A phenomenological analysis of gender integration policies in the U.S. military, 1980 to 2013

Tiffany L. Bohm
ABSTRACT

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER INTEGRATION
POLICIES OF THE U.S. MILITARY: 1980 TO 2013

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This project investigates the gender integration policies of the U.S. Military between 1980 and 2013. I argue that gender integration policies highlight male service members and create a status of privilege within the military. Policies enacted during the 1980s and 1990s recognized that in a technologically advanced military, more women could be used to fill roles previously reserved for men, yet women were prevented from filling every position and in some cases, faced discrimination. Male privilege was perpetuated through gender integration policy that used specific kinds of language, thus reinforcing the preferred masculine or male identity in the military. While in other instances, gender privilege was less evident, indicating acceptance of more gender neutral roles or equally representative of male and female service members. Consequently, the policies of the military generally set up a system where it is easier to follow a path of least resistance as opposed to challenging gender privilege. Gender integration policies of the military tend to privilege the male soldier while reinforcing the dominant masculine identity of the institution. This may be done at the expense of the female soldier as well as impact unit cohesion and effectiveness. By using a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry of 46 personal interviews, I provide evidence to support that the identities of the men and women who serve in the military may be impacted by gender integration policies.
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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER INTEGRATION
POLICIES IN THE U.S. MILITARY: 1980 TO 2013

BY

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DEDICATION

To the men and women in the U.S. Military
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I dedicate this work to the men and women who bravely volunteer to serve in the U.S. Military. It is through your courage and selflessness that we have a world-class fighting force. I recognize that our leaders in Congress and in the Department of Defense mean well in their execution of foreign policy initiatives, but sometimes we lose sight of the individual wearing the uniform. Your voice is important and will never be forgotten.

To my husband Benjamin, who provided feedback, encouraged me and supported me unconditionally through this project as well as the entire doctoral program at Northern Illinois University. To my wonderful daughter, Elsaya and my fantastic son, Bruce: may the light always shine on your face and the wind is at your back. I hope you accomplish everything you set out to do in life and remember I will always be your biggest fan.

To my sister Michelle, thank god I have you! As I transitioned from the military, you were there to help and support me in my wandering career path. You have been a constant source of inspiration through all that you do in your life and through all of the obstacles and challenges you have overcome.

To my parents, thanks for your steadfast love and belief in me; I would not be where I am today if both of you had not told me that I could do whatever I wanted in life. To my in-laws, your support goes beyond mere love of a daughter-in-law. You were there when I needed to study. You willingly took my two favorite little people to movies and picked up where I could not. To my wonderful neighbors, you are fantastic! Between in-laws and neighbors, I had an awesome cheering section.
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To Dr. Rebecca Hannagan, thank you just does not seem to cut it. Your support of me during my doctoral program and throughout this dissertation has been unwavering. Despite random texts, emails and phone calls, cross-country moves and those relocations that never materialized, this project took shape. Thank you for allowing me to vent and for guiding me to better, more applicable research of women in the military. You have set me on a path that I hope will become my academic legacy as this topic is near and dear to my heart. I look forward to a lifetime of friendship and collaborative work.

Lastly, the Political Science Department at Northern Illinois University thank you for accepting a non-traditional student and seeing my potential. To Angie, thanks for talking me off numerous cliffs with deadlines and registration issues. To Military Student Services, thanks for fixing all my funding issues when the government decided to “forget” me. To the fellow graduate students at NIU, thanks. You accepted me and my unique perspective which made for a more interesting learning environment.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 50 years, there have been significant policy changes in the U.S. military regarding gender integration. How have such policies impacted gender identities of the men and women who serve? And do such identities further impact the gendered relations between men and women, men and men, and women and women in the military? The concept of gender privilege complicates how men and women self-identify, and the military has historically privileged men since women were not officially allowed to serve until 1917 when they could join the Army Nurse Corps (Becraft 1990). This dissertation examines how gender integration policy in the U.S. military affects identity as well as characterizes the relations between men and women who serve. I use narratives from structured interviews and phenomenological analysis to show how men and women have been influenced by gender integration policies. I will evaluate the gender identities in the self-talk from the interviews and the likely impact on gendered interactions using two time periods. These periods are: 1980 to 1994 and 1995 to the present.

I argue that when policy specifically highlights gender differences, this is more likely to reinforce privileging of masculine identity and subjugating of feminine identity. Whereas, when policy is gender neutral, no such privileging is likely to result. The conceptualization of privilege suggests a structural differentiation that affects job
performance expectations as well as success, especially in group settings (Kruks 2005). In the case of the military, when men are conflated with “masculine” qualities as suggested by policies that highlight gender differences, systemic bias is more likely to occur because men appear to be privileged over women. In some cases, this may impact unit effectiveness because supervisors and commanders are monitoring who is the best “man” as opposed to who is the best soldier, sailor, marine or airman and men may be promoted faster or more often than women. Moreover, female service members may actively try to conform to articulated masculine standards by projecting a more masculine identity or downplaying feminine qualities and may be at odds with being “herself.” In contrast, gender neutral policies may decrease the likelihood that male service members are privileged when compared to female service members. The identity and relations of the men and women in uniform not only affects an individual’s psychological well-being, but also the readiness and capability of the teams and units, and ultimately of the U.S. military to fight current and future wars. The implications of this study thus contribute to military policy considerations regarding gender neutrality, but also scholarly literatures that examine the dynamic interaction between gender-focused policy and gender identity dynamics.

My Experience with the Military

When I was 18 years old, I started college like most young people do; however, I attended school on an Air Force Reserve Officer Training (ROTC) scholarship at the University of North Dakota. My four years at school included indoctrination classes and leadership courses that prepared me to become an officer upon graduation. I was
commissioned in May 1999 and promptly reported to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida as a newly minted, Second Lieutenant in Aircraft Maintenance. I was one of a handful of females in this career at my base and I quickly realized something was odd about the condition of my service. Although I enjoyed my time at Eglin, it was difficult to socialize with male service members since I feared being accused of improprieties that would be harmful to my career. Moreover, it was difficult to form lasting friendships with other female officers because of the potential isolation from the larger officer corps. Following a short assignment in Florida, I transferred to Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina.

While at Shaw, I began to see the differences in the way male and female service members interacted with each other. I witnessed various discriminatory practices related to race or military specialty, but all seemingly above-board since nobody said or did anything about these occurrences. It was not until my naming ceremony at the fighter squadron, that I came to experience male privileging – and even at the time, I did not recognize its full impact on my professional identity.

A naming ceremony is a tradition or custom wherein every pilot and those assigned to a fighter squadron are given a name that serves as their “call sign” over the radio. On the Friday night I was named, I followed the tradition by taking shots of alcohol with the fellow pilots of my unit, singing drinking songs and telling jokes. Part of the ceremony required that I did not smile and when I did, I was chastised. This sort of hazing is not new nor is it foreign to military units. Activities like these are ways to foster comradery and unit cohesion; although, this is not always successful. In my case, I was named “Babe” after withstanding the rigor of good-natured teasing and was given a mug to hang in the
squadron bar for the weekly officer calls. It was not until much later, when I phoned my
dissertation advisor after conducting research, and realized I had been labeled in a gendered
way. I had been identified by my fellow officers as something other than how I personally
identified. I had been coded by my fellow officers and those I was to serve with as
something other than my professional identity.

Most pilots have names like “Gunner” or “Mic.” We had one pilot whose last name
was Forsythe and his call sign was “Ripper.” It is not uncommon to receive names related
to your given name, but mine had nothing to do with Aircraft Maintenance or my name.
Instead, my call sign served as a marker for how my peers viewed me – an object, not a
fellow officer working in the unit. Even worse, this call sign was visible on all unit
paperwork and my enlisted troops saw it. At the time, I did not recognize that message and
so it did not seem to affect me, my performance, or the performance of my unit. However,
today, I realize that identity is incredibly important not just in terms of how others viewed
my service, but how I viewed myself. While at Shaw, I deployed to Saudi Arabia and later
to a forward operating base in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. My last duty assignment
was at the Pentagon in 2006. I am proud of my time in the service and myself.

I chose to embark upon this project for many different reasons. The first reason was
because of my experience in the military and how gender integration policies affected me
and those who I served with. Second, female service members are often faced with
challenges to their identity while they wear the uniform. In particular, female service
members who are mothers often have to suppress this identity to avoid harassment or
discrimination. Being a mother in the military is often viewed as nonconductive to service
which is odd because we never encourage male service members to suppress their identity
as fathers. Moreover, I chose to conduct this research because the individual perspective of
military service is overlooked in much of the research on women in the military. We forget
to ask women about being soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines in addition to being
women.

Although I may have a bias in the way I approach this project, my personal
experience in the Air Force and with deployments to Iraq give me a unique ability to
examine narratives and gender integration policies. More specifically, because of my
experiences, I may see gender privilege where others may not. Many view the military as a
masculine institution, yet that does not mean female service members cannot serve
successfully. I served and in doing so, can readily see where a policy or tradition may
privilege a male service member over a service member. This circumstance may not be as
visible to those without military experience.

Identity, Gender and the Military

An individual associates with other people in social situations by presenting a
unique identity. This identity is based upon many different factors which may include one’s
biological gender, race, ethnicity, culture, age, religion, sexual orientation or a host of other
categories that may impact identity development. Additionally, identity often changes over
time and reflects maturity, experience and association with different groups or
organizations at different points in time. One may adopt their identity based on group
membership and may compare this association with that of another group (Tajfel and
Turner 1979), adjusting to evaluations of inferiority or privilege based on that membership. One’s group associations and social interactions may reinforce norms associated with a particular identity that may or may not be gender related. Differences between men and women, or one’s gender association, are a widely recognized group cue defined by one’s culture supported by cultural expectations. Gender association is one of the ways we most readily classify others. In a matter of seconds, we can determine if an approaching individual is male or female and subsequent judgments related to gender and appropriate gender behavior or social interaction may follow. This recognition and association begins early in life – perhaps even at birth when one is categorized as boy or girl.

As one grows and matures, he or she is surrounded by images, behaviors and ideas of what men and women do in their culture and sorts images and behaviors into categories of appropriate and inappropriate. These social norms become masculine and feminine traits or markers and in some cases, there is significant overlap such that a man can be described as having feminine qualities while a woman can be described as possessing masculine traits (Connell 1987, 130-131; McElhinny 1994, 161). Given social contexts, these may be deemed more or less acceptable. For the most part, masculine and feminine are descriptive attributes used to describe men and women, respectively. Women who demonstrate feminine qualities may self-identify as female and vice versa for men. Contexts where a man or woman exudes the opposing characteristics may be viewed as social deviants who may be ostracized for their contradictory behavior. The job an individual performs may be viewed as incongruent with one’s gender and gender identity (Kidder and Parks 2001). Yet, in some cases or contexts when a man or woman takes on qualities viewed as more
feminine or masculine because of occupation or social duty (e.g. single parent), their compensating conduct is viewed positively by others in society. Individuals who exhibit both masculine and feminine qualities to fill a perceived void may inadvertently privilege the trait that is lacking. However, in an evolving American society where gender neutral traits are becoming more culturally accepted, little attention may be given to social deviance out of a compensatory need (see e.g. discussion in Aidala 1985). The social acceptance of non-gender specific roles or any deviation from cultural norms takes time, perhaps not unlike the process racial integration in American history.

Since social and cultural norms may suggest certain behaviors are appropriate for males, but not necessarily females, a woman may acquire an identity inconsistent with more broadly accepted norms to fit in given specific contexts. We see this in everyday life as women enter politics, the board rooms of large corporations, and other traditionally masculine roles like welders, construction engineers, and police and fire officers. To better fit in with their male counterparts, women may modify their behavior and project an identity consistent with the gendered expectation of the job. Over time, as the numbers of women in these roles increase, social norms may be modified and greater acceptance of women’s competence without regard to their gender may be granted. An example is male nurses and female teachers. At the turn of the last century, nearly all nurses were female and the profession had a decidedly feminine identity; yet school teachers were mostly male and education remained dominated by white men until well after 1900 (Rury 1989, 11). Today, we have more male nurses than ever before and yet, nursing could be considered
more gender neutral while the duty of educating children has taken on a feminine identity as the profession is now dominated by women.

**Gender Roles in Society**

These two gender related or “sex-typed” professions highlight qualities recognized as feminine or masculine whose characteristics are often conflated with male and female identities, but of course there is nothing inherent in either profession that makes it more masculine or feminine. Since gender identity is culturally or socially constructed more non-gendered roles may become acceptable and it may be easier for men and women to fill roles previously contradictory with their gender than in the past (Powell et al., 2009). Yet inconsistency in specific contexts in terms of acceptance can pose a challenge to those in traditionally gendered, yet evolving professions. In the case of the military, it may be useful to examine how institutional policies may affect the way men and women construct their identities.

Following political successes of the 1970s, particularly regarding women's further integration into American workplaces, the military created or changed a number of policies related to gender integration. Subsequently, the 1980s were fraught with contradictory policies for men and women serving in the military. On one hand, seemingly toward a policy of equal treatment, women were admitted to the military service academies as well as specialties previously off-limits. Yet, on the other hand, policies were enacted to suggest women needed to retain their femininity or feminine qualities which some claimed made their service less significant or unequal to their male counterparts. In some cases, women
would modify their appearance and behavior to overcome their feminine appearance and the gender stereotypes that could follow in an effort to gain equal footing with male service members.

**Women in the Military**

Cynthia Enloe (1988) recognized women would modify their behavior and daily activities in response to the contradictory integration policies in her book “Does Khaki Become You?” Following the distribution of an Army anti-sexual harassment video, numerous female service members felt empowered and rebuked sexual advances by male service members, but were accused of being lesbians (Enloe 1988, 149). The video enabled female service members who were being sexually harassed to speak up, but at the same time made them targets for different attacks. Enloe’s work suggests that women who maintain their femininity and appearance will be perceived as encouraging sexual advances by their male counterparts; yet, women who do not exude femininity or avoid personal interaction with male counterparts will be perceived as being lesbians. Women in the military thus face a double standard. In being more masculine they face being accused of being one kind of deviant (a lesbian), and in being more feminine they face being accused of being another kind of deviant (not soldier-like). When policies encourage feminine appearance, it follows that the latter category of identity may be taken up by women.

During the 1980s and 1990s, accusations of homosexual or lesbian activity were viewed as immediate grounds for discharge from the military. Commanders ambivalent to women in their units would frequently use investigations or accusations of lesbianism as
opportunities to get rid of women they felt were degrading their mission readiness (Enloe 1988, 143). To that end, men in the unit who felt threatened or whose sexual advances were not reciprocated were more likely to use accusations of lesbianism as a retaliatory measure. Although my research does not directly address the heteronormative underpinnings of the military, it does directly assess how military policy suggests men and women will modify their behavior in response to gender integration policy. A woman’s appearance, either overtly feminine (e.g. lipstick) to discreetly masculine (e.g. short hair), serve as a primary cue to gender and the anticipation of behavioral norms between men and women.

In the military, the conflation of gender roles and biological differences creates a puzzle since the social norms that surround traditional roles for men and women outside of the military may have evolved quicker than roles within the military but in other aspects, the military can be highly progressive. There are no policies in civilian life dictating that men and women serve in gender related roles; in fact, there are policies against such discriminatory practices in the U.S. Although strides have been made in the last 30 years to fully integrate women in the military, they still remain a minority in all branches of service and are in larger numbers in certain career fields. The military remains a male dominant, masculine institution due mainly to the nature of war and conflict. Moreover, significant policy changes enabling women to participate more fully in the military may draw unintended attention to the differences between men and women in uniform, rather than signal equality and evolving cultural norms.

---

1 War and conflict has been considered a traditional male or masculine occupation in nearly every nation or empire throughout history (Cass 1999; Reeves 1999).
**Gender in the Military**

When gender is highlighted and demonstratively lived, theorists suggest we become gendered beings. Traditionally, the military has been a hyper masculine institution. Men are privileged for military service since they are viewed as the warriors or the ones who will defend citizens and society from harm. This reinforces Connell’s (1987; 1989) definition of hegemonic masculinity which suggests that people will behave in ways to sustain male privilege in a particular environment. In the military, the conditioned behaviors and mandatory conformity bolster hegemonic masculinity, thus privileging male service members (Cheng 1999; Connell 1989; Connell 1995; Hearn 2004; Jefferson 2002; Kimmel 2003; Kimmel and Messner 2001; Kahn 2009). Hegemonic masculinity suggests that “real men” are *in power* and demonstrate the preferred masculine traits of aggression, risk taking, confidence and bravado (Johnson 2010). Masculinity as expressed by these behaviors is privileged in the military context.

With the integration of women, expressing femininity or masculinity while in uniform may conflict with cultural expectations of presentation of gender identity. Specifically, when women dampen down feminine qualities in favor of more masculine qualities, social interaction may become strained between men and women or even between women and other women. Women or men may take on feminine identity when they exhibit more nurturing, passive and fragile qualities or the “personal, the emotional and the particular” (Keller 1985, 7). In contrast, men or women may take on masculine identity when they exhibit aggressive, dominant, and strong qualities. In the military, the hierarchical organization is rooted in a system of patriarchy where men serve as authority
figures (Bondi 1997, 246). Furthermore, when the dominant masculine identity is fused with the policies that highlight strength, physical prowess and aggression, femininity and lesser prized qualities like compassion and empathy are equated with women and de-valued.

In modifying existing policies and creating new procedures for integrating women, the military whether strategically or inadvertently, maintained a privileged system predicated on masculine identity. Feminine qualities such as compassion, empathy and meekness are not generally associated with a fighting force. Thus, the military promotes the socially accepted construct of masculinity through its culture and policies. The military historically has promoted this socially accepted construct and may continue to do so without understanding the consequences for gender dynamics.

The rhetoric in the integration policies subsequently highlights the disproportionate relationship between men and women by putting a spotlight on their differences. Early policies during the initial integration period beginning in 1970 suggest specific “conditions” related to women would result in limited duty assignments or even discharge from the military. This was the case when women became pregnant, for example. Policies enacted nearly twenty years later reflect an understanding of the need to account for a physical capability differential between men and women. Policies enacted during the 1980s and 1990s recognized that in a technologically advanced military, more women can fill roles previously reserved for men. In some instances, male privilege was perpetuated through policy that used specific kinds of language, thus reinforcing the preferred masculine or male identity in the military. While in other instances, gender privilege was less evident,
indicating acceptance of more gender neutral roles or equally representative of male and female service members. Consequently, the policies of the military generally set up a system where it is easier to follow “a path of least resistance” as opposed to challenging gender privilege (Johnson 2010, 80). The gender integration policies of the military tend to privilege the male soldier while reinforcing the dominant masculine identity of the institution. This may be done at the expense of the female soldier as well as unit cohesion and effectiveness.

Gender Privilege

Male privilege is not unique to the military, and societal norms of elevating male qualities over female qualities is likely to be implicitly understood by most members of the military apart from any military specific training and subsequent cultural norms that flow from official policies. Privilege may be seen as a positive aspect of societal interactions. For example, those who identify as “good” or “strong” may be viewed in more positively than someone who may fall into a “bad” or “weak” category. Those people in positively viewed groups may have more opportunities than those in oppressed or negatively assigned groups. Privilege which takes on negative connotations may affect interpersonal relationships and interactions. In her seminal work, Peggy McIntosh (2010) identified two kinds of privilege that can have negative consequences. First, the idea of “unearned entitlements” reflects the idea that people have the same opportunities and access in life, but the reality is that only a small group of people get to enjoy these things (McIntosh 2010). This notion of privilege relates to status and in the military, this is demonstrated most visibly by the hierarchical
rank structure. Commissioned officers have more responsibility and are expected to lead troops; therefore, some privileges are viewed as rewards for their sacrifices, responsibility or other contributions. One potential negative feature of privilege stems from those officers who are graduates of one of the military service academies. Graduates from military academies receive their commission before other officer candidates (e.g. ROTC, OCS) and also have first choice in their duty assignments. Another potential example of unearned entitlements comes in the differences of physical fitness requirements for men and women. At times, women have not been required to meet the same physical fitness requirements as their male counterparts and some men perceive women as receiving privileges simply for being female (Samuels and Samuels 2012).

The second type of privilege addresses “conferred dominance” (McIntosh 2010). Conferred dominance is the idea that one group has more power over another group and this condition is most often linked with social groups or class identities. For example, a white, rich, male is most often viewed as dominant to a poor, woman of color. The dominant status is nearly always at the expense of what is perceived to be a weaker or less powerful group. It is important to note that privilege in one form or another affects all of us. It is only when the conferred status of one group reinforces the exclusion of a less dominant group, thus perpetuating inequality. In the military, this conferred status could be linked to the hegemonic masculine character of the institution (Connell 1987). When men excel in

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2 There are three major service academies where attendees do not pay tuition, but pay will military service commitments following graduation. These academies are: the Air Force Academy, hereafter USAFA; the Army academy at West Point, hereafter West Point; and the Naval Academy at Annapolis, hereafter Annapolis. The Coast Guard has a service academy for commissioning officers, but it is not well-known.

3 The military has alternative commissioning sources such as Officer Candidate School (OCS) and Reserve Officer Training Programs (ROTC). OCS is a program for those who already have college degrees and need the officer training while ROTC is a program that members complete while they are attaining their bachelor’s degree.
physical fitness requirements, which are conflated with being an ideal soldier, they reinforce their conferred dominance as male service members as compared to women who only have to aspire to meet less stringent requirements. Gender privilege in American society likely pre-conditions new enlistees with notions of hierarchical gender privileging and once they enter the service, gender integration policy may further influence their likelihood of shaping identity.

As previously mentioned, self-identity is the result of an acquisition process that may include psychological affiliations with a particular group (Oakes 2002). It should come as no surprise that this affiliation can be positive or negative, may be short-term or long-term and can change when one’s group affiliations change. Much like race, religion or ideology may serve as features of identity; gender is another influence and may be more or less meaningful given contexts (Ferguson and Mansbach 2002). Becoming a member of the military may further complicate the identity acquisition process since an individual not only acquires a group identity (e.g. Army infantry, Naval intelligence), but in a masculine dominant institution, one’s projected gender identity may matter as well. One’s branch of service and unit assignment provide influences, such as non-gender neutral gender policies, suggesting masculine or feminine qualities may be made salient and impact identity. Moreover, when a member transitions, is promoted, or is relocated to a new unit, group affiliations and the salience of gender policies may also shift and change. Much like the civilian world, the identity acquisition process is on-going and one’s identity is a reflection of the culture and context of his or her current life setting.
The masculine role embedded within organizational policies is an element of a conferred privileged status (McIntosh 2010; Samuels and Samuels 2012). Additionally, one’s identity in the military may be shaped by the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) code, or duty assignment. The majority of women serve in subordinate positions or less-prominent roles while men are privileged because there are numerically more of them. More men become officers than women; the highest ranking officers are men; and certain jobs central to career progression and advancement are reserved for men. Despite former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta’s announcement in 2013 that all combat roles will be open to women, there has been a delay in integrating some specialty fields. More often than not, women are assigned to support positions, thus maintaining masculine privilege. Some women may navigate the military from a perceived inferior position rather than a gender neutral position, and the women assigned to traditionally masculine positions may use alternate coping strategies which may include alterations in gender self-identification. Some women, however, may navigate the military from a gender neutral position or a position that is not outwardly feminine or masculine. Instead, these female service members may have joined the service because of poverty or relative lack of opportunities and choose to identify their military cultural experience - and their position in it - as relatively superior to the alternative they would have faced in civilian life. Female service members in this gender neutral position recognize that men still dominate the military, but project an identity that enables them to pursue a career in a somewhat invisible status based on their job assignment, outward appearance and perhaps behavior. The paths available to female
service members in the military are influenced by the context of their service which may pose impediments to professional interaction.

The root of these navigation challenges can be traced to a missing sense of belonging in the masculine institution. A man is more likely to be viewed as someone who “belongs” in the military simply because he is male. This identity affords the man certain privileges that women are not provided (e.g. physical ability not being questioned). When women fill traditionally masculine roles and succeed, they not only provide an example for other women, but also establish a new prototype for their male colleagues. The new prototype demonstrates how the primary asexual, social identity of "airman" or "soldier" replaces the traditional gender roles reinforced by gendered policies. However, establishing a new prototype or norm is not without challenges. These challenges are most often grounded in military policy.

**Military Identity**

Gender integration policies have been historically contradictory; a likely consequence of the equal rights victories of the 1970s as well as flawed research made public only after a policy has been instituted. During the 1980s and early 1990s, it became clear that women in the military faced a “double-bind” much like political scientists describe as women enter politics (Herbert 1998). On one hand, women have to demonstrate they possess the masculine qualities deemed necessary for military service; yet, on the other hand, they cannot lose their feminine qualities inherent to being a woman (e.g. nurturing, empathetic, compassionate, sexually attractive to heterosexual men, etc.). Women were
expected to maintain their femininity despite meeting the requirements of a traditional
dominant role. Despite breaking many barriers during the push for equal rights in the
1970s, women in prominent business and political roles were still required to maintain their
feminine identity or risk harassment and discrimination in the workplace. In some contexts,
the military was and is no different. In order to accommodate the social norms of femininity
inherent in the broader American culture, military leaders drafted policy allowing women to
serve, yet these policies provided different standards for male and female service members.
These policies were an effort to preserve the feminine identity and were often grounded in
flawed research. The difference in requirements for physical fitness and the need to
maintain femininity contributed to the challenges women faced in navigating the military
and some of the challenges remain even today.

Any policy or directive serves as the overarching guidance for one’s military
experience. The effects of military policy begin immediately after a new recruit or officer
candidate signs a contract signaling a commitment to military service. Moreover, the
characteristics of military service are also introduced immediately with the use of proper
titles and recognition of hierarchy related to rank and duty position. A new recruit may be
required to attend mandatory physical fitness training prior to attending the initial boot
camp or Basic Military Training (BMT). At these training sessions, the recruit learns to use
proper titles, obey commands and place themselves in the hierarchy of the rank system -
basically at the very bottom where the only way to achieve a higher status is to earn it
through completion of specific training requirements. The military as an institution assumes
that individuals will leave their civilian identities behind and become a Marine, soldier,
sailor or airman, or at the very least, place their new identity hierarchically above any meaningful identity prior to entering the service. In the military, policy sets the stage for one’s environment with regard to leadership and unit culture.

Part of the training process of new recruits in the military is indoctrination into the military way of life. This includes the proper wear of the uniform, the appropriate vernacular and terminology used by each branch of service as well as learning their place in the organizational structure. One learns the acceptable behavior and social courtesies required for interaction between peers and the chain of command. Despite clear policy against discrimination and harassment, when recruits arrive at basic training, they are faced with intense yelling, occasional use of obscene and profane language or inappropriate references that may be personally degrading. For new recruits, there is little that can be done in this environment except adapt and learn to follow orders (Kennedy 2001, Grossman 2002). Learning to follow lawful orders is imperative to battlefield performance. Supervisors and commanders teach new recruits how to follow so that in a combat situation or the “fog of war,” they will listen to commands. The need to instill followership is inherent to the command structure as well as performing one’s duty. We know from history, however, that some orders are unlawful. Teaching followership involves instruction on lawful and unlawful orders which can be challenging at times. Moreover, there is a gendered component to military policy which is most evident in dress and appearance criteria for men and women as well as different physical fitness requirements most apparent in BMT.
The Uniform

In general, all branches of the military have a utility uniform and a dress uniform. The utility uniform includes pants and a shirt, commonly referred to as a Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) or in some cases, a flight suit which is a one-piece, zip up jumpsuit. The utility uniform is unisex and sizes run from extra small to extra-large with no difference in style between the male and female uniform. All services at one time or another have experimented with gendered utility uniforms, but for the most part, the only modification for a female style is reserved for pregnant women with a maternity uniform. The dress uniforms are quite different and are reserved for office settings or special occasions. These uniforms enable the female service members to wear either a skirt with modest heel shoes or dress pants. Male service members wear pants with dress shoes. Women who are assigned to an administrative position may be persuaded by their commanders to wear the skirt option for various reasons. In 1982, most women were not allowed to wear the pant option unless working in a medical unit where a medical uniform, i.e. scrubs, was preferred or in a duty requiring heavy equipment operation or maintenance. This is no longer the case and women are believed to be able to decide whether they wear the skirt or the pant option. In order to fit in better with male colleagues, female service members may not feel they have a choice in apparel and opt to wear the pants for uniformity. This selection is often a direct reflection of the identity a female service member wishes to present to her peers as well as a reflection of the unit identity.
Physical Fitness

In learning to follow military protocol, policies that highlight gender differences may be the first insight into how the military expects male and female service members to perform their duties as well as interact with each other. Physical fitness requirements are one example of a policy that has been modified over time. In the early years of integration, 1976 to 1982, gender-neutral physical fitness requirements prevailed; exercises were created around potential situations in the field - like a 50-yard drag/pull of a 50-pound pack (Stiehm 1989, 202). The test was to simulate real-life challenges soldiers may face on the battle field and assess each member’s ability to meet the challenges. Physical fitness tests in the latter part of integration, 1982 to the present, used exercise to measure aerobic and anaerobic abilities. The minimum physical fitness requirements were also modified to accommodate for age differences and differences between male and female service members.

The Army physical fitness test in 1982 modified the previous test to three events comprised of push-ups, sit-ups and a two-mile timed run (AR 600-9; FM 21-20). The test was worth a total of 300 points and the number of repetitions for sit-ups and push-ups assigned a point value. In each event, soldiers must earn 50 points and in order to pass the test, must score at least 160 points for all three. A female soldier earned 200 points by doing the maximum of 40 push-ups and 84 sit-ups. Men on the other hand only received 60 points for completing 40 push-ups and -- points for 84 sit-ups (AR 600-9, Appendix C). The two-mile timed run was the final event; female service members earned 100 points for finishing the run in 12:10 or less. Men were awarded 66 points for finishing with the same
time. Men were held to higher minimum conditions. However, when a female service member meets the minimum physical fitness requirements, policy dictates she is competent for duty, despite having different requirements. The physical fitness policy can set up a situational and complex position for women. If a woman exceeds the requirements and earns scores rivaling her male counterparts, depending on her unit environment, she risks being identified as too tough, too masculine or not feminine enough. However, women in units more accepting of gender equal performance, a woman may gain respect and confidence from her male counterparts when they excel at physically demanding job requirements. Regardless, inconsistent gender integration policy can cause problems for all members of the military because it dictates unequal treatment. Commanders and unit leadership remain the local interpreters of policy.

