

DEOMI News Highlights

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Army Chief Discusses Future of Training [Donna Miles, *American Forces Press Service*, 1 June 2011]

- Making training as challenging as possible to ensure readiness, despite what's expected to be an era of reduced resourcing, is the goal behind the new Army Training Concept
- "The idea is to make training more rigorous and relevant by leveraging technology to create challenging training environments for our leaders," said Army Chief of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey
- "The challenge we face is that we have to get ready for an Army that will have a potentially insatiable demand to train and to expand the aperture away from strictly [counterinsurgency] to hybrid threats, full-spectrum operations, maneuver training and all the things that we know can atrophy over time," stated Dempsey

[Army Chief Discusses Future of Training](#)

Once a Campus Outcast, ROTC is Booming at Universities [Larry Gordon, *Los Angeles Times*, 1 June 2011]

- Helped by the recession, more active recruiting and a sea of change in student perceptions of the military, ROTC programs on college campuses are thriving
- Even with ongoing U.S. involvement in conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and now Libya, participation in the program has surged 27% over the last four years
- In another sign of the changing times, the congressional rescinding of the "don't ask, don't tell" ban on gays serving openly in the military has recently led Stanford, Harvard and several other elite universities to take steps to welcome the ROTC back to their campuses for the first time in 40 years

[Once a campus outcast, ROTC is booming at universities](#)

Navy Leaders Stress Sex Assault Prevention [William H. McMichael, *Navy Times*, 9 May 2011]

- More than 900 sexual assaults were reported in fiscal 2010. And as Navy Secretary Ray Mabus told more than 300 commanders, enlisted leaders and sexual assault response coordinators, commanding officers will have to answer for the problem
- "I'm going to continue to hold our COs responsible for their command sexual assault prevention programs, demand that they properly train their personnel, and hold them accountable if that doesn't occur," said Mabus
- Teaching what is known as bystander intervention might be the best way to reach the wider fleet as a prevention strategy. Bystander intervention "needs to be embedded and inculcated down to the deck-plate level," said Adm. Jonathan Greenert, Vice Chief of Naval Operations

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Human Relations

Army Chief Discusses Future of Training

By Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service 1 June 2011

WASHINGTON, June 1, 2011 – Army Chief of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey has put a lot of thought into ways to take the lessons learned during more than nine years of war and apply them to the military's training and education programs.



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey speaks with U.S. Division Center soldiers at Camp Liberty, Iraq, April 19, 2011. Dempsey has cited the need for Army training that will challenge a combat-seasoned force. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy

Dempsey, who spent two years commanding U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command before taking his current post in mid-April, knew it wouldn't be easy to replicate the complexity of the operational environment in the classroom or at home station.

“We cannot expect to capture the imagination of combat-seasoned forces that have been in some of the most complex environments imaginable for almost a decade by sitting them in a classroom and bludgeoning them with PowerPoint slides,” he wrote earlier this year in a five-part series in Army magazine about the Army's “Campaign of Learning.”

<http://www.ansa.org/publications/ausanews/archives/2011/4/Pages/ChangetoFM3-0reflects‘CampaignofLearning’.aspx>

“We must make the ‘scrimmage’ as hard as the ‘game’ in both the institutional schoolhouse and at home station,” Dempsey wrote.

Speaking in February at the Association of the U.S Army's Winter Symposium and Exposition in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Dempsey offered a glimpse of what's likely ahead for military leaders. “The challenge we face is that we have to get ready for an Army that will have a potentially insatiable demand to train and to expand the aperture away from strictly [counterinsurgency] to hybrid threats, full-spectrum operations, maneuver training and all the things that we know can atrophy over time,” the general told the audience.

Dempsey told the Senate Armed Services Committee during his Army chief confirmation hearing in March that his challenge is to build on a decade of battlefield experience that's proven the Army to be a courageous, resilient, resolute, inquisitive and adaptable force.

“Our challenge will be that these young men and women have had capabilities, authorities and responsibilities as captains that I didn't have as a two-star general -- and I'm not exaggerating a bit when I say that,” he told the panel. “And so continuing their development, ... from that point, that much higher entry level than I had, is our challenge.”

Dempsey said troops simply won't accept a return to the pre-conflict way of training. “If we were a rubber band and have been stretched over the last 10 years, we can't let ourselves simply contract back to our previous shape, because they won't stand for that,” he said. Making training as challenging as possible to ensure readiness, despite what's expected to be an era of reduced resourcing, is the goal behind the new Army Training Concept. Introduced in the Army's 2010 Posture Statement, it provides the vision of the way ahead for the 2012-2020 modular force.

https://secureweb2.hqda.pentagon.mil/VDAS_ArmyPostureStatement/2010/index.asp

The idea, Dempsey wrote in Army Magazine, is “to make training more rigorous and relevant by leveraging technology to create challenging training environments for our leaders.”

https://secureweb2.hqda.pentagon.mil/VDAS_ArmyPostureStatement/2010/index.asp

<http://www.defense.gov//News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=64141>

The concept strikes a balance between operational and institutional training requirements and offers different ways to train beyond 2012 that will maintain current capabilities while producing the next generation of agile, ready forces.

A centerpiece of the Army Training Concept is Tradoc's "Training Brain." This blend of capabilities, systems, networks and data repositories directly from the Joint Training Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Operations Integration Center puts soldiers smack in the middle of realistic operational environments. It "allows us to pull [a] stream of real-world data from current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, declassify it, and use it to build realistic scenarios to support training throughout the Army," Dempsey wrote.

In addition, the Army is using the Training Brain to create videos based on recent battles and operations to make them accessible on the Army Training Network. "Soldiers can use this as a tool to facilitate their own learning, whether they're in a schoolhouse environment, conducting home-station training or even deployed," Dempsey wrote.

Meanwhile, the general said, Training Brain is helping the Army evolve massive, multiplayer online role-playing games. These provide a forum for soldiers and leaders to interact and collaborate using common scenarios in a virtual environment -- not only with soldiers within their own units, but across the Army. "This enables us to provide realistic and relevant training and learning opportunities at the point of need," Dempsey said, while making training student- rather than instructor-centric.

Dempsey shared the contents of an email he had received from a Tradoc schoolhouse. Captains attending a career course had organized voluntarily into teams so they could compete against one another in an online role-playing game based on a relevant training scenario. The officers, he said, began giving up their lunch periods, coming in early and staying late so they could continue their training experience on their own time.

"This Army training captures the imagination, challenges the participants and allows them to adapt the material to facilitate their learning needs," Dempsey said. It's "a far cry from the death-by-PowerPoint approach with which many of us are all too familiar."

Dempsey offered assurance that Army training will never lose sight of the fundamentals of "move, shoot and communicate." But looking toward the future, he said, leader-development programs must produce leaders who are inquisitive, creative and adaptable.

"It should be clear to all after more than nine years of conflict that the development of adaptive leaders who are comfortable operating in ambiguity and complexity will increasingly be our competitive advantage against future threats to our nation," he said.

With that in mind, Dempsey said he makes a series of promises to students in pre-command courses who are preparing to become battalion and brigade commanders and command sergeants major. "I promise them that the future security environment will never play out exactly the way we've envisioned. History confirms this," he said. "I promise that we will not provide the optimal organizational design nor perfectly design the equipment that they will need when they enter into a future mission. History -- especially recent events -- confirms this as well, although we do our best not to get it too wrong.

"And I promise that the guidance they receive from 'higher headquarters' will always come a little later than needed," he said. "We would be ill-advised to think that we will do much better than our predecessors in that regard. "What I promise, however -- and this, too, is confirmed by our history is that it is always the leaders on point who are able to take what we give them, adapt to the environment in which they are placed and accomplish the mission," Dempsey continued. "Leader development becomes job No. 1."

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110528822755.html> or

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/28/nyregion/fleet-week-takes-a-tamer-form-for-servicewomen.html>

For the Women of the Service, a Tamer Type of Fleet Week

By Ashley Parker

New York Times, May 28, 2011

When the U.S.S. Iwo Jima docked on Manhattan's West Side this week, a gaggle of sailors of a different sort stood ready to greet the ship.

