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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

## THESIS

**THE GLASS CEILING EFFECT AND ITS IMPACT ON  
MID-LEVEL FEMALE OFFICER CAREER PROGRESSION  
IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
AND AIR FORCE**

by

Adrienne Evertson  
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March 2004

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**THE GLASS CEILING EFFECT AND ITS IMPACT ON MID-LEVEL FEMALE  
MILITARY OFFICER CAREER PROGRESSION  
IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS AND AIR FORCE**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

Women in the military are considered a minority population. Recent numbers reflect a 16% representation by women in the total Armed Forces population, with the Air Force displaying the largest proportion (17%), while the Marine Corps has the smallest proportion (6%). Multiple Defense organizations have expressed concern about the progression of women officers into senior leadership positions and if they face barriers to their continued success in the military.

This thesis explores the officer career path experienced by women officers progressing through the ranks, primarily during the mid-level grades of Captain (O-3) through Lt Colonel (O-5). It specifically examines women in the United States Marine Corps and Air Force because these two branches of service currently maintain the smallest and largest proportion of women, respectively. The researchers examined the demographic composition of the individual service communities and conducted personal interviews with mid-level (O-3 to O-5) and senior (O-6 and above) officers to investigate any commonalities paralleling the military to the civilian sector. Specifically, this inquiry looks at the “glass ceiling” effect and any strong similarities or differences that may exist between the Marine Corps and the Air Force. Resulting information is expected to reveal a better understanding of military women’s career progression and factors that may exist in today’s Armed Services, which influence their decision to continue or separate from the military.



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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. BACKGROUND

Women are playing an increasingly important role in the United States military. Since 1948, the proportion of women serving has increased from less than one percent to approximately 16 percent of the total force population, with the Air Force displaying the largest proportion, 17 percent, while the Marine Corps has the smallest representation at six percent. Traditionally, women were limited to medical and administrative duties, but the positions open for women today have increased substantially, encompassing all occupational areas as categorized by the Department of Defense (DOD).

The performance of women in Operation Desert Storm, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq has demonstrated that women are capable and professional members of the military. In conjunction with this recognized credibility, it would be a reasonable expectation that more women would find themselves holding senior level positions. Although, statistical data show that only a small percentage of the overall female population in fact get promoted to these positions now, this new credibility should increase this percentage in time.

Even though the services have gone to great lengths to decrease barriers to women's career progression, they are increasingly concerned with women's movement into top leadership positions. This concern is mirrored in the civilian workforce and is commonly referred to as the "glass ceiling."

The question presented for the military then becomes, "Is there a 'glass ceiling?' If so, where is it and how is it similar to or different than the 'glass ceiling' in civilian organizations?"

## B. PURPOSE

This research explores officer career paths experienced by women as they progress through the ranks, primarily during the mid-level grades of Captain (O-3) through Lieutenant Colonel (O-5). It also examines changing demographics

(if any) for women in the Marine Corps and Air Force to provide additional insight. Resulting information is expected to reveal a better understanding of military women's career progression and factors that may exist in today's Armed Services which influence their decision to continue or separate from the military.

### **C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The primary research question to be addressed in this thesis is: ***What are the opportunities and barriers for advancement of women's careers in the United States Marine Corps and Air Force?***

Additional research questions in support of our overarching inquiry include:

1. What is the definition of the glass ceiling and how does it present itself in the civilian workforce?
2. How has legislation impacted the advancement to top-level positions for women?
3. What are the promotion rates for Marine Corps and Air Force female officers compared to male officers?
4. How do Marine Corps and Air Force female mid-level and senior-level officers view opportunities for advancement to senior ranks?

### **D. BENEFITS OF STUDY**

There are three major benefits of this study. The first benefit is providing an analysis of female military career paths identifying trends that may prevent or advance their promotion into senior pay grades. The second benefit is the identification of strategies that junior female officers use to address challenges that face them as they progress in their careers. The third major benefit is a published study that may be used to continue research or enhance ongoing research by Defense organizations such as Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service (DACOWITS), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Air Force Manpower and Innovation Agency (AFMIA), USMC Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) and others. The potential exists for extrapolation of data

to extend into all branches of service, revealing trends and possible generalities that the Department of Defense may use to mitigate the “glass ceiling” effect in the military.

## **E. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1. Scope**

This thesis focuses on mid-level female officers' career progression in the military. It specifically examines women in the United States Marine Corps and Air Force because these two branches of service currently maintain the smallest and largest proportion of women, respectively. It also primarily seeks the impact (if any) on those women in the ranks of Captain (O-3) to Lieutenant Colonel (O-5). We have chosen to look at these ranks in part because of the scarcity of women in more senior ranks and the current process of automatic promotion during the first two ranks of Lieutenant. Furthermore, the time in a female's life when family and career come in conflict often parallels the promotion periods between Captain through Lieutenant Colonel.

### **2. Methodology**

This thesis includes a thorough literature review of news articles, journals, web sites, government reports, congressional records, legislation and historical accounts concerning female military officership and the glass ceiling effect. We collected and analyzed the latest statistics and demographics of officers in the Marine Corps and the Air Force. This analysis presents statistical data on promotion rates of women into senior ranks as well as a comparison of officer promotion rates between women and men. Data used in the analysis was supplied from Department of Defense (DOD) Select Manpower Statistics, the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC), Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs (MR&A) and the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC).

Forty personal interviews, consisting of 18 female Marine Corps Officers and 22 female Air Force officers were then conducted. Each group was divided into mid-level (O-3 to O-5) and senior ranks (O-6 and above). For the purposes

of this thesis, officers achieving the rank of O-6 were chosen to represent women senior leaders. Sub-dividing the interviews, the total count of mid-level female officers was 31, 14 Marine Corps and 17 Air Force. The total count of senior level female officers was nine, four Marine Corps and five Air Force. Officer selection began with volunteers from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and former coworkers. From there, a network developed to make contact with more officers, especially those at the senior level. Diversification of the sample was considered, but not a critical priority due to project limitations of time, cost, and personnel availability. The officer demographics of our sample can be found in Appendix A, Interview Demographics and Protocol.

Before the interview process began, an interview protocol was submitted to each respondent and permission was obtained to conduct the interview. Interviews were recorded on audiocassette in conjunction with note-taking in private locations to encourage a relaxed atmosphere and elicit sincere and candid responses. Marine Corps interviews were conducted at NPS, Camp Pendleton, MCAS Miramar, and MCRD San Diego. Air Force interviews took place at NPS, Los Angeles Air Force Base (AFB), Wright-Patterson AFB, US Air Force Academy, and Ft. Meade. Interview questions were open-ended, allowing respondents to freely express their opinions on the topics asked. Separate protocols were used for mid-level and senior level officers to capture any similarities or differences between the groups. A copy of the protocols used can be found in Appendix A.

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed to identify the perceptions of the women interviewed. From these perceptions, themes were developed by service and grade level. We then compared and contrasted the themes across all levels to create a discussion concerning the career paths of women in the Marine Corps and Air Force.

## **F. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY**

This thesis is organized into eight chapters. Chapters II through IV include literature reviews on the glass ceiling and the evolution of women in the military. Chapter V is an empirical analysis of the current level of female representation in the military and underlying trends, primarily focused on mid-level females (O-3 to O-5). Chapter VI includes the recurring themes of Marine Corps and Air Force female mid-level and senior level officers obtained through personal interviews. Chapter VII uses the themes to compare the similarities and differences between the two branches of service as well as the mid-level and senior level officers. It also examines how the notion of the “glass ceiling” might apply to the military. Chapter VIII offers a summary, conclusion and suggestions for further research.



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## II. DEFINING THE GLASS CEILING

### A. OVERVIEW

“Female leaders say there has never been a better time to be a female” (Ziegler, 2003). As more women are encouraged to portray their own professional styles, they are no longer required to conform to formerly preferred models based upon their male co-workers. Even so, today’s more responsive, integrated work force still sends mixed signals in an uneasy period of adjustment toward a more female-integrated labor force.

Presently, women report encountering obstacles that restrict their potential to achieve fulfilling careers abounding with opportunities for growth and promotion to senior levels. But what are these obstacles? Struggles continue for women stretching in all directions, from a 70-hour workweek to marriage to childcare and more. The efforts of the first wave of the feminist movement in years past to empower women etched the first cracks in the glass, but where do we go from here? This chapter intends to explore the presence of these work-related barriers women confront, constructing the commonly referenced “glass ceiling” in an effort to better understand just where women in the workforce are headed.

First we define the term “glass ceiling” and identify the forms in which elusive, yet prominent roadblocks may exist. Leading with a discussion about their origination in the civilian workforce, we illustrate some of the obstacles associated with the glass ceiling. The chapter concludes with the consequences of the glass ceiling in the workplace. Our contention is that until the rewards of female labor surpass long-standing male dominance, the ladder of success will remain a struggle for women inhibited by contained limitations.

### B. DEFINING THE GLASS CEILING

A special report printed in the *Wall Street Journal* in 1986 coined a phrase that has yet to be shattered among the world of corporate women. The phrase

“glass ceiling” was introduced to depict a world where businesswomen in their attempt to access top positions were blocked by corporate tradition and prejudice (Jackson, 2001). Coming in the form of common institutional restrictions or societal and cultural perceptions, professional women were encountering barriers that limited their career progression horizons.

Five years later in 1991, as part of the Civil Rights Act, a Glass Ceiling Commission was appointed by the Executive branch and chaired by the Secretary of Labor. This 21-member group was established to discover blockages and broaden career possibilities and progression options for women and minorities (*The Glass Ceiling Commission*, 2003). To target these obstructions the commission members agreed a common definition would help them identify the barriers. They agreed the glass ceiling was molded from, “invisible, artificial barriers that prevent qualified individuals from advancing within their organization and reaching full potential” (2003).

Experts recognize that these barriers come in multiple forms, particularly prominent near key promotion junctures. Whether they are institutional or occupational, policies or practices, the ceilings manifest when women and other minority groups endure struggles to obtain equal access and opportunity. While rapid increases of female participation were not expected, women were expected to expand their roles across all career levels (Goldman, 1973). Goldman’s (1973) foresight described female entry as “a gradual increase in numbers and a slow but steady expansion...[with] equal pay for equal work...[an] institutional change oriented toward equality.” Current public and private sectors cannot deny the truth of this statement. The societal shift toward acceptance of females leading the workforce has evolved slowly. The movie “Mona Lisa Smile” presents this slowly changing shift and the main character, an art teacher at Wellesley (an all women’s college) during the 1950s, reaches out to her pupils, inviting them to do anything they want, to “Bake [their] cake and eat it too” (Goodman, 2004). However, one of the most promising students still remains unsettled by the world that is expanding before her and falls victim of the societal pressure to still choose marriage above the opportunity to attend law school.

Among the working population only 12.5 percent of corporate officers were female in 2001, as compared to the five percent in 1995. This small change of 7.5 percent exists despite numerous efforts reported by organizations to improve the advancement of women. Regarded as a marginal increase at best (Armstrong, 1995), it is in the form of under-utilization of women, beginning at lower-level management positions and extending upward. Women are unable to pursue higher goals when there is no room for upward progression as they are frequently placed in dead-end career tracks. Women are in positions of reduced visibility and their ideas “are frequently discounted or ignored, creating the ‘invisible-woman syndrome’” (Jackson, 2001). Their transparent presence in the workforce ironically supports the similar transparency that depicts the glass ceiling as an invisible barrier.

Barriers for women are not isolated to particular job levels. In most instances they are strengthened by the image of women being followers and not leaders in business. Jackson (2001) reports that women lack the opportunities to observe other women as role models in key corporate positions, thereby inhibiting their own mental stimulation of seeing themselves as capable and acceptable leaders. The business world could better see the problems opposing female careers by working to solidify the barriers that present the resilience of a glass ceiling. Once correctly identified, organizations could work to eradicate them from the workplace and be able to capitalize on the strength and support women contribute to the labor force.

### **C. BARRIERS CREATED BY THE GLASS CEILING**

Glass ceilings rest on intertwined pillars comprised of structural obstacles and behavioral differences that culminate into workforce disadvantages of career advancement. Structural obstacles include barriers defined by organizational practices and policies. Behavioral differences are reflected in corporate culture and societal traditions (Sonnert & Holton, 1996). Both of these forms were identified in a 1996 report conducted by Sonnert and Holton. In it they present two models, the Deficit and Difference Models, to better explain the barrier forms.

First, the Deficit Model describes the structural barriers that prevent women from advancing beyond a certain level. Second, the Difference Model relates the behavioral and cultural beliefs that reduce the female desire to achieve success. Embedded in both models are unfavorable corporate practices and cultures that develop into general group stereotypes and perceptions about the abilities and effectiveness of female employees.

The structural impediments suggested by the Deficit Model are usually the first to be recognized when identifying glass ceilings. This is primarily due to their tangible attributes that can be objectively collected and recorded as raw data. Examples of these types of barriers are smaller amounts of females in the training pipeline, women lacking years of experience on the job and their exclusion from special assignments that promote greater visibility and advancement. The simple solution is to put more women in the pipeline and let them advance through the ranks. This ideology satisfies the hands-off, supporter role many CEOs prefer so as to not jeopardize their powerful position, but it is not a sustainable solution (Ragins et al., 1998). While women are increasing their numbers in the labor force, it does not imply they successfully reach top leadership positions. Their ambition to advance is suppressed by inadequate exposure to career building blocks such as professional guidance, training, and experience (Redwood, 1996). As a result they become disenchanted with the vision to develop their senior leadership potential.

Beneath the outer structural layers of the glass ceiling are behavioral obstacles of the Difference Model. The model describes these obstacles as less than desirable conditions of career progression where women find they must work to prove their individuality to remove themselves from gender stereotypes and expectations. The visual front of corporate culture fosters the advancement of male careers via favoring the volume and experience of male workers over women. Problems then become two-fold as they struggle with adopting either a characteristic feminine or domineering masculine managerial style. Preconceived

notions of women “all being alike and that likeness being extremely different from the men” (Ragins et al., 1998), creates a challenging environment for women looking to advance their careers.

Successes of the few women who have risen above their male coworkers characterize their strategies as being adaptive and proactive; working long hours, capitalizing on performance expectations and devising a self-management style that doesn't conflict or threaten their coworkers (Ragins et al., 1998). Electing a more feminine manner poses the threat of seeming ineffective and non-authoritative. Oppositely, a woman exhibiting masculine behavior subjects herself to ridicule for not displaying enough femininity (Ragins et al., 1998). This double standard behavior has caused women to employ numerous career strategies to help overcome the invisible oppositions, but there is no clear line delineating the steps of these strategies. It becomes a case-by-case situation where women realize that recognition and advancement come when their work efforts exceed and outperform their male coworkers, while not driving up insecurities among their male counterparts.

#### **D. GLASS CEILINGS IN THE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE**

The civilian workforce is well aware of the existence of glass ceilings hindering a greater abundance of successful professional women. After all, it was the epitome of corporate America, *The Wall Street Journal*, which coined the phrase. The onset of the Glass Ceiling Commission in 1991 was a significant beginning to the potential for change in the career advancement of women. Commission research showed evidence “that a glass ceiling does exist and that it operates substantially to exclude...women from top level positions of management” (Jackson, 2001). While companies and CEOs agreed with the finding, acknowledging the existence of a glass ceiling, it was not enough to warrant significant action to change current corporate practices. They were not quick to respond to implementing the changes necessary to reduce these barriers, largely due to their lack of support for change to occur and inability to specifically identify them. Moreover, resistance is enhanced by the notion that

males feel threatened by the female presence. They perceive themselves to be losing – “losing competitive advantage, losing control, and losing opportunity” (Redwood, 1996).

To counteract the perceived loss, CEO opinions continue to remain in favor of playing the supporter role and letting the women play the initiator of change. Corporate reliance on this perception, allowing women to solve their own problems, seems to be the easiest solution causing the least amount of disruption to current operation flows. It simply is not part of the CEO’s job description to create change. Instead it is the job of the women to help themselves gain experience and career advancement. While CEOs remain in the background of female career guidance, their intent is largely on being a supporter, but not a teacher of how to succeed in the workforce (Ragins et al., 1998).

Visibility of this attitude quickly travels from senior down to lower management and can become commonly accepted performance and part of norms and office culture. Women recognize the unsupportive attitudes of their CEOs and coworkers as a red flag in their pursuit for career advancement. Civilian barriers range across corporate practices and culture. Working extended hours and working for less than equal pay of their male coworkers were frequent observations of working women. These negative practices coupled with a negative culture emitting discriminating behavior towards women becoming leaders reinforce the layers of the glass ceiling.

Female executive leadership opportunities are far from reaching saturation in the labor market. The initial women who have risen to the top have been rightly referred to as “trailblazers” and “pioneers”. Their initial experience and handling of resistance and obstacles set the tone for those who follow in their footsteps now. Their tireless efforts paved the way for junior women by showing the female workforce that career change and advancement is possible. Nevertheless, the lingering perceptions about reduced possibilities for

advancement continue to discourage the highly motivated females and increase the turnover of women who could potentially remain career-focused (Ragins et al., 1998).

#### **E. CONSEQUENCES OF GLASS CEILINGS**

We see that in the case of the US military the number of middle-management women in the work force is significantly less than the number of men. Whether removed from service by policy or voluntarily, “the small numbers of women promoted as percentages of total [personnel] promoted...signal the presence of glass ceilings” (Baldwin, 1996). These ceilings plague the ladder of success for female careers. More often than not, these obstacles present either insurmountable blockades to top positions or unwanted challenges that are perceived to hinder further advancements, ultimately resulting in significantly reduced female representation. The underlying problem is that organizations fail to recognize the consequences induced by the glass ceiling and fail to consider their repercussions over time (Armstrong, 1995).

Each encounter with a barrier affects the attitudes and decisions that shape a woman’s progression through the ranks. For the civilian workforce, this translates to the presence of women beyond the levels of middle management and for the military, above the middle grades of Captain (O-3) through Lieutenant Colonel (O-5). The reduced numbers of female leaders create a domino effect on the ambitions junior women develop in their careers. Finding themselves outnumbered in the workplace, women frequently have to struggle to become part of the informal network connections that lead to upper level management positions. Women attempt to be uniquely resourceful and compensate their lack of inclusion in the old boy’s club by participating in female networks. Or they must learn new skills, competencies, and hobbies to create associations with the men, such as golf (Jackson, 2001). Unfortunately, this only serves to further increase the level of discomfort and reduce productivity and motivation.



In the midst of external competition and internal challenges, organizations are missing the opportunity to fully use their assets. Recall invisible-woman syndrome previously mentioned. Created from the assignment to lower visibility projects, it also stifles a woman's journey to the top of the leadership ladder. Experts report that women repeatedly spend more hours working hard at work to dispel negative attitudes about their credibility as managers and prove they have the talent to reach the top (Ragins et al., 1998). Women feel an overwhelming pressure to perform harder than their male colleagues and perceive their actions to be more highly scrutinized. This becomes especially relevant when they are the first females to enter the position, believing themselves to be "seen as a test case for women in the future" (Jackson, 2001).

## **F. CONCLUSION**

The survival of women in long-standing work cultures that are dominated by male ideology depends on their willingness to confront barriers. These same behaviors may challenge multiple levels of their performance and skill sets as they pursue senior leadership positions. Characterized by realism and often misconceived perceptions, they seemingly hinder women with leadership abilities from climbing the ladder of success. It is not the battles on Capitol Hill or the lobbyists who ultimately make these opportunities possible for women. It is true that legislation, labor policies, and cultural perceptions are incrementally changing to reduce the gap between male and female employment, but there is still much to be done. The growing societal acceptance of women in the workforce certainly aids the inflow of career-seeking females and encourages them to take advantage of higher promotion opportunities. Restructured societal language and attitudes increase female motivation to succeed. The movement is strong as women begin to push through some of the emerging cracks in the ceiling. Ultimately, resigning the societal harness on historic gender-role patterns will be the tool enabling women to remove the stalwart glass ceiling looming above.

### **III. HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WOMEN WARRIOR**

#### **A. OVERVIEW**

Although there are many stories and myths about women serving in the military prior to World War I, women have only been an official part of the United States Military for just over 85 years. Women have slowly earned the right to serve as full-fledged members of the military, since World War I. Although women presently serve in every branch of the military and in a majority of the occupations, history has shown gaining acceptance in the military has been a continuous battle for women. The following chapter provides a historical look at the events that have shaped women's roles and the process of acceptance in the United States Military.

#### **B. WORLD WAR I**

Although women have joined the military for many of the same reasons that men join, their initial acceptance into the military was due to manpower shortages. In 1918 over 11,000 young women enlisted in the Reserves of the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard after the United States entered into World War I. This does not include the over 21,000 women already serving in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps, which at the time was not considered part of the active duty forces (Beckee & Chien, 2002).

High ranking officers in the military believing women were incapable of performing well in many occupations and professions resisted their entry into the military much like many male-dominated occupations in the civilian world such as law, university teaching, and medicine (Goldman, 1973). The slogan, "free a man to fight," was a justification for allowing women to enlist in the Navy and Marine Corps as noncombatants during World War I. Once the war was over, however, the need for women no longer existed and most people were happy to see the women leave the service, regardless of how well they performed. At a ceremony on the White House lawn toward the end of World War I, addressing

distinguished visitors, the Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, turned to the women Marines, smiled, and said: "As we embrace you in uniform today, we will embrace you without a uniform tomorrow" (Lawliss, 1988). This attitude would prevail for many more years to come. On July 30, 1919, separation orders were issued to all the women, except those in the Nurse Corps and by 1922, all women except the nurses were discharged and sent home (Holm, 1982). Ironically, although women were encouraged join the military during World War I they were still denied the right to vote.

In 1920, the Army Reorganization Act was signed with a provision to grant military nurses the status of officers with "relative rank" from second lieutenant to major. Until this time, nurses were not provided the same rights and privileges as male officers such as base pay equal to male officers in the same rank ("History & Collections", 2003). In 1925, the Naval Reserve Act of 1916 was changed so that eligibility to enlist was changed from "citizen" to "male citizen" (Holm, 1982). This ultimately prevented the Navy or Marine Corps from enlisting women in the future without Congressional approval.

### **C. WORLD WAR II**

As the United States entered World War II, a manpower crisis developed. As in World War I there were not enough men to serve in combat units. Even after the draft was established, the need for women in the Army became a necessity. In late 1941, the Army began supporting a bill already in Congress allowing for a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), but Congress was slow in moving the bill through the committee process. According to Brigadier General John Hilldring, who was responsible for pushing the bill through Congress, "In my time I have got some one- hundred bills through Congress, but this was more difficult than the rest of them combined" (Holm, 1982). Although the Senate quickly passed the bill, the House was less willing, and voiced considerable opposition fearing that women would be a humiliation to America's manhood (D'Amico, Francine & Weinstein, 1999).

Despite the opposition, in May of 1942 the bill was finally passed and women began joining the Army. They found, however, that their tour of duty was under different regulations than their male counterparts. Both officers and enlisted women were given appointments or grades comparable but not identical to those held by men in the Army. At first, WAACs received less pay than the males, but on November 1, 1942, when the auxiliary distinction was removed from the WAAC, they began to draw the same pay and allowances as members of the regular army (*Women Veterans*, 2003). Unfortunately, the women were not necessarily welcomed with open arms. A former WAC and Army Brigadier General described what it was like for the women during that time:

The temperature that first winter could not have been colder than the reception given women in the Army. Forced to accept us by an Act of Congress, the men had no choice but to grit their teeth...few smiled (Lewis, 1999).

In July of 1942, a similar bill authorizing women to enlist in the Naval Reserve was signed by the President, and the Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES) was established. This bill also established the Women's Marine Corps Reserve and the Coast Guard Reserve. The Marine Corps was the last of the four services to allow women to join. Then in February of 1943, the Marine Corps Women's Reserve began enlisting women. By March of the same year the Army, Navy and Marine Corps as well as the Coast Guard were enlisting women in the Reserves. As more and more women enlisted, the number of men available to fill combat units increased as well.

During World War II, over 270,000 women, (21 percent of the total force) answered the call to join the military, including over 85,000 officers and 185,000 enlisted personnel ("Selected Manpower", 1997). Unlike the women who served in World War I, these women were assigned in over 200 military occupational specialties. This included, but was not limited to, clerical work, motor transport, parachute riggers, air traffic control, welders, and mapmakers. In The Marine Book, Lawliss (1988) describes how the Marine Corps decided which occupational specialties were opened to women. This was done by assigning each occupation one of four classifications:

Class I. Jobs in which women are better, more efficient than men. An example would be clerical.

Class II. Jobs in which women are as good as men, and could replace men on a one-to-one basis. Examples would be some clerical jobs like accounting or jobs that required a high degree of finger dexterity.

Class III. Jobs in which women are not as good as men, but can be used effectively when need is great, such as wartime. An example would be motor transport.

Class IV. Jobs in which women cannot or should not be used at all. This covered any job demanding unusual physical strength.

By June 1944, women were serving throughout the United States and overseas. By the end of the war, with over 260,000 women serving in the military, many still doubted the need for women in the armed services; that notwithstanding, the advantages to keeping women around were noticed. For example, Marine Corps Commandant, General Holcomb was hesitant to enlist women in 1942. Nevertheless, he later declared: "There's hardly any work at our Marine Stations that women can't do as well as men. Some work they do far better than men. What is more, they're real Marines" (Lawliss, 1988). Another testament to the high level of proficiency displayed by the service women came from General Dwight Eisenhower, who told Congress after the war that he was "violently against" the proposal to create women's units when first proposed. Then Eisenhower added, "During the time that I have had women under my command, they have met every task assigned them. Their contribution in efficiency, skill, spirit and determination are immeasurable" (Rustad, 1982). Eisenhower went on to fight for a permanent place for women in the US Armed Forces.

