was floundering, the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* was finished. In November 1993, female veterans came from all over the country to witness the unveiling and dedication of the first memorialization of women in the U.S. military. The three-day event was planned around a march down Constitution Avenue toward the new memorial. The street was lined with supporters. Male Vietnam veterans, families, friends, and other admirers come to cheer, thank, and hug the women. Many women found the parade an emotional experience, as they had never really been welcomed home or thanked for their service. The parade helped them heal. "I didn't realize until then that I hadn't been welcomed home. I didn't think I needed a parade […] and if that's important to me, it's got to be important for other women too," Lieutenant

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[290] "Time is Running Out," 7.

[291] "P. Lough O'Daly Papers," *Sophia Smith Collection*, Smith College, 512-14, and "General Vaught Talks about American Women Veterans," *Social Education* 58, no. 2 (02, 1994): 98. https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/general-vaught-talks-about-american-women/docview/210626148/se-2. See chapter four for more information.

Elbring remembered. “I had no idea this was still affecting me. I had no idea that not saying anything could carry this long a toll on me, on anyone, and I’m not the only one.”[292]

Lieutenant Adams had her own memories: “The men had put flowers around it,” she said. “Men were crying. We were crying, because again, you forget how much you’re appreciated by these men and then you see they wanted this statue to be erected for us.” [293] In many ways this memorial effected a reconciliation between male and female veterans as much as it did between female veterans and civilians. Kim Heikkila claimed that this memorial “opened doors that had long been shut and signaled an important step in their recovery from war.”[294] It meant more, however, than that. For the first time ever, women were recognized specifically for their roles as servicemembers and welcomed home by their male comrades and civilians.

By building the *Vietnam Women’s Memorial*, the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial Fund hoped to acknowledge the contributions of military women in a way that would unite male and female veterans. Despite such lofty goals, however, the physical positioning and design of the statue in relation to the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* and the *Three Servicemen* statue served to “other” military women in a way that reflected their status in the military as inferior to male servicemembers. Thus, the placement and final design of the *Vietnam Women’s Memorial* symbolized the ways in which female veterans

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[292] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 154.

[293] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 66.

[294] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 154.

were set apart from their fellow servicemen during the war itself, and in public memory following the war.

The *Vietnam Women's Memorial*, sculpted by Glenna Goodacre, depicts four figures in fatigue uniforms: three women and one man. A young nurse with an injured male soldier in her arms is the focal point of the piece, while two women are positioned behind her, one imploring towards the heavens for help and one gazing at forlornly at a helmet at her feet. As Goodacre herself described the sculpture:

> It seemed natural for a nurse – in a moment of crisis – to be supported by sandbags as she serves as the life support for a wounded soldier lying across her lap. The standing woman looks up, in search of a med-i-vac helicopter or, perhaps, in search of help from God. The kneeling figure has been called the "heart and soul" of the piece because so many vets see themselves in her. She stares at any empty helmet, her posture reflecting her despair, frustrations, and all the horrors of war.[295]

While none of the figures display any identifying insignia and are meant to evoke all female Vietnam veterans, the choice to display women in positions of carework raises questions about exactly which sort of personnel they truly represent.[296] Although the memorial was revolutionary, as the first one dedicated solely to the women that served in any American conflict, it still reinforced traditional ideas concerning gender roles in the military. Despite the Commission of Fine Arts' stated goal to find a statute that would represent all the occupational specialties (MOS) of military women, the final design has

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[295] The author transcribed these words from the National Park Service's information panel at the Vietnam Women's Memorial on April 21, 2024.

[296] "Dedication of the Memorial," Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation, (Accessed 2018) http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org/dedicat.php. (Weblink is dead as of last attempted access, April 22, 2025).

become known as "the nurses memorial."[297] Nursing, as a form of carework, has long been understood as women's work. It is an extension of women's maternal role, an extension of her place in the private sphere. Thus, a statue that portrays military women in their roles as nurses without acknowledging their function outside of traditionally feminine roles, serves to reinforce the idea that nursing was the most important role a woman could fill in the military.[298]

The emphasis on carework by female veterans was reflected by the original bronze sculpture's design by a marine veteran named Roger Brodin. *The Nurse*, which was accepted by the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project, depicted a single woman with a stethoscope and surgical scissors, holding the helmet of a deceased GI and grieving for his loss. This statue would complement the Hart sculpture, ostensibly rounding out the full picture of the war, by showing that servicemen carried the apparatus of death, which servicewomen wielded instruments that represented healing and hope. While *The Nurse* statue was eventually replaced by Goodacre's multifigure group, the former's initial acceptance highlighted common understanding concerning the roles of military women. Goodacre's statue, while attempting to represent both nurses and women who served in other capacities, in many ways reflects the same assumptions.[299] While the women

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[297] "Dedication of the Memorial," Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation, (Accessed 2018) http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org/dedicat.php. (Weblink is dead as of last attempted access, April 22, 2025) and Heikkila *Sisterhood of War,* 150.

[298] See introduction. for more information.

[299] Karal Ann Marling, "The Sexual Politics of Memory: The Vietnam Women's Memorial Project and 'The Wall,'" *The Prospects* 14 (1989), 351; Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory,* 301-3; and Heikkila *Sisterhood of War,* 145-50.

depicted may not be holding stethoscopes or surgical scissors, they seem to occupy no other position except that as caregivers or perhaps even surrogate mothers to the male figure positioned front and center.

The inclusion of a wounded male soldier in the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* begs analysis of the placement of that figure in such a prominent position on a memorial meant to honor women. If the very existence of the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* was to honor those that *Three Servicemen* neglected, the women would stand alone as representative figures. The inclusion of a wounded male soldier not only highlights the gendering of carework but emphasizes the existence of female veterans as contingent to serving men. While the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* was built to honor female veterans, placing the male figure so prominently in the foreground, and posing the female figures around him, emphasizes his story as the narrative of the memorial. The *Vietnam Women's Memorial* allows the only male figure to become the focus. It thus positions the female veterans as depicted to be supportive figures, as opposed to the center of their own narrative.

In the NPS' description of the memorial on the mall, Glenna Goodacre describes the lone male figure as a stand in for all veterans, stating "the soldier's face is half-covered by a bandage, creating an anonymous figure with which veterans can identify. Even though he is wounded, he will live. I want this to be a monument for the living."[300] While the statue is meant to honor servicewomen, Goodacre's "intent," according to the NPS description, was to allow male veterans to also identify with the statue. Thus, it was not just for the servicewomen. Similarly, the NPS website about the memorial also

[300] The author transcribed these words from the National Park Service's information panel at the Vietnam Women's Memorial on April 21, 2024.

highlights the male figure, stating the *Vietnam Women's Memorial*, while "equally important" to some of the other memorials on the mall, "portrays three women caring for a fallen soldier."[301] This description privileges the roles of carework and highlights the ways in which female Vietnam veterans served men during the war. The information panel at the memorial states that it depicts "three women" that "represent the more than 265,000 military and civilian women who served around the world during the war." While it goes on to say that "the memorial's portrayal of women in uniform illuminates historical experiences too often erased from the public memory of war," describing the figures as "women" first separates them from their roles and identity as members of the military.[302] The informational pamphlet available at the Vietnam Memorial does a slightly better job, referring to the servicewomen depicted as "women of the U.S. Armed Forces" before further describing the statue as a depiction of "three women coming to the aid of a fallen soldier."[303] The description of the memorial, however, is a mere four sentences long, as opposed to the five paragraphs (nearly half of the page of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* pamphlet) about the *Three Servicemen*. The literature surrounding the memorials therefore serves to once again diminish the roles of servicewomen.

Goodacre's description of the standing woman posed "in search of a med-i-vac helicopter or, perhaps, in search of help from God," also emphasized male figures in a

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[301] "Reflect at the Vietnam Women's Memorial," National Park Service, Department of the Interior (May 10, 2021), https://www.nps.gov/thingstodo/vietnam-womens-memorial.htm.

[302] The author transcribed these words from the National Park Service's information panel at the Vietnam Women's Memorial on April 21, 2024.

[303] National Park Service, *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, 2.

memorial to women.[304] The nurse alone could not help the wounded soldier. Instead, she looks for help from men: either a pilot or the Christian god. Furthermore, the central figures of a servicewoman and a wounded soldier is reminiscent of the long tradition of the "mourning mother" figure and her son.[305] First appearing in Germany in the 14th century, the "theme of the lamentation over Christ's body" was immortalized in Michelangelo's sculpture, *The Pietà* in 1499.[306] The Pietà in Christian art is the image of the body of Christ draped over the lap of the Virgin Mary. By the early twentieth century, the mourning mother theme moved from just religious iconography to a wider art motif. Claudia Siebrecht analyzed how it became an important part of German art produced by women during World War I, exploring how women used their status as mothers to speak to civilian loss and sacrifice during wartime. This gendered approach, she argued, was used to emphasize the place of women in war. Such depictions became a feature of memorial designs following World War I because "the symbolic power of the pietà also derived from the manner in which it came to be seen as crystallizing the pivotal question of wartime: the correlation between society and sacrifice."[307]

The use of the Pietà imagery in a memorial depicting military women thus emphasized their sacrifice along with the theme of the mourning mother, emphasizing

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[304] The author transcribed these words from the National Park Service's information panel at the Vietnam Women's Memorial on April 21, 2024.

[305] Claudia Siebrecht, *The Aesthetics of Loss: German Women's Art of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 104.

[306] *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Pieta," last modified September 10, 2019. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pieta-iconography.

[307] Siebrecht, *The Aesthetics of Loss,* 104-5.

their femininity and not the martial masculinity depicted in memorials to servicemen. This embodied one of the accepted roles of women in country. Frequently, when a soldier was injured and arrived at a hospital, his nurse was the first woman he had seen since his deployment. This gave his nurse responsibility for more than just his physical health. Lieutenant Elbring recalled, "I was their mother, their sister, their girlfriend."[308] Jeanne Rivera recalled her role similarly: "Sometimes all they needed was just someone to talk to them. I think talking to them … sometimes they thought I was their mother."[309] Nurses thus took on the figurative role of the mother both during their service and in their memorialization.

At the groundbreaking ceremony for the *Vietnam Women's Memorial*, when Gen. Colin Powell spoke to the crowds of people gathered to see the statue, he asked "How often were you the mother for a kid asking for Mom in the last few seconds of his life? How many nineteen-year-old sons did you lose?"[310] Even at a ceremony that was specifically about honoring the women who served, they were honored in relation to the men that they cared for, not as servicemembers who made their own sacrifices. Thus, instead of telling the story of Vietnam-era servicewomen, the memorial shows the ways in which servicewomen adopted the roles of wife and mother by caring for injured men.

In examining the *Vietnam Women's Memorial*, Kim Heikkila argues that while "nurses had broken the midcentury mold for women by joining the military and going to

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[308] Steinman, *Women in Vietnam*, 147.

[309] Freeman and Rhoades, *Nurses in Vietnam*, 64.

[310] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War*, 151.

war, the work they did there was familiar in its emotional overtones, and it was that familiarity that the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* captured."[311] The memorial portrayed women in the roles of nurse without acknowledging their function outside of traditionally feminine roles. This served to further the ways in which women in nontraditional MOS were written out of the historical memory and reaffirmed the femininity of military women. Their memorial, therefore, toed the line of what was accepted in the U.S. military itself. "'Nurse' became the mediating identity" of Vietnam servicewomen, "one that allowed women to be both woman and soldier but neither one fully."[312] In highlighting the women who straddled this line, The *Vietnam Women's Memorial* thus reinforced the common perception of female veterans as nurses and thus reinforced ideas of the gendering of their military service.

While Heikkila argued that the memorial allowed women to be "honored for performing caretaking duties that traditionally defined women's place in the nation, and they can also be remembered as war heroes in their own right," the words of Colin Powell, and indeed the original design of the women's memorial, reminded the nation that women could be viewed as heroes only if they fit the traditional mold.[313] In framing female Vietnam veterans' heroism as a part of their caretaking duties and emphasizing the role of the nurse as the mothering figure, even Powell reinforced traditional ideas concerning female sacrifice in wartime. Women were not just the mother, sister, lover figure, but also proud members of the Armed Forces. Highlighting their caregiving duties

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[311] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War,* 151.

[312] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War,* 86.

[313] Heikkila, *Sisterhood of War,* 157

over those of the other roles that they filled allowed those women who did not partake in traditionally female wartime activities to be erased from the public narrative once again. Thus, the memorial does not serve to reunite all female veterans, but rather to privilege those who conformed to gendered understandings of women's roles, even as their military service pushed back against these traditional gender ideologies.

The *Vietnam Women's Memorial* served to other female veterans in more than just their physical depictions. Setting this memorial away from the original Wall site betrays the intended purpose of inclusivity, serving instead to place female servicemembers outside of the larger context of the Vietnam War. In visiting the memorials, in fact, the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* is set in such a place as to require a visitor's special attention: it is located outside of the larger memorial project. It thus serves to locate female veterans themselves outside of what is commonly viewed as the memorialization of Vietnam veterans.

Like *Three Servicemen*, the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* focuses the gaze on a group setting, as opposed to an individual figure, but locates this gaze further away from the setting of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. In choosing to erect multifigure memorials, both the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) and the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation (VWMF) were attempting to highlight the diversity of the military. Taken together, these statues were meant to display inclusiveness: in using multifigure images, the sculptors, and the organizations they were commissioned by, meant to create a uniting memorialization across all veterans. Hagopian argues that multifigure statues also served a larger post-war goal: they "imagine the nation as a united family in which racial and gender differences heighten the transcendent fidelity of

citizens for one another."[314] Setting the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* apart from the others creates a physical distance between the women's statue and the Wall, as well as the Hart statue, that places gendered limits on this inclusivity. Instead of weaving the stories of women into the narrative of the war, the construction of the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* sets them apart.

Unlike the *Three Servicemen,* which despite some objections was placed directly beside the Wall, a separate courtyard and terrace was created for the *Vietnam Women's Memorial.* While it was only 300 feet away, the Fine Arts Commission purposefully placed it "outside the area of context of the Wall."[315] Therefore, the site offers "views of the Wall through the trees" yet the trees "screen the women's memorial so that it would not intrude on either the Wall or the Hart statue."[316] The placement of the Hart statue next to the Wall and the Goodacre statue on the other side of the trees privileged the Hart statue as being more relevant to the larger project of Vietnam War memorialization. Furthermore, creating a physical distance between the two memorials places them in a hierarchical relationship wherein the proximity of *Three Servicemen* to the Wall allows it to be more quickly identified with the sacrifices made during the war, while the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* is partially obscured, and thus outside of the memorialization of the Vietnam War.

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[314] Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory,* 268-269.

[315] "The Memorial," Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation.

[316] Fine Arts Commission quoted in Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory,* 306.

Karal Marling argued that "if [the women's] commemorative statue stands slightly apart from the rest, so much the better, as long as its eventual placement on the grounds of the Memorial testifies to the equal merit of the their service to the nation," and pointed out that "the sense of lack, of 'otherness,' permeates women's experience of Vietnam."[317] But if the goal of the women's memorial is to unite veterans, a reminder of the othering of servicewomen is antithetical to the point. In locating the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* outside of the scope of the other Vietnam-era memorials, a hierarchical relationship is maintained that allows women's participation in war to once again be erased. The decision to place the memorial apart, especially following the womanpause of the 1980s, honored the service of men over that of women. While they may have been equal in name and rank, they were not equal in position.

The true legacy of the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* is perhaps in the way it still forces people to acknowledge pre-Gulf War military women. People do not read every name on the Wall, so they may never notice the eight servicewomen who were killed in the Vietnam War. The women's memorial serves to remind everyone who walks past it that they served too. The physical separation of the women's statue from the other Vietnam War memorials, serves to reinforce the othering of military women during the Vietnam War. They may have been a part of the narrative, but their memorial's placement makes them appear to be the least important part of the story: separate, not equal members of the United States military. This position thus reflects the roles that military women served during the war itself.

[317] Karal Marling "The Sexual Politics of Memory," 364.

Despite its very lofty goals, the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* did not serve to unite Vietnam veterans, especially aesthetically. Since "aesthetics and politics are inseparable," the Wall thus created a divide among both civilians and veterans alike.[318] One of the biggest criticisms regarding the wall is that it was simply a monument to the missing and the dead, leaving the thousands of veterans who survived out of the narrative. While Frederick Hart's statuary was meant to bridge this gap, it instead created new criticisms concerning the ways in which a statue of three male soldiers ignored the roles of women in the war. With the eventual addition of Glenna Goodacre's cast bronze group, the outside observer might believe the memorialization project concerning the Vietnam War was complete: the Wall eulogized the missing and the dead, while *Three Soldiers* and the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* spoke to the men and women who survived. But instead of serving as a truly unifying site for veterans and civilians, the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* inspired new questions regarding women and gender in the United States military.

While female veterans appreciated the ways in which the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* restored their existence to the narrative of the Vietnam War and the process of memorialization, the memorial itself managed to relegate them to the othered status they occupied during the war. Not only did it reemphasize the common narrative that portrayed all servicewomen as nurses, the memorial also to separated them physically from the men that they served with. The dedication and other ceremonies surrounding the memorial may have shown female Vietnam veterans that their service and sacrifice was

[318] Nawar Al-Hasan Golley, *Reading Arab Women's Autobiographies: Shahrazad Tells Her Story* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 183.

appreciated, but the physicality of the memorial and the rhetoric concerning it, both during the building process and afterwards, made it clear that they were still different than other veterans because of their gender. Therefore, while one can understand the importance of the *Vietnam Women's Memorial*, both for female veterans and for civilians, it is important to take a deeper look at the gendered meanings that lie just beneath the surface. In doing so, one reveals the tensions that still exist in memorializing women in war.

The *Military Women's Memorial* as proposed by WIMSA, however, did not raise the same concerns about design and separation from the larger memorialization project. Despite issues with identifying female veterans, the foundation rallied with members lobbying both the state and federal government for funding. In 1993, with the support of Senator Arlen Specter and Senator Harris Wofford, WIMSA was able to gain enough support for a memorial coin, with the sales going towards the memorial funds. Public Law 103-186 codified the creation of this coin on December 14, 1993, and they were released on July 29, 1994. With these efforts, the foundation was able to break ground on June 22, 1995. The ceremony, headed by President William Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, was attended by around 4,000 people, both veterans and civilians.[319]

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[319] "Women in Military Service for America Memorial Dollar," U.S. Mint, Department of the Treasury, (December 12, 2016). https://www.usmint.gov/coins/coin-medal-programs/commemorative-coins/women-in-military-service-for-america and P.L. Title II;-United States Veterans Commemorative Coins, Pub. L. No. 103-186, 101 Stat. 2248, (December 14, 1993) and Sarah Linfield, "Groundbreaking Held for Women's Military Memorial," *The Sun* (Jun 23, 1995): 11A. https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/groundbreaking-held-womens-military-memorial/docview/2460261548/se-2.

On October 18, 1997 then Vice-President Al Gore dedicated and officially opened the *Military Women's Memorial*, stating "in dedicating this memorial, let us be dedicated to root out intolerance and prejudice wherever they may exist" as "the women we honor today demand no less than full success in this mission."[320] The ceremony as only one piece of a four day slate of events that also included a reunion at the National Guard Armory, a separate black-tie dinner a the armory, a candlelit march from the Lincoln Memorial to the *Military Women's Memorial*, and services for remembrance of those lost. Around 30,000 female veterans attended one or more of the events, along with most of the services secretaries and chiefs, several legislators, and other civilians.

At 101 years old, Freida Mae Hardin, a Yeomanette who enlisted in 1918, was the oldest of the speakers at the dedication ceremony. Her ten-minute speech became perhaps the high point of the ceremony, and she received three standing ovations. Hardin told the crowd that she had never felt prouder than she did at that ceremony, stating "we did our part and served with honor and distinction." Hardin, who was not even able to vote when she enlisted, was always proud of her Navy service and was even more so with the dedication of the memorial acknowledging female veterans:

> In my 101 years of living, I have observed many wonderful achievements, but none as important or as meaningful as the progress of women taking their rightful place in society. To those women now in military service I say, "Carry on." To those young women who may be thinking about a career in the military service, I say, "Go for it!"[321]

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[320] Andrew Moulton, "Memorial to women in the military dedicated in Virgina," Fort Worth Star Telegram, October 19, 1997, Section A Page 9.

[321] Myrna Oliver, "Freida Mae Hardin; Oldest Female Veteran in the U.S.," *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 2000, 191. During World War I, shortages of personnel led to the first large-scale effort to recruit women by the U.S. military. Conveniently, the Naval Reserve Act of 1916 did not mention gender, allowing about 12,500 women to serve as Yeoman (F), nicknamed Yeomanettes, during the war. (Holm, *Women in the Military*, 11-13.)

The completed *Women's Military Memorial* included a Court of Valor and reflecting pool with a fountain whose noise was supposed to represent the voices of female veterans. The terrace with the arc of glass tablets topped the fountain, with and of Arlington Cemetery and the Washington Monument. There are four stairwells leading to the terrace that go through the original wall, which the foundation states "symbolize women breaking through barriers in the military." The register, which WIMSA calls the "Heart of the Memorial," allows visitors to look at photographs and profiles of about 300,000 women registered with the foundation. It is in a building connected to the outdoor memorial, with an event space and small gift ship. The memorial also incorporates the symbolic line running from the Lincoln Memorial to the Arlington House meant to connect the North and the South after the Civil War with a line of pavers that start at the Lincoln Memorial and proceeds into the WIMSA's building. Within the building, these pavers are replaced with a black granite line featuring individual stories of female veterans. The memorial also includes a gallery illustrating and explaining the history of women in the United States armed forces.[322] It therefore situates the stories of individual servicewomen within the context of the long legacy of female veterans.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, Hardin told her audience "It is not likely that I will be meeting with you again, so I bid each of you a fond farewell." The majority of the women Hardin served with did not survive to see the memorial and her words are a reminder of the importance of acknowledging the roles of veterans in a timely matter. By

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[322]"Our Legacy," Military Women's Memorial. The author visited the site for some of the physical description.

the time of the dedication of the *Military Women's Memorial*, ten years after WIMSA was incorporated and eighty years after the U.S. entered World War I, somewhere between 1.5 and 2 million American women served in uniform. Heralded as the "oldest female veteran in the U.S," Hardin died on August 9, 2000, less than three years after her memorable speech. She was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, resting next to the *Women's Military Memorial*, which made her one of only a few World War I servicewomen to be interned at Arlington.[323]

The early 1980s witnessed a backlash against military women, led by the Army. This backlash, which only lasted a few years, was marked by language similar to earlier congressional and military disputes over the role of women in the services. Senator Jepsen's argument that the military should not "provide the foundation for any social experimentation" was an oft repeated sentiment in the preceding and following years.[324] Servicewomen and their supporters resisted the idea that they were merely a social experiment, highlighting their service records and successes as proof. Thus, they were still fighting for recognition as members of the military. The fight for memorialization projects of servicewomen is emblematic of this fight, marked by years of struggling for approvals and funding. The arguments made against the *Vietnam Women's Memorial*

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[323] Oliver, "Freida Mae Hardin," 191. While the author cannot verify whether she was in fact the oldest female veteran, she certainly was among the oldest. The memorial is not a part of Arlington Cemetery, the guided trolley tour does pass in front of the memorial. On a tour the author took on April 19, 2024, the tour guide did not mention the memorial at any point. In fact, the only servicewoman the tour guide mentioned was Lt. Cmdr. Barbara Rainey (Navy) the first female pilot in the U.S. military. (See Chapter Two for more information Lieutenant Commander Rainey.)
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[324] Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 389.

reflect the arguments made for the womanpause. They are therefore a part of the same story.

CHAPTER 5:

"WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW WON'T HURT THEM": DEPLOYING THE INTEGRATED MILITARY

On October 23, 1983, the United States deployed members of the Special Operations Forces to Grenada ahead of the October 25 invasion. Codenamed Urgent Fury, the invasion was triggered by the assassination of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop by a military junta that established an intermediary government over the island nation. While the military action only lasted until November 1, almost 8,000 American servicemembers participated in it, including around 200 Army and Air Force women. The latter served in air crews, as military police, and transportation specialists. This was the first combat deployment of women by the newly integrated All-Volunteer Force.[325]

Only two and a half years later, the United States conducted air raids on Libya, in retaliation for that state's sponsorship of terrorism against the American people. This bombing campaign lasted less than an hour and involved about 100 U.S. Air Force and Navy aircraft. While they were not allowed to serve on combat planes, six Air Force women served as pilots, copilots, and boom operators on the KC-10 and KC-135 tankers that refueled the FB-111F bombers. This contribution, however, was not a sign of things to come. December 20, 1989, marked the start of Operation Just Cause, the American invasion of Panama. The operation involved 27,684 troops who were, according to

[325] Barbara A. Wilson, "Operation Urgent Fury and Operation Just Cause," Military Women Veterans: Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow, last modified 1996, https://userpages.aug.com/captbarb/panama.html; Martha Lockwood, "Women's Roles Evolved from 'Lucy' to 'Murphy Brown' after World War II," Women in the Force, United States Air Force, March 16, 2012, https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/111518/womens-roles-evolved-from-lucy-to-murphy-brown-after-world-war-ii/.

President George H.W. Bush, sent to protect American civilians, defend democracy and human rights, curtail drug trafficking, and protect the neutrality of the Panama Canal under the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. Seven hundred and seventy women deployed during this six-week campaign, including two women who commanded Army companies. Perhaps most well-known was Captain Linda Bray, who led a platoon of military police against a Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) compound.[326]

According to military policy, however, none of these women served in combat. This chapter examines the experiences of women who served in Grenada, Libya, and Panama, arguing that their deployment challenged administration views and congressional policies on women in the AVF, as well as the Combat Exclusion Policy. These challenges reflected important changes in military and foreign policy in the 1980s. These three American interventions would lay the groundwork for post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy.

Section 6015 of the U.S. Code, Title 10, stated "women may not be assigned to duty in aircraft that are engaged in combat missions nor may they be assigned to duty on vessels of the navy other than hospital ships and transports."[327] This section and section 8549 prohibiting women from serving on Air Force crews during combat, were the last vestiges of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 that were still in effect by the 1980s and they formed the basis for the combat exclusion policies in effect during that decade. While there was a persistent myth both within the services and the public that women were excluded from all combat by Congress, only these two statutes still

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[326] Wilson, "Urgent Fury and Just Cause" and Lockwood, "Women's Roles Evolved."

[327] *Section 6015: Armed Forces, U.S. Code 10* (1956).

existed. Where these sections were not applicable, such as in ground combat, the Department of Defense invoked the "intent of Congress."[328] Of course, the "intent of Congress" could not be known, and thus the services were given free reign to use the widest possible interpretations in establishing limits on women's service roles. Furthermore, each of the services were free to define combat for themselves. These definitions were revised repeatedly through the years, as the military responded to political pressure, different missions, and changing leadership.[329]

In 1982, the Army, which operated free of congressionally imposed limits on women's service, created a new assignment system known as Direct Combat Probability Coding (DCPC). Partially in response to the second Women in the Army Study (WITA) that began in 1981 showing discontent among servicewomen who were increasingly limited by military occupational specialty (MOS), the DCPC was the Army's interpretation of the "intent of Congress." Put into effect in 1983, the DCPC, sometimes called the risk rule, "attempted to profile the battle area from high probability of enemy contact to low probability and assign women accordingly [by establishing] a complex system of coding all positions and units in relation to their probability of being involved in direct combat." The idea was that the assignment system would attempt to avoid

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[328] *Section 8549: Armed Forces, U.S. Code 10* (1956) and Jeanne Holm, *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution* 2nd ed. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1992), *Women in the Military*, 398-99.

[329] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 398-99. See chapter one for more information on the first WITA and chapter three for more information on the second.

placing servicewomen in combat situations by evaluating mission, doctrine, and location.[330]

Meanwhile, the Air Force chose to ban whole classes of aircrafts to servicewomen as "combatant." Naval policies revolved around combat missions, as opposed to types of aircraft, allowing Navy women to get experience on aircraft that were off limits to their Air Force counterparts. Opportunities for air missions among Navy women were not much better than in the Air Force, however, due to legislative restrictions on women on combat ships. Aircraft carriers, the focus of Naval aviation, allowed women to operate off the deck, but not to be permanently assigned to such vessels, except for the U.S.S. *Lexington* training carrier ship. Female helicopter pilots, on the other hand, were allowed on noncombatant support and auxiliary ships that were deployed for a maximum of six months. The Army copied these restrictions as the basis for its own policies, excluding women from all combat air missions or direct combat support, but allowed them on unarmed combat support helicopters. The Marine Corps took the strictest approach, banning women from all aircraft by stating that all flying was combat, while the Coast Guard took the opposite approach, using women in all positions in air missions.[331]

In the wake of all this, Operation Urgent Fury began. The 1983 invasion of Grenada was the first real-world test of not only the integrated military, but also the Army's DCPC and Naval and Air Force policies regarding women in air support positions. Over 200 women served in Grenada, with Army servicewomen on the ground

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[330] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 403-04.

[331] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 424-32.

and in the air, Air Force servicewomen providing transport and air support, and Coast Guard servicewomen patrolling the waters surrounding the island.[332] Despite the military's intentions, combat exclusion laws and policies blurred as women deployed to hostile territory. The most visible of these women were military police, such as Army Specialist Julie Escude, who was assigned to guard the airport. An article in the *Houston Post* entitled "Women GIs in Grenada," highlighted her M60 machine gun. Also mentioned in that article was U.S. Army Lt. Katherine Henderson, a OH-58 pilot assigned to night missions flying through the hills to look for snipers with a 45-caliber automatic strapped to her flight suit.[333] And yet, neither Spc. Escude nor Lt. Henderson, nor any other deployed servicewomen, entered combat as stipulated by official military policy.

While the deployment of Army women in Grenada following the initial incursion received relatively prompt media coverage, the participation of Air Force women was first reported by Paul Dean in a *Los Angeles Times* article in January 1986. At the time, these women were thought to have belonged to the 63rd Military Airlift Wing, which flew C-141 transports out of Norton Air Force Base, and personnel from McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. An officer involved in the operation said that servicewomen arrived within the early hours of the incursion while U.S. paratroopers engaged in combat with the Cuban military at Port Salinas Airport.[334] According to Maj. Gen. William J. Mall,

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[332] Wilson, "Urgent Fury and Just Cause."

[333] Evelyn Monahan and Rosemary Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women: America's Military Women from World War I to the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan* (New York: Knopf, 2010), 331; Holm, *Women in the Military*, 431.

