

## DEOMI News Highlights

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

### **Discharged for Being Gay, Veterans Seek to Re-enlist [James Dao, *The New York Times*, 4 September 2011]**

- ...[M]any gay men and lesbians who were discharged under the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy say they want to rejoin the service...
- Though the Pentagon says it will welcome their applications, former service members discharged for homosexuality will not be granted special treatment.
- [Several] former service member have filed a lawsuit asserting that they were unconstitutionally discharged and should be reinstated, presumably at their former ranks... But even advocates for gay and lesbian troops say it might not be practical for the military to adopt [such] a blanket policy...

[Discharged for Being Gay, Veterans Seek to Re-enlist](#)

### **The silent battle for servicewomen: Sexual assault [Melissa Dribben, *Philly.com*, 7 September 2011]**

- The article profiles stories of two women who have been sexually abused while serving in the military, provides some relevant statistics on the extent of such abuse, and highlights some recent initiatives by the military leadership to address the problem.
- Among those initiatives: activities of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO); mandatory pre-deployment training for troops; the DoD’s contract with Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), to set up a 24-hour hotline; and the employment of Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, or SARCs.
- The article emphasizes that sexual abuse in the military is "undermining troop readiness" and in the words of former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, "destabilizes the workplace and threatens national security."

[The silent battle for servicewomen: Sexual assault](#)

### **VA responding to growing number of female veterans [Bill Zlatos, *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, 5 September 2011]**

- [The article highlights] the nationwide push by the VA to make its hospitals more friendly to women, because the number of female veterans is growing fast.
- Between 2000 and 2036, the VA projects the number of female veterans will rise from 1.6 million to more than 2.1 million. It expects the number of male veterans to decrease from 25.1 million to more than 11.9 million...
- Female veterans cite as frequent problems low back pain from driving on unpaved roads, foot problems from ill-fitting boots, post-traumatic stress disorder and subsequent abuse of drugs and alcohol... VA officials say one of the most common problems is military sexual trauma.

[VA responding to growing number of female veterans](#)

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# Culture

# Female Engagement Team interacts with local citizens

By Staff Sgt. Rebecca Petrie

DVIDS(Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System, 4 Sept. 2011

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Soldiers from the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, known as the Stonewall Brigade, Female Engagement Team and 3rd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 2nd Regiment, 8th Field Artillery Battalion, along with members of the Afghan National Police, worked together to conduct a joint foot patrol through the bazaar in Qalat, Aug. 21.



*Photo by Staff Sgt. Rebecca Petrie*

*Sgt. 1st Class Bladimiro Fernandez, from Jacksonville, Fla., stops to take a picture with some local children during a foot patrol through the bazaar in Qalat, Zabul province, Afghanistan, Aug. 21.*

The purpose of the patrol was to get a feel for the general attitude and perception of the local population toward the ANP, and to give a show of female presence to demonstrate equality between men and women.

“Sunday's patrol was the first step into community policing in Qalat,” said Sgt. 1st Class Bladimiro Fernandez, from Jacksonville, Fla., the Combined Team Zabul provost marshal noncommissioned officer in charge. “This is the only way to make headway in this war – getting the people to take ownership in their communities by building positive relationships through the Afghan National Police.”

As the soldiers and policemen walked through the bazaar, they stopped to engage in friendly conversations with vendors and shoppers. Some of the police even stopped to pose for photos.

“I'm ecstatic to be a part of positive change in a community dismayed by terror,” said Fernandez. “Once the people have ownership, we will have met our goal.”

Friendly small talk with the vendors was just a part of the whole joint patrol experience. Even though women were scarce and difficult to talk to, Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Jackson from Lynchburg, Va., the FET NCOIC, said she had a great time interacting with the group of children who swarmed the patrol as they handed out toys and shoes.

“I loved interacting with the kids,” said Jackson. “They are the future of Afghanistan, and winning the hearts and minds here will be through the children. If they see that we care about them, I believe it will change their way of thinking and change the future of Afghanistan for the better.”

The positive experience left an indelible impression on several members of the group, who expressed a strong desire to follow up with another mission in the near future.

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110906840095.html> or  
<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/2011/sep/05/marines-battle-to-educate-afghan-children/>

# Marines battle to educate Afghan children

*Commanders say it's a cornerstone of their strategy to defeat the insurgency*

By Gretel C. Kovach

San Diego Union-Tribune, September 6, 2011

The effort has its detractors among those who feel that armed forces should focus their resources and attention on fighting and killing the enemy. But top commanders say their campaign to send Afghan boys and girls to school is more than a humanitarian mission, it is also a cornerstone of their strategy to defeat the insurgency and stabilize the country.

“We have not stopped relentlessly pursuing the enemy,” said Brig. Gen. Lewis Craparotta, the head of Marine ground forces in southwestern Afghanistan — one of the most combative areas of the country. “But when you get to the point where the people are relatively secure, the next thing they want to see is what is the benefit of that security and siding with the government? “In my view, that benefit is not very hard to achieve here,” he said, by providing roads, health clinics and “an opportunity to send your child to school.”

As Afghan students prepare to return to the classroom in mid-September, the challenges facing the military and its civilian partners promoting education remain legion. Afghanistan is one of the most impoverished countries in the world. An entire generation of its citizens was denied an education because of the Soviet invasion, civil war and the government takeover by Taliban militants who replaced normal schools with madrasas indoctrinating youth with their fanatical interpretation of Islam.

Today the literacy rate among Afghans is estimated at 34 percent. In southern Afghanistan — where the Taliban rose to power, drought and famine exacerbated poverty and the connection to central government officials in Kabul remains weak — the rate is perhaps 14 percent overall and virtually zero among females, the Marines estimate. Yet education for children is one of the most frequently cited needs. “There’s a huge hunger for this by parents, for their boys and their girls,” said Maj. Kerry Mengelkoch, the Marine command’s education officer in southwestern Afghanistan. “They see how important education is. The older Afghans, some have been educated and they want the same opportunities they had to be more common for Afghans of today.”

In Helmand province, the Marines work closely to organize the schools with American and other western government representatives. Private charities, international organizations such as the World Bank and donor countries help pay for construction of schools, and the Afghan government certifies teachers, eventually pays their salaries and assumes administrative responsibility.

The Marines and other members of the armed forces working along similar lines elsewhere in the country play a critical role in this broader campaign in the most dangerous areas to jump-start new schools and boost enrollment. For instance, Camp Pendleton Marines from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment posted to Sangin, where U.S. and British forces have suffered their worst casualties in the war, are working with civil affairs Marines to construct a new brick school expected to open this fall.

Often the Marines begin with simple tent structures while they focus on the most difficult task – locating qualified teachers, securing the area and convincing parents that it is safe. After erecting more permanent structures, the next battle is protecting staff, students and schoolhouses from insurgent reprisals. Newly built or renovated schools have been burned and rocketed. One victim

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110906840095.html> or  
<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/2011/sep/05/marines-battle-to-educate-afghan-children/>

of an intensifying Taliban assassination campaign, a headmaster who refused to stop educating girls, was murdered in May in Logar province near Kabul.

Every strata of the military is involved in the education drive, from infantrymen and female Marines on patrol to senior commanders working with other agencies and the Afghan government to try to ensure the projects are sustainable.

“You have to be able to grow the capacity of the Afghan Ministry of Education to deliver those schools independently of the security forces. So there will be a point where Marines should not be in the business of delivering education activities,” said Maj. Nina D’Amato, a Camp Pendleton civil affairs Marine who finished a yearlong tour in March as the southwestern Afghanistan command’s education officer.

Meanwhile, that day is a long way off. “Helmand schools didn’t always look like this,” D’Amato said. “What you are seeing now after 35 years of violence is a reemergence and attempt to cultivate what almost came to a complete halt.” To that end, the Marines work closely with a charity founded by Los Angeles businessman Jim Hake called Spirit of America, which collects donations to support schools, refurbishes them, and connects American and Afghan schoolchildren through video conferencing.