By the end of the war, women were now considered able members in the military, yet the wartime measures that brought them into the service were only designed to mobilize effective manpower and represented a mere symbolic device to include them in the national war effort (Goldman, 1973). This was exemplified by the fact that following the surrender of Japan, the women's

reserve began to demobilize. For many women who served throughout the war their service was more than symbolic as amplified by a former WAC named Beatrice Hood Staroup, when she described why she joined the WACs. “It wasn’t just my brother’s country, or my husband’s country, it was my country as well. And so this war wasn’t just their war, it was my war, and I needed to serve in it” (Lewis, 1999).

#### **D. POST WORLD WAR II AND KOREA**

After World War II, demobilization of both men and women began to overwhelm the services due to a lack of personnel needed to process all these service members. Both the Army and the Navy decided to retain some women beyond the established demobilization date to resolve this dilemma. When this occurred, the question of keeping women in the military as active duty members during both peacetime as well as during wartime, began to surface. In 1947, hearings began on a bill called the Women's Armed Services Integration Act. These hearings generated heavy debate in and out of the military. Marine Corps Brigadier General Gerald C. Thomas, Director of Plans and Policies, stated that:

The American tradition is that a women’s place is in the home... women do not take kindly to military regimentation. During the war, they have accepted the regulations imposed on them, but here after the problem of enforcing discipline alone would be a headache (Holm, 1982).

As the hearings continued, there was considerable skepticism about the validity of having women in the peacetime military establishment. Both men and women, in and out of the service, questioned whether or not women were suitable for military service on a full time basis. Allowing women to serve during a crisis was one thing, allowing them to serve in peacetime was another thing all together. Some feared women might become more masculine performing and working in a male environment, thus damaging American culture (Simon, 1998). A former WAC and retired Army Colonel recalled, “A prime objection, which we were told was discussed in closed session, was that if women were in the regular military, men would have to take orders from a women” (Borlick,

1998). At the conclusion of the hearings, the committee found that the services would need to do a better job of protecting the well being of the women service members.

Employers in the civilian work force had recognized and accommodated the needs of both sexes in setting up work standards. The policies, rules and accommodations in the armed forces had, up until this point in time, been set up for men only. As a result, the services tended to look at any modifications as favoritism or special privilege. Because the number of women in the service had been a small proportion of the total force and because women were only permitted to serve in the reserves during time of major conflict, the women were almost without exception expected to make the entire adjustment to men's standards of dress, privacy, cleanliness, and recreation (Holm,1982). The committee felt that if women were to be allowed to join the service during peacetime, some of these standards would need to change.

While debate continued on the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, President Harry S. Truman approved the National Security Act of 1947 establishing the Department of Defense, as well as creating the Department of the Air Force. Although a new organization, the Air Force, like the Marine Corps, had many people with strong opinions about women serving permanently in the Armed Forces. Despite the Air Force's reputation for being the most modern and forward-looking of the services, its male leadership persisted in viewing women in stereotypical ways. In the late 1940s the Air Force could obtain all the high-quality men it needed from the ranks of those eager to avoid being drafted into the Army so the need for women was minimal except in time of war when manpower shortages existed (Holm, 1982). As in World War I with the Navy and the Marine Corps as well as in World War II with the Army, the Air Force only needed women to ensure they would have enough men to fill combat-related positions.

Finally, Congress passed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act on June 12, 1948. Even though the Act mandated that women become a permanent

part of the military, women like Retired Navy Captain Winifred Quick Collins who began her career in 1942, felt that the Integration Act was in a sense an emancipation, but one with limitations (Borlick, 1998). For instance, women could make up no more than two percent of the total enlisted ranks, and the proportion of women officers could be no more than ten percent of the enlisted women. Women were forbidden to serve in command positions and could not hold permanent rank above Lieutenant Colonel. In addition, although on active duty, women were not integrated into the regular service organizations, but kept part of separate women's organizations, the Army WACs, Navy WAVES, Air Force WAFs and Women Marines and Coast Guard Spars (Beckee & Chien, 2002). Women were strictly forbidden from serving aboard ships or aircraft that engaged in any type of combat mission (Jessup & Ketz, 1994). These limitations would continue until 1967. It is interesting to note that nurses were not included in the two percent limitations because they were considered in a different category than other women serving.

As the United States entered the Korean War, servicewomen who had joined the Reserves following World War II were activated and recalled to active duty (History & Collections, 2003). Requests for women with different skills began to overwhelm the Pentagon, but due to the fluid nature of combat in Korea, the service refused to assign women other than nurses to combat zones (Holm, 1982). WACs and WAFs did serve in supporting billets in Japan and the Philippines, and along with the WAVES, SPARS and Women Marines, replaced men throughout the United States freeing them to serve in combat units in Korea.

By the end of the Korean War, over 45,000 women were on active duty, with about a third of them in some type of medical-related field. Ten percent of the Army Nurses would eventually serve in Korea, many assigned close to the front lines in Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals. The number of women serving during the Korean War never rose above the two percent ceiling required by the



Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948, even though Congress had temporarily removed that requirement. By 1955 the number of women on active duty dropped from a peak of 48,900 to 35,000.

#### **E. VIETNAM**

Over the next ten years, the number of women in the military would remain around 31,000, or about one percent of the total military population. One of the main reasons why the services failed to recruit enough women to meet the two percent ceiling, was simply that they were perfectly comfortable with the peacetime draft of men, which they thought would go on forever. As women were not needed to free a man to serve in combat units, the service saw them as nothing but a token force (Mitchell, 1989). This notion was further demonstrated when Morris Janowitz wrote The Professional Soldier in 1960. Janowitz, for the most part, excluded women because in his opinion their role was minor and lacked an impact on the organizational climate of the profession (Goldman, 1973).

As the United States headed in to the Vietnam War, many considered the role of women in the military at a dead end. Progress was almost at a stand still. The goal for recruiting women was quality over quantity even if it meant that men were drafted to do jobs that women could do. Because the women's programs and units were seen more as a ladies auxiliary and less like a serious personnel resource, physical beauty became the priority and, at one point, the Air Force even required pictures of all potential enlistees so that a "beauty contest" could be held to assist the recruiters in determining who to enlist (Holm, 1982). Women received training in applying make-up and hairstyles and were no longer required to do any type of field training. WAF recruits were told how to apply lipstick correctly and Women Marines were told their lipstick and nail polish had to match the scarlet braid on their uniform hats (History & Collections, 2003). Even the nurses who were serving in Vietnam were expected to maintain a respectable and "lady-like" appearance. The WAC director amplified this in 1967 in a letter to a senior WAC officer stationed in Vietnam which stated:

I am aware that conditions are bad and it must be difficult to maintain a neat and feminine appearance... I do not want anything to spoil their image as women. The matter of proper dress is very important to me (Mitchell, 1989).

The country relied on the Selective Service System to draft sufficient numbers of young men, but the armed services maintained that women volunteers needed to be smarter and more qualified than these men to perform the jobs open to them. Moreover, women needed to be feminine. Military recruiting brochures targeting women promised challenging jobs with unlimited opportunities. But, in fact, most of the challenging jobs were closed to women, and those already trained and experienced in technical skills such as engine repair, equipment maintenance, intelligence, weather, and radio operations were retrained for jobs the military considered women's work (History & Collections, 2003). Women were no longer being allowed to serve in the more challenging and responsible positions once offered to them, and as their role became increasingly trivialized so did their motivation to serve. At this point the peacetime military had no room for women. This would change with time.

In 1967, after years of debate within the military and pressure from various military advisory groups, Congress voted to allow women's promotions to higher service grades, including general and admiral, and removed the two percent ceiling on women's military strength. Unfortunately, few women felt any immediate effects of the legislation. Women were still promoted under a different system, had to resign or were discharged if they became pregnant, and did not receive the same benefits for their dependents as the men did. Despite advocating the bill, the Armed Services Committee of the United States House of Representatives stated:

There cannot be complete equality between men and women in the matter of military careers. The stern demands of combat, sea duty, and other types of assignments directly related to combat are not placed upon women in our society. The Defense Department assured the committee that there would be no attempt to remove restrictions on the kind of military duties women will be expected to perform. ...It is recognized that a male officer in arriving at the point where he may be considered for general and flag rank passes

through a crucible to which the woman officer is not subjected—such as combat, long tours at sea, and other dangers and isolations (History & Collections, 2003).

In many respects, this statement still applies today. Women, often left out of many of combat arms occupations, never have the opportunity to participate in that crucible, which, in the eyes of many, is essential to becoming a senior officer.

## **F. THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE**

The next two decades saw slow but steady progress as compared with the previous two decades. In 1972, women were permitted to enroll in ROTC, and in 1976, the service academies were opened to women as well. In 1975 women were no longer automatically discharged if they became pregnant, and by 1978 women in the Army were finally integrated into the regular Army with the abolishment of the WACs. More importantly though the draft was abolished in 1973 and the United States Military truly became an All-Volunteer Force. With the draft gone, the potential for manpower shortages increased and so did the opportunities and the necessity for women. In anticipation of a shortage of male recruits once the All-Volunteer Force began to form, a task force was established to implement contingency plans for increasing the number of women in the service to offset the possible decrease in male volunteers (Bowman, Little & Sicilin, 1986). Because many occupations, specifically those related to ground combat, could only be filled by men, the services found themselves in need of more women. Although it was peacetime, women were once again needed to free up more men to fill combat units.

Even with all of the changes to increase opportunities and the utilization of service women this process was not a smooth one. Behind each door that opened lay hours of discussion, study and disagreement among lawmakers and military leaders about the value and effectiveness of women to accomplish the mission of the armed forces. The Brookings Institution in 1976 issued a report stating:

The tradeoff in today's recruiting market is between a high quality female and a low quality male. The average woman available to be recruited is smaller, weighs less, and is physically weaker than the vast majority of male recruits. She is also much brighter, better educated (a high school graduate), scores much higher on the aptitude tests and is much less likely to become a disciplinary problem (History & Collections, 2003).

This identifies the continued conflict of today's more modern and technological military. While women are not physically as strong as men, with the advances in technology, physical strength is not necessarily the main requirement to being a good soldier, sailor, airmen, or Marine.

By 1980 as the first women were graduating from the service academies, over 171,000 women were serving in the military ("Selected Manpower", 1997). This represented over eight percent of the total force. Women were now serving on non-combatant surface ships, flying non-combatant airplanes, and more importantly were receiving benefits and pay equal to that given to men.

The 1980s saw many "firsts" for women in the military, including the first female jet test pilot, the first female Brigade Commander at West Point, and the first female Marine embassy guards. Women entered potential combat zones while assigned to aircrews when the United States sent forces to rescue American students in Grenada in 1983. This was a clear violation of the Combat Exclusion Policy, but could not be avoided due to the potential reduction of effectiveness of the participating units if the women were removed from their positions (Jessup & Ketz, 1994).

As it became more apparent that women might be moving closer and closer to combat zones, the Department of Defense (DOD) Task Force on Women enacted a new policy on women. This policy, known as a Risk Rule, barred women from areas on the battlefield where the risk of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture was considered equal to or greater than that experienced by associated combat units in the same theater of operations

(Harrell, 2002). This Risk Rule should have prevented women from serving in any type of unit that might come under hostile fire, but in reality it did not.

Almost seven years later, in 1989, close to 800 women were deployed to Panama in Operation Just Cause with several participating in combat-related operations (Addid, Russio & Sabesta, 1994). Women pilots, military police, and truck drivers all came under direct fire, thus violating the combat-exclusion policy and the Risk Rule (Jessup & Ketz, 1994). These two incidents would foretell what was to come in the next decade.

### **G. DESERT STORM TO IRAQ**

In 1990, over 40,000 women were deployed to the Persian Gulf for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Women, although still not assigned to direct combat positions, often found themselves in combat-related missions, some flying aircraft, driving trucks, and providing logistic and medical support. During Desert Storm, 13 women were among those killed (Binkin, 1993). Once again, the Combat Exclusion Policy had been violated. Desert Storm proved that servicewomen could not be kept safe simply by classifying some jobs as non-combat positions and assigning women to those jobs.

Because of Desert Storm, the debate about the role women play in the military and the combat exclusion rule surfaced once more. The result of this debate was the passing of the Defense Authorization Act of 1992, repealing the combat exclusion law and lifting the ban on assigning women to combat aircraft. It took almost two years for the services to implement this policy, and only after the Secretary of Defense directed the services to comply (“Congress and the Nation”, 1998). The Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, in 1993 directed the services to permit women the opportunity to compete for assignments in combat aircraft. Additionally, he directed the Navy to assign as many women as possible to ships as was permitted by current statutes. Finally, the Army and Marine Corps were directed to conduct further studies on integrating women more fully into their services, looking specifically at identifying billets above the brigade level, as those were not considered direct combat units forces (Beckeet, & Chien,

2002). Less than a year after Secretary Aspin had sent out his directive, the Defense Authorization Act of 1994, which lifted the ban on the assignment of women to combat ships, was passed (General Accounting Office, 1997). In addition to removing the exclusion rule that prevented women from serving aboard combat ships, the Defense Authorization Act of 1994 also established important guidelines for the integration of women into previously male-only occupations. The Secretary of Defense directed the DOD to remove the Risk Rule requiring the services to assign women to all units except those below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in combat forces (Congress and the Nation, 1998). Additionally, the Act required that the Secretary of Defense:

Ensure that qualification for and continuance in occupational career fields is evaluated based on common, relevant performance standard and not based on gender;

Refrain from the use of gender quotas, goals, or ceilings, except as specifically authorized by Congress; and

Refrain from changing occupational standards simply to increase or decrease the number of women in an occupational career field (Beckee, & Chien, 2002).

These two policy changes opened up over 150,000 new positions for women in the military. Women were now allowed to fly combat aircraft, serve aboard combat ships, as well as serve in all billets and units except those engaged in direct ground combat, such as infantry and artillery battalions. As of 2003, servicewomen are still restricted from serving in the following positions:

**Army:** Infantry, armor, Special Forces, combat engineer companies, ground surveillance, radar platoons, and air defense artillery batteries.

**Air Force:** Pararescue, combat controllers and those units and positions that routinely collocate with direct ground combat units.

**Navy:** Submarines, coastal patrol boats, mine warfare ships, SEAL (special forces) units, joint communications units that collocate with SEAL's, and support positions (such as medical, chaplain, etc.) collocated with Marine Corps units that are closed to women.

**Marine Corps:** Infantry regiments and below, artillery battalions and below, all armored units, combat engineer battalions,

reconnaissance units, riverine assault craft units, low altitude air defense units, and fleet anti-terrorism security teams (History & Collections, 2003).

Opening over 150,000 new occupations to women in the military is a substantial accomplishment. Unfortunately, the services also put up roadblocks that still prevented women from entering many of these occupational fields. For example some of these new occupations had limited assignments for women, which made it unlikely that they would be able to progress in their assigned occupations. For instance women in certain occupations can only serve in noncombatant units even though there are billets that correspond with their occupations in both combatant and noncombatant units. In the Army, for example, over half the assignments in the Field Artillery Surveyor occupation are closed to women because these billets are in the units that engage in combat (Harrell, 2002). This occurs in the Marine Corps as well. Women engineers can only serve in Engineer Support Battalions. Men, however, in that same occupation can serve on both the Engineer Support Battalion and the Combat Engineer Battalion. This policy may reduce the number of billets women can hold, thus closing certain avenues that may help with selection to command and promotion.

The issue of limited assignment is central to substantiate the perception that women are still only permitted to serve to free up men to serve in combat units. Even when trained in the same occupations, women are in many cases denied the opportunity to serve in these billets because it is considered a combat billet, a billet only a man can fill. This is an institutional restriction, but a restriction nonetheless, and one that denies women not only billets they can hold, but ultimately it reduces career opportunities (Baldwin, 1996).

## **H. CONCLUSION**

Since the end of World War I, women have continued to enter and serve in the Armed Forces. At each passing decade, through legislation, increased opportunities and occupations, and changes in both military and civilian attitudes, the number of women has continued to grow. The number of women in the

active duty military rose to over 212,000 by the end of 2002. This accounts for 16 percent of the total military force (“Selected Manpower”, 1997). Compared with the women who joined the Navy and Marine Corps in 1918, women have made tremendous advances. With the increase in occupations and opportunities for women, 16 percent of the force does not seem like a significant number, especially if women make up close to 51 percent of the general population (United States Census Bureau, 2003).

Although women have been serving in the United States military for less than 85 years, their history would indicate that they will continue to serve for the next 85 years. How many will serve and to what extent is yet to be determined. Although opportunities to climb the ladder of success and acceptance continue to propel women forward, these opportunities as history has shown, are still often limited by both institutional and cultural restrictions.



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## **IV. LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

The integration of women into the military has historically been forced upon the military establishment. In the 85 years that women have been an official part of the United States Military, they have withstood powerful resistance to gradually gain acceptance. This acceptance has not always been the result of a major shift in societal attitudes. Rather, it is largely due to legislative policy and executive mandates. Since 1918 when the first women were allowed to enlist in the Reserves of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, several key legislative bills have been passed. This legislation has enabled women to not only serve in times of peace and times of crisis, but has also served to literally open numerous doors for women. Not only have these doors led to equal pay and benefits for women service members, but they have removed barriers to promotion, command, and in many cases occupational specialties.

Numerous pieces of legislation and policy have influenced and promoted the integration and advancement of women in the military. This chapter will examine several of the more prominent pieces of legislation and policies that have been enacted and what their impact has been on the integration of women in the military. Table 1 provides, in chronological order, a list of the legislation and policies discussed in this chapter.

YEAR	EVENT	Public Law Number
1948	Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948	PL 80-625
1951	Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service (DACOWITS)	NA
1967	Removal of Career Restrictions for Women Officers	PL 90-130
1973	Draft Ends and All Volunteer Force is Created	NA
1976	Women Permitted to Enter Service Academies	PL 94-106
1980	Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA)	PL 96-513
1988	Risk Rule Created	NA
1991	Defense Authorization Act of 1992	PL 102-25
1993	Defense Authorization Act of 1994	PL 103-160
1995-6	Defense Authorization Act of 1996-7	PL 104-106/201
2001	Defense Authorization Act of 2002	PL 107-107

Table 1. Significant Legislation Impacting the Integration of Women in the Military

**B. THE 1940S: WOMEN'S ARMED SERVICE INTEGRATION ACT OF 1948; PUBIC LAW (PL) 80-625**

After World War II the United States continued to decrease the number of personnel in the military. The idea of maintaining a peacetime draft as well as allowing women to enlist into the regular Army began to surface. This occurred because many legislators and military leaders worried that a rapid mobilization of forces would not be fast enough if another conflict occurred (D'Amico & Weinstein, 1999). If the draft continued and women were allowed to enter into the military even during peacetime, the need to mobilize a large number of troops would be considerably minimized. What the military leaders wanted was a small force of women in each of the separate branches which could serve as the basis for the expansion of additional women in the event of another national emergency (Devilbiss, 1990).

The Army and the Navy were the first to submit bills promoting the issue of female integration into the armed forces. In 1947 the Department of Defense

(DOD) was created when the Armed Forces Unification Act was passed. As part of this Act the United States Air Force were also created. Once this occurred each of the service's separate bills concerning women in the armed forces were consolidated into Senate Bill 1641. Now as a combined DOD bill it had little trouble passing in the Senate, but experienced quite a bit of debate in the House. The major area of debate centered on women in combat. There was no disputing that women would be strictly prohibited from any type of occupation that might involve combat. The debate focused on the wording of the document so it ensured women would never be placed in combat. Senate Bill 1641 survived intense deliberation and finally passed through the House, becoming Public Law (PL) 80-625 with the signature of President Truman on June 12, 1948.

Titled the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948, it gave permanent status to women in the military, opening the door for dedicated women to serve their country in peacetime. Although this was the first official step of integrating women into the military, there were a considerable number of restrictions limiting their advancement. Beyond the encouraging sound of "permanent status in all the armed forces," the remaining language of the legislation proved to be a long list of restrictions that in all actuality hindered the integration of women (Women in the Military, 2003). Provisions of the Act created the perception of female integration. However, the barriers as listed below tell a different story:

- Women can constitute no more than two percent of the total force. The number of women officers can total no more than ten percent of the two percent.
- Promotion of women officers is capped above pay-grade O-3 (Captain/Lieutenant). Pay-grade O-5 (Lieutenant Colonel/Commander) is the highest permanent rank women can obtain.
- Women serving as directors of WACs, WAVES, WAFs and Women Marines are temporarily promoted to pay-grade O-6 (Colonel/Captain).
- Women are *barred* from serving aboard Navy vessels (except hospital ships and certain transports) and from duty in combat aircraft engaged in combat missions.

- Women are eligible to enlist at age 18, but must have parental approval if under the age of 21.
- Denied women spousal benefits for their husbands unless the service women can prove she provided over 50 percent of the family income.
- By policy, women are *precluded from having command* authority over men (Women in the Military, 2003).

The passing of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 was a double-edged sword. The nature of the law was visionary, marking a milestone in the history of women in the military. Nevertheless, it was also discriminatory because it did little to help integrate and advance women into the peacetime military. The two percent ceiling kept the numbers of women that could join very small. More detrimental than the cap on the total number of women was the cap on promotions for the female officers. The possibility of career progression for women officers was minimal at best and even if they managed to get promoted the number of billets available to them was even less. There was only one O-6 billet in each of the four branches (Colonel in the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps and Captain in the Navy) so only one women at a time could hold an O-6 billet. Additionally the O-6 billet was only temporary and once the women finished her tour in that billet she had to retire or revert back to the next lower rank of O-5, Lieutenant Colonel or Commander. For the most part, women officers could only aspire to reach O-5, but even that was limited as there was a ten percent restriction on the number of O-5s each of the branches could have. Even the women who were successfully promoted to the O-5 and O-6 level were often not included in any type of policy or decision-making including those involving decisions about women (Holm, 1982).

The most discriminatory part of the law was the way it treated the husbands and dependants of the women service members. This was an era when men were expected to be the breadwinners in the house, not the women. This attitude was firmly ingrained in the American and military culture of the late 1940s and would remain so for many years to come. To make matters worse, in just a few years (1951), legal policy dictated that women were not allowed to

enlist if they had children, became pregnant, or adopted children. Additionally if a woman married a man who had children or had a child living in her home for more than 30 days she was automatically discharged (D'Amico & Weinstein, 1999). The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 authorized the enlistment of women into the regular Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force, but in terms of actually being integrated in the service, there was still a long way to go.

### **C. THE 1950S: THE DEFENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE SERVICE (DACOWITS)**

Although women were now permitted to enlist as permanent members in the armed forces, women did not flock to the recruiting offices. Regardless of the imposed two percent ceiling, the total number of women in the service at the start of the Korean War barely reached one percent. Women were not interested in joining, and the restrictions placed on them upon entering only served to dissuade other women from joining. Attempting to recruit more female enlistees in anticipation of manpower shortages due to the Korean War, the Secretary of Defense created a committee of prominent civilian women in 1951, known as the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS). At conception, its main function was to advise the Secretary of Defense on recruitment and retention of women in the military. Within the committee, five separate working groups were formed: Training and Education; Housing and Welfare; Utilization and Career Planning; Health and Nutrition; and Recruiting and Public Information. One of the committee's first objectives was to help put together a publicity campaign, calling women to arms (Mitchell, 1989). This effort was unsuccessful in terms of recruiting more women in the early 1950s. As the years passed DACOWITS, however, proved to be an effective organization, serving as adviser to the Secretary of Defense on issues supporting women in the military.

Beyond the advisory role DACOWITS also became an important player in policy and decision-making. Annual trips to military bases and stations

throughout the United States and globally has made them strong and recognizable advocates for women in the service regardless of rank or branch. Although DACOWITS may have had minimal impact on military women when it was first formed, over the years the committee has proven to be an asset in helping women gain acceptance in the military. DACOWITS committees have led the way in recommending several key policy changes including opening more occupations to women, as well as opening the service academies. (D'Amico & Weinstein, 1999). Probably one of the most important issues that DACOWITS pressed for was to “repeal the glass ceiling that limited the number of women in the services” (Breuer, 1997).

#### **D. THE 1960S: REMOVAL OF CAREER RESTRICTIONS FOR WOMEN OFFICERS; PL 90-130**

The sixties saw an increased entry of women into the civilian labor force. At the same time, as public opposition to the draft continued to grow, the Vietnam War was requiring more and more manpower. The surging wartime demands stimulated the DOD to reassess the role women played in the military. Another committee was formed to look at increasing the number of women or replacing them with civilians as their current numbers barely exceeded one percent. In 1967 the President's Commission on the Selective Service recommended that opportunities should be made available for more women to serve in the Armed Forces, thus reducing the number of men who must be involuntarily called to duty (Devilbiss, 1990). After some debate and due to the support of politicians, senior military leaders and especially members of DACOWITS, it was decided that women should not only remain in the military, but be given expanded roles. Senior military officers, both male and female, congressional, cabinet and DACOWITS members looked on as President Johnson signed PL 90-130, November 8, 1967. From 1948 to 1967 there had been no real legislation or policy enacted that affected career progression of women in the military. This new law essentially repealed several of the restrictions in the Integration Act of 1948. Most notably it opened promotions for women to general and flag ranks,

lifted the ceilings on the other ranks, and removed the two percent cap on the total number of women allowed on active duty. In signing, President Johnson stated, “There is no reason why we should not one day have a female chief of staff—or even a female commander in chief” (Breuer, 1997).

#### **E. THE 1970S: DRAFT ENDS AND ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE IS CREATED**

After PL 90-130 was signed, several other significant policies were adopted which changed career opportunities for women in the military. By 1972 each of the services had opened Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) to women, and they became eligible to attend the War Colleges. The Air Force allowed women to request waivers to remain in the service if they became pregnant, and the United States Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for the services to deny dependents benefits based on the gender of the military member. Women finally received the same benefits as the men. In addition to the policy changes came one of the most significant changes for the military. In 1973 the draft ended, and the United States began its All-Volunteer Force for both men and women.