"there was some hostile fire, but not in the immediate vicinity … there was some risk there, that's true" although he emphasized that there were no injuries to any crew members nor damage to any aircraft during the airlifting. He described the airport as being "under friendly control … although it was a combat zone."[335]

While it does not seem that anyone consulted military lawyers, Major General Mall did not believe that the deployment of these women to Grenada while fighting raged in their proximity did not violate Air Force policies or federal law, an assertion reiterated by follow-up articles in the American press.[336] According to Dean's sources, the planning for the invasion was too rushed to handpick crews, specifically excluding any with women. Furthermore, excluding aircraft due to their containing female crewmembers would have decreased response time and effectiveness during the incursion. Mall, the director of Air Force personnel planning at the Pentagon, stated that commanders involved in the incursion were aware that the C-141 transports would have servicewomen on board, and that it was "determined that the risk of exposure to hostile fire and the risk

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[334] "Air Force Women Participated in Grenada Invasion," *Minerva*, June 1986, 61, republished in *Equal Opportunity, Current News*, 1 July 1986, No.1457, Judith Steihm Papers, Box 5, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA and Air Force Women Participated in Grenada Invasion" *Minerva*, and Paul Dean, "AF Says Women Flew Grenada Missions: [Home Edition]'" *Los Angeles Times* (Pre-1997 Fulltext), January 26, 1986. https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/af-says-women-flew-grenada-missions/docview/292260227/se-2.

[335] Dean, "AF Says Women Flew Grenada Missions." Ellipses in original article.

[336] "Air Force Women Participated in Grenada Invasion"; Dean, "AF Says Women Flew Grenada Missions"; and "Women Aided in Grenada Invasion," *Washington Post*, January 27, 1986, 4, republished in *Equal Opportunity, Current News*, April 1986, No.1421, Judith Steihm Papers, Box 5, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

of capture were not factors to preclude […] it wasn't something that surprised everyone."[337]

Five days after American troops secured Port Salinas Airport, 110 women from the U.S. Army were deployed to Grenada.[338] A number of them were interviewed for media stories that highlighted the ways in which their service differed from the women who served before them. Some spoke openly about the bias against servicewomen, including Spec. 4 Liz Miliken who told a reporter that "there's a lot of sexual harassment. But also, a lot of the guys refuse to take you seriously, even if you out-rank them. You have to prove yourself – more than once." Two female lieutenants said that their presence angered some male commanding officers, with on anonymously quoted as saying "some officers look at it that when a woman comes, she's taking a place that would have been held by a man. If she can't perform the same role, then he's lost a man."[339] While some servicewomen understood about frustration with women who might not be able to physically perform in the same way as men due to their physical size, other servicewomen, and the men they served with, emphasized that they received the same training as men and performed their jobs competently.[340]

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[337] Dean, "AF Says Women Flew Grenada Missions," 4. Ellipses in original article.

[338] "Female GIs in Grenada Fight Bias," *Atlanta Journal*, 20 Nov 1983, 26, republished in *Equal Opportunity, Current News*, February 1984, Judith Steihm Papers, Box 4, Folder 5, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

[339] "Female GIs in Grenada Fight Bias," 26.

[340] Female GIs in Grenada fight bias," Atlanta Journal, and "New Army policy permitting women in combat was put to test in Grenada," *San Diego Union*, 24 Nov. 1983, 2A, both republished in *Equal Opportunity, Current News*, February 1984, Judith Steihm Papers.

The ways in which the female personnel of Operation Urgent Fury embodied new Army policies regarding the meanings of combat were highlighted by the weapons they carried, including M-16 rifles, M-60 machine guns, and M-203 grenade launchers. Pvt. Patsy Lerma faced a photographer with her M-16: "With one hand she held a creamy vanilla cone. With the other, she steadied her well-polished M-16." Pvt. Lerma talked about the rifle herself, emphasizing that she could take it apart and put it together in under one minute, only putting it down at the end of the day in a gun rack in her sleeping quarters.[341] Similarly, Specialist Miliken was described as "perched in a machine gun nest on the outer wall of the Ross Point Inn" the temporary U.S. embassy in Grenada, as she "cradled M-60 and M-203 heavy automatic weapons."[342] The language in these articles is strikingly gendered. Private Lerma's ice cream was highlighted in equal language to her M-16. Specialist Miliken was perched on a wall while cradling her automatic weapons. Articles about servicemen describe their firepower without mentioning the ice cream they happen to be eating. There are no articles describing servicemen as perched anywhere. If their armament is described at all, they are holding them, not cradling them.[343] Cradling is often a gendered term, meant to draw the thought to mothering. Newspapers use of gendered language reinforces that servicewomen are first and foremost women.

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[341] "New Army Policy Permitting Women in Combat Was Put to Test in Grenada," 2A.

[342] "Female GIs in Grenada Fight Bias."

[343] The author did an extensive newspaper search and could not find any similarly worded articles about servicemen. Rarely do newspapers even describe servicemen's weapons, but when they did, they did not use the term cradling anywhere.

Furthermore, the media's emphasis on servicewomen's armament illustrates the confusion that the American media and public experienced regarding the differences between combatant and noncombatant. If these women furnished combat-support only, why were they equipped with such lethal weapons? As noncombatants, why were they allowed to fire their arms? While they were fully trained on their weapons, would not the use of them constitute combat? The confusion in the civilian sector echoed that of the military itself. Confusion over the definition of combat and the DCPC in the U.S. Army caused four female MPs of the 82nd Airborne to be recalled to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, leading to disruptions within their units. Upon reporting to post, they received orders to return to their units in Grenada from senior officers. Their recall and redeployment took place over the course of 3 days, from November 2 to 5, illustrating the confusion within the military over who was in combat and where (or what) combat was.[344]

This uncertainty extended beyond the Army: "Grenada. Libya. Panama. Operation Desert Shield/Storm. Every time the question has arisen as to whether or not the tanker crews and the transport crews can log combat time," Air Force Lt. Col. Kelly Hamilton, who oversaw flight records in the First Persian Gulf War, told journalist Linda Francke. Col. Eileen Collins, a C-141 pilot who was diverted from a mission to Europe to deliver combat troops to Grenada said "it was so critical that we get people down there that the air force did not have time to go in and say, 'OK, which crews have women on them-

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[344] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 405; Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 331.

they're not going …. The Air Force just sent the crews that were available."[345] Similarly, Lt. Celeste Hayes, a C-141 pilot assigned to the Air Force's Military Airlift Command at Charleston, South Carolina, delivered members of the Army's 82nd Airborne to Salinas Airfield while it was surrounded by combat operations. When asked about whether her mission could be considered combat, Lieutenant Hayes said that no one had ever thought about pulling her – she was up on the duty roster, trained and qualified, and the Air Force needed her.[346]

According to other women, however, this was not always the case. Maj. Anne Wright, the highest ranking servicewoman deployed to Grenada stated that one the very first day of the invasion, she received ten calls from women who had been left behind. "All I could tell them to do was to keep pressing, to go up the chain of command," Major Wright told a reporter. "I reminded them women didn't take a different oath from the men when they signed up."[347] Capt. Terry Vanden Dolder, a former Air Force captain, remembered that later in Operation Urgent Fury:

> Someone took notice that there were female crew members-pilots, engineers, and loadmasters on different crews partaking in the operations.... They looked at the flight orders, figured out which crews had females on them, separated them out and sent those crews home. They said, 'Now wait a minute. This could be construed as a combat area. Therefore, just to err on the safe side, we'd better take the women out of it.[348]

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[345] Linda Bird Francke, *Ground Zero: The Gender Wars in the Military* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 228. Ellipses in original.

[346] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 426.

[347] Nick Madigan, "Women in the Army: Still No Combat," *UPI Archives*, December 14, 1983, https://www.upi.com/Archives/1983/12/14/Women-in-the-Army-Still-no-combat/3364440226000/.

[348] Francke, Ground Zero, 228.

This flip is emblematic of the military's confusion over what qualified as combat and what did not. But regardless of military policy, these women found themselves thrust into a combat zone. Furthermore, all deployed servicewomen in Grenada received imminent danger pay, including military police on perimeter guard, checkpoint, and roadblock duty, as well as guards of detainee and prisoner of war camps. They were pilots, legal and logistic specialists, navigators, aircrew, medical personnel, truck drivers, stevedores, crew chiefs, maintenance personnel, signal and communication specialists, and intelligence specialists who interrogated POWs.[349] They accepted the risks they took when they joined the military. Major Ann Wright, who spent three months in Grenada as a part of the XVIII Airborne Corps' International Law Team, explains: "One does not join the military to lead a sheltered and protected life… A soldier knows the potential dangers of military life… The bottom line for the United States Army [is] a successful mission due to the dedication of trained soldiers, men and women, who, when given the chance, prove what professionalism is all about."[350] Servicewomen exhibited this dedication and professionalism during the conflict in Grenada and through the rest of the 1980s.

And yet, servicewomen received pushback both from the military policy and their leaders. Volney F. Warner, who retired as a four-star general from the U.S. Army in 1981, was interviewed as part of 1983 as a part of the U.S. Army War College/U.S. Army

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[349] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 331; Holm, *Women in the Military*, 404-426.

[350] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 405.

Military History Institute Senior Officer Oral History Program. He proved rather outspoken about his so-called fundamental disagreement with women in divisions: "As I've mentioned with the blacks and I think, also, with the women, the problem in the Army is not with the people in it, women or men, but, principally, with the people who are not in it. To me, we're using women where we should be using a white male, who is off doing something else in the United States." General Warner went on to say that "it's not truly fair to women to open our arms and clasp them to our bosoms in the Army and say we need them" since the U.S. military was again "using women in a way as we have throughout the history of the world, by putting them in the Army to supplant the requirement of going to the draft or going to some other way to get these guys that need to serve." That echoed arguments made by historians and other scholars that the U.S. military habitually allows women into military roles only due to wartime necessity. Warner then doubled down, however, arguing that not only do women not belong in divisions, but he saw no future for them in combat MOS, calling it a "psychological issue," because he believed that men were more capable of protecting themselves than women.[351]

[351] Volney F. Warner, U.S. Army War College/U.S. Army Military History Institute Senior Officer Oral History Program, Box 1 of 3, Volney F. Warner Collection, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 212-13. General Warner eventually amended his position. In 2006, he wrote the foreword to Erin Solano's *Women in the Line of Fire: What You Should to Know About Women in the Military*, in which he stated "**T**he military world is changing at a rapid rate … but as a combat soldier in two infantry wars I simply cannot change with it. Combat is killing. And I firmly believe that women are better at giving life than taking it. Having said that, I could not be more proud of the fact that two of my granddaughters decided to serve their country 'in the line of fire**.**'"

Cpt. Debra Dubbe, a graduate of the Air Force Academy and a navigator on a refueling tanker during Operation Urgent Fury, would disagree: "There is no difference in women or men taking risks-or dying. I signed up to be an officer, and if it means having to die, that's what I agreed to do."[352] Other servicewomen echoed this sentiment, denying that there is a psychological or emotional difference in men and women when it comes to combat. "I don't think are so different intellectually than men that you should keep us out of combat because we're the softer sex," QM Monique Anne Braver, U.S. Coast Guard, told an interviewer in 1985. "There'll be as many women who are eager to see it as men."[353] They had proven their commitment to their units and their mission in Grenada, regardless of proximity to combat.

On April 14, 1986, 100 planes from the U.S. Navy and Air Force conducted a series of attacks against Libya in response to perceived terrorist activities, specifically a bomb in a discotheque in West Berlin nine days earlier. Designated Operation El Dorado Canyon, the action involved 14 A-6E Navy jets based in the Mediterranean and 18 FB-111 Air Force bombers from England that were accompanied by numerous support aircraft, including Air Force and Navy women.[354] Seven Air Force servicewomen and several Navy women served as a part of the operation. Of those in the Air Force, six were officers – four copilots, one pilot on a backup crew on the KC-135 and KC-10 tankers

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[352] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 507.

[353] Monique Anne Braver, Women in the American Military Oral History Project, 9 September 1985. D-21-89-M222, Box 4, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, acc. 8 January. 2020.

[354] Wilson, "Urgent Fury and Just Cause."

that refueled the FB-111s, and one worked on mission planning and debriefing. The only enlisted Air Force woman was a boom operator on a KC-10. Additionally, female Navy carrier on-board delivery pilots based at Sigonella Naval Air Station in Sicily, Italy took part in carrier landings during the operation.[355]

The night before the mission, Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Charles A. Gabriel, unsuccessfully attempted to replace the women on the aircrews with men, according to journalist Linda Franke. Reminiscent of conversations regarding servicewomen in Grenada, the Air Force feared that women on tanker and transport crews could be construed as serving in combat.[356] According to Francke, upon their return from the raid, tanker crews found that their missions had been reclassified as noncombatant, despite their being previously classified as combatant, with the appropriate medals and points toward promotion.[357] In reality, KC-10s and KC-135s had been reclassified in 1984, thus allowing women to serve on them in the first place, including in Grenada. It is accurate to say, however, that prior to 1984, re-fueling tankers were considered combat aircraft, and thus servicemembers who served on missions like the Libya bombing would have been eligible for combat awards. Instead, crew aboard the KC-135s and KC-10s were awarded expeditionary medals. “In Korea, guys got it for flying in a parallel that was near the DMZ or over a certain border in Vietnam,” a female tanker pilot recalled in an interview

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[355] Wilson, “Urgent Fury and Just Cause.” And "AIR FORCE, NAVY WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN ACTION AGAINST LIBYA." Minerva 4, no. 2 (Summer, 1986): 43. https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.temple.edu/scholarly-journals/air-force-navy-women-participate-action-against/docview/1812412755/se-2.

[356] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 228.

[357] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 228-229; Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 93-94.

with Francke, explaining the bitterness among the aircrews on the KC-135s and KC10s that had flown barely outside of the bombing zone. “The guys were furious that they didn’t get medals because of us. But there was nothing they could do. The slap in the face went across the board. None of the tanker crews got medals.”[358] According to the Minerva Society for the Study of Women and War, every other participant in the Libya raid, except those on tanker crews, received combat medals. In responding to the rumors that circulated about the purposeful exclusion of tanker crews for combat medals to fit Combat Exclusion Policy and frame women’s participation as noncombatant, the Air Force denied that it had been a decision specifically to counter the impression that women were on combat duty.[359]

A year after Operation El Dorado Canyon, the Army’s Office of the Inspector General conducted an inspection of military assignment policies and declared the DCPC to be unworkable and recommended that it be rescinded. The Army Chief of Staff chose not to do so, and instead sanitized the final report that was sent to the Pentagon, removing any information on problems reported in the field. Full compliance with DCPC was required. That same year, however, Army leadership conducted a “fine tuning” of the DCPC coding, opening 12,000 positions to women in the forward support battalions within the Army’s combat divisions. According to Major General Holm, retired USAF and historian of women in the military, the Army finally realized that “the readiness of

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[358] Quoted in Francke, *Ground Zero,* 229.

[359] "Air Force Women Ineligible for Medals for 1986 Libya Raid." Minerva's Bulletin Board 1, no. 1 (Mar 31, 1988): 4. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/air-force-women-ineligible-medals-1986-libya-raid/docview/231090308/se-2.

combat units would be hampered if women were excluded from these forwards support battalions."[360] Conversations swirled within the military around the definition of combat, and about what was and was not within the purview of Sections 6015 and 8549 of Title 10 U.S. Code, as well as what them "intent of congress" was when it came to combat exclusion. As the reclassification of tanker crews from combat to noncombat show, the military was ready and willing to take decisive action to prevent women from being recognized as in the combat zone. And yet, being designated as noncombatant does not noncombatant make.

By the start of Operation Just Cause in Panama, the Army also opened positions to women in the headquarters units of armor and infantry divisions, as well as positions in air defense, signal, and some light infantry positions. At the same time, the Air Force was prohibited by Congress to set minimum or maximum gender-specific goals, except when it came to MOS that fell under the combat exclusion law. In effect, this allowed men and women to compete for available openings in most positions.[361] Thus, around 800 women, or about 4 percent of the deployed force, from the Army and Air Force served as aircraft commanders, pilots, copilots, boom operators, navigators, flight engineers, loadmasters, truck drivers, and military police, as well as within intelligence and logistics positions, within Signal Corps, in medical positions, and as administrative and maintenance personnel. While Army women were allowed to serve on Black Hawks that ferried infantry troops to combat zones in Panama, often coming under direct fire, women in the

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[360] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 405-06.

[361] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 420.

Air Force were not allowed to pilot the C-130s and C-141s that brought Airborne servicemembers and supplies into the country. Air drop, according to the Air Force, was a combat position, while it was not considered to be one in the Army. While the air drop restriction was not lifted until after Operation Just Cause, the decision to do so had been made earlier, but staffers had not begun implementation before the start of the operation. Nonetheless, at least 150 servicewomen were in combat zones, with many taking enemy fire and some returning it.[362]

The nationwide media coverage of servicewomen during Operation Just Cause that brought the confusion over combat exclusion policies to the public eye.[363] Servicewomen were exposed to direct fire and combat situations and yet told they were noncombatants. Their experiences, like those of the women who served in Grenada and Libya, put the lie to that policy. As stated by PFC Christina Proctor, an MP stationed in Panama: "Congress doesn't like women in combat, but what they don't know won't hurt them. I raised my right hand to defend my country, and I've got a job to do. I was trained just like the guys, and that's what I do."[364] In responding to a letter from Ret. U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Edward M Flanagan, Jr., who was compiling information and notes on women in combat positions after the Gulf War, 1st Lt. Lisa M. Kutschera attempted to compile a "fairly complete account" of her first 72 hours in Panama during Operation Just Cause, as

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[362] Wilson, "Urgent Fury and Just Cause."; Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 94; Francke, *Ground Zero*, 46-72; Holm, *Women in the Military*, 420-31.

[363] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 339.

[364]Vickie Lewis, *Side by Side: A Photographic History of American Women in War* (New York: Stewart, Tabori, & Chang, 1999), 129.

well as the remainder of her time in country. In her response, Lieutenant Kutschera disagreed with DOD policy concerning women in combat, pointing out that, for instance, both she and WO Debra Mann proved that women proved themselves capable of piloting aircraft in combat, something that was not in alignment with official DOD policy.[365] Lieutenant Kutschera and Warrant Officer Mann, who ferried infantry troops to landing zones in Panama on December 20, 1989, in a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, had come under heavy gunfire during the mission. After receiving severe damage, Mann's helicopter was grounded for maintenance. "We'd heard the shots but we didn't even know we'd been hit," Mann recalled.[366] Kutschera and Mann were both nominated for the Air Medal with V device for Valor for their actions.

In speaking of women's places in the military, Kutschera pointed out the importance of picking the best person for a position, regardless of gender: "I think our only chance to maintain a quality force is to determine the strength, endurance and mental requirements of each job and put the best qualified person in it, be it a male or female." Furthermore, while not all women might be willing and/or able to serve in combat, some could and those who wished to should be given the opportunity: "If I can perform as well as I have I'm sure there are women who can do better."[367] Kutschera

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[365] Lisa M. Kutschera [handwritten letter to Lt. Gen. Edward M. Flanagan Jr and typed], "Experiences during Operation Just Cause," 23 May 91, Edward M. Flanagan Papers, Box 14, Folder: Documents pertaining to Women Serving in Combat, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

[366] "Two Female Pilots Face Heavy Gunfire," *Washington Post*, 9 Feb 1990, Washington Post Archives, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1990/02/09/two-female-pilots-faced-heavy-gunfire/55586f5e-aa95-4290-91e3-03d1bf975bec/.

[367] Kutschera, "Operation Just Cause."

pointed out, however, women's ability to perform their duties was only a part of the question: there were issues that might be more logistical, such as questions of housing. And the bigger question overall might be whether Americans were ready for women in combat, especially when it came to infantry, considering some of the reticence of servicemen to accept servicewomen in combat MOS.

Kutschera "never felt discriminated against in the Army" despite having "met individuals . . . who openly admitted that they didn't think women should be in the military." She credited her commanding officers during her deployment in Panama for being instrumental in making female soldiers feel accepted as a part of the team, as they had "the attitude that the women assigned to the unit could and should be able to do their jobs as well in war as in training" and that this attitude influenced the entire battalion.[368] Even those servicemembers who Kutschera knew to be opposed to women in the military treated her and the other servicewomen in her battalion with professionalism, which she credited as possibly resulting from either their "belief in equality, or the Army's policy on equal opportunity."[369] But not all servicewomen had equally supportive superiors. In at least one instance, a woman stayed behind when her unit deployed at the direct order of her commanding officer because of her gender.

Sgt. Rhonda Maskus, an intelligence analyst specializing in Panama, was replaced by a less experienced male soldier "with no knowledge of the area" when her unit of the

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[368] Kutschera, "Operation Just Cause."

[369] Kutschera, "Operation Just Cause."

82nd Airborne, deployed.[370] The 82nd Airborne was the same division that had previously sent female MPs back from Grenada in 1983 – illustrating a pattern of resistance to either the deployment of servicewomen or the very existence of women in the military.[371] Sergeant Maskus, who had been a Panama area specialist for two years and spent three months prior to the beginning of Operation Just Cause working on contingency plans for the invasion, filed a sex discrimination complaint. Her commanders told her "nobody knew whether they had permission to put females into the field." While the airborne division's spokesman, Cpt. Jonathon Ross, would not comment on the case, Army spokeswoman Paige Eversole stated that Army policy had been clarified after the recall of female MPs in Grenada and women in combat-support roles were supposed to deploy with their units, should they be requested in field.[372] And yet, Maskus remained behind.

Despite official policy, Sergeant Maskus was told by her CO that "he was uncertain about policies concerning the use of women in Panama and requested clarification through his chain of command" and that he was further concerned that the area to which she would deploy "was still receiving sporadic fire."[373] The man who

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[370] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 405. See also Zeigler and Gunderson, *Moving Beyond G.I. Jane*, 66 and Strohmer, "Soldiers, not WACs," 209.

[371] We cannot claim to know for certain the motivations of the commanding officers who redeployed the female MPs to Fort Bragg in 1983, nor the CO who replaced Sergeant Maskus, but their actions demonstrate some type of opposition to broader roles for servicewomen.

[372] Molly Moore, "Sex Discrimination Alleged in Invasion; Female Sergeant Charges Panama Orders Favored Less-Qualified Men," *Washington Post*, January 10, 1990, ProQuest.

[373] Moore, "Sex Discrimination Alleged in Invasion."

replaced her, however, reported to a secure base, not under fire.[374] Maskus filed a complaint with the hopes that it would force the Army to clarify policy concerning women's roles again, as she stated that she did not believe that she had been singled out, but had been left behind because of confusion within her chain of command over the definition of combat. She hoped her case would pave the way for women in the future, allowing them to do the jobs for which they were trained. "Certainly I do not want to face fire and I would not really look forward to the day, but I have worked for four years to train and to learn for my job and I looked forward to doing my job just like my male counterparts did," Maskus explained. "I felt that my blood is not any more precious than my male counterparts."[375]

In response to a request for a comment from CBS, the assistant secretary of defense for personnel for the U.S. Army, Christopher Jehn stated that while he could not comment specifically on this case because any changes in the roles of servicewomen needed to be made by Congress:

> Without a doubt there are some senior members of the military who believe women should not be in combat, but believe me there are also others who don't share that view. We have not taken a public position because it is not a technical, management or budgetary issue. It's really an emotional, political issue that we think needs to be resolved in the Congress, not by policy edict by the Defense Department.[376]

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[374] "Woman Sergeant Charges Bias: Says Army Barred Her from Panama." *Boston Globe (1960-)*, Jan 15, 1990.

[375] "Woman Sergeant Charges Bias."

[376] "Woman Sergeant Charges Bias."

Yet, as the Army had already required full compliance with the DCPC code and opened combat support positions to servicewomen, and policy stated that servicewomen in combat support were expected to deploy with their units, Maskus' case did not seek to change the roles of women in the military. Rather, it was a decision made by a commanding officer that went against actual policy.

In another lesser-known case, Sgt. Theresa Lynn Treloar was also left at Fort Bragg when her unit deployed during Operation Just Cause due to a battalion policy against the deployment of spouses on the same mission. Sergeant Treloar, nicknamed Ice Lady for her "confident style and single-minded commitment to a tough and dangerous assignment" during her service in Iraq, did not go to Panama because her husband, Sgt. Charles Barbour, did. Sergeant Treloar later told the *New York Times* that following the decision, she went straight to the colonel who created the rule and calmly announced she would divorce her husband if her superior invoked that policy again. As Sergeant Treloar put it, "I would have done it. I would have just lived with my husband instead of being married to him." This exclusionary rule seems to have been quietly changed, as Sergeant Treloar and her husband were both deployed during Desert Storm. No one explained why Sergeant Barbour was chosen for deployment to Panama and not Sergeant Treloar. While gender may have been the reason, it is also likely that MOS played a role, as Sergeant Barbour was described as "a marksman who handles antitank weapons."[377]

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[377] Philip Shenon. Special to the *New York Times*. "At Combat's Doorstep, She Confronts Peril and Male Doubt," *New York Times*, February 24, 1991. Sergeant Treloar's deployment during Desert Storm will be discussed more in the next chapter.

The division rule, however, would privilege the deployment of servicemen over servicewomen, as women could not serve in combat positions. While earlier restrictions on women's roles had been somewhat relaxed, as of 1990, 11 percent of the military were women and 88 percent of MOS classifications were open to women, only 56 percent of actual military jobs were open to women, due to the large number of combat classified MOS. Thus, if a married couple belonged to the same division, the man would be more likely to be deployed in a combat situation. One might be tempted to argue that perhaps if the servicewoman was a specialist of some sort or if the division needed specific support positions filled in theater, she might be more likely to be deployed. However, Sergeant Maskus' case calls that thought into question. Furthermore, one must question why this rule existed in the first place, as it does not seem to follow any official 1989 Army policy. According to Sergeant Treloar, it had been created by an unnamed colonel at Fort Bragg, and not by the Army or DoD or any governing body. Perhaps the idea was that married couples could not serve well together. Perhaps it stemmed instead from concerns about the effects of dual-deployment on children, although not all married couples were parents. Whatever the case may be, this rule not only meant that servicewomen were more likely to be left behind, and thus not allowed to do the jobs for which they were trained, but their careers would therefore suffer as a result.[378]

Of the 770 women deployed to Panama during the invasion, only one became a household name, capturing the attention of both the media and the public, Cpt. Linda L.

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[378] Marlene Cimons, "Women in Combat: Panama Stirs Debate," *Los Angeles Times* (1923-1995), Jan 11, 1990. Dual-service and dual-deployment couples and families will be discussed further in the following chapter. See earlier chapters about the links between deployment and promotion.

Bray. Around 1:30 in the morning on December 20, 1989, Capt. Bray of the 519th Military Police Battalion led a mixed gender platoon of 123 soldiers in an operation to take a military dog kennel outside of Panama City. Receiving small-arms fire on arrival, the platoon realized that the kennel was occupied by PDF members. When the Panamanians refused to surrender, Captain Bray and her soldiers returned fire until opposition ceased, and the American forces could take control of the kennel.[379] After Noriega's surrender, Captain Bray was celebrated as the first US Army woman to lead a unit in combat. Originally, the Pentagon took advantage of the good press, which began with a *New York Times* article on January 4 titled "Noriega's Surrender: Army; For the First time, A Woman Leads GIs in Combat." A spokesperson for the U.S. Army clarified that while women were not allowed in direct combat roles, they did serve as military police, while admitting that "there was no hard and fast distinction between combat and military police roles in Panama." The spokesperson further cautioned that "no one should draw a conclusion from Captain Bray's mission about the desirability of using women in such roles…. What has been demonstrated is the ability of women to lead, for men and women to work as a team without distraction and for women to react in an aggressive manner."[380]

By the end of the first week of January, however, the Pentagon, the DOD, and the media, had begun to backpedal. In a follow-up *New York Times* article four days later, a spokesperson stated that the DOD had received new information. This new "evidence," however, may have originated with the top commanders in the Panama Southern

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[379] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 337-38.

[380] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 337-38.

Command. Gen. Bill McClain stated that, unlike earlier media reports suggested, no PDF casualties had been reported in Captain Bray's engagement and added that reports suggested that the captain may have been at a command post about a half mile away when the shooting started.[381]

The military's response to the Bray story was politically minded. Gratified by the initially favorable media coverage, the Army happily played up her story. The news coverage assumed a mixed character quickly, however, and the flood of stories took policymakers by surprise. The media did, in fact, exaggerate some details in their early reports (including PDF casualty figures and the length of the fighting), but discussion centered mostly on the blurred lines between combatant and non-combatant roles. Thus, Captain Bray's actions represented a threat to combat exclusion policies. The Pentagon's later reports, which many scholars argue formed part of a disinformation campaign, were intended to quell the conversations questioning the intent of exclusion policies that were so unclear.[382]

The confusion about the meanings of combat reflects the confusion within the media around Bray's actions. Political scientist Joshua Goldstein highlighted the disparity by exploring the contradictory stories told by feminist journalist Linda Francke and anti-feminist journalist William Breur:

> According to Francke, Captain Bray arrived at the kennel-which turned out to be a base and weapons cache for Special Operations troops – ten minutes into a fierce half-hour gun battle in which the unit she led was outnumbered by Panamanian defenders firing from the surrounding

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[381] "The U.S. and Panama: Combat; Report of Woman's Role is Called in to Question." *New York Times.* Quoted in Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 339-40.

[382] Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 94; Holm, *Women in the Military*, 435.

> woods. She took cover in a ditch, fired her pistol at the enemy once, and rode in the armored vehicle that crashed through the front gate. A few days later, three Panamanian soldiers' dogs were found in the woods, probably casualties of the Bray-led attack. According to Breuer, however, the kennel was militarily insignificant, there was only some sporadic fire and Bray was not even there at the time. She did not crash through the gates or lead her men in combat. Breuer focuses on exaggerated media reports of a long firefight with many dead Panamanians strewn about (one report refers to a "three-hour-long infantry-type battle"). Breuer takes as fact a Los Angeles Times Report that Francke calls disinformation leaked by Pentagon officials but not supported by the facts[383].

According to General Holm, the Department of the Army stated after Operation Just Cause that not only would Bray's service attract attention to the many roles filled by military women, but the media stories themselves would help shape the history of women in the United States Armed Forces. Around the same time, sociologist Charles Moskos published an op-ed in the *Washington Post*, heralding Bray's command role as the "shot heard around the world, or at least in the Pentagon."[384] It certainly became the debate heard around the world, and especially in the halls of the Pentagon. Thanks to the differences between Franke and Breuer, the history of women in the United States Armed Forces assumed a contested nature – something exacerbated by the military's own inconsistency regarding Captain Bray's actions.

Pentagon policymakers were not the only ones who were unprepared for the attention Captain Bray's actions received. Reflecting on her service sometime later, she highlighted the discomfort she felt about both the media's attention and the reactions of the men with whom she served. Many servicemen resented Captain Bray and other

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[383] Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 101-2.

[384] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 435-36.

servicewomen for the attention they received for their relatively "small" contributions. The negative reactions of male officers, and the harassment Bray faced after the incident, left her disillusioned. She left the Army in 1991, after suffering stress fractures in both legs that she claims were caused by carrying extra weight during marches in an attempt to prove herself to the men in her unit.[385] That same year, an article in the *Washington Times* quoted Bray as saying "The story for me was to demonstrate how well the soldiers performed. I was so thankful for army training […] that was the point of the story, but that's not what came out. It came out: 'Women in combat.'"[386]

While most women who served in Operation Just Cause belonged to the United States Air Force and United States Army, several others served on Grenada with the United States Marine Corps. These included Cpt. Kathryn V. Harrison, who had been stationed in Panama ahead of the invasion at the U.S. Southern Command. Captain Harrison was accosted by three male members of the self-proclaimed Panamanian Dignity Battalion, while returning to her command. Among the many criminals recently released from prison by Gen. Manuel Noriega with orders to kill Americans, these three men surrounded Harrison's car. One was armed with a pistol, while the others wielded rocks, attempting to break the windows to get to Harrison. It was her quick thinking, including a punch to one of the assailants, and defensive driving skills, that enabled her to

[385] Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 94; Holm, *Women in the Military*, 436; Zeigler and Gunderson, *Moving Beyond G.I. Jane*, 56.