“The American people can really be the world’s most powerful force,” said Hake, whose organization has full-time staff with the Marines in Helmand province, to determine gaps in military and government programs. “We can be of great assistance on the frontlines. And by doing it in a way that connects the goodwill of the American people to Afghans in remote areas, we can achieve a much faster result.”

Enrollment in Helmand province rose above 90,000 as of April, a 76 percent increase since 2007, according to Helmand’s Provincial Reconstruction Team. Among them are more than 20,000 girls, up from none in 2001. Nationwide, enrollment has grown from about 6.3 million in 2009 to 8.2 million.

In central Marjah, once the scene of intense combat, the new Koru Chareh school that opened this year was immediately oversubscribed. Marines spearheaded construction of a sturdy school built for 400 students. Soon more than 600 were attending, forcing the Marines to use tents for the overflow and apply for funds to extend the building.

Marjah’s governor, Abdul Mutalab, helped escort House minority leader Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, to the school in March. “People here see that fighting is not getting them results. They think the only solution to get rid of this situation is education,” Mutalab said.

# Diversity



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## NEWS RELEASE

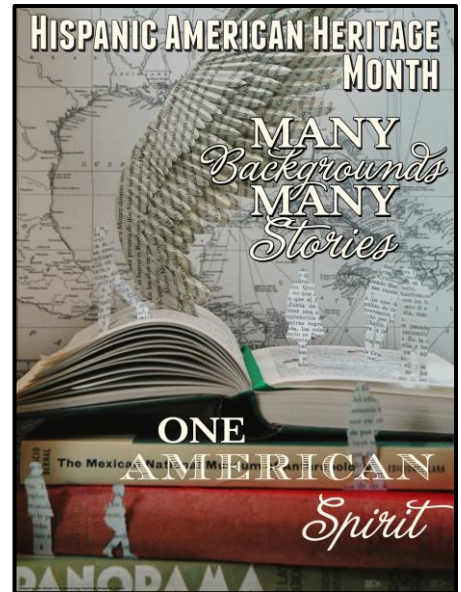
### **DEOMI RELEASES HISPANIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH OBSERVANCE POSTER**

**August 30, 2011  
Release No. 11-08-28**

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – In observance of Hispanic American Heritage Month the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), proudly announces the availability of this new original artwork available for download from our public Web site at [www.deomi.org](http://www.deomi.org).

Please note that you may download this hi-resolution image file by clicking the “download” link below the thumbnail image for this poster and take it to your preferred printing facility for display in your organization or use during your special observance programs. All DEOMI special observance poster images are hi resolution and may be used to print posters up to 30 X 40 inches. DEOMI does not have the capability to print posters and mail them out to our customers upon request.

DEOMI illustrator Mr. Peter Hemmer describes this year’s Hispanic American Heritage Month observance poster:



“The “Many Backgrounds, Many Stories” aspect of the theme had me thinking along the lines of books, which led to artwork created from actual books,” said Mr. Hemmer. “After researching book art, origami and paper craft I came up with this artwork created entirely from Spanish language book pages. The eagle’s wing springing from the books represents an America created by a culmination of the diverse stories, backgrounds, cultures and history of Hispanic Americans. The mostly cream color scheme created by all of the printed text creates a unifying effect while the printed word provides texture and interest,” he said while describing the artistic background for the poster.

### **What is Hispanic Heritage Month?**

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson obtained authorization from Congress to proclaim a week in September as National Hispanic Heritage Week. In 1988, the observance was expanded by President Ronald Reagan to a month-long commemoration, beginning September 15 and ending October 15, making 2011 the **23rd annual celebration**. During this month, America celebrates the culture and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and Spanish-speaking nations in Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

September 15 was chosen as the starting date for the celebration because it marks the independence anniversary of five Latin American countries; Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile also celebrate their independence days in September. Hispanic Heritage Month also includes October 10th, known as Columbus Day in the U.S. and as *El Dia de la Raza* in Latin American Countries.

All DEOMI observance month poster files and presentations are in the public domain unless otherwise indicated. We request you credit the illustrator, author, or simply, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute.

### **Hispanic American Heritage Month Facts for Features**

[http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb11-ff18.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb11-ff18.html)

#### **50.5 million**

The Hispanic population of the United States as of April 1, 2010, making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest ethnic or race minority. Hispanics constituted 16.3 percent of the nation's total population. In addition, there are 3.7 million residents of Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory.

#### **43%**

Percentage increase in the Hispanic population between April 1, 2000, and April 1, 2010, making Hispanics the fastest-growing minority group.

#### **132.8 million**

The projected Hispanic population of the United States on July 1, 2050. According to this projection, Hispanics will constitute 30 percent of the nation's population by that date.

#### **2nd**

Ranking of the size of the U.S. Hispanic population worldwide, as of 2010. Only Mexico (112 million) had a larger Hispanic population than the United States (50.5 million).

#### **63%**

The percentage of Hispanic-origin people in the United States who were of Mexican background in 2010. Another 9.2 percent were of Puerto Rican background, 3.5 percent Cuban, 3.3 percent Salvadoran and 2.8 percent Dominican. The remainder was of some other Central American, South American or other Hispanic or Latino origin.

#### **25**

Number of states in which Hispanics were the largest minority group. These states were Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming.

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[www.deomi.org](http://www.deomi.org) or [www.facebook.com/deomi.dod](https://www.facebook.com/deomi.dod)

<http://www.deomi.org/SpecialObservance/posters.cfm?CatID=5>

# **Human Relations**

# **DLI chief was moved into action after 9/11**

## **Col. Pick tapped language skills**

**By LARRY PARSONS, Herald Staff Writer**

**The Monterey Herald, 8 September 2011**

Army Col. Danial Pick recalls his immediate thought as he watched smoke billow from the damaged Pentagon after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Earlier that Tuesday, Pick had been in a classroom at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College in Quantico, Va., when someone walked in and turned on a television. The first World Trade Center tower was on fire, and then a plane hit the second tower.

Pick headed for the Pentagon, 20 miles away, and into a new world for the U.S. military and America. "My first thought was, 'We need to get off foreign oil.' Don't ask me why. I remember it as clear as if it were today," said Pick, commandant of the Defense Language Institute and Foreign Language Center in Monterey. "Then I got angry. I wanted to get into the field, to an operational unit and do something about the guys who attacked us," he said.

Pick, a Middle East specialist and 1996 Arabic language graduate of DLI, had to wait until the start of the Iraq war to get into battle. But he put his language skills — he also speaks Farsi, Dari and Assyrian — to more immediate use, translating materials captured by U.S. forces fighting the Taliban after the invasion of Afghanistan.

"It made my blood run cold. There were people operating in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and they were dead-set on harming Americans, and doing it in creative and dangerous ways," Pick said. The 9/11 attacks transformed what had largely been a peacetime Army into a military at war, he said.

The past decade, in which many soldiers have been in the Middle East or getting ready to deploy there, has been one of professional growth for the military and tremendous human consequences — the dead, wounded and strained family relationships, he said.

"We have become more competent, agile and proficient as a military," he said. "But repeated deployments and time away from loved ones ... have taken a definite toll on service members and their families."

An outgrowth of 9/11, of course, has been the fractious and often-overheated debate over the Muslim world and its relation to the Muslim extremists who mounted the 9/11 attacks.

For Pick, whose mother left her native Iran in the mid-1960s, the military personnel who learn the languages, history and culture of Muslim countries at DLI provide a critical talent pool "to bridge the gap of understanding between our country and those in the Middle East." "The al-Qaida ideology and extremists, in general, throughout the Muslim world (have) done their people and faith a tremendous disservice," he said.

The Army language school, where more than half the 4,000 students are studying Arabic and languages of Afghanistan and Pakistan, is "a critical enabler for America to understand the Muslim world, to interact with it, and, most important, to determine friend from foe," Pick said.