With the end of the draft quickly approaching, the Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, worried that there would be a considerable shortage in manpower, so in late 1971 he created the Central All-Volunteer Task Force. This task force was chartered with studying the possibility of recruiting more women to help alleviate some of the projected shortage. In 1972 a sub-committee was formed in the House of Representatives to address military manpower utilization. In June of 1972 this committee published its findings. Concerning the status of women, the committee reported:

We are concerned that the Department of Defense and each military service 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 force, women could and should play a more important role. We strongly urge the Secretary of Defense and the secretaries to



develop a program which will permit women to take their rightful place in serving in our Armed Forces (Holm, 1982).

Based on the recommendations from the task force and the house subcommittee over 80 percent of all occupations were opened to women and as a result, the proportion of women in the military began to increase (Bowman, Little, & Sicilia, 1986). The services were essentially ordered to increase the number of women they recruited. During this time Secretary Laird, according to one congressman:

Brought military leaders kicking and screaming into the twentieth century by giving the services two deadlines: ten months to have a female general and flag officers and twenty months to create a viable program for bringing women into Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs and the service academies (Gutmann, 2000).

In 1972 women made up less than two percent of the military, but by 1976 that proportion had grown to over five percent. Prior to this less than 35 percent of the occupations were open to women. To entice more women to join required that the services not only open more occupations to women, but also required that other restrictions be removed. Many of these other restrictions involved family policies. Women were no longer required to leave the service if they got married. The services tried to assign women with or near their husbands whenever possible. In 1975 the Secretary of Defense, James R. Schlesinger, instructed the services to make pregnancy separations voluntary and to end parenthood discharges. Additionally, by 1978 each of the services officially disbanded their separate woman's organizations, WACs, WAVES, WAFs and Women Marines. These and other improvements helped to make the military a more appealing career choice for women thus increasing their numbers from 55,000 in 1973 to over 171,000 in 1980. With more women now entering the service, women became more and more visible. This visibility served to increase their opportunities and benefits, thus integrating them more fully into the armed services.

#### **F. THE 1970S: PL 94-106 OPENS THE SERVICE ACADEMIES TO WOMEN**

Continuing to strive forward, the movement of women into the military sparked congressional interest in women attending the service academies. After the Navy refused entrance to a woman that had been nominated by one of the congressmen in 1972, a lawsuit was filed against the Navy and the Air Force. Two women and four congressmen argued that not allowing women to attend the service academies was discriminatory and was not equitable to female officers. Debates were colorful, continuing to place, yet again, the issue of women in combat at the forefront. The crux of the argument was if women were not allowed to work in combat occupations then it was a waste of money to send them to Service Academies where training centered on developing future officers to fill combat roles.

Despite all the opposition, the number of women entering the officer ranks was slowly but steadily increased. Women were entering the service intending to make it a career and the service academies were a giant stepping-stone to achieving a successful career. In 1975 President Ford finally signed Public Law 94-106, permitting women to apply and enter the service academies. In the summer of 1976, 119 women entered the Military Academy, 81 entered the Naval Academy, and 157 entered the Air Force Academy (Skaine, 1999).

#### **G. THE 1970S: DEFENSE OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ACT (DOPMA)**

In the early 1970s Congress had become concerned with the number of senior officers that each of the different branches of the service were accumulating. Each of the services had their own promotion systems; there was no standardization in terms of whom or how many officers were promoted to each rank, and women were still being promoted using a different process from the men. At the request of Congress, the Secretary of Defense submitted a report outlining a set of standards that detailed the number of officers who should serve in each grade. These standards set forth the number of officers in each grade from O-4 to O-6 and were not based on gender or occupation. These

standards became the basis for DOPMA and were approved by the House in both 1976 and 1978, but stalled in the Senate during both years. Finally a compromise was met in 1980 and DOPMA (PL 96-513) was passed in November of the same year.

The purpose of DOPMA was to maintain a high quality, numerically sufficient officer corps that provided career opportunities that would attract and retain the number of high caliber officers needed and provide reasonably consistent career opportunity among the services (Rostker et al, 1993).

With the passing of DOPMA women were now more integrated in the service than ever before. Promotion systems for men and women were no longer separate, regardless of what branch they served, thus removing one more restriction established with the Women's Armed Service's Integration Act of 1948.

#### **H. THE 1980S: RISK RULE IS ENACTED**

As women became more and more integrated in the service, the likelihood that women would become involved in some type of combat-related incident also grew. In 1983 the United States invaded Grenada and aircrews came under hostile fire. At the time women were allowed to work as part of an aircraft crew, so when the time came for planes with integrated flight crews to fly missions in Grenada, it was either the integrated crews fly or commander's had to find spare replacement male crews. Commanders were in a bind. This was not conducive to successful mission accomplishment. The fact that these women were flying in harm's way troubled many people in the military and civilian sectors. Although women were now allowed to serve on aircraft and ships, they were not supposed to be involved in combat. Defining combat became the obstacle to deciding where women could serve. Each of the different branches interpreted combat differently, some more liberally than others. Attempting to rectify this problem the DOD created the Risk Rule in 1988. This Risk Rule was developed to help standardize the military service's assignment of women in regard to possible

deployment to hostile areas. It was not intended to prevent women from serving in combat, but to reduce the probability that women would be exposed to direct land combat inadvertently (Presidential Commission, 1992). The Risk Rule specifically stated:

Risks of direct combat, exposure to hostile fire, or capture are proper criteria for closing non-combatant positions or units to women, when the type, degree, and duration of such risk are equal to or greater than the combat units with which they are normally associated within a given theater of operations.

Because the line between direct combat and support units is often blurred, the Risk Rule provided the best mechanism available for maintaining consistency in assignment policies and integrity of the relationship between support and direct combat units (Skaine, 1999).

While the Risk Rule helped to better define what roles women could play in terms of combat, it also limited what women could do as well. Under the Risk Rule, women who had previously served in some support units were no longer permitted to do so because that unit was deploying to a possible combat zone. To allow women to work under these circumstances meant the services had to redefine the unit's mission or skirt around the issue. Too often the latter option was favored, and women just got left behind when a unit deployed. For example when troops deployed to Panama in 1989 for Operation Just Cause a female Army intelligence analyst, whose expertise was in Panamanian affairs, was left behind at Fort Bragg when her unit, part of the XVIII Airborne Corps, was deployed. She was replaced by a man with no experience in Panamanian affairs (Holm, 1982).

## **I. THE 1980S AND 1990S: WAR ZONE TRANSITIONS**

The United States' invasion of Panama in 1989 was a litmus test for enforcing the Risk Rule. Against ruling legislation, women assigned to non-combatant units were involved in hostile engagements. Approximately 800 women participated in the Invasion of Panama. Nearly one-fourth of these women were in close proximity to enemy fire. Despite the existing Risk Rule that

stated they were not to be involved in such circumstances, women were piloting helicopter airdrops of soldiers and support equipment, part of transportation units that drove men into combat areas and acting members of military police forces that engaged in fighting with the Panamanian Defense Forces (Segal D., 1994). Unfortunately, the women who faced these dangers found themselves resented by some male service members due to the attention they were receiving for “doing their jobs” (Holm, 182). Their involvement in this action did, however, amplify the ambiguity of the Risk Rule.

## **J. THE 1990S: THE FIRST GULF WAR**

The successful efforts by the women in Panama led to the increased presence of women in the Gulf War shortly thereafter. Thirteen months after the invasion of Panama, in January 1991, over 30,000 women found themselves deployed to the desert theater for the first war in Iraq. Aside from the traditional billets of medical and administration personnel, women once again piloted aircraft and drove vehicles into combat zones. Additionally, they served on support ships, assisted in construction units and supervised enemy prisoners of war. The difference this time was that their presence was publicly known.

Although the combat was short-lived, women were among those on Iraq’s list of prisoners of war and those killed in action. Along with 12 other women who were killed in Desert Storm, Major Marri Rossi (US Army) died on March 1, 1991 while flying her Chinook helicopter (CH-47) into enemy territory to supply fuel and ammunition to the 101<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne divisions. Her undaunted bravery is remembered forever in the caption, “First Female Combat Commander to Fly into Battle,” on her tombstone in Arlington Cemetery, VA (Wilson, 1996-99).

Receiving Purple Heart medals for combat sustained injuries, the heroic efforts of women like Major Rossi provoked reconsideration of combat policies, in particular the exclusion laws of females in direct combat. At this point women’s roles in the military were changing for good. With their increasing, but still lean 11 percent representation throughout the armed forces, less than 50 percent of them were assigned to traditional roles of medical, administration and judge

advocate positions. Activists for women in the military saw these numbers as unacceptable. After notable performances from so many women in the Gulf war, there was a push for legal action to accelerate their career potential.

#### **K. THE 1990S: DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1992**

New found attention on women's abilities to perform in combat areas following Operation Desert Storm in 1992 placed pressure for change on President Bush's Administration. This led to a hotly debated Congressional decision to repeal part of the 1988 Combat Exclusion Policy. Specifically, Congress voted to lift the ban on female combat aviators in the Air Force and females aboard combat vessels in the Navy. Fueled by the uproar, Congress also appointed the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the armed forces to better understand the case surrounding women in combat. This was not only significant, but perhaps the beginning of the single most progressive movement for military women since receiving the right to be integrated members of the military 44 years ago.

The findings of the Commission would be crucial to future support of women's roles in the military. The Commission was challenged with the issue of "whether and in what specific ways the assignment of women to combat would affect the combat capability of the United States to wage war" (Center For Military Readiness, 2001). The commission members, appointed by President George H. W. Bush favored keeping traditional American culture civilized according to the public eye (Fenner, 1998).

The Commission's testimony aligned with prevalent societal views that were rapidly gaining visibility. It argued that women were disadvantaged when it came to not only their survival, but helping in the survival of their fellow troops during combat (Donnelly, 2003). The Commission found that battle-time situations demand the most from individuals in a fighting unit and if a soldier is there out of greed for personal fulfillment, then lives and mission objectives may be compromised. Characterizing this behavior of female soldiers as

“irresponsible” the Commission implied that women were not *suited* for combat duty (emphasis added). Therefore, the only reason for them to serve in a combat unit would be to improve their chances for career progression (Center For Military Readiness, 2001). Nevertheless, the door for inclusion in combat was not without potential for future openings to women. Moderate supporters for women in combat on the committee did eventually admit that “their position was based less on any lack of ability than on imagined public opinion and cultural ideology about proper spheres of activity for men and women” (Fenner, 1998).

#### **L. THE 1990S: DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1994**

1994 saw a continued shift toward a more equal employer emerging from the military society. For the armed forces, this meant opening up 250,000 additional billets formerly closed to women and shifting manning allocations across a broad range of assignments. Male-only units would now have to restructure their facilities to accommodate a new female presence.

Decisive action came from within DOD as defense leaders eliminated the Risk Rule by redefining the definition of direct combat. Previously the Risk Rule had restricted women from any military positions that would expose them to direct enemy ground fire. The formerly acceptable definition, as stated by the Army, involved:

Engaging an enemy with individual or crew-served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy and a substantial risk of capture (Center For Military Readiness, 1994).

Of great interest was the phrase *risk of capture*. By redefining “direct combat,” the Secretary of Defense deleted phrases that addressed seeking out the enemy and capture risk for soldiers, making it more palatable for unbiased gender assignments. Although not made readily noticeable, it was at this time that Congress began to relax its claim of not needing women in combat units. Simply stated, women were now allowed to serve in all positions except whose primary mission was to engage in direct combat.

This change specifically targeted armor, infantry, and artillery battalions in the Army and infantry regiments in the Marine Corps. While the Air Force suffered the least impact, increasing assignment openings for women from 97 percent to 99 percent, the Marine Corps nearly doubled its allocations, going from 32 percent to 61 percent. The emergence of the Defense Authorization Act of 1994 that redefined combat was not only going to reshape the career opportunities for women in the military, but subject them to more vulnerabilities such as involuntary assignments and possible Selective Service obligations.

The evasive procedures used by the DOD to pass this legislation stirred a hornet's nest among military stakeholders. Many felt it was an unjust act of political correctness for gender integration rather than an attempt to better serve the military with additional manpower availability. Controversy over the competing rights of women and the military made it difficult to get a clear picture of the true intent behind this political action. Former Commander of Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield, General Norman Schwarzkopf (USA, Retired), openly declared what many Americans whispered under their breath, "Decisions on what roles women should play in war must be based on military standards, not women's rights" (Center For Military Readiness, 2001). This act would potentially put the lives of many soldiers at stake for the opportunity of career broadening experiences for women. It was seen as "more than bad military judgment. It [was] morally wrong" (Center For Military Readiness, 2001).

#### **M. THE 1990S: THE END OF AN ERA**

Pushing through the negativism, women were not dissuaded from increasing their representation in combat-related assignments. In the years following the Defense Authorization Act of 1994, women remained confident in their abilities. Despite the clouding Tailhook scandal and Lieutenant Kara Hultgreen's (USN) carrier collision, women remained dedicated to continue piloting combat aircraft, serve as NASA space shuttle pilots and deploy to numerous regions and "hot-spots" throughout the world, such as Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo. Women with full vigor and a tremendous sense of empowerment



answered the institutional and occupational progress made by the military. They were ready to accept deployment billets ranging from peacekeeping missions to terrorist eradication.

The increased activity levels of female service members gave rise to a continuation of skepticism and disgust for women suddenly becoming pregnant during increased operation tempos to avoid the risks of deployment. However hard women had been working to dispel this image, planning their pregnancies for periods of decreased operational activity, so as not to jeopardize their unit's mission, concerns were evidently growing stronger. Congressional response included improvements on programs dedicated to military family and childcare plans as outlined in special interest items in the Defense Authorization Act of 1996. Congress targeted these areas to ensure the continued participation of women.

The Defense Authorization Act of 1997 also included efforts focused on women in combat. It called for an assessment on women's roles thus far in the military and consideration of expanding their roles. Shortly hereafter, women challenged and undertook military requirements for assignment in foreign countries. Case in point, Colonel Martha McSally (USAF) successfully fought the DOD to eliminate the policy regarding the wearing of the abaya, an Arabic cloth covering a women's face, while serving in Saudi Arabia. This act set the stage for military women to realize their place as a soldier, not as a second-class citizen in another land.

## **N. CONCLUSION**

Recently, the Defense Authorization Act of 2002 has established a policy of annual documentation on the status of women in the armed services. Additionally and more notably, the Supreme Court, in the event that the draft is reinstated, denounced the argument for the inclusion of women in a military draft. The substantiating argument was "women do not have an 'equal opportunity' to survive or to help fellow soldiers survive... [and] the event of mobilization would

be administratively unworkable and militarily disastrous” (Center For Military Readiness, 2003). This most recent controversy is still pending final sponsorship in the House and Senate, but for now, women are ineligible and considered unrelated to the volunteer pool needed for combat troops obtained through a draft system (Center For Military Readiness, 2003).

As women grow in numbers, skill and knowledge within the military, they will be able to continue to move into the non-traditional career fields that have historically eluded them. Over the last 53 years legislation has provided many new opportunities for women service members. These opportunities have enabled women to participate in more training evolutions, exercises and real time operations thus providing them not only more experience, but more credibility within the profession of arms. This credibility has enabled women to become more and more integrated within the military with each passing decade, resulting in higher levels of career progression. The factual history of their integration and contributions to the military need to remain part of public memory to further support long-lasting advancement and contribute to constructive changes (Fenner, 1998).

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## **V. STATISTICAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF MARINE CORPS AND AIR FORCE OFFICERS**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

Today more than 33,000 female officers serve in the United States Armed Forces (Women in the Military, 2003). Since passing the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948, the number of women who serve in the United States Military has increased steadily with a majority of the increases coming in the last three decades. Despite this increase over the years, the proportional representation of women is still small, now hovering at 16 percent of the total active duty military officer population. This chapter will address the career advancement of women officers by looking at statistical information, both historic and current, to gauge how well women officers have integrated into the Marine Corps and Air Force. This study compares women's proportional representation in two services: the Marine Corps with the smallest and the Air Force with the largest.

Prior to 1967 the proportion of women permitted to serve in the Armed Forces was limited to two percent. Public Law (PL) 90-130 lifted the two percent ceiling and opened the doors for more women to enter and remain in the military. For this reason the tables and figures in this chapter span the time period of 1968 – 2004 with a more thorough discussion from 1982 through 2004. The statistical review covers the following:

1. Proportional representation
2. Select demographics for 1982, 1992, and 2002
3. Promotion rates
4. Survival rates

Data used in the analysis was supplied from DOD Select Manpower Statistics, the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC), Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) and the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC).

## B. PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Tables 2 and 3 show the total number and percentage of active duty officers in the Marine Corps and the Air Force by gender, respectively, serving between 1968 and 2002. Both tables clearly identify the trend that shows increasing numbers of women entering both the Marine Corps and the Air Force over the last 34 years. As discussed in previous chapters, much of the steady increase reflects legislative action and policy changes that have significantly increased opportunities available to women in the military. Especially encouraging is the fact that, although the increases have been small, they have been showing continuous growth in the proportion of women for both services since 1968. While the Marine Corps still boasts the smallest proportion of women, at just over five percent, versus the Air Force with the largest, at just under 18 percent, both services have raised their 2002 representation to nearly five times greater than it was in 1968.

MARINE CORPS OFFICERS					
YEAR	Total Number of Females	% of Total Officers	Total Number of Males	% of Total Officers	Total Number of Officers
1968	225	0.92	24330	99.08	24555
1970	299	1.20	24642	98.80	24941
1972	263	1.33	19580	98.67	19843
1974	336	1.79	18404	98.21	18740
1976	386	2.04	18496	97.96	18882
1978	433	2.35	17955	97.65	18388
1980	487	2.68	17711	97.32	18198
1982	560	2.95	18415	97.05	18975
1984	648	3.18	19718	96.82	20366
1986	643	3.18	19556	96.82	20199
1988	653	3.25	19426	96.75	20079
1990	677	3.39	19281	96.61	19958
1992	649	3.39	18483	96.61	19132
1994	643	3.61	17180	96.39	17823
1996	750	4.18	17181	95.82	17931
1998	854	4.77	17038	95.23	17892
2000	932	5.20	17006	94.80	17938
2002	998	5.46	17290	94.54	18288

Source: DOD Selected Manpower Statistics, 1968-2002

Table 2. Total Number and Percentage of Officers on Active Duty in the Marine Corps, 1968-2002

AIR FORCE OFFICERS					
YEAR	Total Number of Females	% Total of Officers	Total Number of Males	% Total of Officers	Total Number of Officers
1968	4991	3.57	134700	96.43	139691
1970	4667	3.60	125136	96.40	129803
1972	4766	3.92	116908	96.08	121674
1974	4767	4.31	105724	95.69	110491
1976	4967	4.98	94820	95.02	99787
1978	6010	6.30	89453	93.70	95463
1980	8493	8.70	89156	91.30	97649
1982	9942	9.76	91948	90.24	101890
1984	11234	10.57	95005	89.43	106239
1986	12377	11.35	96671	88.65	109048
1988	12899	12.27	92227	87.73	105126
1990	13331	13.33	86714	86.67	100045
1992	12683	14.03	77693	85.97	90376
1994	12322	15.21	68681	84.79	81003
1996	12047	15.77	64341	84.23	76388
1998	11971	16.65	59921	83.35	71892
2000	11819	17.12	57204	82.88	69023
2002	12912	17.93	59120	82.07	72032

Source: DOD selected manpower statistics, 1968-2002

Table 3. Total Number and Percentage of Officers on Active Duty in the Air Force, 1968-2002

### C. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS FOR 1982, 1992 AND 2002

As the proportion of females in the military has increased over time, it becomes important to identify how women have integrated into their respective branches. Looking at demographics with respect to time is a way to identify trends or gaps that may exist for female integration. Four demographic areas that influence integration and career progression are:

1. Representation in pay grade
2. Commissioning source
3. Occupational specialty
4. Marital status

We will explore each category by examining how female officers in the Marine Corps and Air Force compare with their male counterparts for the years 1982, 1992 and 2002. The 20-year time frame provides perspective on officer behavior resulting from key legislative changes affecting the military. In particular, the allowance of women to participate in Reserved Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs since 1973, to attend military Service Academies beginning in

1976, rescinding the Combat Exclusion Policy by 1994 and improvements towards family and childcare coming about in 1996 and 1997, respectively.

### 1. Representation in Pay Grade

Breaking down the representation of men and women in each pay grade shows how women have progressed through the ranks in each of the services. Appendix B provides a description of the pay grades for the Marine Corps and Air Force. Figures 1 through 3 provide a percentage breakdown of Marine Corps female and male officers in each pay grade for 1982, 1992 and 2002. In all three years there is a higher proportion of women in the junior ranks, O-1 and O-2. Except for 1982 the proportion of females and males in the O-3 pay grade is almost indistinguishable. This trend shifts to favor men as both genders enter the mid-level and senior pay grades. Although the proportion of females in the O-4 pay grade in 1992 is also equal to that of the males, the proportion of females at the O-5 pay grades falls below the males in all three years and is consistently less than the males through the remaining pay grades.

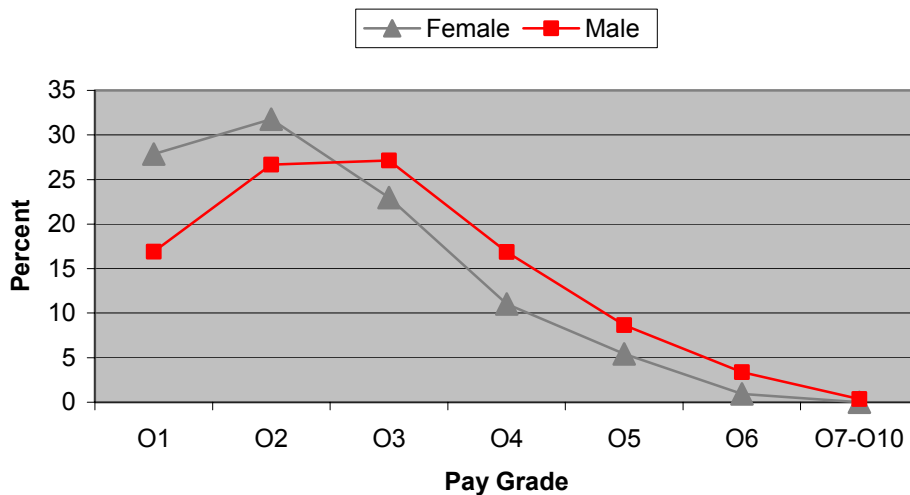


Figure 1. Percent of Marine Corps Female and Male Officers by Pay Grade, 1982

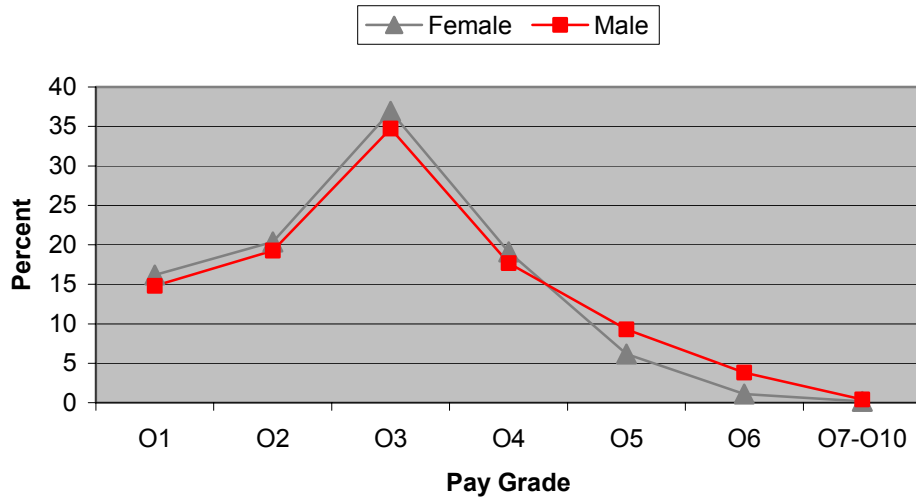


Figure 2. Percent of Marine Corps Female and Male Officers by Pay Grade, 1992



Figure 3. Percent of Marine Corps Female and Male Officers by Pay Grade, 2002



Figures 4 through 6 provide a breakdown of the percent of Air Force female and male officers in each pay grade for 1982, 1992 and 2002. As with the Marine Corps, the proportion of Air Force females in the junior pay grades is higher than that of the males. Unlike the Marine Corps however, the proportion of Air Force females in the O-3 pay grade is also higher than the males in all three years. As the female and male officers reach the mid-level and senior pay grades, the Air Force officers exhibit a declining trend similar to that of the Marine Corps officers. The female proportion of officers drops below that of the males and remains there for the remaining pay grades, O-4 through O-10. As with the Marine Corps, the proportion of Air Force females and males in 1992 was similar throughout the pay grades, but in 2002 the gap begins to widen in favor of Air Force male officers from O-4 and higher.