The contradictory integration policies stem from studies and research conducted in an effort to accommodate the increased number of women joining the military. However, the impetus and logic behind many of these studies was flawed for two reasons. Judith Stiehm (1989) addresses these assumptions in her research of women’s service in the military directly. First, the assumption that all female soldiers are heterogeneous is false, much like asserting all male soldiers have the same capabilities and goals in their military service (Stiehm 1989, 135). Second, research into women’s military service, which began in the 1950s, investigated if women should serve and if so, in what capacities are they able to serve (Stiehm 1989, 135)? These two assumptions grounded early gender integration policy in the context of privilege.
Male service members were never viewed as heterogeneous - in fact, the all-volunteer force made every effort to recruit all able-bodied men, regardless of limitations which may have included previous run-ins with the law or illicit drug use as well as a wide swath of body types and physical attributes. Furthermore, specific positions were reserved only for men while the number of women was limited in an effort to provide for as many male soldiers as possible (Stiehm 1989, 157; Harrell and Miller 1997). Men were privileged in that their service in the military fit the culturally accepted identity of being male. Their service was not questioned or challenged; rather, a man’s ability was used to place him in the best position for the sake of the military. Women in the military may still be viewed as out of place or out of the norm. The misguided research into women’s service in the military perpetuated the dominant masculine identity of the institution with conflicting messages embedded within gender integration policy.

In recent years, women in the military have stretched the masculine and feminine identity boundaries to create professional, non-gendered self-identities for themselves based upon exemplary job performance and duty accomplishments. However, the policies governing gender and gender integration have made continued navigation of the masculine context of the military in many areas challenging. Between 1994 and the present, the number of policies related to gender integration increased. In 2004, the Sexual Assault Prevention Office (SAPRO) was established in response to numerous sexual assault allegations including high profile investigations at the Air Force Academy and the Army’s Aberdeen Proving Ground, for example. Much of the official policy explicitly or implicitly
categorized women as victims, thus making gender salient and potentially problematic for identity and gendered interactions.

Scope and Chapter Outline

With this backdrop of considering identity acquisition, gender privilege and military identity in mind, I turn to now consider the scope of my project. This research differs from previous research in several ways. First, this project seeks to understand how policies aimed at gender integration influence the identities of men and women in the military. Secondly, through their voluntary membership in the military, I explore the different ways women and men express their identities with attention to the concepts of gender privilege. These identities, I argue, are in part a response to the gender integration policies in effect at different periods of time. Some policies negatively highlight the differences between men and women which encourage prejudice or discriminatory behavior by privileged group members (Powell, Branscombe and Schmitt 2005); yet other policies positively highlight gender neutral competence. These policies are likely interpreted in local contexts by military leadership that greatly influence group dynamics. Finally, using phenomenological techniques, I assess self-talk regarding military service from men and women who served during the two periods of interest. These narratives provide evidence that gendered policies influence the identity of service members. By using this qualitative method, I maintain the rich descriptive quality of the subject’s understanding of their time in service while integrating the sociological concepts of identity and gender privilege. I argue that when policy specifically highlights gender differences, this is more likely to reinforce privileging
of masculine identity and subjugating of feminine identity. Whereas, when policy is gender neutral, no such privileging is likely to result.

Although I hope to illuminate on the intersection between self-identity and gender integration policy through a lens of privilege, there are limits to this project. This research will illustrate a richness of lived experiences that cannot be acquired through quantitative analysis, but the findings are not generalizable to all military personnel under all circumstances. The subjects do not speak for all members of the military or their unique experiences at different periods of service with relation to policies in effect. I do not directly test a hypothesis, but provide evidence that gendered policies influence a gendered self-identity because meaning is made by dynamic integration within cultural institutional contexts. Furthermore, I provide a foundation for future research assessing the specific wording of policy and how this can affect those who are expected to follow the policies and the rules. This research is an attempt to theory-build in the areas of gender focused policy implications as well as gender identity and gender relations.

In Chapter 2, I will provide a brief review the literature as well as explain the organizational structure and hierarchy of the military. The organizational structure of the military provides a foundation for self-identity acquisition for each subject based on branch of service, unit of assignment, rank and MOS. Self-identities are evident in relations between men and women and reflects the policy in place at a given point in time.

Within Chapter 3 I explain how the phenomenological method is utilized in this project. I will address the institutional level of analysis by presenting the gender integration policies in the two periods of interest, 1980 to 1994 and 1995 to 2013. I assess how
elements of privilege and gender are linked to the gender integration policies of the U.S. military. I argue privileged individuals wish to maintain their status and gender integration policies merely facilitate dominant behavior. In other words, because the policy is gendered, privileged individuals use them for personal benefit, not necessarily the good of the unit or mission requirements.

Chapters 4 and 5 introduce the gender integration policies from the two period of interest. I will demonstrate how policy is gendered. Then in Chapter 6, I present the data from the subjects, separated by the period of analysis as defined by time of service. I will demonstrate that terms utilized by subjects represent their self-identity within the military. I intend to provide a thematic correlation of the analysis, highlighting patterns where a privileged identity and gender policy intersect using the self-talk from the personal narratives. This intersection will be indicative of the effects of DOD gender integration policy through the two periods of analysis.

In the final chapter, I will summarize my findings, point out the implications and provide direction for future research.
CHAPTER 2
ORGANIZATION AND CULTURE OF THE MILITARY

In this chapter, I describe the military organizational structure and how gender integration policy is passed from the highest level of leadership to the lowest levels through the chain of command. Additionally, the organizational structure of the military provides a foundation for self-identity acquisition for each subject based on branch of service, unit of assignment, rank and MOS. Self-identities are evident in relations between men and women and reflect the policy in place at a given point in time.

Military Organization

The United States military is organized around a hierarchy put in practice by duty assignment as well as the chain of command. All military specialties or duties are separated into “line” and “non-line” designations. Line positions are those directly responsible for performing a war fighting mission such as pilot, infantryman, rifleman, weapons handler (Simon 2001, 11). Non-line positions are supporting careers like legal, medical and administrative functions. To clarify, non-line positions help the warfighter perform his or her duties in accomplishing the mission objective. Line and non-line positions exist in both the enlisted and officer ranks.
generally speaking, service members in line positions enjoy conferred privileges (McIntosh 2010) due to their military specialty.

Commanders, or officers appointed by a congressional commission, lead troops or those with lower rank in the enlisted corps. Commanders in all branches of service may be as inexperienced as a newly commissioned Second Lieutenant or as experienced as General Officer with thirty years’ experience. The title of “commander” is further complicated by the rank structure. All officers are in hierarchical positions above enlisted service members; however, not all officers are commanders and supervise troops. For example, any aviator in the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine Corps is an officer. However, only one of these individuals with the most time at current rank and more often than not, the greatest time in service, is assigned a command position, supervising others. The hierarchy begins with the officer corps and then trickles down to the senior enlisted leadership, the non-commissioned officers (NCO) and finally, the newly enlisted troops.

The Enlisted Corps

The enlisted force is divided into three groups. First, the new enlistees with less than three or four years of service, the non-commissioned officers (NCO) with five to fourteen years of service and finally, the senior enlisted officers with fifteen to thirty years of service. Within the enlisted force is a well-known pecking order for promotion - those in service longer who pass duty qualification and knowledge tests are promoted first. However, in addition to the knowledge and qualification tests are endorsement opportunities where individuals in the chain of command can weigh in on job performance
and professional qualities. It is within the endorsements that most political and controversial decisions are made. It is to the benefit of a newly enlisted service member to find a mentor of higher rank that can help him or her navigate the promotion process as well as other challenges within the military.

The main issues to understanding the hierarchy in the military is learning the differences in the officer and enlisted corps, and then learning the hierarchy within each category. The system of leadership in the military gives power to those in the highest rank of the officer corps. The generals or “military brass” are the longest serving and highest ranking officials who establish policy and protocols for each branch of the military. These leaders are also called upon by the executive branch to serve as advisors. This level of leadership has the authority to manage lower ranking officers as well as the enlisted ranks. The hierarchical system in the military ensures that those with the most power and authority are concentrated at the highest ranks where few members of the military serve. Since the highest ranking officials in the military are predominantly male, this reinforces the masculine identity of the institution through formal customs and courtesies of daily military activities.

Basic Military Training

One of the first challenges newly enlisted members face is being able to identify officers and performing the appropriate custom and courtesy when interacting with them. This indoctrination process begins in BMT where drill sergeants bark orders and teach the new recruits a proper salute with greeting. The drill sergeants, although enlisted personnel,
become the first example of a proper military service member and demand respect similar to those in higher command positions. Additionally, the basic training experience is the first chance a service member has to use the chain of command. Should a soldier be disciplined for inappropriate behavior or substandard duty performance, he or she may be confronted by the commanding officer (CO) in an attempt to correct the situation. Furthermore, if the soldier has a problem requiring leadership attention, he or she is required to first inform the drill sergeant and then allow the drill sergeant to relay the information to supervisors or resolve the problem at their level. Since the majority of service members are male and most drill instructors are male, male authority in the leadership hierarchy reinforced. At all times in the initial training process, it is understood that problems are generally addressed at the lowest level possible and seeking assistance outside of the chain of command should be avoided (Nelson 2002, 269).

**Non-Commissioned Officers**

Following BMT and indoctrination into the military, enlisted personnel are assigned to a second training location where they learn how to do their job-specific duties and receive specialized certification. In general, personnel serving in infantry, aviation or elite units (Special Forces) are viewed in higher regard than those who serve in support positions like clerical, medical or administrative units. These service members have conferred entitlements based solely on their duty assignment which is closely linked to their gender because these elite units remain closed to women. Additionally, these assignments may be linked to aptitude test scores or physical fitness. The restrictions placed upon female service
members further reinforce the masculine nature of the military. In addition to learning the hierarchy and job-specific duties, the member is learning the lower ranks have fewer privileges and female service members may also have fewer privileges.

After the initial enlistment phase, a service member “crosses the line” into the non-commissioned officer (NCO) ranks - service members become experienced personnel who often become immediate supervisors to younger, newly enlisted personnel. For women who earn the “esteemed NCO grades, like sergeant or staff sergeant, you suddenly become more visible” (Wilson 1999, 59). This is not due to additional stripes on the uniform (equated with higher rank) or additional responsibilities, but because others view you as a survivor - one who has lasted through an initial enlistment period where other women have not. There are many reasons for why women choose to leave the military. These may include personal reasons or pressure from external sources, both of which may remain unknown to researchers. Gender integration had an impact on the enlisted force structure and the number of women in the enlisted force is similar to the officer corps. “In 1960 and 1970, women made up only 1% of enlisted members of the U.S. military services. By 1980 this had risen to 8.5%, 11.1% in 1990, 14.9% in 2000, and then a slight decline to 14% in 2008” (Rutgers 2009). Regardless of the increase, women in the NCO and higher ranks become a more visible commodity simply because they are rare.

**Senior Non-Commissioned Officers**

Following the NCO ranks are the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO) ranks. All branches of the military promote the most senior enlisted personnel to these ranks based
On performance evaluations from their commanders, meeting the requirements for their career field as measured by test scores and achieving the needs of the military, as determined by the Department of Defense Annual Review (Stiehm 1989). The SNCO ranks are viewed by most enlisted troops with respect and trepidation because often times, these individuals take on the character of a “crusty old sergeant.” Junior officers are often reliant on the senior enlisted personnel for technical expertise and advice on manpower issues. Senior officers also rely heavily on the senior enlisted force to keep them informed of morale issues, limitations in manpower and unit capability as well as serve as a fundamental liaison to the enlisted force. In the last twenty five years, senior enlisted personnel have received the most attention in sexual harassment cases as was the case with the highest ranking enlisted man in the Army Sergeant Major Gene C. McKinney, who was accused of sexually harassing six women during training at Aberdeen Proving Ground (Henry 2005). Abuses of power and the privilege of rank are evident in such cases.

The Officer Corps

Officers in all branches of the military follow a similar career path as enlisted personnel, but their BMT differs based on the accession route. Accession route refers to the source of the commission and military training can either occur concurrently with coursework toward a degree or after a degree has been conferred. All officers must meet the initial requirement of earning a four-year degree from an accredited institution. Officers must also complete a basic training course prior to receiving their congressional

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4 McKinney was eventually acquitted of the sexual harassment charges, but was found guilty of obstruction of justice and was forced to retire following a reduction in rank.
appointment as a Second Lieutenant (2Lt). Commissioning sources include private and public four-year colleges where Reserve Officer Training Courses (ROTC) are taught; special military colleges like the Citadel or the Virginia Military Institute (VMI); and the service schools like the Naval Academy in Maryland, West Point (Army) in New York, the Air Force Academy in Colorado and the Coast Guard Academy in Connecticut. Although graduates of service academies are able to join any branch of service, most graduates stick with the branch associated with their school. The Naval Academy serves as a commissioning source for Marine officers, however. In the final year of school, graduates from the Citadel and VMI must declare their branch of service.

Military Academy and Reserve Officer Training Graduates

The officer corps in the military has a subtle and socially nuanced hierarchy based on the source of accession. The pecking order is reinforced by military policy wherein officers receiving commissions from the service academies have earlier entry dates into the service than all other officers. This conferred dominance (McIntosh 2010) results in preferential treatment because these officers are the first group to select a career field and duty location. Following service academy graduates, officers from ROTC programs and military colleges receive their entry date - policy dictates their date of service must begin at least 30 days after the date of service begins for service academy officers (Hosek et al 2001, 8). While this group of officers is the largest of all the commissioning sources (Eitelberg et al 1997), their reputation among the ranks in each branch of service varies greatly. Some service members hold ROTC officers in higher regard than service academy graduates,
while others consider them less qualified because they did not earn the full-ride scholarship to a service academy. Much of these judgments are based on personal opinion and lack substantive evidence. It is important to note as well that judgments differ between the enlisted service members and other officers with the latter often more critical of their peer group. Female graduates of the service academies may face the expectation that they are the elite of all female officers in the military. The perception that academy graduates are the “cream of the crop” is perpetuated by their high proportion of selection rates to high-ranking positions and elite career fields (e.g. aviation, Special Forces).

**Officer Candidates and Training School Graduates**

The last groups of officers to enter the service are those commissioned through Officer Candidate School (OCS) or Officer Training School (OTS). These service members receive the remaining vacant positions and duty assignments as allocated by the DOD Annual Review (Stiehm 1989; Harrell and Miller 1997). OCS/OTS graduates attain their degree prior to entering their military training and each branch of service provides a different, yet similar, training program for officer candidates who generally have no prior military experience. The majority of OCS/OTS graduates fill medical positions (Eitelberg et al 1997; Smith and Smith 2013) as they have completed lengthy academic programs while becoming certified in their specialty. A small group of OCS/OTS graduates are prior enlisted personnel who earned their degree during an initial enlistment, then applied to become an officer. This group of officers are admired by some enlisted troops because “they have been there, done that,” yet fellow officers may be critical for various reasons.
The main reason relates to loyalty. Does the new officer identify more with the officer corps who have a privileged position or does the officer maintain an identity similar to the enlisted troops? The transition through the rank hierarchy, regardless of enlisted or officer status, poses additional challenges to a service member’s identity.

Social Interaction

The social milieu of the military is often complicated by the customs and courtesies required of both enlisted and officer personnel. There are certain official military functions that require both groups to participate and interact socially. In the early years of gender integration, this interaction was fraught with inconsistent guidance which served to complicate the relationship not only between officers and enlisted, but also between men and women in uniform. It is not uncommon for units to have “officer calls” on Friday nights following a tough work week or training period. Prior to integration, these “calls” fostered camaraderie between men and also served as a networking function to grease the wheels for future assignments and promotions. As women entered the force, these “officer calls” often took one of two forms. In the first, women were required to join the officer call at the local Officer’s Club on base or at the local unit bar - prevalent at most military installations or within duty locations like an aviation squadron or brigade lounge. In doing so, many women were viewed not as professional counterparts, but as sexual conquests (Johnson 1999, 34). This is a broad generalization; yet, direct guidance on the conduct of officers and prohibited behavior was left to the discretion of local commanders. A commander’s discretion may be influenced by his or her impressions of fellow officers,
male or female, as well as influences from personal beliefs. Officer calls are viewed as a long-standing military tradition, but when few women serve in the elite units often promoting these extra-curricular social events, their participation may draw unwelcome attention from their peer group.

A second form of officer call is the male-only ritual wherein female service members were either not invited or where openly prohibited from attending. In this instance, the local unit commander or group of commanders had determined that the only way to prevent allegations of sexual harassment or other career-limiting charges was to stay away from the female service members serving alongside them. In this case, women were viewed as professional threats in a social context thus reinforcing the masculine ethos of the military. Women were not viewed as equal to men in the profession of arms and this isolation not only represented the view of the leadership, but also set the tone for how the enlisted personnel viewed female officers.

**Fraternization**

The relationship between enlisted members and the officer corps is further complicated by the subject of fraternization. Fraternization generally refers to inappropriate relationships between a supervisor and subordinate. It can occur between a senior enlisted member and a new recruit, between a junior officer and a higher-ranking commander or the most common reference, between an officer and enlisted member of the military. In the early stages of integration, official policy on fraternization was inconsistent and often confusing (Sadler 1999, 51). This led to the forced segregation of female officers from male
officers at some bases, hindering the acquisition of identity as an officer, not just a female officer. In 1980, female officers only accounted for 7.7% of the active duty military. In 1990, that number increased to 11%, improving to 14.4% in 2000, and in 2008, 15.3% of the officer corps was female (Rutgers 2009). Despite the positive trend, when female officers are separated from their unit by their fellow officers and commanders, the unofficial policy that female officers are “different” can predicate behavior modification or the adjustment in identity that a female officer projects to her peers in an effort to overcome the perceived “differentness.”

Identity Cues

Gender notwithstanding, one’s rank and place in the military hierarchy has a prominent effect on one’s identity. As with gender, service members form opinions and immediate judgments of others when passing in a hallway during duty hours. The first identity cue to any difference between officer and enlisted personnel is the insignia worn on the uniform. When approaching an officer, the enlisted service member is required to salute and greet him or her and perhaps present a report if the officer is the commanding officer. In return, the officer will salute and must project an identity reflecting leadership and confidence. When rank is combined with gender, the resulting interactions are more complex. In some cases, a female officer projecting a strong, dominant image may be perceived as hostile or threatening to her male counterparts. Furthermore, a male officer who is less aggressive or demonstrates feminine qualities may be viewed as soft or less of a leader in his role when contrasted with the strong aggressive female officer. These
projections can have an impact on enlisted personnel in the unit since an officer may be respected more or less depending on the identity one projects and the perceived interpretation by enlisted personnel.

A second identity cue used in the military is unit designation. One’s unit designation not only highlights the unit of service, but also status as a line (combat) or non-line (support) unit. Line officers and enlisted personnel are viewed with higher esteem due to their conferred privileges. Some of the conferred privileges include recognition of combat experience or special duty assignments which may be necessary for promotion. Those in non-line positions do not have the same opportunities, thus reinforcing unequal status between personnel. The military highlights those in privileged units with different uniform accessories, like berets (e.g. Special Forces, military police), uniform patches or insignia (e.g. flight wings for aviators), flights suits, or braided cords for officers. Those serving in support units may have their own unit identifier to signify their role in accomplishing the mission. However, individual personnel are often overlooked in support roles which may lead to feelings of inferiority when interacting with those bearing the symbols of privilege. The contrast between superior and inferior status can impact one’s projected identity thus straining relations.

Interactions between officers and enlisted as well as between line and non-line positions are guided by professional courtesy and the traditional rules of the military. However, when gender becomes an additional variable into these relations, the norms of behavior may be influenced by perceptions and expectations based on the gender category instead of rank or unit designation. When policy highlights gender rather than job
performance, interaction between men and women can be complex. For example, in the aviation community, women were not allowed to officially fly in combat\(^5\) until recently. However, there were women who flew early combat missions and were held to the same standards and job performance requirements as their male counterparts. In Operation Just Cause (Panama 1989), First Lieutenant Lisa Kutschera and Warrant Officer Debra Mann ferried troops with their Blackhawk helicopters into areas where Panamanian Defense Forces fired upon them (Becraft 1990). Although their missions were classified as cargo not combat, these women received the same commendation, an Air Medal, as their male counterparts. Furthermore, these women not only self-identify as competent pilots, as I discuss in the next chapter, but served during a time when non-gender specific policy enabled their male counterparts to view them as proficient in their duties as soldiers, not “female soldiers.”

The Evolving Military Organization

Gender integration has been a slow and arduous process. Policy established during the 1980s and 1990s stemmed from research conducted in the late 1970s. One notable report is the *Evaluation of Women in the Army* (EWITA) compiled in 1978 (Stiehm 1989). This report was prepared for use in the Army and focused on defining the term “combat” as a predictor of which units women could be assigned to. Units were coded as “combat units” even if the likelihood of being close to enemy engagement was minimal, such as transporting equipment for a short time. These combat units remained male-only which

\(^5\) Although women flew combat missions in Grenada (1983), conducted raids on Libya (1986), transported troops in Panama (1989), and piloted refueling tankers in the first Gulf War (1991), their accomplishments were not officially recognized as combat activities until 1993.
limited the units where women could be assigned to medical, legal, supply and a few others. This segregation served as reinforcement to traditionally gendered roles in American culture.

**Evaluation of Women in the Army**

The EWITA report highlighted four critical areas to gender integration. First, the pregnancy issue was addressed claiming that “a full-term pregnancy resulted in twenty-one weeks of lost time” (Stiehm 1989, 143) which lead to the recommendation that women who become pregnant be discharged to maintain unit effectiveness and mission-ready capability, despite being a non-combat unit. Another issue was the difference in physical strength between men and women. The report recommended creating a “gender-free” fitness test. By making the physical fitness requirements task specific, any member of the service would be evaluated on duty requirements, not physical prowess. A third item addressed were the substandard living conditions for overseas or isolated locations. It was suggested the Army improve living conditions, specifically for the female soldiers assigned to these locations. Finally, the lack of adequate uniforms, size and quality for female service members was assessed. The report suggested the military transition to a unisex uniform to address women with smaller frames. Although not pointed out in the report, the smaller uniforms could be used for smaller frame male soldiers as well. The EWITA report was the first report to be conducted in an attempt to investigate attitudinal as well as perception problems with women in the Army.
In an attempt to reduce perceptual problems within an integrated force, the Army sought to equalize recruiting standards for men and women in 1980 (Stiehm 1989, 144; U.S. Department of the Army 1983, 77-78). This came on the heels of the Army’s worst recruiting year in 1979, when the total was 15,400 short of the congressional authorization (U.S. Department of the Army 1983, 75). The EWITA report, made public in 1980, suggested the Army increase the number of women to 96,000 by 1985 (U.S. Department of the Army, 1978), but the main issue with increasing the number of women was determining how these women were best suited to fill the shortfalls in recruiting. At issue was the number of MOSs closed to enlisted women based on duty requirements or those closed to women due to the proximity to combat (combat coded). In the first case, jobs were closed to women as a way of distributing the number of women across all available career fields so one specialty, like medical or dental, did not have an overabundance of female service members. Subsequently, many MOSs had caps placed on the number of women recruited to fill vacancies while other specialties had minimum quotas in an attempt to recruit women to non-traditional fields thus ensuring equal distribution of men and women (U.S. Department of the Army 1978). The challenge to these recruiting goals was the actual number of units open to the integration of women did not meet the distribution allocations recommended by the EWITA report. In other words, there was a need to recruit women, but their service was limited to areas where Army leadership felt they could be used. In effect, any attempt to overcome perceptual challenges to female service members failed.

These shortcomings in Army integration policy were not overlooked by those in the service as well as those conducting research on gender integration. The Army surveyed 16
commanders of major Army units following the EWITA report to evaluate “career opportunities and quality of life for women” (Stiehm 1989, 144). The result of their inquiry reflects the contradictory message sent from Army leadership. On one hand, commanders did not report that pregnancy affected the mission capability of their unit, but suggested childcare facilities and maternity uniforms were much needed commodities. Additionally, one commander brought up the topic of sexual harassment and another commander highlighted the identity challenges facing women in non-traditional specialties noting that women preferred more traditional jobs to avoid being labeled as a lesbian or “bull-dyke” (Stiehm 1989, 145). The survey responses suggest some commanders were facilitating integration within their units with a genuine concern for the well-being of their troops. They were willing to shed light on issues specific to female service members (e.g. pregnancy, maternity uniforms and gender labeling) and yet Army leadership either overlooked their concerns or did not feel they were important enough to correct. In failing to do so, the privileging male service members continued.

Women in the Army Policy Review

A later study was released in 1982. The Women in the Army Policy Review (WITPAR) began under the direction of Major General Robert T. Wetzel. Major General Wetzel coordinated a visit to two Army posts in Georgia for a group of advisors which included military and civilian personnel. The group dwindled in size when Wetzel retired and was replaced with Brigadier General Ronald Zeltman who appeared to have personal opinions about the use of women in the military. Zeltman successfully pushed women off
the working group who he felt were radical (Stiehm 1989, 146). Moreover, he scheduled meetings where women working on the study were not invited and planned to make the findings classified perhaps in an attempt to avoid public influence of Army policies regarding women. Zeltman was approached by the members of the Defense Advisory Council on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) regarding the findings of the report as well as future Army plans for integration. One the findings were accessible, a number of researchers began to question the results, including a social scientist who was also a DACOWITS member at the time and an active-duty Air Force Officer who charged, “the Army developed its conclusions and then began looking for a rationale to support them” (as qtd in Stiehm 1989, 147). This early research into integration policy is indicative of the challenges that not only faced the Army, but the other branches of the military. In creating panels, study groups and research agendas, the military had difficulty overcoming individual bias and judgments made by leaders. The result was often misguided research and contradictory policy.

The Air Force used the various studies published in 1982 as a reason to pause recruitment initiatives aimed at meeting the goal of 90,000 female service members by 1986. The Air Force cited various challenges to female service members. These so-called challenges were related to unfounded data which suggested the rate of pregnancy increased, women struggled to adapt to military life, and even accusations of lesbianism. Even though the Air Force had the highest percentage of female service members at the time, leaders took the opportunity to change recruiting goals when the Reagan administration provided the opportunity (Stiehm 1989). This pause in active recruitment occurred even though the
Air Force had implemented a gender neutral accession model where “no floor or ceiling [existed] with respect to recruiting women” as General William Usher explained (qtd in Stiehm 1989, 61). Subsequently, the Air Force reduced its recruiting goal to 61,000 by 1986. Again, this contradictory message was the result of poor research and unwillingness on the part of leaders to adapt accommodation of women.

The message trickled down to unit commanders and supervisors. Although 90% of jobs in the Air Force were open to women, General Usher claimed women had “more than their proportional share of problems associated with a very young group inexperienced in life in general and military life in particular” (qtd in Stiehm 1989, 61). In order to compensate for this inexperience in life and perceived “problems,” male unit commanders routinely took advantage of their privilege and used policy as a way to gauge their adaptability. One female service member remembered her unit commander, a Captain and his application of the uniform policy:

You know, and my captain, every friggin morning, he would come out so you’d have to stand at attention. And I was always the first one because I am six foot two [inches tall] and every morning he would come out of his office with a ruler, like the length of my skirt was going to change overnight, and measure my skirt. Make sure it wasn’t 4 inches above my knee. (Subject #39)

Perhaps the captain meant well by enforcing the uniform guidelines for female service members in an effort to reinforce following regulations. However, male members of the Air Force were not subject to the same treatment because they did not wear skirts. Furthermore, this type of behavior from unit commanders was a reflection of higher ranking opinion of women the military as demonstrated by their unwillingness to adapt to the presence of women.
Maternity Uniform

The delay in creating clear policy on gender integration in all branches of the service lead to other oversights which created additional animosity between male and female service members. One such example was the wear of the uniform while pregnant. In the first period of analysis, 1980 to 1994, maternity uniforms were non-existent. Women who became pregnant could wear the uniform until it was no longer comfortable, and then wear appropriate civilian attire. Or, somehow modify the uniform to fit the changing female body. One of the first maternity uniforms was created for pregnant women in the Air Force. The uniform (see Figure 1) consisted of blue polyester material in the style of a smock with a white blouse underneath. This was a dress uniform for women who worked in an office or non-line MOS. As for women in jobs requiring the wear of a utility uniform, there was nothing available until the late 1980s when the fatigues and eventually the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) were modified to accommodate pregnant service members.

Image courtesy of the National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center; 1980

Figure 1: Maternity uniform.
The wear of uniform may not appear to be a challenge to gender integration or identity acquisition; however, in the context of privilege, uniforms can signal differences between men and women. In the early 1980s, male and female service members wore the same uniform, a unisex utility or dress uniform. As mentioned earlier, some women had the option of wearing a skirt. Wearing the same uniform contributed to a sense of unity among members in each branch of service as well as within unique units on at different installations. When an alternative uniform was required by local commanders, uniformity and group inclusion may have been impacted.

Gender integration policies established during the 1980s and 1990s reflected poor scope in research design and methods. The research conducted in the late 1970s determined which units female service members could be assigned by using the designation of combat or non-combat. By segregating male and female service members into different types of units, the military may have only reinforced the traditional roles more widely accepted in American culture. These policies served to privilege men and their service in the military most likely at the expense of an increasing number of female soldiers.

In this chapter I have reviewed aspects of the military organization as a precursor to my examination of gender focused or gender neutral policies and their impact on identity acquisition. In the next chapter, I will assess how elements of privilege and gender are linked in specific gender integration policies within the military.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

This chapter presents the selected research method and clarifies the appropriateness of the exploratory phenomenological approach for this project. By using personal narratives and first person accounts from male and female service members, I investigate the gender integration policies and perceived impact on those who serve. More specifically, I examine how these policies may privilege male service members above female service members, which in turn may impact how men and women identify in the military. These identities may directly influence how men and men, men and women and women and women interact with each other.

Methods and Procedures

This chapter provides an overview of literature as it relates to identity and privilege, qualitative methodology and the phenomenological approach. The military institution is unique in that there is a visible hierarchical structure represented by rank. Following rank, there are other identity cues male and female service members use to identify each other. This identification is common in the military, but may not be evident in other facets of social interaction. For this reason, it is important to study the experiences of male and
female soldiers of differing ranks, branches of service and even different specialties using first-hand narratives.