On the 10th anniversary of 9/11, Pick will be in Afghanistan, but a moment of silence will be observed at the Presidio.

"What I encourage is to consider what happened that day — the loss of life and tragedy — and to think about the strength and resiliency of the nation we are, a rich mosaic of all faiths and all nationalities," Pick said. "And we take pride in that. That's what makes us strong."

<http://www.military.com/news/article/panetta-says-threat-of-another-911-is-real.html>

# Panetta Says Threat of Another 9/11 is Real

by Robert Burns, Associated Press  
Military.com, September 07, 2011

NEW YORK --- After a decade of war with al-Qaida the potential for another devastating terrorist assault "remains very real," Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Tuesday following a somber visit to ground zero of the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

The Pentagon chief walked through the National September 11 Memorial park and museum with Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and afterward told reporters that Americans must remain vigilant against the threat of another successful al-Qaida attack.

"The potential for that kind of attack remains very real," he said from the 10th floor of 7 World Trade Center, the first completed office tower at the site where hijacked commercial airliners were flown into the Twin Towers, killing more than 2,700 people.

Bad weather forced Panetta to scratch plans to visit Shanksville, Pa., where hijackers flew United Flight 93 into the ground, killing all 40 passengers and crew shortly after the coordinated terrorist attack began in New York.

Noting that many of al-Qaida's top leaders, including Osama bin Laden, have been captured or killed in recent months, Panetta said the nature of the terrorist threat has evolved to the point where al-Qaida "nodes" outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan are now the most dangerous.

"Yemen has risen to the top of the list," he said.

Panetta's New York visit gave him an early glimpse at the memorial, with its majestic 30-foot manmade walls of water that hug the sides of one-acre reflecting pools that encompass the ground where the Twin Towers stood. The water is meant to signify falling tears.

Panetta also took a peek inside the entrance to the museum, which is still under construction. And he was shown the "Survivor Tree," a non-fruit bearing pear tree that was rescued from the World Trade Center grounds after the terrorist attacks. It stands amid the white oaks, near the reflecting pool at the former South Tower.

Dozens of workers scrambled Tuesday morning to put the finishing touches on the memorial, planting ivy as ground cover around the 225 white oak trees that surround the reflecting pools.

The Sept. 11 attacks killed nearly 3,000 people, including 184 at the Pentagon. The names of every person who died in the attacks, including those at the Pentagon and in Shanksville, are inscribed in bronze panels that edge the reflecting pools at the Twin Towers site.

Panetta's spokesman, Doug Wilson, said the Pentagon chief wanted to visit Shanksville and New York to highlight the role the military has played over the past decade in preventing further attacks on the homeland. Accompanying him on his trip Tuesday were five service members - one each from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard.

The visit also recalled the most memorable event of Panetta's tenure as CIA director: the May killing of bin Laden.

Panetta will attend 9/11 memorial events at the Pentagon on Sunday.

He was a private citizen on 9/11 but happened to be on Capitol Hill at the time of the attacks, according to his press secretary, George Little.

<http://www.military.com/news/article/panetta-says-threat-of-another-911-is-real.html>

Shanksville remains the least publicized of the three 9/11 attack sites. In its final report, the official 9/11 Commission that investigated the terrorist plot wrote a gripping account of what happened aboard Flight 93.

The commission determined that the plane, overtaken by four hijackers, slammed into the ground at 11 seconds past 10:03 EDT, on a path over Pennsylvania toward its intended target in Washington - either the Capitol or the White House.

It departed from Newark, N.J., bound for San Francisco, at 8:42 a.m. The hijackers took over the cockpit 46 minutes later. At 9:57 a.m., a passenger revolt began. The cockpit voice recorder captured sounds of the passenger assault.

"Some family members listening to the recording report that they can hear the voice of a loved one among the din," the 9/11 Commission report said.

Within minutes, the hijackers apparently determined they were about to be overpowered and decided to abort their mission and destroy the plane. "The aircraft plowed into an empty field in Shanksville, Pa., at 580 mph, about 20 minutes' flying time from Washington, D.C.," the report said.

# Panetta Visits 9/11 Memorial at Ground Zero

By Karen Parrish

American Forces Press Service, 6 Sept. 2011

NEW YORK, Sept. 6, 2011 – Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta today toured the National September 11 Memorial and Museum site here.



*Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, center, visits the 9/11 Memorial site at ground zero with New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, right, Sept. 6, 2011. DOD photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jacob N. Bailey*

“This Sunday, the nation marks the tenth anniversary of 9/11, the worst terrorist attack in the history of the United States,” the secretary told reporters. “We will honor those who died at the Pentagon, 184 of them, but I thought it was also appropriate to come here and honor

those, nearly 3,000, who died here in New York City.”

Panetta is the first Cabinet officer to visit the site. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg welcomed the secretary to the site and accompanied him during his visit.

Lower Manhattan’s ground zero is still a construction zone, with hard-hatted workers, cranes and heavy equipment all busy on new buildings near the former site of the two towers.

The area where the towers stood, however, will open as part of the memorial to the public this Sept. 11, -- the tenth anniversary of the attacks that killed 2,996 people after terrorist hijackers crashed four passenger jets: one into each of the towers, one into the Pentagon, and one into a field near Shanksville, Pa., short of its likely Washington, D.C., target.

The 8-acre memorial centers on the sites of the former towers, now transformed to square, granite reflecting pools, each about an acre in size. Each pool is fed by 4 30-foot waterfalls that descend from ground level, and the pools drain into what memorial staff members describe as a “center void” at the bottom of each.

The theme the pools represent is “reflecting absence,” according to memorial officials.

The waterfalls are edged with bronze ledges about waist-high, inscribed with the names of all the victims who died in the 2001 attacks, as well as the six people killed during the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

The terrorist attacks of a decade ago brought the nation together in a commitment that such horror “will never happen again,” Panetta said.

“As tragic as 9/11 was, we have drawn tremendous inspiration [from it],” he said, adding that those who attacked the United States in an attempt to weaken the country actually made it stronger.

The day of the attacks, Panetta said, he was on Capitol Hill briefing members of Congress on ocean issues. After remaining in Washington for a few days, he rented a car and drove across the country to his home in California.

“It ... was an interesting drive,” Panetta said. “It gave me a chance to see how the rest of the country came together after 9/11.”

Driving through the Midwest, he saw “God bless America” signs. “It just told you a lot about what this country’s made of,” he said.

<http://www.defense.gov//News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=65253>

Contrasting ground zero today with the devastation he viewed shortly after the attacks, Panetta said, shows the resilience of the country and the city.

“I think this is going to be a special place,” he said of New York City’s 9/11 memorial and museum, “for people to ... come to and remind themselves not only of the sacrifice that was made, but also the great strength the American people have in coming back.”

During his visit to ground zero, Panetta also toured the Memorial Museum, which is scheduled to open next year on Sept. 11. Seven of the museum’s 10 stories are underground, and part of the above-ground structure will display structural components recovered after the towers fell.

Sarah Lippman, a member of the memorial staff, told reporters the site will also feature 400 swamp white oak trees, more than 200 of which already are in place. The leaves of swamp white oaks typically start changing color around the time of the anniversary, she said, and the trees are expected to grow from their current height of about 25 feet to an eventual 60 feet.

Also on the site is the “survivor tree,” a pear tree found alive at the site after the attacks and nursed back to health at a nearby nursery, Lippman said.

Five service members who enlisted since 9/11 accompanied Panetta on today’s visit. They are:

-- Army Staff Sgt. Ryan M. Celko, who enlisted in the Army in 2004 and deployed twice with the 10th Mountain Division’s 4th Base Support Team Battalion out of Fort Polk, La. He is from Middlesex, N.J.