[386] Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 436. Brackets in original.

get away physically unscathed. Harrison's conduct rated a combat fitness report, detailing her performance and evaluating her actions, but not a Combat Action Ribbon.[387]

In reflecting on official military policy regarding women in combat, an anonymous female paratrooper who deployed to Panama with the 82nd Airborne remarked, "If they are going to let us wear the uniform, then they ought to let us defend it. Otherwise, don't let us wear it."[388] Not all servicewomen wanted combat roles to be opened to women: S. Sgt. Christine J. Brown and Rose DeBerry were among two female veterans that testified in front of the House Armed Services Committee on behalf of the Army against proposed legislation on allowing women in combat. "I think there's a lot of physical limitations …. I think we're setting ourselves up for failure," said Staff Sergeant Brown.[389] DeBerry, who served with Brown during Operation Just Cause, agreed: "I don't think that women are emotionally or physically ready to do it.'"[390] While their testimonies were given in 1990, Brown and DeBerry both deployed to Panama in 1989; Brown in Army Intelligence and DeBerry as an Army MP. Along with other

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[387] Colonel Nancy P. Anderson, *The Very Few, The Proud, Women in the Marine Corps, 1977-2001* (Quantico, Virginia: History Division, US Marine Corps, 2018), 87. Anderson cites two newspaper articles, both from the early 2000s to support her description of Capt. Harrison's actions (Brain Baer, "Female Marine Earns Decorations, Respect," *Free Lance-Star* (Fredericksburg, VA, 13 February 2003, and PFC John Flagg, "Intel Officer Inducted into Women's Hall of Fame," *Quantico Sentry*, 28 September 2001, A1.

[388] Holm, *Women in the Military, 507.*

[389] Quoted by Mark Thompson, "Military, Male and Female, Cool to Women in Combat," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Mar 21, 1990, https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/ military-male-female-cool-women-combat/docview/1834864676/se-2. For more on Rep. Schroeder's proposed legislation, see the next chapter.

[390] Quoted by Thompson, "Military, Male and Female, Cool to Women in Combat." DeBerry's rank was not listed.

servicewomen who were chosen specifically by the military to testify against allowing women in combat, Brown and DeBerry parroted the lines delivered by generations of men – policymakers, military officers, enlisted soldiers, and civilians – about women's physical and emotional limitations. But those assumptions already been proven false.

According to General Holm, by the end of Operation Just Cause, "the disparities between theory and reality in military policies, tolerated during the Cold War, were exposed."[391] Servicewomen in all branches of the US military had deployed to combat zones with their units and many served with distinction, receiving decorations for valor. They had been fired upon and returned fire, regardless of their designation as noncombatant or combat-support, challenging ideas about what was and was not combat, both within the institutional military and the civilian world. And they were about to challenge those ideas further with the start of Operation Desert Shield.

[391] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 434.

CHAPTER 6:

"I CAN GET SHOT AT; I JUST CAN'T SHOOT BACK": WOMEN IN COMBAT IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

Less than seven months after the end of Operation Just Cause, the United States deployed its military to defend Saudi Arabia in Operation Desert Shield. At 2:00 A.M., Thursday, August 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein, the President of Iraq, invaded Kuwait. Within a few hours, the Iraqi military conquered the small emirate, and Hussein gained control of the worldwide oil market, thus making himself the most powerful leader in the Middle East. As Iraqi forces moved through Kuwait towards the Saudi Arabian border, President George H.W. Bush imposed an economic embargo on Iraq and deployed three aircraft carriers, with their supporting task forces, to the Persian Gulf in the name of stability. At the same time, he underwent the process to begin what became known as Operation Desert Shield, a full-scale rapid deployment of U.S. forces to the region to prevent Hussein's troops from violating the Saudi border.[392]

Meanwhile, the military and civilian society were concerned about the ability of the All-Volunteer Force to engage in such a large conflict. While military experts agreed that the AVF was perhaps the best military in U.S. history, as far as training, leadership, and equipment went, this would be its first large scale test, and specifically the servicewomen who made up 11 percent of the active-duty military and 13 percent of the reserve forces. The debates that raged earlier about women's abilities to serve in the military still existed – critics insisted that "women were a drag on military readiness and more trouble than they were worth," arguing that their success in the conflicts of the

[392] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 439.

1980s was not empirical proof in their abilities but rather had been exaggerated by feminists and the media.[393] From the very beginning of Desert Shield, the United States Coast Guard played a major role. Unlike the other military branches, the Coast Guard had opened all its Military Occupation Specialties to women. Thus, when the United States Navy asked the Coast Guard to supply cutters and crews to assist in a naval blockade of Kuwait and Iraq, the servicewomen were put on alert to deploy as a part of the fully integrated Coast Guard. Cpt. Jane Hartley, then a lieutenant in the Coast Guard, remembered, "The Navy asked for coast guard ships and crews, and was not happy when they looked at crew rosters…. They wanted the coast guard to replace coast guard women who were in positions of leadership aboard these ships."[394]

But Coast Guard women were not the first to deploy during the First Persian Gulf War. When the U.S. Army put the 82nd Airborne Division on ready alert on August 2, 1990, Captain Nanette Gallant volunteered to join the advance team that would parachute into Saudi Arabia. Upon the invasion of Kuwait, Gallant was activated as the 82nd Airborne's division support commander and general supply officer, but still recalled being shocked that the colonel in charge of the Material Management Center allowed her to deploy with the advance team: "In the back of my mind, I didn't believe that they would let a woman do that."[395] As a member of the advance team, Captain Gallant belonged to one of the first units to put boots on the ground. "As far as I know," she

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[393] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 438-440.

[394] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 343-47. Ellipses in original.

[395] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 346.

recalled, “there was no other woman there when we first reached the ground. It was very strange. By the time all the planes landed it was me with nine hundred men.”[396]

Operation Desert Shield began on August 7, 1990, with a coalition of 35 nations organized by President Bush to defend Saudi Arabia against the Iraqi forces and hoping to force them back from Kuwait. The next day, the XVIII Airborne Corps, which included the 82nd Airborne was deployed to Saudi Arabia, followed by the 24th Infantry Division, the 101st Airborne Division, and the 197th Infantry Brigade. The U.S. Army called up the largest number of reservists since the Korean War. Meanwhile, the Navy was already in the region. The Joint Task Force Middle East was placed on ready alert immediately and the USS *Independence* (CV-62) and USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN-69) led battle groups from the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea to the Gulf of Oman and Red Sea. On August 7, 1990, the Navy deployed a further 240 ships and 18.3 million pounds of supplies and equipment, to equip both the deployed Army and Marine forces in Saudi Arabia. Over 21,000 Naval reservists were called up. The United Nations imposed sanction on Iraq to weaken their economy and thus impede the invasion. On November 8, 1990, U.S. VII Corps moved from Europe to the Gulf. The swell of personnel allowed the U.S. forces, led by Gen. Norman H. Schwarzkopf, to take the offensive against the Iraqi forces.[397]

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[396] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 343-47.

[397] “Operation Desert Shield” Center for Military History, U.S. Army, accessed May 10, 2024. https://history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/dshield_dstorm/desert-shield.html and “Desert Shield/Desert Storm” Naval History and Heritage Command, U.S. Navy, accessed May 10, 2024. https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/middle-east/shield-storm.html.

Female Marines, meanwhile, were not deployed immediately. According to Brig. Gen. Mike Myatt, commander of the 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps leadership was "uncertain of the Saudi reaction to the female Marines."[398] Instead, female marines in deploying units were replaced by men. Some women were unsure as to whether they would deploy as their orders changed multiple times. Official policy prevented women's deployment for two reasons: Marines were the most forward of the forces, and combat restrictions prevented women from deploying to areas that may face combat, and the Marine Corps claimed they wanted to avoid offending people in Saudi Arabia by putting women in what "men's roles." And yet, some women did deploy with their units, including Gy. Sgt. Becky Morgan, staff sergeant with Marine Air Control Squadron 1. Gunny Sergeant Morgan, the only military specialist in her unit, remembered:

> I donned my gear, my weapons, and a very concealing flak jacket. Ten days after the beginning of the war I was in-country with my fellow Marines. I kept a low profile and did the job that I had trained with my unit for 3 years to do. I am told that I was one of the first women in-country at the time. This passed without fanfare, without ceremony, and more women came.[399]

Some commanders were adamant that the female Marines would deploy with their units. Lt. Col. Robert M. Shea, commanding officer of the 9th Communication Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), directed women under his command to tuck their hair in to their helmets, as he had heard rumors about women "being pulled off the aircraft just prior to departure, and he was not deploying without all of his Marines."

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[398] Brigadier General Mike Myatt, CG, 1st Marine Division message 221433ZMAR91, "Women Marines Performance in Desert Shield/Desert Storm," March 22, 1991.

[399] Anderson, *The Very Few, the Proud*, 103.

Lt. Gen. Walker E Boomer, commander of I MEF, believed the front lines to be safer as "Iraqis would not use nerve gas so close to their own frontline troops." The female Marines in his command deployed with their units. The Marine Corps stated that some servicewomen would rejoin their units in-country later, but female Marines were One month later, however, Marine Corps Headquarter clarified their policies and women were allowed to deploy.[400]

While the coalition of forces managed to repel the Iraqi forces from Saudi Arabia, Iraq still occupied Kuwait. On January 17, 1990, Operation Desert Shield ended and Operation Desert Storm, an air offensive campaign, began with Army and Air Force helicopters knocking out Iraqi air radar systems and anti-aircraft guns and creating a gap in the Iraqi defense system. Hundreds of U.S. Marine, Navy, and Air Force aircraft and missiles followed. This was the beginning of a 38-day air campaign. The ground campaign began on February 24, 1991, and lasted only 100 hours. At the height of the action, around 600,000 U.S. personnel were deployed.[401]

In an interview about her deployment during Operation Desert Storm, years after retirement, Lieutenant Carla Reed said, "no matter how significant or insignificant our contributions were, they couldn't have done it without us."[402] By the end of Operation Desert Storm, more than 40,780 women, about 8 percent of all deployed servicemembers, served in theater in all but directly combat-related specialties. About 22 percent of

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[400] Anderson, *The Very Few, the Proud*, 103-04.

[401] "Operation Desert Shield" Center for Military History; "Desert Shield/Desert Storm" Naval History and Heritage Command.

[402] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 359.

servicewomen believed they filled combat roles, regardless of official policy. They received imminent danger pay during their deployment, the same as servicemen.[403] Yet, according to the military, the Combat Exclusion Policy remained in effect. This chapter explores the experiences of servicewomen who served in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm understanding them as combatants, regardless of military policy.

Scholars of women's military history in the post-World War II era, such as Kara Dixon Vuic, Beth Bailey, and Tanya Roth, have spoken extensively on the construction of the female soldier as a paragon of white, middle-class, heterosexual femininity and the ways in which her image was used to reinforce gender ideologies, even as they changed through the decades and into the creation of the All-Volunteer Force. Roth argues that this extends past the Cold War: "Gender and sexuality continue to be central elements of women's military experiences, affecting how servicemen and male superiors perceive them, their assignments, and their career opportunities."[404] Many of the experiences of the women who served in the Gulf War reflect this argument. Roth's conclusion points to the advancements made since 1980, arguing that by the beginning of the 1980s, a "new definition of equality centered . . . on recognizing individual capability, regardless of sex."[405]

Despite the advances made through the 20th century regarding the roles that were open to women, Sections 6015 and 8549 of the U.S. Code remained in effect as of the

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[403] Theresa Strohmer, "Soldiers, Not Wacs: How Women's Integration Transformed the Army, 1964-1994" (Dissertation, University of Greensboro, 2016), 306.

[404] Strohmer, "Soldiers, Not Wacs," 306 and Roth, *Her Cold War*, 220.

[405] Roth, *Her Cold War*, 217.

First Persian Gulf War. Thus, women were barred from combat aircraft and naval vessels. Meanwhile, the Army excluded women from direct combat, defined as taking "place while closing with the enemy by fire, maneuver, or shock effect in order to destroy or capture, or while repelling assault by fire, close combat or counterattack."[406] Any position designated P1 was completely off limits to women, thus entire specialists could be declared off limits, including service jobs located further forward than the very rear. Servicewomen could be temporarily assigned further forward, however, to deliver or fix equipment and there was no limit on how far forward they could move, as long as it was temporary.[407] Sgt. Sheri L. Barbato, a records keeper in vehicle maintenance in the 1st Cavalry (Armored), who crossed into Iraq on the first day of the ground war on temporary duty, remembered "I didn't think women were supposed to get this close to the front lines." She went on to explain that was what convinced her that the DCPC was not viable: "There wasn't anything over there that happened to the guys that didn't happen to me…. There were times when I would have welcomed the opportunity to fight back."[408]

According to Marine Corps policy, female Marines were not assigned to any combat or combat support units, so they would remain in their positions when their units were activated. Uncertain about the Saudi Arabian reaction to female Marines, however, Corps leadership pulled most of them from the first wave of deployments, replacing them

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[406] MS, Women's Research and Education Institute, Women in the Military 1980-1990, Washington DC 1991, 9.

[407] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 210.

[408] Jon Nordheimer, "Women's Role in Combat: The War Resumes," *New York Times*, May 26, 1991, 28.

with men. Other Marine women were kept in a state of confusion, as information on whether they would deploy changed often.[409] But some did deploy, including Gy. Sgt. Becky L. Morgan, who recalled:

> I was the only military intelligence specialist in my unit. I donned my gear, my weapons and a very concealing flak jacket. Ten days after the beginning of the war I was in-country with my fellow Marines. I kept a low profile and did the job I that I had trained with my unit for 3 years to do. I am told that I was one of the first women in-country at that time. This passed without fanfare, without ceremony, and more women came.[410]

Several senior officers, including Lt. Col. Robert M. Shea, Lt. Gen. Walter E. Boomer, and Brig. Gen Charles Krulak, were adamant that they would not leave their female Marines behind. Lieutenant Colonel Shea, commanding officer of the 9th Communication Battalion, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (1 MEF), told the women in his command to tuck up their hair in their helmets, as he had heard of women being pulled off aircraft that were ready to deploy. Lieutenant General Boomer, commander of 1 MEF, believed the front lines to be safer for women, as the Iraqis were unlikely to use nerve gas close to their own front lines, deployed his marines together, regardless of gender. Brigadier General Krulak, commander of the 2d Force Service Support Group (FSSG), was determined that his command would deploy together, especially as 50 percent of his staff were women. According to Marine Corps representatives, they expected that servicewomen would rejoin their units later. But female Marines found no comfort in such assurances, especially since women from the other services were

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[409] Anderson, *The Very Few, The Proud*, 102-3.

[410] Barbara A. Wilson, "Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm: Women Were There," Military Women Veterans: Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow, last modified 1996, http://userpages.aug.com/captbarb/ femvetsds.html

deployed much earlier. In September, less than a month after the initial deployments, Marine Corps Headquarters clarified its policy and allowed women to deploy.[411]

While the Navy attempted to impose Sections 6015 and 8549 on the Coast Guard, it quickly found that they did not have a choice. As a small service in relation to the others, the Coast Guard used their servicewomen as effectively as possible. "The navy got its underwear in a bunch because we had ships going over [to Operation Desert Shield/Storm] with women as leaders in the theater and that was a real shakeup for them," Captain Hartley explained. "They said 'You can't do that!' And we said, 'Then you can't have the ships because you can't take the COs off the vessels.'"[412] Thus servicewomen crewed combat vessels during the conflict, at least with the Coast Guard. But Coast Guard women were not the only ones to enter combat.

By the First Gulf War, the lines between combatant and noncombatant scarcely existed. In a letter dated 1 May 1991 to Lt. Gen. Edward Flanagan, a female tactical officer with an illegible signature=wrote:

> As for the current regulations concerning the role of women in combat - unlike the Navy and Air Force there are no laws which bar women from combat duties in the Army. There is simply ever changing policy which the Army believes is an interpretation of Congress' intent to keep women out of the most likely positions which could encounter combat. Actual duty positions barred or granted women based on the belief that they are less likely to encounter direct combat are constantly changing - especially in Signal, transportation, MI, etc. Because "direct" (what even that means) combat is highly likely in infantry and armor those positions have never been made available to women, however, women have served as S2's and other liaison officers to infantry and Armor brigades. Sir, I believe as long as you view modern warfare as foxholes, massive moving fronts and so on you are denying yourself a clear picture of the iminent [sic] danger most

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[411] Anderson, *The Very Few, The Proud*, 101-11.

[412] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 346.

> soldiers (regardless of branch or location) are in in combat. The long range and lethality of modern weapons systems have changed the face of battle forever. Cutting off the supply lines as a means of support against our enemies and for them against us is essential. These supply lines (trains) are attacked first and must keep up w/ a very fast moving combat force out front. Guess who's in the rear?- a lot of women. They are not safe - they don't pretend that they are.[413]

This is perhaps made obvious by the two female POWs during Desert Storm: Spc. Melissa Rathburn-Nealey, an army truck driver who was captured when the truck she was driving was stuck in sand and Maj. Rhonda Cornum, a flight surgeon who was captured after a plane crash, as well as by the thirteen servicewomen who lost their lives, four by enemy fire.

Spc. Melissa Rathbun-Nealy of the 233rd Transportation Company was the first American servicewoman captured by hostile forces since World War II. On January 30, 1991, she and her partner, Spec. David Lockett, along with two other soldiers in another truck, went to pick up heavy equipment vehicles that were undergoing repairs. The two trucks got lost on their way back and came under fire. While the second truck managed to turn around, Specialist Rathburn-Nealy and Specialist Lockett were stuck in the sand and surrounded by Iraq forces. The next day, the Iraqi government announced that it had captured both male and female servicemembers and the U.S. confirmed their identities three days later. Both Specialist Rathburn-Nealy and Specialist Lockett suffered injuries in the incident and Iraqi forces held them as prisoners in Basra and then Baghdad, finally releasing them on March 4.[414] The American military did not, however, officially declare

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[413] M.F., [handwritten letter, signature unreadable], May 1, 1991, Edward M. Flanagan Papers, Box 14, Folder: Documents pertaining to Women Serving in Combat, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

[414] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 215 and Holm, *Women in the Military*, 455-7.

either Specialist Rathburn-Nealy or Specialist Lockett as a POW or MIA. The Pentagon classified them as DUSTWUN, duty status whereabouts unknown, even as the media and public considered them to be POWs or missing in action. After further reports came in from the field, the military declared the two servicemembers missing two weeks after their capture, but the Pentagon did not confirm reports of their capture, so they were not designated POW or MIA. Rathburn-Nealy's father believed that this was due to her gender: "Bush was afraid of adverse publicity with a woman captured."[415]

Meanwhile, the public's imagination roamed, fueled by the media. While the International Red Cross believed that the Iraqis would treat servicewomen according to the Geneva Conventions, the fears that Iraqi forces would sexually assault or rape Specialist Rathburn-Nealy dominated much of the conversation and was used by both sides in the debate on women in combat. While no U.S. servicewomen taken as POWs had reported being raped by their captors up to this point, the specter of possible abuse was powerful. While one of her guards did assault Rathburn-Nealy, it was not to the degree that the public was concerned: after her return, she told her father that one guard had attempted to grope her breast, but stopped when she slapped him.[416]

Unlike Specialist Rathburn-Nealy, Major Cornum's capture was unknown until around the time the Iraqi government released her. On February 27, 1991, Major Cornum volunteered for a search and rescue mission to find an injured F-16 pilot who had crashed sixty miles away. She recalled coming under fire only a few minutes after they left the

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[415] Quoted in Francke, *Ground Zero*, 94-5.

[416] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 91-97.

American-controlled territory. Five of the crewmembers on her Blackhawk died and three, including Major Cornum and Sgt. Troy Dunlap, were taken prisoner and held until March 6. All three had been injured; Major Cornum was shot in the back and had two broken arms, which were reset by her captors. While she initially reported mostly good treatment, she came forward later revealing that she had been sexually assaulted while being transported.[417] In an interview in 1992, Major Cornum told a *New York Times* reporter that on her first night in enemy custody, one Iraqi put a blanket over both of them, unzipped her flight suit, and kissed and fondled her. Due to her existing injuries, and fear that her assailant would injure her further, she did not fight back and told the reporter that at that time that she was more afraid of Sgt. Dunlop being shot by their captors trying to defend her than she was of being sexually assaulted.[418] Major Cornum later told Linda Francke that she believed her broken arms and pained screams were the only things preventing her captor from further assault, stating, "I was manually molested, anally and vaginally. . . . I would have gotten raped but he couldn't get my flight suit off."[419]

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[417] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 457-59.

[418] "A Woman's Burden," *Time*, March 29, 2003, 1. Major Cornum told her story to Time correspondent Cathy Booth Thomas back in 1992. They reprinted the 2003 story following the capture of Specialist Shoshana Johnson, the first servicewoman held as a POW following Major Cornum (as well as the first black female POW). She also admitted to being assaulted after direct question from conservative activist Elaine Donnelly during her testimony to the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Military on June 8, 1992.

[419] Quoted in Francke, *Ground Zero*, 99.

While both Specialist Rathburn-Nealy and Major Cornum told the Survival, Evasion, Resistance Education (SERE) agency about their assaults, they did not talk about those experiences in their early press interviews. When they became public after the war, the continuing debates on women in combat became a front-page story in the *New York Times*. When asked about how Sergeant Dunlop felt, Major Cornum stated that she felt just as helpless as she overheard his beating during interrogation as he felt during her assault.[420] She went on to say, "Being a POW is the rape of your entire life. But what I learned in those Iraqi bunkers and prison cells is that the experience doesn't have to be devastating, that it depends on you."[421]

In many ways, the initial reports of Iraqi treatment of female POWs quelled some of the fears that surrounded the idea of women in combat. While Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi government exploited POWs taken earlier for propaganda, the captures of Specialist Rathburn-Nealy and Major Cornum were not used in such a way. Except for once incident each, neither of which was public knowledge at the time, the Iraqi military treated both women within the guidelines of the Geneva Conventions.[422] As Major Cornum did not speak publicly of her assault until June 8, 1992, during the war the media and the public believed that women in combat were not in any more danger if captured than servicemen. Conservative Activist Elaine Donnelly questioned Major Cornum directly during Cornum's testimony to the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of

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[420] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 101.

[421] "A Woman's Burden," 1.

[422] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 91-101.

Women in the Military and the Army confirmed that they were aware of the report.[423] Major Cornum went into some further detail in advance of the release of her autobiography, telling the *Washington Post*:

> Since everything that happens to you as a prisoner of war is non-consensual, then the fact that one thing they did was non-consensual is not very relevant…. So then you have to organize the bad things that can happen to you in some other hierarchy. My hierarchy was, is it going to make me stay here longer, is it life-threatening, is it disabling or is it excruciating. If it's none of those things, then it took on a fairly low level of significance.[424]

In a separate interview, Major Cornum dismissed the idea that her experience should be used to prevent women from serving in combat, citing civilian statistics on rates of sexual assault in the United States: "Clearly it's an emotional argument they use … because they can't think of a rational one." When Secretary of Defense Les Aspin opened more MOS to women in April 1993 following the war, the contributions of servicewomen such as Major Cornum were cited as proof that women could serve in combat. Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught specifically spoke of Major Cornum's experience being assaulted as a prisoner of war, calling it "a validation that if women are in combat and something like this happens they do have the strength, the stamina, the mental courage to meet the demands."[425]

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[423] "Female POW Was Sexually Assaulted," *Tampa Bay Times* June 11, 1992, 1.

[424] "Brig General Rhonda Cornum Parade Grand Marshall," Spokane Lilac Festival Blog, May 7, 2018, https://lilacfestivalblog.wordpress.com/2018/05/07/brig-general-rhonda-cornum-parade-grand-marshal/

[425] "Brig General Rhonda Cornum Parade Grand Marshall," Spokane Lilac Festival Blog,

In July 1993, the United States General Accounting Office sent a report titled "Women in the Military Deployment in the Persian Gulf War" to Secretary of Defense Les Aspin. The GAO conducted their fieldwork between April and October 1991, and thus it reflects the views of the personnel interviewed not long after their deployment. The report analyzed the performance of servicewomen during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, addressing common debates concerning the deployment of servicewomen and most specifically: "women's roles and performance; ability to endure deployment conditions; effect on unit cohesion; and effect on a unit's ability to deploy."[426] While researching this report, the GAO visited ten support units that deployed during the Persian Gulf War and conducted interviews with their commanders, as well as focus groups of officers, NCOs, and enlisted servicemen and servicewomen.[427]

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[426] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military: Deployment in the Persian Gulf War*, GAO/NSAID-93-93, (Washington, DC, 1993), 1. This report addresses some of the controversies surrounding servicewomen in combat conditions, but also the larger debates about women in the military. In addition, by analyzing the performance of servicewomen during the First Persian Gulf War, the report documents the roles women played but also how both military personnel of all genders perceived the contributions of women. The GAO report was sent to the Secretary of Defense following his April 1993 decision to lift the ban on women in combat aircraft and in anticipation of further debates concerning women in other combat roles. The GAO also sent the report to the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of the Air Force, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Secretary of the Army, and some unnamed congressional committees and other government parties.

[427] U.S. GAO *Women in the Military*, 2-14. The focus groups consisted of 171 men and 130 women divided into 59 groups by gender and rank, with separate groups for officers, NCOs, and enlisted personnel, and with a wide range of demographics (68 percent white, 22 percent black, 8 percent Hispanic/Latinx, 2 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 1 percent Native American. These personnel ranged in age between 18-51 years old, with the average being 29; about half of whom were married when deployed, about a quarter of which were in dual-military marriages. Respondents served an average of eight years in the service) and military backgrounds (25 percent officers, the rest roughly equally divided between enlisted and NCOs), as well as across the four services (38 percent Army, 24 percent Air Force, 21 percent Navy, and 16 percent Marine Corps.) The

The GAO report first addressed the combat exclusion policy, addressing the argument that "the modern battlefield is so fluid that women cannot be protected and therefore, the combat restrictions have no impact during war" and thus military policies that restrict women from combat-designated MOS do not shield them away from the danger.[428] Even the rear lines were not safe, as the Iraq military often fired Scud missiles at the ammunition and supply areas. Scud surface to surface missiles, launched from trucks that were constantly moved, could reach up to 500 miles, and could contain deadly chemicals, a threat that Saddam Hussein repeatedly made.[429] As Major Rossi put it, "front-line combat takes on a different meaning when you have Scuds going over all the soldiers and landing on the rear troops."[430] Representative Patricia Schroeder, chair of the House subcommittee on military installations, explained that "every military manual instructs you to hit the back supply line first and try to isolate the front line. Where are all the women? In the back lines with the supply details, communications equipment, and refueling planes."[431]

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analysts also visited a wide variety of units: Army Medical Command, Aviation Brigade, Forward Support Battalion, Military Police Brigade; Air Force A-10, F-15, and F-111 Fighter Wings; Marine Expeditionary Force; and Navy Combat Logistics Force Ship and Destroyer Tender. The report itself is anonymous, and thus details concerning the ranks, units, etc. of the individuals surveyed are mostly unknown. The report occasionally gives specifics, mostly when quoting an interviewee. Any specifics that were included in the report are also included here.

[428] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 11

[429] Zeinart and Miller, *The Brave Women of the Iraq Wars*, 33-35.

[430]"A Woman's Burden," 1.

[431] Quoted in Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 22.

Across the board, participants in the GAO survey said that there were varying interpretations of combat restrictions and exclusions, meaning that personnel assignment differed by unit and service and qualified servicewomen were sometimes not given the assignments for which they had trained. Servicewomen in the Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps crossed the Saudi Arabian border into Iraq and/or Kuwait during both the air and land phases of the conflict. They were also exposed to hostilities on Saudi territory as well, including receiving and returning enemy fire and handling prisoners. The possibility of facing hostilities seemed to correlate with one's branch of the service, with Army and Marine Corps women being most likely to experience combat. Of those who reported crossing the Saudi Arabian border, 62 percent of Marine groups, 59 percent of Army groups, and 12 percent of Air Force groups reported hostile or combat conditions while 35 percent of Air Force groups, 25 percent of Marine Corps groups, and 18 percent of Army groups reported experiencing hostilities despite not crossing the border. For example, one unit, according to its commander, was stationed within eight miles of the Saudi/Kuwaiti border, and thus within range of enemy artillery. When the logistical elements of that unit moved into Iraq, all soldiers required to be nearby for support or assigned to the rear contingent of the battalion moved forward, regardless of combat restrictions. In another example, a unit came under friendly fire after being placed between a combat unit and two follow units assigned to take control of POWs. Additionally, there was at least one unit stationed between 5 and 20 kilometers behind the front line and a hospital unit on the Iraq border ahead of infantry units. [432]

[432] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 15-20.

About a quarter of the four hundred members of the 24th Support Battalion (Forward) 24th Infantry Division, the most forward U.S. supply battalion in Saudi Arabia, consisted of women. They provided male tank crews and infantry with food, fuel, ammunition, spare parts, and medicine. As one unnamed servicewoman told a reporter, all personnel from the 24th slept with their M16 rifles "right next to us, like part of our bodies."[433] The press interviewed Sgt. Bonnie Riddell, a military police officer on perimeter guard duty, with a .45 caliber on her hip and an M16 close at hand, while she manned a light machine gun. While admitting that she was scared, Sergeant Riddell stated, "if it happens while I'm sitting here, and it's a question of me or them, it's going to be them."[434] They were prepared for combat, whether it reached them or not.

Others, such as Lt. Phoebe Jeter, known as the first female Scud buster, lived in more immediate danger. Lieutenant Jeter, who trained for her position for three years, led a fifteen-man platoon assigned to a Patriot missile control team. It was her job to identify any incoming Scuds and issue orders to destroy them. Any missiles that she did not correctly identify, locate, and destroy in the air could reach her base, causing mass casualties, as happened in Dharan. For her actions, Lieutenant Jeter became the first in her battalion to receive an Army Commendation Medal.[435] Similarly, Sgt. Barbara Bates, a meteorologist with a forward stationed self-propelled howitzer unit of the 24th Infantry (Mechanized Division) provided the combat troops with information about the weather,

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[433] Quoted in Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 213.

[434] Tony Clifton, "You're here, They're There. It's Simple," *Newsweek*, November 12, 1990, 28.