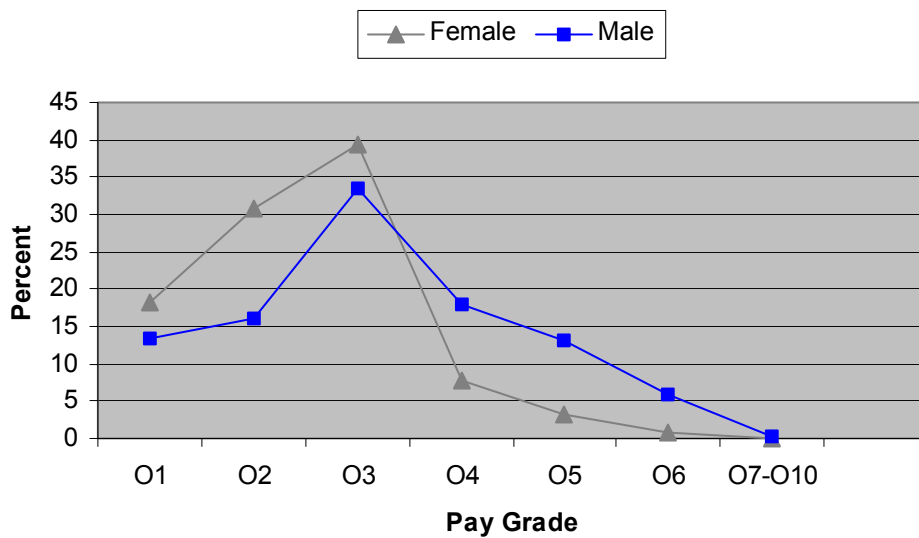


Figure 4. Percent of Air Force Female and Male Officers by Pay Grade, 1982

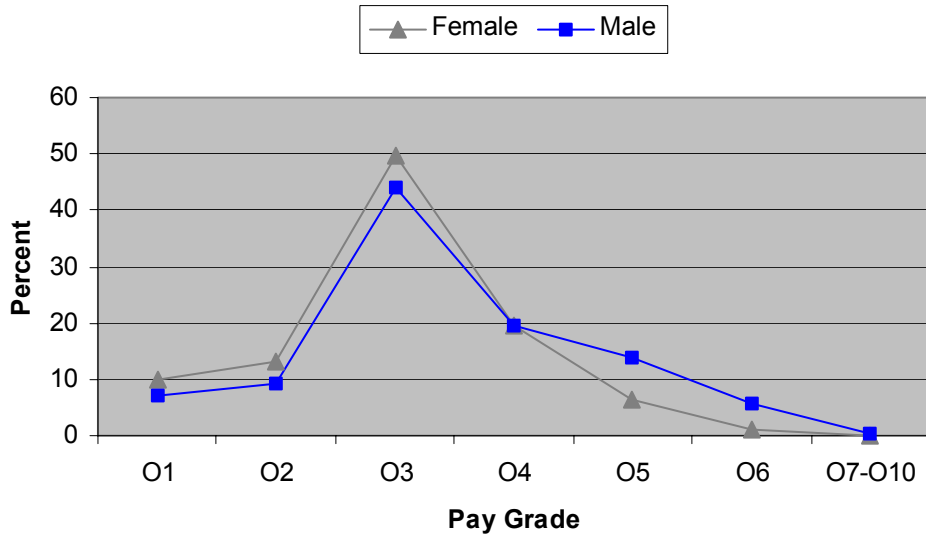


Figure 5. Percent of Air Force Female and Male Officers by Pay Grade, 1992

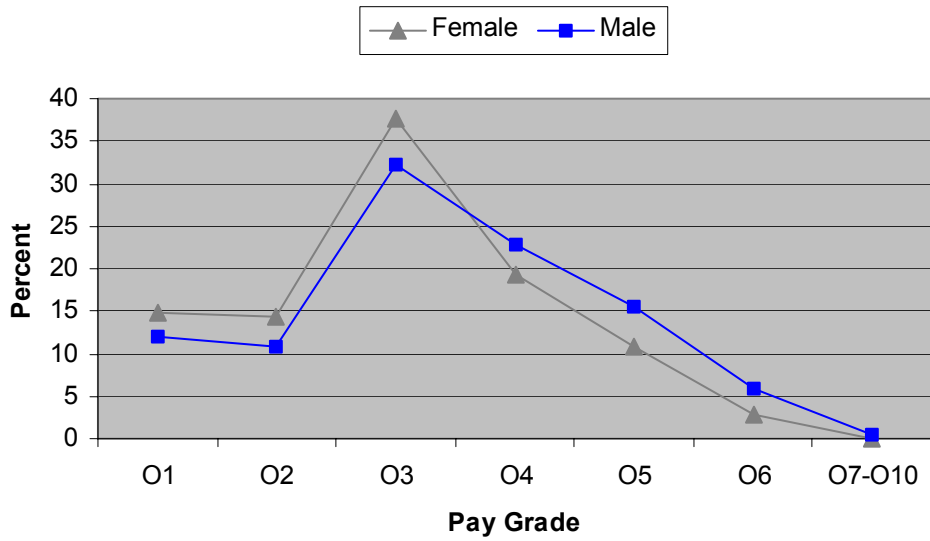


Figure 6. Percent of Air Force Female and Male Officers by Pay Grade, 2002

## **2. Commissioning Source**

The commissioning source that a member goes through to obtain his or her officer status may help or hinder that individual in career progression. Each program has a Minimum Service Requirement (MSR) an officer must complete prior to voluntarily separating. The military considers the MSR to be a payback to the government for the training and education provided for the officer. Appendix C provides a more descriptive list of each commissioning source and their MSRs.

Previous studies reveal that officers who graduate from one of the military Service Academies or participate in ROTC commissioning programs display an advantage when it comes to promotion and longevity (Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers, 1998). Nevertheless, the government finds it more cost effective to send officers through Officer Candidate School or Officer Training School (OCS/OTS); therefore a significant number of officers are commissioned through OCS/OTS. With that said, it is important to look at how women begin their commissioned service to see how many of them begin their careers with the possible advantage for career progression.

Women officers have made great strides in taking advantage of all commissioning programs available since 1982. Figures 7 through 9 provide the percentages of Marine Corps and Air Force officers by gender in each commissioning source for 1982, 1992 and 2002.

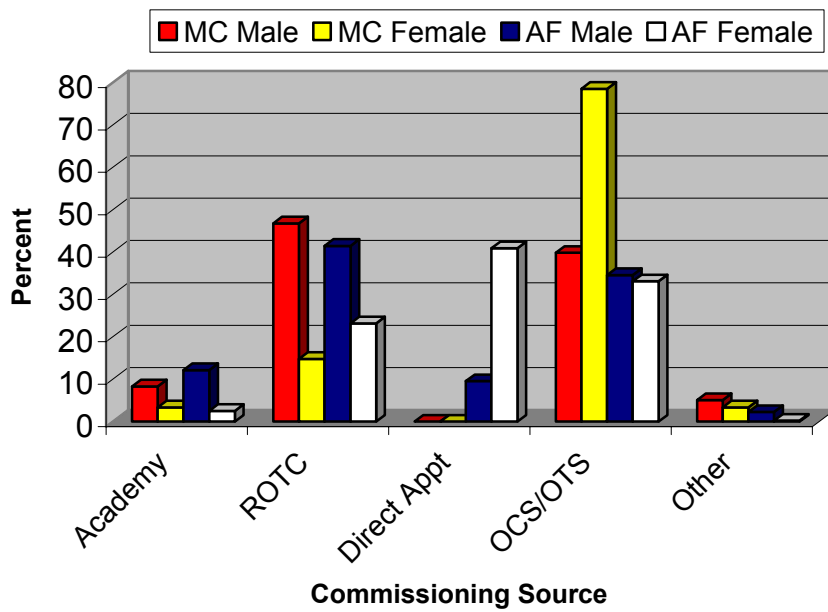


Figure 7. Percent of Marine Corps and Air Force Officers by Gender in each Commissioning Source, 1982

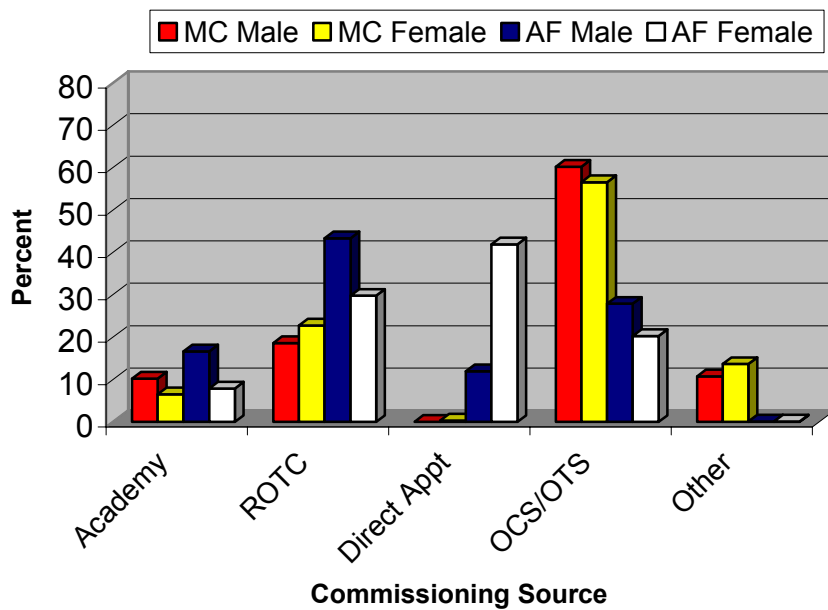


Figure 8. Percent of Marine Corps and Air Force Officers by Gender in each Commissioning Source, 1992

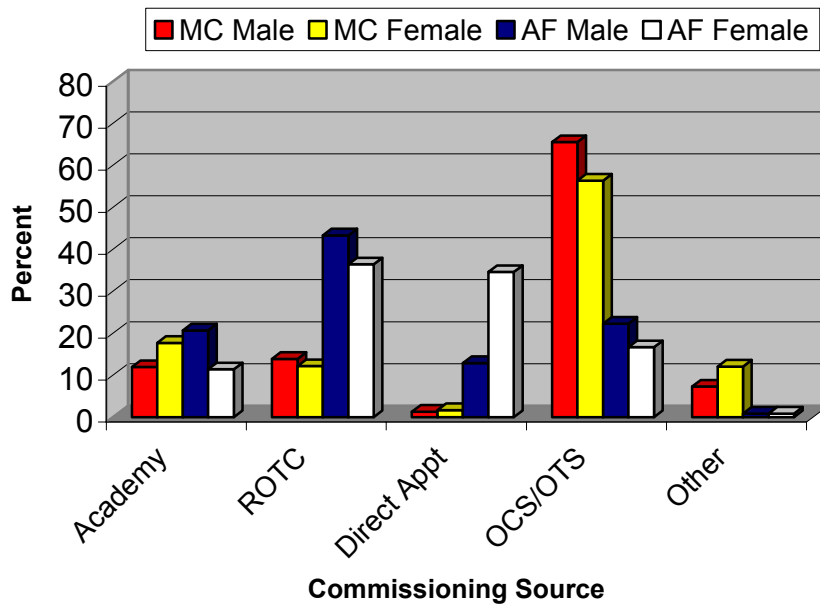


Figure 9. Percent of Marine Corps and Air Force Officers by Gender in each Commissioning Source, 2002

The proportion of Marine Corps female officers commissioned from a Service Academy in 2002 exceeded the men. The percentage of women who are commissioned through OCS has decreased since 1982 and the proportion of women commissioned through ROTC rose in 1992 and then fell in 2002, but the percentage of men getting commissioned through ROTC has also fallen similarly. Overall, in 2002 each commissioning source provided a similar proportion of women and men to the Marine Corps. The trend that is important to note here is that more women Marine Corps officers are entering the service through the commissioning sources perceived to provide a better advantage for career progression than did ten and twenty years ago.

Alternately, the Air Force's large population of professional officers in Medical Corps, Chaplain Corps and Legal Corps explains the large proportion of officers commissioned through a direct appointment source. Women still hold the majority of professional occupations so it is logical to see their percentage of direct appointments surpassing the men. The percentage of women obtaining commissions through ROTC and a Service Academy has risen, but continues to remain lower than the men. Nevertheless more women are entering the Air

Force through the commissioning sources perceived to provide the best advancement opportunities at increasing rate, similar to the Marine Corps women.

When comparing the women in each of the services, the Marine Corps exceeds the Air Force in acquiring Service Academy graduates. The greater number of OCS/OTS officers for the Marine Corps is not unanticipated because it is the primary source used by the Marine Corps to obtain officers. However, the greater number of officers commissioned through ROTC and Direct Appointments for the Air Force are again, most likely due to the large proportion of women in the healthcare and professional occupations.

### **3. Occupational Specialty**

It is important to look at occupations because sometimes there is a perceived difference between assignments that are open to women. In denying women the opportunity to serve in career enhancing occupations and billets such as those in the tactical fields, they may be less likely to experience the same type of success when progressing through the ranks (Harrell, 2002). DOD occupational categories are used to standardize the occupational specialties because the Marine Corps and Air Force code their occupations differently. Appendix D provides a comprehensive description of the DOD occupational categories. Figures 10 through 12 chart the percentages of Marine Corps and Air Force officers in each occupation by gender for 1982, 1992, and 2002. It is important to note that the Marine Corps does not have its own Medical or Chaplain corps. The Department of the Navy provides these services for both the United States Navy and Marine Corps.

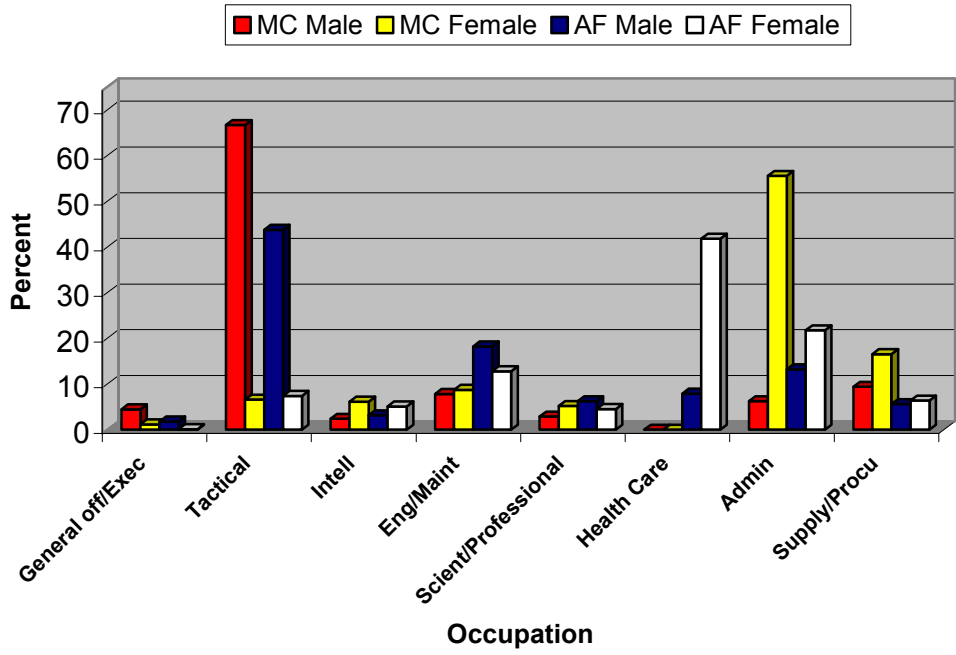


Figure 10. Percent of Marine Corps and Air Force Officers by Gender in each Occupational Specialty, 1982

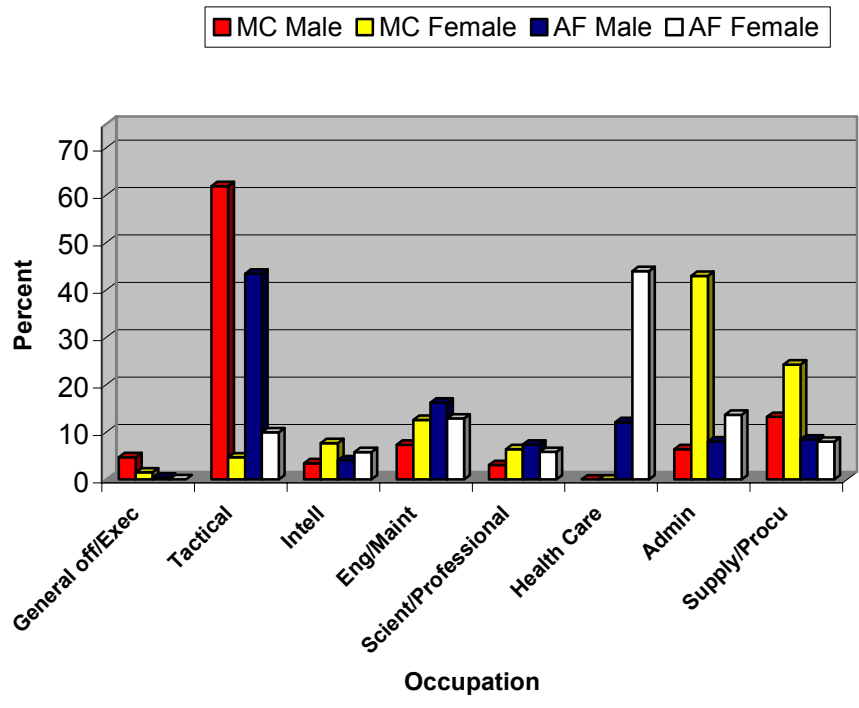


Figure 11. Percent of Marine Corps and Air Force Officers by Gender in each Occupational Specialty, 1992

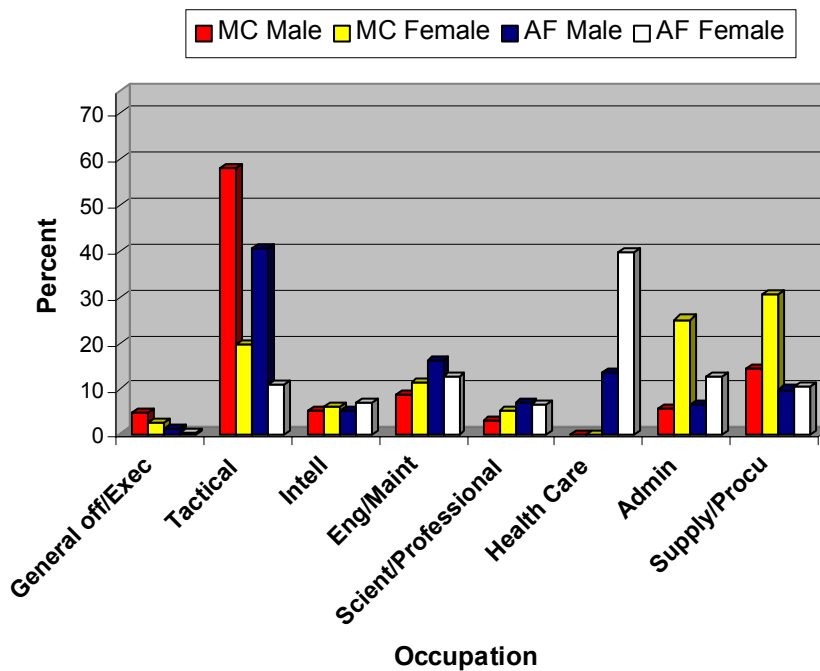


Figure 12. Percent of Marine Corps and Air Force Officers by Gender in each Occupational Specialty, 2002

Historical categorization of administrative positions as a traditional career for women substantiates their surplus representation versus men in that occupational category (DMDC Utilization Report, 1996). Since 1982, it has been the leading occupation for women in the Marine Corps and the second highest occupation for women in the Air Force behind Health Care. Marine Corps women in Tactical occupations have improved their representation to nearly three times greater from seven percent in 1982 to 20 percent in 2002. Additionally, women officers in the Marine Corps represented a higher proportion in all the occupations except in Tactical and General officer/Executive occupations. Although 92 percent of all occupations in the Marine Corps are now open to women, only 62 percent of the billets are open to them which accounts for the smaller percentage of women in the Tactical occupations (Women in the Military, 2003).

Occupational changes for women in the Air Force have not been quite as dramatic as they have been for women in the Marine Corps. The overall occupational representation of women in the Air Force has changed very little



between 1982 and 2002. A partial explanation of the incremental changes is that the Air Force has dominated the four services with its ability to maintain nearly all positions open to women. The Air Force had 97 percent of its positions open to women before 1993. Lifting the combat exclusion policy in 1994 increased the job openings to 99 percent for women. Despite the wider range of job flexibility offered by the Air Force, 40 percent of all women in 2002 remain in the Health Care occupations, changing slightly from the 44 percent in 1982.

#### **4. Marital Status**

Historically a high proportion of women officers have been single which some researchers suggest may imply gender-related differences in the personal life choices of military personnel (DMDC Utilization Report, 1996). Figure 13 provides the percentages of single Marine Corps and Air Force officers by gender for 1982, 1992 and 2002.

Since 1982, the proportion of women officers in the Marine Corps who are single has changed minimally. Single female Marine Corps officers exceed the percentage of single males by 30 percent. For the women in the Air Force, there has been a decline in the proportion of single women since 1982, but it is still almost twice that of the men. Overall, women officers in both services are more likely to be single than men.

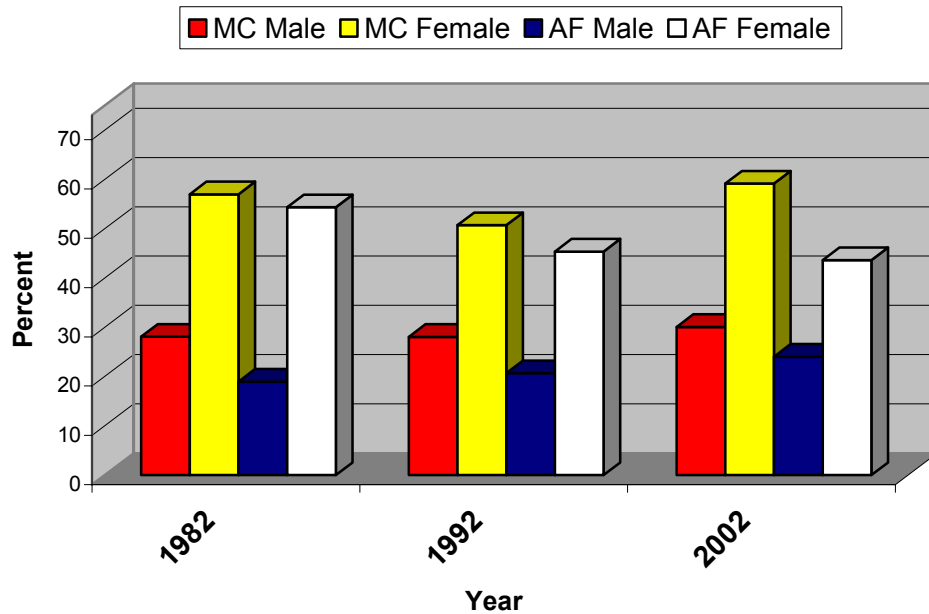


Figure 13. Percent of Single Marine Corps and Air Force Officers by Gender, 1982, 1992, and 2002

#### D. PROMOTION RATES

At the request of DACOWITS in 1996, DMDC assembled a report on the accession, assignment, retention and career advancement of women in the military. In this report, looking at cohorts from each of the four branches of service and Coast Guard in 1987, 1992 and 1996, it stated that: “An index of equality in promotion suggests remarkable fairness between men and women; and the greatest disparities, when found, tend to “favor” women” (p. XI). A report completed by the General Accounting Office (GAO) in 1998 on the Gender Issues: Analysis of Promotion and Career Opportunities Data found similar results. Using promotion data on the four branches of the service on cohorts from 1993 through 1997 they concluded that:

The military as a whole selected men and women from promotion to the top three non-flag officer and enlisted grades at similar rates in about 82 percent of the promotion boards or examinations reviewed. For the remaining instances, 15 percent were in favor of women, three percent were in favor of men.

Figures 14, 15 and 16 use data from the GAO study to provide the promotion rates in the Marine Corps and Air Force by gender, to the pay grades

of O-4, O-5 and O-6 respectively, from 1993 to 1997. The percentages are based on the total number female and male officers eligible for promotion.