These "sailors" — think Halloween, not United States military — wore tiny naval hats perched tartly on their heads, stiletto heels and, in a patriotic nod to Fleet Week, tight red dresses and blue Daisy Dukes that stopped well above their knees. They gave out coupons and fliers promising free drinks and, importantly, "the most exotic entertainers in NYC!"

They were seeking business from some of the thousands of members of the Navy, Marines and Coast Guard who arrived this week for the city's 24th annual Fleet Week. But they clearly were not aiming for everyone who stepped off the ships.



Julie Glassberg for The New York Times; Ariel Whitfield-Jeanty, left, and Ebony Gray were among the servicewomen who visited Times Square while on liberty during Fleet Week

Almost one in five active-duty members of the Navy are women. They perform substantially the same duties as the men, and equal treatment within the ranks is a mandate. But when they arrive for

Fleet Week, their experience diverges somewhat from that of their male shipmates.

"They never have anything for us," said Master-at-Arms Third Class Avena Cheatham, 23, of San Antonio, as she sat in her ship's mess hall for a barbecue lunch and male members cheered for a group of U.S.O. girls. "What about us?"

Her friend Master-at-Arms Third Class Alyssa Saple, 20, of Orlando, Fla., chimed in: "What about the hot guys? I want hot guys."

She added that the sailor whites so integral to the dashing military image did not flatter the figures of female sailors. "You basically have to help yourself out by putting on makeup, doing your hair," she said.

Even in the personals on Craigslist, the Fleet Week offerings greatly favored servicemen. There were male sailors seeking women — "Want a man in uniform?" read one item — and women seeking male sailors, offering to "make you a little late for your curfew" and "mess up those crisp uniforms."

There were some male sailors seeking men, and some men seeking male sailors. But there were very few ads of any kind for female sailors, though one enterprising woman offered herself up for a night of fun "since D.A.D.T. is pretty much over." (The "don't ask, don't tell" policy, rescinded by Congress and President Obama, is still technically on the books but is expected to be formally phased out this year.)

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110528822755.html> or
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/28/nyregion/fleet-week-takes-a-tamer-form-for-servicewomen.html>

Fleet Week is not all about sex, of course, and the women of the Iwo Jima had mapped out a mostly wholesome agenda for themselves, a blend of Ladies' Night Out and All-American Girl Meets New York.

Their plans included a stop by the M&M store on Broadway ("She's been talking about that for months!" one of Master-at-Arms Cheatham's friends teased), a trip to Tiffany & Company ("I've just never been inside one," Ms. Cheatham explained), and some nighttime bowling at Bowlmor Lanes ("I've read it's where all of the celebrities go, and it has fine dining," Master-at-Arms Saple said).

Another group of four female sailors munched on tacos and wings at the Hard Rock Cafe on Wednesday night as they plotted their first night of freedom.

Boatswain's Mate Dyamond Swails, 21, of West Palm Beach, Fla., began air-drumming and, when the band played the opening chords of "Blitzkrieg Bop" by the Ramones, the entire table began pumping their fists and shouting, "Hey, ho! Let's go!" before dissolving into giggles. They finished their drinks, wiped their fingers clean and headed out into the warm New York night.

First stop? The AT&T store, where a fellow boatswain's mate, Ariel Bass, 23, of Beaumont, Tex., was hoping to get her broken cellphone fixed.

Up next was Smith's Bar on Eighth Avenue and 44th Street. As they made their way there, passers-by offered appreciative greetings of "Ladies, ladies." A drunk woman ran up to the group and shouted:

"I love you! Can I have a picture?"

The sailors stopped to pose, and a crowd formed and snapped photos.

As the women walked, they chatted about the tattoos that one of them got in Brooklyn last year, and they stopped to pet just about every dog that walked by. They sang Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" on a corner opposite the Shake Shack on Eighth Avenue, dancing with abandon as onlookers smiled and thanked them for their service.

Inside the bar, Boatswain's Mate Swails offered a toast. Cryptological Technician Third Class Ariel Whitfield, 20, of Dallas had just been promoted a rank, and they drank to her and "to a good girls' night out."

Patrick Ingram, 37, approached the table to compliment the sailors and to hit on Boatswain's Mate Bass, but she politely demurred.

"I'm with my family," she said, pointing to her group of sailors, who were now chatting with a male Marine by the bar.

Eventually, it was time to get back to their ship. Bearing McDonald's bags — and one new cellphone — the four women flashed their military IDs at a security gate, which glowed violet in the shadow of the Pier 88 sign, with time to spare before their 1 a.m. curfew.

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110601823427.html> or

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-rotc-20110601,0,3528287.story>

Once a campus outcast, ROTC is booming at universities

Helped by the recession, more active recruiting and a sea change in student perceptions of the military, ROTC programs on college campuses are thriving. And some elite schools like Stanford and Harvard are welcoming ROTC back for the first time in decades.

By Larry Gordon

Los Angeles Times, June 1, 2011

PALO ALTO -- On an early May morning 43 years ago, fire swept through Stanford University's Navy ROTC building, destroying a structure that had been damaged in another suspicious blaze just two months earlier.

No arrests were ever made in the two arson fires, but they came at a time of angry, sometimes violent demonstrations against the Vietnam War on college campuses nationwide. Those protests often targeted the closest symbol of the U.S. military, the Reserve Officers Training Corps -- with more than 200 campus ROTC units reporting vandalism during that war.

Flash forward to a much different time. On a recent afternoon, Stanford senior Ann Thompson wore her Army ROTC uniform with pride as she helped staff a recruiting table for the military training program at a campus activities fair. She chatted with visitors about the ROTC's scholarships as a few dozen students marched nearby to protest the program's likely expansion at Stanford.

"There definitely are people not supportive of ROTC, but we still have respectful conversations," said Thompson, 22, of Paso Robles, Calif. "I can't fathom anyone burning a building down." Helped by the recession, more active recruiting and a sea change in student perceptions of the military, enrollment in ROTC programs on college campuses is booming.

Even with ongoing U.S. involvement in conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and now Libya, participation in the program has surged 27% over the last four years -- to 56,757 men and women, according to the Defense Department. The military boosted the number of ROTC scholarships to help expand the wartime officer corps, and the recession made the offers attractive to students.

Today's college students, who never faced a military draft and whose childhood memories include the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, are more receptive than their parents' generation to seeing fellow students in uniform. Returning veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and are now enrolled in college also create a more sympathetic, and familiar, image of the military.

In another sign of the changing times, the congressional rescinding last year of the "don't ask, don't tell" ban on gays serving openly in the military has recently led Stanford, Harvard and several other elite universities to take steps to welcome the ROTC back to their campuses for the first time in 40 years. On-campus military training still raises hackles for some. Yet even critics acknowledge that most current college students are willing to accept the ROTC.

Gay activist Marco Chan helped organize anti-ROTC rallies at Harvard this spring, focusing on the military's continuing ban against transgender individuals. A senior from Vancouver, Chan, 23, called the school's decision to restore the ROTC discriminatory: "To make a highly symbolic gesture, Harvard has thrown its own student body under the bus," he said.

But Chan said many Harvard students seemed sympathetic to the military. "They grew up in a post-9/11 world," he said. "The war on terror has been a part of their daily lives."

Jimmy Ruck, a 21-year-old Stanford senior and Army ROTC cadet from Millbrae, Calif., will join a military intelligence unit as a second lieutenant after he graduates next month. "We are putting a

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110601823427.html> or

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-rotc-20110601,0,3528287.story>

face on the military, showing that we are not some faceless, heartless machine, that we are individual human beings and that we are doing this for a variety of reasons," said Ruck, who along with Thompson is one of 14 Stanford students who are enrolled in the ROTC but must train at other Bay Area campuses. "Some are doing it for leadership, for public service, or if you want to pay for your college."

Ruck applauded the April 28 Stanford faculty vote to invite the program back to the campus and said he hopes the university's small ROTC contingent will grow, especially if its cadets no longer have to travel elsewhere to train.