[435] Jeannie Ralston, "Women's Work," *Life* May 1991, 56.

allowing them to get their kill shots. The only woman stationed with 700 men, Sergeant Bates was in as much danger as any of the men next to her, even though she was not allowed to fire a howitzer. "When the shells start coming downwind, I will be counting on my flak jacket for protection, not my MOS," Bates quipped.[436]

The confusion about the meaning of combat and combat restrictions was even more apparent over in Iraq. Army women in one ground maintenance unit who stated that their commander did not allow them to be assigned to combat units to conduct repairs reported that they saw other women from a different outfit working further forward in the same capacity. Personnel in another unit reported that servicewomen were barred from a specific type of mission at the beginning of their deployment because it would place them within 15 miles of the Saudi Arabian border, even though servicewomen in that unit were not only trained for the mission but had performed the same assignment in a different hostile location. And yet, when the ground war started, those same women deployed across the border into Iraq. Additionally, a number of participants in the GAO survey on women in the military reported concerns about including aircraft with women aboard when defining what type of missions would constitute combat flying time might violate combat exclusion policies. Thus, what was considered combat flying time differed depending on commanders combat definitions. According to a member of the GAO study "some people were not sure what the restriction rules were and the unit's changing, and seemingly contradictory, policies seemed to highlight that uncertainty."[437]

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[436] Colin Nickerson, "Combat Barrier Blurs for Women on the Front Line," *Boston Globe*, November 13, 1990.

[437] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 26.

Servicemen also reported that different subunits followed their own policies when it came to the deployment and utilization of servicewomen. One man, who was assigned to a mixed-gender field hospital, reported that at one point, they had been the furthest forward unit on the battlefield. Another stated that he was stationed with servicewomen almost on the Iraq border ahead of combat MPs. A third man, whose outfit was about thirty kilometers from the border, recalled that several servicewomen volunteered to set up a forward camp only to be barred from doing so by their commander, even though they "could have contributed meaningfully."[438] Other women, however, were allowed to serve further forward, including female Marines under Brig. Gen. Charles Krulak, commanding general of the 2nd Force Service Support Group Group/Commanding general, 6th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic from 1990 to 1991. Brigadier General Krulak told Naval Institute's *Proceedings Magazine* that

> After dark on the first day of the ground attack, ten of my female truck drivers went through the breach [across enemy lines] to bring back enemy prisoners, so they actually cleared the breach ahead of some of our hard-charging infantry units.[439]

At least three units reported that confusion over combat restrictions led to rumors about commanding officers moving servicewomen to the rear or removing them from the unit entirely. Such rumors, some commanders rightfully noted, could hurt morale. There

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[438] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 27.

[439] James A. Brabham, "A War of Logistics," U.S. Naval Institute, *Proceedings Magazine* 117, no 11 (November 1991); 55-57, https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1991/november/war-logistics. Also quoted in Anderson, *The Very Few, The Proud*, 112.

was some grain of truth to these rumors: Two different units in two services interviewed by the GAO highlighted logistical issues with housing or sanitation concerning servicewomen assigned to support for all-male units. Support teams commonly remained with these units for more than one day and often several days at a time. These units reported that servicewomen were rarely, if ever, assigned to those support teams, either because the all-male receiving units "could not accommodate" them or simply did not want women assigned to them. In at least one case, a less experienced serviceman replaced a woman, and in another case, men were assigned to support without receiving specific training for their job, instead of using the trained women available. In addition, at least one "receiving unit chose to go without support rather than have women assigned." While those interviewed told the GAO that "when the need for support was great, as in the heat of battle, need overcame gender considerations," the report did not give any examples of this.[440] Those stories can be found elsewhere.

Sgt. Theresa Lynn Treloar, nicknamed the "Ice Lady" due to her direct nature, strong will, and dedication to the mission, was the closest servicewoman to the battlefront at one point, according to media sources, with the next being twelve to thirty miles back. Attached to the 2nd Armored Cavalry, VII Corps, Sergeant Treloar was not allowed to discuss her exact job or release any photos of herself. In addition, military security rules did not allow for disclosure of exactly how close to the frontline she operated. Cpt. Michael Mendell, the leader of her team, told Maj. Gen. Jeanne Holm that they the unit was stationed only a couple miles from the front and would move with U.S. forces as

[440] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 27.

they went forward. Captain Mendell fought for Sergeant Treloar's assignment, with the support of their battalion commander, and said that headquarters stated that putting a woman in that position was against Army policy.[441] Others suggested that her commanding officers should pull her back once fighting began, but Captain Mendell refused. Of the job, Sergeant Treloar said, ″I could have turned this down. But I had no hesitation at all. It's not every day you have a war."[442]

While the nature of Sergeant Treloar's assignment in the Persian Gulf War is still classified, it was certainly dangerous, as the 2nd Armor played a pivotal role in the conflict. She served in "the kind of unit whose soldiers have no insignia on their desert camouflage uniforms, if they wear them."[443] Captain Mendell said, "She is the only woman I know who carries an M-16 rifle, a light antitank weapon, an AT-4 and grenade." He added that he trusted her with his life. While Sergeant Treloar told reporters that she would not be fighting, there is no way to know whether she did. She did make it clear that she believed that gender should not play a role in combat eligibility. On her assignment, Sergeant Treloar said, "I chose this and I knew what I was getting myself into when I chose it," a sentiment many servicewomen shared.[444] They knew what they were getting into when they enlisted and were well trained and ready to do their jobs under fire.

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[441] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 451 and Neil Macfarquar, "Closest Woman to the Front Say's She's No Different Than Any Soldier," *AP News* February 23, 1991.

[442]Macfarquar, "Closest Woman to the Front Say's She's No Different Than Any Soldier."

[443] Macfarquar, "Closest Woman to the Front Say's She's No Different Than Any Soldier."

[444]Holm, *Women in the Military*, 451.

On September 19, 1990, Maj. Marie Rossi, a CH-47 Chinook pilot with 18th Aviation Brigade, deployed to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield. On her arrival, Rossi flew missions delivering troops, ammunition, and supplies. She was also one of the first female soldiers to cross the Iraq border on the first day of the ground war in support of the 18th Aviation Brigade and the 101st Airborne of which she said "personally, as an aviator and a Soldier, this is the moment that anybody trains for, so I feel ready for the challenge." On March 1, 1991, Major Rossi and three of her men were killed only a few days after her interview and one day after the ceasefire. They were returning from a mission transporting Iraqi POWs when bad weather caused their helicopter hit an unlit microwave tower in Saudi Arabia. The Army buried at Arlington National Ceremony with full military honors, the only female Gulf War veteran to be accorded such treatment at the time.[445] Major Rossi's interview had made her a well-known figure, with crowds of people and many news outlets attending both her hometown and military funeral and the Army posthumously awarded her the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Air Medal.[446] The day before her crash, Major Rossi told CNN, "What I'm doing is no greater or less than the man who is flying next to me or in back of me."[447]

Major Rossi almost lost her command the month after she deployed to Saudi Arabia, while attached to the 101st Airborne. Upon rumors of a ground war, commanders identified Major Rossi's unit as one of those to deploy to the front early on, and senior

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[445]James E. Wise, and Scott Baron, *Women at War: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Conflicts* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 71.

[446]Francke, *Ground Zero*, 13-14.

[447]Quoted in Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 214.

officers were concerned with violating the Direct Combat Probability Coding that would keep women out of combat and thus attempted to replace her with a male officer. The confusion over the DCPC meant that Major Rossi, who had earned pilot in command status in Korea and three company command assignments afterwards, had to fight to keep her command. While her company commander and friends insisted that her assignments were based on merit, others disagreed, attributing it to so-called reverse discrimination. Yet, those who flew with Major Rossi remembered with admiration. "She was a natural," her husband, Warrant Officer Andy Clayton testified.[448] Rossi's death, like those of other women in Desert Storm, illustrates the ways in which they were exposed to combat conditions, regardless of combat status. As Air Force Lt. Col. Kelly Hamilton, KC-135 command pilot, recalled of her own service and that of women who served before her, "I can get shot at; I just can't shoot back."[449]

Rossi was not the first servicewoman killed during the war – 13 women died in total, five in combat conditions. On February 25, 1991, a Scud missile killed 28 military personnel when it hit barracks housing personnel assigned to the 475th Quartermaster Group, near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Of the dead, three were women: Spc. Beverly Clark, Spc. Christine Mayes, and Spc. Adrienne L. Mitchell. The explosion hospitalized another 110 soldiers and around 150 more experienced minor physical injuries or mental health issues following the attack. This one missile was responsible for more than a third of all deaths during the war. Spc. Cindy Beaudoin, an Army medical technician with the 142nd

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[448]Francke, *Ground Zero*, 15-17.

[449] Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 489.

Company of the National Guard, was killed by a mine in southern Iraq. Her death, first declared to be action related, was reclassified by the Army as noncombatant after an investigation claimed that she died while attempting to take souvenir bomblets instead of being killed by an Iraqi land mine. In 1993, the Army once again reclassified Beaudoin's death as in action, due in part to the lack of an autopsy.[450] In a letter that Beaudoin's parents received after her death, she wrote, "Pray for the young guys. They really need it."[451] She went on to tell them:

> I did not come here to be a hero. I came here because my country needed me to be here. As much as I hate being so far away from home, I am proud to serve my country. I am here with thousands of other soldiers helping to bring down a very deranged tyrant…. If I should die while helping to achieve this, then I did not die in vain.[452]

In addition, Army Sgt. Cheryl LaBeau-O'Brien, a door gunner, died when her Black Hawk was shot down by an Iraqi anti-aircraft gun while on a mission to recover the remains of fallen soldiers.[453] After the sergeant's death, her mother stated that she was not reassured by her daughter's placement in the rear, but rather knew that "if something needed to be done, she would never say 'No, I'm not going. That's a combat zone.'" Sergeant LaBeau-O'Brien's husband, Michael, who was stationed only two miles away

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[450] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 459-60; J.C. Humphrey, "Casualty management: Scud Missile Attack, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia," *Military Medicine 164* (5) 322–326.; Vanessa De La Torre, "Killed in Action in Gulf War: Plainfield's Cindy Beaudoin," *Hartford Courant* May 19, 2014.

[451] David Gonzalez and E.R. Shipp, "Death in the Gulf: 11 Soldiers' Stories: So Few Died, but How It Hurt those Back Home: 11 Stories," *New York Times* March 15, 1991.

[452] De La Torre, "Killed in Action in Gulf War"

[453] "Medals Set," First Division Museum at Catigny Park, Accessed June 24, 2023, https://www.fdmuseum. org/collections/medals-set/.

from her, agreed: “Cheryl wouldn’t have said, ‘Let it be a man.’ Cheryl would have said ‘Let it be me.’” Sgt. Labeau-O’Brien was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Air Medal.[454] Ironically, Sgt. Labeau-O’Brien, and the other servicewomen who died during deployment, were officially classified as noncombatant and were therefore not eligible for any combat specific ribbon, badge, or medal.

In early 1991, 51,849 dual military parents, 33,179 men and 18,670 women, belonged to the U.S. Army. Of these, 9,000 of these deployed to the Persian Gulf, including 2,462 couples with dependent children. The military required all families to set up care arrangements in case of deployment, including provisions for dependents that included powers of attorney for guardians. A servicemember’s commanding officer reviewed and validated these plans annually, but they still sometimes proved unrealistic or became impossible under circumstances outside of a soldier’s control. If a care plan failed, the military required the soldier to attempt to remedy the issue while on duty and if that was not possible, permitted him or her to return to base for up to 30 days to find care or face separation. Some studies found that soldiers whose families experienced difficulties were less efficient and more prone toward stress related illnesses and accidents. [455] Marine Corps Reservist S. Sgt. Jodi M. Lewis, a single parent with a young

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[454] "Medals Set," First Division Museum at Catigny Park, Accessed June 24, 2023, https://www.fdmuseum. org/collections/medals-set/.

[455] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 217; Anderson, *The Very Few, the Proud*, 104-05.

child, was activated on October 11, 1990. She later stated that the family care plan was "a very efficient tool to smooth my activation."[456]

The press focused some of its reports on the stresses of deployed servicewomen with young dependents. For instance, deployed Army Spc. Michele Brown, a single mother in the 202nd Military Intelligence Battalion, found out that her daughter, who she left in the care of her mother, was in the hospital. "It's hard being a single parent and going to war," Specialist Brown admitted, "I don't want to be here."[457] Sgt. Mary Payette, an antitank weapons specialist, who left her eight-month-old son with her sister, never really thought about being deployed with an infant at home before she went to Saudi Arabia. Her concerns are about what might happen if she doesn't return: "I don't want him calling anyone else Mom." Kim Williams (rank and MOS unknown) who deployed along with her husband Robert, expressed similar fears about her children, especially considering that the couple was not sure about the length of their deployment. "We could be here for a few weeks or a year," Kim Williams explained. "Maybe our children won't remember us."[458]

Having to leave their children behind was not the only stress felt by dual military families. Sgt. Bonnie Padilla, whose husband Peter was also in the military, spoke to a reporter about the effects of her deployments to Panama and Saudi Arabia, as well as the

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[456] Anderson, *The Very Few, the Proud*, 105.

[457] Eric Schmitt, "War in the Gulf: Servicewomen; War Puts US Servicewomen Closer than Ever to Combat," *New York Times*, January 22, 1991.

[458] Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 24-25.

separation caused by his training exercises. According to Sergeant Padilla, they had been separated for all but “a month or so” of their two-and-a-half-year marriage. “We’re getting divorced,” she said, citing her most recent deployment as the last blow. “We talked about straightening out our problems, but it's hard to get your life together when you're always apart." Sgt. Cheryl Stewart felt similar stress, when her deployment with the 202nd Military Intelligence Battalion meant that her husband, a former infantryman, was left at home with their two children, saying, “We’re as close to divorce as we've ever been.” She, in part, blamed her husband’s “male ego” for their issues, adding, “he felt he should have been here and I should have been at home.”[459] Dual deployed couples also faced the stress and fears felt by family members of all deployed military personnel, but with the additional pressure of experiencing such feelings while in a war zone. Karen Norrington, an Army ordnance specialist, found out her husband was also deployed with a different unit after her arrival in Saudi Arabia, exclaiming, “I’ve stayed out here looking for him.”[460]

The deployment of military dual and single parents caused concern and controversy in the press and among the public, which was reflected in Congress as “the image of mothers kissing small children good-bye to march off to war, and the specter of large numbers of war orphans,” which haunted both politicians and voters.”[461] While media attention on the plight of single mothers in the military caused special scrutiny, in

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[459] Schmitt, “War in the Gulf.”

[460] Beck, “Our Women in the Desert,” 24. Norrington’s rank is not disclosed.

[461] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 219.

reality, two-thirds of single parents in the military were men. This was a consequence of the all-volunteer force, as the military during the Persian Gulf War, while still mostly male, moved from mostly single child-free men to an older population. Horror stories emerged in the media of children being left with unfit guardians or completely unattended. Two cases that got special attention were that of an unmarried male soldier who left his children alone with instructions on how to use his bank card to take care of themselves and a young female soldier who was held by military police after failing to report because she did not have a suitable family care plan. The attention on single parents in the military and dual deployed military couples created public awareness, and thus pressure on Congress to enact legislation. Several senators and representatives proposed different measures that would limit the ability of the Department of Defense to deploy parents of dependent children. This included a nonbinding resolution sponsored by Senator John Heinz of Pennsylvania that would allow single parents, as well as one member of a dual military parent couple, to be assigned to a noncombat zone. Congresswoman Barbara Boxer of California sponsored a bill limiting the ability of the military to assign single parents or both military parents to combat designated zones. Congressman E. Clay Shaw of Florida proposed to limit the deployment of servicewomen with children under six months to only non-hostile theaters. [462]

The Department of Defense claimed that these restrictions were not necessary in the All-Volunteer Force, and strongly opposed any limits on its ability to deploy soldiers

[462] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 464-67; Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 220.

as it seemed fit.[463] Some servicemembers agreed, including Sgt. Theresa Treloar, who was deployed to the Persian Gulf along with her husband, Sgt. Charles Barbour III, leaving their eight-year-old daughter behind. While admitting to the press that she found parting with her daughter to be the most difficult part of deployment she also said, "If your family prevents you from doing your job then get out of the army or get rid of the family."[464] Furthermore, the media attention, did not account for the numerous single-parent or dual military couples who deployed without issue: according to the military, 17,000 in all, most of whom made appropriate family care plans. Many single parents in the military and dual deployed couples resented the implication that they were irresponsible, with one deployed couple responding to a reporter who questioned how they could "bear" to leave their child with others by claiming "we're doing this for him."[465] Servicewomen believed that the public and political debate undermined their status as professionals, especially as the issue was fodder for conservative groups that opposed women in the military. In pushing back, servicewomen emphasized that, as adults and military professionals, responsibility for family care and their children fell to the parent, not the government.[466]

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[463] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 220.

[464] Macfarquar, "Closest Woman to the Front Say's She's No Different Than Any Soldier."

[465] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 467.

[466] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 464-469.

In a letter to Lt. Gen. Edward Flanagan, a female tactical officer responded to the public and political debate:

> You worry about babies and small children being left in orderly rooms when a unit gets alerted! Now lets get realistic! SNAFUS happen but most parents are responsible and all commanders realize that soldiers cannot fight if they are worried about their children.[467]

The pressure to resolve the issue was limited due to the short nature of the conflict and the relatively low number of casualties and was not resolved by the end of the war, and debates continued long after. By the end of the Gulf War, three soldiers with custody of minor children died, two men and one woman. All three had designated guardians for their children and two of those guardians accepted the children long-term, while one petitioned the court for other arrangements. These cases underlined the point that the majority of deployed servicemembers had comprehensive and well-executed family care plans.[468]

Concerns over the unavailability of women to deploy due, as the GAO report put it, to "pregnancy and the belief that women generally lose more time on the job than men do" are often cited as an issue with the deployment of servicewomen in general as well within mixed-gender units.[469] Over the course of the conflict, the pregnancy rates remained at their pre-war rate, about 7 to 8 percent of servicewomen. The number of

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[467] M.F., [handwritten letter, signature unreadable], May 1, 1991, Edward M. Flanagan Papers, Box 14, Folder: Documents pertaining to Women Serving in Combat, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

[468] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 220.

[469] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 11.

nondeployable female soldiers due to some kind of physical disqualification, however, was sometimes as high as 18 to 20 percent, significantly higher than that of nondeployable male soldiers. As commanders needed to fill every slot for a unit to serve at full capacity, had to anticipate that they would replacing more women than men. While pregnancy was a contribution to this difference, so was maternity leave. Maternity leave, according to regulations, lasted forty-two days, after which soldiers must either leave the military or return to active duty. Pregnant soldiers went into the Individual Ready Reserve category, meaning that they were active-duty but not able to perform their regular jobs due to health or family problems. During the war, there were four hundred and thirty women designated Individual Ready Reserve due to pregnancy. Servicewomen categorized as such remained on duty during their first trimester but stayed stateside. Commanding officers decided the duties of servicewomen in their second or third trimester, but usually assigned them light or part-time duty. Should a servicewoman discover that she was pregnant after deployment, she would return to her home base.[470]

Personnel discussing undeployability or early return cited pregnancy as one of the main reasons why people did not deploy with their units or returned from deployment. This perception was incredibly common across the branches, with enlisted groups citing pregnancy more often than NCOs or officers. Nevertheless, they identified few cases of women that they actually knew who did not deploy. More women were thought to have been sent home early, but that was at least in part due to the fact that women were not

[470] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 220-21.

always tested for pregnancy prior to deployment.[471] While data on the number of servicewomen who did not deploy or were recalled due to pregnancy was unavailable, the GAO report focused on the perception of pregnancy as the biggest contributing factor to availability for deployment or return of deployed servicewomen. The effects of nondeployment or recall are difficult to accurately assess, especially among units that deployed only some of their servicemembers. In those cases, it was easier for commanders to fill empty slots and they had some leeway to establish policies around who would or could deploy. For instance, in at least one unit, the commander created a policy that within dual military families with dependents, only one parent would deploy. In units that were deployed in their entirety, however, vacancies created by nondeployability for any reason posed considerably more difficulties, since those slots had to be filled prior to deployment.[472]

Debate over the deployment of servicewomen to combat zones often included the claim that women were unable to endure a deployment because they "need or prefer to be more meticulous than men about personal hygiene," "more readily run the risk of health complications," and "are less able to endure the lack of privacy."[473] More specific

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[471] Of the twenty-nine groups that provided numerical estimates, twenty-four said 0-2. Of the twenty-three qualitative responses, eighteen stated "none," "very few," "heard about from others," "know about personally," or "yes" while the others stated "some," "a lot," "about half," or "very often." Of the qualitative responses, sixty-seven personnel reported 0-2 while eighteen stated more than 2. Twenty-one groups gave quantitative responses, with nineteen people stating "none," "very few," "heard about from others," "know about personally," or "yes" while the four stated "some," "a lot," "about half," or "very often." U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 50-51. It is not easy to summarize these responses, as at least some of them were about the same women, according to the GAO interviewers.

[472] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 52.

[473] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 29.

examples included the supposed inability of women to withstand combat conditions including "living in tents with little or no privacy, the lack or limited availability of bathroom facilities and clothes laundering options, and the inability to shower daily or at will."[474] In examining the effects of deployment on issues of health and hygiene, however, the GAO found that servicemen and women responded to issues of hygiene and privacy similarly and the effects of deployment on women's health were similar to men's, including mental health and stress. There were logistical issues, however, in accessing to so called "gender-related supplies."[475]

Both men and women harbored concerns over privacy and often found ways to adapt their situations as much as possible. Women were more likely to report issues with privacy in showers and latrines. In one example, women described showers that exposed the upper body and in another, women talked about shower stalls that were short enough to allow tall men to see into them. More than a few mentioned issues with "Peeping Toms" in general.[476] A number of servicewomen reported limited shower hours, with one unit stipulating that the seventeen women in the unit were given one hour immediately following their shift to share the two showers, with several stating that "the men waiting to take a shower begrudged the women access to the showers."[477] In adapting to the absence of latrines, women reported using their ponchos as impromptu privacy screens or

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[474] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 11.

[475] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 29.

[476] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 29-33.

[477] U.S. GAO Office, *Women in the Military,* 32.

using trucks as shields. Of those in permanent facilities, some stated that they addressed any private hygiene needs in secluded areas outside of their housing facilities or behind partitions. One servicewoman who was the only one barracked with men and without shower facilities, used vehicles for sponge bathing, quite in the same way that all servicemembers reported doing during the ground war.[478] Sgt. Theresa Treloar, who was the only woman in her camp, told reporters that she strung a poncho across the tent she shared with her commanding officer to take sponge baths and described her bathroom as a "two seated latrine in full view of the camp and open to the surrounding desert." While Sergeant Treloar admitted to finding the lack of privacy to be difficult at first, she went on to say, "I don't think it's being female. It's just being human."[479]

While both men and women reported deployment-related health problems, there were very few references to gender-related issues. Jock itch and yeast infections came up, but these were generally infrequent, and the GAO did not find any instances of these minor complaints affecting troops' ability to accomplish their missions. While many commanders, lawmakers, and civilians reported concerns regarding menstruation affecting the abilities of women to perform their duties, neither servicemen nor women cited that as a problem. Some women, however, reported secondary amenorrhea or irregularity in menstrual cycles, while others used birth control to regulate or control their cycles. As personnel were expected to provide for their initial personal hygiene supplies, and military supply lines were used to providing feminine health care items for a much

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[478] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 35.

[479] Macfarquar, "Closest Woman to the Front."

smaller number of women, there were some issues with supply of menstrual hygiene products, especially early in deployment. Women shared those items among themselves, bought what they could locally, and relied on sparse care packages from family and friends. Later during the deployment, servicemembers could rely on supply lines and there was an increase in care packages from back home, which addressed the issue.[480]

Although critics of women in combat both within and outside of the military question the physical capabilities of servicewomen, the GAO reported that the military personnel they interviewed did not find physical strength to be as much of an issue as feared. Instead, the "capabilities of service personnel were more dependent on the individual's characteristics than gender." Numerous military personnel noted that teamwork negated the issue of physical strength for both men and women. Additionally, servicemen and servicewomen were equally likely to report that physical limitations did not affect a unit's ability to accomplish their mission, as well as emphasize the role that teamwork made in overcoming any limitation, rendering the issue of strength as irrelevant. Negative assessments focused more on differing physical strength or fitness regardless of gender. One group reported, however, concerns about "women's inability to maintain physical fitness performance standards equivalent to men's," while one person stated that he or she "considered gender-normed standards as ineffective and noted that women appeared to often escape fitness training exercises."[481] There were more concerns expressed over physical ability in men's groups than in women's. More men believed that

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[480] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 34-36.

[481] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 21- 23.

they had to work harder to overcome women's limitation in physical strength, and more men reported that the physical limitations of women hurt the mission at least once.[482]

Yet, many MOS deemed combat did not require physical strength. While most servicewomen may not have the ability to heft 60-pound shells, they did qualify to serve in other combat MOS. As Lt. Stephanie Shaw, who was assigned to a deployed tactical air wing as a flight mission controller, insisted, "I can fly that F-15 just as well as a man." A former Navy submariner agreed: "On a ship, war is high tech. Men aren't any better at video games than women."[483] In positions such as these, the physical differences between men and women could not be used as a reason to keep them out of combat. Concerns remained, however, about the mental differences, with many critics of women in the military believing that the latter would not be able to handle the pressure and stress of a combat zone.

As far as concerns about mental health went, few focus groups reported differences in stress between men and women, or attributed stress to gender-related concerns. Deployment by its very nature increases concerns about mental health and certainly increases the amount of stress on servicepersons, but most focus groups who

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[482] Sixteen groups had at least one man who stated that they had to work harder once or more due to differences in physical abilities. Additionally, 37 percent of men's groups reported that they had to work harder as opposed to 15 percent of women's groups while 28 percent of men's groups reported that women's physical limitations hurt the mission verse 7 percent of women's groups. U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 23-24.

[483] Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 22-23. The Navy did not open the ban on women submariners until 2010, with the first female commissioned officers reporting to duty on submarines the next year. Enlisted women were not integrated into the command until 2016. Cameron Stoner, "Women in Submarines: 10 Years Later," *Navy Military Press Office,* June 25, 2021, https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2671640/women-in-submarines-10-years-later/.

spoke about war-related stress reported that there was no gender difference in coping with this problem. This reflects the common view about capabilities expressed earlier – it concerns the individual more than the gender. The only distinction made along gender lines regarded sources of stress that men did not experience. The two that the servicepeople identified had to do with the restrictions imposed on servicewomen to respect cultural differences in Saudi Arabia and the extra scrutiny placed on directed at servicewomen by the media.[484]

According to the military, servicepeople, and the Saudi government, "concessions had to be made by all to protect host nation sensibilities while giving the soldiers enough latitude to accomplish their jobs."[485] Marine GySgt. Becky Morgan remembered "when the military was first deployed into the Persian Gulf theater, they were not allowed to take the women of their unit. It was said at that point that to take the women in what the Arabian society considered 'men's roles' would offend them and that would hurt the war effort."[486]

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[484] Fifteen groups (twelve men's groups and three women's) reported that there were no differences in war related stress due to gender. Five groups perceived that that war related stress was worse for servicewomen (four men's and one women's), while three (all women's groups) reported it was worse for men. As far as coping, three groups (two women's and one men's) reported that women coped better with war stress while four (all men's) reported that men coped better. This difference is negligible, especially compared with the overwhelming view, as expressed by the groups to the GAO, that there was no gender difference. U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 36-37.

[485] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 97.

[486] Wilson, "Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm." This was not actually true, as several women discussed earlier have shown, but it was almost entirely true of the Marine Corps. Gunnery Sergeant Morgan deployed ten days into the conflict herself.

In his autobiography, Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf explained that despite his staffs' best efforts to explain the cultural differences:

> Nothing we did was going to eliminate the culture shock completely. For example, merchants in downtown Dhahran were appalled when off-duty women soldiers started browsing in their stores: troops in a war zone take their weapons with them wherever they go, so these women had assault rifles slung over their shoulders! At a warehouse we'd rented, women soldiers unloading boxes of medical supplies took off their fatigue jackets and worked in their T-shirts. We got any complaints about women disrobing in public.[487]

To maintain a cordial relationship with the host country while protecting the mission, American servicewomen were permitted to "discreetly" drive while on duty, even though Saudi women were forbidden to do so. Eventually servicewomen received permission to use one airbase's gym during limited hours, provided they entered through the back door. Nevertheless, they were still required to wear abaya off base and be escorted by servicemen even while shopping on base. They were also forbidden from wearing shorts or jogging at any point outdoors.[488] Some personnel understood and accepted these concessions, such as Capt. Susan Beausoliel, a paratrooper with the 18th Airborne Corps, who stated "This is their culture. We shouldn't impose our ways on them."[489] Others, both men and women, expressed anger at the restrictions, and uncertainty whether such limitations would impede mission success.[490] One unnamed

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[487] H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Peter Petre, *The Autobiography: It Doesn't Take a Hero* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 386.

[488] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 97 and Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 24.

[489] Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 24.

[490] Schubert and Krause, *Whirlwind War*, 97

Army staff sergeant felt that the Saudis "looked at you like a dog - they don't want American women here."[491] Representative Schroeder went further in condemning both the concessions made and the military's choice to make them: "Could you imagine if we sent black soldiers to South Africa and told them to go along with apartheid rules?" This "clash of cultures" was occasionally highlighted in the media, with one article quoting Army 1st Lt. Jennifer Ann Wood, who, on seeing a woman walk by in a black veil, responded "tragic." She went on to quote an adage from her time at West Point: "That's a tradition unhampered by progress."[492] The media highlighted the ways in which servicewomen experienced cultural differences but not how servicemen may have experienced something similar.

Specialist Rathburn-Nealy and Major Cornum, the two female POWs, certainly felt the media scrutiny. The attention they received after their release upset them, with Specialist Rathburn-Nealy's father later commenting that she felt embarrassed about being heralded as a hero, especially considering that her capture had been due to getting lost and stuck in the sand. As one of ten POWs released at the same time, Rathburn-Nealy did not want the media to single her out. Major Cornum resented the pushiness of reporters who hounded her on her return home, especially the questions they asked about sexual assault.[493] Many servicewomen with children also took umbrage over their depictions in the media, as Karen Zeinart discusses in *The Brave Women of the Iraq*

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[491] Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 24.

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[492] Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 24.

[493] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 100-101.

Wars: "As the war intensified, heart-wrenching photos of crying children waving good-bye to teary-eyed mothers assigned to the Gulf region dominated the news."[494]

While servicewomen were angered by their representation as overly emotional, some servicemen, who were also fathers, resented that such depiction undercut their pain at being separated from their children as well.[495] Articles such as Melinda Beck's "Our Women in the Desert: Sharing the duty – and danger – in a 'mom's war" in *Newsweek* exacerbated these servicemen's feelings. The article described Maj. Kathy Higgins "pinning up a crayon drawing by her 5-year-old son in her medical evacuation office" and servicewomen with "torn up photos of their children; looking at them a little too hard." This kindled resentment among servicemen who also held onto battered photographs of their children and old drawings.[496] They faced similar struggles as servicewomen yet the media rarely talked about the difficulties facing deployed fathers when it came to missing their families, perhaps because of the assumption that it was a man's duty to fight for his country, even if that meant leaving behind his loved ones. Spotlighting the emotions of servicewomen did a disservice to both deployed men and women: women's portrayal as "overly emotional" undercut perceptions about their ability to serve, especially in combat, while emphasizing the perceived stoicism of men.