The use of phenomenological analysis is the most appropriate tool to evaluate “structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view” (“Phenomenology” 2014). The descriptive narratives used in this project help me to investigate gender integration policies and their likely impact on male and female service members. In particular, gender integration policies may suggest that female service members dampen down feminine qualities in favor of more masculine qualities. At the end of the chapter, I present my research design for this project as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the approach.

Qualitative Approach

I use a qualitative phenomenological analysis in an effort to explore identity with special attention devoted to privilege as both are influenced by gender integration policy. The study’s purpose is to understand the essence of military service for male and female service members. The only way to know what service members experienced while in the military and to see how they interpret the world is to conduct a phenomenological inquiry (Patton 2014, 116). By using phenomenology, specifically hermeneutic phenomenology, I am able to better understand the context of one’s military service which is of considerable importance to understanding the impact of gender integration policies. Every member of the military has similar experiences such as completing basic training, completing weapons training, arriving at a duty location for the first time or even participating in a military
exercise. When these lived experiences occur while gender integration policies are changing, the effect on individual service members may be different based upon one’s sex, branch of service, specialty, unit assigned and unit leadership. Each of these factors when combined with gender integration policies may relate to notions of privilege. This in turn may impact how male and female service members identify in their military environment.

Their identity may affect their ability to communicate, train and prepare for combat operations because identity impacts the social dynamics of men and women in contexts. The identity of soldiers as demonstrated in self-talk provides a rich source of information to better understand the identity acquisition process within the culture of the military. Understanding what soldiers do to present an identity in the military may be of considerable significance to the profession of arms.

Qualitative research as the selected research method, and in particular the use of hermeneutic phenomenology, is a good fit for the research problem presented in Chapter 1 because contemporary scholars and practitioners are able to assess a first-hand account of a lived experience through the language used by the interviewees. The use of phenomenology to explore an area where very little is known is an appropriate first step to gaining leverage on complex subject matter. Such exploratory research lays the groundwork for future analyses or theory building. Hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry may assist in accomplishing the goals of the project by demonstrating a link between privilege, identity and gendered integration policies in the military.

My research focuses on the ways men and women present their identities in the military in relation to gender integration policies. By using interviews for hermeneutic
phenomenological inquiry, the reader is invited to reflect upon the experiences provided (Bailey 2009; Patton 2014) and to examine the relationship between gender policies, privilege and identity in the military. Peter and Ann Ashworth (2003) used phenomenology to explore the different dimensions of individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease. Ashworth and Ashworth (2003; 2006) suggest that phenomenological analysis enables the researcher to evaluate what they view as fractions (see also Bailey 2009, 475). These fractions include self-identity, a sense of embodiment, relations to others, mood and discourse as well as others. By providing the reader a way to critically evaluate an argument supported by examples and first-person accounts, phenomenological research provides a well-rounded view of the context. Ashworth and Ashworth (2003; 2009) successfully create a life world wherein the reader can experience a particular event in the life of an Alzheimer’s patient that would not otherwise be available to researchers. The reader may challenge the findings or find additional support based on the information taken from a first-person narrative where other sources may omit substantive details.

In the field of Political Science, phenomenology has been used in evaluating global politics (Odysseos 2002), the assessment of organizations (White 1990), research of nations like Lithuania (Sverdiola and Kacerauskas 2009) and violence (Staudigl 2013) most often related to uprisings or human rights violations. Related to this work is research by Parco, Levy and Spears (2015) who conducted a phenomenological study of transgendered individuals in the military. Scholarly research using phenomenology provides a foundation for scholars to build and test theories for the causes of successful relations between nations, institutions or even leaders of nations during times of conflict or revolt. Without a first-
hand account of the events surrounding an event or period in history, researchers may not have a complete picture of the independent variables affecting the final outcome. Moreover, the details gleaned from first person narratives may provide additional insight into factors or intervening variables that may not have been apparent by using other research approaches.

Identity in the Military

The acquisition of an identity after entering the military is not directly addressed in the current scholarly literature; however, general concepts of identity and privilege are addressed separately. The phenomena of soldier’s thoughts and recollection of events or contexts in interpersonal communication is quite complex as the outcomes may be related to cultural background or features other than identity. This study highlights the details of how individual soldiers view themselves with particular attention to a period or event in their military careers. These recollections help place one’s identification within the context of service inasmuch as specific policies were in place that may have changed during a later period of service. Additionally, the experiences taken from the interviews provide perceptions of gender privilege with special attention to how gender integration policy influences or reinforces a preferred identity within the military.

Although it may not be possible to provide a single definition of identity (Lawler 2008, 3), it is likely to explain the concept and how it may affect those serving in the military. Identity is fluid and hinges on commonalities and differences. For example, if one identifies as female, one is identifying with a common group in society. If one identifies as
male, this not only signals a commonality with other males, but also a difference from females in society. This paradoxical notion is highlighted even further when one chooses to serve in the military.

Wherein military service is viewed as a traditionally male role in society, the military itself is also viewed as a masculine institution. Masculinity and femininity are hypothetical constructs (Kahn 2009) which suggests one’s sex matches one’s gender identity. Men are expected to demonstrate masculinity and in contrast females are expected to present feminine qualities. Stereotypes and the conflation of sex and gender is often found in societal beliefs and may be brought into the military when a member joins. Therefore, the military poses a distinctive challenge to gender identity in that male service members are expected to demonstrate masculinity while female service members may struggle with acquiring an identity that enables them to fully participate without drawing attention to perceived differences from male service members. Female service members risk being viewed as social deviants when they excel as soldiers, a traditionally masculine role. Moreover, male service members also risk being viewed as deviants when they excel in less masculine and more feminine roles in the military like nursing or administrative duties.

The military is a relatively closed institution which means that after one joins, there is little outside influence into the professional and social interaction between service members. Military policy dictates that members wear a uniform and conduct themselves in a manner commensurate with being members of the profession of arms. This uniform identity suggests that once you become a member of the military, you will always have this
identity, even after you separate from the military. Additionally, since the military is relatively isolated from civilian influence, the cues men and women receive directing appropriate behavior and presentation of identity may have roots in their unit, their unit’s leadership, their specialty and perhaps even their duty location. This complex environment provides researchers a clear view into the effects of gender integration policy upon the men and women who serve in the military.

Integration and Privilege

I turn now to a discussion of privilege derived from military policy relating to gender integration. As previously discussed, male and female service members enter the military with existing stereotypes related to gender through characterizations of masculinity and femininity. These stereotypes and other ways of viewing gender as well as personal identity may be altered or reinforced as one spends more time in the military. Official policy, individual performance and unit leadership at the first duty assignment serve as the main sources of influence, laying the foundation for one’s perception of privilege in the military. Additionally, one often may begin to adopt the social values and norms of behavior when integrated with a new group (Geis 1993, 12) consequently forming a new identity or updating a previously held identity. For the enlisted personnel, the period of acquisition may be limited as basic training is much shorter, 16 to 20 weeks, compared to officer training which may occur over the course of four years for service academy or ROTC graduates. Immediately, upon entering the military, all members learn that officers
are privileged due to their rank. On a more subtle level, being male or presenting masculine qualities is also privileged.

**Appearance**

Once in the military, men and women are instructed on the proper wear of the uniform and acceptable grooming standards. For men, this is simple—hair cut short, clean shaven and a clean pressed shirt and pants for dress uniform. For women, it is not so simple. Women are instructed to keep their hair short, yet not unfeminine (Enloe 1983, 119). While recruiting posters advertise the ability to wear lipstick on the frontlines, the use of unnatural-looking cosmetics, like red lipstick, is frowned upon (Army Regulation 670-1). Women also have a range of uniform options that include a skirt with shoes of modest heel height (1 to 1.5 inches) or pants. The utility uniforms for all branches of service have a unisex, non-gendered style with pants and an overshirt. Within the uniform policy, though the emphasis is on “sameness,” there is little explicit highlighting that men may be privileged over women except the contradictory message offered to women in terms of hair and other aspects of appearance. Military leadership sought to retain the feminine appearance of women while integrating them into the ranks by providing a skirt and heel option. Such policies signal gender distinctiveness and perhaps, implicitly, that men are privileged.

In addition to learning dress and appearance policy, new service members are instructed in acceptable behavior and conduct. Again, officers are provided more leniencies

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6 All branches of the military have similar guidelines in their official policies.
in some instances since they may have the option to live off-post in private quarters whereas enlisted personnel are often assigned to dormitories for the first few years of their enlistment unless they are married. Members of the Navy have a unique situation in that their first duty assignment may be aboard a ship for six months where living quarters are even more closely confined than a dormitory at a military installation. These living arrangements provide the context for social interaction between enlisted service members and may contribute to the acquisition of one’s identity in the military.

Informal Norms

As newly enlisted members adopt and internalize norms attributed to military service, they may be vulnerable to gender-coded expectations derived from official and unofficial policy. When these social norms are combined with previously held schemas of proper gender behavior, any deviation may be grounds for harassment. In the early years of the first period of analysis, 1980 to 1994, the unofficial expectation was that female service members should project femininity through participating in stereotypical off-duty activities such as volunteering or seeking male companionship in their off-duty time. As Judith Stiehm notes “young men (and women) are away from home for the first time and find themselves immersed in a culture where people play the game of courtship according to rules very different than those following in their high school or home town” (1989, 205). Male service members may have sought the companionship of the women they worked with, which may have blurred the lines or professional and personal relationships. During the 1990s, the perception of preferred feminine behavior began to change. Yet, female
service members were still expected to retain their femininity during duty hours as well as during their off-duty time. Policy and social customs reinforced the belief that activities performed by women were to support or meet the needs of men; in the military, this may have suggested for example that the “female identity [was] reduced to sexual object” (Moon 1999, 213).

The social expectations of female service members are not limited to the enlisted ranks. During the 1980s, “female attendees at Officers Basic Military Training were immediately and repeatedly informed by male officers that we were expected to attend daily happy hours at the officers club as part of our orientation to military life” (Johnson 1999, 33). During these events, women were expected to socialize with men, but often, female service members would form their own groups for support as well as friendship. The conduct of female officers on and off-duty affects the acquisition of identity. In order to be viewed as an equal, it was necessary to socialize with fellow officers, both male and female. Too much socializing with one group over the other however, could project an unwanted identity cue of either promiscuity or lesbianism. Either characterization could only be prevented when the female officer avoided any off-duty socialization which in turn could lead to being ostracized from the unit. Once ostracized, a female officer’s professional identity and career progression were restricted.

Off-Duty Activities

Off-duty time was no less difficult to navigate for female enlisted service members. Living accommodations and dining facilities were collocated to provide accessibility,
which ensured that even in off-duty hours, women are subject to pressure to behave in a certain way. In the early years of integration, 1980 to 1994, there were few if any on-base social activities for female service members. The Air Force still had a policy in 1980 that female service members could not play contact sports (Stiehm 1989, 124). Since the military actively recruited in *Sports Illustrated* and military installations promoted intramural sports for male service members (Brown 2012, 172), opportunities for social interaction and professional relationships may have discriminated against female service members.

In the second period of analysis, 1995 to 2013, sports activities were encouraged for all service members, but even so, only 24% of women chose to participate in the “male” sports or play on predominantly male teams (Herbert 1998). In which case, if female service members did not meet socially accepted behaviors for the sport, they were often subjected to unwanted sexual advances, comments and harassment (Stiehm 1989, 205). In the event female service members avoided interaction with male counterparts and formed female-only teams, they may have been viewed with suspicion. The military implicitly encouraged these behaviors by not providing clear directives on professional conduct or by holding the harassers accountable for their unprofessional behavior, in or out of uniform. Furthermore, the military may have expected male service members to project a masculine identity by participating in off-duty activities such as male-only athletic events. Female service members had little encouragement and opportunity for female-only activities which by contrast may have privileged male service members who enjoyed male-only events.
The differences between male and female service members is often enhanced by social activities that outside of the military would be viewed as quite normal for young adults. In particular, underage drinking is a common rite of passage for most American young adults. In the military, underage drinking is strictly prohibited; yet, when unofficial policy encourages men and women to attend events at social clubs on base, there are often opportunities for service members who have reached the legal drinking age to purchase and provide alcohol for those who are underage. In many cases, these situations are overlooked by supervisors and commanders (Dao 2013; Graham 2013) unless something bad happens to shed light on the transgression as what occurred at the Tailhook Convention in Las Vegas. In cases where unwelcome publicity highlights inappropriate or illegal behavior by military members, public policy or directives often follow in an attempt to prevent unacceptable behavior(s).

Military Policy and Interpretation

Policy in the military follows the command hierarchy which refers to a line of authority followed by all military personnel. At the top of this command structure is the President, Secretary of Defense and leaders or highest ranking appointees from each branch of the military. This military “brass” provides advice on military action, frequently present data on the status of the force and institute policy for accomplishing the mission. Policy from the Secretary of the Defense may be interpreted and applied differently in each branch.

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In 1991, the Navy’s Tailhook Association met in Las Vegas for its 35th Annual Convention. During the event, 83 women and 7 men reported being sexually assaulted or harassed. This off-duty, military organization was thrust into a media spotlight by the unprofessional conduct of military officers where underage drinking was encouraged as well as discriminatory behavior.
of the military which means that as policy is disseminated down the chain of command, there is much opportunity for interpretation. Commanders at the lowest levels in all branches of the military supervise between 100 and 300 personnel; supervisors of troops may be enlisted personnel, but are not regarded as “commanders.” Commanders are appointed and legally bound to uphold the law as defined by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Policy is generally an extension of the UCMJ and may even modify outdated laws to be more current for the contemporary military. Commanders at the lowest level are responsible for interpreting and implementing policy received from higher ranking officials unless they are considered unlawful. Individuals within a unit learn of official policy and unofficial policy from the commanders and enlisted supervision within their chain of command.

Leadership within a unit sets the tone for acceptable and unacceptable behavior from service members. When a commanding officer issues a policy through a speech open to both military and civilian personnel, the language used and the style may be different than direct orders given to troops in his or her command. The language of a policy as well as the way in which the message is delivered lays the foundation for a response from anyone who receives the information, not just the intended audience. A commander may have the intent to bring attention to an increase in harassment and assault with a goal of preventing it. In context though, the commander may bring unwanted attention to one group over another thus suggesting one group may be more responsible than the other for

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Unlawful orders are those which commanders give which may break the laws of the UCMJ or be considered unlawful in civilian courts. Some of the most controversial and abhorrent abuses of command authority include the My Lai incident during Vietnam and the abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.
prevention. The vagueness or subtle response by commanders may also suggest that leaders are not doing enough to address a particular problem. Commander behavior may affect public response and in turn this may affect policy. For example, a commander’s actions could suggest to family members that a brother or sister who just signed up for military service is at risk for verbal harassment or worse, a physical assault. “And we’ve seen early evidence that multiple sustained efforts and visible leadership have a significant impact on reducing sexual assaults, especially those of your shipmates who are at risk, young and new sailors” (Jill Loftus, Dept of the Navy Sexual Assault Prevention Coordinator during a Townhall Meeting April 2012). From the quote above, it is not clear what Ms. Loftus means by “at risk.” The implication may be that a new member of the service is at risk of being assaulted; however, if a similar message were delivered through a different method, the audience may infer a different meaning. It is important to assess how policy is delivered from commanders or other leaders in an effort to investigate how the message is understood by members of the military.

Another example is a live town hall meeting delivered globally through closed-circuit television featuring Vice Admiral Ferguson. In his speech, Ferguson used additional word “cues” and language to suggest that some members of the military family may be at risk for “destructive decisions” (Townhall April 2012). Again, it is unclear what these destructive decisions may have been, but the method of delivery combined with the context of the speech provides clues to how the recipient may interpret the message. Consequently, words used in speeches, official policy or casual interaction will have different meanings for each individual, military or civilian, who receive them. Furthermore, the message may
not be interpreted as the speaker intended due to vagueness or contradictory language. Official communication or directives from military brass is often filtered through existing expectations of gender, privilege, social or cultural stereotypes. Gender integration policy may be affected by the context of the commander receiving and interpreting the message on behalf of his unit and the troops assigned.

The language used and the method of delivery of gender integration policy may influence perceptions of privilege among the ranks. In this 2013 memorandum, the Secretary of the Navy outlined integration plans for female Marines into careers they were previously restricted from entering. The following describes part of the Secretary’s plans of transitioning to an integrated force: “Provide integration education at newly opened MOS schools to prepare for the integration of female Marine trainees as well as to members of the newly opened units where female Marines will be assigned” (Secretary Ray Mabus, May 2013). On the surface, this appears as a common-sense approach to educating previously assigned instructors as new classes will include female Marines. Yet, the implication that the school is all-male cues the perception of a privileged group in existence a priori to integrated training. The cue is two-fold. First, what are currently assigned service members being educated about? The military is often heralded as gender neutral and a pioneer in equality, yet this paragraph from the Secretary of the Navy suggests otherwise. The male instructors at these MOS schools apparently require education about female Marines which highlights a difference between male and female personnel.

Second, by perhaps inadvertently privileging men at various MOS schools which began to accept female trainees, the Secretary of the Navy may have created a context for
conflict between male and female service trainees. While the majority of mid-level supervisors in the military are familiar with gender equality and non-discrimination policies, older and more senior leaders may be not. Subsequently, the senior non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers assigned to the newly integrated MOS schools may be less supportive of education initiatives and may be reluctant to view female trainees as capable, competent and willing to meet the school MOS objectives. This command culture may affect the trainees in such a way to privilege. Additionally, male service members with more time in service and seniority are privileged in comparison to newly assigned female members. Such conditions may affect the acquisition of identity.

Given that the Secretary of the Navy did not elaborate upon the content of training to the Secretary of the Defense in his brief memo, it is unfair to assess what may or may not be included. This was not the first time training of integrated units had questionable policy content. A male Marine who served from 1998 to 2006 recalled: “The extent of the info we got regarding dealing with the opposite sex was don’t get married until you’re an E4 because you’re gonna get divorced.” This highlighted the privilege of male members in as much as they should limit their contact with women, military or not, since they may cause personal struggles such as divorce. Provided these members remained in the Marines and became supervisors, their background may influence their identity and predisposition to privilege male service members. Older male service members who have been in these male-only units for several years and have been surrounded by supervisors and commanders who basically professed “women are trouble” struggle to relate and identify with newly assigned personnel. This resonates with a culture of conferred dominance (McIntosh 2010) which
may directly affect the identity acquisition process of female service members who are not only new to the military, but as a group, new to the unit or MOS school that is led by men potentially hostile to their presence.

In this project, I argue the gender integration policies between 1980 and 2013 directly affect the identity of the members of the military. Moreover, male service members are privileged by these policies in that they are the preferred member of the military over female service members. By using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach in examining gender integration policies in conjunction with the personal experiences of service members, I hope to shed light on context, language and experiences related to identity in the military.

Research Design

The hermeneutic phenomenological approach provides a time sensitive, first-hand account of the thoughts and experiences of a soldier, sailor, airman or Marine. The first-person experience is overlooked in the current research on gender integration. Instead, the research evaluates different recruiting methods focused on potential male and female members (Brown 2012) while other research evaluates how all-volunteer militaries adjust their gender integration policies to meet recruiting goals (Segal 1995; Obradovic 2014). The approach I have chosen is the best tool to use in understanding the complex situations men and women face in the military. Without hypothesis testing or evaluation of causal mechanisms, the lived experience of the subject is evaluated at face value. By using this method, the blurred lines and nuance of gender integration policy coupled with privilege
emerge with little or no *a priori* expectations. Furthermore, the results may not be
generalizable, but the exploratory analysis completed in this project lays the foundation for
more in-depth scholarly work.

Phenomenology in this project is appropriate because it captures “the richness,
poignancy, resonance and ambiguity of lived experience” (Finlay 2009, 474). This
accommodation is important because it offers the researcher a front-row seat to the
subject’s understanding and perception of a specific experience. By using descriptive
phenomenology pioneered by Giorgi (1985) and later Wertz (2005), this research aims to
study the essence of privilege as it appears in the dialogue between interviewer and subject.
Giorgi’s method (1997) includes three components, though I only utilize the first two in this
project. The first component includes the bracketing or phenomenological reduction to
highlight the phenomena of interest. The phenomena of interest is military service and I
bracket this with the gender integration policies in effect during an individual’s time in
service. Next, a description of experiences is developed using hermeneutic phenomenology.
Hermeneutic phenomenology is the evaluation of language and structure of communication
(Schwandt 2001, 191-194; Patton 2014, 117). By completing a hermeneutic
phenomenologic inquiry, I evaluate what the subject said in relation to the gender
integration policy. Then, I evaluate the words used in describing this experience reflect the
member’s identity.

In order to appropriately bracket gender integration policies, I began researching the
policies related to gender integration beginning with the year 1980. As I conducted my
archival research, the policies began to reflect three main themes. First, gender integration
policies were focused on where female service members could work and the units they could be assigned to. Next, a trend emerged related to physical capabilities of female service members and assumptions about perceived inabilities. Finally, the last category highlights policy related to military culture and appearance related to the integration of female service members. These three categories resulted in 28 policies to be used during the examination of personal narratives.

In the next step, I reviewed all of the interviews and coded the words used as they related to gender, privilege and policy. Specifically, I highlighted terms like: girl, boy, male, female, man, woman, feminine and masculine. A second sub-set of terms was developed related to feminine and masculine characteristics (cite); these include words like: aggressive, empathetic, weak, strong, quiet, loud, tough, and pretty. I then apply a linguistic approach pioneered by Ruth Wajnryb (2008). In this step, I evaluate the context of gender integration policy in conjunction with the experiences described by the subjects interviewed. My goal is to link the words, phrases and instructions presented in the policy to words, language and behavior described in the interviews. It is imperative to sort through these details since the language used and the method of delivery, e.g. official or unofficial policy, may have unintended consequences for the identity acquisition process. More specifically, I evaluate if the language and words used correlated to a specific policy.

In all of my interviews, the description of one’s military service directly related to at least one, if not more than one, gender integration policy in effect at the time of service. Using hermeneutic phenomenology and my personal background knowledge of the military, I explain how the policy may have affected the male or female service member as
well as how the policy reinforced male privilege. I have provided direct quotes from the interviews as they relate to the gender integration policies in Chapters 5 and 6 to demonstrate how gender privilege was reinforced. In the context of military service, the data collected suggests privileging did have an impact on the identities of male and female service members.

Time Periods of Examination

I turn now to the analysis of gender integration policy beginning with the first period of analysis, 1980 to 1994. This research begins with the year 1980 for two reasons. The first women to graduate from the military service academies occurred in 1980. Prior to this, the number of women in officer ranks were minimal and even more significant were the assignment system not only privileged male service members, but also privileged those who graduated from the military academies. President Ford’s authorization for women to attend these academies with Public Law 94-106 provided equal opportunities to female officers who previously, were not as privileged as their male counterparts.

The second reason for using 1980 as a starting point for this research is related to conscription. The year 1980 marks the beginning of the first decade following the conflict in Vietnam without a draft or mandatory conscription. Although the AVF began in 1973, between 1975 and 1980 the requirement to register for Selective Service was halted and then re-instated. Upon renewing the mandatory Selective Service Registration for men, former President Carter suggested women be included in the draft. Congress debated the issue which resulted in a Supreme Court case, Rostker v. Goldberg. The Supreme Court
upheld the male-only registration requirements (Case No. 80-251). Subsequently, female service members were recruited to fill positions left unfilled by the decrease in male service members.

This background brings attention to the context of gender integration. While women served in the military as far back as the Revolutionary War, official policy for their integration into male-only units did not begin until 1980. This highlights the third reason 1980 is an effective starting point for my research. As the cultural shifts became more visible in American society, the military was forced to adapt. When the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) passed both the Senate and the House of Representatives in 1972 (Francis 2014), the push for equal opportunity in the military increased. The ERA was poised to become the 27th Amendment to the Constitution which would have protected the rights of men and women to be treated as equal in the eyes of the government. Although there was momentum for equal rights for men and women, these efforts stalled with former President Reagan’s election in 1980. Against this backdrop, we see the number of women in the military increase in an effort to fill positions once held by men and then stall. The number of women who joined the military in the early 1980s challenged traditional gender roles associated with being female at the time and in turn, forced military leaders to update their recruiting and assignment process.

**Gender Integration Policy Overview**

In this project I present an overview of the gender integration policies affecting individual service members by highlighting differences between the two periods of
investigation. I argue that gendered policies contribute to one’s identity in the military which may affect interaction between male and female service members. In the first period of analysis, 1980 to 1994, gender integration policy relied upon research and evaluation which was often biased or lead to misinterpretation by commanders. Beginning in the 1980s, integration policy addressed two areas: the number of women allowed to serve and the jobs they were allowed to fill. This focus on quantity not necessarily quality resulted in quotas and caps based on the branch of service, the unit or the MOS. The unsubstantiated perception that one-third of all American women wanted to join the military may have encouraged biased perceptions of women in the military (Office of the Secretary of Defense 1981, 26). Gender integration policy addressed the type of jobs women could perform based on previously held stereotypes or beliefs not necessarily on accurate data or real-world criteria. Limited assignments curtailed the career paths and the length of service for many female service members. Additionally, the restrictions and continual adaptation of policy in the second period of analysis, 1994 to 2013, produced a paradoxical environment not only for female service members navigating military culture, but also male service members.

**Positionality**

In conducting this type of research, it is important to be mindful that one’s positionality may bias one’s epistemology. In *The Feminist Classroom*, Maher and Tetreault explain “the idea of positionality, in which people are defined not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be
analyzed and changed” (2001, 164; Takacs 2002, 169). My identity in this project is as an investigator who happens to have been a former officer in the Air Force. Although this appears to be a fixed identity now, my veteran status provides a rich network of relationships that other researchers do not possess. This position affords me insight into the informal and formal processes of policy implementation in the military. Moreover, this knowledge may influence how I view responses to policy in the military which may affect the final phenomenological analysis.

In reviewing the interview transcriptions and descriptions of lived experiences from members of the military, I found myself reflecting on my time in the Air Force. As a researcher, it was much easier to see the privileging of male service members over female service members than it was when I was serving. The clarity with which I come to this realization highlights how nuanced and imbedded these policies are in the framework of the military. While I served in the military, I felt a part of every unit I served in and I felt as a contributed much like my male counterparts. I was an award winner and frequently deployed in support of combat operations. I had no reason to suspect I was treated any differently than my male counterparts. Unfortunately, my experience is rare and I know that many female service members did not have the same positive experience that I did. This is why I was drawn to this research. I wondered what made my experience in the military different than the experiences of other women and even some men.

As I worked on this dissertation, I often marveled at the resilience and naïveté that many female service members projected. Many were faced with blatant discrimination for being female, yet, they continued to serve their country with honor and distinction. Others
appeared oblivious to the privileging of male soldiers above female soldiers because they had found a professional niche which afforded them the ability to also serve their country. I was surprised by a few male service members who recognized their privilege above female service members, but due to the context of their service felt unable to try and correct the bias. Finally, the male service members who did step out of their privileged status and recognize that female soldiers are not just “females,” but soldiers or sisters-in-arms, gave me hope that gender integration is a worthwhile endeavor. These men highlighted the accomplishment of female service members, actively sought accommodation medals or other awards for them and championed their promotions. Without this professional fortitude, many service members, male and female, would have ended their military careers early. It is the valid recognition of top performers, regardless of their sex, that guarantees a formidable military.

I believe that my status as a military veteran was an advantage to working with these individuals and to understanding their experiences. I was able to “talk the talk” and understand military colloquialism that many members used in their personal narratives. I found myself agreeing with personal descriptions of events when I had experienced the same thing. In being a veteran, there is a common bond, an identity that binds all military members, old or young. Despite this personal attachment to the subject matter, I was acutely aware of my position as a researcher. On many occasions, the interviews affected me very deeply and I had to take a few days to adequately assess the event that had transpired. It is for this reason that I continued to focus on the examination of the impact gender integration policy had on identity.
Data Collection

I used in-depth interview data collected by myself and my advisor, Rebecca J. Hannagan in conjunction with the archival data collected on gender integration policies between 1980 and 2013. I personally collected the gender integration policies over the period of one year from March 2014 to March 2015.

Archival Collection of Gender Integration Policies

The gender integration policies used in this research were collected using various sources. My efforts focused directly on policies where male and female service members were mentioned in relation to integrating units, military specialties or participation in professional functions like promotion ceremonies or re-enlistment ceremonies. Although I found numerous policies related to the integration of women in the military, not every policy was focused on the process or procedure for integration. I narrowed my search by using the terms: gender, integration, neutral, assignment, physical, male, female, men and women.

I started with the outdated Department of Defense personnel guidance or “directives” that had been referenced in previous research on the topic. Judith Stiehm (1989) as well as Laura Miller (1997) both conducted research into the integration of women into the military. I cross-referenced policies referenced to identify specific gender integration policies by conducting internet searches. Once I located a policy, I verified it by locating official directives implementing the policy. Each branch of service maintains a
repository for outdated or superseded policies; however, some of these databases are incomplete which makes conducting archival research difficult. The Library of Congress was instrumental in filling in the gaps for missing policies as well as maintaining transcripts of official Congressional testimony from military leaders.

When I documented a policy that mentioned one or more of the search terms described, the selection process became a snowball method of sorts. I found that many policies were made in response to a previous policy or as a change to existing policy. Once I could identify the policy being changed, it was easier to identify the original policy and its relation to gender integration. After I had collected over 50 policies related to gender integration, I looked for patterns to narrow the lens of my research.

In narrowing my focus, I identified three themes in the gender integration policy between 1980 and 2013. First, there was a clear distinction regarding assignment policies for male and female service members. Male service members were assigned to combat specialties, and then support specialties after the first category had been filled. Female service members, however, did not have a clear assignment policy. Instead, the policy directed where females should be assigned because of their gender rather than where they could be assigned based on their capabilities. This closely relates to the next theme I discovered related to the physical capabilities of male and female service members. Gender integration policies rarely highlighted male physical capabilities; yet, female physical capabilities were viewed as limitations to their service. Finally, the notion of military culture and appearance includes the final theme of gender integration policies used in this research. This is a broad category, but addresses many nuances in gender integration policy
that serve to encourage female service members to maintain their femininity which may reinforce the privileging of male service members. As femininity is promoted and demonstrated by female service members, masculinity is more clearly defined as male which in turn, privileges male service members in the dominant masculine environment of the military.