-- Navy Lt. Adam C. Jones enrolled in the U.S. Naval Academy in 2002 and earned his commission in 2006. His was the first class to enroll after 9/11. He is from Annapolis, Md.

-- Marine Corps Sgt. Carlos A. Tovar enlisted in March 2008. Originally from Caracas, Venezuela, he became a U.S. citizen while serving in the Marine Corps. He is from Orlando, Fla.

-- Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez Jr. enlisted in 2002 following graduation from Southwestern Community College. He was wounded by enemy fire on his second deployment. He is from Chula Vista, Calif.

-- Coast Guard Lt. Nikea L. Natteal graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 2006 as part of the first class to enroll following 9/11. She is from Yuma, Ariz.

Gutierrez told reporters the visit to ground zero “reminded me why I enlisted.”

Gutierrez said he tried to enlist the day after the attacks, but the recruiting stations were closed. When they reopened, a waiting list quickly formed because of the rush of people wanting to sign up for the military, he said, and his own enlistment was final about six months after the attacks.

America’s greatest strength is highlighted by its service members, Panetta said. And the young people in uniform traveling with him today, he added, represent the service they and their fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen have given to the nation.

“Since 9/11, we have achieved significant success going after al-Qaida and ... [its] leadership,” Panetta said, adding that, nevertheless, it’s critical to maintain pressure on the terrorist organization.

The secretary was scheduled to travel from New York to Shanksville, Pa., and the Flight 93 Memorial there, also set to open Sunday. That segment of his travel was cancelled due to weather.

# Miscellaneous

[http://articles.cnn.com/2011-09-06/politics/military.dadt\\_1\\_service-members-servicemembers-united-sexual-conduct?\\_s=PM:POLITICS](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-09-06/politics/military.dadt_1_service-members-servicemembers-united-sexual-conduct?_s=PM:POLITICS)

## Bill aims to protect service members who oppose homosexuality

By Charley Keyes, CNN Senior National Security Producer  
CNN Politics, September 06, 2011



*Congressman Duncan Hunter's bill would be an amendment to the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.*

The military is on a two-week glide path to ending "don't ask, don't tell," its present policy banning gay men and lesbians from serving openly in the armed forces.

But congressional critics may provide some low-level turbulence on the final approach to the September 20 policy change.

Congressman Duncan Hunter, R-California, is shopping around a bill to ensure that any member of the armed forces who may disagree with homosexuality won't be pressured by the military to act in any way to contradict personal beliefs.

The official language of the proposed amendment says it would require that "members of the Armed Forces are not pressured to approve of another person's sexual conduct if that sexual conduct is contrary to the personal principles of the members."

Hunter's staff is circulating the bill to other members of Congress this week.

Hunter's press secretary, Joe Kasper, says the bill would be an amendment to the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy and would protect members of the military.

"Congressman Hunter is floating around legislation to amend current law so that service members are not pressured to personally approve any behavior or action that is contrary to their own principles," Kasper told CNN by e-mail. "The military always falls in line, but that doesn't mean that the men and women who serve in its ranks should suddenly be forced to personally accept something that is contrary to their own principles."

The Pentagon is not commenting officially on Hunter's bill.

"We don't comment on proposed or pending legislation," Pentagon spokesman Col. Dave Lapan told CNN last week.

Throughout its lengthy publicity and training campaign about the repeal of "don't ask don't tell," the military has emphasized that its tradition of discipline and respect would ensure that new rules and procedures would minimize problems.

Top Pentagon officials, both civilian and military, have repeatedly insisted the new policy will have no negative impact on morale, cohesion and effectiveness of troops.

One of the most vocal advocates of the change in the Defense Department policy, Alex Nicholson, of gay military organization Servicemembers United, accused Hunter of "petty, silly and undignified" behavior.

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110905839935.html> or  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/05/us/05reenlist.html?scp=1&sq=Gay%20Veterans%20Face%20Hurdles%20In%20Re-Enlisting&st=cse>

## **Discharged for Being Gay, Veterans Seek to Re-enlist**

**By James Dao**

**New York Times, September 5, 2011**

They lived shadow lives in the military, afraid that disclosure of their sexuality would ruin carefully plotted careers. Many were deeply humiliated by drawn-out investigations and unceremonious discharges. Yet despite their bitter partings with the armed forces, many gay men and lesbians who were discharged under the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy say they want to rejoin the service, drawn by a life they miss or stable pay and benefits they could not find in civilian life.

By some estimates, hundreds of gay men and lesbians among the more than 13,000 who were discharged under the policy have contacted recruiters or advocacy groups saying they want to re-enlist after the policy is repealed on Sept. 20. Bleu Copas is one. He had been in the Army for just three years when someone sent an anonymous e-mail to his commanders telling them he was gay. After he was discharged in 2006 under “don’t ask, don’t tell,” the military’s ban on openly gay troops, “It took away all my value as a person,” he recalled.

Michael Almy is another. When the Air Force began its investigation into whether he was gay, it suspended his security clearance and relieved him of his command. On his final day in service in 2006, police officers escorted him to the gate. “It left kind of a bitter taste,” he said. Though the Pentagon says it will welcome their applications, former service members discharged for homosexuality will not be granted special treatment. They will have to pass physical fitness tests and prove that they have skills the armed services need right now. Some will have aged to the point that they will need waivers to get back in.

Even if they pass those hurdles, there is no guarantee that they will go back to their former jobs or ranks. And because the armed services are beginning to shrink, some will be rejected because there are no available slots. People discharged under “don’t ask, don’t tell” who wish to return to service “will be evaluated according to the same criteria and requirements applicable to all others seeking re-entry into the military,” said Eileen Lainez, a Pentagon spokeswoman. “The services will continue to base accessions of prior-service members on the needs of the service and the skills and qualifications of the applicants.”

To be eligible for re-enlistment, former service members cannot have been discharged under “other than honorable conditions,” Ms. Lainez said. The majority of people released under the policy since 1993 — a significant number of them highly trained intelligence analysts and linguists — received honorable discharges. As with all people who join the military, the reasons for wanting to rejoin vary widely. Some say they want to finish what they started, but on their own terms. Others point to the steady pay, good health care and retirement benefits. Still others talk idealistically about a desire to serve and be part of an enterprise larger than themselves.

“It’s a hunger,” said Mr. Copas, who now works with homeless veterans in Knoxville, Tenn. “It doesn’t necessarily make sense. It’s the idea of faith, like an obligation to family.” Jase Daniels was actually discharged twice. Because of a clerical error, the Navy failed to note on his records that the reason for his first discharge in 2005 was homosexuality. So the following year, when his services as a linguist were needed, the Pentagon recalled him. “I wanted to go back so bad, I was jumping up and down,” he said. “The military was my life.”

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110905839935.html> or  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/05/us/05reenlist.html?scp=1&sq=Gay%20Veterans%20Face%20Hurdles%20In%20Re-Enlisting&st=cse>

He was open about his sexual orientation while deployed to Kuwait for a year, he says. But a profile of him in Stars and Stripes led to a new investigation, and he was discharged a second time upon coming home in 2007. Now 29, Mr. Daniels says that in the years since, “I’ve had no direction in my life.” He wants to become an officer and learn Arabic, saying he is confident he will be accepted because he has already served as an openly gay man. “No one cared that I was gay,” he said of his year in Kuwait. “What mattered was I did a good job.”

The issue of rank could discourage many from rejoining. Because there are fixed numbers of jobs or ratings in each of the armed services, some people might have to accept lower ranks to re-enlist. And those allowed to keep their former ranks will still find themselves lagging their onetime peers. “I’ve been out six years, so my peers are way ahead of me in the promotion structure,” said Jarrod Chlapowski, 29, a Korean linguist who left the Army voluntarily in 2005 as a specialist because he hated keeping his sexual orientation a secret. He is now thinking about rejoining.

“It’s going to be a different Army than the one I left,” he said. “And that’s a little intimidating.”