The extra attention accorded deployed mothers as opposed to fathers reveals the media's fascination with the differences in the new all-volunteer military during the USA's first large-scale deployment since the end of conscription. The ways in which

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[494] Zeinart and Miller, *The Brave Women of the Iraq Wars*, 32.

[495] Zeinart and Miller, *The Brave Women of the Iraq Wars*, 32.

[496] Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 22.

media depictions of the new military both shaped and reflected the public perception of servicewomen, which sometimes fostered bitterness among servicemen who made similar sacrifices. Media attention around deployed mothers was not the only difference between servicemen and servicewomen that caused resentment. Other concerns included perceptions of favoritism and recognition, issues surrounding sexual assault and harassment, uneven applications of combat exclusion, and lingering sexism. In this environment, was it possible for servicemen and women to truly be “brothers-in-arms?”

CHAPTER 7:

"A NATURAL PROGRESSION": NAVIGATING THE IDENTITIES OF LADIES AND BROTHERS

During the 1977 spring meeting of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), Gen. Bernard W. Rogers, Army Chief of Staff, stated that over the previous decades, the "army progressed from treating women as separate (the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps) to separate but equal (the Women's Army Corps) and is now progressing to equal treatment (integration into the army's Combat Support and Combat Service support branches the same as male soldiers)."[497] In using this separate but equal language, appropriated from legislation and policies regarding race, General Rogers suggested that women were the last segregated group within the military, still seen as "lesser" than the men they served with. Yet, the general was specifically speaking about allowing women into support and not into combat to progress to the ideal of "equal."

At the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991, women had served in these support roles, but did not always see themselves as equal. M.F., a female tactical officer who deployed during the first Gulf War stated:

> I believe women will serve as infantry and armor soldiers. Strength (physical) will become less important and society will learn to respect women more. When this happens it will be a natural progression and accepted. I am in no hurry now. Women are now blocked from so many more positions that should have been opened yesteryear we are still playing catch up.[498]

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[497] Roth, *Her Cold War*, 197. Parenthesis in original.

[498] M.F., [handwritten letter, signature unreadable], May 1, 1991, *Edward M. Flanagan Papers*, Box 14, Folder: Documents pertaining to Women Serving in Combat, United States Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

This weight she puts on respect here is telling. By saying that when society, and indeed the military, learned to respect women more, they would be allowed into combat, implies that keeping women out of combat is a matter of disrespect. Despite the ways in which the military adapted its policies through the 1970s and 1980s to meet recruiting quotas and to adapt to the times, women were still seen as "lady soldiers," even after they deployed as members of the AVF. In keeping women outside of the "combat" sphere and attempting to separate their service in the public view, the military served to reinforce the difference between a servicewoman and a serviceman.

This chapter, therefore, attempts to understand how servicewomen were both "lady soldiers" and "brothers-in-arms" and how they navigated these seemingly contradictory identities. After the first Persian Gulf War, Congress began to question whether the combat exclusion policy should still exist, at least as far as air and naval combat. Yet, even after those restrictions were lifted, the differences between servicemen and servicewomen were still reinforced, specifically by the arguments surrounding combat exclusion legislation, especially the testimony of the service chiefs, and the ways in which sexual harassment and even assault had become ingrained in the military. This chapter therefore covers the congressional debates over allowing servicewomen to serve in combat roles, and some of the experiences of women during the Persian Gulf War to show the ways in which servicewomen were both accepted and rejected in the military.

In April 1991, after hearings with Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, Senator John McCain (R-Arizona) asked the House and Senate to review the laws that banned women from combat, asserting that "the issue of what is in combat and what is not in combat becomes more and more blurred as the range of

missiles and aircraft and equipment becomes greater." The Army and the Marine Corps service chiefs rejected the idea entirely, while the Navy urged caution. The Air Force, on the other hand, responded favorable. In March 1990, Lt. Gen. Thomas J. Hickey, Deputy Chief of Personnel for the Air Force, told the committee that "there probably isn't a combat job in the Air Force that women couldn't do." Lt. Gen. William H. Reno, Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel said that the current "policy is appropriate and we do not see any compelling reason to change," while Lt. Gen. Norman H Smith, Marine Corps, opined, "I don't think its broken. I don't think anything needs to be done with it." Navy Vice Adm. Jeremy Boorda was more optimistic, but cautioned that "we would have to be willing to undertake the commitment to make it a truly equal opportunity for males and females."[499] These differing opinions set the stage for the debates on women in combat that would follow the first Persian Gulf War.

Less than three months after the end of Operation Desert Storm, Representative Patricia Schroeder (D-Colorado), a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, introduced an amendment to the budget bill for the 1992-1993 fiscal year that would repeal the Air Force statute that prevented women from flying combat missions. The statute was the least defensible of the combat exclusion laws and Representative Schroeder believed that the Air Force would be the most amenable to repeal, as Lieutenant General Hickey was the only service chief to openly accept women in combat. As he put it, "In my own personal view, the last impediment we have to doing that is the

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[499] Glenn Law, "McCain asks review of laws that bar women from combat," *Arizona Republic*, April 18, 1991, A10, https://www.proquest.com/cv_701361/docview/1934141979/7938E3BCA11346C9PQ/11?accountid=14270&sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers

law." Representative Beverly B. Byron (D-Maryland), chair of the House Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee, proposed to expand Representative Schroeder's bill to include combat flying missions in the Navy and Marine Corps. The revisions made it through the committee without much opposition and defense authorization bill, with the revisions to combat flying restrictions, passed May 22, 1991. According to Schroeder, "There were a lot of cowardly lions roaring in the cloakroom… but they wouldn't go out on the floor and vote against it…. The Persian Gulf War helped collapse the whole chivalrous notion that women could be kept out of danger in a war."[500]

On May 23, 1991, Secretary of Defense Cheney's official spokesperson gave a press conference, stating: "The Department welcomes the legislation, because it gives the Department of Defense the authority to decide where the line should be drawn, rather than having Congress set the limits on the role of women in combat." Pentagon officials and senior military members who opposed the legislation were convinced that eliminating air combat exclusion laws would lead to servicewomen in combat on naval ships and ground units. According to one official, "They're taking the heart and soul out of the law … how are we going to defend not doing a total repeal of the law?" Secretary of the Army Michael P. W. Stone stated that if the bill passed the Senate, the Army would also open combat aviation MOS to servicewomen. President George H.W. Bush's nominee for Army Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Gordon Sullivan, however, opposed that move: "My recommendation at this juncture would be that women should not fly in combat." The nominee for Marine Commandant, Lt. Gen. Carl Mundy, Jr., disagreed,

[500] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 475-76. See previous chapters for more information.

stating that servicewomen performed "superbly" in aviation, but he had "reservations" about women serving on board ship. If directed to open those MOS to servicewomen, however, he stated "the Marine Corps knows how to salute."[501]

Meanwhile, the bill moved on to the Senate, where support for revising combat exclusion laws had gained rapid support, due in large part to the backing of Senators McCain, William V. Roth (R-Delaware), and John Warner (R-Virginia). In an interview for Mutual/NBC Radio, Senator Warner expressed his approval for women in combat: "If they … are going to take the risks in the rear, and they are willing to take the risks in the forward positions, can we as a matter of law deny that?... There is no safe area now in a combat zone, front or back." The passage of the bill in the House brought the debate into the public sphere. The media ran with the story, featuring debates about women serving in combat, focusing more on the idea of women in ground combat than women in air combat, even though the bill only addressed aviation roles. The Senate Armed Services Committee scheduled hearings to begin on June 18, 1991, in front of the subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, chaired by Senator John Glenn (D-Ohio).[502]

Top military leaders, who opposed repealing any combat exclusion laws, had several allies on the Armed Services Committee, including Chairman Sam Nunn (D-Georgia) and Senator Glenn. Some retired servicemembers, especially former officers,

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[501] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 476-77.

[502] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 477-78. Senator Warner, a Navy World War II and Marine Corps Korean War veteran and former Secretary of the Navy, was the ranking minority member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services. Senator McCain was a Navy Vietnam veteran who was held as a prisoner of war and Senator Roth was a World War II Army veteran.

lobbied heavily to keep the laws in place, while advocacy for repeal was much more sporadic. Proponents naively assumed that the positive response to servicewomen's contributions during the Persian Gulf War would mean support for repealing at least some restrictions. During the hearings, Senator Nunn mentioned that if any combat positions were open to women, they would be forced into all combat position, reviving previous conversations about the possibility of a future draft that would include women. While most service chiefs and senior military members supported the existing exclusion laws, much of the military was split on the issue, which was reflected in the hearings themselves. Only Senator Roth and Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) favored repeal from the beginning. Senator Warner and Senator McCain, who had been considered allies by proponents of repeal, moved back to neutral ground. [503]

Assistant Secretary for Force Management and Personnel, Christopher Jehn, told senators that the Department of Defense believed that "we have reached a point where further expansion of opportunities is very difficult within the current combat-exclusion laws and the associated policies that reflect their intent," but did not actually favor the removal of these policies. While senators hoped for a clear statement concerning the Secretary of Defense's position on combat exclusion policies, Jehn never gave an answer.[504] Jehn did say that if the aviation exclusion laws were lifted, the DOD would be happy to give servicewomen opportunities to fly in combat, "as long as the effectiveness

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[503] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 478-80.

[504] U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993: Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services,* 102nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1991. Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military,* 478-82.

of the military was unimpaired." He urged the subcommittee to only make legislative changes in this matter that "affords the Department of Defense maximum flexibility on where and how to use women."[505]

All four of the service chiefs voiced their opposition to any changes in combat exclusion laws, arguing that these restrictions were necessary to keep the military effective, especially in the wake of the massive changes following the Persian Gulf War. Army Chief Gen. Carl E. Vuono and Marine Commandant Gen. Alfred M. Gray, Jr., were the most adamant of the chiefs, but they also focused almost entirely on ground combat. They argued that allowing women in combat would harm unit cohesion and effectiveness, although their only explanations as to how was that servicewomen were not strong enough and might distract servicemen. Both the Army and the Marine Corps had servicewomen testify in support of the current policies. S. Sgt. Susan Leifeste, who deployed with the Army to Saudi Arabia, testified that, "I don't think a female would be able to keep up with a male, where we're talking infantry." According to Commandant Grey, "We don't find that our women want change. They seem to be satisfied with what they do. They like the assignments. We believe our women understand that you need women and you need men, and they're different." Marine Gunnery Sgt. Hean A. Amico agreed: "I don't wish to carry a rife, lug a pack around and live the way the grunts do." Commandant Grey did not comment on servicewomen's roles in aviation and at sea but

[505] Linda N. Harrington, "Military Brass Cool to Women in Combat," *Chicago Tribune*, June 19, 1991, N4, https://www.proquest.com/cv_701361/docview/1619856688/7938E3BCA11346C9PQ/1?accountid=14270&sourcetype=Historical%20Newspap,ers

stated that the Gulf War was not a good test of women's ability to serve in combat: "this was not the ultimate test of sustained combat... it was a short war.[506]

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Frank B. Kelso II and Air Force Chief Gen. Merrill "Tony" A. McPeak both testified that they preferred to keep the combat exclusion laws in place but would adopt whatever policies enacted by Congress. Admiral Kelso did not give a clear answer concerning the Navy's position on female aviators in combat, instead pointing out that the Navy would have added responsibilities, as they would have to create new sleeping quarters for servicewomen and servicemen would have to undergo sensitivity training. He also alluded to morale problems the Navy faced on integrated noncombat ships, which evaded that service's notice in its own studies. While Admiral Kelso expressed sympathy for a female aviator "who can fly an airplane well and do her job very well, who sees this law as keeping her from where she wants to be and wants to go," he also stated that naval servicewomen were divided on the issue.[507] Kelso also stated that "changes in this area must be made in the interest of military effectiveness, not as an issue of equal opportunity… This does not mean I oppose progress on this issue.

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[506] Tennessean News Services, "Military Debates Women in Combat," *The Tennessean*, Vol. 87 N. 170, June 19, 1991, 1. https://www.proquest.com/cv_701361/docview/1909475530/7938E3BCA11346C9PQ/6?accountid=14270&sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993: Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services*, 102nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1991. Quoted in Holm 478-82.

[507] Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel. Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 483.

Far from it. I firmly believe we must let the role of women in the military evolve."[508] He did not elaborate on what that evolution would be.

General McPeak, a career fighter pilot and Vietnam veteran who was an expert on combat flying, acknowledged that "there are some women … who can do combat as well as a man" adding that women were better at handling G-forces than males. General McPeak, however, expressed his own conflicting thoughts on the matter:

> It's the law that's preventing us doing this, and I find some comfort in that … I admit it doesn't make much sense…. Personally I'm not eager to increase exposure of our women to additional risk.… However the Air Force does not believe in artificially barring anybody from any job… If a woman … wants to fly the F-15, then in my judgement we should not erect a policy barrier against her doing that in the Air Force.[509]

When asked between choosing a highly qualified female aviator and a less qualified male pilot, however, McPeak stated he would choose the man.[510] Despite acknowledging that women were more than capable of serving in combat air missions, the Air Force chief was stuck in his ways. While choosing a less qualified man over a highly qualified women might not be in the interest of national security, McPeak still espoused sexist views about whom he would prefer to fly.

Former Marine Commandant Gen. Robert H. Barrow took his testimony against women in combat a step further, arguing that such a change would "destroy the Marine

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[508] Harrington, "Military Brass Cool to Women in Combat," N4.

[509] Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel. Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 483.

[510] Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel. Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military*, 483.

Corps … something no enemy has been able to do in over 200 years."[511] "If you want to make to make a combat unit ineffective" he said, "assign women to it."[512] Barrow went on to argue:

> Exposure to danger is not combat. Being shot at, even being killed, is not combat. Combat is finding … closing with … and killing or capturing the enemy. It's KILLING. And it's done in an environment that is often as difficult as you can possibly imagine. Extremes of climate. Brutality. Death. Dying…. It's uncivilized! And WOMEN CAN'T DO IT! Nor should they even be thought of as doing it. The requirements of strength and endurance render them UNFIT to do it. And I may be old-fashioned, but I think the very nature of women disqualifies them from doing it. Women give life. Sustain life. They don't TAKE it.[513]

A senior servicewoman remarked that "the General's agenda has more to do with maintaining the macho image of the Marines than with national security."[514] Following the testimony of the chiefs, other servicemen and women were called to testify. While some agreed with the chiefs' assessment, stating that women were incapable of combat and/or their presence would interfere with unit cohesion and efficacy, others were more than willing to serve with women in combat units, provided they met the same physical and mental standards as servicemen. Air Force M. Sgt. Glenn Palmer, a combat air controller, testified that he would "personally and professionally welcome anyone who could pass the training standards."[515]

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[511] Gen. Robert H. Barrow, Prepared Statement, U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations.*

[512] Tennessean News Services, "Military Debates Women in Combat," 1.

[513] Barrow, Prepared Statement.

[514] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 484.

[515] Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel. Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military,* 484.

Other than General McPeak, only two servicemembers gave extensive testimony on combat flying, both of whom were female pilots. Air Force Maj. Christine Prewitt and Navy Lt. Brenda Marie Holdener testified that their careers suffered due to their gender, as they received the same training as male pilots but that the inability to serve on combat missions restricted their promotions. Major Prewitt, a C-12 Huron transport pilot, stated that servicemen adjusted to the presence of women in previously all male units: stating that there are initial problems, as servicemen adjust to the presence of women, but "basically you have to go out and prove yourself. After that it doesn't seem to matter that you're a woman."[516] Lieutenant Holdener, a helicopter pilot and Gulf War veteran who flew supplies to support ships, argued that the only question that mattered should be: "Can women do the job in the combat area?"[517] According to former Air Force Gen. Jeanne Holm, however, the only question should be "what impact would qualified women flying combat missions have on the military's ability to fight a war?"[518] That question was never actually addressed.

Furthermore, almost no senior military women were asked to testify. DACOWITS Chair Becky Constantion was the only person with extensive firsthand knowledge about the issues facing servicewoman to testify. Rear Adm. Roberta L. Hazard, the highest-

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[516] Quoted in Times Wires, "Military Debates: Should Women Fight?" *St. Petersburg Times: Tampa Edition*, June 19, 1991, 2B. See also Holm, *Women in the Military,* 483-85.

[517] Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel. Quoted in Holm, *Women in the Military,* 484.

[518] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 485.

ranking servicewoman on active duty in the U.S., chair of the 1990 Navy Women's Study Group, and head of the Committee on Women in the NATO Forces, was absent from the proceedings entirely. Servicewomen were disheartened and angry, especially after General McPeak's comments on women in air combat were broadcast on the evening news. He openly called his feelings on the issue old-fashioned, and servicewomen were concerned that he would allow his personal views to cloud his professional judgement. Some servicemen shared their concern. One female Air Force reservist told General Holm that she would have stayed in the Air Force if she had been allowed to fly combat aircraft. Instead, she joined the reserves and worked for a commercial airline. She believed she made the right choice, stating that the Air Force is "still a boy's club."[519] Army Major Lillian Pfluke, an ordnance officer who had been among the first class of women to graduate from West Point found the attitudes of Army leadership during the debates to be "deeply personally disappointing to me. I had invested 19 years… proving my competence in the organization and suddenly realized it was not a matter of confidence." Pfluke, who earned her airborne wings with the goal of becoming an Airborne Ranger and Infantry battalion commander, stated: "The Army was content to choose less qualified men over more qualified women… because of politics and a deeply entrenched and dated attitude. In fact, it was fighting desperately for the ability to continue to do so."[520]

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[519] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 486.

[520] Donna McAleer, *Porcelain on Steel: Women of West Point's Long Gray Line* (Jacksonville: Fortis Publishing, 2010), 66-67. Pfluke retired in 1995.

The hearings stalled the momentum on the repeal of combat exclusion policies, but the subcommittee was unsure as to what to recommend to the Senate Armed Services Committee concerning the defense authorization bill. Senator Roth, with the support of Senator Kennedy, stated that he would be introducing a bill similar to the one that passed in the House. The subcommittee decided that the only way to address the issue would be to introduce a new study. On July 9, 1991, the Senate Armed Services Committee's version of the Defense Authorization Bill did not open air combat MOS to women. Instead, the subcommittee proposed a commission to study the roles of servicewomen to be completed by November 15, 1992. As the issue of women in combat was politically volatile, the Armed Services Committee's recommendation appealed to most senators. According to a congressional staffer: "If they have a commission study it, it takes everybody off the hook … whatever the commission recommends, Congress and the Pentagon can say, 'don't blame me, it wasn't my decision.'"[521]

Senator Roth expressed disappointment with the idea of a presidential committee, stating that there was a "very large possibility" he would take his bill to the Senate floor. Carolyn Becraft, a former Army captain, and advocate of repeal, stated that the issue of women in combat "has been studied to death already" and the proposal for the commission was a "sitting duck."[522] Roth agreed, issuing a press release on July 11, that announced:

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[521] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 486.

[522] "Bid to let women serve in combat stalls in Senate," *Boston Globe*, July 10, 1991, 13, https://www.proquest.com/cv_701361/docview/2745397869/2B7881CB3E574765PQ/11?accountid=14270.

> I am greatly disappointed that the full…. Committee has effectively ducked the question of whether to let women in the armed services compete for fighter pilot positions…. Appointing a commission to perform another study is absolute hogwash…. As we've seen in the Persian Gulf, women have already proven themselves capable of flying in combat situations…. I am simply talking about giving women pilots equal opportunity for equal capability- no less, and no more.[523]

Kennedy agreed, recounting that during the first Gulf War, servicewomen "faced hostile fire, they flew into enemy territory, they faced death, injury, and were captured as prisoners of war and lived in conditions of extreme hardship." Repeal," according to Roth, "is not about gender. It is about excellence."[524]

Meanwhile, lobbyists against repeal were working hard to keep the current policies in place. To combat their efforts, Senators Roth and Kennedy rallied their supporters. The Women's Research and Education Institute rallied former and active servicewomen, former DACOWITS members, and national women's organizations to lobby any one they could. The newly formed Women Military Aviators (WMA) organization, led by Air Force Lt. Col. Kelly Hamilton, a Desert Storm veteran, was vital to the mission. Navy Comdr. Rosemary Mariner, who succeeded Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton as president, was one of the first women to earn her wings in 1974 and the first woman to fly the A-4E/L Skyhawk. According to Commander Mariner, "when you go in to a profession, you want to reach the top. You take the risks with the rewards. I don't want to be protected…. A child is protected. As long as women are protected we will not

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[523] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 486.

[524] "Senate Votes to let women fly in combat," compiled from Times wires, *St. Petersburg Times*, August 1, 1991, 6A, https://www.proquest.com/cv_701361/pagelevelimagepdf/2052942109/pagelevelImagePDF/2B7881CB3E574765PQ/1?t:lb=t&accountid=14270&sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers.

be regarded as adult citizens."[525] Commander Mariner organized WMA members to reach out to senators regarding the need for repeal. At the same time, the media got a hold of the story and the debate around women in combat once again focused on ground combat.

At a press conference on July 25, 1991, Roth and Kennedy announced that they would introduce an amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill. As Roth told the press:

> We are here to talk, not about whether we want women pilots flying combat missions, but whether we want the best pilots flying combat missions…. When our nation's future is at stake … we want the most highly skilled and seasoned men and women on the job.[526]

During a visit to the Naval Air Station in Patuxent, Maryland, journalist Barton Gellman of the *Washington Post* interviewed servicewomen at the elite Navy Test Pilot School, including Lt. Lori Melling, who settled for this comparatively mundane posting despite having the credentials to be a fighter pilot. Lieutenant Melling had taught air-to-air gunnery to pilots at Top Gun, and she admitted, "I want more…. I want to be able to stay on par with my male contemporaries…. The Navy's all about going to sea. I'm a jet aviator and I can't go to sea."[527] Lt. Barbara Bell, the first naval woman to qualify as an F-14 radio intercept officer, graduated first in her class in jet school in 1988. Most of her classmates were men who had already served at sea, while Lieutenant Bell had remained stateside.[528] Lt. Loree Draude, whose father was a brigadier general in the Marine Corps,

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[525] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 486.

[526] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 486.

[527] Barton Gellman, "Women Fliers in Race with Changing Times," *Washington Post,* July 29, 1991, A1.

[528] Gellman, "Women Fliers in Race with Changing Times," A1.

was interviewed just after completing jet school and her first carrier landing. Lieutenant Draude called the carrier landing "pretty cool," but "almost depressing in a way. I really envy the guys who can go out and do that all of the time."[529] Capt. Thomas J. Bernson, the director of the test pilot school, told Gellman that "these are exceptional ladies … they blew out on top of the guys to wind up coming here…. I'd put them against any man, anywhere."[530]

On July 31, 1991, the Senate met to discuss the Kennedy-Roth amendment as well as a competing amendment, proposed by Senators Glenn and McCain, with the support of Senator Nunn and Senator Warner, that would remove all combat restrictions temporarily until the presidential commission submitted their report.[531] The senate allotted two hours for debate, but voted almost half an hour early, after Senator Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kansas) pointed out that the Kennedy-Roth amendment would allow the services to decide whether women would be allowed in combat, but would not force integration.[532] Senator Kassebaum stated that she did not believe that she should make the decision: "I have a great deal of confidence in the chiefs being able to stand on their own two feet and make that decision … because they understand how women can serve best."[533] In the end, the Glenn-McCain amendment was approved by a vote of 95-3.

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[529] Gellman, "Women Fliers in Race with Changing Times," A1.

[530] Gellman, "Women Fliers in Race with Changing Times," A1.

[531] Holm, *Women in the Military, 501.*

[532] Senator Nancy Kassebaum, speaking on H.R. 2100, on July 31, 1991, 102nd Cong., 1st session, *Congressional Record* 137, pt.14: 20730.

[533] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 502.

Senator Glenn then moved to table the Kennedy-Roth amendment, but the motion was rejected by a vote of 30-69. The Kennedy-Roth amendment was then approved and thus the Senate adopted the House measure to remove restrictions on women in combat air missions. This did not necessarily mean that women would serve in combat, but that the services would need to reevaluate their combat restriction policies.

Following the vote, Kennedy stated "it is an embarrassment to Congress and an injustice to every woman in the armed forces that we retain these foolish restrictions on the statute books," calling the decision "'"victory for the women pilots who demonstrated in the gulf their patriotism, courage and competence."[534] Pentagon spokesperson Pete Williams replied, "I can't predict exactly what we'll do. But if the ultimate direction give to us is to lift the combat exclusion law, then I think we'll look at it and proceed carefully." Senator Glenn, however, said that the aviation and naval combat exclusion acts should not have been repealed until after the committee's recommendation. While he also stated that perhaps Congress should investigate removing all combat restrictions, as well as whether the repeals would affect the draft and involuntary combat assignments, Glenn was concerned that women in combat units would affect morale and efficiency.[535]

Servicewomen who had recently returned from the Gulf War knew that regardless of the decisions made by politicians, they had already been serving in combat. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower Lawrence Korb summed it up: "Just

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[534] "Senate Votes to let women fly in combat," 1A & 6A; "Female combat pilots OK'd" Nation Briefs, *Las Vegas Review*, August 1, 1991, 10, https://www.proquest.com/cv_701361/docview/259828347/95B6E9573DCC4A73PQ/9?accountid=14270&sourcetype=Newspapers.

[535] "Senate Votes to let women fly in combat," 1A & 6A.

because you're not in a combat unit doesn't mean you won't be in combat…. On a ship, war is high tech…. Men aren't any better at video games than women."[536] According to Capt. Cynthia Mosley, when it came to deployment, "nobody cares whether you're male or female. It's just: Can you do the job?"[537] Maj. Marie Rossi, who led a squadron of helicopter into Iraq on February 24, 1991, agreed, telling a reporter that "what I am doing … is no greater or less than the man who is flying next to me. Or in back of me."[538] Maj. Rhonda Cornum, mentioned earlier as one of the two female POWs taken during the Persian Gulf War, said "gender doesn't come into play at all, to tell the truth. Nor did it the whole war, which I think is the most important thing you can come away with."[539]

Many servicewomen spoke of their deployment in a way that contradicts the idea that they were separate – or at least, that they were lesser – some specifically talking about familial bonding. S. Sgt. Betty Brown of the National Guard said the servicemen with whom she "became like big brothers."[540] Major Cornum recalled:

> People talk about male bonding in the military, and how female soldiers supposedly will disrupt unit cohesion. Bonding, however, goes far beyond whether the two people involved are two men or two women or one of each. It's much deeper than that. Going to war with a unit, risking your life with them, builds an intimate and intense relationship. The soldiers don't all have to be men for that to happen.[541]

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[536] Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 23.

[537] Lewis, *Side by Side*, 141.

[538] Zeinert and Miller, *The Brave Women of the Gulf Wars*, 34-35.

[539] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 4539

[540] Randolph, "The Untold Story of Black Women in the Gulf War."

[541] Lewis, *Side by Side*, 136.

In arguing against women in combat, critics often state that having servicewomen on the frontline would disrupt unit cohesion, specifically because servicemen would not be able to engage in the type of male-bonding seen as essential to military success. According to the GAO report, these critics believed that "the introduction of women to an all-male unit would, at best interfere with, and more likely destroy or prevent, the male bonding necessary for effective unit cohesion during combat operations."[542] As Brian Mitchell, a former Army captain, put it, "men simply can't treat women like other men. And it's silly to think that a few months' training can make them into some kind of sexless soldiers."[543] According to the GAO report, however, while unit cohesion was necessary for success, especially in smaller units, gender was not identified as either a determinant or a part of cohesion. While some participants did state that they preferred all-male units, most personnel from the ten mixed gender units that were interviewed also reported that the bonds created between deployed servicepeople was at least as good as, and perhaps better than those in mixed-gender units. They also attested that unit cohesion was not only effective during deployment, but often better than at their home station. Furthermore, they were more likely to highlight conflict between personnel from different units and home bases as a threat to cohesion than gender. The personnel interviewed reported positive or neutral perceptions of servicewomen's effects on interpersonal conflicts, not negative ones.[544]

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[542] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 11.

[543] Quoted in Beck, "Our Women in the Desert," 23.

[544] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 38.

Unit cohesion, as understood in the military, is "the bonding of the members of a unit in such a way as to sustain their will and commitment to each other, the organization, and the mission."[545] To many military personnel this boils down to "teamwork" or "working together."[546] Thus, cohesion is about both interpersonal and group interactions and support, which the majority of groups deemed "important, critical, and/or necessary." When members of the GAO focus groups were asked specifically about the effect of gender on unit cohesion, many personnel commented that gender was not the primary factor that created disruptions in bonding. In assessing unit cohesion, the GAO also looked at interpersonal friction. While it found that many respondents perceived that friction likely occurred more between genders than between people of the same gender, the majority also stated that the presence of women either had no negative effect on the number of interpersonal conflicts or reduced the amount friction.[547] One of the common themes raised by these groups was a focus on individuals and interpersonal interactions – indicating that cohesiveness relies on an individual's ability to "adapt and be versatile and flexible" as well as the "capabilities, personalities, training, and overall skill levels" of the unit.[548]

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[545] William Darryl Henderson, *Cohesion-The Human element in Combat* (National Defense University Press, 1985), 9.

[546] William Darryl Henderson, *Cohesion-The Human element in Combat* (National Defense University Press, 1985), 9; U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 38. Of the focus groups analyzed in the GAO report, twenty-eight commented on the meaning of cohesion. Of those, 82 percent included either one of those terms or both. U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 38.

[547] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military,* 42.

[548] Twenty-six groups interviewed in the GAO report commented on the significance of cohesion. Of those, twenty-five used at least one of those terms in response. One group

Sgt. Julie Tovsen of 79th MP Company, U.S. Army, noted the disconnect between the discussions in the media (and thus the larger society) and the reality of serving as a unit, caused personnel to create bonds due to circumstances that had little to do with gender. She said, "I was one of the fortunate ones who served with a group of thirty men in my platoon who respected me and bonded in a way beyond gender." Sergeant Tovsen saw the bonds that they forged as natural:

> We shared family pictures, letters, talked about favorite things we missed. We learned a lesson that I hope to keep for the rest of my life - that people are what is important. It was understood that I would be there for them as they were there for me. This is why the friendships have been maintained since the Gulf War. I was introduced to a wife or girlfriend as my "war buddy." My children have grown up knowing them as my best friends.[549]

Lt. Betty Carr stated that she gained "the respect of her male military comrades" during her deployment and found it to be a "source of pride and camaraderie." Carr, a Navy nurse stationed in Dhahran, remembered sharing a morale tent with a thousand men and women where they gathered to watch television while off-duty. "If a reporter made the mistake of mentioning only 'the men' serving here," she related, "there would be boos from both the women and the men. The men were totally supportive. They'd say 'We want people to know it's the men and women of the U.S. military.' The pride I felt

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said that cohesion was not actually as important because the military personnel must follow their orders, so they would fulfill their responsibilities regardless of unit cohesion. Overall, of the 53 groups commenting on gender and unit cohesion, in 42 at least one person said that mixed-gender units bonded as well as or better than one gender units, while in six groups at least one person said that servicewomen had a negative impact. Twelve groups also contained at least one person who preferred all-male units, although not necessarily because they felt like they could not bond with servicewomen, while one person stated that he believed bonding was always better in single-gender units, regardless of the gender. U.S. GAO *Women in the Military*, 39-40.