**Interview Process**

I used a convenience sample of 46 male and female veterans recruited between July 2012 and June 2013 for this study, see tables 3.1 and 3.2 at the end of the chapter. Participants were contacted either by the PI or Co-PI or participants responded to a call for participants that was posted on the PI’s Facebook page. Fliers inviting participants were posted at the Student Veteran’s Affairs Office, Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault, and Department of Political Science at Northern Illinois University and Women’s Resource Center, Student Veteran’s Affairs Office, and Hatfield School of Government, Portland State University. A call for participants was also sent out by the following organizations: Protectourdefenders.org, stopmilitaryrape.org, or the Service Women’s Action Network.

**1980 to 1994**

In the first period of analysis, there are 12 veterans who served between 1980 and 1994; 10 female and 2 male service members. The participants range in age from 44 to 58, with a mean age of 51. Of the 12 participants in the first period of analysis, most were
either White (66%), Multi-racial (16%), African American (8%) or Latino/a (8%). Levels of education ranged from GED (0%), high school diploma (33%), Associates degree (8%), BA (25%), or Master’s degree (33%). Participants ranged in self-identified income levels from upper income (8%), middle income (50%), to lower income (42%). The majority of the sample in the first period of analysis was women (76%). In terms of marital status six were married (50%), four were divorced (33%), one was a widow (8%) and one was single (1%). Five participants had one child (42%), three had two children (25%), three participants had three children (25%) and one did not have any children (8%) (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year Join</th>
<th>Years Served</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Marines</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1985</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Navy</td>
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<td>1981</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1979</td>
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</table>
All branches of the military are represented, with five having served in the Air Force, four in the Navy, two in the Army and one in the Marines. Ranks included Specialists to Lieutenant Colonels. Participants had served from 1977\(^9\) to 1994, and spans of service from less than a year to 20 years.

**1995 to 2013**

In the second sample set, the participants ranged in age from 20 to 41, with a mean age of 30.5 years. There were 18 females and 16 males in this period of analysis. Of the 34 participants, most were either White (76%), Multi-racial (8%), African American (5%) or Latino/a (8%) or Pacific Islander (3%). Levels of education ranged from 12 with high school diplomas (35%), two Associates degree (5%), 12 participants with a BA (35%), or eight Master’s degree (25%). Participants ranged in self-identified income levels from upper income (0), middle income (82%), to lower income (18%). The majority of the sample in the second period of analysis was women (53%). In terms of marital status 10 were married (29%), five were divorced (15%), and 19 was single (56%). The majority of participants did not have children (74%), five had one child (15%), three had two children (8%) and one had three children (3%).

The participants of the first sample also represented all branches of the military, with 11 having served in the Air Force, seven in the Navy, 11 in the Army and five in the

\(^{9}\) Served past 1980, during the first period of analysis.
Marines. Ranks included Specialists to Lieutenant Colonels. Participants had served from 1995 to 2013, and spans of service from less than a year to 20 years (see Table 2).

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Year Join</th>
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<td>49</td>
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<td>2001</td>
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</table>
**Interview Structure**

Participants took part in a structured interview. The interview was made up of three parts: (1) demographic questions; (2) questions about unit effectiveness, cohesion, bonding, and relationships with leaders; and (3) questions pertaining to consensual and non-consensual interactions, and the scope of the problem of sexual assault in the military. Although sexual assault in the military is not the main focus of this research project, questions were asked as they relate to the larger picture of gender integration in the military. The interview lasted from 30 minutes to 2 ½ hours.

**Procedure**

All participants were given an Informed Consent document, told about the nature of the questions they would be asked, that the interview would be tape recorded for transcription purposes, and the scope of the research project. Once consent was given participants were interviewed and the interview was recorded for transcription purposes.

I did not complete the majority of the interviews which gives additional validity to this project. Due to my experience as a female in the military, answers to the questions may have been biased in a sense that members may not have been honest with answers due to the halo effect. Edward Thorndike first coined the term “halo” when he characterized a person’s response to questions in correlation to how the individual viewed the interviewer’s perception of him or her. The interviewee will respond in such a way to promote the interviewer “thinking of the person in general as a rather good or rather inferior and to color the judgment of the separate qualities by this general feeling” (Thorndike 1920, 25). Since I
did not complete the interviews directly, there is no halo effect in the responses related to my experience as a member of the military.

At the end of each interview the participants were asked if they had any further questions about the research and invited to contact the PI at any time if they had any other concerns or thoughts they would like to share. The Institutional Review Board at Northern Illinois University approved this study and all participants were treated in accordance with institutional ethics guidelines.

Transcription

The interview data were collected between July 2012 and July 2013, but the transcription process took much longer. Besides myself, there were additional transcribers, but due to misunderstanding of military terms, some of the transcriptions had to be re-accomplished to ensure accuracy. The identity of the participants and as well as their voice-recorded interviews was protected to guarantee anonymity in accordance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.
This chapter presents an overview of the gender integration policies between 1980 and 1994. It is outside of the scope of this research to include every policy with special attention to gender integration in the military. As such, I have selected policies that reflect the themes identified in the previous chapter: duty assignment, physical requirements and military culture and appearance. These three categories represent themes of policy where male service members are often privileged above female service members. In turn, this privileging may impact how male and female service members identify in the military.

As previously discussed, the concept of privilege may come in various forms. The privilege of rank authorizes one group, officers, to control and manage another group, the enlisted personnel. Privilege of rank gives those in authority the power to lead and command troops. This level of privilege may be desirable in the military, however with inconsistent or contradictory interpretation of gender integration policy some individuals assume a license to discriminate or treat others unfairly. Male service members are further privileged, regardless of rank, simply due to their gender and the traditional role men have filled in fighting wars. Policies may influence the identity of service members both positively and negatively depending on the context. The analysis of self-talk from both
male and female service members provides direct insight into perceptions of privilege within the military as it relates to gender integration policy.

Duty Assignment

Prior to 1980, the number of women serving in officer ranks peaked at 3.4% during the 1960s then tapered off until the late 1970s and early 1980s (Department of Defense 2010; Rutgers 2010). Following the admittance of women to service academies, the number of female officers rose dramatically to 7.7% by the mid-1980s and the number of female enlisted service members increased from 1.1% to 8.3% during the same period (Department of Defense 2010; Rutgers 2010). The sharp increase in female service members challenged the existing assignment process for various reasons due to their physical capability and concerns about their proximity to direct combat. Officially, units with combat missions were off-limits to female service members.

Numerous female service members served in various military specialties prior to 1980, including specialties in close proximity to the front lines of combat. When the recruitment and retention of female service members increased to maintain a stable force following the introduction of AVF, greater attention was placed on women being placed in the direct line of fire. Integration policy focused on allowing female service members to serve in capacities in which they currently served as well as encouraged more women to enlist to stabilize the force. The first visible policy related to the assignment process and gender came when Congress passed the Defense Officer Manpower Personnel Management Act (DOPMA). This act abolished any requirement for female officers to be appointed
separately from male officers. DOPMA integrated the promotion system which enabled female officers to compete against their male counterparts for the same positions and rank (Becraft 2010). This act was important for two reasons. First, male and female service members were provided visible evidence that female officers were being treated equal to their male colleagues, even in the higher ranks such as Flag and General officers. Second, DOPMA enabled future investigations if a qualified female officer was “passed over” for promotion allegedly due to her sex. DOPMA provided female officers a way to challenge the “good ‘ol boy” network if their credentials, despite being equal to or better than a male officer’s, were overlooked in a promotion cycle. The DOD was forced to comply with this Congressional legislation and provide all service members with reassurance that integration was occurring at all levels of the chain of command.

Prior to DOPMA, only two women reached the general rank through the segregated promotion system. Elizabeth P. Hoisington and Anna Mae Hays\textsuperscript{10} attained the rank of Brigadier General in 1970. Their tenure at this rank was limited and resulted in assignments as commanders over female-only units. DOPMA marked a turning point where future female generals would command gender integrated units and serve alongside male colleagues with similar qualifications. With DOPMA, female generals also became eligible for special duty assignments and appointments previously off-limits. The integration of the promotion system allowed the highest leadership positions to be filled by women, yet their assignment to these ranks remained minimal even into the second period of analysis.

\textsuperscript{10} Hoisington led the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) until 1971 and Mays led the Army Nurse Corps until 1971.
Between 1980 and 1982, each branch of the military sought to fully integrate women while considering their physical proximity to direct combat, physical strength and sex-specific issues such as pregnancy and overseas accommodations. Women who were serving at the beginning of 1980 remained in their positions with little change or adaptation. As the number of women increased, attention to combat specialties and women assigned to these positions also increased. The Army projected an increase to 75,000 women by 1983, while the DOD projected 100,000 women (Stiehm 1989, 146). To meet these goals, the Army monitored the process of assigning women to available specialties. Instead of opening “close-combat” positions to women, Army leadership suggested lowering admission standards and closing some MOSs to men (Stiehm 1989, 143). In other words, the Army placed women in roles that would be viewed as traditional for their gender and prevented men from filling these positions. This policy was criticized by DACOWITS as well as Air Force leadership as having “creat[ed] morale problems among female troops” (Washington Post 1982 [Stiehm 1989, 147]). This segregation of male and female service members into combat and non-combat positions signaled male privilege in the assignment process.

A few years later, the Air Force instituted their own policy on the assignment and distribution of female service members using aptitude tests. The Air Force utilized scores from the ASVAB and AFQT assessments to determine how men and women should be assigned to their positions. These scores provided Air Force leaders with statistical support for funneling women to jobs which Air Force brass felt they were qualified to fill. Air Force leadership assessed the level of qualification by applying a formula derived from testing
recruits in basic training. “According to Air Force planners, male recruits [were] interested in 100% of Air Force jobs and only 78% of female recruits showed the same interest” (Stiehm 1989, 165). The Air Force then took the number of interested women and decreased the available positions in the entire Air Force by 22%. Next, the Air Force took the remaining recruits and reviewed their ASVAB and AFQT scores to assign both men and women to positions based on their qualifications. In this round of the assignment process, the number of female recruits decreased by one-third (Stiehm 1989, 165). Judith Stiehm illustrates this point:

Imagine there are 100 positions available to both men and women. The Air Force dropped the number of positions available to women down to 78, then decreased these positions again to 52. When a new female recruit selected desired duty assignments, she would only have 52 to select from whereas a male recruit may have all 100 based on the fill rate.

In using a perceived level of interest in available career fields combined with aptitude test scores, the Air Force was able to systematically control and distributes female service members as the leadership desired. Similar to the Army, the positions made available to women in the Air Force were in career fields that were not likely to be in close proximity to combat. These MOSs were also viewed as traditional female roles such as nursing, administrative or clerical positions.

Despite the majority of female service members in the Army and Air Force being funneled into non-combat or non-line positions, a few women did receive assignments to non-traditional specialties. These women were assigned to aircraft maintenance, logistics or aviation positions due to the shortfall of available men and because their ASVAB and AFQT scores warranted this assignment. Interviews from female service members who served in non-traditional MOSs during the first period of analysis reflect the integration
struggles into non-traditional specialties. In the early 1980s, the Army and Air Force instituted programs to meet their future manpower goals, while limiting where and how female service members could serve. This may have directly affected the identity of male and female service members.

Of all branches of the military, the Army was the most cognizant of the role of female service members in the early years of integration. In 1978, the Army used the term “close combat” to define positions that were off-limits to female service members (Becraft 1990). In 1982, however, the Army revised the term to “direct combat” as a way to further explain and separate the positions male and female service members could fill. According to Army leadership, “direct combat” is "engaging an enemy with individual or crew-served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy's personnel, and a substantial risk of capture. Direct combat takes place while closing with the enemy by fire, maneuver, or shock effect in order to destroy or capture, or while repelling assault by fire, close combat or counterattack” (Becraft 1990, 6).

Even though no law existed to prevent women from serving in combat positions, words used in the policy restricted female service members to units or positions not considered as “direct combat” units.

In addition to using ASVAB and AFQT scores to limit the opportunities for female service members, the Air Force followed the Army with a similar assignment categorization process. The Navy and Marine Corps also used the likelihood of direct combat to limit the positions female service members could fill. These limitations were in response to military and political leaders who suggested Americans were not prepared to see female service
members killed or wounded during conflict (Golding 2002, 7). Evidence from the early 1980s suggested that public opinion towards women in the military was slowly changing, but when military leaders and Congress focused on women in combat positions, opposition to their inclusion into combat roles began to increase (Chapman 2008, 37). A poll in 1982 suggested “that slightly more than 50% of Americans favored drafting women for military service” (Stiehm 1989, 182: The poll was conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago; Chapman 2008, 37). This was an increase from 29% in 1971 (Chapman 2008) and supports a change in public opinion. However, congressional and military leaders may have stifled momentum by the way the issue was framed.

Framing the issue of women in the military with a focus on combat misrepresents many conditions of military service. Most American men who were drafted for service in previous conflicts did not fill combat-coded positions (Dunne 2009) and the majority who filled support roles did not see any direct combat. The premise that the public was not ready to see female service members killed in action reinforces the masculine image of the military while suppressing the cultural shifts which suggested that women were not only capable of successful military service, but that Americans were also becoming more supportive.

Between 1982 and 1988, the military continued to integrate female service members into their ranks while issuing contradictory policies related to gender integration. Assigning women to combat-related positions remained controversial at different levels of military hierarchy as well as between the different branches of service. In an effort to unify and have
a single assignment policy as requested by DACOWITS, in 1988 the DOD Task Force on Women developed the “Risk Rule” which stated that:

risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture are proper criteria for closing noncombat positions or units to women, providing that the type, degree, and duration of such risks are equal to or greater than that experienced by combat units in the same theater of operations. (DOD Task Force on Women 1988, p. 1)

From this wording, female service members were encouraged to join the military, but most were assigned to positions where military leaders felt their duties would not put them near the front lines of combat. The risk rule was highly contradictory in that it appealed to those who wished to protect female service members from the spoils of direct combat while at the same time, appealed to those pushing for greater integration of the military. The policy sent a mixed message to leaders and supervisors which encouraged individual interpretation at the unit level.

As a result of the broad guidance, unit commanders developed policies specific to their service and unique mission. This came at a time when the military mission was changing. The Army changed from a threat-based structure used during the Cold War to a capabilities-based structure, highlighted by budget restrictions and the integration of air, land and sea units (Demma 1989). Within this restructuring, Army leadership opened additional MOSs and positions to women. “Under new guidelines, 56% of all authorized spaces in the Army could be filled by women” (Demma 1989, 130). Army leaders continued to review recruitment quotas and initiated the Female Officer Professional Development Review to determine if there were any challenges related to the assignment process that held female officers from promotion. In September 1988, DOD leaders “informed the Army of its policy to keep female soldiers in the theater in the event of either
mobilization or hostilities to perform the same jobs in wartime as in peacetime” (Demma 1989, 130). The wording of the policy suggested female service members would have more opportunities. However, the idea of female service members in close proximity to combat and in violation of the risk rule prompted Army leadership to remove all females from artillery units. At the time there were only 430 women and 51,000 men serving in this field (Demma 1989). By April 1992, the Army provided official policy to all levels of leadership in Army Directive 600-13:

The Army’s assignment policy for female soldiers allows women to serve in any officer or enlisted specialty or position except in those specialties, positions, or units (battalion size or smaller) which are assigned a routine mission to engage in direct combat, or which collocate routinely with units assigned a direct combat mission. (AR 600-13, 1)

Based on this policy, all female soldiers were assigned to units believed to have little or no chance of experiencing direct combat. Those women in units with the chance to serve near front lines of combat were re-assigned. These lines were often blurred and the female sailors in the Navy served on board ships in combat zones before the risk rule was officially rescinded in 1994.

In late 1990, the Navy sent ships to the Persian Gulf in preparation for combat operations in Operation Desert Storm. By 1991, ships were in the region with female personnel on board in spite of the official policy against women in combat. “The manpower needs sometimes led women to work in areas or on missions that they otherwise would not have participated. The needs of the war presumably led commanding officers and mission leaders to use the best qualified persons to carry out their orders even when that involved females. Thus, there was sometimes a difference between enforcing the written law regarding women in combat and using them because they were among the best persons
needed to maximize the success of the mission.” (DOD 1992, Appendix R). Since regard for the risk rule was disproportionate and overlooked by some, but not others, a contradictory message may have been sent to service members. Female sailors were the best qualified or perhaps only ones available to fill a necessary position, but given peace time conditions, these female service members would not have been considered eligible for this duty. Based on the demonstrated competency and successful service during war, calls for wider female participation in the military came from civilian leaders. Subsequently, former President George H.W. Bush called for a commission to investigate the future role of women in the military.

In 1992, The Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces began a series of panel discussions, heard witness testimony and conducted site visits to 32 military installations (Becraft 2010; Presidential Commission on Women in the Armed Forces 1992. Over the course of eight months, the commission of 15 members, nine men and six women, collected numerous pieces of information both supporting a more inclusive role for women in the military as well as evidence for a more limited role. A four-month investigation challenged the integrity of the Commission. In October 1992, an NBC report found the Commission to be biased against women in combat (“Presidential Commission Found to be Biased against Women in Combat”). Despite an attempt to get an impartial hearing into the future of women in combat roles in the military, seven of the 15 commissioners had very strong views against women serving in the military. Elaine Donnelly and William Henderson were two of the most outspoken commissioners against combat roles being opened to female service members. Donnelly went as far as to solicit
testimony from a former Army Lieutenant Colonel, William Gregor, who was the head of the University of Michigan’s Army ROTC program. Lt Col Gregor’s testimony suggested the following physical limitations of female service members, as reported at the Center for Military Readiness, a website managed by Commissioner Donnelly:

- Only 3.4% of females achieved a score equal to the male mean score. On the push-up test, only 7% of women could meet a score that was exceeded by 78% of the men. *(CF 1.39c,d)*

- Few women can meet the male mean standard. Men below the standard can improve their scores, whereas the women who have met the standard have already achieved a maximum level beyond which they cannot improve. *(CF 1.39f)*

- Age also makes a difference: A 20 to 30 year old woman has about the same aerobic capacity as a 50 year old man. Because women begin losing bone mass at an earlier age than men, and are more susceptible to orthopedic injuries, those initially selected for the combat arms would probably not survive to career-end. *(CF 1.39h)*

Gregor’s testimony is deeply troubling for many reasons. First, the “research” Gregor conducted included only Army ROTC members at the University of Michigan and was not a representative sample of military personnel. Second, there is no published report of his findings. Without having any published data, the validity of his findings is not only questionable, but also very easy to discredit. Without asking Gregor to produce his “research,” the Commission had no way of knowing how many individuals, male or female, were included in the test; when the physical fitness exam was given; over what length of time individuals had to prepare for the test and most importantly, how many female ROTC members were included in his “research.” Furthermore, Gregor’s testimony on September 12, 1992 was solicited by Donnelly and was never recorded to be reviewed later. Yet, military leaders and scholars*11* have continued to reference Gregor’s findings as if they

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*11* See Alfonso, Kristal L.M. 2009. “Femme Fatale: An Examination of the Role of Women in Combat and the
were not only accurate, but as if the results were generalizable to all members in the military - not just the Army ROTC detachment he used for data collection. Despite questionable testimony and bias, the report from the Commission unanimously recommended each military branch adopt gender-neutral muscular strength/endurance and cardiovascular standards for relevant specialties (Presidential Commission on Women in the Armed Forces 1992; Gregor 2012, 3c). Moreover, Congress directed the military to develop gender-neutral occupational performance standards as required by Public Law 103-160, Section 542 (1993).

Former Lt Col Gregor is one example of a unit commander influencing Army policy based on faulty research and perhaps personal experience or opinion related to gender privilege. Army ROTC commanders are the highest ranking officers in charge of training future military officers through the four year programs available at some four-year universities. Gregor’s “research” suggested that his personal belief was that female soldiers were not as physically fit or as capable as their male counterparts. This belief may have negatively affected the identity of both the male and female cadets in the ROTC program where he was commander. If the commander of an ROTC unit conducted research and testified in Congress that female cadets were unable to meet physical fitness standards, the commander not only promoted male privilege within the unit, but most likely influenced how future officers would identify as professional soldiers in relation to their sex.

I turn now to the topic of physical fitness standards and policies as they evolved between 1980 and 1994.

Physical Requirements

As women were integrated into the military, numerous studies were conducted in an effort to fully assess their physical capabilities. Early research seemed to focus on two areas of concern. The first area of concern addressed the limitations commensurate with being female and becoming a mother. Menstruation and pregnancy were viewed as limitations to service since the female body was viewed as less able to perform assigned duties during periods of menstruation or pregnancy (Enloe 1988). These research agendas exaggerated differences between male and female soldiers unnecessarily since not every female soldier had a desire to be pregnant or become a mother. Moreover, the research regarding menstruation and its perceived effects on mobility and readiness were unsupported by the lived experiences of many former female service members, mostly nurses, since menstruation never limited their service.

Early research on upper body strength appeared to be “an almost desperate search for some fundamental, intrinsic (i.e. not open to political debate) difference between male and female soldiers” (Enloe 1988, 138). Military policy adopted as a result of these studies seemingly justified the continued exclusion of women from certain military specialties and limited their career progression. Moreover, the physiological differences between the physical training of male and female service members preserved the barrier of non-acceptance of women in the military (Adams 1980, 47). These limitations on female service members and the exclusions directly affected the identity of both male and female soldiers. Male soldiers were led to believe their female counterparts were unable to perform basic duties required of their position. Female soldiers were restricted to career fields where
military leadership believed they were capable of performing without limiting the mission effectiveness or mobility of the unit. Military policy was not prepared to accept female service members who had developed upper body strength and exceeded physical fitness requirements. Instead, the military developed policy to confine women as a way to seemingly preserve masculinity and male dominance of the institution.

Between 1980 and 1982, as the military transitioned to a fully integrated force, most female service members served within administrative or medical career fields (DACOWITS 1982, Tab E). There were some female service members, predominantly in the Army, who were misplaced or classified incorrectly and were told, “They could not, or would not be allowed, to do their jobs” (Stiehm 1989, 65). These women were reclassified along with new female recruits using the new physical fitness standards. These standards were developed from the result of a four-year long study conducted at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This research suggested that 368,000 MOSs, nearly two-thirds, of the Army’s jobs required upper body strength to complete “very heavy” lifting tasks (Department of the Army 1982). The study proposed that only 3% of the female service members currently serving were capable of such tasks. Furthermore, only another 8% of female service members could complete the 71,000 jobs listed as “heavy” lifting tasks (Stiehm 1989, 65). Ultimately, the Army suggested that only 11% of women were capable of serving in three-fourths of the Army’s current specialties (Stiehm 1989; Enloe 1988). In 1982, the Army adopted the Military Entrance Physical Strength Capacity Test (MEPSCAT) which was designed to match physical requirements of each MOS to physical abilities of the member (Chapman 2008, 72-73).
Of the six tests in the MEPSCAT Battery\textsuperscript{12}, two were used as a factor in assessing the abilities of service members. Lifting and body mass evaluations were the most applicable to Army job requirements, but may have also highlighted differences between male and female service members. One’s body mass was calculated by an equation comprised of one’s weight and height. Most female service members had higher levels of body mass which did not correlate to being overweight. However, the tests did little to compensate for the physiological differences between male and female members. Instead, differences highlighted whether a female service member was competent or not competent and often this may have privileged male service members.

The lifting test was conducted by having the member lift increasing amounts of weight repetitively to chest height (Myers et al 1984, 5; Sharpe et al 1980). The test used “chest height” as a standard for scoring the lift as opposed to adhering to the 60 and 72 inches since some individuals may not be as tall as needed to properly administer the test (Myers et al 1984, appendix E). This modification compensated for height differences, regardless of sex. Three categories were then created according to the amount of weight lifted; “very heavy” referred to lifting a minimum of 100 pounds, “moderately heavy” referred to lifting 80 pounds at least once, but frequently lifting of 40 pounds or more and “light” referred to lifting 50 pounds with frequent lifting of 20-25 pounds (Stiehm 1989, 202-203; Department of the Army 1982, chapters 2-3).

The “moderate lifting” category was a compromise between light and heavy lifting, but may have created more problems for members who were unable to lift greater amounts

\textsuperscript{12} The MEPSCAT included Lean Body Mass (Percent Body Fat), Handgrip, Lift 60 Inches, Lift 72 Inches, Upright Pull (38 cm), and Predicted Max VO\textsubscript{2} (Myers et al 1984, 25).
of weight. Prior to having this category, only light and heavy lifting existed and only 18% of male service members could lift the minimum weight of 100 pounds for the heavy lifting category. The majority of female service members did not qualify for jobs that required heavy lifting either. The Army created a moderate lifting category to “optimize the physical capacity of women” (Department of the Army 1982, 4-16) which inadvertently opened additional jobs to male service members. The new category was linked with 44,000 jobs (64 MOSs) increasing the number of qualified female service members to 26% (Stiehm 1989, 203). This new category took a previous minority group of male service members, the 18% previously in the heavy lifting category, and moved them into the moderate lifting category (Stiehm 1989, 203; Department of the Army 1982, chapter 2). In effect, the minority group of men became a dominant majority group in the moderate lifting category. All male service members were viewed as physically competent and able to fill MOSs requiring moderate lifting; smaller framed or weaker men were easily “hidden” in the moderate lifting category and female service members were made a minority. This seemingly well-intentioned redistribution of lifting qualifications did not open more jobs to female service members. Instead, the policy reinforced the male privilege and the desired image of masculinity in the military.

The other branches of service conducted similar examinations to assess individual competency for mission readiness in the early 1980s, but not all tests separated the minimum requirements between male and female service members. Since U.S. forces regularly shared equipment with members of foreign militaries whose members may have been smaller in stature and weaker in strength, there did not appear any immediate reason to
accommodate for differences between male and female service members. As long as a member could complete the physical tasks required of a specialty, they were assigned and used as necessary. The Marine Corps exemplifies this approach more than any other branch of the military and continues to do so today. If a member can successfully complete the Marine Corps basic training, all physical fitness requirements to serve in the assigned specialty have been met. As Judith Stiehm aptly notes, “One is fit to be a Marine” (1988, 205) once basic training was successfully completed.

The DOD began to change physical fitness requirements near the end of the 1980s and established separate male and female standards. The Air Force adopted an annual assessment consisting of a 1.5 mile run or 3 mile walk (Air Force Regulation 35-11, 1985). This test was one of the first to compensate for differences between male and female service members. Additionally, the strength assessment was removed (see Table 3).

Table 3
Fitness Performance Standards [1985]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>1.5 Mile Run</th>
<th></th>
<th>3 Mile Walk</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time (Minutes)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Time (Minutes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-29</td>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>15:36</td>
<td>40:54</td>
<td>43:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>16:05</td>
<td>42:04</td>
<td>45:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>16:40</td>
<td>43:15</td>
<td>46:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>17:10</td>
<td>44:25</td>
<td>47:44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>16:30</td>
<td>17:45</td>
<td>45:34</td>
<td>48:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>17:00</td>
<td>18:15</td>
<td>48:19</td>
<td>52:02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The differentiation between male and female physical fitness requirements may have lead “to the assumption that the services must lower physical requirements to accommodate weaker females” (Alfonso 2009, 69). Although the intent of norming physical standards for men and women may have been to better assess the capabilities of both sexes, the result may have promoted a sense of privilege in members who excelled in their respective age and gender categories. More importantly, faulty research may have stereotyped the preferred soldier as young, physically fit males (Gregor 1992). Service members who were underprivileged because of the gender differentiated physical standards were smaller, weaker males and females who were perceived as less capable of meeting demanding physical fitness requirements for combat-coded MOSs. Male service members who could not meet the minimum standards may have faced additional criticism or administrative punishment for not performing as their duty required. These male service members may have also been viewed as less masculine or less competent. In contrast, female service members who excelled at their respective standards and perhaps even met the male standards may have been viewed as competent, but also as threatening to their male counterparts. In turn, their physical abilities may have caused conflict in the professional relationships of those who felt female service members should retain a feminine presentation. This directly conflicted with the masculine character of the military. When physical fitness requirements were segregated to accommodate physiological differences between men and women, the result may have reinforced the masculine identity and privileging male service members above female service members.
Even more disconcerting were the data used to underscore the differences in male and female service members. Following the repeal of Title 10 USC 8549 which banned women from serving aboard combat aircraft during combat missions, former President Bush established the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces (Becraft 2010). During this commission, numerous civilian and military personnel testified to the benefits and limitations of allowing women to serve in combat coded positions. Despite the outstanding performance of female service members during the Persian Gulf War, there was growing concern that female service members would not have the strength or endurance to be assigned to combat-coded specialties. Between 1980 and 1985, commissioned studies and well-intentioned reports often highlighted the physiological differences between male and female service members rather than their shared capabilities.

Jill McCall recalls her experience as a B-52 engine mechanic in relation to the policy affecting her duty assignment in the early 1980s (Fenner and DeYoung 2001, 10-11). Upon arriving at her first duty station after completing training, the male members of McCall’s unit were suspicious of the new social experiment, referring to female service members being assigned to previously male-only career fields. Their doubt at her capabilities stemmed from previously held beliefs about female service members based on information about physical abilities which McCall visibly support with her 4’11” height. However, McCall was able to win-over her male counterparts by carrying her 50-pound toolbox to the flight line every day without help, not asking for favors and successfully completing all duty requirements. Moreover, McCall’s male counterparts recognized her
unique size saved them additional labor and time since she was able to access smaller spaces in the engine compartments (Fenner and DeYoung 2001, 11). In recognition of her contributions to the maintenance team, the male service member’s in McCall’s unit built a special trolley for her toolbox and she was accepted in spite of the military’s efforts to disparage the potential female service member’s provided to male-only units. This suggests that male service members were often privileged without careful examination as to how or why, which may have influenced the context of military service which may have affected the identities of male and female service members. It was not until the second period of analysis, 1995 to 2013 that research of physiological differences provided evidence to contradict early gender integration policies restricting women based upon perceived physical limitations (Tragos 2006, 26-27).

The Evolution of Culture and Appearance

Performing one’s identity is contextual and in the case of the military, integration policy may have directly affected how male and female service members demonstrated their professional identity. Female service members, enlisted or officer, faced a direct challenge to their gender by working in a male dominant, masculine field. Erving Goffman (1967; 1990) first described these challenges as an interaction order. The interaction order suggests that men and women follow specific rules of behavior for their respective sexes (Goffman 1990, 45). Men perform very masculine functions in daily life whereas women perform feminine ones. In the early phase of gender integration, the military presented rules that conformed to the traditional interaction order formed when sex and gender are
conflated. Male service members were expected to fill the front-line, combat positions first
and overages of personnel would then be assigned to support positions. Female service
members were assigned to non-line, non-combat positions first. Females were only offered
positions in combat-related positions in order to disperse the number of women into
separate career fields so they were not all assigned in one specialty area. The concept of
desegregation by way of controlled integration merely highlighted male service members as
privileged while suppressed the contributions of female service members.