Experts say the recent change of heart by influential American universities will boost the prestige of the program, which was founded during the Civil War on the belief that the nation needed a well-educated officer corps imbued with civilian values. "It shows historically that the military and civilian society are trying to bridge the gap," said Donald Downs, a political science professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and coauthor of a new book about the ROTC.

But those schools still will play a small role in the national ROTC, which never left most U.S. campuses. Nearly 500 units are in existence, and many other schools without their own programs send students to train at other area colleges, including Stanford's Army ROTC members training at Santa Clara University, Navy at UC Berkeley and Air Force at San Jose State. (ROTC scholarships can be worth as much as \$43,000 a year at expensive schools; all recipients must then serve four years in the armed forces, with four more in the reserves.)

Despite UC Berkeley's reputation as a center of '60s radicalism, the ROTC remained on campus and about 150 students are now enrolled. Don Johnson, a rhetoric major from Oakland who is soon to become an Army second lieutenant, said off-campus antiwar activists have hassled him when he's worn his ROTC uniform. But no student ever bothered him. "Usually, people will ask what I'm doing after school and a lot of seniors understand the need for a job, and the fact that I have one makes them envious," said Johnson, 22.

In the Vietnam era, hostility toward the ROTC soared as the war's casualties increased and reached a height when U.S. troops were sent into Cambodia in 1970. Student protesters occupied ROTC centers at many colleges, and fires and explosions damaged the program's buildings at the University of Michigan, Kent State University and the University of Colorado.

The ROTC was pushed off some campuses after faculty and administrators stopped giving academic credit for its courses and imposed other restrictions. Programs elsewhere died for lack of interest after the draft ended in 1973 and fewer men sought to become officers as a way to survive the war.

From 1968 to 1974, the ROTC closed 88 units, many at private schools in the Northeast, and opened 80 replacements, mainly at friendlier public colleges in the South and Midwest, according to Michael Neiberg, a military historian at the University of Southern Mississippi who wrote a book about the program.

Nowadays, the Pentagon is happy to be wooed by Stanford and other top private schools. The Navy signed an agreement with Harvard in March and, last week, with Yale and Columbia to reestablish units. But officials said they must study costs and the need for officers before promising other units.

"New universities interested in ROTC programs will each be evaluated for the most efficient use of these resources," said Eileen M. Lainez, a Defense Department spokeswoman. At schools with the ROTC, students and administrators say the program has become just another strand in the fabric of campus life. "It's just another thing that's here, that's available," said Michelle McGrain, a student government leader at the University of Maryland. The student response "is kind of neutral," she said. "It's not a huge issue."

Schools cultivate new mission for Marines

California universities share knowledge that can yield good relations with Afghan farmers

**By Elizabeth Weise, USA Today
Marine Corps Times, 2 June 2011**

The Marines are about to land in Fresno.

No, it's not an assault. Rather, on Monday, about 20 U.S. Marines will arrive at California State University-Fresno for some down-in-the-dirt farm training. They'll spend a week learning how to test soil, assess an irrigation system, check livestock for disease and prune a pomegranate tree.

The goal of the training is to teach Marines who may have little background in agriculture something about the kind of farming that is the lifeblood of Afghanistan.

"Afghanistan is still an agrarian society; 85% of people there still have a connection to the land," says Bill Eryasian, coordinator of the California State University Consortium for International Development, which began the program last June.

The course's first graduates, in June of last year, were 15 officers and enlisted Marines with the 11th Marine Regiment Civil Affairs Detachment, stationed at Camp Pendleton in California. They were later deployed to Helmand province in Afghanistan. A second unit of 20 went through the course in March at Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo.

"It gave us a basic working knowledge of the glue that holds their society together. Being conversant in basic agricultural practice is really imperative for anyone whose job is to interact with civilians," says 1st Lt. Karl Kadon of the 11th Marine Regiment, civil affairs. He did the first training and then used his new skills in Afghanistan.

Teaching them the basics

The training, basic to a farmer, is not so basic to your average American or your average Marine, Eryasian says. "We teach them about things like: How do you determine what's good soil and bad soil? What are the different types of irrigation methods they can expect to see in Helmand province? What types of livestock are they going to encounter?"

Even simple things can make all the difference on the ground. "We tell them when you walk onto a farm, ask the farmer about what he grows, about his irrigation," Eryasian says. Once they've been through the training, a Marine who couldn't have told a plum from a peach can now say, "Oh, I see you've got some pomegranate trees over there. Let me show you how you can prune it to get better yields."

Kadon used what he had learned as soon as he was sent to the Sangin area in Helmand province, when he and his unit were building a road to access one of their bases. They had to blast their way through a farmer's field. They compensated the farmer, but the new road blocked part of the canal system that fed water to all the fields in the area.

Because of the training, Kadon knew what the irrigation system should have looked like "so I could judge how much we'd damaged things and what crops he was growing, because we paid people depending on what they were growing."

Kadon helped create the workshop after doing intelligence work in Iraq and then being assigned to civil affairs in Afghanistan. "I tried to look at the gaps, things we were missing, and agriculture was one of them."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2011/06/usat-schools-cultivate-new-mission-for-marines-060211/>

The training gives the Marines "an agricultural Rolodex" they can use in the field, Kadon says. "We knew we weren't going to learn everything in a week, so basically we got names on a piece of paper: For water issues, call this guy; for soil, call this guy."

It effectively turns the agriculture professors into an on-call rapid response team for the Marines. "They take photos with their cellphones and they shoot them directly to our people here," Eryasian says. "We make it a point to try to respond in 24 hours because we know they have little time, few resources, and often they're not in a safe situation."

Since the training started, staff at the five California State universities involved Chico, Fresno, Humboldt, Pomona and San Luis Obispo have gotten used to getting cellphone photos and e-mails with questions from Marines in Afghanistan.

"I had one officer write to me from Nangarhar province, where there's an olive processing plant," Eryasian says. He thought they weren't getting enough oil output, so he sent photos of the groves and the plant. That one went straight to the California Olive Oil Council, which "immediately e-mailed back to say their trees were too close together."

Another photo of an irrigation system went to a Fresno water expert. Eryasian says it took just a glance for the expert to reply, "The concrete is cracked and it's leaking and the floodgate needs to be repaired."

Getting help quickly

That kind of instant information is a huge help to the Marines working with the local populations, the officers tell Eryasian.

The training has worked in part because Fresno has almost exactly the same agro-climate as Helmand province in Afghanistan, including the use of irrigation, and grows many of the same crops: olives, almonds, pomegranates, tomatoes, cucumbers, raisins, apricots and wheat. Helmand is the main poppy-growing region of Afghanistan, producing much of the world's opium, so the military is making an effort to get farmers to transition to wheat.

The training doesn't replace the much more comprehensive programs offered by the U.S. Agency for International Development and non-governmental organizations. "But these are the first contacts a lot of these farmers are going to have with American military, so the idea is to give them the types of tools necessary to assist the Afghans at the farmer level," Eryasian says.

Miscellaneous

Army Ranger to be awarded Medal of Honor

Stars and Stripes, 31 May 2011

WASHINGTON -- An Army Ranger who lost his right hand after throwing a live grenade away from fellow soldiers will be the second living Medal of Honor recipient from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the Army.

Sgt. 1st Class Leroy A. Petry, now serving as part of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Ga., will receive the Medal of Honor July 12. U.S. ARMY



On July 12, President Barack Obama will award Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Arthur Petry with the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry, for his courageous actions during combat operations against an armed enemy in Paktia, Afghanistan, on May 26, 2008.

"It's very humbling to know that the guys thought that much of me and my actions that day, to nominate me for that," Petry was quoted in an Army news release. The Medal of Honor is the nation's highest military honor.

Petry and his soldiers participated in a rare daylight raid to capture a high-value target, the Army said. At the time Petry was assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment based out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

Petry was to stay with platoon headquarters in a building already deemed safe, but he noted that one of the platoons needed help clearing a building and he made his way there, according to the Army's account. Once part of the building had been cleared, Petry and Pfc. Lucas Robinson moved to the outer courtyard, which had not been cleared by U.S. soldiers. The pair, both Rangers, encountered three enemy fighters.