Mr. Almy, 41, Mr. Daniels and another former service member have filed a lawsuit asserting that they were unconstitutionally discharged and should be reinstated, presumably at their former ranks. A former major, Mr. Almy, who was deployed at least four times to the Middle East, was among the highest-ranking members removed under the ban. But even advocates for gay and lesbian troops say it might not be practical for the military to adopt a blanket policy of allowing all service members discharged under “don’t ask, don’t tell” to return to their previous ranks.

“You have to think long and hard from a policy perspective whether you want to put somebody who’s been out 5 or 10 years back into the same billet just because an injustice was done,” said Alexander Nicholson, executive director of Servicemembers United, a gay rights advocacy group. Mr. Nicholson, 30, who was discharged in 2002, is considering going to law school and trying to become an officer.

For Mr. Copas, who is 35, age could be a factor in whether he gets back in. An Arabic linguist during his first enlistment, he is thinking of learning Dari or Pashto so he can go to Afghanistan. He also is a musician and has a master’s degree in counseling.

But the Army may consider him too old and demand that he get a waiver. Even as he searches the Web for potential Army jobs, he worries that he will jump through many hoops only to be rejected again. “It almost feels like I’m getting back in bed with a bad lover,” he said. “I’m still dying to serve. But I don’t know how realistic it is.”

<http://www.military.com/news/article/new-fitness-test-getting-fort-bragg-workout.html>

# New Fitness Test Getting Fort Bragg Workout

**BY Drew Brooks, Fayetteville Observer  
Military.com, 6 Sept. 2011**

FORT BRAGG, N.C. -- Army Spc. Jakob Staley kneeled along the outskirts of Pike Field to catch his breath.

Staley, a member of the 18th Airborne Corps' 82nd Sustainment Brigade, was one of the first Soldiers in his unit to compete in a pilot program for a physical fitness test that may one day become standard for all Soldiers.

"It's pretty exhausting," said Staley, 24, of Elizabethtown, Ky. "I didn't think it was going to be as tiring as it was."

Staley had just run the Combat Readiness Test, one of two tests that Soldiers on Fort Bragg completed in August as part of the three-week pilot program.

The other test, the Army Physical Readiness Test, is a proposed replacement of the Army Physical Fitness Test, better known as the common PT test.

For years, the Army has considered replacing its 30-year-old physical fitness test with one that more accurately reflects the changing demands on Soldiers.

Instead of push-ups, sit-ups and a 2-mile run, the new test would require a 60-yard shuttle run, rowing exercises, a standing long jump, push-ups and a 1.5-mile run.

The Combat Readiness Test is a separate evaluation designed to gauge a unit's readiness for combat. That test consists of a 400-meter run and obstacle course.

Maj. Gen. Richard Longo is overseeing the creation of the new tests in his role as deputy commanding general for initial military training for U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Eustis, Va.

Longo said many commanders realized that PT scores did not always correspond to performance in Iraq or Afghanistan, leading officials to begin looking for a better way to evaluate physical fitness.

"Endurance running, sit-ups, that's not what Soldiers are doing in combat," he said. "It's like a sport. You don't take football players and make them swim to prepare for football."

Longo said the tests under development are just proposals at this point.

"We think we're going to change," Longo said. "Our current test that we've had in place for 30 years doesn't do a very good job at measuring fitness for the kind of skills we need. It's too general."

Longo said about 10,000 Soldiers will participate in the pilot program, including Soldiers from Fort Bragg, Fort Stewart, Ga., Fort Bliss, Texas, and the Kentucky National Guard.

"This is a foundational decision. It won't happen easily," Longo said of potentially introducing the tests to the entire Army. He said the pilot program will allow input from a "strictly math" standpoint and from leaders in the operational Army who witness the new tests firsthand.

If approved, the new tests could potentially become standard Armywide by October 2012, Longo said.

<http://www.military.com/news/article/new-fitness-test-getting-fort-bragg-workout.html>

## **What may come**

On Fort Bragg, Staley was one of thousands of Soldiers during the last three weeks who have gotten a taste of what might come.

Officials from the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's Training Support and Schools Directorate at Fort Jackson, S.C., were on the installation through Aug. 25 gathering data on the tests.

The proposed PT test includes an obstacle course that simulates moving with a weapon in a combat zone, moving a wounded colleague and carrying ammo and other supplies.

"It's a lot different, but I think it's a good thing," said Staley, who completed the test in 5 minutes, 32 seconds. "The old test doesn't really show what you can do. This does."

Capt. Donald Maye, operational officer for the Training Support and Schools Directorate's Physical Readiness Division, oversaw the pilot program on Fort Bragg. He collected information that includes scores on the proposed tests, demographic information on participants and information on past PT test scores.

"You want to get a blend of every Soldier out there as best as you can," Maye said. "We collect the data, then allow the statisticians to study results, and we'll make changes if needed."

The proposed replacement of the PT test would add events designed to gauge speed, agility and leg strength while tweaking other aspects of the current test to eliminate rest periods.

"I wouldn't say that it's tougher or harder," Maye said. "It measures different standards of Army fitness. You want to measure what you want a Soldier to be able to do."

For the Soldiers completing the Combat Readiness Test, no part appeared to be more difficult than any other.

Staley, who admitted to poor balance, said he stumbled with carrying ammo cans across a series of balance beams.

Pfc. Michelle Powers, with the 82nd Sustainment Brigade, said her toughest challenge was the casualty drag.

"It outweighs me by 40 pounds," said Powers, 23, of Lawrence, Kan., who completed the course in 5 minutes, 59 seconds.

Sgt. Eileen Tavaréz of the 82nd Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team, which served as a grader for the test, said most Soldiers seemed to struggle with the ammo can shuttle run, which is one of the final tasks of the obstacle course.

"By the time the Soldiers get there, they are physically exhausted," she said. "It's the toughest five minutes of their life."

Tavaréz praised the proposed test, saying it provides a good indicator of combat skills.

"You need to be able to rely on your buddy," she said. "You've got to maintain a target while in motion."

Tavaréz said she wasn't concerned about Soldiers not putting forth their best efforts.

Despite the scores meaning nothing to their Army careers, Tavaréz said, she believes pride will prevent anyone from easing through.

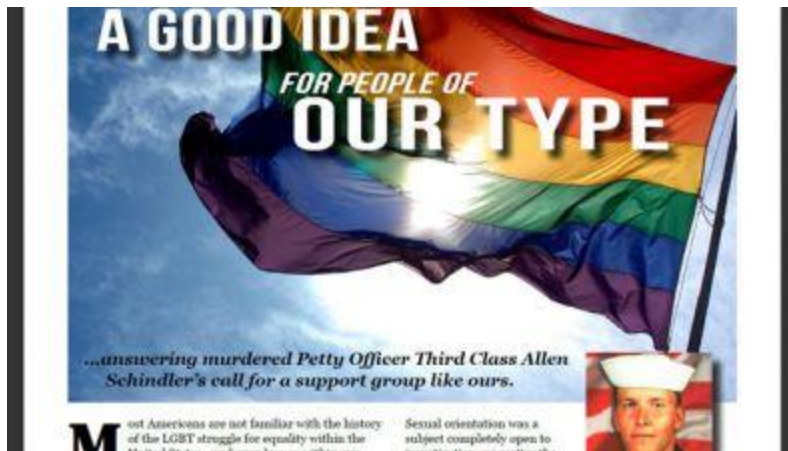
"A lot of Soldiers are self-motivating. They want to do well on every test they have," she said. "Everybody always feels like they can do better."

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2011/08/31/new-gay-military-magazine-headed-for-base-newsstands/>

# New Gay Military Magazine Headed for Base Newsstands

By Justin Fishel,  
FoxNews.com (Pentagon), August 31, 2011

With the official repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" less than a month away, members of the military can expect to see a new [gay-themed magazine](#) available at military exchange stores on Sept. 20, the same day the repeal goes into effect.