In the early phases of gender integration, female service members were not as
visible in units as male service members. This changed in later periods of integration.
Between 1980 and 1994, the number of women serving in the military slowly began to
increase as did the number of military specialties open to female service members. By 1991
and the beginning of the Gulf War, the number of enlisted female service members had
increased substantially to 11.1% of the total force (Department of Defense: Selected
Manpower Statistics). Female officers mirrored the enlisted female force at 11.4%. This
suggests unit leadership maintained a masculine context which may have influenced the
institutional culture. Female officers and non-commissioned officers who were visible
during the early integration period may not have been as hospitable to subordinate female
troops since they may have faced significant professional identity challenges. In one regard,
a female officer was expected be tough like other officers who were male, but in doing so,
she had to avoid becoming too masculine and retain some element of femininity to avoid
harassment and criticism.
One way the Department of Defense sought to deter the masculinization of female service members was through dress and appearance. Recruits in the Marine Corps “were required to attend make-up and etiquette classes” as part of their basic military training (Herbert 1998, 38). The first class with women at the U.S. Air Force Academy segregated some portions of the curriculum; specifically, female cadets were instructed on the proper wear of make-up from consultants hired by military leaders (Campbell and D’Amico 1999, 74). Additionally, when a senior officer at West Point saw male cadets dancing with female cadets who were wearing the official uniform trouser, he ordered that all female cadets were to wear skirts to social functions (Campbell and D’Amico 1999). These make-up classes and additional attention to uniforms may have highlighted the differences between male and female service members. The unwanted attention emphasized the masculine culture of the military while controlling and containing women’s behavior by controlling the presentation of their femininity. This context privileged male service members and may have influenced the acquisition of identity.

In seeking to present a professional military identity, both male and female officers sought the approval of their peers as one who knows their job and can be trusted to do it. In some cases, this was a detriment for female officers who may have modified their behavior and identity in an effort to fit in with the masculine culture of the military. This identity may have come at the expense of female subordinates who looked up to female officers and expected camaraderie from a shared experience, but often times were disappointed when female officers did not defend a female enlisted troop against harassment or discrimination. By acquiring a professional identity perceived as indifferent to gender issues, female
officers may have tried to prevent accusations of favoritism toward female service members from male colleagues, but may have alienated themselves from their unit in the process of walking such a line as to appear impartial.

Based on these gendered assignment policies, female service members were recruited and the job opportunities limited. Although male recruits were eligible for every position, they were rarely placed in non-combat, non-line positions which may have caused resentment from men who wished to fill these support positions. Female service members were frequently assigned to administrative and support positions before male service members. These positions were highly desirable since their duties and job requirements were easily transferable to the civilian job sector and frequently required professional certification or training. The assignment policy for each fiscal year was predicated by the manning requests of military leadership in the Pentagon as approved by Congress in the annual Defense Authorization bill. During the early phases of gender integration, the projected number of female service members increased until 1983 then declined until a slight increase in the early 1990s.

As the number of male and female service members evolved, so did the culture of the military. The most visible period of adjustment occurred right after the end of the first Gulf War where 40,782 female service members served (Becraft 2010). Many of these women experienced direct combat in Iraq despite being assigned to non-combat coded specialties. Some senior leaders witnessed firsthand the capabilities of female service members while others remained skeptical and continued to promote their limited utilization,

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13 Some of the MOSs include: dental technician, medical assistant, paralegal, personnel management, data processing, computer networking, communications, logistics and human resources.
thwarting gender integration efforts. Junior members may have thought that inclusion was forced upon their leaders wherein any prejudice or privileged behavior would be condoned by senior leaders who felt similarly, but were not in a position to resist civilian influence (Fenner 1998, 22). Thus, the military mirrored the continued struggle for equal opportunity in American society during that time period.

In the first period of analysis, 1980 to 1994, there were few official policies directly addressing professional interaction or sexual misconduct. The DOD and each branch of the service had policies against discrimination and harassment regardless of gender. These policies focused on civilian employees while military commanders were authorized to handle matters within their units for military personnel. In 1987, DoD Directive 1440.1, the DoD Civilian Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program provided guidance for commanders who supervised military personnel as well as provided benefits to spouses of military members seeking employment. The EEO program did not evolve to include military personnel until 2009 when DoD Directive 1020.02, Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (EO) mandated each military installation establish and EO office for all assigned personnel, regardless of military or civilian status or sex. Policies regarding professional behavior were often vague and left to local commander discretion to not only implement, but also monitor and punish infractions. In the absence of official guidance, it is not uncommon to hear of hazing when a new member joins a unit or requirements to attend unofficial social functions like “officer calls” or “commander’s calls” at the enlisted or officer clubs. Each military installation provides a bar type atmosphere usually connected to a banquet facility where military personnel and their spouses can enjoy off-duty time. The
“clubs” are separated by rank to preserve the integrity of the chain of command as well as protect against fraternization or charges of improper behavior like conduct unbecoming.

Some interactions between male and female service members involved an unofficial audience (Stiehm 1989, 18). In the absence of official written policy or guidance, many privileged male service members would harass other less privileged members, either men from non-combat units or female service members, in an effort to show-off to their friends. This sort of interaction is characteristic of masculine institutions and highlights the privilege some male service members presented. Judith Stiehm noted, “The clubs, which [were] supposed to make leisure pleasant, [were] considered unusable by many women” (1989, 18). It was difficult for female service members to interact socially at the clubs without receiving explicit sexual advances or verbal harassment since there were so few of them in the early 1980s. For younger, enlisted women in the early 1980s, the integration process was even more difficult to navigate than for older or officer ranks because of the unwanted attention.

Newly enlisted members, male and female, were required to live on base which meant they frequently used the dining facilities (aka “chow hall”). Young female service members in this context reportedly skipped meals or ate soup warmed on a hot plate to avoid the unwanted attention or “dining hall gauntlet” (Stiehm 1989, 18). This voluntary segregation in off-duty settings reinforced the privilege male service members possessed as well as hampered the ability of female service members to establish professional relationships and an identity where they were confident in their profession.
Military wives further complicated the ability of female service members to establish a professional identity during the first period of gender integration. Since there were very few women in the military in the early 1980s, non-military or “dependent wives,” enlisted and officer, were often combined with female service members as a consumer base for Post Exchange (PX)\textsuperscript{14} merchandise. This meant that civilian clothing in the PX was often marketed toward the tastes of senior officer wives rather than newly enlisted personnel (Stiehm 1989, 19). Additionally, any on-base conveniences like daycare facilities, hair salons, medical or dental offices often catered to military wives before female service members (Stiehm 1989). Those with spouses of higher rank enjoyed unearned entitlement privileges over those of lower rank. The commissary\textsuperscript{15} was open during hours during the day that many female service members worked. Medical services geared specifically toward women (gynecological) often only scheduled appointments during the day, generally when female service members were working (Stiehm 1989). This often meant that female service members did not schedule routine exams since it would mean asking a male supervisor for time off. Even more troubling was when a commander’s wife would use the rank of her husband to take advantage of a preferred appointment time. This often caused resentment with enlisted members, male and female. The presence of military wives privileged masculinity and heteronormative relationships and the relationship between civilian military wives and female service members may have complicated the acquisition of a professional identity for the female service member.

\textsuperscript{14} The Post Exchange or Base Exchange is the name of the store, much like a Walmart, located on the military installation. The majority of military installations have one PX/BX.  
\textsuperscript{15} The commissary is the base grocery store.
In this chapter, I provided a brief description of the system of male privilege influenced by gender integration policy. These policies may influence how male and female soldiers identify. Male service members enjoyed privileges based on the traditional masculine role of the military during the early integration years. The masculine nature of warfighting complicated the professional identities of male and female service members through gendered assignment and physical fitness policies. Policies affecting the culture of the military during this period promoted masculinity while dampening femininity. The policies affecting gender integration may affect conferred and unearned entitlement privileges which in turn, may have influenced the identity of members of the military.

GENDER INTEGRATION POLICIES

1980  Defense Officer Manpower Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) passed by Congress to integrate the promotion system; male and female officers would compete for rank

1980 - 1982  Each service branch evaluated gender integration independently

1982  Army begins using the term “direct combat” as a term to exclude female service members from certain MOSs

1982  Army adopted MEPSCAT to match MOS with physical capability of the service member

1982  The Army created a moderate lifting category to “optimize the physical capacity of women”

1985  The Air Force begins to use a sophisticated process to evaluate ASVAB and AFQT scores, sex and perceived interest in the specialty to make duty assignments

1985  The Air Force began separating physical fitness requirements for male and female service members, Air Force Regulation 35-11
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>DOD Task Force on Women developed the “Risk Rule” which prohibited women from being assigned to units that could be close to direct combat action during time of war.</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>The Army removed all women from artillery units.</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Presidential Commission on Women in the Armed Forces convenes and releases a report on faulty data that suggests female soldiers are physically unable to perform combat duties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Army issues AR 600-13 which stated that all female soldiers could only be assigned to units that had little or no chance of experiencing direct combat.</td>
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I turn now to the gender integration policies in effect during the second period of analysis, 1995 to 2013. At the beginning of 1992, there were 2,065,597 men and women serving in the military, but by the end of 1995, only 1,540,865 men and women were serving (DMDC Active Duty Master File 2004, 4). The reason for this drawdown varied and has been argued to be related to the end of the Cold War (1990), the end of the Persian Gulf War (1991) and budget constraints on military spending in light of peacetime. In the early 1990s, the number of female recruits in the military may have declined based on the negative publicity within the context of their future employment. Despite the success of female service members in the Gulf War, female service members were not actively recruited for desirable careers in aviation or other combat-related specialties. Finally, on January 13, 1994, former Secretary of Defense Les Aspin made a bold move to rescind the “risk rule” (Becraft 2010) in an effort to allow more women to serve in the military. The Army, Air Force and Marine Corps followed with print ads in Seventeen magazine in the late 1990s (Brown 2012). The Navy did not actively recruit women despite opening sea vessels to their service; consequently, the Navy missed accessions goals in 1998 by more than 7,000 sailors (Brown 2012). The rescission of the risk rule and active recruiting efforts by three branches of service put in motion new assignment policies for the Department of
Defense. Each branch of military service evaluated the best way to utilize female service members.

The Ground Combat Rule

When the risk rule ended, 32,700 positions in the Army and 48,000 positions in the Marine Corps were open to female service members (Becraft 2010; Stiehm 1989; Harrell and Miller 1997). Yet in the transition to remove all exclusions for women in combat, the risk rule was modified in such a way to maintain exclusions against women in group combat. “The Ground Combat Rule” existed for the majority of the second period of analysis and stated that “women shall be excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground” (Aspin memo, January 13, 1994). The DOD provided for each branch of the service to develop policy specific to their branch and mission. In effect, the assignment of women could be restricted when:

the Service Secretary\textsuperscript{16} attests that the costs of appropriate berthing\textsuperscript{17} and privacy arrangements are prohibitive
where units and positions are doctrinally required to physically collocate and remain with direct ground combat units that remain closed to women
where units are engaged in long range reconnaissance operations and Special Operations Forces missions
where job-related physical requirements would necessarily exclude the vast majority of women service members. (Aspin memo, January 13, 1994)

From the rescission, the verbiage used suggested the DOD provided for wider utilization of female service members; however, DOD leaders delegated the authority to assign female

\textsuperscript{16} The term Service Secretary refers to the Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Air Force, Secretary of the Army and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

\textsuperscript{17} Berthing refers to the private accommodations each member aboard a naval vessel is allotted; in most cases, this is a bunk and locker area with a communal bathroom.
service members to appropriate MOSs. The official memo from Aspin left room for interpretation based on specific mission requirements and physical fitness requirements. As previously suggested, when policy on both of these issues is established upon faulty research or discriminatory interpretation of DOD guidance, full inclusion of female service members in the military was unlikely.

Significant assignment policy changes were mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act (NADA) for fiscal year 1994 as well. The NADA repealed the legal restrictions which had prohibited female service members from being assigned to combat vessels (NADA 1994; Beckett and Chien 2002, 7). This meant the Navy would have to open sea-billets to female service members, thus qualifying them for extended sea duty like their male counterparts. NADA also required the Secretary of Defense to ensure that qualified individuals were assigned to military specialties commensurate with performance, “not on the basis of gender” (Beckett and Chien 2002, 7). Moreover, the military was to no longer use quotas for male and female service members except as authorized by Congress and to “refrain from changing occupational standards simply to increase or decrease the number of women in an occupational career field” (House Report No. 103-200 Section 542-Gender Neutral Occupational Performance Standards). This guidance from Congress was an attempt to prevent assignment modifications like the Army and Air Force made during the 1980s. The policy was an effort to accommodate greater integration of female service members, but continued to protect the privilege of male service members.
The Navy

By 1995, the Navy was at the forefront of integrating female service members. Integration required the modification of berthing areas, or sleeping quarters, in naval vessels to accommodate female service members. Although this required immediate attention and planning, there were a few other ships that had deployed with mixed crews in support of the first Gulf War (1991). The USS *Eisenhower* was the first aircraft carrier to deploy with a significant number of female sailors (Moore and Webb 2001, 84). This was a significant accomplishment since modifying berthing areas or “bunks” for enlisted female service members in the Navy was not easy. The lack of bunks available for female service members on Navy vessels was a limiting factor in assigning women to sea billets or assignments (Harrell and Miller 1997, 23). By March 31, 1997, the Navy had successfully modified two-thirds of the 99 combatant ships in the fleet which allowed 3,150 female enlisted members and 400 female officers to serve aboard (Harrell and Miller 1997, 25). The rescission of the risk rule and the directive in the 1994 NADA made 94% of all positions in the Navy available to female service members (Beckett and Chien 2002, 9). The only specialties to remain off-limits to female service members were Special Forces units (Navy SEALs) and submarine or nuclear capable vessels.

The Marine Corps

The Marine Corps coordinated with the Navy and the Army prior to revising its assignment policy in an effort to provide consistency between the branches. However, Marine Corps doctrine dictates that combat engineer units, in particular headquarters
battalions, provide decentralized support to units that served on the front-lines of combat (Harrell and Miller 1997, 26). The Marine Corps retained combat exclusions on these units prohibiting the assignment of female service members. The Army, in contrast to the Marine Corps, opened similar positions to female service members. Aspin’s replacement as Secretary of Defense in 1994, William J. Perry, wrote a letter to the late Senator Strom Thurmond\(^{18}\) when questioned about the assignment policy discrepancy. Perry explained: “The Marine Corps Infantry Regimental Headquarters is a fighting headquarters that commands only the direct ground combat element of a Marine Corps Air/Ground Task Force” (MAGTAF). Perry’s letter clarified that female service members could be assigned to the MAGTAF headquarters, but not the Infantry Regimental Headquarters since the units had different doctrinal missions; although both were filled with members in the combat engineer specialty (Harrell and Miller 1997, 27). This difference in unit nomenclature highlights the differences between each military service branch and further complicates consistent assignment policy. In the Army, female combat engineers were eligible to be assigned to a ground headquarters unit, but in the Marine Corps, female combat engineers could only be assigned to the support headquarters unit. By 1997, the Marine Corps had opened 93% of all available specialties, or 101,000 positions, to female service members (Harrell and Miller 1997; USMC Information Paper, 1000, MPP-56, Subject: Gender Equality Efforts).

The efforts to open more MOSs to female service members did not result in an increase in the number assigned to fill them. When the additional occupations were made

\(^{18}\) Thurmond was the ranking Republican on the U.S. Senate’s Armed Services Committee.
available to female service members in the Marine Corps, only 2% were filled by women (Harrell and Miller 1997, Appendix B). The Marine Corps recognized three reasons for the low numbers: females scored lower on the ASVAB subtests which limited their assignments to less technical specialties; there were no quotas set for the number of females to be placed in any specific MOS; and finally, not all female Marines wished to enter into the newly opened career fields. All three reasons support a positive and gender-neutral context wherein the female service members who excelled in a technically challenging career, and desired to be assigned to it, were not restricted from filling the position based on any quota. This assignment process supported a positive professional environment where male and female service members were not privileged based on their gender, but only on their rank according to the traditional military hierarchy. Moreover, female service members shared the same deployment burden as their male colleagues and were eligible to compete for higher leadership positions on an equal foundation of prior experience and assignments (Harrell and Miller 1997).

Army

Based on the performance of female aviators during the Gulf War as well as other considerations, former Army Chief of Staff General Gordon Sullivan had already drafted plans to open more specialties in the Army to female service members when Aspin rescinded the risk rule (Harrell and Miller 1997, 18; Army Deputy Chief of Staff of Personnel). The first Army specialties opened to female service members were support units such as ceremonial positions in Washington, D.C. By 1997, however, the Army still
lagged behind the other services in gender-neutral assignments primarily due to unit commander interpretation of the combat exclusion policy in relation to unit mission. Nine units and their associated career fields remained closed to female service members and no new MOSs were opened to female officers. This limited the amount of female officers in the Army to 13%. Only 14% of the enlisted force was female despite being permitted to fill 70% of the available MOSs (Harrell and Miller 1997, Appendix B). Although female service members in the Army were performing their duties in such a manner to merit promotion and increased inclusion, the contradictory assignment policies created tension with male colleagues. The idea that some commanding officers and senior enlisted supervisors felt women were not capable of filling certain military specialties slowly trickled down to the junior officers and lower ranking enlisted personnel of a unit. The Army reinforced male privilege by limiting the specialties female service members could be assigned to, especially female officers. This posed challenges for male and female service members in establishing a professional identity of equals, but rather reinforced gender privileging.

Air Force

In addition to the above mentioned branches of service, the Air Force adjusted its assignment policy for male and female service members following the rescission of the risk rule. The Air Force transitioned female aviators to combat aircraft beginning with pilot training in 1993. Female service members already in pilot positions competed for fighter or combat aircraft training alongside male service members desiring the same assignment.
The Officer Assignment System (OAS) continued to recruit and assign eligible female officers to aviation positions based on technical aptitude, physical capability and available positions. Male and female officers interested in aviation competed for spots following the traditional hierarchy: service academy graduates received first selection of assignments and following pilot training, top graduates received priority in selecting aircraft as well as the desired geographic location (Undergraduate Pilot Training 2014). The inclusion of female service members to combat aviation roles was in full effect by the beginning of 1995.

Much like the Navy and Marine Corps, the Air Force consulted with the Army on determining the correct policy for female service members likely to deploy in support of an Army mission or unit. For example, air liaison officers frequently deploy with Army ground forces to coordinate air support during an attack (Harrell and Miller 1997). Based on the input of the Army, the Air Force maintained restrictions on this specialty keeping it male-only. By 1997, the majority of positions were open to female service members in the Air Force.

**Military Drawdown**

Since the 1990s was a period of military restructuring and a drawdown of forces following the end of the Cold War, the total number of military members declined and the composition of male and female service members changed. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of women in the military increased from 11.1 to 14.6% (Rutgers 2010) while the total force decreased by 37% to 1.37 million personnel (Rostker 2013, 13; Defense Manpower Delivery Center). Then, the events of September 11, 2001 dramatically changed
U.S. national security policy and initiated a military build-up to support the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan (December 2001) and Iraq (2003)\textsuperscript{19}. The build-up of forces enabled female service members to fill non-traditional, combat positions that had opened following the rescission of the risk rule. By 2002, women in positions such as Army gun crews, Navy seamanship specialties and Marine and Air Force combat/combat support aircraft reached 5\% (Department of Defense 2004, vii). The DOD continued to use the ASVAB and scores from the 10 subtests to group recruits into five categories of eligibility.

These five categories of eligibility were utilized differently by each branch of the military, but in general privileged male service members. Test results continued to suggest that “men tend to score higher than women on the ASVAB tests in the mechanical and electronics composites, while women tend to do better on administrative measures” (Department of Defense 2004, 3-13). Based on this, female recruits continued to be assigned to military specialties viewed as traditional for women despite a wider range of occupations being open to them. In all branches of the military, female service members were more than two and a half times more likely than their male colleagues to serve in the traditional female occupations such as support, administration and medical/dental specialties (Department of Defense 2004). Although it may be likely that some female service members requested these assignments, it is unlikely that they were provided with a wide range of available specialties since the higher the scores on the ASVAB directly relate the number of available choices. Each branch of the military continued to use scores on the

\textsuperscript{19} Prior to 9/11, the U.S. military supported North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members in combat operations over Kosovo in 1999. This military engagement did not spur a military build-up of forces as occurred following 9/11.
ASVAB to privilege male recruits by offering more occupational choices than female recruits.

After the Attacks of September 11, 2001

By 2004, the Army joined with the Marine Corps to begin the Lioness program. This program assigned Army women with Marine Corps ground units who were conducting raids in Iraqi towns where women and children were present (Becraft 2010). As the Lioness program evolved, female Marines and Navy sailors also participated with Marine and Army combat units. The Lioness program was in direct conflict with the combat exclusion rule and in 2005, Congress mandated that the Secretary of Defense submit a report to Congress notifying them of any changes to the assignment of female military personnel 30 days before it was scheduled to occur (PL 109-163; 2006 Defense Authorization Act, Section 541). The notification process would not be used until 2010 when the Navy notified Congress it intended to open two classes of submarines to female officers (Becraft 2010).

In addition to the Lioness program, many female service members served in combat as medics or other medical personnel. Yet these assignments conflicted with the Congressional mandate and it is not known if the Secretary of Defense notified Congress 30 days prior to deployments where male and female service members were collocated. The circumstances surrounding the award of the Silver Star, the third highest military honor to a female Army medic in 2008 demonstrates the limitations of the mandate. In April 2007, Specialist Brown jumped out of the Humvee she was riding in to render medical attention to the wounded members of her unit (Tyson 2008). Three days after the incident in a remote
village in Eastern Afghanistan, Brown was removed from the cavalry unit she was serving with and sent to another location. Her platoon commander at the remote base in Paktika province claimed the re-assignment was due to the Army’s restrictions on women serving on combat missions like the one Brown participated in (Tyson 2008). Lieutenant Martin Robbins stated, “By regulations you're not supposed to," but Brown "was one of the guys, mixing it up, clearing rooms, doing everything that anybody else was doing" (Tyson 2008). When former Vice President Cheney pinned Brown’s medal in March 2008, he commended her for her actions to help those wounded and trapped in a disabled Humvee, even while under attack from Taliban fighters. Without Brown’s actions, members of her unit may have died, yet the contradictory policy continued to privilege male service members.

In 2009, the Marine Corps established the Female Engage Team (FET) Program with a principle mission to engage Afghan men and women in order to influence the population in accordance with the commander’s objectives (Bedell 2011). FET members were all female Marines who were attached to either Army or Marine combat units serving in Afghanistan. The FET program evolved to include female service members from foreign militaries (Becraft 2010; Bedell 2011). These programs provided a positive image of female service members when their duties were integrated with combat specialties reserved for male service members. By the end of 2012, the role of FETs in Afghanistan was transferred to the Afghan National Security Forces (Lamothe 2012). Both the Lioness Program and the FET Program represent strides made in integrating combat units especially while serving in
support of combat missions. This inclusion may have positively improved the acquisition of a professional identity because women were doing jobs critical to combat operations.

End of Combat Exclusion

By the end of 2012, most of the restrictions on women serving in combat coded careers had been relaxed. In January 2013, former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta officially directed all branches of the military to open all combat positions to women (DOD Release No. 037-13). Among other things, the directive also required each branch of the service to:

Validate occupational performance standards, both physical and mental, for all military occupational specialties (MOS), specifically those that remain closed to women. Eligibility for training and development within designated occupational fields should consist of qualitative and quantifiable standards reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for each occupation.

The full integration of female service members into combat and non-combat specialties is to be completed by 2016.

Between 1995 and 2013, military assignment policies still differed between male and female service members based on the branch of service as well as the MOS. However, significant changes occurred toward the end of this period in an effort to fully integrate female service members. The assignment process follows the traditional hierarchy and graduates of military service academies continued to receive additional privileges in preferred assignments. Female officers increased in number from all accession sources which suggested they will eventually be able to fill positions at higher rank and with more experience. Male officers, particularly graduates from the service academies, continued to
dominate command positions as well as the higher ranks, including flag officer ranks\textsuperscript{20}. The increase of female enlisted personnel with a commensurate increase in female officers may suggest the assignment policies may be changing to provide a more gender representative command structure. In 2008, the number of female officers in the military peaked at 15.3\% while the number of enlisted personnel was fairly stable at 14\% (Rutgers 2010). In 2009, only one female officer had reached the highest rank of General - Admiral. The total number of female flag officers was still low with only 41 out of 475 being women (Rutgers 2010) and as of 2013, only three women had attained the rank of 4-star General, Ann Dunwoody (now retired), Navy Admiral Michelle Howard and Air Force General Janet Wolfenbarger (Krieger and O’Hanlon 2014). The assignment policies were not the only limitation for female enlisted and officer members of the military. Physical fitness requirements also evolved during the second period of analysis. I now consider the changes to the physical fitness policies as they influence gender integration and identity in the military.

**Physical Requirements**

In 1995, the DOD issued a new directive regarding physical standards. According to DOD 1308.1, dated July 20, 1995: “5.1.3.3 Each Military Service shall establish its specific requirements and conduct the physical fitness training for its particular needs and mission.” This guidance supported the FY 1994 National Defense Authorization Act passed by Congress which required the services to adopt gender-neutral occupational performance

\textsuperscript{20} The term “flag officer” corresponds to a commissioned officer with a high enough rank to warrant the flying of a flag to represent his position; most generally, these are unit commanders and above, Brigadier General (Rear Admiral) to General (Admiral).
standards as well as determine strength, endurance, or stamina essential to the performance of duties (Section 543). As mentioned previously, each branch of the military used different tests to select qualified individuals for enlistment as well as determine how to classify them for military specialties. In addition to mental evaluations like the ASVAB test, the Army and the Air Force utilized strength aptitude tests in various forms to counsel recruits on the requirements of certain MOSs (GAO 1996). The Navy and Marine Corps never used strength testing for pre-enlistment purposes, but maintained stringent physical fitness standards during Basic Training.

When gender differentiated physical fitness requirements were comprehensively instituted at the same time new career fields were made available to female service members, commanders were left with contradictory policies to implement. Some of the occupational requirements of newly opened specialties included heavy lifting and/or experiencing extreme physical strain (i.e. G-forces, road marches). In some instances, commanders used existing physical fitness requirements to limit or restrict duty to only those male and female service members able to meet the standards. However, since the requirements were being subject to local interpretation, units with similar missions had different capabilities depending on how personnel were evaluated for their specialty. In some cases, male service members may have been allowed to continue serving in their unit despite failing a physical fitness test. The individual may have received counseling or other administrative punishment to correct the discrepancy. However, newly assigned female members may not have been provided the same considerations. Instead, unit commanders demonstrating privilege not only by rank, but perhaps by their sex, may have punished a
failing female service member more harshly or requested the individual perform different duties. Other commanders have chosen to work around deficiencies in physical fitness requirements in hopes of seamlessly integrating female service members into the unit. In both instances, the way a commander handled the situation and the way members of the unit responded serve as examples as to how policy interpretation can affect the acquisition of identity in relation to gender privilege.

**Government Accounting Office Research**

After a detailed investigation of each service branch’s application of physical fitness requirements, the Government Accounting Office published recommendations in 1996 that laid the ground work for further occupational evaluations (GAO/NSIAD-96-169 Physically Demanding Jobs). These recommendations identified the shortfall in data collection throughout the entire Department of Defense: little systemically collected data on the ability of service members, male or female, to meet the physical demands of occupational tasks was available (GAO/NSIAD-96-169, 9). This was a significant limitation in effectively integrating female service members into the military since the minimum requirements for perceived physically demanding jobs did not exist. Male service members were assumed to be qualified because of their sex, while female service members were subjected to commander interpretation of unit needs. Furthermore, any revised physical fitness requirements for an MOS would not only be new for the assigned female service members, but also male service members not currently required to meet any requirements in these specialties. The potential for male performance failures existed wherein male service
members in these specialties had never been questioned about their capability - their identity as a male service member may have tempered any doubt of their abilities.

Physical Fitness Testing

In addition to differences between male and female physical fitness requirements, differences in these requirements between the branches of service presented conditions of privilege. The Army, Navy and Marine Corps used strength testing and endurance testing on some level in basic training as well as annual evaluations. These tests were comprised of sit-ups, push-ups and a variation of a run or road march conducted within a specific amount of time. These three branches of service also had the largest number of direct combat jobs of which many were recently opened to female service members. The Air Force, which tested service members using a cycle ergonomic method, did not routinely strength test members. By 1998, former Secretary of Defense William Cohen had recognized the differences between each military branch’s physical fitness requirements and directed that by 1998, all service branches would develop some method to strength test its members (Borlik 1998).

The Army, Navy and Marine Corps developed their 300-point scale to using in assessing personnel by 1998. Men and women were tested with different minimum requirements based on their age group. In place of the pull-up for males, females were required to perform the flexed-arm hang. The Navy substituted curl-ups in place of full sit-ups and each service maintained some form of endurance test, like a 2 mile run (Borlik 1998). The Air Force identified eight installations to use as test sites for its new strength
and flexibility tests (Bailey 1998), but pushed back the implementation for service-wide physical fitness testing until 2000. The test sites collected data and forwarded information to the Force Enhancement and Fitness Division of the School of Aerospace Medicine and the Air Force Fitness Program Office at Brooks Air Force Base, Texas. Prior to 2000, the Air Force continued to use the cycle ergonomic method to test service members. By continuing to use this method while the other three military service branches used a different method suggests a difference in institutional identity based on mission requirements and/or leadership of each service. These differences may have privileged those in units with direct combat missions or those with more stringent physical fitness requirements. In turn, this may have also affected the individual identity of unit members, potentially complicating professional relationships between members of different branches of service.