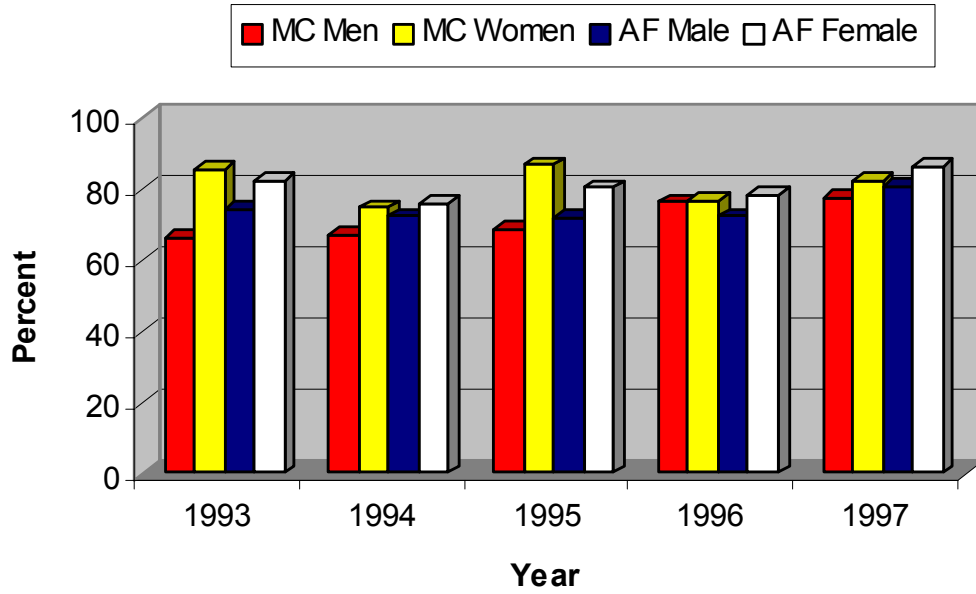


Figure 14. Promotion Rates for Marine Corps and Air Force Officers to O-4 by Gender, 1993-1997

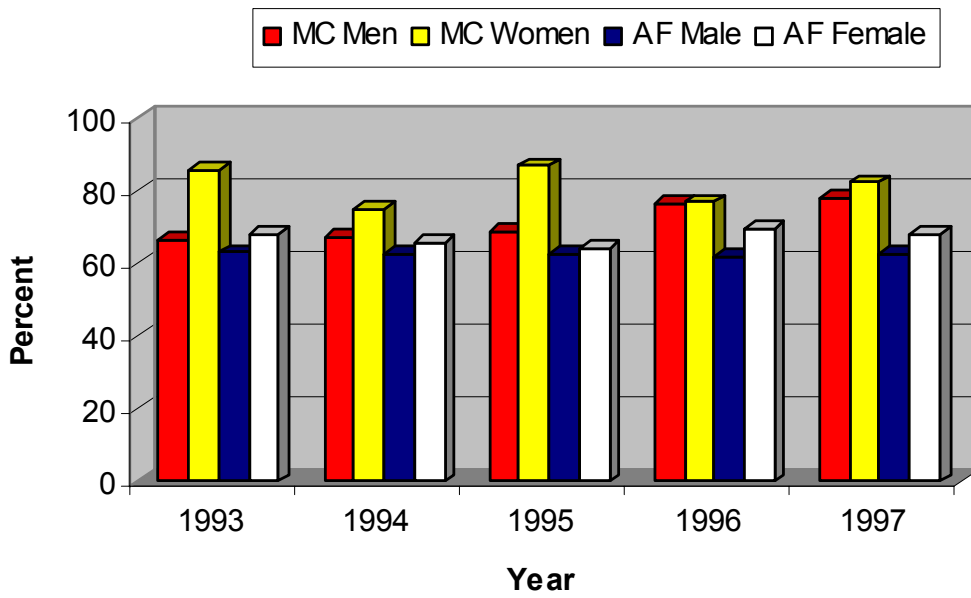


Figure 15. Promotion Rates for Marine Corps and Air Force Officers to O-5 by Gender, 1993-1997

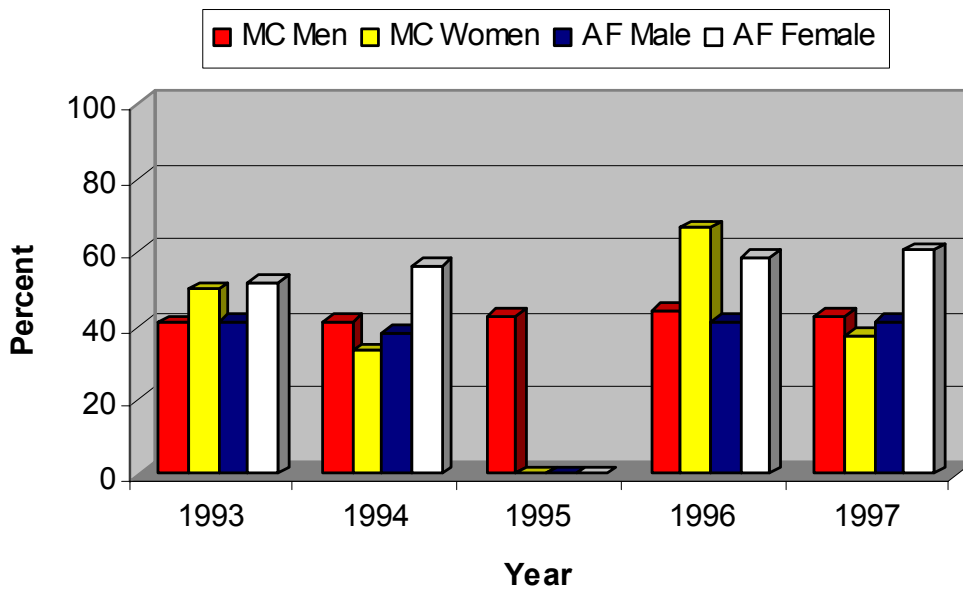


Figure 16. Promotion Rates for Marine Corps and Air Force Officers to O-6 by Gender, 1993-1997

Promotion rates of Marine Corps women to O-5 and O-6 were higher than the men, except for 1994 and 1995 for the rank of O-5 and 1994 and 1997 for the rank of O-6. These figures also show women officers in the Air Force had higher promotion rates in each of the three pay grades than the men.

Although the results of these studies show overall favorable promotion rates for women, they fail to identify in the higher pay grades that there are often so few women that promoting one female can dramatically change the promotion rates. For instance looking at Figure 16, there were only three Marine Corps women eligible for promotion to O-6 in 1994 and only one was selected resulting in a promotion rate of 33 percent. Likewise, for O-6s in 1996, there were three women eligible and two selected so the promotion rate for women was 67 percent, much higher than the men's rate of 45 percent.

Unlike the results in the promotion data for 1993 to 1997, women officers in the Marine Corps did not fare as well as the men during the 2002 through 2004 promotion boards. Figures 17, 18 and 19 show the most recent statistics for the Marine Corps officer promotion boards by gender to the ranks of O-4, O-5 and O-6 respectively.

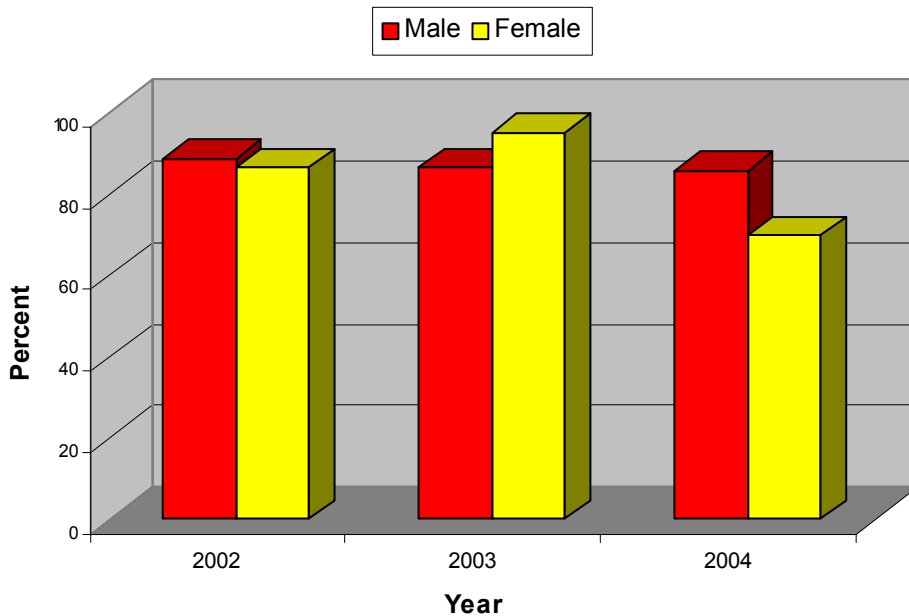


Figure 17. Marine Corps Promotions to O-4, by Gender 2002-2004



Figure 18. Marine Corps Promotions to O-5, by Gender, 2002-2004



Figure 19. Marine Corps Promotions to O-6, by Gender, 2002-2004

During the three years, women had higher promotion rates than the men in only four out of the nine promotion opportunities. In 2004, the number of men promoted to O-6 was twice as high as the number of women. Statistically the difference is significant, but it is important to not overlook the small number of females eligible for promotion.

Figures 20, 21 and 22 show the Air Force officer promotions by gender to O-4, O-5 and O-6 respectively. Using the most recent available data, from 2000-2002, there was only one promotion drop for females in 2002 occurring in the O-4 promotion board. The Air Force has not experienced a decline of female O-4 to O-6 promotion rates similar to those seen by the Marine Corps.

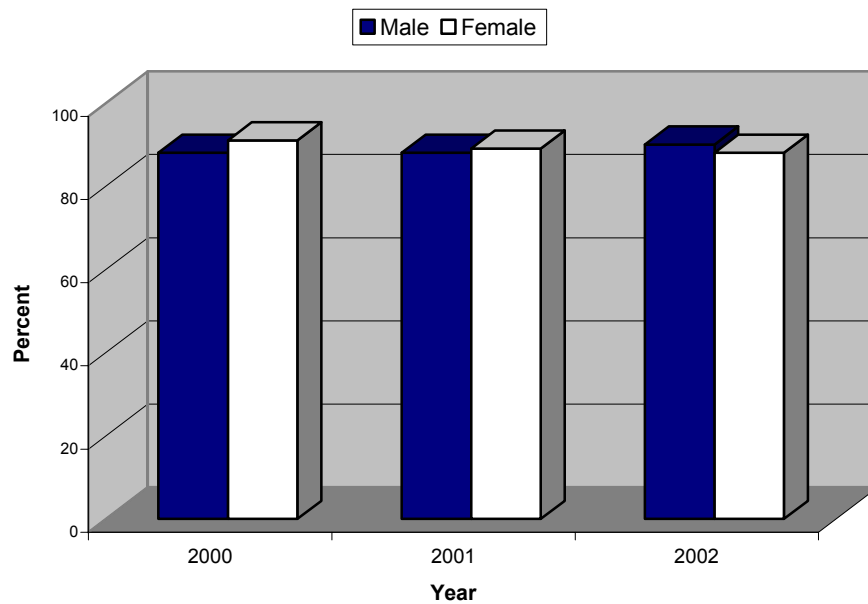


Figure 20. Air Force Promotions to O-4, by Gender, 2000-2002

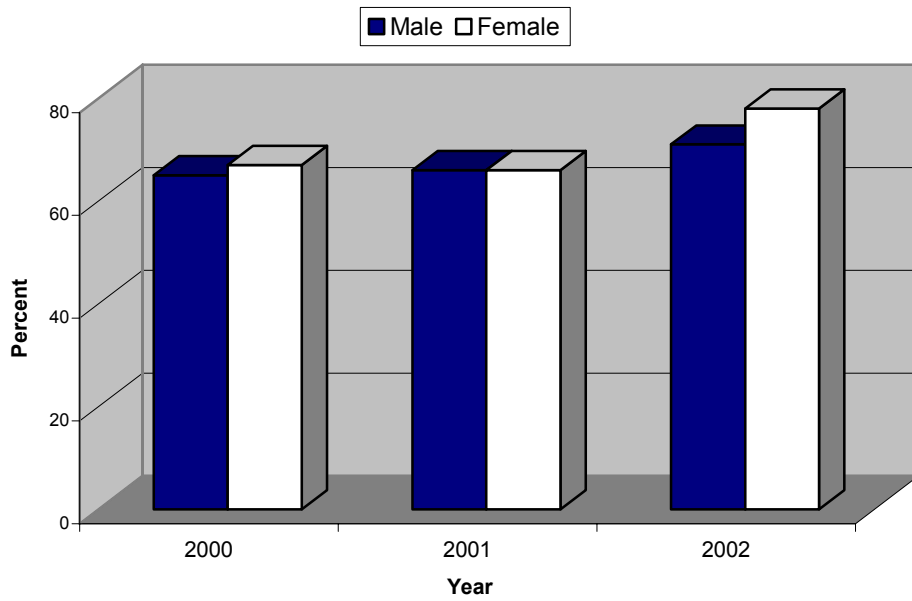


Figure 21. Air Force Promotions to O-5, by Gender, 2000-2002

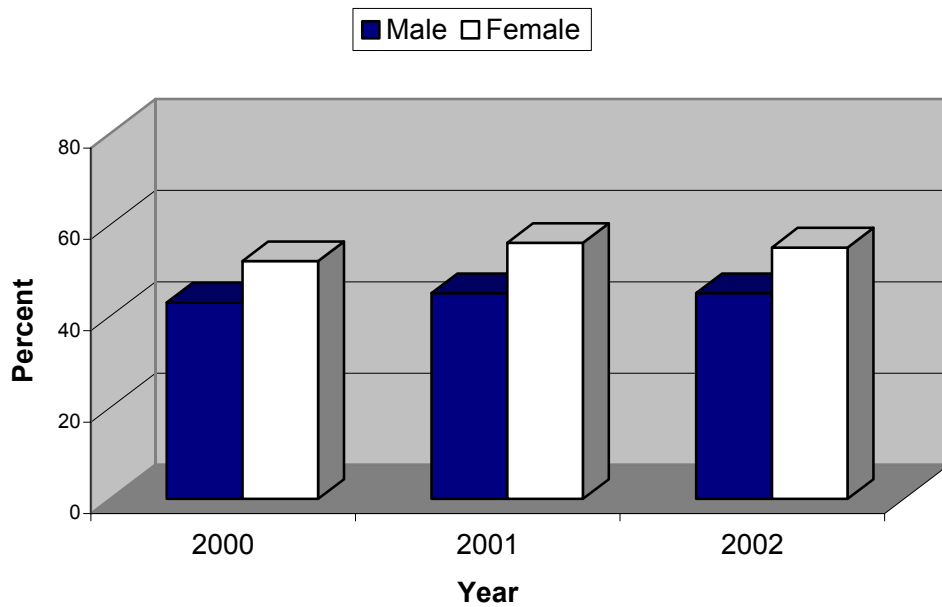


Figure 22. Air Force Promotions to O-6, by Gender, 2000-2002



Although the numbers are small, those women that do remain in service past O-3 appear to have sufficient opportunity for promotion to O-6. Since 1993, the promotion rates for women officers in both services have been comparable to the men in their respective services.

**E. SURVIVAL RATES**

While the number of female military officers is on the rise, there is increasing awareness concerning their longevity. Officer survival rates represent retention as accumulated years of service. Because it is an officer’s decision to remain in the military beyond her/his MSR, survival analysis is an indicator of an officer’s willingness to stay. Figure 23 depicts the average survival rates by gender of Marine Corps and Air Force officers.

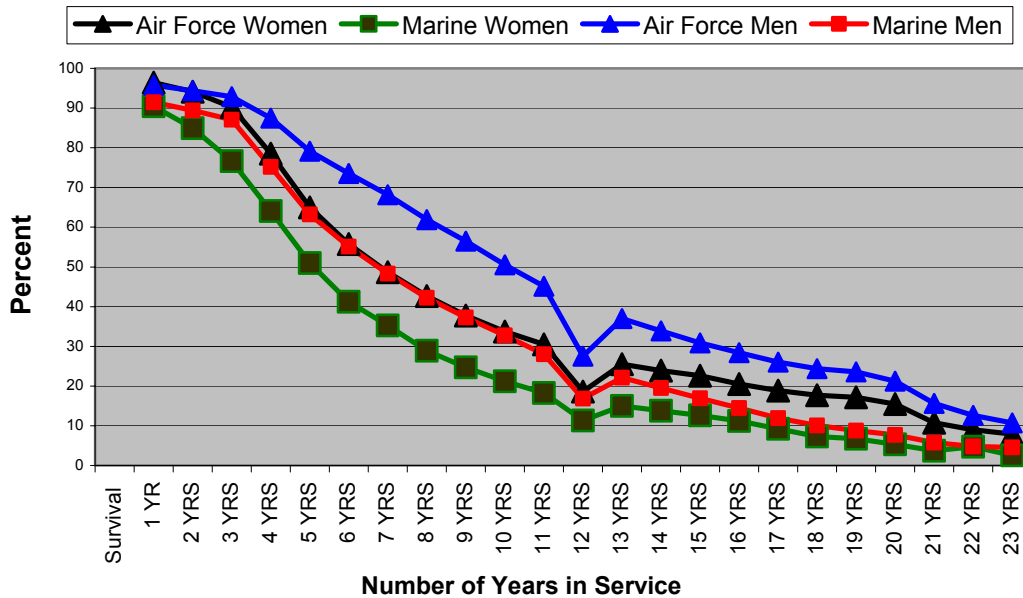


Figure 23. Average Survival Rates for Marine Corps and Air Force Officers by Gender for Years of Service

There is a steeper decline in the survival of officers during their first 10 years of service than in the latter half for the overall population. By gender, men are proportionately more likely to remain in the military than women. By service,

the Air Force officers are proportionately more likely to remain than Marine Corps officers. The downward spike between the 12 and 14-year points mirrors the officer decline from the O-3 to O-4 pay grades previously discussed. The slower rate of decline in officer survival after the 14-year point reflects an officer's decision to stay in the military with the possibility of completing enough years of service to reach retirement eligibility.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

The military workforce has long been a model for the American labor force equal opportunity practices. In doing so, one might expect the military to be at the forefront of equal employment opportunities with minimal gaps in gender equity. This holds true for pay and benefits in the military, but still falls short on overall representation, senior leadership and selected occupations for women. Statistically there is evidence that women in both the Marine Corps and the Air Force are progressing in terms of integration and career progression yet there are still areas needing improvement.

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## **VI. PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN OFFICERS**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

This chapter summarizes the more prominent themes revealed in the interviews conducted of the 18 Marine Corps and 22 Air Force female officers. We began by looking at the themes from the Marine Corps interviews with an examination of mid-level officers followed by senior level officers. This is followed by the themes from Air Force officer interviews, again addressing both mid-level and senior level officers. Each theme presented is supported by a justification that includes quotations and excerpts from the interviews. The purpose of this chapter is to provide insight on the perceptions of mid-level and senior level female officers based on their experiences with regards to career progression. We also explore the attributes that may contribute to successful career progression for female officers in the Marine Corps and Air Force. Appendix A provides the interview demographics and protocols used for the officers that participated in the interviews.

### **B. MARINE CORPS MID-LEVEL FEMALE OFFICER THEMES**

#### **1. The Marine Corps Offers a Challenging Lifestyle**

Some of the officers interviewed commented that the Marine Corps was the hardest, the most challenging, and had the best reputation among the services. References were made about the discipline and pride associated with the Marine Corps. Several participants spoke about a chance to be part of an organization that was always called upon to serve and to make a difference. The respect gained from being a Marine was often expressed.

One of the Majors (MC9) said it this way, “There is a work ethic that Marines have that not a lot of people have. There is no task too big and no mission that they can’t accomplish and it doesn’t matter if they have to work day and night.”

A Major (MC6) who grew up in a military family said:

I liked the discipline of the Marines... the pride of Marines.... I have always felt that the Marines were the best, and I wanted to be a part of it... there was just so much pride, and borderline arrogance with being Marines...I have always felt that the Marines were the best, and I wanted to be a part of it.

A Major (MC10) joined the Marine Corps because her brother wouldn't, stating, "I joined only because my brother said he couldn't, it was too hard... he said it was too hard so I went down to enlist." Another Captain (MC2) added, "The Marine Corps is the best...Marines, they are always doing everything. It really impressed me...They always got to do really good things."

Another Major (MC7) mentioned that:

You know a Marine stands out...Look at Somalia. The Somalian's wouldn't touch the Marines. They were afraid of the Marines. In Haiti when we went in and took over after the riot started, the Army couldn't handle it. We came in, we rolled up our sleeves so the light part of the sleeve would show where the Army rolls them differently and the Haitians knew who the Marines were by their sleeves and they didn't mess with us. There is a sense of pride that goes with that.

## **2. Leading and Developing Marines Provides a Sense of Responsibility, Pride and Enjoyment**

This theme is expressed through statements referring to the responsibility, rewards, and enjoyment of working with and leading Marines. One Captain (MC5) stated it simply, "...responsible for taking care of and developing junior Marines. I definitely think that is the best part, when you try and help and teach and guide someone, and they get it and you see that they get it. It is really rewarding."

Another Captain (MC1) said, "Taking care of my Marines is very important to me...the Marines I have worked with have made it for me."

One of the Lieutenant Colonels (MC12) described it this way:

It's the camaraderie. When you get mad at the Marine Corps and you hate the Marine Corps, you don't want to be a Marine any more, the thing that keeps you being a Marine is not the Marine Corps, it's the Marines.

A Major (MC11) believed that Marines were her main priority saying:

I think taking care of the Marines is more important than moving up the ladder because I get more satisfaction out of being a Company Commander than doing briefs for the General. I got a lot more recognition for doing the briefs, but I get more satisfaction from this stuff.

This theme is further echoed by this Lieutenant Colonel (MC14):

It's like you have a Marine that you see the light bulb go on, like being a teacher. I had a Sergeant and I was doing initial counseling on him...I told him, "You really have a lot of potential and if you are interested I certainly would support your ambitions to becoming an officer..." Yesterday I heard him talking to one of the other Marines...about putting in a MECEP (officer program) package. I was so excited...I don't know if it was just because of me, but I think I had some kind of hand in that.

### **3. Men Do Not Feel Comfortable Working with Women**

This theme is identified through comments that refer to how men are unsure of how to act around women Marines or how they don't want to be around women Marines, even ignoring them. Additionally the respondents expressed that they feel awkward in the work place when dealing with the men.

One Captain (MC3), talking about her reporting senior (boss) described it this way:

...I was the only female in the office...I don't know if he was uncomfortable talking with me, just did not feel that connection or just did not like me. I don't know what it was, but he would know that I was working on that thing and go to the other Lieutenant (male) in front of me. Of course the Lieutenant would just turn around and ask me. It was a very awkward situation.

This same Captain also described a situation that occurred at a social gathering:

I went to a friend's wetting down (promotion party)... I had worked with quite a few of these (male) Majors and Lieutenant Colonels, and they had never seen me out of uniform... One came over to me and put his arm around me (his wife was there) and told me, "I wanted to tell you that you look like a person," and then he whispered, "I wanted to say woman, but I thought you might get offended." The other one kept asking me why I didn't have a boyfriend, I was so athletic and such a good catch and why I didn't

have a boyfriend. He just kept bringing it up...They are our senior leadership. I am wondering now, is that how I am seen when I am working? Are they concentrating on the fact that I am girl and not the fact that I was the budget officer? It was kind of funny, but it kind of creeped me out.

A Lieutenant Colonel (MC13) provided some more insight on this theme:

My boss (a Colonel) told me to go and tell a female civilian GS-15, equivalent to a Colonel, that she was being unprofessional and profane, and he gave me a direct order to go and do this, which was totally out of my purview. I was a Lieutenant Colonel. It was something that he should have done, but he wanted me to do it because I am a female, and he didn't have the guts to do it. That was the bottom line I think. I think that he couldn't deal with the women over all, the military or civilians.

One of the Majors (MC6) who is married to a Marine provided this:

When I was a Company Commander, my First Sergeant and Company Gunnery Sergeant were both Grunts (Tactical occupation), they were awesome Marines and outstanding individuals, but they always tell you, "I am not used to being around women, can you say this around a woman, can I make this joke around a woman?"...I think sometimes they do not always question the women's abilities, I think they question their comfort level working with women. If they have never done it before and they have the choice between working with a male and a female I think sometimes they go with the male just because they are comfortable with him.

Another Major (MC7) proved this example:

It's the little things like sitting in the wardroom...your sitting at a table with about eight chairs open and there are like one chair at one table and two at another open and three of your squadron buddies come in. They will not sit at the table with you. It's the little things like... It's very lonely.

#### **4. One Woman's Behavior Reflects on All Other Women**

This theme can be found in comments that address women who perform poorly and how other women suffer because of it. Issues addressed in this theme include: how women have to maintain high standards, how overly feminine behavior is looked down upon and how women can be singled out.

One Major (MC8) summed up her feelings by explaining it this way:

You (referring to other females) hinder me when you come and every time I turn around you are falling out of run. You hinder me because I have to work that much harder and mandate that I never fall out of a run to show male Marines that we can do it and to show female Marines that they need to get a clue and get with the program...

The same Major also stated:

I think we hurt ourselves sometimes by...you can't be cutesy and flirty and flighty and expect to be respected, it cannot work. They (the men) will laugh at you, they will sleep with you and drink beer with you, but they will not welcome you to the board per sé.

Another Major (MC9), described how her female Commanding Officer would single out the females when she gave official briefs saying:

[The Commanding Officer] would emphasize the fact that we were different because we were females. I cannot stand that. My opinion, that kind of sets the women back a few decades, instead of trying to get us on par with the men.

Another Major (MC11) provided this:

...take off your whole girlish, Malibu Barbie thing that you got going on. You need to be a little bit more down to earth. That is bad because that is not how Marines should be viewed. They give us a bad reputation because when you look at her you don't see a defender of our country, you see a flirt. And I don't like when female Marines use their female ways to get what they want. It doesn't get them ahead long term, maybe short term, but not long term. Their peers see right through it, but it makes us look bad.

One Captain (MC4) felt that the actions of other women, even if only perceived by others, can still cause problems for other women. She gave this example:

...while I was on ship, we had an equal opportunity climate survey and I had no idea how much animosity there is... At that time they asked some of the junior Marines, "How do you feel about sexual harassment?" and they said, "You know if I go to the gym and if I just look at a female I am afraid she is going to say that I sexually harassed her, so I leave." I thought that was kind of funny because I was offended by that because I would never wrongly accuse someone of that.



## **5. Females are Not Perceived to Hold Senior Leadership Positions in the Marine Corps**

This theme can be identified through comments that talk about how women in senior level positions are not visible to younger officers. One Captain (MC1) stated bluntly, "I don't know any O-6s. The highest ranking female I know is a Major."

Another Major (MC8) provided this insight:

I think because we are a male-dominant organization, a vast majority of key leadership billets are held by men. There is a network there and so we are not going to (have the same success as men). I don't even think we are proportionate to them, the percentage of women to our leadership billets...You can't tell me that we do not have qualified, competent and professional female leaders to the proportion of all the percentage of the Marine Corps that are not in key billets, key roles. I am so glad for women Marine officers that have obtained full bird (O-6) and General, but there are more out there who are quite competent to do that.

Another Lieutenant Colonel (MC13) stated that:

It's the good old boys network. The guys helping each other out and we don't have the women helping each other out because there are not enough of us around. The good old boys network put the guys they want to get promoted in certain jobs to make them stand out, look good. I think it's the guys know each other and they help each other out and we (the females) don't have the same type of mentoring. I think the Marine Corps as an organization thinks that "Yea, we have women and they are good at what they do, but we don't need more than five percent because that is the perfect number." Well that's crap!

A Major (MC6) articulated this theme by saying:

Put more women in key billets. I think people need to see it to believe it. Women need to be more involved in operational side of the Marine Corps. Need to see women in higher billets talking key issues, Iraq and so on. We have not seen it. Until you do see it, you don't believe women can be that involved, know the big picture, talk logistics, combat and all those other things.

Another Major (MC10) who was the only female officer on the Wing Staff, when asked if she knew any senior female officers stated:

...I don't see a lot of women. I think we will all get promoted but at some point I see a lot of male Generals and I only see two females...There is a percentage of male officers and female

officers. I don't know if the distribution is equitable. The bottom line is I don't see a hell of a lot of O-6s and I have been on staff, Wing level staff and I have been at the MEF and I don't see them there either... "where are they?"

A Captain (MC3) stated:

...I think that career advancement is skewed because women cannot work in combat MOSs and combat MOSs seem to be the ones that advance quicker. But you need more diversity in those Colonel and General billets...Are the proportions the same in Lieutenants as they are in Colonels for females and males? It just doesn't seem that there are as many opportunities for the advancement or billets...