Petry was wounded by a bullet that went through both of his legs. Robinson was hit in his side plate by another bullet. While wounded and under enemy fire, Petry led Robinson to cover in a nearby chicken coop and called for backup.

As team leader Sgt. Daniel Higgins began to inch his way to his wounded comrades, Petry threw a thermobaric grenade toward the enemy fighters, which resulted in a brief lull in the fighting. Higgins reached the chicken coop just as an insurgent-thrown grenade landed near the three Rangers, wounding Higgins and Robinson.

Another enemy-tossed grenade landed just a few feet from Higgins and Robinson. Petry – despite his wounds and with complete disregard for his personal safety – “consciously and deliberately risked his life to move to and secure the live enemy grenade and consciously throw the grenade away from his fellow Rangers,” according to the release, citing battlefield reports.

As Petry released the grenade it detonated. He lost his right hand but continued fighting after managing to tie a tourniquet on his arm.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/army-ranger-to-be-awarded-medal-of-honor-1.145202>

In the meantime, Staff Sgt. James Roberts and Spc. Christopher Gathercole reached the courtyard and joined the fighting. During the volley of gunfire, Gathercole was killed.

Higgins and Robinson returned fire and killed the enemy.

Moments later, Sgt. 1st Class Jerod Staidle, the platoon sergeant, and Spc. Gary Depriest, the platoon medic, arrived to help their fellow soldiers.

Higgins later wrote in a statement, "if not for Staff Sergeant Petry's actions, we would have been seriously wounded or killed," the release states.

Petry is the ninth servicemember named a recipient of the Medal of Honor for actions in Afghanistan and Iraq; all but Petry and Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta were awarded the honor posthumously.

Included among those recipients are Spc. Ross A. McGinnis, Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith, Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael A. Monsoor, and Marine Corps Cpl. Jason L. Dunham, all for actions in Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, Staff Sgt. Robert Miller, Sgt. 1st Class Jared C. Monti and Navy Lt. Michael P. Murphy were awarded the Medal of Honor for actions in Afghanistan.

Petry, 31, currently serves as a liaison officer for the U.S. Special Operations Command Care Coalition-Northwest Region, providing oversight to wounded warriors, ill and injured servicemembers and their families.

He enlisted in the Army from his hometown of Santa Fe, N.M., in September 1999. After completing One Station Unit Training, the Basic Airborne Course and the Ranger Assessment and Selection Program, Petry was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. Petry has served as a grenadier, squad automatic rifleman, fire team leader, squad leader, operations sergeant and weapons squad leader.

He has deployed eight times, with two tours to Iraq and six to Afghanistan.

Petry and his wife, Ashley, have four children, Brittany, Austin, Reagan and Landon.

Bin Laden raid a triumph for Spec Ops

Successful raid follows 31-year effort to build elite force

By Sean D. Naylor - Staff writer

Navy Times, 9 May 2011 16:16:03 EDT

The moment a Navy SEAL forced his way into Osama bin Laden's bedroom and put two bullets into the al-Qaida leader was not only the culmination of a manhunt that stretched back to the 1990s, but also Joint Special Operations Command's finest hour.

JSOC is an organization that, like others involved in the raid on the bin Laden compound, was born out of the ashes of an equally high-profile mission that ended in abject failure one week and 31 years earlier.

On the night of April 24, 1980, the U.S. launched Operation Eagle Claw, an audacious plan to rescue 53 American hostages held captive in the U.S. Embassy in Iran.

A team of Delta Force commandos assembled in the Iranian desert, preparing to fly into the Iranian capital of Tehran, take back the embassy and bring home the hostages.

The mission was scrubbed when one helicopter slammed into a C-130 Hercules aircraft, killing eight service members and destroying both aircraft, after which the commandos abandoned the helicopters and left Iran in another C-130.

It was a catastrophic blow to American morale at home and prestige abroad.

The history of U.S. special operations since then can be summed up as a 31-year effort to ensure that when the nation called again, the military's most elite units would be up to the task.

"Those of us who bear the burden of having failed at Desert One, but having now seen what it resulted in over a 31-year-period, are very proud of what has come out of the ashes of those helicopters and C-130 on the night of the 24th of April, 1980," said retired Lt. Gen. William "Jerry" Boykin, who was a Delta Force officer on the hostage rescue mission.

It is in the nature of the secretive missions that are JSOC's *raison d'être* that the organization's many successes remain hidden while its reverses and failures — such as the recent attempt to rescue British hostage Linda Norgrove from Afghan insurgents that ended in Norgrove's death — are sometimes revealed to the world. The raid on bin Laden's compound provided JSOC a rare opportunity to showcase its abilities. This time, JSOC did not miss the opportunity to impress.

A hard lesson learned

The bin Laden raid took advantage of earlier lessons learned. In the years since the failure at Desert One, the Defense Department stood up several organizations, filling capability gaps exposed by the Iranian hostage rescue mission.

In 1987, over the objections of the Joint Chiefs, Congress created U.S. Special Operations Command, a four-star headquarters to oversee the military's burgeoning special operations capabilities. But that was more than six years after the Pentagon established what was to become arguably the pre-eminent three-star command in the U.S. military: Joint Special Operations Command.

When it stood up in December 1980, JSOC was a two-star command designed to command and control Delta Force and other elite units in the conduct of counterterrorism missions. It later added operations to counter weapons of mass destruction to its mission profile, with regular exercises aimed at neutralizing the nuclear forces of a country such as Libya.

<http://www.navytimes.com/news/2011/05/military-bin-laden-raid-a-triumph-for-special-operations-050911/>

The command had some early successes, notably the rescue of American Kurt Muse from Panama's Modelo prison during Operation Just Cause in December 1989.

- [Mission helo was secret stealth Black Hawk](#)
- [SEALs from bin Laden raid drawn from Red Squadron](#)

But it suffered a setback in October 1993 in the Somali capital of Mogadishu when a daylight operation to capture leaders of the Habr Gadir clan was thrown off course by the downing of an MH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

In the ensuing battle, the JSOC task force killed hundreds of Somali militiamen, but 19 U.S. troops also died, the vast majority of them members of the task force.

The JSOC commander at the time, and the man who ran the U.S. side of the battle, was Army Maj. Gen. Bill Garrison. Despite the Mogadishu experience, Boykin, who commanded the Delta troops in the battle, said Garrison was the leader who began the process of turning JSOC into the formidable force it is today.

"Bill Garrison did a great deal to improve the headquarters by getting beyond a strict focus on just the operator in the Rangers or the SEALs or Delta or anything like that," Boykin said.

Garrison "established a strong ethos of, 'Everybody's a team and you all contribute to the success or the failure of this organization, so even if you're not in the battle space, necessarily, your contribution is equal.'"

Turning point

But the biggest turning point in JSOC's history occurred when then-Maj. Gen. Stan McChrystal took command in 2003, a recently retired SEAL officer said.

"Look at JSOC from 1980 to 2003, and there was a series of progressions that was on a very similar path, ... and then look what happened starting in 2003 to today, how radically different it is," he said. "Look at the level of respect it gets in the interagency. Look at the level of respect it gets in the conventional forces."

Before McChrystal, who spent much of his career in the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment, "we were really good at what we did [in JSOC], but we were pirates and totally disorganized," the retired SEAL officer said. "McChrystal took the Ranger discipline, applied it systematically to the organization and then completely changed the way the organization works within the government, within the Defense Department and then within the greater interagency."

McChrystal's vision and force of personality molded JSOC, its component units — and, crucially, its partners in the intelligence community — into a force that took its ability to conduct precision raids to an industrial scale.

This led to multiple task forces across Iraq conducting dozens of raids nightly to destroy Abu Musab Zarqawi's al-Qaida in Iraq network, finally killing Zarqawi himself in a June 2006 airstrike.