In the first years following the attacks of September 11, 2001, most physical fitness tests were not administered or recorded officially. Instead, real world events and combat engagement served as real-time assessments for male and female service members. All branches of the military deployed and served together. By 2005, after the operations tempo\textsuperscript{21} stabilized and unit deployments became more predictable, the DOD reinstated annual testing of personnel for physical fitness. The Secretary of the Air Force, in bringing the Air Force more in line with the Army, Navy and Marine Corps changed the official policy to include muscle fitness (strength), body composition and aerobic fitness (May

\textsuperscript{21} Operations Tempo or “Ops Tempo” refers to the frequency of deployments and the length of deployments. In a high ops tempo environment, a single unit can be deployed two or more times per year. In a low ops tempo environment, a single unit may deploy once every three years. The term does not provide a concrete definition, but instead provides guidance to military leadership on the frequency of deployment which in turn, strains personnel and equipment.
Scores were separated for different age groups and by gender with male and female service members completing the same exercises, but receiving different points based on their performance (see Appendix - AFI 10-248, May 2005, Attachment 12).

**Gender Specific Physical Fitness Standards**

The gender-norming of physical fitness has roots in adapting duty requirements for differences between male and female service members. However, in differentiating physical fitness standards, the policy also divides support for the rationale of including female service members in more specialties. Supporters of differentiating physical fitness requirements claim that women may have different abilities, but the effort required by male and female service members was equalized when different minimum requirements were used (GAO 1998; Silva 2001, 946; Fenner and deYoung 2001, 136). Opponents of the different standards suggest that this is one way the military has lowered requirements to compensate for the physiological differences between male and female service members (Silva 2001, 946; Fenner and deYoung 2001, 133; Donnelly 2007). Senior military leadership at the Pentagon took little action to dispel misconceptions or provide guidance on the rationale for different physical fitness standards. Instead, unit commanders were left to implement and interpret the fitness programs as directed in official instructions from the Pentagon. Differences in implementation practices may have created conditions where privilege negatively affected the professional identity of male and female service members. Moreover, when members from one unit moved to another unit where the differences in
physical fitness standards were addressed positively, a member’s professional identity may have adapted in response to the new environment.

Each branch of the military was responsible for collecting and managing physical fitness programs to ensure compliance with the Department of Defense policy. Beginning in 2005, the Army began collecting and recording data on service members, who either failed the physical fitness test, exceeded maximum allowable body fat or both. In 2009, a report published by the Institute of Health using this data found that on average female service members scored higher on the physical fitness test than their male counterparts in the Army (Williamson et al, 4). The Air Force discovered similar results and produced a new “Fit to Fight” program to implement a comprehensive improvement program for underperforming service members. The Air Force stressed that maintaining the proper fitness levels was really about maintaining combat capability. The highest ranking enlisted member, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley declared, “Being fit can make the difference between life and death for Airmen when actions require concentrated physical activity on or near the battlefield” (Lyle 2009).

During this time, debate about the Marine Corps Physical Fitness Test (PFT) surfaced in 2005 when some argued the flexed arm hang gave female service members an unfair advantage. Since the Marine Corps used PFT scores in evaluation for promotion, some felt that female service members were getting promoted over their male counterparts based on higher PFT scores (Stiehm 2012). Male service members were required to perform the standard pull-up during their PFT and in some cases, some male service members were not earning scores equivalent to what female service members were earning using the
flexed arm hang. When it came time to evaluate personnel for promotion, if the only
deciding factor was a different in PFT score and the female service member scored higher,
then she would be promoted instead of the male service member. The differences in point
values per exercise suggested that each exercise did not accurately assess a member’s
strength. Some believed it was “too hard or impossible for women to lift their own body
weight” (Posey 2005, 10) to complete a pull-up, so the flexed arm hang was used as a way
to test female upper body strength. However, it is not impossible for women to complete a
pull-up. The difficulty exists because most female Marines have not been trained on the
proper form, nor have they ever been made to practice this exercise.

This difference in physical evaluation exercises has roots outside of the military
since most women from a very young age do not train, practice or test on their ability to
perform a pull-up. Instead, beginning in elementary school, physical fitness educators
separate girls from boys. Young girls are required to perform the flexed-arm hang while
boys are required to perform pull-ups (Posey 2004; Foley 2005; Stewart 2005). This gender
segregated socialization creates a misperception that females are unable to perform the pull-
up based on their lack of upper body strength. The idea is reinforced in the Marines as well
as other branches of the service when different exercises for the different sexes are
evaluated instead of evaluating on the same exercise. Research has shown that female
service members, in particular female Marines, who are trained on the proper way to
complete a pull-up and encouraged to perform these exercises routinely, are able to
compete with their male counterparts (Posey 2004; Read 2013). Additionally, “comparison
of men and women for strength using a ratio score with lean body mass as the divisor
considerably reduces, if not eliminates, the large absolute value strength difference between genders” (Marriott and Grumstrup-Scott 1992, 505).

The issue about the use of the flexed arm hang over the traditional pull-up in the Marines continues today (Leiby 2013). The other branches of the military continue to use gender-norming exercises to evaluate strength, but perhaps receive less attention because they have been integrated longer or because female members have somewhat “proven” themselves in physically demanding specialties. The Marine Corps is the last branch of service to fully integrate female service members into all units, including ground combat. The juxtaposition between requiring female service members to perform the traditional pull-up in place of requiring them to perform the flexed arm hang in an annual PFT assessment, highlights the contradictory message that female service members possess equal opportunities in the military. Female service members are expected to perform their duties as required, but at the same time, commanders are less likely to promote strength training or practicing exercises like the pull-up since female service members are not evaluated on their ability to do a pull-up (Posey 2004). In essence, unit commanders are forced to treat male and female service members differently when it comes to physical fitness because requiring females to complete a pull-up may be seen as discrimination. If a female service member takes it upon herself to train as her male counterparts do instead of performing the female specific exercises, she may be viewed as threatening to men or too masculine which may also cause discrimination instead of acceptance.

While some feel the use of the flexed arm hang privileges female service members, this is not necessarily the case. Male service members are privileged because the traditional
pull-up highlights their upper body strength which is often viewed as overtly masculine and desirable for military service. If the PFT scoring was changed to lower the point value associated with the flexed arm hang, the male service members would remain privileged since the only reason for doing this would be to prevent a female service member from being competitive for promotion and give the false impression that the exercise is not a significant assessment of strength.

Endurance and Cardiovascular Testing

By 2013, all branches of the military had revised their physical fitness testing to evaluate cardiovascular strength, endurance and muscular strength. While each branch of service uses a variety of exercises, a 1.5-2 mile run accompanied by sit-ups/crunches and push-ups are standard. Other exercises such as the pull-up/flexed-arm hang and abdominal crunches are used by the Marines for Combat Physical Fitness evaluations (Smith “USMC PFT charts”). Different physical fitness tests are completed during the recruitment process and once enlisted, the member is held to the standards of the unit assigned. The service academies, ROTC units and OTS/OCS have different requirements than active duty units in an effort to ensure proper training. These evaluations are an effort to ensure that each recruit or cadet meets the duty requirements prior to signing an enlistment and can continue to perform once assigned. Each branch of the military continues to use differential scoring methods based on gender as well as age. These scores are based on research and data collected, however, each military service branch and unit commander can adapt as necessary to ensure mission effectiveness.
The Evolution of Culture and Appearance

The number of female service members in the military increased during the second period of analysis, 1995 to 2013. In this period, male and female service members served in Bosnia (1994-1995) and Kosovo (1999) as well as in Operation Enduring Freedom (2001 to present), Operation Iraqi Freedom (2001 to 2010) and Operation New Dawn (2010 to 2011). As of 2011, women made up 14.5% of the total military force (U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center, unpublished data as of 30 September 2011; compiled by the Women’s Research & Education Institute, March 2012). This is a significant increase from 9.4% who served in 1984 (Women’s Research & Education Institute, March 2012). The number of female officers increased dramatically as well. In 1980, only 2% of lieutenant colonels and above were women, but by the beginning of fiscal year 2012, women made up 18.5% of all officers in the Department of Defense (U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center, unpublished data as of 30 September 2011). The increase in the number of female service members has forced the military institution to change in some regards; however, contradictory gender integration policies continue to privilege masculinity and male service members. This privileging may affect the culture and the professional identities of male and female service members.

When one uses a lens of privilege related to gender identity as a way to interpret or implement gender integration policy, the effect on the unit may directly influence the culture of the unit. In turn, this privileging may influence the identity of male service members who demonstrate masculinity above female service members who may appear more feminine. In order to be accepted, some female service members may dampen down
their femininity and demonstrate more masculine characteristics. Melissa Herbert (1998) completed a study of how unit culture may affect male and female service members. In 1995, after many women had been assigned to traditionally male career fields such as pilot, vehicle and aircraft maintenance, security forces and explosive ordinance disposal, Herbert found that some female service members were judged as “too masculine simply because they do the very job to which they had been assigned” (1998, 47). These female members were judged negatively by their male counterparts, other female members, supervisors and commanders despite possessing the characteristics the military deems most desirable (Herbert 1998). This culture is heavily influenced by unit commanders who may have very traditional ideas of what a woman should or should not do.

Contradictory policy on the assignment of female service members to traditional masculine specialties complicated the issue. Male service members who viewed their female counterparts as equals may face ostracism by others in the unit for their views. Female service members who identify as feminine are ostracized by both male and female service members for not performing to the masculine standard (Herbert 1998, 65). Yet, when women excel and perform to the masculine standard, they may be criticized for being too aggressive or not feminine enough (Stiehm 1989; Herbert 1998). These paradoxes are not easily remedied due to contradictory gender integration policy which hampers the ability to establish a professional identity.
Sexual Harassment

Between 1995 and 1997, the military culture was characterized by high profile cases of sexual harassment and discrimination. These cases highlighted the privilege of rank and being male in the military. Three military training instructors or “drill sergeants,” were charged with harassment and rape in the 1996 Aberdeen Proving Ground investigation. One sergeant with 12 years of service in the Army was convicted of multiple rape charges and sentenced to 25 years in prison (Spinner 1997, B01). The accounts of sexual harassment, discrimination and assault came at the same time the Army was opening more positions to female service members. The official guidance on personal relations between male and female service members in a training environment was left to unit commander’s discretion. In other words, the Department of Army policy on having a “buddy system” anytime an enlistee needed to speak to a drill sergeant was relaxed significantly at many installations (Spinner 1997, B01). Local interpretation and application of DOD policy created a culture that fostered privilege in the form of rank and since men dominated the military, this also privileged male service members. The drill sergeants at Aberdeen Proving Ground were not held to strict standards regarding interaction with subordinates which led to “the relaxed college-like environment so many of the recruits said existed during their training at Aberdeen” (Spinner 1997, B01). This environment was much like the commander’s calls discussed in the previous chapter during the first period of analysis. Male and female members were invited to participate in social events during off-duty hours and many times, service members may have used these events to find ways to fit in better with their unit. On
some occasions, these events privileged one group over another and challenged the professional identity of both male and female service members.

In a social setting, female service members were often expected to relax, drink alcohol and join in activities that may be out of the norm for their character (Herbert 1998). Male service members may also be expected to present an image that contradicts their normal behavior in off-duty situations. Without clear guidance from local commanders on what is appropriate and what is not, the lines of acceptable and unacceptable behavior are often blurred. When unacceptable behavior happens, both male and female service members suffer consequences related to their privilege and professional identities. In the case of the drill sergeants at Aberdeen Proving Ground, their behavior represented conferred dominance.

Sexual Harassment Court Martial Cases

Another example of such privileging occurred when the highest ranking enlisted soldier in the Army was accused of harassment in 1997. Former Army Sergeant Major Gene McKinney was accused of sexually harassing six servicewomen, but was not found guilty (Gross 1998). Instead, former Sergeant Major McKinney was found guilty of obstruction to justice and demoted in rank. The case of Sergeant Major McKinney is another deeply troubling situation since he was assigned by the former Secretary of the Army Togo West Jr. to serve on a military-civilian task force. The Senior Review Panel on Sexual Harassment was tasked with identifying weak areas and making recommendations to prevent sexual harassment. McKinney served on this panel one year prior to being
charged with sexual harassment (Chapman 2008, 11). Both of these high profile cases suggest that something outside of the gender integration policy was occurring between male and female service members in the military. The lack of enforcement of policy at all levels suggest that leaders were interpreting policy based on their preferences, which may influenced by privilege.

One’s professional identity in the military remains a complicated matter even after the events of September 11, 2001 opened doors for gender integration. Many male and female service members deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom and successfully served in integrated units. Female service members were assigned to units with combat duties despite restrictions. When female service members were necessary to a mission and exceeded preconceived expectations, they challenged the norm for women in the military. This new culture enables male and female service members to perform in combat zones or within mission-ready postures without attention to their physical appearance or the way others perceive them (Herbert 1998). When this occurs and male and female service members are allowed to accomplish mission directives without unwanted attention to their gender and sex differences, the professional identity of a Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine emerge. When contradictory gender integration policies fall by the wayside, the profession identities of male and female service members reflect the qualities of all military personnel and the values of the United States military as a whole.

I turn now to a discussion of these policies as highlighted in the self-talk of 18 men and 28 women interviewed for this project.
GENDER INTEGRATION POLICIES

1993\textsuperscript{22} The Air Force began to transition women to fly combat aircraft through the Officer Assignment System (OAS)

1994 \textsuperscript{23} Former Secretary of Defense Les Aspin rescinds the “Risk Rule” and replaced with the “Ground Combat Rule”

1994\textsuperscript{24} The National Defense Authorization Act repealed the legal restrictions on women being assigned to combat vessels

1995 Each branch of the military was directed to develop physical fitness standards according to their particular need(s) and mission

1996 The Government Accounting Office published recommendations for occupational evaluations in the military; requirements differed for male and female minimum requirements

1996 Aberdeen Proving Ground Sexual Harassment incident

1997 The Department of the Army implements the “Buddy System” where every soldier must have a “buddy” or friend with them, especially when speaking to a higher ranking individual

1997 Former Army Sergeant Major Gene McKinney was found not guilty at a court martial for sexual harassment

1998 The Army, Navy and Marine Corps develop 300 point physical fitness tests; the Air Force continued to use ergonomic test (bicycle test)

2001 Male and female service members were deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom

2004 The Army begins the Lioness Program with the Marine Corps

2005 The Army begins to collect data on physical fitness

2009 Marines begin using the Female Engage Team (FET) on missions in Afghanistan

\textsuperscript{22} This policy was not in full effect until the end of 1994 and the beginning of the second period of analysis.

\textsuperscript{23} Full implementation of this policy began in 1995, the beginning of the second period of analysis.

\textsuperscript{24} Full implementation of this policy began in 1995, the beginning of the second period of analysis.
2009 Army report published from data collected since 2005 suggesting that female service members score the same or better than male counterparts in physical fitness tests

2013 Former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta directed all branches of the military to open all combat positions to women
In this chapter, I demonstrate how the policies described directly relate to male privilege and subsequently the acquisition of gender identity. The identity acquisition process is complex as it reflects the unit culture and military climate during a particular period of individual service. Where military policy should provide a framework for professional behavior and interaction between service members, at times policies may have made these interactions more complicated due to the wording which privileges one group over another. These policies further complicate the interpersonal relations between male to female, male to male and female to female service members. When a service member identifies in a manner contrary to the expected norm, they are creating and recreating what it means to be a soldier, sailor, airman or Marine (Herbert 1998, 115) from the expected norm. Gender integration policies in the military directly relate to male privilege and how service members developed their identity in response to privilege.

In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, I presented the policies affecting gender integration in the military in two periods of analysis, 1980 to 1994 and 1995 to 2013. In the first period of analysis, gender integration policies focused on where female service could be assigned with relation to proximity to combat. The period ended with the repeal of the “risk rule” which suggested more duty assignments and positions would be made available to women.
Physical capabilities were noted in the first period of analysis and by 1994, all branches of the military except the Marine Corps had developed separate requirements for male and female service members. Finally, policies related to appearance and the culture of the military in the first period of analysis highlight a desire by military leaders to maintain a feminine identity for female service members. Not every female service member shared this same desire and this complicated the identity acquisition process.

First Period of Analysis: 1980 to 1994

Assignment Policy

In the early years of integration, the first policy to highlight differences between male and female service members was the Defense Officer Manpower Personnel Management Act (DOPMA). This act abolished any requirement for female officers to be appointed separately from male officers and provided the means for female officers to compete with their male counterparts for promotion and next duty assignment (Becraft 2010). Additionally, each branch of service actively recruited women as the military continued to transition to an All-Volunteer Force (AVF). The number of female service members increased between 1980 and 1984, yet the number of female officers in visible leadership positions remained minimal. According to an enlisted female in the Air Force that joined in 1974, the proportion of women changed from “90% male and 10% female in 1974 to 60% male and 40% female in 1984” (Subject 39). The same female service member never had a female commanding officer in any of the units she served in. Of the 12 veterans
who served between 1980 and 1994, only one had a female supervisor, but none of the subjects served under a female commanding officer. The process of integrating female officers into visible command positions did not fully occur until the second period of analysis beginning in 1995.

Enlisted Women

The perception that the branches of service were adding more enlisted female service members to the ranks was not always visible to the men and women serving in the first period of analysis. An enlisted female who joined the Navy in 1974 and served until 1991 recalled: “Well, I was a radioman, which is mostly a male rating. So, I was maybe like one of just a few women in each of the units I’ve ever served in” (Subject 34). One reason for the lack of female service members despite the increase recruiting was that this woman served in a predominantly masculine specialty, often considered having a closer proximity to combat activity. This directly relates to the assignment policies during the first period of analysis wherein female service members were not to be assigned to units that may see combat. In rare cases, a female service may have been assigned when (1) there were no other male recruits to fill this void and (2) the female’s test scores supported her being assigned to this position.

In response to the assignment policies enacted between 1980 and 1994, other specialties not considered “close combat” or “direct combat” positions, but more support-type positions, did see an increase in the number of female service members between 1980 and 1982. An enlisted female in the Air Force who joined in 1980 and was assigned to a medical specialty stated her unit was closer to 60% male and 40% female (Subject 42).
While this woman did not have a female commanding officer either, she did serve in a specialty that could be considered more feminine and appropriate for women who wished to join the military.

The increase in recruiting of female service members and the lack of clearly defined integration policies presents a contradictory message to those serving in the military. The broad assignment policy suggested that women who were recruited for service would be assigned to positions where other women were also recruited. The Army and the Air Force projected increases in the number of female service members based upon assignment policies which suggested that male and female service members were eligible for all specialties. In reality, female service members were restricted to specialties that in the event of conflict would not place them in close proximity to combat activities. The segregation of combat/non-combat or line/non-line specialties privileged male service members as the preferred soldier to handle combat activities. When the assignment policies highlight differences between male and female members by separating where they can serve, the lens through which these members begin to identify reflects the masculine and feminine context of service. Additionally, service members had to navigate the military through an understanding of hierarchy not only between male and female members, but also between newer and older service members. The identity of male and female service members, as reflected in their self-talk, supports the idea that older, more senior female service members may have been dominant to newer, younger female service members.

A woman who joined in 1981 never had a female commanding officer, but she reported having numerous mid-level managers who were female. During the transition of
integrating more female service members into the Navy, many women were successful and
were promoted to NCO ranks (E-4 through E-6). This category of women had served a
minimum of 5 years, but some may have served as many as 10 years within these ranks. As
the number of women in the military, particularly the Navy increased, this woman
observed:

You know, so they [women] had been in when there was hardly any women and
now they were sort of middle management, you know, not quite to the chief level,
but just really, really bitchy, resentful of these younger women coming in with all
these advantage. (Subject 32)

Within the context of this woman’s service, she experienced privilege based on the
hierarchical structure of rank and position, as well as gender. The identification of “middle
management” and “not quite the chief level” suggest that not only does this individual
know and understand her position in the military hierarchy, but also recognizes the female
service members who have earned rank above her. Moreover, this recognition directly
relates to one’s power over the other (Foucault 1979, 27). A female enlisted member with
more time in service and higher rank has power to present a negative image to subordinates
based on the perception that the “younger women” being integrated into the Navy have
more advantages than the women who served prior to integration. This reflection of service
relates to the challenges female service members faced in adapting to the masculine culture
of the military during the first period of analysis as discussed in chapter 4. While the
perception of being a bitch may be inaccurate, the context of service may create animosity
between supervisors and supervise as well as affect interpersonal communication between
all members of a unit. This challenge to interpersonal communication may occur because of
the gendered nature of the military assignment process and the gradual increase of female service members.

As the number of female service members increased between 1980 and 1994, so did the challenges female service members faced in adapting to the masculine culture of the military. In addition to concern about how one is perceived by other female service members, some women were acutely aware of how male service members regarded them. One enlisted female in the Air Force was very concerned about how male leadership perceived her service and commented:

Um, as a woman, I characterized it as very um, uh, fearful of the top echelon. Uh, very mistrusting of the top echelon. Had I been a male soldier, I would have considered it a very positive and close relationship. (Subject 42, joined in 1980)

Another female who enlisted in the Marines also noted that the units she served in were predominantly male with only 25% females (Subject 19). From this, male leadership in these units reinforced a dominant masculinity by recognizing male service while ignoring female service. This female Marine stated:

If you had a female and male soldier doing the same thing, um, the majority of the time the male soldier was promoted more than the female soldiers and received more commendations than the female soldiers did. (Subject 19, joined in 1985)

Rank and promotion during the early years of integration were reflective of the unit’s leadership influence and support of the member’s military service. Since leadership was male, their behavior toward female service members preserved the hegemonic masculinity of the military. This communicates the effect of military leaders who felt female service members should not be a part of the military because of their sex.

Despite meeting the academic and physical requirements used for assessment, many female service members still faced challenges to their service. An enlisted male in the
Army recognized the professional environment of female service members was more challenging than male service members. “So, in the intelligence branch, the women were just as technically trained, just as highly skilled as men, but they had to work harder it seemed to me. They worked harder to get the recognition” (Subject 47, joined 1981). In spite of meeting the occupational physical fitness standards and the academic testing requirements set by the Army between 1980 and 1994, some female service members were still tested to prove they could perform as well as their male counterparts assigned to the same position. Moreover, when women were placed in what was perceived as more challenging specialties, the military positioned female service members in such a way that incorporated their service without fully enabling their acquisition of a professional identity. This resulted in female service members who may have worked harder than their male colleagues, but their performance may not have been regarded as equivalent through recognition. In turn, this reinforced male privilege within the units these female service members were assigned to.

Early Definition of Combat

As the gender integration process evolved, the context of the assignment process began to adapt to integrated service by segregating men and women by specialties viewed as traditionally masculine or feminine. In an effort to keep female service members from direct combat, the assignment policy separated MOSs into combat and non-combat coded specialties. Male service members were assigned to combat specialties and line positions first, and then they were put into support positions until all of the male recruits had been
assigned. Women were assigned to traditionally feminine roles characterized as support positions in administrative, medical, dental, legal and personnel fields. Some career fields with an administrative function included a lot of women, yet at times, even they were assigned near a combat zone.

A woman who joined the Air Force described herself this way when asked if she saw combat: “I didn’t see it because I’m a behind the desk type person, but, you know, the IED’s, we heard the missiles. They were close” (Subject 26, joined 1983). Being a “behind the desk type person” is one way individuals in support positions self-identified. This female service member is reflecting the informal policy of not assigning women to positions where the likelihood of seeing combat was greater than an assignment to a different unit. In this case, it is interesting to acknowledge this female did not refer to herself as a “woman,” but a person. Her identity was gender neutral, even if her duty assignment may not have been.

On another occasion, a female service member who joined the Army in 1984 remembered her first supervisor as very discriminatory against women. She recalls:

It was kind of like there was this double standard, huge, huge double standard and I happened to work in an office where there was a first sergeant that was old school, he had been to Vietnam, and he was extremely prejudiced against female soldiers period. And um, he just pretty much flat out told me that once I became pregnant, I was not deployable and he didn’t feel like females should be in the military period. (Subject 27, joined 1984)

This supervisor’s treatment of this young female service member is not surprising since prior to 1980, the military was segregated and women served in separate units. Once gender integration began, there were older, more senior male members who were not supportive of the assignment policies. By assigning female service members to traditionally feminine
specialties, male service members maintained a privileged masculine identity in the military. This female soldier’s recollection demonstrates knowledge of a link to the more senior and older enlisted member’s privileged status in a gender segregated military. She recognized his opinion of the changing assignment process of the military as a direct reflection of her service in the unit. Most importantly, this female service member was very aware of his privileged position in a supervisory role in a support position and that even though she was subordinate her existence was contradictory to his identity in the military.

Identity is often a lived subjectivity which suggests that how one is located socially may be different than how one understands oneself to be (Alcoff 2006, 93). In the quote above, the female soldier described the First Sergeant as “old school” (Subject 27). In essence, she is identified herself as part of the “new school” by describing the context of her service through a description of her supervisor. The dominant masculinity that existed in the military through segregated units was being forced to adapt with the new gender integration policies. In the absence of policy accommodating female service members who may become pregnant, this male supervisor exhibited male privilege by suggesting she was not welcome in “his” military. This woman in the Army may have understood herself as a volunteer soldier, but in the context of the military, she was an unwelcome employee to her supervisor.

**Official Versus Unofficial Policy**

The context of military service is also visible in official and unofficial assignment policies. The Navy’s assignment policy between 1980 and 1994 appeared to closely follow
the guidance from the DOD prohibiting female service members to be in close proximity to direct combat. From this, female service members could not be assigned to sea duty which may include ships in or near combat operations. All female service members in the Navy were expected to serve on land in “shore billets.” From this discriminatory policy, some believed female service members were privileged. A female in Navy who served 17 years remembered how her male colleagues interpreted this policy: “Well, most of the men just resented us for taking the shore billets. They had no problem letting you know that” (Subject 34, joined 1974). Male service members in the Navy were expected to complete sea-duty which could be as long as six months aboard a ship and as frequent as every other year. Females in the Navy, by interpretation of the assignment policy, were exempt from this requirement. This woman continued describing how she perceived her male counterparts viewed her service: “They didn’t, they didn’t really want you there. They thought you took up the shore billage. They thought you were getting an easier time in some way” (Subject 34, joined 1974). The separation of assignments based on sex, not capabilities or shared responsibilities, may have created hostility between male and female service members since it was believed that the better (e.g. warmer climate, less vigorous work, etc.) assignments went to females. Moreover, this context may have inhibited the identity acquisition process of female service members, especially in the Navy. The Navy’s adherence to the risk rule suggested that female service members were incapable of sea duty or perhaps could not be trusted to perform as well as their male counterparts.

Like the Army and the Air Force, the Navy used the potential for direct combat activities as a way to limit the positions available to women. One female service member
who served 15 years in the Navy reported that Air Traffic Control “was mostly the career field that I was in because I don’t think it had been particularly closed off to women before my time” (Subject 32). By recognizing that female service members were restricted from certain specialties suggests an understanding of the military’s characterization of male and female service members. This woman’s description of her assigned specialty presents evidence that she knows she was assigned to a career viewed as feminine or her duty performance was complimentary to military service.

The assignment policy between 1980 and 1994 was very vague and contradictory in restricting female service members to non-combat related specialties, but defining little else for the context of their service. Because of this, a few highly qualified, female service members were placed in male dominant MOSs. In particular, aircraft maintenance represents a traditionally masculine career and one female maintenance officer recalls how a fellow officer perceived her expertise during a change of command ceremony. A fellow maintenance officer, who was a man, expressed his ignorance about female maintenance officers: “and then he faces the crowd and he goes, “well, we’re here for a change of command today and um, uh, I don’t have a clue what she knows about aircraft maintenance” (Subject 14, 1983). The female maintenance officer had between 15 and 20 years of experience in her specialty, but her retelling of this lived experience suggests that her male counterpart did not recognize she may have had the same or even more qualifications than he did. Her male colleague did not appear to view her as an equal or competent in her duties. Aircraft maintenance is not considered a direct combat or close combat career. There had been no direct restrictions on women serving in this career, just
the limitation of meeting the physical requirements and the test scores on the ASVAB.

Despite this female service member’s successful career, she still faced discrimination and harassment because she deviated from the traditional gender norm for women in the military. She served in a male dominant career and as one of very few officers in the first period of analysis. Her interview indicates the assignment policies unfairly privileged male service members regardless of how well or successful a female service member becomes in a field dominated by men.

**The Risk Rule**

The military continued to integrate female service members while issuing contradictory policies. Assigning women to combat-related positions remained controversial at different levels of military hierarchy as well as between the different branches of service. In an effort to unify and have a single assignment policy as requested by DACOWITS, in 1988 the DOD Task Force on Women developed the “Risk Rule” which stated that:

- risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture are proper criteria for closing noncombat positions or units to women, providing that the type, degree, and duration of such risks are equal to or greater than that experienced by combat units in the same theater of operations. (DOD Task Force on Women 1988, p. 1)

From this wording, female service members were encouraged to join the military, but most were assigned to positions where military leaders felt their duties would not put them near the front lines of combat. The risk rule was highly contradictory in that it appealed to those who wished to keep female service members from the spoils of direct combat while at the same time, appealed to those pushing for greater integration of the military. The policy sent
a mixed message to leaders and supervisors which encouraged individual interpretation at the unit level.

As a result of the assignment restrictions, unit commanders developed local policies specific to their branch of service and mission. This came at a time when the military mission was changing. The Army changed from a threat-based structure used during the Cold War to a capabilities-based structure, highlighted by budget restrictions and the integration of air, land and sea units (Demma 1989). Within this restructuring, Army leadership opened additional MOSs and positions to women. “Under new guidelines, 56% of all authorized spaces in the Army could be filled by women” (Demma 1989, 130). Army leaders continued to review recruitment quotas and initiated the Female Officer Professional Development Review to determine if there were any challenges related to the assignment process that held female officers back from promotion. In September 1988, DOD leaders “informed the Army of its policy to keep female soldiers in the theater in the event of either mobilization or hostilities to perform the same jobs in wartime as in peacetime” (Demma 1989, 130). The wording of the policy suggested female service members would have more opportunities. However, the idea of female service members serving in close proximity to combat and in violation of the risk rule prompted Army leadership to remove all females from artillery units. At the time there were only 430 women and 51,000 men serving in this field (Demma 1989). By April 1992, the Army provided official policy to all levels of leadership in Army Directive 600-13:

The Army’s assignment policy for female soldiers allows women to serve in any officer or enlisted specialty or position except in those specialties, positions, or units (battalion size or smaller) which are assigned a routine mission to engage in direct
combat, or which collocate routinely with units assigned a direct combat mission (AR 600-13, 1).

Based on the updated policy, all female soldiers were assigned to units believed to have little or no chance of experiencing direct combat. Those women in units with the chance to serve near front lines of combat were re-assigned to units not likely to see combat.