[549] Wilson, "Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm."

was overwhelming."[550] Carr spoke of her service as a period during which she made lifelong friends and connections – men she saw as family. This emphasis on camaraderie and the creation of family reflects Major Cornum's remarks on the bonds she forged within her unit, the idea of fraternity understood as "brothers-in-arms" regardless of gender. Units were teams, and those who served together saw themselves as teammates. According to Kelly McCormick, "it never crossed my mind that I shouldn't be there or whether I was safe or not." According to her commander, "they weren't women, they were soldiers."[551]

In a separate interview a year after Major Cornum's return from Iraqi custody, she reflected on the issue of gender in the military, stating that the argument was pursued by people who had never served, or if they had served, had not worked with women. Cornum insisted that her gender did not matter when it came to action: "I have never pulled a guy out of a wrecked helicopter and had him say, 'Would you please not do this? I'm waiting for a male.'"[552] In the spring of 1991, Gen. Alfred M. Gray, the Marine Corps Commandant, requested information from commanders of deployed forces on the performance of female Marines during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Maj. Gen. James M. Myatt, commander of the 1st Marine Division, reported that female Marines on the 11th Marine forward logistics base

> Drove as many miles, stood as many guard details, manhandled as much ammunition and served at as many decontamination stations as the male Marines. One driver of an ammo truck hit a land mine, which disabled the

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[550] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 358.

[551] Strohmer, "Soldiers, Not Wacs, 321. Original does not give rank or position details.

[552]"A Woman's Burden," 1.

> truck. She kept [her] composure, jumped on another truck and continued on with the convoy. Women Marines appreciated being the job they were trained to do. They also appreciated that they were treated with the respect and professional courtesy they deserved. I am proud of the women in this division-they did what had to be done-with style.[553]

Lt. Col. Nanette Gallant, U.S. Army, one of the first women deployed during the Persian Gulf War, said that she felt like she was "a regular teammate" during deployment. She also chose to qualify as a master parachutist, however, stating that because she felt that "as a woman, if you don't have some of the things to be competitive, you're already fighting from the bottom up. Once they see you have master wings, at least you have one sign of recognition when you have to go into units with hard-core males."[554] Therefore, Lieutenant Colonel Gallant believed she had to work harder than the men she served beside to be viewed as their equal.

Maj. Patricia Mondt, an Army chaplain, spoke specifically about the ways in which she experienced both sides of the lady/brother divide in a post-retirement, expressing that her male comrades in the 82nd were accepting as a whole: both respecting her capabilities as a soldier, and her higher calling as a chaplain. And yet, she experienced something different among the male chaplains with whom she deployed: "I wasn't accepted by these chaplains because I'm a woman." Most of them came from an evangelical background. One chaplain stated that they volunteered for the 82nd Airborne because there were no women and then Mondt "came along and ruined it." Major Mondt said that these prejudiced males could get away with such conduct because they received

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[553] Anderson, *The Very Few, the Proud*, 109.

[554]Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 347.

support from a number of their commanding officers, including “the general officer who was in charge of the eighty-second at that time, General James Johnson” who “openly said he didn’t want women in that division and that he was going to get rid of them by attrition, so it went from 1500 or so with 300 women, and it went down to 150 women.”[555]

Other women found themselves constrained by both their race and gender, in theater and at home. Army Lt. Phoebe Jeter, who led an all-male platoon as a part of the Delta Battery, 3-43 (Patriot), stated “if you’re a woman, *whatever* you are doing, believe in yourself, because there are a lot of people out there who don’t care about you or what you’re doing.”[556] Lieutenant Jeter was the first Air Defense Artillery officer to lead a platoon to destroy a SCUD missile during Desert Storm, and remains the only woman to do so during that conflict.[557] And yet, her postwar recollections show that she found herself judged more by her gender than her accomplishments. Lieutenant Jeter told a reporter from *Ebony Magazine* that she once had to call a meeting with her fellow lieutenants after hearing comments regarding her body and ability: “They said things like, 'She doesn't belong in the Army, she's fat. . .,’ I had to confront them and then it stopped.”[558]

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[555]Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 350.

[556] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 358-59.

[557] Zeinert and Miller, *The Brave Women of the Gulf Wars*, 34-35.

[558] Randolph, “The Untold Story of Black Women in the Gulf War,”

While Lieutenant Jeter does not specifically mention her race as a factor in how she was viewed, other Black women spoke of it extensively, claiming that they experienced "dual discrimination from male GIs who made it only too clear that they felt war was a man's job and women had no business in it."[559] According to Lt. Col. Ora Jane "O.J." Williams, a career soldier who commanded the 2nd Material Management Center during the Persian Gulf War, being Black and female in the Army meant that "the men are always thinking, 'Is she going to be a powder puff or is she going to pull her weight?…' You have to earn their respect and demonstrate your capabilities." Williams was the only woman in her battalion-size logistics management unit, which was responsible for requisitioning supplies for three different combat divisions. She said, "I'm here cause I can do [the job]."[560]

Many Black servicewomen also expressed frustration with racism back home, especially in the wake of the Rodney King beating on March 3, 1991. Cpt. Cynthia Mosely, commander of Alpha Company, 24th Support Battalion Forward, 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), and Bronze Star recipient for meritorious service in combat, remarked on the civil rights debates in Congress: "A lot of us are willing to risk our lives again for our country, and for them to tell me, 'Oh, yes, you're willing to give your last measure of devotion. However, when it comes to protecting your rights when you return, we're going to debate that." During Senior Airman Theresa Collier's deployment to the Gulf, someone scratched KKK into the roof of her car while it was parked on the naval

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[559]Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 359.

[560] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 453-54; Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 359.

base where her husband was stationed. When she was on her way back to the United States, the first thing she saw in Germany was the tape of Rodney King's beating. "I couldn't believe it," she exclaimed. "I'm like, here I am, spent eight months over here to protect my country, yet people are getting beat ... for no apparent reason at home."[561] Black servicewomen, dealing with racism and sexism in the military and the wider American society, made up an estimated 40 percent of the women deployed to the Gulf. While they experienced unique struggles, they were also caught in the world between ladies and soldiers.

While gender did not perhaps have the effect on unit bonding that critics of women in combat anticipated, it impacted somewhat on off-duty bonding. Some of this was related to the creation of policies on social and sexual intimacy that impeded the ability of men and women to connect during leisure time. Many personnel from across all four services reported either formal or informal policies, some of which they attributed to command discretion. Additionally, several personnel believed that commanding officers were observing and monitoring social and sexual interactions outside of these policies. For instance, one unit cited the creation of a sign-out system that personnel thought their superior officers used to monitor fraternization. Some of these policies, however, were overtly controlling. One report described a commander separating all recreation by gender and designating all facilities as single gender. In addition, he created and distributed lists of all the deployed servicewomen in the unit and told servicemen not to socialize with them off-duty. While the personnel stated that they knew the commander

[561]Randolph, "The Untold Story of Black Women in the Gulf War."

was concerned about impact of close male and female relationships on the mission, they also said that such policies had a negative effect on morale and seemed "extreme."[562]

Both units with and without gender-based segregation policies reported the presence of rumors that interfered with off-duty bonding and recreation, as well as interpersonal friendships. Personnel reported that any interactions between men and women while off-duty resulted in rumors concerning sexual and/or social intimacy, leading them to feel constrained in their ability to bond, which added to deployment stress. Some stated that these rumors discouraged friendships, regardless of any official or unofficial unit policy. Some of the stories told to the GAO included a female officer who was "counseled" multiple times about socializing with male comrades, as well as another servicewoman who also reported being counseled for "spending too much time" with the men in her unit, despite the fact that she was the only woman and then transferred to a different location until the rumors ceased. One enlisted man recounted that his friendship with a servicewoman led to a unit-wide lecture on abstinence during deployment. In a more extreme case in a different outfit, rumors circulated that that the servicewomen occupying one tent were all prostitutes.[563]

In a letter to *Stars and Stripes* one unnamed male combat arms veteran said that the servicewomen with whom he deployed had earned his respect and hoped that he had

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[562] Thirty-four groups (58 percent) reported unit policies regarding sexual or social intimacy; nineteen of which stated that there were formal polices and thirteen cited informal ones. Nineteen groups also mentioned that there were penalties to violating these policies. About a third cited command discretion and half of each of the groups in each branch of the military reported official or unofficial policies (or both). U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 45-46.

[563] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 46.

also earned theirs.[564] The slang that still servicemen used about servicewomen often did not reflect respect. Lt. Gen. Edward M. Flanagan, who compiled and donated documents regarding women's military service, included a list of expressions common among servicemen in the Persian Gulf War. Some of these terms originated during previous conflicts, such as calling women in the Marines "BAM(s)," an acronym for "broad-ass Marine(s)." Military issue glasses on servicewomen were called BCGs or BCDs, for birth control glasses or devices. Servicemen created rating systems, designating servicewomen who were thought to be unattractive stateside but attractive during deployment due to the dearth of other women a "Desert Ten." This system was closely related to the C-Plus system, where a servicewoman was ranked by how many days after deployment it took for men to think she was attractive. (For example, C Plus One would be a woman who was immediately considered attractive while C Plus Fifty would mean it took fifty days after deployment for her to look good to the men serving with her).[565]

This type of language was ingrained in servicemen early, starting with military academies and training drills. For instance, the official name for female midshipman's uniforms at the U.S. Naval Academy, "Working Uniform, Blue Alpha," was shortened to WUBA and understood as "Women Used By All." Common jokes included: "How are a WUBA and a bowling ball similar? Answer: You put three fingers in them and throw them in the gutter." Cadence calls for drills at the Naval Academy, known as jodies, were

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[564] Quoted in Strohmer, "Soldiers, Not Wacs," 321.

[565] Edward M. Flanagan Papers, Box 14, *Folder 6: Documents pertaining to expressions used in Persian Gulf War c. 1991*, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

also constituted of sexually demeaning phrases and explicit sexual jokes. While sexual harassment directives were given to use more respectful cadence calls, instructors who tried to use them were met with derision. A drill instructor at Fort Benning said servicemen "wanted to hear how the man is masculine over the woman and that's what we sung to them and that's what maxed their PT tests." This was regardless of the sort of drill, according to the sergeant: "The dirtier the better. It got results." While the Department of Defense issued sexual harassment directives to change the language of these cadence calls, these directives were rarely enforced.[566]

Similarly, the Pentagon issued directives to the military to remove sexual posters and erotica in the office, as such images fit the services' definition of a hostile work environment. Those images, however, often remained in place. According to Air Force Capt. Patricia Gavin, "When I asked my boss to take down the pornography in our office because it was fueling male sexual discourse in the workplace and causing fractionalization, he told me I was too straightlaced…. You would have thought I'd asked for the Red Sea to part." Captain Gavin filed a complaint about the ongoing harassment at the Fort Benjamin Harrison Defense Information School in 1991. Meanwhile, go-go dancers and strippers were common forms of entertainment in clubs on U.S. military bases throughout the world, despite Pentagon directives, as clubs relied on them to attract servicemen. According to one anonymous Army senior personnel specialist, "When I left Korea in 1992, the whole unit threw a party.... The commander danced with a stripper. The first sergeant danced with a stripper. That was the top command level in the biggest

[566] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 161-63.

aviation unit in the Army. There's no way you're going to change the military climate. It's tradition."[567] The military accepted this climate and with it, sexual harassment flourished.

Servicemen and women interviewed for the GAO's report on "Women in the Military Deployment in the Persian Gulf War" discussed sexual harassment during deployment, although they had little consensus as to the actual meaning of "sexual harassment." It was most often described as "offensive language," "offensive physical contact'" and/or "whatever a woman thinks it is." Other examples included soliciting or trading sexual favors, asking for dates, any sexual fraternization, gestures, "overstepping relationships," "'normal' interaction between men and women" and differences in treatment due to gender. Those interviewed mostly cited perceived or witnessed verbal harassment, with only a few reports of assault or rape.[568]

In 1988, the Department of Defense conducted a survey to study the rate of sexual harassment in the military. The survey also explored the frequency of these behaviors, asking subjects how often they experienced seven specific types of sexual harassment over the preceding 24 months:

> 1.Uninvited pressure for sexual favors. 2. Uninvited deliberate touch, leaning over, cornering, or pinching. 3. Uninvited sexual looks, staring, or gestures. 4. Uninvited letters, phone calls, or materials of a sexual nature. 5. Uninvited pressures for dates. 6. Uninvited sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions. 7. Actual attempted rape or sexual assault.[569]

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[567] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 163-64.

[568] U.S. GAO, *Women in the Military*, 43-44.

[569] Anderson, *The Very Few, The Proud*, 160.

According to the survey, 75 percent of women in the Marine Corps, 68 in the Army, 66 percent in the Navy, 62 percent in the Coast Guard, and 57 percent in the Air Force reported at least one instance of sexual harassment. Around 5 percent reported rape or attempted rape. Forty-two percent of servicewomen who reported that they experienced some type of harassment or sexual coercion/assault named superiors in their chain of command as the perpetrators. Servicewomen who experienced sexual assault rarely reported it, partially because when someone above you on the chain of command is the problem, there is no one to report it to. Those who attempted to report their abuse were dismissed. Some faced further harassment by the men serving with them if such complaints reflected poorly on their unit. Furthermore, sexual harassment was difficult to prosecute on its own, as it was not included as a punishable offense by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. To prosecute or report sexual assault or harassment, a servicewoman was required to file an "equal opportunity" complaint within her chain of command for review. Thus, a complaint against a person within that chain was also investigated and adjudicated by that same command. According to Captain Gavin, "the only person you have to be judge and jury is your commander.[570]

While the Department of Defense policy may have encouraged servicewomen to report harassment and assault, there was no incentive for commanders to follow through, as the military was more likely to promote those with problem-free records. One anonymous servicewoman recalled that officers who received complaints had to answer

[570] Quoted in Francke, *Ground Zero*, 174; Statistics from *Department of Defense 1995 Sexual Harassment Survey* (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense Manpower Data Center, 1996), 10. Francke, *Ground Zero*, 174.

to their own superiors and were often "so worried about answering to those people that they don't want to even admit to themselves that there are any problems, much less try and solve them. They are too afraid somebody is going to find out about them and that puts their career on the line." The reporting system therefore meant that commanders were more likely to dismiss complaints than to follow through. Carolyn Becraft, director of the Women and the Military Project for the Women's Equity Action League, described the situation in a conversation with journalist Linda Francke in 1992: "Between a young enlisted woman and the base commander you may have twenty layers of the chain of command that may have been telling her, it is all in your head."[571]

While the military created equal opportunity advisors as point persons for complaints, all services apart from the Air Force viewed EO duty as temporary and sometimes chose not to address the most complicated problems due to lack of time and resources. Even if EO advisors wanted to address the issues of sexual assault and harassment, they were hampered by the reality of military hierarchy. Advisors were enlisted and thus had little control over officers. Furthermore, they could only offer suggestions to commanders on what actions to take regarding complaints and had no authority to take any actions themselves. Every decision was made within the chain of command, who were more likely to bury complaints than follow through. EO advisors who attempted to disrupt that would risk their careers. According to an Army platoon sergeant who served as an EO advisor in 1992:

> If we go around him, it's very dangerous. Even as an equal opportunity staff advisor, I can't think of a time I would not be loyal to my boss. I

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[571] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 174.

> would document any complaint and let him know I was documenting it and how I feel about the situation. But I've been in personnel for seventeen years and I've been to bat for young soldiers who've been discriminated against, who've been assaulted. I know what the command problem is. Hopefully, he'll have a conversion overnight and come in and change his opinion.[572]

The military's Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) further complicated the reporting process. The UCMJ defined rape as "sexual intercourse with a female not his wife, by force and without her consent."[573] It did not list sexual harassment as a punishable offense until 2006. Military women attempting to report sexual harassment needed to bring up perpetrators on charges of "conduct unbecoming," "maltreatment of a subordinate," "extortion," or "indecent, insulting or obscene language prejudicial to good order."[574] It is therefore difficult to track numbers regarding sexual harassment or the results of the complaints filed under other offenses. Nancy Duff Campbell, co-president of the National Women's Law Center reported that "anecdotal evidence suggests that a slap on the wrist is much more common than severe punishment and that significant redress for victims is unusual."[575] Considering all of this, it is no wonder most servicewomen never reported sexual harassment. It was therefore easy to continue to sweep this epidemic under the rug. That all changed in September 1991 after the latest

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[572] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 173-75.

[573] U.S. Congress. United States Code: Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. §§ 801-940 .1950 "§ 920. Art. 120. Rape and carnal knowledge," 1031. See Chapter Two for more information on the UCMJ and rape/sexual assault.

[574] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 175-76.

[575] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 176.

bacchanalian Tailhook convention. Scattered anecdotal evidence to the contrary, the American military could not be considered a safe and nurturing environment for women.

CHAPTER 8:

"INSTITUTIONALIZED INDISCRETIONS": TAILHOOK 1991

Ahead of the 35th annual Naval Aviation Symposium in 1991, known colloquially as Tailhook, Tailhook Association president Cpt. Frederick G. Ludwig, Jr., sent a message to the twenty-two squadron commanders overseeing the convention: "This year we want you to make sure everyone is aware of certain problems we've had in past years." He went on to say: "As last year, you will only be charged for damage inside your suite." Ludwig added: "In past years we have had a problem with under age participants," and "in the past we have had a problem with 'late night gang mentality.'" Captain Ludwig's letter included a very clear warning: "REMEMBER… THERE ARE TO BE NO 'QUICK HIT' DRINKS served. LEWD AND LASCIVIOUS behavior is unacceptable. The behavior in your suite reflects on both your squadron and your commanding officer.[576]

While Tailhook had always been touted as a space for Navy and Marine Corps aviators to unwind, it had become increasingly rowdy throughout the 1980s. In 1985, the convention was marked by a weekend long drinking binge with a strip show. Shots and strong drinks were everywhere, with suites that featured go-go dancers and strippers, as well as X-rated videos, and even public sex. Afterwards, Vice Adm. Edward H. Martin., deputy chief of naval operations for air warfare called the convention "a rambunctious drunken melee" that he found "grossly appalling." In a letter to the Pacific Fleet

[576] William H. McMichael, *The Mother of All Hooks: The Story of the U.S. Navy's Tailhook Scandal* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 17-18. Capitalization used for emphasis in the original letter. "Quick hit drinks" simply means very potent liquor, such as Everclear.

commander, Admiral Martin further stated that "there was virtually no responsibility displayed by anyone in an attempt to restrain those who were getting out of hand." Martin demanded change: "We can ill-afford this type of behavior. We will not condone institutionalized indiscretions."[577] He warned the board of directors that if the association did not take appropriate action, the Navy would withdraw all support.[578] The Tailhook Association convened a board meeting on September 26, 1985. Then-Tailhook president, Capt. Jack W. Snyder, issued an apology to Vice Admiral Martin and promised reforms, including evaluating whether they should ban hospitality suites. Captain Snyder promised to put "the word 'professionalism' back into the centerpoint of 'Hook 86." The letter placated Vice Admiral Martin, but the Tailhook board later voted not to take any action besides sending a list of rules and warnings to squadron commanders.[579]

Secretary of the Navy John Lehman, a former flight officer in the Naval Reserve, was expected to set the tone for the convention, but he did not do so in the way the Navy, the Tailhook Association, or Admiral Martin hoped. According to a retired vice admiral, Secretary Lehman "was a highly visible item in early eighties Tailhooks: slipping dollar bills into strippers' G-strings and climbing on platforms to dance" with dancers. The admiral also described an incident in which Secretary Lehman "stepped up on to a

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[577] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 18-19.

[578] Jeffrey J. Matthews, *Generals and Admirals, Criminals and Crooks: Dishonorable Leadership in the U.S. Military* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2023), 219.

[579] Matthews, *Generals and Admirals,* 219.

platform to dance with a go-go dancer and … picked her up, threw her over his shoulder and carried her towards the door."[580] Despite Martin's warnings:

> At one point during the 1986 convention, Lehman ambled into the VFA-127 suite, where a stripper was doing her thing for the fifty or so fliers in the room. Lehman ended up in the middle of the suite, flat on his back between the completely nude stripper's legs, eating whipped cream out of her crotch.[581]

At that same convention, Secretary Lehman entered a suite where a sex worker was dancing. He laid on the floor between her legs, and "placed a rolled up dollar bill in his mouth. The naked woman gyrated her hips over his face" and then "snatched the bill with her labia."[582] If Secretary Lehman could behave in such a manner, what would stop his fellow fliers? While the 1986 convention witnessed less conspicuous alcohol consumption than the previous one, excessive drinking ramped back up by the time of the 1991 convention, hence the warning issued by Captain Ludwig.[583]

The Tailhook Association that ran the Naval Aviation Symposium was a private booster group for active and retired Marine Corps and Navy fliers and contractors named for the metal hook on Navy planes used to land on air carriers. Despite being an independent gathering, Tailhook was supported by the Navy who flew attendees free of charge on naval passenger planes. The Navy's office of the chief of naval operations for air warfare arranged the conference program and provided speakers. According to

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[580] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 19.

[581] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 19.

[582] Matthews, *Generals and Admirals*, 220.

[583] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 19.

journalist William H. McMichael, Tailhook was "a fraternity bash for a unique fraternity-people crazy and cocky enough to land airplanes on aircraft carriers." The convention was part social event and part conference, featuring lecturers on tactics, displays of equipment, and professional development events. The Naval and Marine aviators were joined by pilots from the Air Force and the Army, as well as civilians including strippers and go-go dancers from local naval bases who came to join the partying. Pilots also handed out invitations to local sororities and word spread throughout Las Vegas, the convention site.[584]

According to Retired Rear Adm. James D. Ramage, one of the founders of the Tailhook Association, it "started as an old man's drinking club" although it was originally founded by eight younger naval aviators in 1957. Over the 35 years between the original meeting and the 1991 Tailhook scandal, the association morphed in to a professional organization, but it never lost its reputation for wild parties and drinking as a part of a bonding experience among male naval aviators. [585] Servicewomen posed a threat to this. Though the convention's reputation had been sullied by whispers and rumors of sexual misconduct and harassment of civilian women, by 1991 more and more female attendees were aviators themselves. Furthermore, recent congressional changes meant that female aviators may soon be serving in combat themselves, threatening the last males only bastion in the Navy.

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[584] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 22-25.

[585] Jean Zimmerman, *Tailspin: Women at War in the Wake of Tailhook* (New York: Doubleday, 1995) 6.

On the last day of the 1991 Tailhook Symposium, 2,500 attendees, mostly aviators, attended a discussion panel, called the Flag Panel, with Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Duane A. Wills, deputy chief of staff for aviation, and eight Navy flag officers, including Adm. Richard M. Dunleavy, vice chief of operations for air warfare. During the question and answer session, C-2 pilot Lt. Monica Rivadeneira asked the panel: "When will women be assigned to combat roles in aviation?" Before any of the panelists could respond, a male aviator in the crowd responded: "We don't want women in combat!"[586] Senior leadership, including the panelists, did nothing to quell the cheers, applause, and catcalls.[587] Vice Admiral Dunleavy responded, "Hoo Boy … if congress directs SecNav to allow qualified women to fly combat aircraft, we will comply." [588] Servicewomen in attendance were not necessarily surprised by the raucous pushback from the audience, although they were disappointed in the response by senior leadership: upon arrival at the convention, they were greeted by male aviators in "Women are Property" and "He-Man Woman Haters Club" shirts.[589] Some servicewomen stated afterwards that the panel that day, combined with the general attitude of male aviators towards women in combat, and the lack of response by leadership, led to the that evening's scandal: the assault of 83 women and 7 men on the third floor of the Las Vegas Hilton.[590]

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[586] Anderson, *The Very Few, the Proud*, 163.

[587] Anderson, *The Very Few, the Proud*, 163.

[588] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 35-36.

[589] Francke, *Ground Zero*, 160; Matthews, *Generals and Admirals*, 223.

[590] Anderson, *The Very Few, the Proud*, 163.

When naval aviator 1st Lt. Kara Hultgreen exited the elevators on the third floor of the hotel around 9 P.M. on Friday, she was immediately mistaken for a "hooker." "That's no hooker," she heard a Navy captain respond. "That's an A-6 pilot."[591] Lieutenant Hultgreen, who had been the only woman to graduate in her class at the Aviation Officer Candidate School, was one of the first women to qualify for jet-training in 1989. According to journalist Jean Zimmerman, Lieutenant Hultgreen was not particularly bothered or surprised by the comment. She knew that many of male aviators who attended Tailhook believed that the women present were prostitutes, dancers, or civilians looking to have sex with a pilot, and they were often correct. It also did not surprise her in the context of the event, as she was well aware of Tailhook's reputation. Hultgreen attended the convention despite any apprehensions to specifically ask about the future of servicewomen in combat aviation at the Flag Panel. Despite her qualifications, the Navy limited Hultgreen to flying an EA-6B Prowler used only for pilot training in an electronic warfare squadron. Less qualified male aviators who had trained with her received combat roles, while she was only allowed to train the next round of combat aviators. When asked by a reporter if servicewomen should be allowed in combat, she responded "Why not? My fangs grow as long as anybody else's."[592]

The evening before, Lieutenant Hultgreen went to the third floor, known as the "third deck," to visit the A-6 "hospitality suite." During a conversation with several pilots who she barely knew, she felt a strange hand on her butt. She swatted the man away two

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[591] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 8-9.

[592] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 11.

or three times while continuing her debate with her fellow aviators on women in combat. The fourth time she felt his hand she responded, asking one of her male companions to hold her beer. Hultgreen then grabbed her molester by his collar and pushed him against the wall. "Look," she snarled, "I'm an officer. I'm an aviator. You touch me again and I'll kill you." But the man would not be deterred. Instead of groping the lieutenant, he bit her directly in the buttocks, a practice known as "sharking." Hultgreen responded by elbowing him in the head and knocking him to the floor, stating: "Look. You idiot. I told you. Get the hell away from me. I'll kill you." The man got the message and left the suite.[593]

The third deck was legendary among male aviators. It was the epicenter for "The Party," spread out through a series of the so-called "hospitality suites," each inhabited by a separate naval squadron. For years, male aviators lined the hallway between the suites, groping the women who walked through. Some men thought of it as only a prank; some were satisfied with merely pinching women's buttocks. Others took it much further: pulling down women's tops, groping their crotches, grabbing their chests, etc. Meanwhile, the convention normalized the practice of "zapping." Each squadron had its own sticker with the unit logo which they "zapped" or slapped on every port or base they visited. At Tailhook, that practice underwent a diabolic expansion, with aviators "zapping" women anywhere they could reach, including their breasts, crotches, and buttocks. By the 1980s, the third floor hallway was well known for this ongoing exercise

[593] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 11-13. The Navy later identified the suspect as Royal Australian Air Force officer Jim Ibbottson. The Naval Investigative Service (NIS) notified Ibbotson's superiors in Australia. He committed suicide. (McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 58-59).

in sexual harassment. Sometime in the mid-1980s, the sexist ritual received its nickname, the "Gauntlet" or "Gantlet." [594]

The Tailhook Gauntlet was common knowledge, at least among junior officers. A Department of Defense Inspector General investigation following the scandal stated that the "gauntlet evolved over the years from somewhat innocuous nonassaultive behavior to the assaultive acts that occurred in recent years. The gauntlet existed in some form for many years and was well known within the naval aviation community."[595] Junior aviators said it would be impossible for senior officers to be unaware of the practice, which the report confirmed:

> In addition to whatever specific knowledge any of the flag officers may have had, it is our opinion that there was general knowledge among the Navy's senior aviation leadership of the inappropriate behavior that had become commonplace on the third floor during annual Tailhook conventions. In part, we base this opinion on the fact that 33 of the 35 flag officers who attended Tailhook 91 had attended prior Tailhook conventions. that 2 of the flag officers were past Tailhook Association Presidents; and that all of the aviation flag officers were former squadron commanders. Further, concern was expressed by flag officers over the excesses at prior Tailhook conventions as early as 1985. Many of the junior officers we interviewed told us that knowledge of the type of misconduct which occurred at Tailhook 91 was widespread throughout the aviation community. Finally, we obtained eyewitness testimony that one former high-ranking Navy civilian official engaged in inappropriate activity with a stripper in front of junior officers at a prior Tailhook convention, indicating that, at least in one instance, a senior official was

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[594] The term came from a Clint Eastwood movie, where the protagonists are driving down a narrow street, being shot at from all sides. The term "Gauntlet" was used by Captain Ludwig and others to describe the hallway, although the term should have been "Gantlet." A gauntlet is a medieval glove, where as a gantlet is a "former military punishment in which the offender had to run between two rows of men who struck him with clubs as he passed." Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 8; McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 20.

[595] U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Inspector General, *Report of Investigation: Tailhook 91*, part 2, V1-1
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> aware of and participated in the type of activities for which junior officers are now being criticized.[596]

In fact, DOD-IG investigators discovered that Admiral Dunleavy knew about the Gauntlet back in 1990. On Saturday, September 7, 1991, he was on the third floor of the hotel and was aware that the gauntlet was forming, telling investigators that the men “hooted and hollered” and he heard some of them yell "show us your tits!" The admiral stated that he did not interfere because he did not think he would be heard over the noise and believed the activities "appeared to be in fun, rather than molestation." He said no one seemed to be upset and women “would not have gone down the hall if they did not like it." [597]

A female Navy lieutenant told investigators that she had been warned about the gauntlet by her squadron prior to attending Tailhook. They did not give her any details or tell her about the assaultive behavior, they simply said: “Don't be on the third floor after 11:00 p.m."[598] Unfortunately, too many women, both civilian and military, walked into this degrading trap unaware of their peril.

The 1991 convention was Anne Merritt’s second Tailhook. Merritt was the civilian daughter of an Army sergeant major and a civilian employee of the Air Force. In 1990, she had gone through the gauntlet and remembered her how scared she felt as she was passed bodily through the hallway, feet barely touching the ground, as male aviators

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[596] Quoted in U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, X-9; Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 8; McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 20.

[597] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, X-9.