Under McChrystal, who led the command for almost five years from 2003 to 2008, JSOC expanded its reach, becoming a global actor with small elements deployed to distant countries outside the combat theaters and raised its status to a three-star command in 2006.

McChrystal "came up with a way to command and control his forces so that with a limited number, he could service efforts in truly a global game," said retired Army Capt. Wade Ishimoto, who was on the ground at Desert One as Delta's acting intelligence officer and is now an adjunct faculty member at the Joint Special Operations University at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

<http://www.navytimes.com/news/2011/05/military-bin-laden-raid-a-triumph-for-special-operations-050911/>

Vice Adm. Bill McRaven, a SEAL who took command of JSOC from McChrystal, has continued where the latter left off, according to special operations sources, honing JSOC into an even more capable organization.

As JSOC has drawn down its forces in Iraq and redeployed assets to Afghanistan, it appears to be re-creating the sort of operational tempo for its task forces there that existed at the height of the Iraq war in 2006 and 2007. It is the main force going up against the Haqqani network, which U.S. commanders consider the most dangerous Afghan insurgent group.

“McRaven’s going to get the credit [for the bin Laden mission], and he deserves it because he’s continued the legacy,” said the recently retired SEAL officer. “But make no mistake, this house was built by Stan, was developed over five years of blood, sweat and tears to reforge completely the way people operate.”

Ishimoto also paid tribute to McRaven, but said that others beyond the past two JSOC leaders played key roles, including Boykin, who served as deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence under President George W. Bush, and McChrystal’s intelligence chief at JSOC, now-Maj. Gen. Mike Flynn of the Army.

“We had a good cast of the right people in the right places at the right time to make this kind of progress,” Ishimoto said. “It’s not luck. There were some decided efforts to make things happen that way.”

The special operators

The Obama administration has not identified the units that took part in the mission to kill bin Laden.

But the stealth MH-60 Black Hawks that carried the SEALs to the compound were almost certainly flown by crews from the Army’s 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), another unit created in the 1980s, this time to fill the need for an elite helicopter force that had been underlined by the debacle at Desert One.

The unit went by a series of different names in the 1980s before acquiring the 160th SOAR(A) moniker in 1990.

The SEALs who killed bin Laden, his son and two male couriers — as well as, accidentally, one of the women in the compound — came from another unit formed to fill a capability gap identified after Operation Eagle Claw: Naval Special Warfare Development Group, or DEVGRU, popularly known as SEAL Team 6.

“DEVGRU was created specifically as a result of [Eagle Claw],” Boykin said. “It was created to give this new joint command a maritime capability.”

Multiple sources in the special operations community said the operators who conducted the bin Laden mission were drawn from DEVGRU’s Red Squadron, chosen because it was ready at DEVGRU’s Dam Neck, Va., headquarters and available for tasking.

“It was Red Squadron,” said the recently retired SEAL officer. “They were not on alert and they weren’t deployed.”

Each squadron has about 50 operators, “of which they picked about half ... for this thing,” he added.

But the selection of DEVGRU to conduct the bin Laden mission has irked some in Delta, who are miffed that their organization — traditionally considered the pre-eminent special mission unit for direct action operations on land — was overlooked for such a prestigious tasking.

<http://www.navytimes.com/news/2011/05/military-bin-laden-raid-a-triumph-for-special-operations-050911/>

“The infighting between the tribes is at an all-time high,” said a field-grade Army special operations officer. “People [in Delta] are livid.”

Some Delta personnel think that the fact that SEALs command both JSOC and U.S. Special Operations Command — Adm. Eric Olson in the latter case — was a critical factor behind DEVGRU’s selection for the mission, the field-grade Army special operations officer said.

But other sources said a bigger factor was likely the fact that DEVGRU has worked nonstop in the Afghanistan theater since 2001, while Delta spent much of that time focused on Iraq.

“We deployed for 10 years to Afghanistan,” said the recently retired SEAL officer. “When Delta left, we stayed. They got to chase the better shiny object in Iraq ... so we were the guys that slogged and fought and stayed there [in Afghanistan] the whole time.”

Almost since SEAL Team 6’s creation, Army special operations personnel have criticized the SEALs’ Tier 1 outfit as lacking in the areas of planning, leadership and operator maturity.

During the past two decades the unit has been involved in several episodes that provided grist for the critics’ mills, with the Norgrove rescue attempt, which was conducted by a DEVGRU element, being the most recent example.

But while the intramural competition between Delta and DEVGRU remains fierce, improvements made by the Naval Special Warfare community in general and DEVGRU in particular have done much to mute the criticisms, said retired Army special ops officers.

“The success of this is really a testament to some extraordinary efforts on the part of the SEAL community to enhance the professionalism and capabilities of the SEALs,” Boykin said.

“The leadership in the SEALs is excellent today and that is evidenced by the fact that SOCOM is commanded by a SEAL, JSOC is commanded by a SEAL, the next SOCOM commander will be a SEAL,” Boykin said, in reference to the fact that the Obama administration has nominated McRaven to replace Olsen later this year.

In another sign of rise of the SEALs, the Pentagon announced May 4 that the administration had nominated Vice Adm. Robert Harward, a DEVGRU alumnus and former deputy JSOC commander, to be the next deputy commander of U.S. Central Command.

“So the fact that they have targeted vast improvements in the leadership, that’s probably made as much difference as anything,” Boykin said. “The Naval Academy is now agreeing to allow more of their graduating class to go into the special warfare community, which was quite unusual for them in the past, and when I go out and do leadership seminars with them, over half of the SEAL officers at the lieutenant level are Naval Academy graduates.

“That is probably their single biggest improvement. Guys like Eric Olson had a vision for what they wanted the SEAL community to be, and they have been very vigilant in implementing their vision and I think their first focus was leadership. Across the board, I think that’s the single biggest thing that they’ve done.”

Ishimoto, an adviser to the Naval Special Warfare community, said the complaints he hears about Delta not being selected for the mission come from people “who don’t know how far DEVGRU has come.”

“That doesn’t mean they’re better than [Delta], but it does mean they’re not the SEAL Team 6 that Dick Marcinko put together,” Ishimoto said, referring to the controversial, hard-drinking first commander of the unit. Ishimoto identified “planning, command and control and working in a joint environment” as the key areas in which DEVGRU has made major improvements.

<http://www.navytimes.com/news/2011/05/military-bin-laden-raid-a-triumph-for-special-operations-050911/>

The recently retired SEAL struck a conciliatory tone in discussing the tensions with DEVGRU's Army counterparts. "The reality is, all of us have bled, all of us have worked together, collaborating on the same targets in both Iraq and Afghanistan ... for a long time now," he said.

But he took umbrage at any suggestion that the SEALs were a dubious choice for the mission.

"The results speak for themselves: not a single U.S. casualty, four dead enemies, body positively ID'd, on and off the target in 40 minutes," he said.

"From an execution standpoint, it could not have gone better, and that hasn't always been the case for all of us, we've all had mistakes, but that op was flawlessly executed on every level.

"So this is good closure for us, for sure," he said. "It's closure for everybody, make no mistake. ... This is big. It's big for all of us. It's a lot of funerals ... a lot of failures kind of vindicated."

Gates Says Teamwork Was Key to Picking New Joint Chiefs Chairman

By Julian E. Barnes

Washington Post, 2 June 2011

So why didn't Marine Gen. James "Hoss" Cartwright get the nod to be the chairman of the Joint Chiefs?

Gen. Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was the odds on favorite to be tapped for the top uniformed military job, when President Barack Obama abruptly shifted and named Army Gen. Martin Dempsey to the position.

In a roundtable with reporters, Defense Secretary Robert Gates vehemently denied reports that Gen. Cartwright's nomination was scuttled because of controversy within the Pentagon over the vice chairman's role in the debate over the Afghanistan surge. Mr. Gates said bluntly that most of the reporting on why Gen. Cartwright was passed over was "garbage."

"Some of the negative things that have been reported as influencing the decision, for example the Afghan piece, are completely wrong," Mr. Gates said.