Operation Just Cause

When an assignment policy highlights gender, the perceptions and expectations for duty are based on the gender expectations of the service member instead of the ability to accomplish the unit’s mission. Additionally, interaction between male and female service members may become more complex. For example, in the aviation community females were not allowed to officially fly in combat until 1990. However, women did fly early combat missions and were held to the same standards and job requirements as their male counterparts, perhaps due to an immediate mission requirement. In Operation Just Cause (Panama 1989), First Lieutenant (Lt) Lisa Kutschera and Warrant Officer (WO) Debra Mann\(^{25}\) ferried troops with their Blackhawk helicopters into areas where Panamanian Defense Forces fired upon them (Becraft 1990). Although their missions were classified as cargo not combat, these women received the same commendation, an Air Medal, as their male counterparts. Furthermore, these women not only identify as competent pilots, but served within a unit where their capabilities were utilized in a mission critical situation.

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\(^{25}\) Another woman, former Captain Linda Bray, served as a Military Policy Officer and became the first female officer to lead troops in battle during Operation Just Cause. In the interest of space, her experience is not included in this paper, but is included in the dissertation.
Lt Kutscher’s commander during the combat operation directed the entire unit to “fly the way you’ve been trained, do it” (Department of the Army, January 1990). Lt Kutscher recalled her actions during the operation:

We were lead formation...and I think our aircraft were the only ones that flew into Cimarron. We had in our unit--we had two flights going into Tinajitas. The first one was a flight of six and then Mr. Mann and I were flight lead on the second flight of three going in there. As we took off, we got maybe a kilometer south of the runway on the route. Mr. Vandenhoovel called over the radio that CPT Muir had been shot in the head, and that was where I realized in my gut that people get killed doing ... and before that I knew in my head that “yeah we can get killed doing this.” (Department of the Army, January 1990)

Throughout Kutschera’s entire interview with an Army Historian, she never referred to herself as a woman, a female pilot or anything related to sex or gender. This suggests her acquired identity was as a qualified and competent Blackhawk pilot who served in a fully integrated unit. Her recognition that “people” may get killed as opposed to “men” or “women” is also indicative of her integration into the male dominant field of aviation and as seeing herself as one of “them.” Both of these examples of assimilation into a professional identity are indicative of a strong leadership role in the unit. Without a leader who treated both male and female pilots as equals, the possibility of discrimination or bias against female service members would have been greater. In spite of the combat exclusion policy in effect during Operation Just Cause, these female service members were expected to perform alongside their male counterparts without any deferential treatment from their unit leadership.
Desert Storm: 1990 to 1991

At times, the assignment policies were overlooked due to mission critical necessity and one example was the first war in Iraq, 1990 to 1991. Many female service members served in combat, including the Navy which sent ships to the Persian Gulf before the official start of combat activity. By 1991, ships were in the region with female personnel on board in spite of the official policy against women in combat, the risk rule.

The manpower needs sometimes led women to work in areas or on missions that they otherwise would not have participated. The needs of the war presumably led commanding officers and mission leaders to use the best qualified persons to carry out their orders even when that involved females. Thus, there was sometimes a difference between enforcing the written law regarding women in combat and using them [women] because they were among the best persons needed to maximize the success of the mission. (DOD 1992, Appendix R)

Since regard for the risk rule was disproportionate and overlooked by some, but not others, the effect was very contradictory to female service members. Female sailors and helicopter pilots were the best qualified or perhaps only ones available to fill a vacant position, but in peacetime, these female service members would not have been considered eligible for this MOS. Based on the demonstrated competency and successful service during war, calls for wider female participation in the military came from civilian leaders, but not without political challenges and push-back from military brass.

Throughout 1991, the majority of units serving in the theater of combat operations had mixed-gender units. These assignments not only tested the limits of the risk rule, but also provided evidence that female service members, who were utilized in positions previously off-limits to them, could be very effective. The 3,700 female sailors who

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26 The theater of operations included Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, Turkey and various other sea or land-based locations in the Middle East.
deployed to the Persian Gulf served on hospital, supply, oiler, and ammunition ships afloat as well as other land-based operations (DOD 1992, Appendix R). The ships, however, may not have had the berthing areas\textsuperscript{27} modified to accommodate female service members. In conducting research for this paper, I found no evidence of direction from the DOD to the Secretary of the Navy to begin any official modifications to naval vessels until after former Secretary of Defense Les Aspin repealed the combat ship exclusion, Title 10 USC 6015, in January 1993 (Becraft 2010, 7). Even more troubling was the affect this haphazard context of service had on female sailors aboard these vessels given the traditional masculine environment.

A young female in the Navy commented on her service aboard ship carrying ammunition during Desert Storm, “It was over 300 men to maybe about 26 women” (Subject 30). She characterized her duty as:

you know, your job was infringing on one of the males or something like that. Maybe they call it old salt and they don’t like to see the women doing a man’s job, so you know, we had that every now and then. (Subject 30, joined 1989)

The comment above directly relates to the official policy that female service members were not to serve in units or positions were the likelihood of seeing hostile action was greater than begin assigned to a different unit. In spite of this contradiction to the assignment policy, this woman describes herself as a woman doing a man’s job. Additionally, this highlights her acceptance of being an “other” (Wajnryb 2008, 84). She viewed herself as outside of the norm of the male dominated unit. This was further complicated by the small number of women who served aboard the ship with her during Desert Storm.

\textsuperscript{27} Berthing areas is a term used for the sleeping quarters aboard naval vessels.
The disparity in numbers, as well as female service members’ unofficial participation in the war, infringed upon the privileged male space in the Navy. The context of female service aboard Navy ships in the Persian Gulf may have been inhospitable to establishing an identity as an integrated member of the unit. Complicating matters was the classification of the ship’s mission as a support mission. Despite this classification, the ship’s geographic location during Desert Storm placed all sailors afloat within a combat zone (Executive Order No. 12,744, 56 Fed. Reg. 2661, 1991), thereby all female sailors were in violation of the official policy if serving within the theater of operations.

In light of these examples from female service members successfully serving in combat, the contradictory assignment policy created a paradox. Navy policy dictated that female service members could not serve in close proximity to combat so they were restricted to shore duty. In a sense, female service members were punished for not being able to deploy and viewed as privileged. Yet, when the needs of the military took priority over the official assignment policy and female sailors were needed to fill voids aboard naval ships, women may have been criticized and discriminated against. One male service member who served in the Navy from 1990 to 2013 recalls this about gender integration: “But that [Tailhook] was a watershed event in the Navy that forced us to change our culture significantly from a boy’s club into a more professional organization that accepted people on merit, not just on gender” (Subject 44, joined 1990). This quote highlights the context of service before and after the Tailhook scandal in 1991. The Navy was viewed as a “boy’s club” wherein the members were male and privileged in their duties which may have translated to inappropriate behavior in off-duty circumstances. However, during duty hours
when there were manpower shortages, female service members were viewed as useful in getting the mission done. The contradictory message sent to all service members in the Navy may have predicated discrimination and harassment when female service members successfully performed outside of the expected gender norm. This harassment may have hindered acquisition of professional identities not only for female service members, but also for male service members who may have questioned their conferred dominance. Nevertheless, this assignment policy privileged male service members since the characterization of women’s service between 1980 and 1994 was as support only. Women in the military were not viewed as directly influential to combat or mission essential duties.

Physical Requirements

As the number of women in the military began to increase, the Army and Air Force conducted studies in an attempt to fully assess their physical capabilities. A main area of concern addressed the limitations commensurate with being female and becoming a mother. Menstruation and pregnancy were viewed as limitations to service since the female body was viewed as less able to perform assigned duties during periods of menstruation or pregnancy (Enloe 1988). The findings from these studies exaggerated differences between male and female soldiers unnecessarily since not every female soldier had a desire to be pregnant or become a mother. Moreover, the research regarding menstruation and its perceived effects on participation and unit readiness were unsupported by the lived experiences of many former female service members, like Lt Kutschera in Operation Just Cause, since menstruation never limited their service.
Pregnancy

Because many men who served during the transition were not familiar with the physiological differences between men and women, commanding officers often relied on personal knowledge to make decisions since an official policy did not exist. In some cases, these decisions were based on male privilege and a disdain for women being integrated into the military. One particular issue that challenged the status quo of male-only units was that of pregnancy. It was not uncommon for older male officers to assume that all newly assigned female service members would have a desire to become pregnant at some point in her career. Moreover, dealing with pregnancy was something many male commanders did not want to consider or even allow. One female who served in the Air Force in 1980 remembers how her pregnancy was handled: “And that time, as soon as my command found out I was pregnant, again, they initiated discharge, and then I was discharged” (Subject 22, joined 1979 and served until 1981). Pregnancy and the medical attention associated with prenatal care was not something commanding officers were trained on or even willing to educate themselves about, despite an increase in the number of female service members. The military was also not prepared to accommodate female service members with uniforms conducive to being pregnant. One female service member who served in the Air Force wore civilian clothes: “There was not a maternity uniform so I wore civilian clothes with my name tag for those nine months” (Subject 39, joined 1974 and served until 1984). Another woman who served 17 years in the Navy explained her issue with the lack of maternity uniform:

And so, for the next, what, 6 months, for all along the way, when my uniform started cutting me, I pleaded with them to please let me wear civilian clothes. Which
they eventually gave into when I showed them the marks on my stomach. (Subject 34, joined 1974 and served until 1991)

The lack of attention to female service members who become pregnant is a deviation from the guidance to maintain the femininity of those who choose to serve. Not every female service member desires to become pregnant, but the military was completely ill-prepared to handle the ones who did. This oversight brings attention to the focus of policy related to physical capabilities inasmuch that the military’s main concern was assigning women to positions where they could support the male service members in direct combat roles.

The lack of concern for proper uniforms highlighted the differences between male and female service members. In these examples, female service members who became pregnant were viewed as inferior since they were perceived as a hindrance to the mission. Additionally, they were unable to wear the uniform which is a main cue to identity in the military. Without this identity cue, these female service members may not have been viewed with the professional courtesy of other female service members who were not pregnant and could wear the uniform.

The context of being female and being pregnant was inconsistent with the dominant masculine image of the military. Pregnancy was viewed as an interference with duty and an inconvenience to military service since female service members were not considered physically fit or capable for at least six weeks after the birth of the child (DOD 1997; Bucher 1999). Interestingly, the quotes included above do not indicate any confusion with a professional identity. These female service members wished to continue their military careers despite facing uniform problems and changes in their physical appearance.
Arguably one of the most feminine traits of motherhood did not challenge their identity as female service members.

Duty Requirements

Physical fitness requirements for women in the military appear to be a secondary consideration in the gender integration process. The first consideration was proximity to combat, next female service members were evaluated for their physical capability in order to receive a duty assignment commensurate with their abilities. The Army and the Air Force were the only branches of service to modify physical fitness requirements during the first period of analysis. The Army made modifications that privileged a group of men who performed in a middle-range category of assessment. The Air Force made modifications in an effort to norm the physical fitness requirements for perceived differences between male and female service members. The result of these modifications appears minimal during this period, but laid the foundation for privileging service members who excel in meeting physical fitness requirements in the second period of analysis.

Physical fitness assessments were used as a way to fill non-combat or seeming less masculine careers, like legal, personnel and administrative duties. Not only were female service members prohibited from serving in combat positions, but MEPSCAT scores were used to reinforce their assignment to non-combat coded MOSs by suggesting a better suitability. Yet, this assessment may not have been an accurate assessment of suitability. Major Santure (Army) recalls how a leader inspired troops to become physically fit in preparation for combat, “But by being in shape, by being physically conditioned, you can
do those things” (Wright 1990, tape 020). Major Wright, an Army Historian, interviewed Major Santure after Operation Just Cause ended. Major Santure’s reflection of physical abilities was based upon lack of adequate sleep and a high ops tempo\textsuperscript{28}, not anything directly related to strength. He points out that even support personnel, male or female, had similar requirements:

I can truthfully say from the 17th of December until this operation kicked off on Tuesday night, I probably had ten hours of sleep, maybe in those four or five days. But still able to perform and continue to perform, because of just being in shape. And not only myself, but I think ninety-nine percent of the people in the battalion. And as we’re trooping out, as we are here now on the 8th of January, that legacy of being in shape, of being physically fit, is important to the ... not only of course the infantry guys that are out there, but also to the support troops here with ... where our guys are out there even on the POL pumps that are manning the pumps 12 hours a day.

Major Santure’s comments reflect a cohesive integrated unit focused on accomplishing the task at hand. There was not any recognition of gender or sex differences in the mission; moreover, in his opinion, everyone’s performance relied upon a pre-conditioned physical shape which is something that could be gained and improved upon over time.

The Air Force was the other branch of service to modify physical fitness requirements in the first period of analysis. In 1985, the Air Force separated the minimum fitness score requirements between male and female members (Air Force Regulation 35-11, 1985). Instead of relating physical fitness to occupational requirements, the Air Force sought to improve the physical condition of all male and female service members. The requirements also evaluated height and weight to assess body fat measurements. However, use of body fat measurement was only utilized if a member exceeded the maximum weight (Air Force Regulation 35-11, 1985).

\textsuperscript{28} Ops Tempo refers to the frequency of military deployments and is recorded by the DOD.
None of the five Air Force veterans who were interviewed for this project mentioned anything related to physical fitness requirements or the differences between male and female scoring. This omission may suggest that the physical fitness test scores were not utilized in a way to visibly privilege one group over another. It may also suggest that the effects of gender norming the physical fitness requirements were minimal. Male and female service members who served between 1985 and when the modified test was implemented in 1994 may not have realized any difference in physical capabilities or perceived limitations based on performance. In other words, the difference between male and female scores may not have been apparent unless a supervisor or commander used them as a basis of privilege. This is an area where additional research is necessary to investigate the possible relationship between physical fitness policies and the individual member the military. From this project, physical capabilities appeared as a concern only at the top echelons of the military command and Congressional leadership.

The Evolution of Culture and Appearance

Even as the military enlisted more female service members, policies related specifically to their needs were limited. For example, a female who served in the Navy mentioned that the man who supervised her had little knowledge of the lack of medical facilities or care available to women on post (Subject 34, joined 1974). However, he was not the only one without any knowledge of the available medical care. The same woman remembered that a female officer in the same unit was not proactive in correcting her male counterpart’s lack of knowledge, nor did the female officer make any attempt to improve
the deficiencies in medical care females on base (Subject 34, joined 1974). The lack of knowledge about the necessary care or facilities available to female service members suggests that facilities were either very limited, did not exist or females service members did not utilize the services for unknown reasons.

The disregard for the needs of female service members is indicative of the privileged male service member which in turn may have affected how female service members presented their identity. Male commanding officers or those in a position to provide better medical care and support to female soldiers were often unable or unwilling to do so. Commanding officers may have been unable because of budgetary constraints or lack of guidance in the procurement process of medical care for female service members. It is more likely that male commanding officers were likely unwilling since the idea of pregnancy is not complimentary to service in the military. Commanding officers exhibiting signs of male privilege may have discriminated against pregnant female soldiers because their condition was not conducive with military service or combat. Female service members may not have felt their pregnancy was incompatible; rather it may have been a short term condition, not a permanent limitation. For female service members who did require medical attention for female issues, not including pregnancy, the lack of care may have prevented them from receiving treatment out of fear they would attract unwanted attention.

Leadership

Since the military was traditionally male, senior leadership and male supervisors who had served for several years prior to integration had little knowledge about the needs
Leadership in some units existed in a vacuum where the mission was accomplished with little or no attention to the social behavior unless it directly affected a commander’s professional reputation. When female service members were integrated and social interaction occurred between men and women during off-duty hours, privileged male leaders were concerned with their careers as opposed to mentoring young men and women on acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. A young woman in the Army describes her experience with male leadership as:

Most people were, you know, of the upper echelons, that were officers, or you know, higher enlisted, um, they were just concerned about getting promoted. They are just concerned about their own careers, they really don’t care about those lower enlisted, those private, PFCs, E4s, they don’t care about them. You know, they think of us as just kids. We come in, we go out, a few stay, but mostly, it’s just a recycling system, they don’t care about us. (Subject 27, joined 1984)

In this context, the service member is knowledgeable of the hierarchical structure of the military and within it, the competitive promotion system. Since there were few official policies directly addressing professional interaction or poor leadership, any action taken by a female service member against a male commander were most likely ignored by senior leaders. Since men held nearly all leadership positions in the military during the first period of analysis, the military was akin to male dominated patriarchal system (Johnson 1997).

In male dominated patriarchal systems, what men do as normal and good reflects on male identification, but what others do is abnormal and wrong (Johnson 1997). In the military, female service members are often openly criticized for their displays of femininity, as well as any displays of masculine behavior or characteristics. One female soldier explains the culture of the military as: “It’s like, there’s this persona that, if you’re female, and in the military, you are basically there to service them [men] sexually. And they have
that idea in their head, it’s like open meat market” (Subject 27, joined 1984). This reflection on her time in service relates to the policies requiring female service members to attend make-up and etiquette classes as well as wear the skirt in place of the pant option for the uniform. In the military’s attempt to maintain femininity for female service members, the military reinforced the social aspect of male/female relations above the professional aspect of unit cohesion. Female service members were promoted as different from male service members through appearance policies. These policies reinforced the idea of masculinity as the preferred gender in the military which in turn, privileged male service members.

A male who joined the Army in 1981 had a similar experience to what the female service member described. He recalled his experience with different units: “I got to see a lot of different areas and how people interacted and the motor pool was horrible. You know, people making sexist remarks and slapping girls on the butt and a lot of sexual harassment” (Subject 47). This type of behavior and male dominant aggression is indicative of a privileged group. Service members in the first period of analysis were more likely to see an antagonistic relationship between male and female service members than those who served during the second period of analysis. This may be due to the slow transition from a segregated military to a fully integrated military. Or, the older service members who were hostile to the integration of female service members may have retired from the military. Beginning in 1995, these personal views against gender integration were stifled due to the implementation of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies.
Assignment Policy

Following the official release of the President’s Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, former Secretary of Defense Les Aspin made additional changes to the gender integration policies of the military. In 1994, the risk rule was rescinded and replaced with a policy limiting assignments for female service members to non-ground combat units only. Additionally, all naval vessels, except submarines, were required to be upgraded so female sailors could be assigned to sea duty (NADA 1994; Beckett and Chien 2002, 7). The Navy began to retrofit berthing areas and restrooms so male and female service members could be assigned. The Air Force began assigning women to combat aviation slots which included assignments on fighter or attack aircraft and the Navy also followed suit with an increase in female aviators being assigned to aircraft carriers\(^\text{29}\). While the Army, Navy and Air Force deviated from the strict policy against ground combat assignments for women, the Marine Corps followed the policy very specifically.

When the Army assigned female service members to headquarters units in an effort to prevent them from serving in close proximity to combat, these assignments violated the ground combat exclusion policy (Fenner and de Young 2001, 114). Since a headquarters unit would never deploy as a stand-alone unit, each individual in the unit would be assigned to a smaller unit (company or below) and potentially serve in close proximity to ground

\(^{29}\) Although a few women flew combat missions during DESERT STORM, the official Air Force policy allowing female service members to fly combat aircraft was implemented in 1994.
combat. As such, the Army required that all members in engineering and infantry units complete advanced training with field experience (Department of the Army Pamphlet 611-21, 2007; AR 600-3). During one such training period, a young enlisted female remembered: “In AIT (Advanced Individual Training), I was the only female in the entire platoon” (Subject 49, joined 1997). This woman recalled that she was treated differently which impacted her identity as a soldier. As described in her explanation of time during AIT:

And so he brought me into the office and was pissed that he had to make me an assistant platoon leader. Because I was the only female, and if he didn’t do it then people would think he was, you know, whatever. So it was this really weird sort of thing. So he was mad at me that he had to put me in this position that I didn’t want to be a part of. And it was a really weird situation. (Subject 49, joined 1997)

This young female in the Army was singled out for being the only female and then she was placed in a leadership which she clearly did not want. Leadership positions create a condition where duty performance is critically evaluated by others and as mentioned in Chapter 5, there were few women assigned to these positions even in the second period of analysis. Unwanted attention coupled with scrutiny of job performance because one is female may contribute to an increased belief that men remain privileged in the military.

**Following the Rescission of the Risk Rule**

The contradiction in the interpretation and application of assignment policies in all four branches of the military following the rescission of the risk rule may have led female service members to question their contribution to the unit mission. Female service members who were assigned to support roles may not have viewed themselves as effective as their male counterparts. Despite 94% of all positions being open to female service members in
the Navy, their presence in non-traditional or non-support roles was still minimal (Beckett and Chien 2002, 9). Male service members shared this perception as one male sailor who served in the Navy for eight years explained:

In my unit, women were typically put into more administrative roles. There were people that were doing military escort so they were actually, you know, carrying weapons and escorting equipment. They [women] never got put onto those teams. (Subject 3, joined 1999)

This observation suggests that male service members were very aware of the policy against female service members serving in units that had the potential for ground combat. Moreover, recognition of the different assignments available for male and female service members suggests that one was more privileged than the other. In some cases, a male service member who did not wish to serve in a combat-coded unit may have felt that female service members were privileged in their assignments restricting their proximity to ground combat operations. A male officer in the Air Force remembers his assignment to a non-combat, training environment:

I even notice the difference from my doing from operational job and doing my non-operational job when I was teaching school for those couple of years. I never thought about it...I said to myself, ok, this is what it means, to have a life and you know, to take some down time and not have to go into work on the weekend. (Subject 11, joined 1999)

The description above informs us that non-combat assignments were more consistent in daily routines and schedules. By 1997, the Air Force had opened the majority of positions to female service members. Yet, many support positions remained dominated by female service members (Harrell and Miller 1997). These positions were generally administrative or training in nature. Officers like the one who was quoted above noticed a difference between combat and non-combat assignments. These assignments were often viewed as
easier or lighter in duty requirements and individuals who filled them may have been privileged above those who were unlikely to be assigned. Alternatively, a female service member may have felt that male service members were privileged since there were no restrictions on the types of units they could be assigned to. This paradoxical situation reinforced by the assignment policy, directly affected how male and female service members identified.

The way a female service member accomplished the unit mission as well as her feelings of competence in individual duties was both a direct reflection of how she viewed herself within their military environment and how others perceived her. In some cases, being female was the main issue, regardless of how well one performed. “Just being female definitely was a point of being ostracized in my unit. And I cannot speak for the ship as a whole, but in my unit, it was a pretty severe distinction between men and women” (Subject 17, joined in 2003). Being ostracized for being female on a male dominated Navy ship affected how this woman thought about her position in the unit. By using the word “severe,” her description of the environment is overtly negative. Severe may suggest something is deeply painful and experienced on a personal level, rather than a professional level. The woman continued as she explained her working environment.

In those kind of situations I think, you know, because it’s sort of like even if your personality isn’t such you like identified with female or something, but if all of sudden, you’re in a place or the situation where that’s how everybody sees you. Like how can you help but not sort of think, ok well I guess that’s what I am is you know, I am a girl person as opposed to just a person with my own identity. (Subject 17, joined 2003)

Being viewed as “girl person” as opposed to “a person with my own identity,” suggests that the male sailors in this woman’s unit failed to see past her gender. In her perception of the
situation, she identifies as a person with her own identity, but realizes those around her view her as a girl, not a gender-neutral member of the unit. This is somewhat disturbing since being part of a team may be a contributing factor to successful completion of missions or assignments.

Despite the Navy successfully modifying two-thirds of the 99 combatant ships in the fleet by 1997, this only allowed 3,150 female enlisted members and 400 female officers to serve aboard (Harrell and Miller 1997, 25). These numbers may seem significant, but when the largest operational unit of the Navy is a carrier strike group, the numbers seem minimal. In a single carrier strike group, there are likely close to 7,500 personnel assigned. This includes personnel aboard an aircraft carrier, at least one cruiser, a flotilla of six to ten destroyers and/or frigates and a carrier wing that may include as many as 70 aircraft (eisenhowernavy.mil). The Navy currently has 11 assigned carrier strike groups which suggest that the number of positions available to women in 1997 was minimal at best. Moreover, not having as many positions for female service members as male service members restricted were females could be assigned. This limitation in duty assignment directly impacted how female service members were viewed aboard ships they were assigned to. Their limited numbers highlighted their presence in a way that privileged male service members.

Interaction between officers and enlisted

The context of military service after the rescission of the risk rule enabled more units to integrate, which may have strained the communication and interaction between
male and female service members. One female Air Force officer remembers that she was perceived as unapproachable while other male officers were visible:

I would say that the women acted a little differently when he [unit commander] was not there and I was in charge only because, and I am just making an assumption, and I don’t know for sure, but only because I was the only other woman and that might have been the only time that they felt comfortable to come and speak with me.

(Subject 1, joined 1999)

Without knowing the full context of these conversations, it is hard to imagine why female enlisted personnel avoided speaking to the female officer when the male commander was present or if they avoided the male commander as well. The recognition by the female officer that the female enlisted troops acted differently suggests a comradery or sense of likeness based on gender. The female officer did not mention a difference in the behavior of male personnel, but only female personnel which may also suggest that the fewer number of female service members enhanced attention to their presence in the unit. The context of service during periods or within units where fewer women were serving also created an environment where unwanted attention may have been encouraged.

Pregnancy

Much like the first period of analysis, pregnancy remained a condition incompatible with military service. In some disturbing cases, female service members in the second period of analysis were also ostracized despite continuing to complete their duty requirements.

Okay, so, for instance, um, one time I was pregnant, and the baby was dead, but I was still carrying, so I had to have surgery. Regardless that I going was through all of that, nobody wanted to talk to me because it was all man in the office. So they would call the female surgeon to come talk to me, and instead of help me through it, they actually found somebody else to take my position and put me somewhere else.
So it was kind of like you have problems, we don’t want to deal with you, you’re better off their problem than ours, you know, let’s get a man in here to do the job. And ironically, the man they get in there to do the job was arrested and went to jail, so it wasn’t I couldn’t effectively to do the job, it was that I was going through something at that time that they didn’t want to deal with. Or they, they didn’t know how to deal with. (Subject 15, joined 1998)

Dramatic descriptions of discrimination based on women who were pregnant continued into the second period of analysis, 1995 to 2013. The woman above served in the Air Force for eight years and served within a non-combat specialty. This description is evidence of how some commanders may have interpreted policy based on their individual perception of the unit’s needs in order to fulfill mission requirements. By using the needs of the unit to replace a woman facing a miscarriage, this commander used his privilege to suggest her position was mission critical and it could only be successfully completed by a male service member.

Despite being in a non-combat coded position, male privilege and the behavior associated with being a dominant male may have contributed to animosity between male and female service members. In some regards, male service members in the unit described above may have felt inferior when compared to male service members assigned to combat units. This context of service may have promoted a need to project a more masculine identity to other members of the unit. When this occurred, physical conditions or characteristics closely associated with being female, e.g. pregnancy, attracted unwanted attention thus complicating professional relationships between male and female service members. Such a lived experience may impact a female service member unless one projects the identity of a professional soldier.
Recognition

A male supervisor recognized the professional accomplishments of a young enlisted female in the Air Force:

[Male supervisor] he put me in for senior airman below-the-zone, and he wrote me great performance reports and he try to get me a medal, um, before I left that duty section. That was my first term in, um, but they, but they denied it, but he tried. (Subject 15, joined 1998)

Her identity as a professional in the Air Force attracted positive attention from a senior enlisted male supervisor who did not present himself as a privileged male. Instead, this supervisor viewed the performance of his female subordinate with approval, so much that he recommended her for early promotion and for a medal. Such behavior from male supervisors suggests a dampened down masculine identity, reflective of increased integration in assignment policies. Moreover, this type of recognition may have fostered a more cohesive unit environment where male and female members did not face challenges to their identity.

Post September 11, 2001 Assignment Policies

During Operations Enduring Freedom (2001) and Iraqi Freedom (2003), many units deployed with more female service members than had been utilized in previous conflicts. The Marines’ use of female members changed dramatically over the course of the war. In 2003, a young male Marine recalls a female Marine was assigned to his unit.

She was uh, um, she was part of our support, she was a communications specialist, so she just pretty much sat in an armored vehicle all day and it was a heavily armed vehicle that wasn’t even part of our unit’s gear because we pretty much just had Humvees. And our uh...I don’t know who made the decision, but she had to be in an armored vehicle. Whereas comm guys from our unit, her counterparts, were able to do their job from Humvees. (Subject 6, joined in 1998)
This Marine was very aware of the female Marine’s proximity to combat operations as well as how she was treated differently. Perhaps due to the ground combat restrictions discussed in Chapter 5, the unit commander assigned the female Marine to work in a heavily armed vehicle as a way to protect her from hostilities as well as an attempt to comply with the official policy. Yet, the placement of the Marine caused some to question her professional abilities as this young man explains: “As far as I know, she did her job well, but she was so well protected” (Subject 6, joined 1998). The Marine’s inability to discern if the female Marine contributed to the mission effectiveness is noteworthy. This woman was a trained communications specialist who deployed with a Marine unit to a combat zone. Yet, her participation as an equal contributor was not recognized. The lack of interaction with the male members of her unit as well as uncertainty about her job performance may have comprised the acquisition of professional identity as a Marine. The male Marine remembers how the female Marine was treated more so than her duty performance.

I know everybody in her platoon was highly respectful of her, and there were two other platoons and you know, I think everybody was pretty respectful of her. I never saw anything that would kinda lead me to say otherwise. (Subject 6, 1998)

In this recollection of a particular period during a deployment, there is little to suggest that either the male Marine or the female Marine were incapable of performing their duties. Moreover, the male Marine demonstrates privilege in his description of duty assignment. He was not “support” as the female Marine, nor was he as protected as she had been during combat operations.
Another male who served in the Navy referred to Marines as grunts. “I mean, grunts are men and they don’t...there’s no women” (Subject 3, joined 1999). His perception suggests that the Marines not only had a tougher mission, but that female service members would not be able to perform due to the requirements or the proximity to ground combat operations. Both reasons support that the assignment policy between military branches of service as well as within each branch of service remained divided by traditional gender roles. Such gender separation not only highlights the differences between male and female service members, but also creates a professional atmosphere wherein discrimination and preferential treatment are more likely to occur. In most instances, the assignment policy privileged male service members while it may encouraged female service members to dampen down their feminine qualities in an effort to fit in.