[598] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, V1-6.

groped her. She heard them banging on the walls and yelling "she's a player," meaning that she was interested in running the gauntlet.[599] Merritt decided to stay far away from the gauntlet the following year but did venture up to the third floor to join the party. While she was waiting for a drink, a man pinned her arms to her sides, lifting her up fast and hard enough to knock the wind out of her. Merritt knew the man: a Marine captain who got violent when he drank. He had previously asked Merritt out and been rebuffed. He saw this as his chance.[600]

The loud music and party noises drowned out Merritt's screams for help. She fought back, kicking the captain repeatedly. He simply spun her around, to the laughter of the witnesses, and taunted, "I love it when you talk dirty to me." The captain dragged Merritt onto the patio and sat in a chair, pulling her onto his lap and wrapping his legs around her to keep her from getting free. He pulled up her shirt and proceeded to grope her breasts, kissing her body roughly, while holding her arms down. Then he abruptly stopped, telling Merritt to wait there while he went to the bathroom. Merritt ran into a women's lavatory nearby, sobbing. When she emerged, she told a Marine lieutenant colonel about her assault. He angrily responded that he would "break the man's knees," but Merritt did not reveal his name. The entire incident lasted roughly ten minutes.[601]

Around 11:00 PM that evening, several helicopter pilots emerged from a suite, carrying a barely conscious young woman by her arms and legs. They dumped her on the

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[599] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 39.

[600] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 39-40.

[601] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 39-40.

hallway floor and went back into the suite. Julia Rodgers, only 18, had come to the Hilton with friends to join the party. While she visited other party rooms, Rodgers spent most of the evening in Suite 315 with Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 1 from Jacksonville, Florida. After consuming a lot of alcohol, Rodgers fell to the floor. When an officer attempted to help her up, she resisted and then passed out. Not wanting trouble, some of the partyers carried her out of the room, dropped her against the wall of the hallway, and returned to their suite to continue their shenanigans. Suddenly seven different men descended on Rodgers, and lifted her in the air, carrying her face up along the hallway. Three of the men were later identified as Lt. Frank Truong, Lt. David "Junior" Samples, and Lt. Greg "Goose" Geiss. Lieutenant Truong was at her head, Lieutenant Samples was in the middle, with Lieutenant Geiss holding her legs. The aviators undid Rodgers' shirt and bra, and removed her pants entirely, before dropping her on the ground, naked from the waist down and still unconscious. After somebody yelled that the security guards were coming, the group dispersed and disappeared into the neighboring suites. Two security guards, who had been watching the party, got involved for the first time. They helped Rodgers to her feet and took her down the hallway. She half walked, and was half dragged, to the security office where she threw up. Around midnight, her mother came to drive her home.[602] Rogers remembered drinking in the suite and then nothing until she was "out in the hallway and being thrown in the air by a crowd of men."[603]

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[602] This is according to Lieutenant Truong. Lieutenant Geiss claimed that he did not remember either Truong or Samples touching Rodgers while Samples denied his role entirely. McMichael, *The Mother of All Hooks*, 40-41 and 128-131.

[603] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, F-36.

Lisa Reagan and Marie Weston were visiting Las Vegas from Sacramento for the weekend for a short vacation and happened to be staying in the same hotel as the convention. All weekend they had heard about "The Party" from Tailhook attendees who had continuously invited them to the third floor. On Friday evening, Reagan and Weston met Larry, a Marine captain, while in the casino. Larry invited them to dinner, telling the women that he had won money gambling. Larry spent the evening telling them about his wife and children, his hobbies, and his squadron. Reagan and Weston found him to be polite and charming. On Saturday night they ran into Larry again, who offered to escort them to the party. When they reached the third floor and saw the crowds, they moved single file: Reagan, followed by Weston, with Larry trailing somewhere behind.[604]

Reagan suddenly felt walls of people closing in and then felt unknown hands grabbing her everywhere, slipping under her shirt and pulling up her skirt. She shouted at them to stop, but no one did. Reagan panicked:

> If you've never been attacked by anybody before, and then you've got fifty or however many people with their hands all over you, you don't know if they're capable of doing that, what they are going to do next. Here there were five or six guys with their hands up my skirt, grabbing at my crotch from different angles. I didn't know what was next. They're feeling me up. They're pulling at my clothing. Are they going to pull my clothes off? Because they could have overpowered us easily.[605]

Weston thought she and Reagan were about to be gang raped. She threw her drink at the men, who responded by splashing some type of liquid directly in her face and reaching up her dress, attempting to pull down her pantyhose. She fought back, punching anywhere

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[604] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 15-18.

[605] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 18.

she could, sometimes making contact. The more she fought, the more alcohol was thrown in her face. Reagan was drenched in some type of thick pink liquid but kept moving forward. She could not find Weston, who was continuing to fight. Weston threw one last solid punch, connecting hard and everything stopped. It was a Marine Corps captain who the women had met earlier at the pool. He responded with the obvious: "You punched me!" Then Reagan thought she heard him say, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry." Reagan and Weston ran through a door and ended up on the patio, which was filled with people. "Smile!" one said to Weston, who was sobbing. The two women made their way to the elevator, where they were joined by Larry, their Marine Corps escort, and the Marine captain Weston punched. When the doors opened, Larry said, "It's been a pleasure ladies!" They had arrived to the party less than five minutes earlier.[606]

After returning to their hotel room, Reagan and Weston tried to call 911 but the hotel operator connected them to security instead. The security guard would not put them through to the police, instead responding himself. The guard kept asking questions about the damage to their clothing. Regan told him that that was not the basis of the complaint, but he continued his questions in the same vein. The next morning, they attempted to get a copy of their statements from the front desk and instead found a pair of assistant managers laughing about it, saying "Oh, look what those guys did last night." When confronted, one of them stated "Don't you girls know what goes on at these parties?" Reagan and Weston then went to the police and on Sunday September 8, 1991, became the first women to ever file a complaint with the Las Vegas Police after a Tailhook

[606] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 16-19.

convention. The police response was almost as bad as the hotel's: they told the women that since they could not identify any suspects, there was no case. All the women could do, according to the police, was file a civil suit.[607] The Las Vegas Police referred Reagan and Weston back to hotel security.[608]

Reagan and Weston, however, were not the only ones to attempt to report the abuse they suffered at the 35th Tailhook Convention. Lt. Paula Coughlin, a helicopter pilot by training, was serving as the aide to Rear Adm. John Snyder. This was Lieutenant Coughlin's second Tailhook -- she had previously attended in 1985 while in flight training. She was aware of the hard-partying nature of the weekend, but had chalked it up to men being men, and was certain that they meant not harm, especially to a fellow pilot.

> There was never any malicious act… The worst I can think of is, "So I scored last night, even though her husband was deployed." That was the kind of behavior that I had become used to thinking was normal-you know, men are animals, they have no scruples. But in my mind, we're thinking something consensual.[609]

On Saturday September 7, 1991, Lieutenant Coughlin found out that not everything that occurred during the weekend was consensual when she ventured onto the third deck looking for a friend she had promised to meet. She found two men blocking the corridor and attempted to squeeze past one who hip checked her in to the wall. When Lieutenant Coughlin said "excuse me," he grinned and she knew the hip check was

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[607] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 21-22.

[608] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, F-34.

[609] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 24.

intentional.[610] The other serviceman then yelled, “Admiral’s aide!”[611] Lieutenant Coughlin did not recognize him, but he apparently knew who she was. Suddenly, the first man grabbed her by the rear end and picked her up, moving forward while her feet dangled off the ground. “What the fuck do you think you’re doing?” the lieutenant gasped, originally more shocked than scared.[612] After another pair of hands grabbed her buttocks, she repeated in a louder voice: “What the fuck do you think you’re doing!!?”[613] The man lifting her moved her further down the hallway, as men tore at her clothes and groped her body. He then reached down her shirt and inside of her bra, grabbing her breasts.

Lieutenant Coughlin responded by crouching down, attempting to keep any other hands from grabbing her, with her assailant still holding onto her breasts. She bit down on each of his hands until he let go. Coughlin stated that she then “felt another hand reached up under my skirt and grabbed the crotch of my panties. I kicked one of my attackers. I felt as though the group was trying to rape me. I was terrified and had no idea what was going to happen next."[614] She continued to fight. And the yell “Admiral’s aide” echoed down the hallway. Two men blocked her path and grinned at her as others continued to grab and pinch her body. Coughlin saw a man walking away and pleaded

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[610] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 24.

[611] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 24.

[612] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 24.

[613] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, F-26-27; Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 25.

[614] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, F-27.

with him to help. He simply turned around and grabbed her breasts.[615] The lieutenant managed to get away and duck into a mostly empty room. A few minutes later, Lt. Matt Snell, an acquaintance of Lieutenant Coughlin's from Patuxent River, entered the room. Lieutenant Coughlin asked Lieutenant Snell if he knew what was going on out in the hallway. He responded: "You didn't go down the hallway, did you?... Someone should have warned you…. That's the gauntlet.[616]

Coughlin spent the night thinking about the third deck, not just her experiences but the fact that so many other women probably had experienced the same thing, telling investigators she just sat in the dark "attempting to understand what had happened to me… I was appalled not only by the brutality of the incident, but the fact that the group did that to me knowing I was both a fellow officer and an admiral's aide."[617] She decided that she could not just dismiss the event as a one off:

> All I had in my mind's eye was that the little monsters in that hallway are going to be commanding officers of squadrons, and they're going to have their little monsters behaving the same way. And that is not the way my Navy operates. That man should not be in my squadron. That man should not be in the Navy. That man should be in jail. And you could probably diagnose it as some kind of denial, but this was still a professional issue with me. This was not a personal assault…. this is just for the good of the Navy.[618]

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[615] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, F-27; Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 25-26.

[616] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 44.

[617] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, F-27.

[618] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 23.

The next morning, Lieutenant Coughlin called her boss, Rear Adm. John Snyder. When he asked about her evening, Coughlin replied, "I was practically gang-banged by a group of fucking F-18 pilots." Admiral Snyder commented, "It's so wild down there… That's why I went, had one margarita, said hello to a few friends and left."[619] Later that morning, Coughlin and Snyder met for breakfast. According to the lieutenant, she gave her boss every detail of what happened the previous evening and he responded, "Paula, you need to stop hanging around with those guys." [620] He added a comment about the third deck always being wild and how that related to the complications pertaining to women in combat that were raised during the Flag Panel that weekend.[621]

Admiral Snyder later told investigators that he did not remember discussing the assault at all. He claimed that he heard about it from his chief of staff at Patuxent, after Lieutenant Coughlin told a friend on his staff who relayed the information. "That got through the chain of command to me," the admiral told investigators. "I got the story, and was absolutely shocked and appalled…. We basically right there came up with a plan of action." Admiral Snyder said that he hand delivered two letters to Vice Admiral Dunleavy, one from himself and one from Coughlin. According to Coughlin, however, Snyder knew all the details of the assault on September 8. He told her that he would personally call the Tailhook Association president, Captain Ludwig, to complain, and would immediately write to Admiral Dunleavy.[622] A week later, she raised the subject

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[619] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 23.

[620] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 47.

[621] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 27.

[622] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 48.

once again, and he once again responded "that's what you get when you go on the third floor full of drunk men." On September 18, he repeated the sentiment a third time, and Coughlin snapped, "That's not what I get! You better watch what you say!" According to Coughlin, she then went to the admiral's chief of staff, Captain Bob Parkinson and told him "I will not work for a man that tells me 'That's what I get.'" Captain Parkinson set up a meeting with the Admiral for the next day where Coughlin gave a full account of the assault. Admiral Snyder asked only one question: "were you raped?" According to Snyder, that was the first time he heard the full story.

Admiral Snyder, Captain Parkinson, and Lieutenant Coughlin decided on a plan: the admiral would draft a letter to Vice Admiral Dunleavy demanding "some action," but first he needed to give the Vice Admiral a heads up. He called him on September 24 but still did not send a letter. At one point, Snyder told Coughlin "This was a learning experience…. Now you know the hatred and chauvinism that exists in the TACAIR community." He told her that if she raised the issue, she might be blackballed in the naval aviation community: "You can't go off like a Roman Candle and leave those people with burns on their hands that say 'Paula Coughlin.'"[623] A few weeks later, when she found out Admiral Snyder never wrote to Admiral Dunleavy, she gave up on waiting for the former to take action. The lieutenant sent her own letter to Dunleavy on September 29, 1991, three weeks after Tailhook ended.[624] According to Coughlin, she showed Snyder a courtesy copy of her letter and he then decided to write his own. Admiral Snyder hand

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[623] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 41-42.

[624] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 49.

delivered both letters on October 2, but Lieutenant Coughlin's letter had already been passed directly to Dunleavy's office by a friend.[625] Admiral Snyder also gave Tailhook president, Captain Ludwig, a call, informing him of the accusations.[626]

When Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Jerry Johnson, received the letter he called Rear Adm. Duvall M. Williams, Jr., the commander of the Naval Investigative Service (NIS) and directed Willaims to open a criminal investigation into the allegations. Williams, who was not a fan of women in the military to begin with, was unhappy with his assignment: if he failed to find those responsible for Coughlin's assault, the Navy would receive heavy criticism, but to find the perpetrator(s), he would have to somehow break the code of silence in the aviation community. Rear Admiral Williams told Johnson that it was "a lose-lose for NIS."[627] Timing was not on their side: Williams told investigators that "we were first informed of this case more than 30 days after it occurred…. The party was attended by thousands of people, many not associated with the Navy and probably unidentifiable by us. Heavy alcohol use was prevalent. These are not ideal circumstances." According to him, NIS did not have a "fart's chance in a whirlwind" of finding and prosecuting the perpetrators of the assaults.[628]

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[625] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 42.

[626] Colonel W. Hayes, "Tailhook: What Happened, Why & What's to Be Learned" *Proceedings*, Vol.120/9/1099, September 1994, reprinted online by U.S. Naval Institute, https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1994/september/tailhook-what-happened-why-whats-be-learned.

[627] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 49.

[628] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 70.

The same day that the investigation began, October 11, 1991, the beleaguered Captain Ludwig sent a letter to the commanders of the hospitality suites that was equal parts congratulations and admonishment:

> As President of the Tailhook Association, I wanted to take this opportunity to give you a debrief of the "goods" and "others" of this year's annual symposium at the Las Vegas Hilton while it is still fresh in your mind. Without a doubt, it was the biggest and most successful Tailhook we have ever had. We said it would be the "Mother of all Hooks" and it was…. All of our naval aviation leaders and many industry professionals had nothing but praise for the event. We can be proud of a tremendous Tailhook '91 and a great deal of thanks goes to all the young JO's in the various committees that made Hook fly…. Tailhook '91 was the "Mother of all Hooks" in one other way.... The major "other" of the year's symposium comes under the title of "unprofessionalism," and I mean unprofessionalism underlined! Let me relate just a few specifics to show how far across the line of responsible behavior we went…. We narrowly avoided a disaster when a "pressed ham" [someone man bared buttocks] pushed out an eighth-floor window which subsequently fell on the crowd below. Finally, and definitely the most serious, was "The Gauntlet" on the third floor. I have five separate reports of young ladies, several of whom had nothing to do with Tailhook, who were verbally abused, had drinks thrown on them, were physically abused and sexually molested. Most distressing was the fact that an underage young lady who was severely intoxicated had her clothing removed by members of the Gauntlet…. I don't have to tell you that this type of behavior has put a very serious blemish on what was otherwise a highly successful symposium. It has further given a black eye to the Tailhook Association and all of Naval Aviation. Our ability to conduct future Tailhooks has been put to great risk due to the rampant unprofessionalism of a few. Tailhook cannot and will not condone the blatant and total disregard of individual rights and public/private property![629]

Nothing came of this letter until October 28, 1991, when reporter Gregory Vistica, *San Diego Union*, faxed Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III a copy of

[629] Letter from F.G. Ludwig Jr., October 11, 1991, U.S. Department of Defense, Report of Investigation: Tailhook 91, Review of the Navy Investigations, part 1, enclosure 3. Also quoted in McMichael, *The Mother of All Hooks*, 50, Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 36-37, and Hayes, "Tailhook: What Happened, Why & What's to Be Learned."

the letter and a couple of questions. Until that point, Secretary Garrett was unaware of both the letter and the open NIS investigation into Lieutenant Coughlin's report. He decided to take some time before responding, which was a mistake. Vistica's story came out the next day and ended up on the national wires. The headline grabbed everyone's attention: "Women reportedly abused by Navy pilots at seminar: Investigation is under way of 5 separate reports of physical and verbal assault." Vistica went on to detail Ludwig's letter and Coughlin's assault, although he withheld her name. He specifically called out Snyder's lack of action stating that Snyder "could not be reached for comment yesterday" but

> Senior Pentagon officials said Snyder responded only after the aide wrote a letter to Dunleavy describing the incident. Dunleavy then contacted the office of the Chief of Naval Operations, which began the investigation. Officials aware of the episode are concerned by Snyder's response and the Navy's apparent attitude of trying to keep the incident from the public.[630]

Vistica also pointed out that Navy Secretary Garrett, CNO Kelso, and Vice Adm. Dunleavy, vice chief of naval operations for air warfare, were in attendance. The article thus brought the Tailhook scandal to the public eye, but also forced action. That afternoon, Senator McCain called for an investigation into the alleged assaults and asked the Navy to end any support of the Tailhook Association. Secretary Garrett acted quickly, cutting all ties with the association. He wrote to Captain Ludwig, stating Tailhook 1991

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[630] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 50; Gregory Vistica, "Women reportedly abused by Navy pilots at seminar: Investigation is under way of 5 separate reports of physical and verbal assault" *The San Diego Union*, October 29, 1991, https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/local-history/story/2021-10-29/from-the-archives-tailhook-scandal-first-reported-30-years-ago#:~:text=The%20Navy%20is%20investigating%20reports,aviation%20seminar%20in%20Las%20Vegas.

was “a gross example of exactly what cannot be permitted by the civilian or uniformed leadership in the Navy, at any level.”[631] Garrett went on to state:

> I am writing to you, and through you to your organization, to express my absolute outrage over the conduct reported to have taken place at the Tailhook Association symposium in September…. No man who holds a commission in this Navy will ever subject a woman to the kind of abuse in evidence at Tailhook ’91 with impunity.[632]

The next day, Secretary Garrett published a letter describing his “absolute outrage over the conduct reported to have taken place” and “terminating, effective immediately, all Navy support in any manner whatsoever, direct or indirect, for the Tailhook Association.”[633] Secretary Garrett told Undersecretary Dan Howard to direct the Naval Inspector General, Rear Adm. George Davis, to investigate noncriminal abuses at the convention, including an investigation of the Navy’s relationship with the Tailhook Association and the use of Naval resources supporting the organization and the convention. Undersecretary Howard also directed Admiral Davis to begin an inquiry into reports of violations on policies concerning sexual harassment and alcohol abuse, but to limit the investigation to the “business association” between the Navy and the organization.[634]

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[631] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation, Review of the Navy Investigations*, part 1, 5.

[632] Quoted in McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 51. See also U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation: Tailhook 91*, part 1, 5-7.

[633] Hayes, “Tailhook: What Happened, Why & What's to Be Learned.” See also U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, 5-7.

[634] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 50-52. See also U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation: Tailhook 91*, part 1, 5-7.

Admiral Davis began to investigate the use of naval aircraft to transport convention participants and the free office space the Navy provided at Miramar Naval Air Station. Meanwhile, NIS commander Williams continued his investigation into the alleged sexual assaults. After a few weeks of individual meetings, Undersecretary Howard decided to hold weekly briefings that also included Navy Judge Advocate General Rear Adm. John E. "Ted" Gordon; Secretary Garrett's personal lawyer, Cmdr. Pete Fagan; and Barbara Spyridon Popole, the assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower and reserve affairs. Pope, the senior female official in the Navy, was outraged by the allegations, especially as they went against all Naval regulations about sexual harassment. She, along with Admiral Davis, wanted to expand the scope of the investigation. Admiral Davis told Undersecretary Howard that the Navy needed an "all-up investigation" of Tailhook to find out if the Navy had a "cultural problem" that led to the sexual assaults.[635] He was concerned whether the chain of commands had acted in an appropriate manner when informed about the assaults. According to Davis, Undersecretary Howard limited the investigation and told Davis to let NIS take the lead. Meanwhile, both the NIS and IG investigations were facing trouble. Investigators from the IG office were required to request permission from NIS to interview specific officers and officials while NIS refused to cooperate with the IG. Rear Admiral Williams, who was very open about the fact that he did not like women in the military, also believed that the Tailhook problem was not serious, and the press would move on. Only one senior officer or commander was investigated or reprimanded: due to his failure to follow up on

[635] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 52. See also U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, 5-7.

Lieutenant Coughlin's report, Admiral Kelso removed Admiral Snyder from his command on November 10, 1991.[636] But that was the only action the Navy took that year.

According to both Admiral Williams and Admiral Davis, the aviators were "closing ranks" and invoking a code of silence. Pope asked Admiral Dunleavy to issue some type of statement asking officers to cooperate, but on the advice of his lawyer, Dunleavy refused. In early 1992, when speaking to the rest of the committee, Pope stressed that agents needed to investigate senior officials. Admiral Williams refused, stating "what you don't understand, Barbara, is that men in the Navy don't want women in the Navy." He also told her that "a lot of female pilots are topless dancers and hookers." The next day, Williams apologized to Pope and they discussed the issue, but Williams did not change his mind. During a briefing with agent Beth Iorio on Coughlin's statement about her assault, he was informed that she had screamed, "What the fuck do you think you're doing?" He responded, "Any woman that would use the 'F' word on a regular basis would welcome this type of activity."[637] Iorio later told IG investigators that she remembered the conversation:

> So vividly because I am a woman and I have been known to use the "F" word on more than an occasional basis. So I personally found it offensive because personally I would never welcome that type of activity that [the victim] received up on the third floor being indecently assaulted.[638]

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[636] Hayes, "Tailhook: What Happened, Why & What's to Be Learned."; McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 53.

[637] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*,, part 1, 16. The report does not give Iorio's name. See also McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 55.

[638] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, 16.

Other NIS staff members present at the time expressed concern about the nature of Admiral William's remarks. The Director of Investigations and Counterintelligence at NIS apologized to Iorio for Williams' remarks. According to the IG report, Williams also called Iorio and "tried to assure her that all he intended to convey was that the victim's language could be used by the defense to reflect negatively on her creditability." Both the Director and Williams also attempted to convince Iorio that she had simply misunderstood what the admiral said.[639]

Despite his personal feelings, Williams knew that he had to find the perpetrators. Agents identified a possible suspect in January 1992. On January 24, he enlisted the help of Navy lawyer Lt. Cmdr. Hank Sonday. Sonday was one of the Navy's best lawyers and Admiral Williams, along with Admiral Gordon and his deputy, Rear Adm. William Schachte, wanted him to oversee the prosecution. Two days later, Lieutenant Commander Sonday met with Charlie Lannom, the agency's deputy director and top civilian. Lannom and Williams agreed that investigation would explore "clearly assaultive criminal activity" and directed Sonday to do the same. Williams advised Sonday, however, that his scope needed to be even more limited: Williams only cared about finding Lieutenant Coughlin's assailant. By this point, investigators had put in between 12,000 and 13,000 hours and only found two suspects: Jim Ibbottson, a Royal Australian Air Force officer, and Capt. Gregory Bonam, a Marine instructor pilot, who was identified by Lieutenant Coughlin as her assailant. But she had only seen him in a photo; Lieutenant Commander Sonday's first job was to set up a lineup.[640]

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[639] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, 16.

[640] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 55-60.

While Coughlin correctly identified Bonam as her assailant during the lineup, she expressed a slight doubt. She remembered him being bigger. Sonday was also concerned because the lieutenant had incorrectly identified a suspect earlier in the investigation. In a meeting with Coughlin, Sonday told her that "you need to remember that in the grand scheme of things, you're not dead, you weren't raped, you have no missing body parts." Meanwhile, Sonday was investigating other felony assaults, as well as whether any aviators lied to investigators. After a few months, he received a statement made by Lt.j.g. James Carson Reynolds, revealing that members of his unit "have a grapevine system where they discussed what was said/not said and what information they should provide in the future." Lannom and Sonday requested an immediate reinterview, hoping to find evidence of collusion, but Reynolds changed his story, telling the agent "I've been completely misunderstood." Sonday later told Pentagon investigators that naval aviators "were bending like reeds in the wind, so you could never break them. They were more adept in the art of obfuscation. They would say 'Could have happened. Might have happened. Saw some hands go out and grab somebody. Didn't see any faces though."[641] While some officers cooperated with DOD-IG investigators, others deliberately falsified or withheld information. For example:

> A common tactic taken by many officers in response to general questioning was to answer that they simply had no knowledge of the subject. However, we experienced a number of situations in which facts disclosed later in the investigation suggested that many of the same individuals did indeed have pertinent knowledge or information. A typical response to questions posed in followup interviews was that the investigator had not asked the "right" question. It is our belief that several

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[641] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 61-64.

> hundred of the 2,384 naval officers we interviewed responded in that fashion.[642]

Bonam was the only real lead. When questioned on January 21, he admitted to being at Tailhook and on the third floor at the time of Coughlin's attack but denied his participation. He also informed Sonday that his former commander, Lt. Col. Michael S. "Wizard" Fagan, had told NIS investigators that Bonam was not at Tailhook. Marine Captain Ray Allen saw Bonam there with Fagan but had a bigger revelation: he had seen Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett in the Rhino Room. While that was not a crime in and of itself, his presence in a room where drunk Marines were encouraging women to perform fellatio on a plastic dildo attached to a mural of a rhinoceros, was not good for the reputations of the Secretary or the Navy. NIS investigator Bob Powers remarked that "there's nothing wrong with being in that room," to which Sonday quipped "I hope to God he was drinking beer and not making the Rhino happy." Even if Secretary Garrett was only drinking a beer, Sonday said, "there's a lot better places he could have been than in the Rhino room." After receiving corroborating statements about the presence of Fagan and Bonam on the third floor, however, Sonday decided not to interview Secretary Garrett.[643]

At the end of February, Sonday was informed he had to finish his investigation by the end of March. On March 27, 1992, he returned to Norfolk and left NIS agents and officials to compile the report. Secretary Garret and Pope were briefed on April 28, but Secretary Garrett was about to leave on a two week trip and directed Undersecretary

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[642] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, IV-1.

[643] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 66-71.

Howard to wait until his return before releasing the report. Howard, who was furious about the findings, released it anyway. There were only three American suspects: Bonam for assault, Fagan for obstruction of justice, and pilot Mike Clancy for "trying to encourage certain partiers to keep party-poopers from interfering with the gauntlet," a dubious charge. Meanwhile, the IG report was released the same day and was much better received. It stated that the Navy should cut off its relationship with the Tailhook Association, which the Navy had already done. More importantly, it found "a marked absence of moral courage and personal integrity" on the part of officers that refused to accept responsibility for their actions and the actions of those in their command, a troubling "long-standing, continued abuse and glamorization of alcohol," and an attitude among aviators that their treatment at Tailhook "was what women should have expected and accepted." [644]

According to the IG report the "overwhelming majority" of the servicemen interviewed displayed a "what's the big deal" attitude about the events. Furthermore

> Those interviewed [by NIS] had no understanding that the activities in the suites fostered an atmosphere of sexual harassment and the actions that occurred in [hallway] corridor constituted in the minimum sexual harassment, and in many cases, sexual assault. That atmosphere condoned, if not encouraged, the gang mentality which eventually led to the sexual assaults.[645]

Adm. Robert J. Kelly, commander f othe U.S. Pacific Fleet, released a statement that same day stating that "commanders must create an atmosphere in which [sexual

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[644] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 69-71.

[645] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, 10.

harassment] must not exist."[646] While he did not address Tailhook at all, he said that commanders were obligated to stop sexual harassment from occurring within their commands. The next day, Kelly went on a tour of Naval bases to reiterate the Navy's zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and assault.[647] It was too little too late.

On May 27, Pope testified in a hearing on personnel issues before the Senate Armed Services Manpower Subcommittee. Secretary Garrett assured her there would not be any questions about Tailhook, but Pope was questioned about the investigation for an hour. She was also handed two letters to deliver: the first called on the Navy to discipline any irresponsible commanders and the second froze all Navy and Marine Corps promotions until the committee received a list of every officer who was accused of any poor behavior at Tailhook. They required a letter attached to every promotion package about whether a candidate had been questioned about or implicated in anything untoward during Tailhook.[648]

That same month, Vice Admiral Dunleavy took responsibility for the misconduct, telling reporters "We in naval aviation leadership ... failed.... We weren't there to step in and stop it." He stated that he could not comment on any possible disciplinary action but asserted, "I should be fired." Cmdr. Mark Van Dyke, a Navy spokesperson, stated, "As the direct representative to the Chief of Naval Operations on naval aviation, Admiral

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[647] H.G. Reza, "Navy Report Faults Brass in Sex Assaults at Convention," *Los Angeles Times*, May 1, 1992, B1 & B7, https://www.proquest.com/cv_701361/docview/1723335438/13B9A77F96DD4298PQ/2?accountid=14270&sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers.

[648] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 73-74.

Dunleavy wanted to make it clear that the incidents happened on his watch and that he was taking responsibility." According to Commander Van Dyke, Dunleavy "wants to stay on and help come up with solutions to these problems…. He wants to pass on a clean command."[649] Dunleavy, set to retire in June, also misled reporters, claiming, "It's not until afterwards that we hear about these goddamn stories."[650]

Meanwhile, both Garrett and Kelso's offices received questions from the *New York Times* about whether they had been in the party suites after Secretary Garrett released a statement that he had not been in attendance. Their offices investigated the NIS report and spoke to investigators. When they contacted Sonday, he confirmed that Secretary Garret's presence was common knowledge and told them to look at the Allen statement detailing the Secretary's presence in the Rhino Room. The statement, however, had been removed. According to Sonday, agent Iorio decided it was not pertinent. Sonday was concerned that Iorio was directed to do so by Admiral Williams. If she was not, Williams certainly knew the testimony was missing. Admiral Kelso wanted to fire Williams, but Secretary Garrett intervened, putting out a second official statement saying that he had just heard about Allen's statement "yesterday" and that he had only stuck his head into a party suite for a beer:[651]

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[649] "Vice Admiral Takes the Blame in Tailhook Scandal," *Los Angeles Times*, May 6, 1992, SDB3, https://www.proquest.com/docview/1731578611/28A8DD25A42A4596PQ/2?accountid=14270&sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers

[650] Matthews, *Generals and Admirals*, 229.

[651] H. Lawrence Garrett statement, U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, enclosure 10, page 2, dated June 11, 1991. See also McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 73-74.

> The closest I came to any of the suites, to the best of my recollection, was on one occasion, shortly after I had arrived in the patio area, when I walked over to the poolside entrance to one of the suites which bordered on the patio area to get something to drink. At the poolside entrance to this suite was a large container of beverages. I took a can of beer from the container and immediately returned to the area on the patio where I had been. I do not recall speaking to anyone while I was in the area of the entrance to the suite, although I may have… Neither during those few moments when I approached that one suite to obtain a drink, nor at any other time that evening, did I observe any inappropriate or offensive conduct.[652]

Secretary Garrett then offered his resignation to Defense Secretary Dick Cheney but was told that resignation would not be necessary. Meanwhile, both the House and Senate were threatening to hold their own hearings on the Tailhook matter. The Navy handed the investigation over to the DOD-IG, which was already investigating how the Allen statement went missing, hoping that they would be the most sympathetic to servicemen. Paula Coughlin, however, was frustrated with the lack of action. On June 25, 1992, she went public with the details of her assault. President George H.W. Bush took notice: on June 26, Secretary Cheney accepted Garrett's resignation.[653]

In August, the DOD-IG, Derek J. Vander Schaaf began a series of investigations into both the events of Tailhook and the Navy's handling of the scandal. The office released a critical report, focused specifically on the failures of the previous investigations in September, stated that senior Naval officials purposefully undermined the Navy's own inquiry into the matter and covered-up the participation of senior officers, including Secretary Garrett, who attended Tailhook in 1990 and 1991. In

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[652] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, enclosure 10, page 2-3.