## **6. Marriage and Family Conflict with Career**

This was expressed through comments that referred to trying to maintain a balance between work and family, sacrifices that have to be made by the family and by the Marine, such as missing important moments in the children's lives and giving up important assignments because of family commitments. One Major (MC7) amplified this by saying:

I am gung-ho Marine Corps, but I've got two kids. When I got back from Kuwait I was gone for over 50 percent of my boys' lives. That's a lot. If I were in the squadron, if I hadn't put in my resignation papers, I would be leaving in a few days for seven months, possibly 13.

A Lieutenant Colonel (MC13) added:

I would probably have to move again this summer. I need to stabilize my family. My family at this point after 20 years in the Marine Corps has got to be more important...I could make another move and find another billet I would be happy in, but my kids would have to move, and they are at the age where I don't think they should be moved anymore.

One Lieutenant Colonel (MC12) provided perceptions of senior officers and family:

I think the common thing is no kids because I think it is difficult to see your children growing up and you realize you are not there. There is a point where you realize that you are going to stick around and be a Marine forever or are you going to focus on that other part of your life, and I think that's where that self-imposed part

comes in. If you choose to be a mother than becoming a Colonel or a General is probably not really in the cards?

Another Lieutenant Colonel (MC14) stated, "All the women that I know in senior positions-- no children. I hate to say that. Again this is a choice you make."

The same Lieutenant Colonel also added:

The biggest roadblock for me is my family...I would never tell my kids that I couldn't do things in my career because of them, but it is true. After the birth of my first son I got a call as soon as I got off of maternity leave when Kosovo was going saying that they needed a Captain, and I was like one of the only people in the Marine Corps who could fill this billet. And I said, "unless you got day care in Kosovo I can't go." Luckily they were asking and not telling. That just killed me to say, "No."

A newly married Captain (MC5) with five years in the Marine Corps addressed the issue of the dual spouse and children conflict:

I do not think it is necessarily fair sometimes to the other people you work with when you have two active duty spouses and a child. All of a sudden you kind of put a burden on the people you work with because it is I can't stand duty Monday through Friday now because my husband deployed so now your fellow Marines have to pick up your slack....

## **7. Mental Toughness is Perceived to be Associated with Being a Successful Female Marine**

This was identified through remarks that focused on what qualities and abilities were needed to be a female in the Marine Corps, often addressing the need to have a "thick skin". Often the officers interviewed provided comments about the tangibles and intangibles the Marine Corps embraces.

A Captain (MC1) provided the following, "I think you have to have a certain personality that fits into the Marine Corps. You have to be a little tough skinned, you can't let little things bother you." She amplified this by saying, "I think I would like to believe as long as you work hard and do your job well and have a no nonsense attitude about your work. I think that's what it takes."

A Major (MC8) expressed this theme by stating:

...and so if they have that soft tender personality like that you are not going to fit here. If you wear your emotions on your sleeves you are not going to last here. So there has to be a certain mental toughness, there has to be a certain desire to not be the norm and not fit into the norm... You got to have a certain amount of grit. You cannot be afraid to get dirty.

A Lieutenant Colonel (MC14) provided the following:

It depends upon the personality. The Marine Corps attracts a certain kind of woman...[She] has to have a thicker skin, likes the challenge... You have to perform, you have to carry yourself, you can't make excuses and all that stuff.

A Captain (MC4) stated:

Depends upon the women. Someone who is not afraid to take charge...you can't put someone here who is easily offended or thought they should get something just because they are a female or thought that they should get special treatment one way or another...People respect you if you are a hard worker...

A Major (MC10) described a successful senior female officer saying:

She was a beer drinking, cussing Motor T person. One of the things she was she was smart. She was absolutely smart and even if you didn't like her or didn't agree with her she could make an argument, a cogent argument that was irrefutable...You have to be articulate, dynamic and know your stuff.

## **8. Marine Corps Women Continually Have to Prove Themselves Regardless of Rank or Experience**

Comments referring to this theme identified having to work harder than the men to be considered equal or credible, that women were not seen as Marines, but as women Marines, and that women had to prove themselves before being accepted. References to females' reputations being an issue are also identified as a cause of one having to prove themselves, as well as the different standards that exist for the women and men.

One Captain (MC1) summed it up by saying,

You have to know that when you check in they (the men) don't see a Marine, they see a female Marine and that's not sexist, it's just the way it is. You have to be able to just deal with that and do your job well and hope that speaks for itself.

Another Captain (MC2) agreed saying:

Initially you are judged a little harder than if you are a male, but once you are familiar with whom ever you are working with and get the thumbs up or down in some cases. I think there is initially something you have to feel out just because you are female.

Another Major (MC6) provided the following experience:

I think my CO had to prove herself. I find that with me... I always go back to being the S-3 Officer at Supply Battalion. I remember my first G-3 meeting and one of the male majors said to me, "oh you are taking Major XX's place (a male major), that's going to be tough, you have some big shoes to fill." That same Major coming back to me six months later saying, "I feel like an idiot for saying that to you. I don't know why I said that, and now I realize how stupid it was. You are doing a good job." I think he had an expectation that I would not do a good job because we were talking about so many operational issues and having to have the knowledge of the entire Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). I think he was concerned that I couldn't do that. So I had to prove myself to him.

A Lieutenant Colonel (MC12) provided this:

I would probably encourage women to join, but it is a tough thing and you got to know that that's what you are up against. You are not just going into something that is totally equal, you are going to have to work harder than you have ever worked and go in with expectations that you are going to have to be twice as good. That is still the same no matter what. There is no average woman, you are either really good or you are really bad.

## **C. MARINE CORPS SENIOR FEMALE OFFICER THEMES**

### **1. Marriage and Family Conflict with Career**

Similar to mid-level officers, this theme was expressed through comments that referred to trying to maintain a balance between work and family, as well as sacrifices that have to be made by the family and by the Marine.

One Colonel (MC18) who was married to a Marine explained why having a family could be difficult:

It is very difficult to be married and be a Marine and balanced. How do you read everything you are suppose to read?...I could never have kept up with everything to make me a credible officer in the areas that I wasn't working. I was very credible where they put me,

and I think to be a General Officer you have to be credible wherever they put you. That means if you are in an assignment here you are reading, you are PMEing, you are keeping abreast, you are constantly reeducating yourself on what the Marine Corps is doing, what it's about. That's a 24/7 kind of job. I have always said I need a wife (jokingly) to stay at home and take care of everything, like most General officers have. It is just not that easy to do the balancing act, but you can do it. But you have to set your limits because if you step beyond them then you lose the credibility that has taken you so long to get. I knew to this point I could do the kids and do a credible job. That next step I wouldn't be.

Another Colonel (MC17) who is married to a retired Marine Officer provided this concerning family and the Marine Corps:

I think it would be interesting to see how many women are Colonels and how many have kids. It is hard to balance what's best for the family and what's best for the Corps and that is a balance and you can't really do it unless you have a supporting spouse. It's not easy. I have been very fortunate. My husband is a great supporter. He is Mr. Mom, and we have a total role reversal. That's going to be the big thing when women stay. Will they stay with families or will they get out at 20 or 21 years. How can we make it so they can stay? I don't have an answer to that, but I know the spouse has to be supportive and the Marine Corps has to look at where they are putting them.

Another Colonel (MC16) who is not married stated:

The question is, "Can you do it all?" And that is really the question and I have great admiration for women who are married, who have families, who do all that. They look at me, and they go, "I don't know how you do it." Well the reason I can do what I do is because I don't have a family. I don't have children. I am very, very focused and able to give a 150 percent if I need to. I can give anything to this job that's required. Someone who has a husband and children, they are just as good as I am, if not better, but the time constraints for them to still be a dedicated mother, still be a dedicated house wife, still be a dedicated wife...You just absolutely can't. So the challenge is, "Are you, when you make those choices, are you happy with those choices?"

**2. Although Boxes Have to Be Checked for Career Advancement, Working Hard and Seeking Opportunities is a Fundamental Strategy for Success in the Marine Corps**

The respondents addressed this issue through comments that focused on working hard, doing well no matter where the Marine Corps sends you (blooming where you are planted), and not only taking advantage of opportunities when they come your way, but making opportunities. Other comments include completing the requirements that make you available for promotion, Professional Military Education (PME), getting command, and deploying.

One Colonel (MC16) explained it this way:

...whatever it is that you do, do it to the best of your ability. If you are in charge of a particular single task, if you do the best you can and bloom where you are planted then that is really going to be your success.... Don't burn bridges. Don't step on anybody's back to get where you think your going to get because people have very long memories in this business. And I think really just do the best that you can in the job that you are doing and everything else will take care of itself.

Another Colonel (MC18) put it this way:

I never talked to my monitor, never checked the blocks. I never did that. I just literally was told where to go, when to report and I did it. All the way until I think, actually to be honest I never balked at anything they said or what they told me to do...my advice would be to at least know what the checks in the block are that are important to promotion boards: Command, MOS credibility...Who you know is important in the Marine Corps and the more senior you get, I think that is a reality...So it is all about the individual. It's back to who you are, what you want to accomplish and how hard are you willing to work for it.

A different Colonel (MC17) provided this:

I would tell you to get enough time in the operational forces. Deploy as much as you can. Never give up an opportunity to command. Seek opportunity to command. Make sure you go to school (PME)...Don't be afraid to get out there and work your hardest and do your best. Don't let anyone tell you, "No, you can't do something" because of your sex. Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty, which I think most women do.

Finally, one of the Colonels (MC15) expressed her opinion this way:

There is no “path” (emphasis added). If you look at one General’s career pattern and you take mine, you take another Colonel’s and one more Colonel’s career pattern and there are virtually no similarities at all. Every one of us has been successful. And again it gets back to bloom where you are planted. But I would also say that you have to be your own career planner. You have to look around, be aware of what’s available and if you want it, seek it. Let people know you want to do it. You do not wait for something to come to you...The very basic ground level rule is to bloom where you are planted and then because what you do with that is you prove yourself. Prove yourself capable of whatever the Marine Corps asks you to do. And that I think is the best way to recommend yourself for promotion and advancement...become the go-to person in that area. The Subject Matter Expert if you can and that will recommend you better than anything else.

### **3. Women in the Marine Corps Have to Continually Prove Themselves Regardless of Their Rank or Their Experience**

Like the mid-level officers, comments referring to this theme identified having to work harder than the men to be considered equal or credible, that women were not seen as Marines, but as women Marines, and that women had to prove themselves before being accepted.

One Colonel (MC18) provided this explanation:

It is not that I had ever not wanted to be a woman, but I wanted to be treated as an equal. I think I left every assignment with a lot of credibility as an officer, but I don’t think that’s how I came into each job. I think women in the Marine Corps start out 10 paces back. If we go into an assignment, immediately we start behind our male counterparts. Then given time, we can move up to even and if we are better we move ahead. But it takes time, takes perseverance and it takes a hell of a lot of stick-to-it-ness...I also learned young that I had to be able to perform if I wanted to gain the men’s credibility, gain their respect. So I always pushed myself far, far more than my male counterparts ever did. They could be broken and it was OK. But when I was broken I would have never said anything because it would have looked like weakness. With them they were broken. There is a double standard, there will always be. I don’t know how to change that...

Another Colonel (MC17) offered the following:

Being in the operational force gives you credibility. You have to have been able to have boots on the ground I think in order to show, especially as a woman, that you can do it. We still have to



work twice as hard as our male counter parts to prove that we can do it. Thankfully for most of us it is easy.

Additionally she provided the following:

My last two commands, this one and the one before it, I followed a woman. People start thinking it's a woman's command instead of earning your right to be there. So there still is that, trying to think of the right word, sort of like that cloud over our head that we got because we are women not because we earned the right to do it. And you still have to prove to people in the battalion that you have the right to be there. You still have men come up to you and say, "We loved serving with you and oh by the way, you are the first woman I have ever served for." It is like, "What difference does it make?"

#### **4. Women Need to be Seen in Senior Level Positions**

This theme can be identified through comments that talk about how women are not visible in senior level positions and how men make the important decisions. Additionally there are comments about networking and mentoring female officers that are a part of this theme.

One Colonel (MC15) explained what she perceived to be the male hierarchy:

"Male Institution," the hierarchy of the Marine Corps. There are 80 some Generals in the Marine Corps; only two are women. They make the decisions; they make the calls for the institution. At the local level lots of Marines make decisions, but when it comes to the hard decisions, the big questions, it's the male officers who make those decisions... But there is still, let's face, it the Marine Corps is still a macho organization. There is a male mindset, but I think it is leaving the Marine Corps...We can have women as Platoon Commanders and Company Commanders, Battalion Commanding Officers. "OK we can do that." Base Commanders, "OK, we can do that." In the operating forces, I think there is still some uncertainty.

She went on to say:

What I don't think we have done enough of is put women in appropriate roles. I would like to see more women Generals, more women in more senior positions within the Marine Corps. Some of these things are taking way too long. Even women who have experience and credibility in Manpower jobs are just finally moving into some of the top Manpower billets. Why aren't we putting people with the right skills and the capabilities? They could do the best job for the Marine Corps.

This Colonel (MC16) agreed also, saying:

I would probably recommend that we increase the numbers of women. When I say that, without severely hampering the Marine Corps' primary mission. So I would probably recommend that we do another structure analysis as to what the Marine Corps could really handle with women. I think the women do well. I think ensuring or selecting women to do key jobs, which we have been doing, but there are still positions that women have never held that there is no reason not to have had. Commanding Officer of TBS, Commanding Officer of Recruit Training Regiment at Parris Island, Commanding Officer of OCS. There are still positions that we have kind of hung onto that there is really no reason. Women have been going through TBS forever so why not? Again could a woman be the Commanding General of Parris Island? Yea! So why not? We had a woman who was the Commanding General of 3rd FSSG. That was a very visual picture. People knew we had a woman, we actually had two out there, as operational commanders, at the pointy end of the spear. People were saying hey the Marine Corps is doing it right, but those are the only two places they have been. Women Commanding General's have not been anywhere else. Why not the FSSG at Lejuene, why not the FSSG at Camp Pendleton?

Finally this Colonel (MC17) added:

I think they are doing a good job, but I think where they place us in commands becomes very important. Some people see it as we are taking jobs away from men. Part of it is there are not a lot of us. But they have to make sure they place us in the right positions so that we can advance so that other women can advance and show that they can do it...I think because they groom people for General Officers and there are only two slots for us (women General Officers). I will be interested to see if anyone makes it off this next board. My personal opinion is that nobody will.

## **5. Female Officers Entering the Marine Corps Today Have More Credibility**

This theme is identified through comments that refer to the number and types of billets the younger officers, Captains and Lieutenants, are getting today and how that will help them to get credibility and advance to more senior positions.

This Colonel (MC15) has seen a difference in how many females are getting command now, stating:

One thing I have seen change is you have a lot of young officers, women officers right out of The Basic School (TBS) and they become Platoon Commanders right off the git-go...So they are going to become Company Commanders because they know their stuff. They're going to become Battalion Commanders because they have got the stuff. They know the business. They have got the credentials, and everything else being equal they are as competitive as anyone else. So that has changed. At one time recently 1stFSSG had two women Battalion Commanders at the same time. So my God, we went from having, in my day, a couple of Company Commanders to having two women Battalion Commanders and Maintenance Battalion had a female Battalion Commander when they went off to war.

Another Colonel (MC16) stated, "It's hard not to be jealous. I think of the things that we have done for the past 20 or 30 years, things that I have not done. I see the doors wide open for Lieutenants and Captains today."

She went on to say:

There are many more occupational fields today than there ever were when I was in...you rarely find a female in a traditional female job any more. I think, no kidding, a Lieutenant female today, no kidding, has no reason not to think that she could not wear three stars in the Marine Corps 30 years from now. There is every opportunity for someone to do and be whatever they want today as a female, I think. You can embark on ships, you can be the commander of troops. You can fly airplanes and be crew chiefs. There is, outside of the specific combat arms, women are in theater now (IRAQ). Those are things that truly make people competitive for promotion and their records will speak for themselves as well.

Another Colonel (MC17) explained it this way;

So I think they have a better chance at making it than we had in our time. The other thing when I came in the Marine Corps I think we were like 26 MOSs and then the Commandant of the Marine Corps took it down to 13 MOSs. There were not many choices of what we could go into. When I look at the women today, they can fly, they can be engineers, they can do so many different things.

Another Colonel (MC18) provided the following:

...but I do think that women that are coming up now are being trained, are getting the kinds of billets that will help them to have

more credibility. So I think that is changing. So I am hoping that some of the younger officers out there, I would like them to become General Officers.

#### **D. AIR FORCE MID-LEVEL FEMALE OFFICER THEMES**

##### **1. The Air Force Provides Education, Travel Opportunities and Equal Pay**

Organizations have many types of opportunities available that attract employees. Opportunities can be the receipt of medical benefits, on-site childcare, continuing education training and much more. The Air Force women interviewed found the military to be an organization that provided the right opportunities for them, including education, job and travel opportunities and equal pay.

The opportunity of education was what one Captain (AF15) said gave her the feeling of accomplishment:

I'm definitely grateful to the military for all the opportunities I've had- for all the education and the training- I've had so much training. I'm lucky. I wish I had a better memory with all the training... Finishing my Bachelor's degree was a huge milestone.

A Lieutenant Colonel (AF5) also said education was a great benefit:

It's so fulfilling to have a career, to have gone to college, gotten a degree and master's degree...I would have not liked to have been a housewife and thought, "What could I have accomplished if I tried?"

Other officers commented that it was the opportunity for travel and job variety that appealed to them. One officer (AF6) said, "the places I have gotten to go to, the things I've gotten to see and do, the people I have gotten to see and meet, I just would not have gotten that someplace else."

A Lieutenant Colonel (AF13) had this to say:

Obviously, I think it's a great way of life and I've told people I get paid to work, travel the world, serve my country, do the mission. I'm just like, "Great!"

Another Lieutenant Colonel (AF16) shared similar feelings:

I like the opportunities to travel and doing different jobs... And so I know that for my own personal reasons, its best that I don't stay at

one job for like- 10 years, because at some point I would blow a gasket.

One Major (AF7) commented:

In my view, other than what you would find in other organizations, outside of the military, is what I perceive as more of an equivalency. Where you don't have to worry about if there is a balance between what a Captain with seven years how much they paid as a male versus how much a Captain with seven years gets paid if they are a female.

## **2. The Air Force Provides a More Equitable Work Environment**

The women described the Air Force as providing a sense of fairness and equality. They provided examples of job positions, a systematic structure, and rank.

A Lieutenant Colonel (AF4) had this to say:

So when I thought about it, asked myself "Do I really think I could have had almost any position?"- Was there something about being a woman that was prohibiting me? I don't think so.

A Captain (AF17) stated that it was the system of the military that kept everything equal:

I think the system, in theory, is there to promote people regardless of gender, sex, age, etc. The system is there. It's hard to put in a bias there because it's systematic.

Another Lieutenant Colonel (AF5) said:

Everyone does the best job they can and help each other out and I feel our own reward system and our promotion system is fair across the board. So whoever does the best job is rewarded appropriately.

Another Lieutenant Colonel (AF16) said that the rank structure determines the jobs, which keeps things pretty fair in the military:

You do the same work, you get the same pay. It's rank that sort of results in you getting jobs. It wasn't like I got this position and then because I was a woman, I got placed under the Major because he was a guy. That's not the way it works. So I think that the military as a whole, is pretty good off. It's fair.

A few officers also perceived the Air Force in particular, as a more equitable work environment when compared to the other services. One Captain (AF17) said:

Of the four services, I think it is the most “girl friendly.” And I’m total civilian, I’m a total weenie- and I was thinking, “OK, ‘Air Force Inc.’ That was probably the most business like,” and “OK, this could work.”

### **3. The Air Force Fosters Teamwork**

There is an attractive quality to an organization that is welcoming, providing a sense of acceptance. It fosters an environment of teamwork, where people are willing to help each other get the job done and to get it done well.

One Captain (AF17) said:

I think the teamwork aspect, working together. You don’t need to meet a bottom line. You don’t have shareholders. You have citizens. People are willing to help you.

A Lieutenant Colonel (AF13) put it this way:

I think the military has the esprit de corps, where people take care of each other and the whole teamwork thing... is great- we take care of our people. People just really come together to help others.

Another Lieutenant Colonel (AF5) also preferred the teamwork, saying:

I just felt that people were better. I liked the camaraderieship in the Air Force...I think it’s amazing how it works, that if you help each other and the whole team works hard, then the whole organization does well. It surfaces who those team building leaders are. How we see it is that those leaders are those who help that organization accomplish those goals.

One final reference about teamwork equates the Air Force to being one big family.

One Major (AF14) had this to say:

You can go anywhere in the world and if you’re stranded they’ll just take you in. Or you meet someone and you find out “Hey you were in the service?” And you can strike up a conversation with people who are complete strangers, but immediately you can have a bond because you both served. Even if it was a different service, you were still in the military. It’s a big sense of family.

#### **4. Air Force Women Associate a Sense of Patriotism with Military Service**

Air Force women acknowledge their service in the military as a patriotic duty. One Captain (AF15) remarked:

I felt very fortunate to be an American and wanted to do something to help out our country. My father was in the military in WWII and he had always talked about it. And there was nobody really in my family that was in the military, and I thought it would be something different that I could do.

It was clear to one Captain (AF10) as she said, "I wanted to serve my country and I thought that was awesome."

One Captain (AF17) said that after spending time in a civilian career, she really knew it was the patriotic sense of duty that lured her to the job:

But is it really like teaching me to the greater good? I just wanted to be part of something bigger than me and that really hit me when I was doing the 9 to 5 type of thing. You know, you're doing something for your country, something for your fellow man, all that patriotic stuff. I buy into it. I love that stuff.

A Major (AF3) recalled the impression it made on her mother through the remarks she would say when she was growing up:

My mother always used to talk about it, but no one in my family was in the military, my mother used to say, "What an honorable profession," and when you see people in uniform, you think, "Wow-that's something to be proud of and these people are remarkable and would I ever be lucky enough to be chosen to be in the military."

#### **5. Working in the Air Force Provides the Chance to Make a Difference**

There is an allure to a workplace that provides a sense of purpose, a sense of doing something that reaches out to others and makes a difference. The women interviewed remarked that it was the chance to make a difference and positively impact others.

One Captain (AF1) put it this way:

I really like the commitment to something that is a larger cause. Being part of something that is bigger than you are that you may

not be able to see the end, but you know that you are there for a reason. That really appeals to me.

One Captain (AF8) said that to her, doing the job is:

Not just working to make an extra buck. I'm actually doing something to make a difference in the world... You see things on the news and think, "Hey- I'm actually doing something about it."

One Major (AF14) said it was a combination of patriotism and service for others:

Not only am I serving my country, but I'm helping other people. In everything I do- whether it's people in my unit or people in the Air Force or the folks in the community. There are always folks that no matter what you're doing, is contributing to something. So you know that it's not a waste of time. That someone needs it.

She concluded by saying, "It's just one of those careers that is not self-serving. You're there for other people's needs."

Another Major (AF3) said:

I guess making a difference. In terms of for the country and the troops that work for you, as far as leadership goes-- helping the troops. For me the overarching reason is for the greater good.

One Lieutenant Colonel (AF11) remarked that the military has given her a feeling of success and making a difference. "[It] is a perfect blend of being able to do what you are trained to do, but also lead people and be part of their lives as an influence."

## **6. Men Show a Lack of Respect to Women**

Roadblocks to career progression for career-oriented women may take many forms. Often times, it can be an issue of credibility. The Air Force women interviewed expressed this perception through their comments about feeling prejudged on their abilities before they even walked in the door of their office. The women cited examples of lack of respect and blatant gender discrimination. According to some women interviewed, the men just didn't think the women were credible.



One Captain (AF9) said:

It's something that I just can't put my finger on it. I have seen a woman here that previously all the Colonels joked that "Oh, is she pretty? Well then that is why she got the job." It wasn't that she wasn't fully capable, because I knew she was...And they didn't know her. On top of it, she wasn't an idiot, like some others could be. But I don't know, it's just something that you can put your finger on.

One Captain (AF10) said that it was a lack of respect by her boss for her abilities that gave her a feeling of self-doubt in doing her job. She said:

He doesn't believe a word we say and so that was interesting for me because I never really experienced that before and I don't know if it was because he had been in so many years and just had that old mentality or if it was just him. I haven't experienced that again and I hope not to but you know, it makes you feel like, "Why am I here?"

Another Captain (AF8) also felt the same way saying, "I went in there and everyone had some preconceived notions that as a Lieutenant I shouldn't have been there and I was a woman."

Another Captain (AF9) illustrated her disgruntlement with the lack of respect from subordinate personnel:

Because I can do the same thing that my boyfriend does and it will be taken completely different. I have scolded people and have seen males do the same thing and taken completely differently. People come back at me and say, "How come you did that?" and when my boyfriend does it they don't do anything. And I'm like, "How is that any different? Was it wrong the way I did it?"

The issue of gender discrimination was also referenced by some of the women as a detractor to their progress.

A Major (AF14) said it came straight from her immediate supervisors:

My commander, an O-6, point blank said, "I don't think women should be in the military." And then the Operations Officer said, "You want to know why your one of the top collectors- it's because you wear a skirt!"

## **7. Maintaining Balance Between Career and Family is Difficult**

Like the Marine Corps, Air Force women often find themselves balancing their time between the demands of their career and the needs of their family. Both occupy substantial amounts of time, but there comes a point when women find themselves having to make compromises in their lives for one or the other.

One Captain (AF17) commented, "I'd love to have a wife! Ha, Ha, Ha. Female military officers have to take on both roles- takes a rare male to do that."

A Major (AF3) said it just isn't the same for men and women when considering family roles:

I think in that regard, if you want to have a normal life (married with children), the kind most people envision as they mature, then there is a definite sacrifice as a female. So I just think that some women make a decision while in the military, they won't have the family because it is such a high price to pay.