The assignment policy prohibiting female service members from being assigned to Special Forces units served to reinforce a strong masculine identity in those units. Of the subjects interviewed, many who served in a combat-coded units like Special Forces often referred to the unit’s mission or specialty as an individual identity. For example, this soldier in the Army describes his unit: We were basically Airborne Infantry. We were straight...we would jump out of airplanes and engage the enemy” (Subject 8, joined 2005). Even though the risk rule had been rescinded, those members who were assigned to units with special or unique missions frequently referred to their unit instead of their individual duty assignment. This reflects the assignment policy discussed in Chapter 5. Female service members were excluded from being assigned to ground combat units unless a unit commander chose to
modify or ignore this policy in some way. The male soldier above describes that he was not just an infantry soldier in the Army, but that he was assigned to the Airborne Infantry unit attributed with conferred privileges (Oakes 2002; McInstosh 2010). These conferred privileges reinforce the privileged male identity since female service members were not allowed to be assigned to these units during this period of analysis.

Female Commanders

Female service members may not have been officially assigned to combat units, but in rare cases, they were placed in command of very large units within a combat zone. A male in the Navy explained that a female captain took over in the middle of his deployment when the male captain had been relieved of duties.

1. We had done a change of command halfway through our deployment and we went from a male captain to a female captain and our female captain was part of a pilot program which tested only about a handful of female officers behind the command of a ship and I think by the time our deployment was over, she was the last female officer standing who had not been fired. So, she was looking down the barrel the entire time she was in command and she didn’t want to screw anything up and she didn’t want to seem too lenient or uh, so she was the opposite of the spectrum. She was overbearing, she was a micro-manager and she was completely uptight about everything. (Subject 12, joined 2004)

It is noteworthy that this young enlisted sailor recognized his new female commanding officer was part of some sort of pilot program being used to test female officers in leadership or command positions. One wonders how this information was communicated to the members aboard the ship and if the information was necessary to explain or defend this woman’s assignment as commander. Inasmuch as this woman was the last female officer standing after the deployment, she clearly performed satisfactorily or she would have been
removed from her position. Yet, this male service member did not see her performance as satisfactory or even commendable. Instead, the female commander was described as “overbearing” and as a “micro-manager,” none of which are positive descriptions of identity. The female commander most likely did not self-identify in these terms, but the assignment policy and the pilot program she is believed to have participated in reinforce male privilege aboard the ship. This in turn enabled male service members to view her command negatively, rather than view her as a competent and professional commander.

Although the Navy integrated naval vessels relatively quickly following the rescission of the risk rule, the number of female commanders remained near zero until 1998 when five Surface Warfare Officers (SWO) were assigned as commanders of combatant command ships (Ebbert and Hall 1999). Female commanders served in medical units or land-based operations, but these SWO assignments were the first visible representation of the integration of female Naval officers following the repeal of the risk rule.

In describing the female commander, this male service member also presents his identity as a privileged male, despite his status as an enlisted troop. By characterizing his female commander in negative terms, he is suggesting that perhaps male commanders were different or even better when they served in the same position. Instead of recognizing the female commander’s ability to withstand criticism or prevent mishaps which may have led to the removal of previous male officers, the male service member viewed his commander as “uptight about everything.” This description of female leadership suggests that even during the second period of analysis when integration was much more advanced, female service members were often viewed with a critical eye to their duty performance.
Combat versus Non-Combat Positions

In contrast, male service members, especially those serving in combat-coded or line positions often received privileges related to their specialty. Since aviation units were male dominated, frequently male aviators were privileged as a male officer in the Air Force explains:

> There are certain individuals who get more and who are...who operate under almost a

2. different system of discipline than the rest of the Air Force. And that’s usually, uh...you know, the Air Force is a flying Air Force so usually the fly...aviators, the pilots, WSOs, there’s usually a little to decent amount of more leniency towards them on disparate actions because they’re considered the backbone of the air Force. So I know several instances of aviators that probably should have had greater amount of discipline brought down on them and they didn’t quite simply because the fact that they were aviators. (Subject 18, joined 1997)

The explanation of treatment between line and non-line or combat and non-combat specialties supports that conferred privilege existed in the Air Force and more broadly, in aviation units across all of the branches of military. The male officer describing his experience was not an aviator, but was very clear on how this group of individuals identifies and are privileged by their duty. Moreover, the context of privilege is something known to those outside the aviation community and this knowledge contributes to the privileged status of pilots. Such privileging suggests that those serving in support or non-combat specialties are not deserving of special treatment, like reduced punishment for inappropriate behavior. Additionally, disparate consequences for members who commit the same crime yet serve in different units may impact the relations between the members of

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30 Weapons Support Officers (WSO), pronounced “wiss-o,” is responsible for navigation and armament management in some fighter aircraft. In fighter aircraft with two seats, the WSO sits in the back and is responsible for firing the weapons or dropping bombs.
each unit. Highlighting the prestige of one group while downplaying the importance of another group may reinforce group identities; however, in this case, privilege came at the expense of equal treatment over disciplinary issues. A work environment where there is preferential treatment for one group over the other may directly relate to conflict in acquiring a professional identity.

One way to deter preferential treatment is to make the number of individuals in each group similar. Instead of having a unit that is 75% male and 25% female, a unit could be closer to 50% male and 50% female.

I think honestly, that’s the reason we have such inequality here among the genders because there is that stereotype that females are better at that so even if, so even though there aren’t nearly as many females as males in the military, there are a lot of them here because this is a very unique job. And not all males can get through the training at the same capacity. So, I feel like it’s more evenly spread between males and females because I feel like this job has more females. (Subject 23, joined in 2011)

This quote is from a young woman in the Navy who joined in 2011. Nearly 21 years after the gender integration process began service members are beginning to see parity in a small number of units. In this case, the specialty is intelligence based and not considered a combat-coded duty assignment. However, individuals who serve in this specialty may be attached to a combat-coded unit, thus finding themselves in combat zones. Yet, this possibility does not seem to affect the identity of male and female service members in the unit. Instead, this young woman points out that since there are a significant number of female service members assigned to the unit, recognition and duty performance are “evenly spaced” which may refer to being “equal” between the two groups. Recognizing that the job is unique and some males will not get through the training in the same fashion that female service members do suggests that male service members may lack the qualities needed to be
competent in this specialty. Finally, when units are greater parity between male and female service members, the animosity between individuals in units with fewer females may be negated. The need for a “buddy system” to protect against unwanted sexual harassment may be avoided with greater gender integration of units. This in turn, may directly impact the member’s self-identity since one group is not privileged above the other.

Physical Requirements

Following the DOD’s requirement for each branch of the military to establish specific physical fitness tests, the Army instituted their requirements in 1998. The test included sit-ups, push-ups and a timed two mile run with different criteria for male and female service members. Some argue the gender gap between male and female expectations deliberately highlighted gender differences instead of “gender-norming” (Fenner and de Young 2001, 133; Department of the Army 1992). Male service members may have believed female service members had an unfair advantage by having lower requirements than they had. Female service members may have felt inferior by having such a drastic disparity in the minimum requirements. In each case, the perception of a privileged group may have directly impacted individual identity in the military.

In other cases, female service members were more inclined to get in shape prior to joining the military. One female who joined the Air Force in 1996 remembered “getting physically fit so I could be the best military soldier I could be so that when I was in basic training, I could kick butt and I wouldn’t have any problems physically or whatever”
(Subject 13). Instead of identifying as a female, this service member identified as “soldier,” a non-gendered identification.

A male service member who joined the Army in 2000 noted this about females in his unit:

You just don’t wanna be that person that wasn’t able to perform just like everybody else, so if you think about that, mix gender, um, units and that females are not as physically fit or as strong as a man, so there are certain things that a female just can’t do. And, um, it’s not just only females, I mean, it could be a male too, but if you can’t perform then you are perceived as weak. (Subject 16)

The experience of this soldier suggests that competence is heavily dependent on occupational duty requirements. The male service member realizes that female service members may be a group who are unable to perform physically challenging duties. However, he also recognizes that there are male service members who may also be unable to perform the same duties. The physical fitness policy established in 1998 directed the Army, Navy and Air Force to create gender-neutral physical fitness tests. In doing so, these three branches of service initiated a 300 point test with different minimums for men and women as well as different age groups. Subsequently, data collected between 2000 and 2005 in an Army report published in 2009 found evidence to support that male and female service members scored relatively the same in physical fitness tests which considered physiological differences. A more accurate assessment of physical abilities may include occupational requirements instead of fitness performance which in turn, would promote a gender-neutral physical fitness policy.

By 2000, the physical fitness tests used by all branches of the military separated male and female scores for each exercise. As previously mentioned, this may create a condition where male service members felt female soldiers were unfairly advantaged by not
having to complete more repetitions of strenuous exercises. In the self-talk of the subjects, there is little mention of male service members who are not able to meet the minimum requirements. Instead, gender-normed assessments brought more attention to female service members than anyone else. The physical fitness policy in the second period of analysis creates a perception where female service members may be viewed as weaker, but advantaged in the promotion system as a female in the Marines explains:

But, also, what I did see a lot, were people were promoted that were more for their strength kind of abilities, as far as, ok that person had a perfect score PFT (physical fitness test), so that person is going to be chosen for promotion board vice somebody who may have had a perfect score on some intellectual test. (Subject 24, joined 1997)

The Marines have a reputation for being a service that once you successfully complete basic training, you are qualified to perform any duty assigned (Stiehm 1989). The quote above is an example of this mentality as well as recognition of a gender neutral perception of physical fitness requirements. This female Marine served during the period that the Army, Navy and Marines evaluated service members with a 300 point physical fitness test with different minimum requirements for men and women. However, in her comments, we can assume that both male and female Marines were promoted quickly with perfect PFT scores, not just females who may have been perceived to have an easier test. This woman’s identity as a Marine signals that once physical fitness requirements are satisfied, female Marines compete with male Marines equally for promotion. There is no indication that female Marines are viewed as less capable or weaker than their male counterparts in her self-talk.

The physical fitness policy maintained different scoring methods for male and female service members inasmuch that some may have viewed female minimums as less strenuous, while others may have viewed the policy as compensating for the physiological
differences. The difference in physical fitness tests, however, set up a condition where female service members may have been discriminated against if they were unable to satisfactorily perform the occupational requirements for their specialty. The perception may have been they were too weak or feminine. Alternatively, if female service members excelled or out-performed male service members, they may have faced discrimination for appearing too masculine. In either situation, female service members faced a dilemma that privileged male service members who demonstrated masculinity.

The Evolution of Culture and Appearance

In an effort to modify their identity in the military, some female service members took on qualities generally perceived to be masculine or personality qualities similar to their male peers. In some cases, this presentation of a competent officer was misinterpreted by subordinate male troops. One male soldier had a female lieutenant as a commander during basic training for the Army.

She was not respected. And, ‘cause she was like 23. Um, and our, we had an E9, an E9 was over our entire unit. And he had served in like 5 conflicts and he would have to salute her. You know, ‘cause it’s like one of those things where you’re trying to teach the little soldiers, you know, like so all the NCO’s would have to give her respect and she didn’t deserve it. (Subject 2, joined 2001)

This serviceman’s experience with a female lieutenant reflects the military hierarchy that not only privileges male service members, but also creates a contradictory position for new officers, male or female. One of the most visible ways to gain military experience is through serving and getting promoted which may require participation in combat. The assignment policies between 1980 and 1994 restricted female service members from officially serving in combat operations. This created a condition where male service
members, enlisted and officer, were privileged which in turn impacted their identity in the military.

The assignment policies between 1980 and 1994 reinforced the culture of the military as a hegemonic masculine institution. Those in power were mostly male and because female service members were perceived as unable to meet the requirements for promotion, e.g. combat duty, they may have been viewed as less than capable or inferior to male service members. This perception may have been passed down to new enlisted troops in basic training as well as during AIT as the quote above demonstrates. From the context of this interview, the male soldier does not provide any evidence as to why this female lieutenant was not to be respected other than 1) she did not serve in combat and 2) she was young. The experience of an older male enlisted service member creating an image for a new recruit regarding female service members sets the stage for incorrect assumptions of female service members and promotes a privileged male identity.

**Duty Performance**

In the military, one way a female soldier can overcome misperceptions of their abilities or professional ambition is to excel at their assigned duty. “Like I said, if you were good at your job. Like for instance, this girl who was a bitch. She was good at her job. And...so she got promoted” (Subject 43, joined 2008). This description may suggest that a female who is in a command position and demonstrates qualities most closely attributed with being male, i.e. aggressive, confident, and strong, she may be characterized in a derogatory way rather than for her professional accomplishments. The culture of the
military was more integrated between 1995 and 2013, but that does not suggest that the professional identities of male and female service members were understood in gender neutral terms.

One of the ways female officers may have navigated their context of military service was to find extracurricular activities to improve their self-confidence and presentation to other members of their unit. A female Army officer who was stationed with a small cohort of other female officers participated in self-defense classes during off-duty hours. Their male battalion commander commented: “Oh, my goodness, I heard you guys did really well in your fights. You females are running circles around my male lieutenants. You girls need to slow down because you’re making my guys look bad” (Subject 46, joined 1998). The suggestion that female officers were making male officers looks bad directly reflects the context of male privilege in the unit. The battalion commander was fearful that the male officers were being portrayed in a negative light by the successes of the extracurricular activities of their female counterparts. Yet, the reality was the male officers were abusing their status as privileged to maintain a status quo. The male lieutenants’ performance in the absence of the female officers would have not have raised any suspicion that they were performing any less than expected. However, in the presence of female officers who were excelling both on and off duty, these male lieutenants may have been viewed as less than their female counterparts. Moreover, this female officer presented a very clear identity in her response to the battalion commander: “And immediately we looked at him and said, ‘Sir, why don’t you tell your little boys to step up to the plate and catch up with us?’” (Subject 46, joined 1998). In this exchange, the female officer
recognized her performance was above that of the males in her peer group. Her presentation of identity directly challenged the male privilege that existed within her unit.

The evolution of military culture was not always difficult for female service members. In overcoming male privilege, many female service members tried to perform their job duties especially well.

Because that unit that I, that unit that we were in, that unit was mixed male and female and because of my job, I worked primarily with units that didn’t have females so I was one of the few females that these guys had ever worked with. They weren’t accustomed to working with women and I actually had an easier time with them, yeah they were harder on the up-front, but once I proved myself to them, once I showed them that I was competent, that I was good at what I did, they didn’t bother me. I didn’t have to keep proving myself. (Subject 46, joined 1998)

This female officer in the Army did not dampen down her feminine qualities and was not assigned to a specialty that was dominated by other female service members. Her identity was that of the only female officer in the unit and any behavior contrary to a masculine norm would have been scrutinized by male service members. In order to be successful and accomplish the mission, this female officer projected an identity that rivaled her male counterparts such that she did not attract negative attention while proving she could complete the mission.

Another example includes an experience from a female officer at a forward deployed location. This woman was in a very unique situation since she was an Air Force member serving at an Army post. The hierarchy of service branches suggests that those in combat specialties are privileged over those in non-combat specialties. Additionally, she was the only female at her location and she was a reservist. Given the context of her service, those around her created an identity for her and the only way to overcome their incorrect assumptions was to perform as any other soldier would perform - male or female.
But when I did arrive there, because it was all male, it was Army, um, I was concerned because I was a female. I was a female number one. I was Air Force which there weren’t many Air Force at all. Um, I was enlisted...and they found out I was a reservist. So, apparently, there’s this thing against active duty versus reservists. They think like all the reservists are lazy or whatever. I didn’t know that, you know that, but anyway, I had all these strikes against me so I was worried that maybe I wouldn’t be accepted or maybe I wouldn’t be credible right? But in fact, they were actually very dependent and I realized that as long as I do my job well, and they trust me, those things don’t matter. (Subject 5, joined 1999)

This young woman recreated her identity as a competent female service member in spite of being misidentified by those around her. The conferred dominance (McIntosh 2010) placed upon this woman did not result in modification of her identity; instead, this female service member overcame negative impressions by projecting a professional, competent identity as a member of the unit.

**Enlisted Women**

The same situations existed for enlisted female service members. At an overseas location, a male who served in the Air Force served with a larger number of female service members.

There were quite a bit of females. There were groups, two different types of females. There were the females that could hang with the men and they would be able to do the same physical job and everything that we could. And then there were the ones that we disregarded because...we couldn’t rely on them. They either didn’t have the physical ability or mental ability to do it. We weren’t mean to them because of that...we just...if we needed something done, we’d go to the person that we knew could do it. I think that might just be who the person is, not cause of their gender. (Subject 4, joined 2004)

The comment above suggests that integration of men and women had been moderately accepted by service members. Male service members navigated their professional
interaction with female service members by showing respect to those who could perform satisfactory and disdain for those who were unable to complete the duty requirements.

In some situations, female service members may have been discriminated against if they did not project a masculine identity. An enlisted female in the Army described her experience with the difference in treatment between male and female service members.

“There was some [difference], yeah, especially with myself...but um, yeah. I think if a woman didn’t act a certain way they were treated differently. We had to act like the men” (Subject 20, joined in 2000). As discussed in Chapter 5, female service members faced a double bind. On one hand, they were required to perform like a man promoting masculinity while dampening down their femininity. Yet, if a female service member was viewed as “too masculine,” she could face harassment for deviating from the accepted norm for women.

According to the woman above, females in her unit were treated differently if they did not present an identity that supported the masculine nature of their duty, military police. Despite numerous female service members receiving accolades for their duty performance and capability in accomplishing the unit mission, in this specific context, female service members still needed to present a masculine identity to avoid deferential treatment. The context of this service highlights male privilege and the conferred dominance in some units. Although it is unclear what may occur if female service members in this unit did not project masculine identities, the assumption is women may be harassed and discriminated against for promotion or recognition. In both cases, male service members are privileged over female service members who may hinder positive professional relationships.
The Buddy System

Members were required to travel in same-sex pairs while on base after the buddy system\textsuperscript{31} was implemented. Each branch of the military added additional videos explaining this policy to new recruits as part of their basic training curriculum. A male who joined the Army in 2001 recalls the anti-sexual harassment training session was about eight hours long and completely ineffective (Subject 2).

But we really hated the long classes which everyone hated and the drill sergeants hated [it] because they had to come with us and they had no choice because they were part of like our unit. And everyone hated it because they thought it was stupid. (Subject 2, joined 2001)

This type of training draws unnecessary attention to the differences between male and female service members. Additionally, female service members were limited in their activities during off-duty hours unless their buddy joined them. In most cases, female service members remained in their barracks or dorms and in some rare instances, there were not enough females to pair.

So, like in basic training, you were paired up with a female if you’re a female and the two of you always had to go everywhere together. No one could ever be alone. And so, their solution with me, being the only female in AIT, is they had five males with me everywhere I went. And so, anytime I wanted to go do something, if I wanted to go down to the rec room to try to make a phone call to my family or something, I had to get five males that would agree to stop doing whatever they were doing and come with me and hang out while I was trying to make a phone call. It didn’t happen very often. (Subject 49, joined 1997)

The comments from this female service member reflect the context of the military following the high profile sexual harassment case against former Army Sergeant Major

\textsuperscript{31} The Buddy System was the moniker given the policy that everyone in the military had a buddy to watch out for and vice versa. The program came on the heels of the well-publicized sexual harassment trials at Aberdeen Proving Ground in 1996.
Gene McKinney who was later found not guilty. Her experience highlights the increase in perceived male privilege at the expense of a competent female service member.

**Officer versus Enlisted**

In Chapter 2, I provided an explanation of the hierarchy in the military as established by rank. All officers are in hierarchical positions above enlisted service members and at times, this group identity created animosity.

Because one of the reasons I decided to get out and go to college was because I saw the officers and I thought they were fucking idiots. And I was like, if he can go to college and get a degree, I can do it too. And it was also hard to see the senior enlisted men would always be the ones to train the junior officers. And like these junior officers would be like 21, 23, you know, some of them really young. Fresh out of college, and yet these senior enlisted men who’d been in the military 20, 25, 30 years and then they’d have to salute these young guys. (Subject 10, joined 2001)

There are two notable points from this description. In this young man’s description of his experience in the Navy, he clearly identified as an enlisted man with fewer privileges than those in officer ranks. Additionally, he assessed that even more senior enlisted personnel, or those above him in the hierarchical rank structure, were less privileged than officers. The military preserves rank structure as a way to manage enlisted troops; however, incompetence in job performance can override any credibility in these positions which may affect mission performance in the fog of war. Much like female service members need to prove they are competent, young officers have the same pressure to perform in an effort to prevent acquiring a negative identity.

This chapter provides a look into the lived experiences of male and female service members during different periods of integration. In the first period of integration, 1980 to 1994, gender integration policies highlighted a need to protect female service members
from potential combat as well as separate them into units perceived to be more feminine than masculine. From the quotes of the male and female service members we see disparities in the interpretation of assignment policies as well as uniform policies or those related to professional interaction. During the second period of analysis, 1995 to 2013, gender integration policies again highlight female proximity to *ground combat* operations. Female service members in this period become accomplished fighter pilots, civil engineers, logisticians and careers previously prohibited to their service. Yet, the policies implemented during this period appear to highlight the differences between male and female service members more dramatically. The culture of the military changes in response to high profile sexual assault cases as well as the large number of female service members who contributed Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

In the last 50 years, gender integration policies have changed the structure of the military which directly influences how male and female service members identify. Full integration efforts began in 1980 after female-only units had been disbanded and women became graduates of the Air Force Academy, the Naval Academy and West Point. Initial recruiting strategies from the Army, Air Force and Navy funneled female service members into roles viewed as traditionally feminine. Female service members were assigned to positions that enabled male service members to fill front line, combat positions. On rare occasions, some female service members performed in combat operations with little attention to their gender differences. These differences were noted by commissioned research into the best utilization of women in the military. Subsequently, the integration of women has been plagued by poor data and “research” as well as social and cultural challenges related to the tradition of male privilege.

In this project, I present gender integration policies from two periods of analysis, 1980 to 1994 and 1995 to 2013. In both periods, the systematic privileging of male service members above female service members impacted the individual’s identity, which may have affected the unit in various ways. Privileging is most evident in the early assignment policies wherein female service members were assigned to fill specialties traditionally
viewed as feminine. These roles were less likely to see direct combat action and could be described as mission support. In contrast, male service members filled roles which were likely to see combat. These assignments placed men in positions to receive commendation medals and unit recognition. The rewards for performance of duty privileged male service members in the promotion system since each occurrence is assigned a point value. Commendation and achievement medals gave male service members a higher number of points, ensuring promotion or career progression where female service members were limited to positions without the same opportunity to accumulate points. Even after the risk rule was rescinded in 1994, gender integration policies continued to limit the professional contributions of female service members.

In spite of a competent female military police officer, Captain Linda Bray, having led a platoon in combat during Operation Just Cause or that Lieutenant Kara Kutschera, an accomplished black hawk pilot ferried troops while being fired upon, women in the military were viewed as unable to perform many duties deemed combat-related. Of the 28 women interviewed, each self-identified as competent and able to perform their assigned duties. Not one female service member indicated they felt unable to perform their duties - even when pregnant. Since pregnancy was routinely viewed as incompatible to service in the military, it is noteworthy that each of the women in this study felt fully capable and had a desire to continue their military service. Three of the women interviewed point out that not only did they continue to perform their duty requirements, but did so in the most challenging and unprofessional conditions. This evidence supports my argument that
gender integration policies privilege male service members which may affect how male and female service members identify.

The physical fitness requirements for military service have been the most contradictory and inconsistent policies related to gender integration. When physical fitness standards were the same for male and female service members between 1980 and 1985, senior military leaders commissioned studies to assess the future capability of female service members. When these studies did not present findings consistent with restrictions to duty assignments, senior military leaders called for additional research. In all cases, female service members either found an alternative way to perform the physical fitness requirements or excelled as a way to challenge the assignment restrictions placed upon them. Subsequently, the physical fitness requirements were separated and disparate standards assigned to male and female service members as a way to manage gender integration.

Some members felt physical fitness policies based on one’s gender unnecessarily privileged female service members who had lower standards than male service members. Others felt the revision of physical fitness policy was one way to create gender neutral requirements for military service such that female service members could be utilized more effectively. The problem with both of these perspectives is they bring attention to capabilities based on gender, rather duty performance. Policies related to physical requirements served as another way to limit or restrict the service of female service members. Yet, there was no justification to unfairly restrict their service when history provides examples of female accomplishment with demanding physical requirements. In
promoting and privileging male strength and endurance while suggesting female service members are unable to attain the same standards, the Department of Defense reinforces male privilege. Male service members remain the preferred individual for physically demanding specialties in the military based on their presumed masculinity.

For the most part, male and female descriptive attributes used in gender integration policies to describe male and female service members had an impact on privilege. Given the social context of a member’s unit, presenting masculine qualities as a female service member were not also deemed as acceptable. Conversely, a male service member who demonstrated more feminine qualities would have likely faced discrimination. In the majority of cases presented here, female service members who demonstrated more masculine qualities yet identified as female were described in negative terms by their male colleagues. This presents a paradoxical situation that hinders acquisition of a professional identity. When women perform and excel in their duty requirements and job performance, they face challenges to their service. Yet, if women fail to perform their duties or perform in a manner that is perceived to degrade the unit, they also face challenges to their service. This suggests that gender integration policies exist to preserve male privilege in the military by placing women in a double bind. Female service members cannot perform too well or too poorly or they risk undue attention to their service.

Gender integration policies and the privileging of male service members directly impacted the identities of male and female service members. For example, when male and female soldiers performed exceedingly well in their occupational duty requirements, their projection of a masculine identity could negate any perceived weakness. Female service
members who performed the same duty requirements as male service members may not have been viewed as females, but as soldiers as long as unit leadership encouraged such identification. The impression unit leadership had on the members of the unit speaks volumes to how male and female service member identified. If unit leadership recognized female service members who demonstrated femininity, the message likely received by the members of the unit was contradictory. Men may have assumed that women were less capable of performing certain duties whereas women may have felt they need to modify their identity in some manner. While serving in a unit like this, many women chose to dampen down their feminine identity and replace it with an identity that was viewed as more neutral or even masculine. In essence, female soldiers used their professional abilities and outstanding job performance as a way to overcome male privilege in the military. By dampening down their femininity and performing in a more neutral way, some female service members were able to successfully serve in the military.

Gender integration policies highlight the fears that many senior leaders and those privileged by hegemonic masculinity held: integrating women in the military is not only good, but it meant that male service members would have to work harder unless limits were placed on where women could be assigned. For some men, serving alongside a competent female service member is not a challenge to their masculinity. This was the case with the Blackhawk unit in Operation Just Cause. Kutschera and Mann were both treated as competent pilots who were sent to Panama with their unit to complete a mission. In other cases like that of Bray and Brown, when female service members outperform or received attention for their accomplishments, this was viewed as a threat to the men in uniform.
Kutschera and Mann received the same Air Medals as their male counterparts in Operation Just Cause; however, Bray and Brown were both heralded for their actions in combat and received higher level accommodations for their service\(^{32}\). This recognition above and beyond what their male colleagues received resulted in retirement or re-assignment to another unit. Successful female service, especially during times of conflict, threatened the hegemonic masculinity of the military.

Even today as the first groups of women successfully complete Army Ranger School and the Marine Corps Infantry course, female service members are plagued by male privilege and tradition. For example, female service members are using the same equipment as their male counterparts which include a metal-frame backpack designed for body size that is closely related to men. The weight of these backpacks can exceed 100 pounds and since some female service members and smaller framed male service members may have a different body composition. An improved different design or multiple styles may accommodate various body types rather than a single-style that can lead to injury. By having better or gender neutral designs to the backpack, the military would only be increasing the capability of every soldier utilizing the equipment. Yet, military leaders do not see the accommodation as increasing capability; instead, many senior leaders in the military see this as a compensation so female service members can complete the training. Many believe the rugged training is part of a system to weed out those who are incapable of completing the tasks, including some male service members. This focus on eliminating

\(^{32}\) Brown received the Silver Star, the third highest honor for members of the military.
perceived weaknesses rather than building on individual strengths prevent the military from achieving greater successes.

Reflecting on the descriptions of the men and women who contributed to this study, it is apparent that gender integration policies highlighting differences between men and women often served to discriminate. The seclusion and disconnectedness that some female service members described in relation to filling a support role impacted their ability to embrace an identity, which in turn may have directly affected unit success. In some cases, female service members were able to acquire a professional identity which enabled successful job performance only to have their accomplishments challenged or discredited. This was the case with Bray and Brown; both women were forced out of units and positions where they excelled. It is noteworthy that these female service members as well as the majority of the 28 who were interviewed for this project were all assigned to male dominated specialties. Many who contributed to combat operations only received criticism when their performance appeared to break policy or exceed the performance of male service members assigned to the unit. This criticism routinely begins with unit commanders and their application of gender integration policies.

Commanders have a choice to enforce an existing policy and restrict the assignment of women to potentially hazardous duties. Or, in times of crisis support their unit and place female service members where they can contribute to the overall success of the mission. Many female service members have been placed in positions to do the greatest good because commanders believe they are necessary, contributing members to the unit. In other cases, commanders may feel threatened by the success and abilities of female service
members and seek to limit their participation. By limiting participation through discriminatory interpretation of gender integration policies, unit commanders are not only doing a disservice to their unit, but the entire military.

In this project, I conducted a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry using archival data of gender integration policies. Given the nature of the military, it is not surprising to find male privilege. However, it is surprising that many of the policies created to be more inclusive did not accomplish the goal. Instead, policies intended to more fully integrate women into the military were discriminatory in nature and placed female service members in traditionally feminine roles or those most accepted by society. By highlighting the differences between men and women rather than the unique capabilities each possess, the military perpetuated an environment which privileged male service members. My aim was to evaluate if these policies had an impact on the ways in which male and female service members identify. It is my hope that the first person narratives of military experiences allow the reader to experience the impact gender integration policies had on the men and women who participated in this project. Their descriptions of military service when combined with the gender integration policies in effect suggest that acquiring a professional identity was not only challenging, but in some cases near impossible. Using the themes of assignment policy, physical requirements and culture and appearance, it is my desire that this study serves as a foundation for more nuanced research. Specifically, research should be addressed at the individual level or those who are tasked with implementing and following policies in the military. Without the input of the individuals in the military or those with military service experience, future policies related to gender integration will
continue to face the same challenges the current policy presents. Individual characterization of gender integration policies has been overlooked or misrepresented by academic research for too long. It is time to conduct investigations that take the individual into account rather than just the policy or institutional needs. Gender integration policies can affect the identity of service members, yet many can overcome the markers placed upon them by those demonstrating privilege.
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