During the White House 2009 Afghanistan review, Gen. Cartwright presented the White House with alternative military strategies, including options that required fewer troops than Gen. Stanley McChrystal, then the top commander in Afghanistan, had recommended.

Mr. Gates said he would not disclose his recommendation to President Obama. Although it has been widely reported that Mr. Gates did not support Gen. Cartwright's elevation, he praised the general effusively on Thursday.

"Hoss Cartwright is one of the finest officers I have ever worked with," Mr. Gates said. "I've enjoyed working with him for four years and consider him a friend."

Nevertheless, Gen. Dempsey's nomination had a last-minute feel, given that he had only recently taken over as the top Army officer.

Mr. Gates said he had spoken to the president about the importance of creating a national security team. He said over the last two years there has been "cohesiveness" between the CIA director, the Pentagon chief, the chairman and other national security officials.

Continuing a strong sense of teamwork between the new Defense secretary and new chairman were uppermost in his mind as he made his recommendations to Mr. Obama about who to pick to lead the Joint Chiefs, Mr. Gates said.

"So foremost in my mind was ... how do we sustain the teamwork that has been so critical." Mr. Gates said. "That has everything to do with relationships."

Officials close to Gen. Cartwright have dismissed the critique that the vice chairman was not a team player. The officials have arguing that on a range of issues, from developing a comprehensive cyber strategy to the planning for the raid on Osama bin Laden Gen. Cartwright has proven time and again that he can work closely with others.

But some defense officials have criticized Gen. Cartwright, saying he does not consult widely enough or share his thinking with other top officials. These officials said that they had no problem with Gen. Cartwright offering alternative strategies for Afghanistan, but said he did not do enough to inform other military officials about his recommendations before he made them.

Mr. Gates did not say so explicitly, but his comments suggested he did was in the camp that worried that the vice chairman was not a team player.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/local-freedom-riders-remember-the-movement/2011/05/31/AGZrLnFH_story.html?hpid=z2

Local Freedom Riders recall yesterday's fright, today's pride

By Avis Thomas-Lester

Washington Post, May 31, 2011

The way Dion Diamond remembers it, his June 1960 arrest for the “sit-down” at the Howard Johnson’s on Lee Highway in Arlington County marked the first of 30 times he was locked up.

“You have to ask the FBI the locations, though,” he said. “I can’t remember all the places where I’ve been arrested. You know how on job applications where they ask if you’ve ever been arrested? I always had to give an explanation.”

Diamond, now 69 and a retired social services and human-resources executive who lives in Northwest Washington, racked up his arrests protesting segregation, voting-rights violations and other discriminatory practices in an activist career that took him from Howard University to the Deep South as part of the Freedom Riders, blacks and whites — many of them students — who challenged segregation in public transportation in 1961, mostly in Mississippi.

This month, as Freedom Riders across the country celebrate the 50th anniversary of their activism, Diamond and other D.C. residents reflected on the movement and the special place the city holds in its history.

Howard, part of the black Ivy League, was a hotbed of student activism at the time. The first bus of Freedom Riders departed May 4, 1961, from the District.

Marion Barry, the city’s four-term mayor and now a D.C. Council member, remains perhaps the movement’s most famous alumnus in the area. He was a student in Nashville when he signed on.

But other Freedom Riders who now live in the area, such as Diamond, led more private lives. There’s Paul Green, 72, who spent his career as a mathematics professor at the University of Maryland. He and Diamond lived a few blocks from each other for years in the District without realizing it until recently.

Then there’s Reginald Green, 71, the retired longtime pastor of Walker Memorial Baptist Church in Northwest and a resident of Northeast. And Baba El Senzengakulu Zulu — Lester McKinnie back when he was a Freedom Rider — who lives in Northwest and runs the D.C. charter Ujamaa School.

“Howard was the zenith of black education, and the students were very active,” Diamond recalled.

Accolades this time

He and the other local residents were among the Freedom Riders celebrated on Oprah Winfrey’s show this month. Several, including Diamond and Reginald Green, were among those who also returned to Mississippi last week for a 50th anniversary celebration.

Neither had gone back there for years.

The trip was an emotional one, Diamond said. As the Freedom Riders and their families wended their way through Jackson, hundreds of men, women and children of all races lined the route and waved, many with tears in their eyes.

The police who escorted them represented all races; the chief who ordered the escort was a black woman.

“I cried, because it hit me then the impact of our actions 50 years ago,” Diamond said. “When I remembered the reaction of white people back then compared to the response we received now, it got to me. We hastened the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. We helped

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/local-freedom-riders-remember-the-movement/2011/05/31/AGZrLnFH_story.html?hpid=z2

change things on the local level and on the national level. . . . I felt proud that I had been part of that.”

Paul Green, a New York native, was earning a graduate degree in math at Cornell when he and a few friends heard about the call against segregation in Mississippi.

“We had talked about sending money, and then somebody suggested that we put our money where our mouths were and go down to volunteer,” said Green, who is white. They headed to New Orleans in a friend's car, then got on a train to Jackson. When they arrived, they were arrested and jailed.

Reginald Green was a 21-year-old theology student at Virginia Union University when he headed to Nashville on June 7, 1961, and then on to Jackson.

When, in a harrowing incident in Anniston, Ala., racists burned the bus carrying the first group of Freedom Riders from the District, he was one of several students from across the nation who responded to a call for a second wave to keep the public transportation initiative alive. The Congress of Racial Equality paid for bus tickets for him and two others who left from the District.

Jail conditions

Reginald Green didn't tell his parents he was going to Mississippi. They learned it from a reporter who contacted his parents after he and the others on his bus had been jailed in Jackson.

He spent six weeks locked up with his black comrades in the Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman, one of the most notorious prisons in the South.

That's where Zulu, then 19, also ended up.

At Parchman, the men were allowed to shower only every four days. They were always held at gunpoint, even when bathing. They were allowed neither exercise nor communication with the outside world.

To keep their spirits up, Zulu said, the men in Block 17, where many of the black male activists were held, sang.

“The guards would threaten to take our mattresses,” Reginald Green said. “But our attitude was, ‘We're already in jail. What else can you do to us?’ Music was so important in the African American community back then, and it was with us in Parchman. We took the old Negro spirituals and translated them into messages about the movement. That helped get us through.”

Religion

Military's first Hindu chaplain brings a diverse background

By Chris Carroll
Stars and Stripes, 2 June 2011

WASHINGTON — As a child in New Delhi and other cities of India's northern Plains, Pratima Dharm moved easily through a kaleidoscopic swirl of religions and cultures.

"My neighbors were Muslims, my neighbors were Jews, Buddhists, Jains, Hindus, Christians," she said. "My close friends in school represented all the different faith groups, and it never occurred to me then that we were different or there was anything strange about it."



She feels the same decades later. The U.S. Army, where she holds the rank of captain, and the United States itself, where she immigrated just months before the 9/11 attacks, were founded on the idea that people can be united while worshipping differently, she said.

Dharm, 40, has been named the first Hindu chaplain to serve the Department of Defense. Hinduism, with nearly a billion adherents worldwide — but fewer than 1,000 active servicemembers, according to Pentagon statistics — was the largest of the world faiths not represented by a chaplain.

Though the Army hasn't yet publicized her appointment, the rumor has spread among Hindu servicemembers around the world. And Dharm, a chaplain on the medical staff at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, has started getting emails from them.

"I'm already on the job," she said. "There's this tremendous sense of hope and relief that there is someone who understands their story at a deeper level, coming from the background I do."

Still, most of her time at Walter Reed is spent reaching across faiths to minister to anyone who needs it. That's a key responsibility of military chaplains, she said.

"Some of them come back having lost their buddies, some of them come back having lost their limbs, and things have changed for them forever," she said. "To be able to sit down and show compassion for soldiers I have never met before is part of the message of Christ as well as [the Hindu teachings] of Vedanta."

Dharm speaks easily of Christian teachings. A unique aspect of her story is that until this year, she wore the cross of a Christian chaplain on her battle fatigues. When she started on active duty in 2006, she was endorsed by the Pentecostal Church of God, based in Joplin, Mo.