Joint spouse is another critical issue for the women interviewed. According to one Captain (AF2), it is one of the leading reason for job separation. She said:

In fact, I put in my papers and I got a job and I was ready to get out ...it was just logistically easier, you know- both of us to be in one place. And that was the biggest reason why most people get out. It's just not easy to live in two places and to always be moving.

A Major (AF7) said sacrifices are part of the job as a joint spouse:

I know that at some point one of us will have to leave the military. We are hoping that it isn't anytime soon, but we are willing to make sacrifices to try to stay together and to continue to contribute in each of our career fields while still not sacrificing any of our family unity.

She was also quick to point out:

The other tragedy that I think, so many couples where you have dual military couples and despite the fact that the female might be clearly the stronger officer, it's the female that gets out.

One Lieutenant Colonel (AF11) said that personal choices by both partners to pursue careers have conflicted with joint assignments:

Now I'm going to Alabama and he is staying here. But that is with "our eyes wide open" because I have always felt that we both have been in our service to know how our assignment process works, where we can and can't be stationed and it's a choice that we made

to keep our careers going. I could have turned down Squadron Commander and tried to get to Kadena AFB, but it wouldn't have been appropriate career progression for me, but I could have gotten there. So we haven't been stationed together that much, but I don't blame it on the Air Force or Marine Corps. I kind of blame it on our own goals and where we are headed.

A military career also impacts childcare, in particular, preparing a "back-up" plan and setting priorities. One Major (AF3) said:

If they (women) marry military, they end up getting out. I've had a couple of friends who married military and once they started to have children the female got out as they thought about deployments at the same time.

#### **8. Working Hard and Keeping a Positive Attitude are Strategies for Career Progression in the Air Force**

Career progression is a culmination of attitude and strategies. Two dominating strategies by some of the Air Force female officers interviewed included working hard and keeping a positive attitude. By doing so, the officers felt that they would be rewarded appropriately for their efforts.

One officer (AF1) decided to let her hard work speak for itself:

I'm going to let my work speak for itself. And I'm going to work hard and that's okay- the numbers will all pan out- and by working harder, my team will put up a better product than the others. And putting out that way just went a lot farther than just being the outspoken one.

She summed it up saying, "it's continually working as hard as you can...being ahead of your peers makes it more likely that you are going to continue to get prime assignments."

One Lieutenant Colonel (AF13) said:

The most important thing is you have to do well at your job...you have to do well and establish your reputation based on the fact that you are a good performer and that you are a "go-to" person.

A Major (AF14) also stated that the strategy was her attitude, "My attitude is 'Do a good job in whatever job they give you.'"

One Captain (AF9) expressed a positive outlook that illustrates the potentials she foresees with her career:

I don't really look and go, "OK, are there any female Generals, so that means I can be one." I just get up and go to work and work hard, do my job and things will work out.

A Major (AF14) had this to say:

You can encourage people to do things by having a good attitude, a good sense of humor to get them to realize that "Hey, this is messed up, but let's just fix it up, press on."

## **9. Women in the Air Force Have to Prove Themselves**

On the job experience and performance is perceived as a valuable measurement for a person's capabilities and know-how. While hard work may be recognized in an organization, there were concerns about still being discredited on the basis of gender. Air Force officers said that to combat this image of incompetence, they held themselves to high standards. By doing so, they experienced more positive recognition of their abilities.

A Major (AF7) described her professional behavior as one that compensates for her gender:

I feel, as a female I work harder to be equal, or I work harder to be perceived as equal and certainly when you get into a place like Korea. And it's not so much the location as it is the mentality of the mission; that they need to see you as being more authoritative to earn your respect and for people to pay attention to what you have to say.

Another Major (AF14) felt that she had to prove herself because her gender discredited her abilities:

Until you've really proved yourself to them, you have to do that everywhere you go, over and over, while a lot of guys get the credibility just by showing up and having the patch. Well a female can show up with the same patch and she gets questioned about her abilities.

As a result she resolved to maintain the attitude of:

I'm gonna prove'm that they are wrong. That there's no way that anyone will ever say that a female can't do this job.

One Captain (AF9) provides the following warning to women entering the military:

Tell them to be prepared for it and know that they are going to have to do more than their counterparts, be careful of your reputation, and anything you do. Just because a man can do it doesn't mean you can do it and get away with it.

## **E. AIR FORCE FEMALE SENIOR OFFICER THEMES**

### **1. The Air Force Lifestyle is Filled with Great Opportunities and Great People**

The culture of the military provides the opportunities of travel and job diversity that are appealing. It also provides the chance to work with a wide variety of people that treat you like family.

One senior leader (AF18) said:

I like the fact that with the military, you move every couple of years. You get different jobs, that's always appealed to me. Going different places.

Another senior leader (AF20) said this:

Well, both the value of education, the opportunity to travel. Diversity, in terms of outlook and training, working with different kinds of people from different walks of life and moving into greater and greater challenges. It's all in one place.

Another senior leader (AF22) said:

Even though we wear the same thing, you see, in the armed forces, there so many more individuals, from all walks of life. How interesting the adventure, the travel, the satisfaction of a job well done is. Working with some of the best [people] you can trust; such a sense of confidence.

The levels of acceptance individuals show towards each other in the military also influence the attractive culture. One senior leader (AF21) described it this way:

And so that whole sort of atmosphere pervaded the base, of "we are so isolated, we have to work to make sure that people themselves don't feel isolated and that they feel a family." And that bond really made a difference. I come from a very strong, connected family. And I think the fact that I walked into a new,

strange environment and I found another family. Folks who were okay, we'll try and make you successful and feel at home. And it wasn't just me; it was everybody. And I said, "I like this organization, if that is how they look at the folks as they come in."

She continues to say that the organization has not let down its appeal throughout her years of service:

One of the benefits is you can walk in an Air Force base and you are connected with everybody through the Air Force experience. We still work to take care of our families...We still have kept that up.

Another senior leader (AF22) could not say enough about the people she worked with and all the benefits they have to offer an organization. When comparing her military and civilian experiences, she greatly favored the military culture:

I tell the [them], "I have been there, I have had the big bucks, and I had all the monetary trappings," but there is nothing more rewarding than finishing a job with help, with people you trust, people you admire...You look at our leaders who have responsibility in numbers greater than any other corporations and not just making widgets, tires or jeans, they have life and death. They are bright, they are educated they make the right decisions. They are so impressive and you have the pleasure of serving with those people.

## **2. There is a Sense of Pride and Purpose Associated with the Air Force**

The purpose of the military is to serve and defend the United States. With that purpose comes a volunteer service to one's country. Many of the women interviewed said that this "service" was a symbol of their patriotic and selfless duty to something greater than themselves.

One senior leader (AF21) said her attraction to the organization was stimulated by the sense of patriotic duty it provides:

I have a unique background in that my parents were immigrants to the United States and so it just appealed to me in terms of saying, "This is what I can do as a service to pay back the United States for everything that they have done for my family."

Another leader (AF18) also said, “I think it was the traditions, the patriotism, those kinds of intangibles that attracted me more.” She continues to say that the rewards were just something she couldn’t put a price tag on, it was a feeling she got each morning getting ready for work:

And I’ve never to date, experienced any hankering to jump ship and become the civilian. To me, it’s still a great thing to wake up in the morning and put on the uniform and know that today I’m not going to work just to bring home a paycheck...I like waking up everyday knowing there was some purpose to doing what I was doing.

Another leader (AF22) says the rewards came to her at the end of each day’s work:

What it is, at the end of the day, is if you can look at yourself in the mirror. You hang up that uniform and you feel good. You not only did something right but you feel rewarded because you can see what you have done. When you go out with the troops and they want to have a picture with you, you have succeeded and when you go home at night you feel good, tired but good; rewarded.

One leader (AF21) was also motivated by her impacting contributions:

I came in thinking I would stay in for four years, figure out what I was going to do with my life and move on from there. At the end of four years (or about the end of two years when the light bulb came on) I said, okay, I’m ready- the grass is always greener. But things were never so bad that I had woken up in the morning and said, “That’s it!” I’ve been frustrated, but nothing more. I have always felt that I am helping to change things and making an impact and I think I still can. So, I have achieved the dream I wanted to.

Furthermore, the social prestige associated with a job creates even greater appeal. As one senior leader (AF22) said,

[The military] is still is considered by the American public and probably by the world around as the most respected of all careers. And I think that is for a reason. You can do and lead and be what ever you want to be.

### **3. Air Force Women Must Learn to Fit in a Male-Dominated Organization**

The military is a male-dominated organization. As such, it can be difficult for women to fit in with such a traditional culture. Some of the leaders interviewed

expressed their opinions about the macho culture as a fraternity, a “good old boy’s club” and a place where women are the minority.

One leader (AF22) remarked:

“How do you describe this fraternity that you and I have joined?”...The “good old boy network” is alive and well. I don’t care to be a part of that. I find it disconcerting when decisions are made in the locker room or on the links when I have not been included.

Another leader (AF19) made a concurrent statement when she said:

You go plowing along and think it’s a level playing field, but my hunch is its still a man’s Air Force. And I’m not complaining about what I’ve got, I feel like I’ve earned it. But they let us play (this is my opinion). Don’t look out there and think it’s absolutely equal because it’s not.

One leader’s (AF21) perception revealed that it is important to keep the boss informed of personal developments and accomplishments so you are not overshadowed by the number of men around. She said:

You get sort of lost in the woodwork if you say, “You need to make sure your boss knows what you’re doing.” And yah, he keeps track of lost of things, but as a woman you have to do that a little bit more of making people aware of the kinds of things you do, especially if it’s in an area of something that’s a little different...So I constantly keep him informed so he doesn’t think I’m just sitting here for eight hours a day not doing anything... So you want to make sure that folks are still aware that we are out here and yes, there are more women now than 20-30 years ago, but we’re still not mirroring the population of the United States.

One leader (AF18) summed it up by saying:

I think you just have to be able to fit into a male-dominated culture. I think you need to face right up front that what you’re entering you are going to be a minority and deal with it. And if your personality is such that you can’t deal with being in a male-dominated culture then don’t sign up because that’s the reality.

#### **4. Family and Career Balance is Difficult**

Senior Air Force officers find an incongruence exists when trying to balance family life and professional career. The senior leaders interviewed all recognized that it was not easy to do it all, and that women cannot do it all. There will have to be compromises made along the way. Sometimes those will be in favor



of the family; other times, they will be in favor of the career. As one senior leader (AF21) put it:

One of the things that hasn't change is you can't do it all. In the 70s, 80s there was this commercial of a woman that said you can do everything- she was in business clothes, a pen in her hand, kids all over the place and it said- you can do everything. Well, you can't. That's how I have changed in mentoring, especially the female officers. I said that you are going to have to compromise. Sometimes it will be out of your military career and sometimes, as hard as it may sound, it will be out of your family.

Another leader (AF22) agreed when she said:

I think it is hard to be both. I think being a Mom is a "24-hour, seven days a week" job. There are some jobs in the military that "cater" to being a Mom more than others, but if we are at war, which is our mission and we have to deploy, it's hard for a father and a mother.

One senior leader (AF19) recalled a time when she took a less than desirable job just to stay closer to her husband:

So then, to stay near my husband, I was told I could go to Base Y as Chief of Supply. And I thought, "Supply at a closing base? I don't think there could be a worse job," but I went ahead and took it.

Another senior leader (AF21) said that it was because of her family needs that she had to make a compromise in her career path:

I have two daughters and I was a single parent for about ten years and many of the career decisions I made, especially out of maintenance into academics was because of the two girls and being a single parent. And saying, "What am I supposed to do if I get a call at 0300?" I can't just walk into their rooms and give them a kiss and say, "I think I'll be back." And I didn't really know how to do that.

Finally, one leader (AF20) said she just couldn't see how it could be done:

There are people all around me, right in the front office, that have kids and I really don't know how they do it. But they do. And so, probably if I had 3 kids, I'd be taking all that in stride, but I don't know how people can find enough time in the day to do all that.

## **5. A Diverse Career Path is an Element of Success**

For the Air Force senior officers interviewed, none of them could have predicted they would be where they are today. There were references to taking

job opportunities as they came available and to give each job a chance. It caused them to get out of their comfort zones and tested their leadership abilities. In the end, the perception of the atypical career path appeared to have its advantages.

According to one leader (AF19), it encompasses experiencing all levels of the workforce to acquire the skills and qualifications that will be able to make you successful. She says:

And I think the key to advancing was having depth and breadth and as I look back on my career, I have served at all the levels, squadron and remote and intermediate, Head Quarters (HQ), MAJCOM, Pentagon, wholesale, retail, career broadening, you just have to do that to cover the waterfront. At the same time, you have to be doing a job; you can't be chasing a career. So that's always something to bear in mind.

One leader (AF18) said that her career could not have been planned if she tried:

And I have had a very eclectic career- not your average career. As a young Captain, I went to Squadron Officer School (SOS) to become an instructor and then came back to Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) and worked in a depot and from there I went to US Southern Command at Panama- very strange career move. Which I didn't plan out, just happened that way, and then tour at Air Force Personnel Command, Air Staff. I have had a strange career, so I am not your stovepipe Acquisitions professional. But for me, that was the way to go because I think it was much more fun. But when I mentioned about planning out your career- well heck, I couldn't have planned any of that stuff.

Following the advice from mentors early in her career, one leader (AF21) was able to increase her set of skills, which kept the possibilities open for future career opportunities:

I think I was fortunate because I had some very good chiefs, senior enlisted and a really good squadron commander who took me under their wing as a Second Lieutenant that said, "Wake up, we don't always get what we want. And if your prime goal was to get a better perspective of what talents and skills you have, this is going to give you some more options. You're not going to just leave college and get a job in Public Affairs and that's all you can do. Now you are going to have a larger pallet to work with."

Along similar lines, another leader (AF22) said that building her skills through military education further diversified and enhanced her career:

Therefore some of the block checking through the PME is critical because it forces us to get out and go to schools and now we have the opportunity to go to the other service schools where will pick up skills, some intangible that we can't even imagine. But we are getting these skills as officers that we put in our toolbox.

Furthermore, she emphasizes the concept of "whole person development" for leadership:

At my level, understanding what the needs of the Air Force are, there are certain things that we have identified that are critical to the development of the whole person. We have PME, which we call the Development Leadership Education (DLE)...And how important it is for us to continually be aware of the new leadership challenges within different environments and different threats and the different demands of organizations which we call team building: Joint task forces, transformational leadership, visionary folks, These are the things I try to impart on these folks. I tell them, "This is a laboratory, go out and try your leadership skills."

## **6. Air Force Women Have to Prove Themselves**

This perception permeates all of the discussions with the Air Force senior leaders. Each leader made comments about women having to work harder, to push a little more to not be equal to their male counterparts, but to at least be perceived as equal and "doing the job." References were made to continually having to do your best and build a good reputation.

One leader (AF21) said:

I did seem to feel there was this atmosphere of where, "Women really aren't as tough. They really can't fly as well as the men can." So the men had a tendency to look and be more critical of the women. And so you had to perform better because you were getting this extra look.

She reinforced her perception, saying, "I do think that women have to work a little more harder because we have to be visible."

Another leader (AF20) had this to say about a former supervisor:

One of my Commanders at one point in my career each time I went in for feedback would say, "Wow, for a woman, you're really doing

well.” What does that mean? That was really the only sense that I ever got that someone was still looking at me as a woman and not as an officer.

She continued to then say:

Will women experience some gender bias? Undoubtedly. Because there are attitudes that folks have, whether they are expressed or not. My confidence is on the woman to the best job she can and prove them wrong.

One final note by a leader (AF22) was, “We have to really still continue to serve to do our best and be our best.”

## **7. Placing Women in Senior Leadership Positions Needs to be Supported by Senior Leadership**

As women enter into career fields formerly closed to them, they find themselves in unknown territory. To better support their advancement it is important for current senior leadership to be courageous enough to place qualified women in leadership positions to better promote women’s capabilities and their opportunities for success.

One leader (AF20) said:

I think it’s encouraged and I think the real good leaders I’ve seen are recognizing that women sometimes still have to work harder, so you sometimes get a better quality officer or harder working one. Where people that recognize that, get a real good team around them.

The following example was provided by a leader who was the first female selected for a particular senior level job (AF21):

It really was a “good old boy’s club.” They were very old, very senior, wonderful individuals, but they had all been in those positions for years ...So not only did I come in and sit at the table as the only woman, I was a YOUNG woman (by comparison). These folks were old. So that’s where it takes courage. Because 1) I was a female; 2) I didn’t fit the mold...And I’ll be honest; I was a divorced single parent. I really didn’t fit! And so I think it was one of their finest moments to say, “This is the right person and this is who we want because of what kinds of things she wants to do.”

One leader (AF22) said that it is the leadership who will need to take the risks to better support women:

[Women] will never lead a group or platoon into combat, it's against the law, but should that preclude [them] from being a commander? And I say, "No, it is against the law." But that is where you may have some risk takers out there and you do have some fine leaders in all the services that will measure an officer's ability based on their capabilities, not on the uniform they wear nor on the badges that they have been assigned, but it takes some risk taking and we have some of those folks. We are going to see a lot more.

She provides the following explanation to illustrate the type of positions women need to be in and cites a leader who might take the risk:

We have go to get operating female Generals Officers, and I mean operators, not out of the Personnel or Intell, I am talking pilots and space folks, to hold positions and do a heck of job. Nothing is going to be more powerful than that. I believe that our Chief, if there was a qualified female three-star aviator, a qualified one, he would in a heart beat select that individual based on merit.

## **8. Air Force Women Want Equal Treatment**

A drawback in many organizations is existence of unequal treatment, or at least the perception of it. All of the Air Force senior leaders stated that equal treatment was something they wanted from their work environment, particularly in the military.

One senior leader (AF18) stated:

I would be upset if the Air Force was doing something special for them. I think we just need to treat everyone in a gender blind way. And I think that we treat our promotion boards that way. I think we treat our school selection boards that way. I think to me, that's what important. It's not that we are treated special but we have the same consideration as our male counterparts. And that we have a meritocracy.

She continued by saying:

Along the way, we just don't want to be treated special. And most the women I know in the Air Force have the same feeling- "Don't treat us special. Treat us the way you treat everybody else."

One leader (AF19) described it as being part of a “game” where women hope they meet the same requirements and standards that men do:

And there are women pilots and may be a cut above the rest of the pounders. Does that mean they rank equal with the men? I don't think so. At the same time, it doesn't change anything. If you're in the game and you want to be in the game, then do the best you can to meet the same. They look at the men for what they've done, what they've performed, what they've proven, and ultimately, all you can do is compete on those same grounds and kind of hope for the best.

Another leader (AF20) said that she finds the Air Force to be the service that provides the most equal treatment. She recalled this story to better explain:

I would tell them to join the Air Force, because I think that some of the other services aren't as far along as we are in that regard. When I was at the Armed forces staff college, one of my classmates was an Army Armor officer who had never worked with women because the Army doesn't let women in their Armor Corps/Branch and I said, “How come? Do you really lift all those weapons and stuff?” And he said, “Well no, of course we use machines to do all that.” I said, “Well why couldn't a woman do that?” He said, “Well-you know, we have to get in tanks and all that.” I said, “So.” And it opened his mind a little bit, but it got to be a macho thing because “guys just do this better” and that sort of thing- you know - “Warfighting.” Okay, so what is everybody else doing? I think the Air Force is way beyond that thinking.

One leader (AF21) stated that she didn't like the unequal treatment for being a pregnant woman. Simply being pregnant does not change her abilities to be a capable officer:

And sort of the whole idea of you could be married but you couldn't be pregnant. That's kind of strange. It's a good thing I got married and then got pregnant after they made the change in legislation. But that's the sort of thing where you go, “What's the difference? I'm still the same person, the same officer doing the same job. I just happen to be pregnant.” Okay, so I'll miss one month of work, but that's it.

Another leader (AF22) had this to say:

You do not still mention, “That is a wonderful male Captain.” Do you ever hear that? But, “Boy, is that female Captain sharp”. We are not there yet; we are not there yet.

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## VII. DISCUSSION OF THEMES

### A. OVERVIEW

This chapter provides a discussion of the themes found in the previous chapter. Table 4 identifies the derived themes from the interview sessions with the Marine Corps and Air Force Officers. They are broken down by service and officer level. In particular, we identify perceptions about career progression as viewed by Marine Corps and Air Force female mid-level and senior level officers.

	<b>Marine Corps</b>	<b>Air Force</b>
<b>Mid-Level Females</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Marine Corps Offers a Challenging Lifestyle</li> <li>2. Leading and Developing Marines Provides a Sense of Responsibility, Pride and Enjoyment</li> <li>3. Men Do Not Feel Comfortable Working with Women</li> <li>4. One Woman's Behavior Reflects on All Other Women</li> <li>5. Females are Not Perceived to Hold Senior Leadership Positions in the Marine Corps</li> <li>6. Marriage and Family Conflict with Career</li> <li>7. Mental Toughness is Perceived to be Associated with Being a Successful Female Marine</li> <li>8. Women in the Marine Corps Continually have to Prove Themselves Regardless of Rank or Experience</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Air Force Provides Education, Travel Opportunities and Equal Pay</li> <li>2. The Air Force Provides a More Equitable Work Environment</li> <li>3. The Air Force Fosters Teamwork</li> <li>4. Air Force Women Associate a Sense of Patriotism with Military Service</li> <li>5. Working in the Air Force Provides the Chance to Make a Difference</li> <li>6. Men Show a Lack of Respect to Women</li> <li>7. Maintaining Balance Between Career and Family is Difficult</li> <li>8. Working Hard and Keeping a Positive Attitude are Strategies for Career Progression in the Air Force</li> <li>9. Women in the Air Force Have to Prove Themselves</li> </ol>
<b>Senior Level Females</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marriage and Family Conflict with Career</li> <li>2. Although Boxes have to Be Checked for Career Advancement, Working Hard and Seeking Opportunities is a Fundamental Strategy for Success in the Marine Corps</li> <li>3. Women in the Marine Corps Have to Continually Prove Themselves Regardless of their Rank or their Experience</li> <li>4. Women Need to be Seen in Senior Level Positions</li> <li>5. Female Officers Entering the Marine Corps Today have More Credibility</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Air Force Lifestyle is Filled with Great Opportunities and Great People</li> <li>2. There is a Sense of Pride and Purpose Associated with the Air Force</li> <li>3. Air Force Women Must Learn to Fit in a Male-Dominated Organization</li> <li>4. Family and Career Balance is Difficult</li> <li>5. A Diverse Career Path is an Element of Success</li> <li>6. Air Force Women Have to Prove Themselves</li> <li>7. Placing Women in Senior Leadership Positions Needs to be Supported by Senior Leadership</li> <li>8. Air Force Women Want Equal Treatment</li> </ol>

Table 4. Derived Themes for Marine Corps and Air Force Female Mid-level and Senior Level Officers



This analysis compares and contrasts the perceptions by service and officer levels, incorporates the literature and statistical review to support or defend the themes, and concludes with a determination of the relationship between military career progression and the phenomenon called the “glass ceiling.”

We begin the discussion by looking at the qualities a military lifestyle has to offer. While the aspects that initially attracted women to join the service continue to be important, additional aspects strengthen a woman’s resolve to stay committed to the organization. Despite the valued qualities of life in the military, as women progress in their careers, they are faced with obstacles that impede their advancement. While no obstacle is a complete detriment to their career path, each provides a challenge. Aside from obstacles within the workplace, we then look at women’s inner conflict about family and career, which they struggle to resolve. We continue by discussing the coping strategies that Marine Corps and Air Force women employ to better adapt and overcome obstacles. Finally, we consider the unique outlook senior female officers offer on women’s career potential in the military today and in the future.

## **B. MILITARY’S APPEAL TO FEMALE OFFICERS**

In our analysis of themes, we find that there are tangible and intangible characteristics of the military that appeal to women and encourage them to become professional officers. Tangible characteristics include education, travel and job variety, and equal pay. Intangibles include the challenging environment, honorable profession, and a strong work ethic. These characteristics also carry over into their attitudes when dealing with any perceived barriers they may encounter during their careers.

We found the military’s appeal to women differs between the two services. For the Air Force, there is a greater focus on the opportunities they receive from education and travel as well as the enjoyment they gained in working with other people in an environment perceived to treat both men and women equally. The sense of equality is referenced by the receipt of same pay and benefits, in conjunction with a promotion system perceived as fair, most notably resulting

from the creation of Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA). The bond within the Air Force community creates a sense of family and encouragement to work together, resulting in a job well done. The Air Force mid-level officers state this perception in the themes:

- The Air Force Provides Education, Travel Opportunities and Equal Pay
- The Air Force Provides a More Equitable Work Environment
- The Air Force Fosters Teamwork

Similar to the mid-level officers, the Air Force senior officers felt that these same benefits were appealing today as well as when they first entered. The Air Force senior officers express this theme as:

- The Air Force Lifestyle is Filled with Great Opportunities and Great People

The appeal for the Marine Corps women is similar in terms of overall benefits, but there is an even greater attraction to the Marine Corps. The women perceive the Marine Corps to be the most challenging among the services. The slogan “The Few. The Proud.” captures the emotion the women felt about the reputation of “The Corps.” The women believe the Marine Corps to stand out above the rest, able to accomplish any task, anytime, anyplace. This Marine Corps mid-level officer theme is:

- The Marine Corps Offers a Challenging Lifestyle

The inherent association of service to country and fellow man by serving in the military is a common theme among both services. Specifically for the Marine Corps mid-level female officers, there is an overwhelming sense of devotion and unique bond to the individual Marines with whom they serve. For some, this is the most important aspect of being a Marine officer. The Marine Corps mid-level officers express this with the theme:

- Leading and Developing Marines Provides a Sense of Responsibility, Pride and Enjoyment

For the Air Force officers, there is a different perspective. They associate pride with the patriotic duty they are doing for their country as well as their service to others. From the uniform they wear to the people they help, the women find great pride in doing their jobs. Dating back to World War II, the pride of women in service is as evident now as it was then. From a WAC in World War II stating that it was her country and she needed to serve (Lewis, 1999), to the testimony of females in Iraq who state, “they would be proud to serve their country despite the threats they may encounter.” (“Women In Combat On Increase”, 2004). The Air Force mid-level officers express this theme as:

- Air Force Women Associate a Sense of Patriotism with Military Service
- Working in the Air Force Provides a Chance to Make a Difference

Similarly, the Air Force senior officers validate this perception through their expressions about devotion to their country and service to others. The Air Force senior officers’ theme that captures this selfless belief is:

- There is a Sense of Pride and Purpose Associated with the Air Force

The tangible benefits first attracting Marine Corps and Air Force women to the military, such as education, pay and people, do not lose their appeal, but after an extended period of service, the intangibles of challenge, pride and patriotism, seem to be primary reasons Marine Corps and Air Force women choose to stay beyond their obligated service.