*Outserve*

*An article found inside Outserve Magazine.*

The gay-advocacy group OutServe launched the magazine last Spring and has already produced two editions. The group says its September edition will be available for free at select Army and [Air Force](#) bases.

According to the group's website *OutServe Magazine* is a publication that "highlights the contributions that actively serving LGBTs are making to the [United States](#) military, discusses and educates readers about DADT repeal policies, and advocates for the continued fight for equality for all Americans."

The new September edition will feature a photo spread of nearly 100 people who are both active duty service members and members of OutServe. It will presumably be the first time these individuals have made their [sexuality](#) known among the military ranks.

OutServe's online magazine features a self help section called "Ask Sarge," where readers are encouraged to discuss their problems with a mental health and substance abuse expert who has experience working at a Combat Stress Clinic in [Afghanistan](#).

"Our first objective with the magazine is to let all the gay, lesbian, bi, and trans members currently serving know that they are not alone," OutServe's co-director, an active-duty officer who goes by the pseudonym JD Smith said in a written release. "And we also want to communicate to all troops that there are capable gay [military members](#) serving honorably, and that accepting that and moving on will make our military stronger."

Lt. Col. Tom Shrader, a spokesman for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, did not know which bases will carry the first print editions of the magazine.

## **VA responding to growing number of female veterans**

**By Bill Zlatos**

**PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW, September 5, 2011**

Tina Howell lies on a padded vinyl examination table for a routine pregnancy checkup at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System in Oakland. "Everything seems to be great," nurse practitioner Margie Muldoon says.

Howell, 31, of Latrobe is taking advantage of the VA's recently opened Women's Health Center in its Oakland hospital. An Army veteran with a medical discharge for five herniated discs, she can get her pregnancy exam and, if she wants, consult a specialist for her back problem in the same building. It's part of a nationwide push by the VA to make its hospitals more friendly to women, because the number of female veterans is growing fast.

This comes as the agency counters criticism for troubling incidents at its hospitals nationwide. About 13,000 veterans during the past two years were warned to have their blood tested for potentially fatal infections because of improper hygiene practices at five VA hospitals in Ohio, Florida, Missouri and Tennessee. The VA mistakenly told more than 1,200 veterans nationwide that they suffer from a fatal neurological disease.

And the Government Accountability Office two years ago chided the agency's disregard of female patients -- particularly the lack of privacy in some facilities and some doctors' unfamiliarity with women's needs. The VA is training doctors specifically to address women's care. In April, the VA opened the \$1.6 million women's center in Pittsburgh. In Butler and Mercer counties, the agency hired primary-care providers for women, and the VA in Butler appointed liaisons to handle women's health issues at outpatient clinics.

Between 2000 and 2036, the VA projects the number of female veterans will rise from 1.6 million to more than 2.1 million. It expects the number of male veterans to decrease from 25.1 million to more than 11.9 million, as the number of living World War II and Korean War veterans diminishes. In Western Pennsylvania, the VA reports, the proportion of women among veterans is soaring from 4.4 percent in 2000 to an estimated 11.6 percent in 2030.

Dr. JoAnne Suffoletto, a staff physician for the Women's Health Center in Pittsburgh, said the fastest-growing group of female veterans is women of reproductive age who served in the 1990-91 Gulf War and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. VA officials hope the center encourages more female veterans to seek medical care through the agency.

"Women in particular always felt if they didn't suffer a serious injury as a result of their service, they can't come to the VA," said Deborah Mitchell, female veterans program manager. "In fact, the VA offers five years of totally free care" covering most medical conditions for combat veterans serving since Nov. 11, 1998. Other veterans can get medical care from the VA if they have service-related disabilities.

The VA designed the women's center as a one-stop shop for physicals, pap smears, mammograms or consultations with specialists. "It takes less time out of their life to get everything done," Mitchell said.

Howell began going to the VA after her 2003 discharge from the Army and she has noticed the changes. "From 2003 to now, it's almost night and day," she said. "I still felt I was in the military with all the guys, another number, and now it seems more patient-centered care."

[http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/s\\_755117.html? s\\_icmp=NetworkHeadlines#](http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/s_755117.html? s_icmp=NetworkHeadlines#)

Female veterans cite as frequent problems low back pain from driving on unpaved roads, foot problems from ill-fitting boots, post-traumatic stress disorder and subsequent abuse of drugs and alcohol, she said. VA officials say one of the most common problems is military sexual trauma.

Nationally, the VA reports, about one in five women say they experienced sexual trauma during their military service, compared with one in 100 men. The GAO found 284 sexual assaults were reported at VA facilities around the country from January 2007 to July 2010.

Valerie K. Cortazzo of Penn Hills said she is a victim of military sexual trauma. She has a 60 percent disability from a head injury she suffered in a car accident while in the Navy in Panama. She is trying to get her disability coverage increased because of post-traumatic stress, which she said is related to a rape and an attempted rape by civilians and a sexual relationship with her military supervisor. She said her medical care from the VA is good, but she had difficulty getting more benefits for post-traumatic stress.

Patty Kopa, a spokeswoman for the regional Veterans Benefits Association, said the VA's under secretary for benefits in June directed staff members who handle military sexual trauma claims to get sensitivity training. The VA staff in Pittsburgh received that training on Aug. 8.

Anne Manly, 54, of Morningside goes to the VA in Oakland for a shoulder injury. She said she likes her caregivers so much that she might make the VA her main medical provider. A retired Air Force colonel, she served as chief nurse at a trauma hospital in Iraq. She tearfully recalls the makeshift services during which medics and nurses wheeled wounded warriors on gurneys to say good-bye to flag-draped coffins of dead comrades. Some were teenagers. "They wanted to be with their buddy one more time," she said.

# Misconduct

# Employees punished for political activity

By Kellie Lunney

Government Executive, September 6, 2011

Two federal employees have been punished for violating the law that restricts government workers from participating in certain political activity, according to the Office of Special Counsel.

A National Institutes of Health employee lost her job because she used her government email account to solicit political contributions while on duty, a violation of the Hatch Act. She also invited people, including other NIH employees, to a political fundraiser at her home. In addition, the employee made an online political contribution using her government computer while working in her NIH office.

Federal employees cannot solicit or collect political contributions, although they are permitted to make financial contributions to political campaigns and attend fundraising events while off duty.

In a separate case, a government employee ran for partisan political office in the state of New Jersey. The employee, who worked at the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, ran for the state General Assembly in 2009 and for Rocky Hill Borough Council in 2008. In a settlement with the government, the employee retired in May and is barred from working for any state or local agency in New Jersey for 15 months.

"These cases demonstrate OSC's commitment to protecting the merit system and obtaining disciplinary action for unlawful political activities where it is warranted," said Special Counsel Carolyn Lerner in a statement.

OSC and the Merit Systems Protection Board oversee enforcement of the Hatch Act.

The act restricts federal, state and local government employees from activities include running for office in partisan elections or engaging in political actions while on duty or in a government office. Federal workers also cannot solicit or receive political contributions from any person except in certain instances involving labor organizations or employee groups. Federal employees are allowed to run as candidates for office in nonpartisan elections, contribute money to political organizations, and campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections outside of work hours, among other freedoms.

The law provides some allowances for federal workers in Maryland, Virginia and other designated localities to run for partisan political office.

The number of complaints related to inappropriate political activity in the federal workplace increased in fiscal 2010, according to the OSC. Since January, Congress and the Obama administration have been looking more closely at the Hatch Act. Confusion still surrounds the details of the law, which originally was enacted in 1939, and some believe OSC's guidance on it is too ambiguous.

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110903839657.html> or  
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-sailor-20110903,0,3505384.story>

## **Romance Dooms Navy Career Of Honored Sailor**

*Joshua Hendershot had received a coveted achievement medal three times.*

*Months later, he was given a discharge precluding use of the GI Bill.*

**By Tony Perry**

**Los Angeles Times, September 3, 2011**

Reporting from San Diego -- In March, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua Hendershot received a coveted Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal — the third during a Navy career in which he was consistently rated as a top-notch performer assigned the difficult task of maintaining and operating the Tomahawk missile control systems.