But she's now sponsored by Chinmaya Mission West, a Hindu religious organization that operates in the United States. A Washington, D.C.-area religious teacher who interviewed her for the organization before giving her an endorsement said her multifaith background is an advantage.

"She knows Christian theology, and she has a great grasp of Hindu theology," said Kuntimaddi Sadananda of Chinmaya Mission's Washington center. "This means she can help everyone."

She didn't convert from Christianity to Hinduism, she said.

"I am a Hindu," she said. "It's how I was raised and in my heart of hearts, that's who I am."

But — and perhaps it is hard for some Western Christians to understand — she hasn't rejected Christianity either.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/military-s-first-hindu-chaplain-brings-a-diverse-background-1.145455>

“In Hinduism, the boundaries are not that strict,” she said. “It is to base your life on the Vedantic traditions, and you can be a Christian and follow the Vedantic traditions.”

An Indian-American Army Reserve veteran said that during his years in the service, he was always comfortable meditating in Christian services and talking to non-Hindu chaplains about spiritual matters.

“Hinduism has a strong interfaith philosophy,” said Chaturbhuj Gidwani.

But having a Hindu chaplain available, even if only by email, will make one important group very happy — military mothers who want to make sure their children can practice their faith properly. Sometimes that means explaining cultural fine points.

“Mothers would ask, can you give proper rites to the soldiers?” he said. “For example, if I die, I don’t want to be buried, I want to be cremated. I don’t want to eat beef, I want vegetarian food.”

The Air Force officer who led the Pentagon action group that established Chinmaya West as a chaplain endorsing agency said Dharm’s story is testimony to American pluralism and democracy.

“I get emotional when I talk about it,” said Lt. Col. Ravi Chaudhary, a cargo plane pilot and acquisitions officer. “When you consider Pentagon bureaucracy ... when people here saw that in a fundamental way this is an expression of American values, people moved so quickly to accomplish this.”

Dharm spent a year at a forward operating base near Mosul, Iraq, in 2007 and 2008. She received a Bronze Star and an Army Commendation Medal, among other awards, but the most important thing she came home with was a deeper understanding of what Army chaplains are there for.

It isn’t to advocate for their own faiths, but to bind up the wounded spirits soldiers of any background receive in the brutality of battle.

“You learn to grieve with someone you don’t know on a deep level,” Dharm said. “You watch someone die in front of you and comfort the soldier left behind who had a connection to that person.

“Things of that nature you don’t learn in seminary.”

Sexism

Cokie and Steven V. Roberts: Female U.S. soldiers lose fight in Congress

Billings(Montana) Gazette, May 29, 2011

Women warriors battling in Afghanistan and Iraq will remain second-class citizens, owing to action in the House of Representatives this week. Though a commission appointed by Congress recommended lifting the official ban on women in combat, a proposal to do that in this year's defense bill failed. The vote shortchanges women trying to climb the ranks of military brass and flies in the face of war-zone reality.

„I'd be hard-pressed to say that any woman who serves in Afghanistan today or who's served in Iraq over the last few years did so without facing the same risk as their male counterparts." That's the reality for the more than 260,000 women deployed in America's two wars over the past 10 years, according to Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

But a 1994 ban on female assignments to units "whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground" prevents many military women from moving up the promotion ladder — which relies on combat success — while doing nothing to protect their safety.

Front lines anywhere

"In Iraq, the way the war is, anywhere you are is the front lines," Marine Mary Carnes told NPR at the height of that conflict. Experiences like hers prompted Congress in 2009 to create the commission to study women and minorities in the military. In March, when the commission recommended lifting the restriction on combat duty, it cited the ban as one of the reasons there are so few high-ranking female officers.

But resistance to change runs hard, especially in the ranks of some retired military who can't fathom women going "nose-to-nose with the bad guys, living in the mud, eating what's on your back, no hygiene and no TV," as retired Marine Lt. Gen. Frank Petersen described it when a panel of military women appeared before the commission. "How many of you would volunteer to live like that?"

„I have lived like that," shot back Tammy Duckworth, who lost both of her legs in Iraq. Now No. 2 at Veterans Affairs, Duckworth insisted, "I've lived out there with the guys, and I would do it. It's about the job." Lots of military women have now lived like that, doing the job. No one claims it's easy.

When Army Sgt. Kayla Williams recounted to NPR her six months as the only woman with a unit on a mountainside in Iraq, she admitted her buddies sometimes crossed the line from friendly teasing to harassment. But she thinks the official restrictions contributed to a sense that she was fair game. If women aren't equals, she argues, men are less likely to respect them: "The fact that women can't be in combat arms jobs allows us to be portrayed as less than fully soldiers."

Most of the canards against lifting the combat ban are downright insulting, given the heroics of many female fighters. The stereotypes — women aren't tough enough, they will distract the men and destroy unit cohesion — have been proven false over and over. But to us here's the most insulting argument: The country will sour on war if women are killed.

Insulting stereotypes

That's an insult to the 137 women who have lost their lives in the war zones, and it's even more of an insult to the more than 5,000 men who have died. It implies that Americans care more about their daughters than their sons — that we will tolerate war as long as it's men in those body bags but will

http://billingsgazette.com/news/opinion/editorial/columnists/cokie_roberts_steven_v_roberts/article_aedc239e-1a4a-5fc6-80bc-923e44718592.html

turn against it when women are its victims. That reasoning would horrify any parent who has lost a son.

But we're likely to hear it again when Congress eventually does take up legislation to carry out the commission's recommendations sanctioning what women are already doing — fighting and dying in battle zones. And even if a bill officially allowing women in combat passes, the Defense Department will have final say on when to implement it.

Because the Pentagon is already dealing with what the spokesman calls a “significant cultural change” by lifting the “don't ask, don't tell” rule dealing with gays in the military, there's no appetite for tackling another tricky issue right now. So one more generation of military women will leave their families, head into dangerous territory, some will die, and many will be injured — that we know. We also know that they won't receive the promotions they deserve or achieve positions of leadership because of a piece of paper that tells them they may not serve in combat even as bombs burst all around them.

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110529822915.html> or
http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-women-in-combat/2011/05/25/AGAsavCH_story.html

Five myths about women in combat

By Jane Blair

Washington Post, May 29, 2011

During my service in Iraq as a Marine officer, I, like many other military women, found myself fighting on the front lines of America's wars--yet was unacknowledged for doing so. Women are dying in combat, but Congress still officially bans us from serving in combat units that engage the enemy with deliberate, offensive action.

This antiquated policy may be seeing its final days. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-Calif.) has prepared an amendment to the defense budget bill that would end the the ban. On Memorial Day weekend, let's also end some revered stereotypes purporting to explain why women couldn't possibly succeed in combat.

1. Women are too emotionally fragile for combat.

This myth is based on cultural stereotypes and Hollywood hype. There is no concrete evidence to suggest that women are any more susceptible to combat stress than their male counterparts.

Women in the Marine Corps, for example, go through training identical to what men get. While boot camp is segregated by gender, subsequent training is integrated, and women train for combat the same way as men. Gender-integrated units don't exclude women from any activity. Women shoot, exercise, plan battles and conduct military maneuvers the same way as the men do. They become mentally conditioned the same way as their male counterparts and develop the same combat mind-set. Several studies, including one in 2009 by the Defense Department's Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, have found that gender integration in noncombat units has no effect on overall unit cohesion.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is an unfortunate consequence of war, especially for those who have served multiple deployments — and sadly, no gender is immune to it.

2. Women are too physically weak for the battlefield.

While it is indisputable that the average man has more upper-body strength than the average woman, women have different physical abilities that enable them to offer unique capabilities in combat.