### **C. OBSTACLES TO CAREER PROGRESSION**

Women still represent a minority group in the military. Chapters III and IV address the history of women’s entry to this male-dominated organization. Recalling the legislative change the United States Navy made during the 1920s about the enlistment eligibility for the Navy and Marine Corps, the term “citizen” was changed to “male citizen,” thus taking an act of Congress to allow women to enter into the respective services (Holm, 1982). It was not until 1967, with the passing of Public Law (PL) 90-130, that the two percent cap on the total number of women in the military was removed (Women in the Military, 2003). This said,

Tables 2 and 3 in Chapter V reveal the number of men continues to significantly exceed the number of women in both services. The senior Air Force officers interviewed repeatedly identify this in the theme:

- Air Force Women Must Learn to Fit in a Male-Dominated Organization

Air Force mid-level women feel there is a lack of respect for their authority and abilities to do their jobs. The mid-level officers perceive that the men are prejudging them before they walk through the door. Extant literature also shows that in the civilian world, women are required to emit the correct mix of management style, not too masculine but not too feminine (Ragins et al., 1998). Attempting to stay in the middle, women are unable to maintain a balance, weighing too heavily on one side or the other, resulting in ridicule and continued lack of respect by the men. The mid-level Air Force officers express this theme as:

- Men Show a Lack of Respect to Women

The Marine Corps perception of men not being comfortable working with women is similar to the Air Force characterizing the military as a male-dominated organization. In addition to the bias that stems from societal images where women should not be warriors, men primarily work and interact with other men. This uncomfortable feeling of men working alongside women is also seen prior to the integration of women into the military in 1948 when men expressed unease about having to take orders from women (Borlick, 1998). As a result, it is their perception that men do not know how to act around the women with whom they work. The Marine Corps mid-level female officers acknowledge that regardless of a man's occupation, he prefers to avoid interaction with women just to reduce his level of uncertainty. The Marine Corps mid-level officers express this theme as:

- Men Do Not Feel Comfortable Working with Women

The Marine Corps mid-level women also express a perception that men assume the behavior of one woman characterizes the behavior of every other woman they might encounter. This includes the association with civilian or

military females. Thus a lack of respect for women coupled with the small number of women exposed to men in the Marine Corps amplifies this perception. This theme also shows up in literature about the civilian workforce where women are stereotyped as all being alike (Ragins et al., 1998). This phenomenon is critical for the women termed as “trailblazers” because they are the first to do something and sets precedence for those who follow. An unsatisfactory trailblazing performance conflicts with the image women want to have. This Marine Corps mid-level officer theme is expressed as:

- One Woman’s Behavior Reflects on All Other Women

Marine Corps mid-level officers perceive there is a lack of senior female officers. Due to a lack of visibility and interaction with some of the top women, the mid-level officers are uncertain about the existence of women in those positions. In defining the glass ceiling in Chapter II, previous literature refers to “the invisible women syndrome” (Jackson, 2001) where the positions of women are not readily visible, and by default, makes women inactive participants in the decision-making process. Although legislation that repealed the cap on women serving in the most senior positions (O-6 and above) occurred in 1967, the results are still not able to be fully observed due to the length of the time it takes for a military officer to become eligible for those positions. For example, the senior women interviewed today did not enter until the mid 1970s. Additionally, the first female Service Academy graduates are just now entering the zone for promotion to the General officer ranks. Figures 1 through 3 in Chapter V also validate this perception, showing the percentage of women in senior positions is less than men. This perception is expressed in the theme:

- Females Are Not Perceived to Hold Senior Leadership Positions in the Marine Corps

Although the themes discussed here are different, they all comprise an overarching theme of the military as a male culture. Though policy changes have led to greater proportions of women and the redefinition of their roles as military members, the perception of a male-dominated organization is still valid.

### **C. FAMILY AND CAREER CONFLICT**

All the women interviewed express the theme of family and career conflict as being a significant factor in career decisions. This was a major issue because women perceive they have to make choices between family and career. As seen in Chapter V, Figure 13 shows that women are more likely to be single than men in the military.

A common perception among the mid-level officers is that successful women are more likely to be single with no children. This has a negative impact on the younger women who want to have both but foresee themselves having to make a critical decision at some point in their career, to either have a family or to have a career.

Among the women who decide to marry, many marry another military service member. This can prove to be good and bad. On the one hand, having a military spouse provides a common link and understanding about the demands of military life. On the other hand, both spouses in the military can potentially face assignments requiring long separations or one spouse having to give up a desirable assignment to maintain family unity.

The appeal of the military for women contributes to their work ethic and attitude of being a top performer. This same attitude spills over into their role as mother and wife, wanting to be a top performer at home as well. Unfortunately, the women interviewed said that it is not possible to do so all the time. At one point or another, something has to give because otherwise, it is one person trying to do two full-time jobs. The women know they have chosen to have the family but also want the career and their dedication to both exceeds their abilities.

The conflict of balancing family and career comes as a result of the increased opportunities for women in the military and the changing legislation that has removed numerous restrictions involving women and family. In particular, women are no longer required to leave the military when they have children. Coupled with the increased opportunities of deployment and availability of occupations, these changes have made the military more appealing to women,

thereby heightening the tension between family and career. Additionally, as a woman rises in rank, her responsibility and demands become greater, pulling her attention from the family to work. While the women interviewed are not unwilling to do the work required by their career or family, they are frustrated by feeling they have to make a choice between the two.

#### **D. COPING STRATEGIES**

The women find it advantageous to develop coping strategies to deal with the predominantly male culture. The overarching strategy the women employ was fitting in with the men, often referred to as “becoming one of the guys.” Recalling the previous literature, this parallels the civilian sector women who cleverly adapt their skills and hobbies to better associate with the men (Jackson, 2001).

The senior officers repeatedly state that certain requirements had to be met for advancement. Nothing is emphasized more than hard work and doing one’s best in any job assigned. Marine Corps officers refer to this as “bloom where you are planted.” The senior officers echo that “checking the boxes” is not enough. Their perception is that women must demonstrate a strong work ethic, going beyond what is expected. It is the importance of being a “go-getter,” taking advantage and seeking out the hidden opportunities. Both services agree that gaining operational experience, going on deployments, getting command, and participating in professional military education are important prerequisites to move up the ladder of success.

In combination with the senior officer perceptions of hard work, the mid-level officers also have additional strategies. The Marine Corps mid-level women perceive mental toughness as a quality best suited to adapt to the culture. The women feel they need to handle issues without being overly sensitive or easily offended. You have to be thick-skinned. The Air Force mid-level women perceive having a positive attitude keeps them moving forward. No matter the job, maintaining a positive attitude helps keep a solid focus on the mission. Likewise

literature shows that successful civilian women recognize that advancement comes when their work effort exceeds and outperforms their male coworkers.

All the women repeatedly comment about having to prove themselves as officers. This stems from the perception that men look at them as women first and officers second. As a result, they find themselves working harder to dispel any reservations the men might have about their abilities to get the job done. After a period of time, working twice as hard as their male counterparts, the female officers perceive they are finally recognized as equals. Unfortunately, this cycle is repeated with each new assignment for female officers. They state that they want to be treated equally from the start and want the same respect for their rank and duty position that they perceive is automatically credited to the men. The Difference Model (Sonnert and Holton, 1996) described in Chapter II supports this belief. As women work to prove their individuality and competency levels, they are able to remove stereotypes and negative expectations about their gender.

Unlike the other coping strategies that help women fit into the military, no clear strategy is apparent for dealing with the conflict between family and career. It becomes a case-by-case basis suited to the individual needs of each woman faced with the conflict. One choice is working until they are eligible for retirement at 20 years. By doing so, though, they eliminate themselves from higher career positions, opting to finally spend what they perceive as quality time with their family. To them, this is a way to satisfy their need to have a family and a career, but avoids conflict by doing them separately rather than simultaneously. Another option is obtaining third party support in the form of a nanny or some other live-in type childcare. This allows a woman to maintain a focus on her career, while reducing the demands of family. A non-traditional alternative that some women have is a spouse willing to be the “stay-at-home-dad.” This is considered a role reversal for men and is not commonplace. A final choice is to decide between career and family. Essentially the officer elects to have a full-time career without additional family duties or elects to have a family and a less demanding career.



Women in the military seem to recognize they are the minority. Many believe that if a woman is unwilling to accept that position, she will be unable to fit in whereby blocking her progression. Those willing to accept this appear to have developed their own strategies to improve their situation.

Therefore, the potential for career progression is not solely determined by the jobs you get, or the schools you go to. It involves adopting strategies to deal with the male environment and managing the conflict between career and family. The coping strategies used by women in facing these issues can ultimately result with increasing their levels of continued performance and success in achieving senior leadership positions in the military.

#### **E. SENIOR LEADER PERSPECTIVE**

This section is specific to the senior leadership themes found in Chapter VI. It is a reflection of the unique perspective they have as senior leaders and addresses what they see as the roles of women in the military today and in the future.

The first theme relates to the previously discussed theme about the Marine Corps mid-level officers not seeing any senior female officers. The perspective is shifted slightly with the senior officers, because by being senior officer themselves, they know that women are in these positions. However, they believe there are other women, just as qualified, who could be filling other senior level positions. Furthermore, the necessity of women holding senior positions is important for junior and mid-level officers to witness the potential for women to achieve these ranks. Otherwise, as noted in the civilian workforce, a lack of senior women results in a lack of role models for the younger women to emulate (Ragins et al., 1998). This theme is especially dominant with the Marine Corps senior females, expressed as:

- Women Need to be Seen in Senior Level Positions

Although the Marine Corps senior officers feel there is a lack of women in senior positions, they do believe that women officers entering the service today

are more credible. This is due to the legislation in the early 1990s that opened up more occupations for women, allowing them to participate in more real world operations and to deploy with expeditionary units. Senior leaders feel these women have advantages formerly unavailable to women like themselves who entered the service 20 years ago. All the additional experience leads to increasing the credibility at all levels for women. As shown in Chapter V, Figures 6, 7, and 8 show the transition of women being commissioned in programs considered to be more career enhancing (i.e. Service Academies and Reserved Officer Training Corps). Specifically in the Marine Corps, higher proportions of women graduate from Service Academies than men. Chapter V, Figures 10 through 12 also reveal the increased distribution of women throughout the occupational categories. This perception is expressed in the Marine Corps senior theme:

- Female Officers Entering the Marine Corps Today Have More Credibility

While the credibility of women is improving, it is still important to continue top-level support of women. In a male-oriented culture, this is much easier said than done. The support of women can be risky for male senior leaders because there is potential for them to be at fault if a woman is incompetent in her leadership position. The Air Force senior female officers perceive that even though there are women holding senior positions, to maintain respect and credibility, the senior male officers need to show support. It then creates a top down impression that women are able to serve in some of the military's most senior positions. Previous literature also discusses this image. Often CEOs approach the career progression of women with a hands-off attitude, which quickly travels down to lower management becoming a commonly accepted mind-set and part of norms and office culture (Ragins et al., 1998). This Air Force senior perception is expressed as:

- Placing Women in Senior Leadership Positions Needs to be Supported by Senior Leadership

Despite the low visibility of women, overall, the senior officers believe that women entering the military today have opportunities and advantages afforded to them that will be career enhancing, enabling them to successfully compete for many senior positions that were previously excluded from women.

## VIII. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. OVERVIEW

This study explores the career paths of mid-level female Marine Corps and Air Force officers as they progress through the ranks. Combining literature review, statistical demographics and real-life testimony of 40 female officers, both middle and senior level, we identify and analyze perceptions concerning career progression for women. Using the themes, we discuss their relationship to one another by service and officer level.

We recognize that while conducting our study there were limitations and biases that may have influenced our findings. In particular, we note that time and funding restricted our interview population. There may also have been biases present in the responses provided by the officers interviewed due to personal experiences and their loyalty to their respective branch of service. Additionally, since they were volunteers, the possibility of self-selection bias may have occurred. Finally, our personal connection to our respective services may have affected our findings.

### B. SUMMARY

The primary research question we address is: ***What are the opportunities and barriers for advancement of women's careers in the United States Marine Corps and Air Force?***

Focusing on the *opportunities* perceived by the women interviewed, we found that the military remains an attractive way of life. Air Force mid-level officers view the benefits to be education, travel opportunities and equal pay. Both Air Force mid-level and senior officers perceive the military to provide an opportunity to serve their country creating a sense of personal pride and teamwork. The Marine Corps mid-level officers believe the Marine Corps

provides a more challenging lifestyle than the other services, instilling a sense of responsibility and pride resulting from leading and developing Marines.

In determining the *barriers* for career progression of women in the Marine Corps and Air Force, we considered both structural and cultural obstacles. Historically, there were many more structural obstacles imposed by legislation and policy, including a cap on the total number of women in the military as well as their promotion to senior ranks and the occupations they could hold. Today, most of these structural obstacles no longer exist, with the exception of specific combat-related occupations. This obstacle is greater in the Marine Corps than the Air Force due to its ground combat mission.

The cultural barriers discussed in this study are perceived to be the male-dominated organization and career and family conflict. The male-dominated organization is comprised of several underlying themes that are unique to each service and level. Air Force senior officers comment about how they deal with fitting in to the male-dominated organization. This is then reinforced by the Air Force mid-level officers' view stating that the men lack respect for women in the military. According to the Marine Corps mid-level officers, men do not feel comfortable working with women, one woman sets the reputation for all women and there is a perception that women do not hold senior leadership positions. Previous literature describing a male-dominated military workforce and statistical evidence of minimal female representation in the officer ranks corroborate the perceptions of the mid-level and senior female officers.

To combat perceived obstacles, the women interviewed instinctively developed strategies to assist them in their careers. The senior women in the Marine Corps and the Air Force agreed that hard work and diverse career opportunities are essential elements for career progression in the military. Along with hard work, the Air Force mid-level officers felt a positive attitude was a strategic element while the Marine Corps mid-level officers identified mental toughness. The strategy most prevalent among the women interviewed was the

necessity for women to continually prove themselves because male officers look at female officers as females first, and officers second.

In terms of career and family conflict, all the women interviewed perceive there is difficulty in having to maintain a balance between the two. In years past, women did not have to balance the two because they were legally restricted from continued military service once they started a family. However, as legislation was rewritten and restrictions were lifted, this conflict increased because women were now allowed to make choices between family and career aspirations. The women described this conflict as providing a sense of personal frustration and not disgruntlement with the military. Wanting to pursue both options, they realize the conflicting demands for their time cannot be balanced, and therefore resolve that something has to give. Furthermore, as women become more successful in their careers this conflict intensifies.

Strategies for balancing the family and career conflict are tailored to the individuals. Some deal with this conflict by putting off family until near or after retirement (usually 20 years) while others opt for the assistance of a third party child-care provider. Still others say that it is their personal choice to pursue career or family, but not both.

While these obstacles may hinder the progression for women in the military, both services' senior officers believe younger women are more prepared than ever to reach top positions. They believe this because the younger officers are receiving opportunities and benefits not afforded to female officers 20-30 years ago. Although they see increasing potential for the younger female officers, Marine Corps senior females express their concern about the current lack of female role models holding senior positions by recommending more women be placed in these jobs. The Air Force senior officers imply that senior level support of women in top positions must occur.

### **C. CONCLUSIONS**

While the Department of Defense has opened more positions for women in recent years, the male-dominated culture of the military still prevails. This is especially noticeable among the senior positions, where the “good old boys” network still has a commanding influence on who is promoted into those positions. As a result, women find themselves exerting more effort trying to fit in with the men.

The extra energy women expend helps them to become more accepted by the men. Unfortunately, this acceptance can diminish quickly by the poor performance of one woman. This now causes even more pressure for the women hoping to advance because now they have to not only perform at levels that exceed their male coworkers, but must also ensure that the other women do not make them look bad. Should this occur, women feel their extra efforts have been for naught and become discouraged about their careers, possibly dissuading them from pursuing higher positions.

The lack of support and credibility wears on some women, eventually impacting their performance and morale, resulting in their decision to separate. As more women opt to leave, it begins to appear as an unattractive career for those considering it, hence the military suffers a loss of quality officers. This then becomes a disenchanting view for the younger female officers currently looking to pursue a path to senior leadership positions. Without female role models, they begin to question the likelihood of their potential to reach the top positions. Should this pattern continue, the military could become an unappealing career choice for women in the future.

Although dealing with the male-dominated culture is a job in itself, women who decide to get married and have children experience even more difficulty. Now they are pulled in two directions and struggle to keep a balance between both of them. At some point, this balance becomes unmanageable, forcing

most women to choose: career or family. Once again, women find themselves leaving the military before realizing their full potential. And therefore, the service ends up losing more quality officers.

Having identified structural and cultural barriers in the Marine Corps and Air Force, we conclude that elements of the civilian phenomenon known as the “glass ceiling,” do exist in the Marine Corps and Air Force. In other words, invisible barriers to women’s advancement are present. Although there is an existence of male-dominated cultures in both sectors, the structured and regulated practices and policies inherent to the military are designed to theoretically provide a more equal and fair opportunity for career progression. Unlike the civilian world, the military has a pay and promotion system that is “gender-blind.”

While structural barriers continue to be eliminated, cultural barriers, beliefs and attitudes toward women continue to impede women’s progression. Nevertheless, women in both types of organizations develop similar strategies to cope with the male-dominated obstacle, most commonly expressed as working twice as hard as men, always having to prove oneself and trying to fit in with the men. Beyond that, we were unable to clearly define any other glass ceiling elements.

#### **D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **1. Conduct a Structural Analysis within the Marine Corps and Air Force**

The Marine Corps and Air Force should review the placement and number of women in their respective services. Specifically, a thorough review of the job descriptions for senior leadership positions could determine what factors, if any, are still preventing women from holding these positions. By doing so, it may be found that more positions could be opened for women.

A structural analysis may also provide insight as to the number of women each service can handle without degrading their ability to still meet the mission requirements. If it is found that the number of women has not yet reached



optimum, this may serve to lessen the women's perception of a male-dominated organization.

**2. Encourage Informal Mentor Program**

The Marine Corps and Air Force leaders should continue to encourage an informal mentoring program, assisting in the development of officers. Maintaining a program that provides exposure of senior positions to up and coming officers presents a realistic view of what it takes to be successful.

**3. Look at the Potential for Lateral Re-entry/Return to Service for All Military Service Members**

The perceived conflict between family and career can be a detriment on retention. Implementing a program that affords a service member the opportunity to take an extended duration of leave from the military to stabilize personal matters could reduce the conflict.

**4. Conduct Female Officer Exit Survey**

We recommend conducting a survey of the female officers separating from the military, whether through resignation or retirement. Information found should help to provide a better explanation of why female officers choose to leave. Based on the findings, the military may be able to develop incentives to encourage women to remain in the service longer.

**5. Conduct a Survey on Female Officers with Families**

A study targeted at female officers with families, especially in the pay grades of Major (O-4) through General officer (O-7 and above) would be beneficial to gain a better understanding of the challenges in maintaining the balance between career and family. The findings could serve to assist the military in providing more support to women with families in hopes they will remain in the service longer.

## **E. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **1. Marine Corps and Air Force Follow-on Research**

It would be beneficial to conduct a follow-on study approximately eight to ten years from now, specific to the Marine Corps and the Air Force to see if the career progression for women is improving. This is especially important because at that time, the women who entered after the lifting of the Combat Exclusion Laws in 1992 and 1994 will be approaching eligibility for senior leadership positions.

### **2. Parallel Research for the United States Navy and Army**

As this study only explored the Marine Corps and Air Force, we recommend that a parallel study should be done for the United States Navy and Army. This would provide a valuable comparison of career progression for women in the other services and share insight on the similarities or differences in perceptions by women in other services and their respective cultures.

### **3. Parallel Research for Military Male Officers**

It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study such as this one using male officers to find out if they share the same perceptions as female officers in their pursuit for senior leadership positions. Uncovering some of their perceptions may also help support or dispute the perceptions women have about their work with respect to the men with whom they work.

### **4. Expanded Population and Occupation Studies**

Additional studies should be conducted using expanded populations. This includes female and male officers at the junior level (O-1 and O-2) as well as officers in a broader range of occupational specialties. It would also be beneficial to increase the total number overall of officers interviewed. The responses obtained would provide more information to better validate the perceptions of career progression.

## **5. Research on Senior Executive Civilian Women**

We recommend a study should be done for civilian organizations, specifically looking at those who have senior executive women. Focusing this type of study on what the senior women have done to achieve their current status would provide insight to younger women looking to find what it takes to get to the top and also provide a valid comparison to the military.

## APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROTOCOL

	Number of Marine Corps Officers Interviewed	Number of Air Force Officers Interviewed
<b>Pay Grade</b>		
O-3	5	9
O-4	6	3
O-5	3	5
O-6 and above	4	5
<b>Total Interviewed</b>	18	22
<b>Commissioning Source</b>		
Service Academy	1	6
ROTC	4	9
OCS/OTS	9	7
Other	4	0
<b>DOD Occupation</b>		
Gen Officer/Executive	4	1
Tactical	4	0
Intelligence	1	7
Engineering/Maintenance	1	0
Scientist/Professional	0	7
Administration	2	5
Supply/Procurement	6	0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	7	7
Married	11	15

## **A. MID-LEVEL OFFICER INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. When did you make a decision to join the service and why? Why did this career appeal to you? (Probes: Does it still have that same appeal? If not, are there other things about this career that now appeal to you?)
2. What do you most value in your professional life? What do you care most about being a military officer and have you been able to exercise those values in your military career?
3. Do you have an ideal vision of where you would like to be in your career in five years? If so, how will you achieve this goal? What strategies are you using to accomplish this career movement? (Probe: Do you have a mentor? If so, tell me about the relationship. What kind of advice/assistance do you get from him/her regarding your career development? Where else do you get information about career advancement?)
4. Think of a specific time/incident when you achieved a successful career assignment/milestone. This is a time when you perceived that you advanced in your military career—something that stood out as a “stepping-stone”. Tell me specifically what occurred, who was involved, how the incident occurred. What were you thinking at the time? What were you feeling at the time?
5. Have you ever felt prevented in moving forward in your career? (A time when you felt that a progression was possible yet the situation did not evolve as you had hoped.) What concerns, issues, “road blocks” got in your way that kept you from achieving your career goal?
6. Think of a woman you know who has been successful in achieving a senior leadership position in the Air Force/Marines (someone at the O-6 level or above). What do you believe was required for her to achieve that goal?
7. Do you believe that senior leadership positions are equally accessible, doable, and achievable by men and women? Please explain why or why not? Based on your opinion, would you encourage other women to join the service?

8. If you had five minutes with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF)/Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) to tell him how he could better support women's career advancement in the Air Force/Marines, what would you tell him?

**B. SENIOR LEVEL OFFICER INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Background. When did you decide to join the service and why? Why did this career appeal to you? (Probe: Does the service still have the same appeal? If not, are there other things about this career that appeal to you? )

2. Reflecting on your own experience and the experiences of your colleagues, how would you/do you mentor junior officers about advancing to senior level positions?

3. Now that many of the positions are open to both males and females, do you believe that today's junior female officer will experience gender-related roadblocks when attempting to advance to senior level positions? (Probe: If not, why not? or If yes, why?)

4. Do you believe that the Marine Corps/Air Force supports women's advancement to senior level positions? (Probe: Why or why not?)

5. If you had five minutes with the CSAF/CMC to tell him how he might better support women's career advancement, what would you tell him?

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## APPENDIX B. OFFICER PAY GRADE STRUCTURE

<b>Pay Grade</b>	<b>Marine Corps and Air Force Rank</b>	<b>Cumulative Years of Service</b>
O-1	Second Lieutenant	Rank at time of commission
O-2	First Lieutenant	2
O-3	Captain	4
O-4	Major	10
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	16
O-6	Colonel	22
O-7 to O-10	General Officer	Congressional decision

\*Note: Cumulative Years in service to O-3 through O-10 is an approximation



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## APPENDIX C. COMMISSIONING SOURCES

Source	Minimum Service Requirement	Remarks
Service Academy	5 years	
ROTC	4 years	Includes scholarship and non-scholarship
Direct Appointment	4 –8 years	Includes Medical, Chaplain, Legal Corps Appointments
OCS/OTS	4 years	
Other	Typically 3-5 years	Example: Enlisted Commissioning Programs

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**APPENDIX D. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OCCUPATIONAL  
CODES**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
General Officer/Exec	Includes all officers of Gen/Flag rank and all commanders, directors, and planners; this includes all Marine Corps full Colonels (0-6)
Tactical	Includes pilots and crews and operations staff officers
Intelligence	Includes strategic, general, and communications intelligence and counterintelligence officers
Engineering/Maintenance	Includes design, development, production, and maintenance engineering officers
Science/Professional	Physical, biological, and social scientists, and other professionals such as lawyers and chaplains
Healthcare	Includes physicians, dentists, nurses, veterinarians, biomedical sciences, and allied health officers and health services
Administration	Includes general and specialized administration and management officers
Supply, Procurement and Allied Officers	Includes officers in supply, procurement and production, transportation, food service, and related logistics activities
Non-Occupational	Includes patients, students, trainees, and other officers who for various reasons are not occupationally qualified

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