[653] McMichael, *Mother of All Hooks*, 68-81.

addition to the original statement that had been removed from the report, the IG investigation identified several people who witnessed Garrett entering multiple hospitality suites. While the report stated they found "no evidence that the issue caused the Secretary to take or refrain from taking any particular action with respect to the Navy investigations," the statements "cast doubt on the Secretary's credibility."[654]

Furthermore, the IG investigation revealed that Secretary Garrett was advised by an unnamed immediate staff member "not to attend either convention based on stories and rumors about indecent conduct at the conventions and the alleged misconduct of other Navy officials who had attended previous Tailhook conventions." [655] Marybel Batjer, Garrett's political advisor and special assistant, wrote, "Yuk! Yuk! NO! NO! You can't go to Tailhook," on the top of the invitation.[656] According to the IG report that staff member never attended a Tailhook convention, therefore, "activities that took place at Tailhook conventions were known within the Navy to be incompatible with Navy policies dealing with sexual harassment and abuse of alcohol." Secretary Garrett told investigators that he attended the events to reassure naval aviators that Navy leadership was addressing their needs and concerns, but some felt that "the presence of the Secretary and flag officers gave tacit approval to the event, including those aspects of the convention that were contrary to established Navy policies."[657]

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[654] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, 29-31.

[655] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, 29-31.

[656] Matthews, *Generals and Admirals*, 221. The IG report may have been referring to Batjer's response to the invitation, but that cannot be confirmed.

[657] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 1, 29-31.

Secretary of the Navy Sean O'Keefe, who was appointed to replace Williams, gave a televised press conference on September 23, 1992, acknowledging that the misconduct at the Tailhook convention were a simply a symptom the sexist nature of the military: "We get it. We know that the larger issues is a cultural problem which has allowed demeaning behavior and attitudes towards women to exist within the Navy Department." He asserted that sexual assault and "harassment will not be tolerated. Those who don't get the message will be driven from our ranks."[658]

DOD-IG released the second part of the report in April 1993, stating that the files of 140 officers who were under investigation had been passed on to the individual services for disciplinary action, including charges of assault, indecent exposure, conduct unbecoming an officer, and lying under oath. The report found 90 cases of sexual assault: 21 Navy servicewomen and one Air Force woman, 49 civilian women, six female military spouses, and six female government employees Seven men were also assaulted: five in the Navy and two in the Marine Corps. [659]. In the end, 119 Navy officers and 21 Marine Corps officers were referred for disciplinary action. About half of the cases were dropped due to lack of evidence. Most of the rest went to the captain's mast, a nonjudgemental and internal process resulting in fines and career penalties. The Marine Corps also dropped all charges against Captain Bonam, stating that there was not enough evidence for a court-martial. None of the cases ever went to court. Many lawmakers,

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[658] Matthews, *Generals and Admirals*, 235036.

[659] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation: Tailhook*, part 2, VI-15-16;"The Investigation" *PBS: Frontline Investigation*, accessed June 1, 2024, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/ frontline/shows/navy/tailhook/invest.html.

civilians, and servicemembers were highly critical of both the DOD-IG investigation and the Navy's previous inquiry, especially considering the number of junior officers who received immunity for their testimony. There were also many questions about the investigation techniques, including inappropriate queries regarding a suspect's prior sexual history. All told, the careers of 14 admirals and 300 aviators were affected by the investigation, including Secretary Garrett and CNO Admiral Kelso who took early retirement two years later. Lieutenant Coughlin also resigned her commission in 1995, making her the only junior officer out of a job due to Tailhook. [660]

Some female officers who were assaulted chose not to file reports, due to fear that "the ensuing investigation and publicity would be detrimental to their careers."[661] Their fears were proven to be correct. In her resignation letter, Coughlin stated, "the physical attack on me by the Naval aviators at the 1991 Tailhook convention and the covert attacks on me that followed have stripped me of my ability to serve." After Coughlin was transferred, the Navy grounded her from flying for six months, stating that she was mentally unstable. Coughlin believed it was a form of retaliation. She later testified that her fellow aviators resented her decision to come forward: she broke the code of silence.[662] During the Tailhook DOD-IG investigation, Coughlin was accused of engaging in improper activity during the weekend. Every allegation was eventually

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[660] "Post Tailhook Punishment" *PBS: Frontline Investigation*, accessed June 1, 2024. https://www.pbs.org/ wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/navy/tailhook/disc.html.

[661] Reza, "Navy Report Faults Brass in Sex Assaults at Convention," B1.

[662] Zoe Carpenter, "Sexual Assault in the Military Is Still Going Unchecked. Will Congress Finally Act?" *The Nation*, July 27, 2021, https://www.thenation.com/article/ society/military-sexual-harassment-gillibrand/.

dismissed as hearsay: no one had witnessed Coughlin engaging in improper activity, nor could they name any eyewitnesses. One Marine lieutenant colonel who accused Coughlin of misconduct was found to have lied about his own activities, as well as the activities of others in his unit. He withdrew his accusation. Coughlin denied all allegations. One male officer told investigators that he believed the allegations were designed to discredit Coughlin's testimony.[663]

In 1994, a junior officer who was investigated for conduct unbecoming asked journalist Susan Faludi, "What about all the female officers who were going wild at Tailhook? How come they haven't been prosecuted?" When she questioned what he meant by "wild" he responded, "You know, wearing sexy clothes, dancing like a bunch of party girls, getting their legs shaved in the suites…. How come they aren't being prosecuted for that? This whole thing stinks of a double standard." [664] Some female officers even had consensual sex with male aviators, he said.[665] He was not the only one who alleged unequal justice, especially after the IG said that one reported victim:

> Told us that she did not consider herself a victim of any criminal activity…. The victim told us that, in her opinion, she was not a 'victim' of an assault…. The victim felt that she handled the incident and objected to being labeled as a 'victim'…. The victim felt she resolved the situation and does not consider herself to be the victim of an assault…. The victim

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[663] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation*, part 2, IV-1 & F-28.

[664] Susan Faludi, "Going Wild" 1994 on "Debating Tailhook," *PBS: Frontline Investigation*, accessed June 1, 2024. *https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/navy/tailhook/debate.html#wild*.

[665] Jack Kamer, "Defense: Recovering from a Tailspin" *Reason*, January 1994, accessed June 1, 2024. https://reason.com/1994/01/01/defense-recovering-from-a-tail/. Kamer calls himself a "masculist," which he considers to be a "fair counterpart to feminists."

> stated that she did not get upset at the incident and did not feel that she was assaulted.[666]

The report also stated that the "investigation revealed that many women freely and knowingly participated in gauntlet activities … that went through the gauntlet and seemed to enjoy the attention and interaction with the aviators."[667] Some women did join the festivities, including belly shots and leg shaving. Others refused to call themselves victims for a very different reason: "Certainly nothing happened to me that I didn't handle," Lieutenant Hultgreen stated after she spoke with NIS investigators. "Nobody maliciously tried to assault me. So the guy was just being an idiot. Once I made it perfectly clear that I was not receptive to his advances it was over."[668] Her attitude typified that of naval aviators: a belief in her own invincibility and the ability to handle anything that came her way. It was a necessary part of surviving both in the air and on the ground. Lieutenant Hultgreen also expressed her support for the women who had been assaulted in the gauntlet:

> They say, 'You see Kara, it didn't happen to you because you were smart enough to leave the third floor.' Or, 'You were smart enough not to go in there alone.' Or, 'You were smart enough not to go near that hallway.' Now does that make it right? No. I don't agree with that attitude. That attitude really pisses me off.[669]

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[666] Kramer, "Defense: Recovering from a Tailspin."

[667] Kramer, "Defense: Recovering from a Tailspin." See reports from Zimmerman, *Tailspin* and McMichael, *The Mother of all Hooks* for more.

[668] See earlier. Lieutenant Hultgreen was assaulted previously during the convention, outside of the gauntlet. Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 81.

[669] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 82.

The comments Lieutenant Hultgreen heard reflected the general attitude that it was a woman's responsibility to prevent men from assaulting her. In this way, the military had not changed from the Vietnam War era. The laws in the Military Code of Justice had not changed. Sexual assault and harassment remained a problem, and one that the military was only beginning to address. The final IG report stated that:

> It is important to understand that the events at Tailhook 91 did not occur in a historical vacuum. Similar behavior had occurred at previous conventions. The emerging pattern of some of the activities, such as the gauntlet, began to assume the aura of "tradition" ... In fact, many of the younger officers who attended Tailhook 91 felt the excesses that occurred there were condoned by the Navy. This belief is understandable given that the Navy continued to support the Tailhook Association and the annual convention notwithstanding the knowledge on the part of many senior Navy leaders of significant misconduct that had taken place at prior conventions."[670]

There were two other important pieces of context: the first Persian Gulf War and the congressional debates about servicewomen in combat. Some servicemen accused of misconduct stated that they were celebrating the recent win over the Iraqis or that they believed their activity was excusable or justified because they were "returning heroes." One female Navy commander that some of the servicemen worried that the end of the war meant "downsizing of the military, so that you had people feeling very threatened for their job security and to more than just their jobs. their lifestyle." Servicemen, she believed, blamed servicewomen for that, which created

> An animosity in this Tailhook … telling the women that 'We don't have any respect for you now as humans'." This was the woman that was making you, you know, change your ways. This was the woman that was threatening your livelihood. This was the woman that was threatening your lifestyle. This was the woman that wanted to take your spot in that

[670] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation: Tailhook 91*, part 2, i.

> combat aircraft an animosity in this Tailhook that existed that was telling the women that 'We don't have any respect for you now as humans'.[671]

The events at Tailhook could be dismissed as a one off response to how the idea of women in combat threatened the perceived masculinity of the naval aviation community, especially in the context of the congressional hearings that had just ended. It was not, however, a one-time issue. Representative Schroeder, who fought for servicewomen since the 1970s, stated: “the annual Tailhook convention did not just get out of hand recently - it had been an escalating contest of bad behavior for years.” It was the media surrounding it that changed, she argued: “Tailhook misbehavior was always just a one day story. The press would exonerate the behavior with a wink and then acknowledge that our fighting men deserved to blow off some steam.”[672] The military itself was just as much to blame as the media. Tailhook was a symptom of a wider issue: not just of sexual harassment and assault, but of the sexism of the military. The lack of female officers in senior positions both illustrated and contributed to this issue. The military therefore remained an old boys club that simply winked at the harassment and assault of military women, both in and out of uniform. In that context, servicewomen could never be equal to the men with whom they served.

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[671] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of Investigation: Tailhook 91*, part 2, X-2.
[672] Pat Schroeder, *24 Years of House Work… and the Place is Still a Mess: My Life in Politics* (Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 1998).

CHAPTER 9:

CONCLUSION

On November 2, 2023, Adm. Lisa Franchetti was sworn in as the 33rd Chief of Naval Operations, making her the first servicewoman to hold the highest rank in the Navy and the first woman on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 1981, Franchetti was a freshman at Northwestern University when she met Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) students at a campus barbeque. They informed her of the scholarships available to members of ROTC. When she graduated in 1985, only a few women were selected to serve on noncombatant Naval vessels. While Franchetti was not one of them, her shore tour mentor at the Naval Station at Great Lakes, Illinois, believed she would be an excellent candidate for a shipboard position. She decided to qualify as an engineering officer of the watch to further boost her chances and ended up serving on the USS *Shenandoah*, a destroyer tender. Franchetti then qualified as a surface warfare officer and then, as she related "went to an oiler, because of another policy change that let women go to logistics ships at sea. And so you could start to see these doors opening up a little bit. And that inspired me to keep going and see what would happen next."[673] Franchetti wanted to command a warship, but there was no way for that to happen.[674]

In 1993, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin directed the repeals of sections 6015 and 8549 of 10 USC, which prevented women from serving on combat ships and on Air

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[673] Diana Stancy, "How repealing combat ship exclusion laws led Franchetti to become CNO" Navy Times, December 11, 2023, https://www.navytimes.com/news/ yournavy/2023/12 /11/how-repealing-combat-ship-exclusion-laws-led-franchetti-to-become-cno/

[674] Stancy, "How repealing combat ship."

Force combat missions and opened combat air MOS to women in all the services. The next year, the Department of Defense repealed the Direct Combat Probability Coding (DCPC) or risk rule, which opened about 32,000 Army MOS and 48,000 Marine MOS to servicewomen, although they were not allowed in direct combat roles.[675] In an interview with the *Navy Times*, Franchetti credited that change with opening "pathways to becoming an admiral one day, even to me becoming ... the chief of naval operations…. Without that change in the law, without the changes in policy that came after that, and then without changes in culture over time, none of that would have happened."[676]

While that repeal may have paved the way for Franchetti to serve as CNO, she credits Adm. Elmo Zumwalt for her career success. As CNO from 1970 to 1974, Admiral Zumalt worked to, in his own words, "modernize and humanize the Navy," which he believed should include women.[677] In 1972, he released Z-Gram 116, beginning a pilot program opening MOS to servicewomen on noncombatant ships. Z-Gram 116 also opened the Naval ROTC program to women. Without that change, Admiral Franchetti would never have joined the military. Zumalt's daughter said that "he had faith that the American people would see the wisdom of allowing women to serve."[678] According to Franchetti, "while Zumwalt could not have known precisely when policy, law and custom

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[675] Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, 360.

[676] Stancy, "How repealing combat ship."

[677] Adm. Lisa Franchetti, "How Adm. Elmo 'Bud' Zumwalt helped pave the way for women in the Navy," *Navy Times,* March 28, 2024, https://www.navytimes.com/ opinion/2024/ 03/28/how-adm-elmo-bud-zumwalt-helped-pave-the-way-for-women-in-the-navy/.

[678] Franchetti, "Adm. Elmo 'Bud' Zumwalt."

would lift the barriers to women's service had he not initiated that process, I and countless others would not be here today."[679] According to Vice Adm. Patricia Tracey, the first female three-star admiral, Zumalt's "great gift was the ability to go beyond disruptive vision to know how to lay the railroad tracks for change that would have to play out over time."[680] This dissertation explores the first twenty years of those changes, marked on one end by Z-Gram 116 and on the other by the repeal of section 6015 and 8549 of US Code 10.

In 1972, where this dissertation started, servicewomen were "lady soldiers." They belonged to auxiliary units, restricted from serving on ships and aircraft, and limited to only specific MOS. Through the 1970s, Congress passed legislation on behalf of military women in rapid succession. By 1980, servicewomen were integrated into the AVF, despite the pushback that change elicited in congressional hearings. During that decade, the military began to adopt the idea of equal opportunity, making weapons training mandatory for male and female recruits, starting mixed-gender basic training, and largely removing gender-based designations of roles, outside of combat at least. While exterior pressures and changing ideas of gender roles in civilian society certainly played a role, the impetus for a lot of these changes came from within the military. It was servicewomen who pushed for the changes they wanted.

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[679] Franchetti, "Adm. Elmo 'Bud' Zumwalt."

[680] Franchetti, "Adm. Elmo 'Bud' Zumwalt." Vice Admiral Tracey was promoted to vice admiral in 1996. "RAdm Patricia A. Tracey, U.S. Navy," *U.S. Department of Defense,* accessed June 1, 2024, https://www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Photos/igphoto /2001236906/.

In 1983, the integrated AVF was deployed to Grenada. In less than a decade, servicewomen also served in the Libyan campaign, and deployed to both Panama and the Persian Gulf. According to military policy, however, none of these women served in combat.[681] Servicewomen in all branches of the US military had deployed to combat zones with their units and many served with distinction, receiving decorations for valor. They had been fired upon and returned fire, regardless of their designation as noncombatant or combat-support, challenging ideas about what was and was not combat, both within the institutional military and the civilian world. By the end of Operation Desert Storm, more than 40,780 women, about 8 percent of all deployed servicemembers, served in theater in all but directly combat-related specialties. About 22 percent of servicewomen believed they filled combat roles, regardless of official policy. [682]

Despite the policies adopted by the military through the 1970s and 1980s to appeal to women, to keep the ranks full, and to adapt to the times, it still viewed women as "lady soldiers." In keeping women outside of the "combat" sphere, the military served to reinforce the difference between a servicewoman and a serviceman. Even after the first of the combat restrictions were lifted, the military reinforced the differences between servicemen and servicewomen, specifically with the arguments supporting combat exclusion legislation, especially the testimony of the service chiefs, and the ways in which sexual harassment and even assault had become ingrained in the military. And yet, servicewomen who served during the First Persian Gulf War, and even earlier, point

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[681] Holm, *Women in the Military,* 434.

[682] Strohmer, "Soldiers, Not Wac," 306.

towards the bonds they made with the men they served with. The families they created during deployment meant there was some measure of equality.

The bonds that existed between servicewomen and servicemen, were not only forged in wartime, of course. Lt. Col. Carol Ann Barkalow, who served in the Army for 22 years and deployed to the Persian Gulf in 1991, received her commission in 1980 as one of the first women to graduate from West Point. Of her first three years in the military, she told an interviewer: "I worked with a lot of good soldiers…. We bond with one another ... In the military…. We make sure that we bond, make friends, and work together. So, although it was tough those first 3 years, it was the people and the soldiers over there that made it, you know, something I could get through."[683] By the end of the Persian Gulf War, many servicewomen expressed similar sentiments. Lt. Paula Coughlin believed: "They were pilots … family."[684]

On January 16, 1991, President Bush gave a national address to Congress in which he used the phrase "comrades in arms" and not "brothers-in-arms." And yet, servicewomen could still not be fully equal to servicemen. Lieutenant Colonel Barkalow remembered:

> I switched my specialty from Air Defense Artillery, and the reason I switched that was, as a woman, when I would go up higher in the ranks, I wouldn't be able to serve in all the units that men could serve in. I realized at that point that, you know, if I want to be the best that I can, and go as far as I want, I needed to change what I'm doing, so I switched to Transportation Corps because in that specialty I wasn't prohibited from

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[683] Peg A. Lamphier, and Rosanne Welch eds., *Women in American History: A Social, Political, and Cultural Encyclopedia and Document Collection [4 Volumes]* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2017). accessed June 5, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central, 337.

[684] Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, 24.

> serving anywhere in the Army, so that gave me a better opportunity for a better career.[685]

In 1992, servicewomen were still finding themselves limited in that same way. S. Sgt. Laura Long, dispatcher with the 1st Tactical Fight Wing during Desert Storm, wanted to be a combat pilot and settled for less, because of the combat exclusion laws. Long handled her disappointment by adopting a philosophic view: "Sometimes you have to take what you can get."[686] In addition to the limitations created by combat exclusion laws, servicewomen had to weather congressional debates over that legislation. While servicewomen had more support than ever, both within Congress and among the wider public, they were also subjected to the same misogynistic rhetoric that had marked similar debates during the Vietnam War era. Tailhook, in some ways, exposed the primitive and brutal mindset that underlay such rhetoric. The fact that no servicemen faced charges in court shook some servicewomen's belief that the military would support them should they experience sexual misconduct. In this environment, servicewomen could never really be equal to their male comrades. While the advances of the last twenty years meant that servicewomen were no longer simply "lady soldiers," they also were therefore not quite "brothers-in-arms." Servicewomen instead somehow shared both identities, no matter how contradictory that might be.

When the Department of Defense repealed the risk rule and opened air and naval combat to women in 1994, servicewomen were not allowed to serve in units "whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground." Direct combat was defined

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[685] Lamphier and Welch, *Women in American History*, 337.

[686] Holm, *Women in the Military*, 485.

as “engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force's personnel. Direct ground combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect.”[687] Servicewomen were also excluded from submarines and some lower-class ships, as well as elite forces such as the Navy SEALs and Army Rangers.[688] Submarine positions were opened to female officers in 2010, but enlisted women were not able to serve on board. In 2015, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced that the Department of Defense would remove all combat restrictions within the year. By 2016, enlisted women served on submarine crews, while the first servicewomen attended infantry and armor. As of 2021, five women served in special operations units in the Air Force. Three servicewomen graduated from the Army’s Special Forces Qualification Course, earned their Green Beret, and were assigned to Special Forces units. In the Navy, two women served in special warfare combatant craft boat teams. While three servicewomen completed Ranger school in 2015 as a part of a pilot program, they could not join a Ranger unit. By March 2022, one hundred women graduated from Ranger

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[687] Elaine Donnelly, “Constructing the Co-Ed Military” *Duke Journal of Gender Law and Policy*, Vol 14(2) May 2007 Duke University, School of Law, 815 https://go-gale.com.libproxy.temple.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=temple_main&id=GALE|A166350018&v=2.1&it=r, 815.

[688] For more information, see Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women*, and Roth, *Her Cold War*.

School. To date, no servicewomen have successfully completed Navy SEAL training or Marine Raider training.[689]

In 2021, Maj. Gen. Francis Beaudette, Commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USASOC), directed an internal study on the hidden factors that kept servicewomen from applying to special operations schools, as well as what kept them from being accepted in special forces communities. They reported issues with harassment and assault, hostility from the spouses of the men in their units, and "benevolent sexism" on the behalf of their commanders and fellow servicemen. According to the study, servicewomen in USASOC units also "report that they're called out and excluded due to their status as parents; their perception as too stern or too friendly; and even their decision to wear yoga pants."[690]

Of the women who completed the survey, 30 percent reported issues with sexual harassment, with the female-only focus groups stating that the number was probably

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[689]Heather Mongolio, "Navy Names Submarine Force's First Female 'Chief of the Boat,'" *USNI News*, U.S. Naval Institute, September 5, 2022, https://news.usni.org/2022/08/31/navy-names-submarine-forces-first-female-chief-of-the-boat#:~:text=Submarines%20have%20been%20one%20of,2016%2C%20USNI%20News%20previously%20reported; Haley Britzky, "100 women have now graduated US Army Ranger School," *Task & Purpose*, March 11, 2022, https://taskandpurpose.com/news/100-women-army-ranger-school/; and Hope Hodge Seck, "Few women are trying for elite special operations roles, new data shows," *Military Times*, March 7, 2024, https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2024/03/08/few-women-are-trying-for-elite-special-operations-roles-new-data-shows/

[690] The study was overseen by an organizational psychiatrist included questionnaires filled out by 5,000 USASOC member, one thousand of which were women, 48 female only focus groups at 14 different bases, and 25 command team interviews. Nearly all the servicewomen in the study held support roles. Hope Hodge Seck, "Women in Army SOF sidelined by 'benevolent sexism,' study finds," *Army Times*, August 21, 2023, https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2023/08/21 /women-in-army-sof-sidelined-by-benevolent-sexism-study-finds/.

closer to 95 percent. They were more concerned, however, with how their roles and careers were limited by commanders and colleagues who desired to protect them. One NCO reported that, on her last deployment, the men in her unit decided it was "too risky" for servicewomen to go outside the wire, thus limiting their ability to contribute. Another servicewoman, who experienced a similar issue on deployment, expressed her frustration, stating "I had a she-wee, I can wipe my own ass, and I went to SERE [Survival, Evasion, Resistances and Escape] school where I slept right next to all the guys." One female junior NCO said that she was removed from a deployment roster and replaced with one of her male colleagues because she "wasn't tactically proficient enough for the mission." She told investigators that as pre-mission training had not started, her commander did not have the information necessary to make that call.[691]

Multiple servicewomen also reported that they had been left behind on missions, after servicemen made planning changes in their separate living quarters. The military often separates men and women's living quarters during training and deployment. The practice allows for privacy, but also prevents "spousal distrust." Female officers reported that the spousal jealousy meant that women were often excluded from social events, with one officer saying that the men she served with only referred to her by her last name to hide her gender. One company grade officer told investigators that while she was at a Hail and Farewell dinner, "two spouses approached me and told me not to talk or text [their] husband[s] outside of duty hours."[692] Jealousy therefore prevented camaraderie

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[691] A she-wee is a device that allows women to easily urinate while standing up. Seck, "Women in Army SOF sidelined."

[692] Seck, "Women in Army SOF sidelined."

between servicewomen and the men they served with. The study also said that "the decision to separately house female soldiers was often described as a leaders' attempt to maintain good order and discipline by avoiding perceptions of unprofessional relationships or infidelity" but "most women view it as career preservation for those leaders."[693] In this context, it is not surprising that many servicewomen in special forces also reported loneliness as an issue. While 69 percent of the women reported that they had mentors and felt comfortable asking both men and women for career advice, they also told investigators that they struggled making friends in their units.

Servicewomen even reported double standards when it came to clothing for physical training (PT). When they were allowed to wear civilian clothes, women in USASOC units were "called out" for wearing leggings, as they were too tight. Meanwhile, men often wore very short, tight bottoms, known as "Ranger's panties." According to the study, "Most women do not have a problem with ranger panties, they simply loathe the double standard." Servicewomen also reported that they "cannot have a bad day" because they constantly had to prove that they were competent. According to focus groups, "while male soldiers are believed to be capable until they prove otherwise, the opposite is true for women." Even their facial expressions were scrutinized, with one female NCO reporting that if she smiled she was "too friendly" but her neutral expression was openly referred to as "resting bitch face." She added, "men can be neutral, but I can't." The survey portion of the study also found some servicemen rejected the idea of women in special forces entirely, with multiple senior enlisted men stating that they

[693] Seck, "Women in Army SOF sidelined."

would rather retire than welcome servicewomen into their units. Others implied that women who wanted to join special forces units were only looking for sex or to find a husband. One commented that "the men that choose to lay down their lives and do missions that only great men can do are warriors … women like warriors… These are the facts."[694]

While the members of special operations units constituted only a small percentage of servicemembers, highlighting the double standards between men and women in those communities shows the ways in which servicewomen are still working to bridge the gap between the "lady soldier" and the "brother-in-arm." Lt. Col. Rachel Cepis said "I've always felt like I've been part of the team, but I understand that that's not everybody's experience. What I want and what I hope is that that becomes everybody's experience."[695] When that happens, servicewomen will truly be equal to the men they serve with.

[694] Seck, "Women in Army SOF sidelined."

[695] Seck, "Women in Army SOF sidelined."

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APPENDEX A

MILITARY RANKS

ARMY RANKS [696]

E-1	Private
E-2	Private 2
E-3	Private First Class
E-4	Specialist
E-4	Corporal
E-5	Sergeant
E-6	Staff Sergeant
E-7	Sergeant First Class
E-8	Master Sergeant
E-8	First Sergeant
E-9	Sergeant Major
E-9	Command Sergeant Major
E-9 (special)	Sergeant Major of the Army
W-1	Warrant Officer
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer 2
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer 3
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer 4
W-5	Chief Warrant Officer 5
O-1	Second Lieutenant
O-2	First Lieutenant
O-3	Captain
O-4	Major
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel
O-6	Colonel
O-7	Brigadier General
O-8	Major General
O-9	Lieutenant General
O-10	General
special	General of the Army

[696] "US Army Military Ranks," *Military Factory*, accessed December 14, 2012, http://www.militaryfactory.com/ ranks/army_ranks.asp.

AIR FORCE RANKS [697]

E-1	Airman Basic
E-2	Airman
E-3	Airman First Class
E-4	Senior Airman
E-5	Staff Sergeant
E-6	Technical Sergeant
E-7	Master Sergeant
E-8	Senior Master Sergeant
E-9	Chief Master Sergeant
E-9	Command Chief Master Sergeant
E-9 (special)	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force
O-1	Second Lieutenant
O-2	First Lieutenant
O-3	Captain
O-4	Major
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel
O-6	Colonel
O-7	Brigadier General
O-8	Major General
O-9	Lieutenant General
O-10	General Air Force Chief of Staff
special	General of the Air Force

[697] "US Army Military Ranks," *Military Factory*, accessed December 14, 2012, http://www.militaryfactory.com/ ranks/air_force_ranks.asp.

NAVAL RANKS [698]

E-1	Seaman Recruit
E-2	Seaman Apprentice
E-3	Seaman
E-4	Petty Officer Third Class
E-5	Petty Officer Second Class
E-6	Petty Officer First Class
E-7	Chief Petty Officer
E-8	Senior Chief Petty Officer
E-9	Master Chief Petty Officer
E-9	Fleet/Command Master Chief Petty Officer
E-9 (special)	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
W-1	Warrant Officer 1 (no longer in use)
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer 2
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer 3
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer 4
W-5	Chief Warrant Officer 5
O-1	Ensign
O-2	Lieutenant Junior Grade
O-3	Lieutenant
O-4	Lieutenant Commander
O-5	Commander
O-6	Captain
O-7	Rear Admiral (lower half)
O-8	Rear Admiral (upper half)
O-9	Vice Admiral
O-10	Admiral/Chief of Naval Operations
O-11 special	Fleet Admiral

[698] "US Navy Military Ranks," *Military Factory*, accessed December 14, 2012, http://www.militaryfactory.com/ ranks/navy _ranks.asp.

COAST GUARD RANKS [699]

E-1	Seaman Recruit
E-2	Seaman Apprentice
E-3	Seaman
E-4	Petty Officer Third Class
E-5	Petty Officer Second Class
E-6	Petty Officer First Class
E-7	Chief Petty Officer
E-8	Senior Chief Petty Officer
E-9	Master Chief Petty Officer
E-9	Fleet/Command Master Chief Petty Officer
E-9 (special)	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
W-1	Warrant Officer 1 (no longer in use)
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer 2
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer 3
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer 4
O-1	Ensign
O-2	Lieutenant Junior Grade
O-3	Lieutenant
O-4	Lieutenant Commander
O-5	Commander
O-6	Captain
O-7	Rear Admiral (lower half)
O-8	Rear Admiral (upper half)
O-9	Vice Admiral
O-10	Admiral/Commandant of the Coast Guard
O-11 special	Fleet Admiral

[699] "U.S. Military Rank Insignia," *U.S. Department of Defense*, https://www.defense.gov/Resources/Insignia/ accessed June 1, 2024.

MARINE CORPS RANKS [700]

E-1	Private
E-2	Private First Class
E-3	Lance Corporal
E-4	Corporal
E-5	Sergeant
E-6	Staff Sergeant
E-7	Gunnery Sergeant
E-8	Master Sergeant
E-8	First Sergeant
E-9	Master Gunnery Sergeant
E-9	Sergeant Major
E-9 (special)	Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps
W-1	Warrant Officer
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer 2
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer 3
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer 4
W-5	Chief Warrant Officer 5
O-1	Second Lieutenant
O-2	First Lieutenant
O-3	Captain
O-4	Major
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel
O-6	Colonel
O-7	Brigadier General
O-8	Major General
O-9	Lieutenant General
O-10	General/Commandant of the Marine Corps

[700] "U.S. Military Rank Insignia," *U.S. Department of Defense*, https://www.defense.gov/Resources/Insignia/ accessed June 1, 2024.