Distance running is one such arena, and it's relevant because combat can be as much about physical endurance (sustaining activity over time) as physical strength. According to a study analyzing track-and-field records and published in the journal *Nature* in 1992, the gaps between male and female performance narrow as the distance is extended, and some studies show that at ultramarathon distances (100 miles or more), women with equal training as their male counterparts outperform men. Researchers theorize that women's ability to metabolize fat more efficiently contributes to their endurance and success in longer runs. Women also tolerate hot and humid racing conditions better than men because of their smaller body size, according to a 1999 article in the *European Journal of Applied Physiology and Occupational Physiology*.

Foot patrols involve carrying 50 to 100 pounds of equipment for miles at a time, and I've seen male Marines who can bench-press 300 pounds but struggle to walk two miles with 50 pounds of gear. And you don't have to bench-press 300 pounds to pull a trigger. If a woman passes the physical requirements, why shouldn't she get the chance to fight?

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110529822915.html> or
http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-women-in-combat/2011/05/25/AGAsavCH_story.html

3. The presence of women causes sexual tension in training and battle.

This notion insults men as much as women. For nearly 10 years, the U.S. military has been fighting two wars with a majority of units that include both men and women. Why hasn't supposed "sexual tension" undermined the stellar performance of gender-integrated units?

Women work in close proximity to men in all sorts of occupations — whether dancers or astronauts or war correspondents — without cause for alarm. Personally, I have found more sexual harassment and gender bias in the corporate world than in the military. In the military, I was treated as a Marine first and a woman second.

If anything, the presence of women might improve rather than detract from the service of men. My unit sergeant major, an infantryman, told me once that the presence of women made the men complain less — they didn't want to appear weaker in front of female counterparts who weren't complaining.

4. Male troops will become distracted from their missions in order to protect female comrades.

This myth conjures an image of a heroic soldier, attacking the enemy and about to win, until catastrophe strikes: He spots a wounded woman on the battlefield and abandons his assault to save her life, costing his side the battle. It's the "women and children first" argument translated to the battlefield.

This reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to be a warrior. In battle, saving a comrade is one of the highest and noblest things one can do. Since Vietnam, 10 Americans have won the Medal of Honor, our highest decoration for valor. Nine of them received it for saving the lives of comrades on the battlefield.

If men — or women — have the gallantry to save a fellow soldier's life in battle, it's because that is what we are trained to do. It's no drawback; it is part of our greatest strength as a fighting force. And if a woman, or a man for that matter, can't carry the wounded, the corpsman or another soldier will be close behind to help.

5. Women can't lead men in combat effectively.

Why not? Across the planet, women have proven their worth as leaders as diplomats, heads of state and corporate titans. This is no less true in the military and in combat. In history as well as ancient mythology, women have often emerged as heroic leaders of men and women in battle, with Joan of Arc and the Assyrian queen Semiramis just two of the most notable examples. In the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, there have been countless women who, often unrecognized, have served as leaders of military men and women.

Army Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody proved a few years ago, when she received her fourth star, that women can achieve high leadership roles in the military — yet she is not the norm. Leaders such as Dunwoody prove that women have what it takes. They just need the opportunity.

"If women are expected to do the same work as men," Plato wrote, "we must teach them the same things." If we trained women to be leaders in combat as we train men to be leaders in combat, why wouldn't they perform just as well? But women do not receive intensive infantry training because they are excluded not just from combat roles, but from serving in combat units at all. This is the same discrimination that kept women from voting — the idea that they were not qualified to do so.

Maj. Jane Blair, a Marine Corps reservist, is the author of "Hesitation Kills: A Female Marine Officer's Combat Experience in Iraq." The views expressed here are her own.

Sexual Assault / Harassment

Navy leaders stress sex assault prevention

By William H. McMichael - Staff writer
Navy Times, 9 May 2011 8:45:49 EDT

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Navy Department's top civilian was visibly angry when he took to the stage. The reason: More than 900 sexual assaults were reported in fiscal 2010. And as Navy Secretary Ray Mabus told the more than 300 commanders, enlisted leaders and sexual assault response coordinators gathered here for a three-day conference, commanding officers will have to answer for the problem.

"I'm going to continue to hold our COs responsible for their command sexual assault prevention programs, demand that they properly train their personnel, and hold them accountable if that doesn't occur," Mabus told the attendees of the Navy Department's 2011 Sexual Assault Prevention Summit, held here May 2-4.

That means accelerating training for sailors and Marines so they can learn how to intervene when they suspect someone is about to become a victim. The training will be on site for recruits and at "A" schools, Mabus said.

Most attackers and victims hold ranks of seaman recruit through petty officers third class, the Navy says.

Mabus said his daily operational briefings nearly always contain a report of a sexual assault on a sailor or Marine.

"That's almost three every ... single ... day of the year," Mabus said, pausing slightly for emphasis. "Three times a day, somebody that wears the uniform of this country, and has sworn to defend it and protect it, is being assaulted. Three times a day.

"If somebody was being shot at three times a day, we would do something about it," Mabus said. "This ought to make us mad."

The Navy needs to do more — and more in proportion compared with other behavioral concerns, Navy Undersecretary Robert Work told Navy Times at the summit. In fiscal 2010, he noted, the Navy and Marine Corps together registered 22 deaths caused by motorcycle crashes, 75 suicides — and 925 reported sexual assaults.

"The amount of resources we are expending on suicide prevention and prevention of motorcycle deaths right now vastly exceeds what we're spending on sexual assault prevention," Work said.

The high likelihood that the numbers are greatly underreported concerns Work even more. The Pentagon estimates that only about 20 percent of incidents of unwanted sexual contact are reported. If that's true, he said, it could mean that thousands of such incidents take place every year in the Navy and Marine Corps.

"It is just astounding to me," Work said. "I think as a department, we've got to really, really step up our game."

Work said he first became aware of what he called this "terrible epidemic" during the first annual summit meeting, held in 2009. This was the third. And it only reinforced that same sense for the officer who commands every Navy base around the world.

"I'm a data-driven guy," said Vice Adm. Michael Vitale, attending his second sexual assault summit. "They're providing a lot of data. And it's a very compelling case. So I've had a realignment. Is sexual assault a real issue? Absolutely."

<http://www.navytimes.com/news/2011/05/navy-sexual-assault-reports-ray-mabus-050811w/>
Vitale, who oversees all 81 of the Navy's Family Service Centers and implements the Navy's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program, made sure that his subordinate leaders had the opportunity to gain a similar appreciation. He brought 186 officers and sailors to Orlando, including nine regional commanders and 69 of his 72 total COs, all 12 of his regional command master chiefs and 60 of his sexual assault response coordinators.

It was at that first summit that Navy leaders began recognizing that in addition to the training workshops now provided for commanders and specialists, teaching what is known as bystander intervention might be the best way to reach the wider fleet as a prevention strategy.

"Bystander intervention — and there's evidence-based research that points to this — it fits our culture," said Capt. Chuck Hollingsworth, CO of the Center for Personal and Professional Development at Dam Neck Annex, Va. He managed a 2010 pilot program conducted at 23 fleet units, one schoolhouse and one shore command that has persuaded the Navy to expand the concept.

"There are a thousand times more potential bystanders to intervene than there are either perpetrators or victims. The bystanders are there," Hollingsworth said during his remarks. "They are our eyes and ears on the deck plate. They are out there where we can't be, as commanders. And so we need to empower them with the message."

And teach them to take care of their own, officials said. According to the Navy's latest statistics, 65 percent of all reported sexual assaults in fiscal 2010 were of the "blue-on-blue" variety. During that same year, Marine-on-Marine assaults totaled 61 percent of all completed sexual assault investigations.

"If two out of three of these cases ... involves a blue-on-blue," said Adm. Jonathan Greenert, vice chief of naval operations, "the very concept that one sailor would assault, attack, another sailor — that's contradictory to good order and discipline."

Bystander intervention, Greenert said, "needs to be embedded and inculcated down to the deck-plate level."

Intervening, Navy leaders acknowledge, can be a difficult thing to do — particularly for a younger sailor or Marine.

"Sometimes, it's just the willingness to step up and do the right thing at the right time," said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SS/SW) Rick West. "But I think for the most part, our deck-plate leaders are stepping up to the challenge. We have some that may not. And that's where we have to put our focus at."