The citation praised the 25-year-old for "superior professionalism, exceptional performance and selfless devotion." One superior said he would make an excellent commissioned officer. But within a few months, Hendershot was booted out of the Navy, branded as a habitual troublemaker unfit to serve. He was given a discharge of a kind that makes him ineligible for the GI Bill to pay for college. Hendershot's dismissal from the Navy is proof anew of how fast and seemingly harsh the military justice system can be and of the enormous authority invested in commanding officers.

What was Hendershot's transgression that truncated his Navy career?

He admitted — after initially denying — that he had had a brief romance with a female ensign. "You kiss the wrong girl and it can affect your whole life," Hendershot said. Hendershot and the ensign are unmarried; if one or both had been married to other people they would also been charged with adultery, a crime under military law. They were among five sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer Sampson who were charged this year with fraternization between officers and enlisted personnel. The same commander who signed the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal citation for Hendershot in March also recommended in June that he be dismissed from the Navy: Cmdr. Christopher Alexander, captain of the Sampson.

In March, Hendershot was described as the "driving force" behind keeping the Tomahawk system safe and operational, possessed of technical expertise and acute managerial ability. In June, he had a "clearly demonstrated pattern of misconduct." Alexander, a Naval Academy graduate, has a sterling resume that suggests a bright career ahead. He served on the legislative staff of the late Sen. Edward Kennedy and worked for the secretary of the Navy and the chief of naval operations. The Sampson is his first command.

Military officers say the Navy system helps maintain "good order and discipline" and cannot be compared to the civilian criminal justice system with its layers of appeals or the Civil Service system with its job protection for other government employees. Alexander's recommendation that Hendershot be dismissed was quickly approved by an admiral. Hendershot was shown to the gate of San Diego Naval Base on Aug. 18, no longer a member of the U.S. Navy — after five years and nine months of service, three overseas deployments, rapid promotions and a string of glowing evaluations.

In moving to boot Hendershot from the Navy, Alexander recalled that he had admitted driving drunk in nearby Imperial Beach in 2009. Putting together the previous infraction and the relationship with the ensign, Alexander concluded that Hendershot was unfit to remain in service.

The experience has left Hendershot disappointed that none of his superiors supported him when he appealed Alexander's ruling. "Nobody in my chain of command stood up for me — they all turned their back on me," he said.

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110903839657.html> or

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-sailor-20110903,0,3505384.story>

While on active duty, he accumulated about two years of college credits and he would like to attend the University of Washington in his native state and earn a degree in business. He hopes to appeal Alexander's decision that he receive a general discharge that makes him ineligible for the GI Bill. "The entire reason I enlisted was for college," Hendershot said. "I served five years and nine months and I don't get the GI Bill? That's not right." Hendershot said that he and the ensign — a graduate of the Naval Academy — knew their relationship could get them in trouble. They had broken up even before the relationship came to the attention of the chain of command, he said.

But when the wife of an enlisted sailor complained to the command that her husband was having an affair with a female officer, Hendershot and the ensign were swept up in an investigation into improper romances aboard the Sampson. Rather than fight the allegation through the court-martial system, Hendershot opted for what is called "non-judicial punishment" before Alexander. "I was standing in front of him for maybe two minutes," Hendershot said.

In June, Alexander sentenced him to 45 days of restriction, 45 days of extra duty, demotion of one rank and forfeit of half his pay for two months. "His wrongful conduct was particularly corrosive to the command because his relationship was with a junior officer within his department," Alexander wrote.

Hendershot thought his punishment overly severe. He appealed, but his request was quickly turned down. The Navy declined to discuss Hendershot's case. But Cmdr. Jason Salata, spokesman for the Pacific Fleet's Naval Surface Force, explained that non-judicial punishment is a vital process to allow a commander to maintain "an effective, combat-capable ship." While he was appealing his case, Hendershot was informed that Alexander was also recommending his dismissal from the Navy under a process called "administrative separation." Hendershot believes his decision to appeal angered Alexander because it forced a review of his decision by the admiral.

Under non-judicial punishment, a commander cannot recommend dismissal — a safeguard meant to encourage sailors to "come clean" and admit mistakes. Under administrative separation, however, a commander has the authority to recommend that a sailor be ousted from the Navy.

While that may seem like double-jeopardy to a civilian, it is not unusual under Navy rules. The same conduct that a sailor is punished for under non-judicial punishment can also be a reason for the commander to initiate administrative separation, Salata said. "Sailors' lives and success in battle hang on decisions made by the captain," he said.

As for the ensign, Hendershot said she was transferred off the Sampson and had a negative letter put in her personnel file, the kind of action that may make it impossible for her to sign up for another hitch. The daughter of a Navy captain, she was not immediately dismissed. "My father works at a blade-sharpening company," Hendershot said. "Maybe if he was a Navy captain, I'd have been treated differently."

# **Sexual Assault / Harassment**

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/129349618.html>

# The silent battle for servicewomen - Sexual assault

By Melissa Dribben

Philadelphia Inquirer, Sep. 7, 2011

The U.S. military is struggling to defend troops who are under siege day and night on ill-defined battlefields. Troops who are fighting wars in which it can be impossible to identify the enemy or to know whom to trust. And when they are betrayed, they dare not tell anyone. They are the nation's women in uniform, and they are being sexually harassed, abused, and assaulted at an alarming rate by their fellow soldiers and officers.

Since 9/11, with unprecedented numbers of women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, the nation's military leaders say that misogyny is undermining troop readiness. Women enlist for the same reasons as other soldiers, to further their education, establish careers, and serve their country. These were Linda Bullock's motives, too, when she joined the Army Reserve at 18. She wanted to belong to a community based on honor and trust. Something she couldn't find in her own family where she had been repeatedly raped by a close relative. Bullock was sent to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio for training. Although she had never been away from home before, the city girl from Baltimore, "a string bean" at 5-foot-9 and 135 pounds, surprised herself with her toughness. "It was cool," she says. After two weeks of field exercises, she returned to her barracks desperate for a shower.

While the rest of her fellow soldiers left to get dressed, Bullock stayed behind, luxuriating in the hot water. The bathroom was deserted when she finally wrapped herself in a towel. Suddenly, her drill sergeant appeared. "Who else is here?" she remembers him asking. "No one," she said. Then he covered her mouth, threw her down, and raped her. "He acted like he was on a mission," Bullock says. She was strong, but no match for a man of about 6-foot-3 and at least 200 pounds. "And anyway, I was too petrified to move." When he finished, he threatened, "If you tell anybody - not that they'll believe you - you might as well kiss your career goodbye." So she said nothing about it for the next 25 years.

A 2010 study commissioned by the Department of Defense found that 4 percent of military women on active duty had been sexually abused or assaulted while on the job. But about 70 percent and 80 percent of victims do not report their attacks.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has found that one in five female veterans seeking health care say they have been subjected to sexual intimidation, threat, assault, or rape. And men are abused as well; one in 100 screened by the VA reports sexual trauma. Soldiers remain silent because they fear that they will not be believed or that they will be blamed for sending mixed messages. They worry about being branded as weak or damaged or untrustworthy. Among the few victims who come forward, even fewer press charges.

Military courts do not protect a victim's identity as carefully as the civilian justice system does. Confidential conversations between a victim and a psychologist, medical professional, even a chaplain can be used by defense attorneys. And there is skepticism that attackers will be punished. Of the 2,284 sexual-assault investigations conducted in 2009, nearly half were dropped because evidence was insufficient, the victim declined to pursue the case, or the court ruled that the allegations were unfounded.

In a confidential interview with the Defense Department task force, one military judge advocate general said: "We don't lose cases due to lack of effort or care. They are tough cases."

Recognizing the problem, the nation's military leadership has adopted a new policy toward sexual abuse, said Major Gen. Mary Kay Hertog. "We're not going to ignore it, we're not going to excuse it, and we're not going to condone it." Hertog, the new director of the Sexual Assault Prevention

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/129349618.html>

and Response Office (SAPRO), said, "It's all about the climate that is set by that commander on the ground."

Recruits need to be trained to respect and protect one another, response services need improvement, and abusers must be brought to justice. But like any complex system, she said, the military cannot transform itself overnight. "It's evolutionary. ... It takes a long time to change the culture." Some victims are tired of waiting. In February, 15 women and two men, both active duty and veterans, filed a class-action suit against the Pentagon. The suit claimed that the military failed to properly investigate rapes and sexual assaults.

The weekend before the 10th anniversary of 9/11, more than 20 additional names were added to the lawsuit, said Susan Burke, the plaintiffs' lead lawyer. "It is clear there needs to be dramatic and immediate reform," said Burke, former counsel to Mayor Nutter. "The military cannot be permitted to continue to retaliate against soldiers who have been raped and sexually assaulted. The military needs to prosecute the perpetrators, not blame the victims."

"I really wanted to jump out of airplanes," says Michele Roscher. Home-schooled in a small Massachusetts town, Roscher enlisted in the Army Reserve at 17, determined to serve her country.

"I liked the idea that I was doing something important." In 2003, she received orders sending her to Iraq and was assigned to a unit in Norristown for pre-deployment training, one of three women among 130 soldiers. Because there was no physical base, they stayed in a hotel. The first night, Roscher joined a group going to a TGI Friday's near Plymouth Meeting Mall.

"My sergeant major bought me my first drink," she recalls. "The first thing I was told is never refuse a beer. If you don't drink a beer someone buys for you, it's called 'alcohol abuse.'" Heavy drinking, she says, enjoys a righteous role in the service. "There's a big feeling that we'd better party while we can because we don't know who's coming home."

After one beer, Roscher was woozy. "I kept saying, 'No, I'm good,' but they kept buying me more beers." The group drifted back to the hotel bar, where the drinking continued. She was unsteady on her feet when a specialist, several years older and one rank above her, offered to walk her to her room. Instead, he took her to his. "I wasn't coherent enough to figure it out," she recalls. "I remember being on the floor saying: 'No! Stop it!' The next thing I remember, he ... forced me to give him oral sex." She never reported the incident.

If she had, she felt sure she'd be moved to another unit. "And if a female comes to your unit, everyone knows why. You're labeled." Worse, she says, "I thought I deserved it. I shouldn't have drunk so much." During her first nine months in Iraq, she dated a soldier who was abusive and used to punch her "playfully," leaving bruises on her body. She stayed with him anyway, figuring that the mistreatment was a small price to pay for the protection he gave her from other men in her unit. Back in the States, she broke off the relationship, went to Pennsylvania State University, and earned her degree in political science and criminal justice.

In November 2007, Roscher was redeployed. During that tour, the sexual harassment was relentless, she says. One staff sergeant kept pressuring her to sleep with him, even though he was married. "What happens on active duty is like 'what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.' He told me, 'You don't know my wife's number.'" When she refused his advances, she says, the sergeant "did everything he could to make me look bad" and tried to sabotage her career. She was sent to Sadr City and survived an attack that killed a major and a female soldier. Before she could recover from the shock, she received an e-mail from an officer. "He said the reason I was brought to Sadr City was so he could look at my ass."

The choices for women soldiers, she says, are simple. "If you're not a bitch, you're a whore. If you talk to guys, if you're nice, it's assumed you're sleeping with them. If you don't go out, you're not one of the guys, and you're hung out to dry. People don't talk to you, and in combat they're not

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willing to put their neck out for you." She didn't dare confide in other women, she says. "It's very cutthroat. Even if I said I was sexually assaulted, it's like, 'You're in the military. Deal with it.' "

The Defense Department report on sexual assault begins with a quote from then-Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates: "This type of act not only does unconscionable harm to the victim; it destabilizes the workplace and threatens national security." The military maintains that sexual assault among troops is similar to date rape among college students. Most troops are between 18 and 24, they drink, test limits, and make stupid choices.

The difference is that on a university campus, the victim can distance herself from her attacker, says Patricia Hayes, chief consultant for the VA's health care for women. When a soldier has been assaulted by someone in her unit, "there's an incredible sense of betrayal. It's similar to incest."

Furthermore, in the context of war, where people are being blown up, maimed, and killed, sexual assault can be viewed as a "lesser" trauma, nothing to complain about.

Psychologists theorize that in Iraq and Afghanistan, the strain of living on constant alert, in a restricted to a protected zone with long periods of downtime, may feed the impulse among some troops to prey on the vulnerable. All service branches now require pre-deployment training to teach troops to protect themselves and to intervene when they suspect abuse. And the VA has been trying to spread the word that help is available, free and confidential.

In February, the Department of Defense contracted with RAINN, the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, to set up a 24-hour hotline for servicemen and -women. From any post in the world, victims can phone, e-mail, or text to reach a specially trained advocate who can provide counseling and help obtain medical services. During the last six months, the site has received 14,000 visitors, and more than 1,000 have sought help.

Roscher kept her private turmoil to herself for more than five years, accepting promotions and assignments and earning the honor of being chosen to jump out of a plane into the La Fiere drop zone in Normandy on the 65th anniversary of D-Day. But in 2009, when she received her orders to report to Afghanistan, her past caught up with her. She was constantly crying, panicking at sudden noises, not sleeping or eating well, showing all the signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a common reaction to sexual trauma. "I was afraid if I got deployed again," she said, "I was not going to be able to recover."

During a screening at the Coatesville VA Hospital before receiving care for an unrelated problem, she was asked if she had ever experienced unwanted sexual advances in the military. Her answer led her to Kristine Sudol-Regan, one of the VA's psychologists specializing in military sexual trauma. Sudol-Regan said it's not unusual for her to be the first person her patients have ever told about an assault.

For Linda Bullock, now 50, revealing her secret to the therapist was the beginning of a long, difficult recovery. After a psychological breakdown in 2009, she landed at the Coatesville VA, where she was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. Although she had never been in combat, Bullock's doctors said she had developed PTSD from the rape, which was followed by years of sexual harassment from fellow soldiers and officers, and the crushing weight of her silence.

Bullock's experience is common, says Sudol-Regan. Many military patients joined the armed services to escape dysfunctional homes. One Defense Department study found that 56 percent of female recruits reported some form of unwanted sexual contact before entering military service and 25 percent had been raped. The study concluded, "Previous victims of sexual abuse or assault are at increased risk for future sexual assault."

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The reason for this, psychologists suspect, is that victims signal vulnerability in some way, making them easier targets. Their response to risky situations may also be delayed or inadequate.

Over the last several years, both the Defense Department and the VA have been trying to earn back soldiers' trust and provide victims with the medical and psychological care they deserve.

Each service branch now employs and trains specialists called Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, or SARCs, who teach prevention and response and provide help for victims at all military bases worldwide. And every medical center in the VA system has therapists like Sudol-Regan on staff who specialize in military sexual trauma, or MST.

With Sudol-Regan's help, Roscher and Bullock are mending their lives. Roscher is completing nursing school and is engaged to be married. Bullock is living independently and working for a home health care agency. "Over the past six years, MST has gotten so much more publicity for veterans to know they can come to us," says Sudol-Regan. "Success is hard to measure. For some, it's the ability to reconnect to their families. Others, just to leave the house is a huge accomplishment."

For still others, like Bullock and Roscher, she said, "it's being able to build healthy relationships, get jobs, and be more able to ask for help when they need it. That's a big one. I credit the veterans for having the courage to come forward and the VA for creating a safe place."

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