

## DEOMI News Highlights

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

**McKinley: America Must Preserve Tuskegee Airmen's Legacy** [Lisa Daniel, *American Forces Press Service*, 8 August 2011]

- As the accomplishments of the World War II-era Tuskegee Airmen fade into U.S. history, a grateful nation must work to keep their legacy alive, the chief of the National Guard Bureau said at the 40th annual Tuskegee Airmen convention.
- The military can do more to carry on the Tuskegee Airmen's legacy, he said, by conducting outreach to make more young people eligible for recruitment.
- The services also must continue with efforts to promote diversity as a core value... McKinley said.

[McKinley: America Must Preserve Tuskegee Airmen's Legacy](#)

**Air Force plans new diversity regulations** [Markeshia Ricks, *Air Force Times*, 6 August 2011]

- The Air Force Instruction... on how the service's diversity programs will unfold is to be published some time in 2012.
- Rather than focus on beefing up the number of historically underrepresented minority groups in the service, the Air Force now defines diversity "as a composite of individual characteristics, experiences and abilities." Military diversity expert Nelson Lim said that... [i]t would be hard for the Air Force to convince the rest of America it is diverse if it isn't also demographically diverse.
- Like its sister services, the Air Force shines when it comes to diversity among its enlisted ranks, but the service is whiter and more male on the officer side of the house. Lim said to create diversity among the upper echelons of military leadership, leaders must rethink the kind of competencies needed to become a general officer.

[Air Force plans new diversity regulations](#)

**Corps revamps sex assault prevention training** [James K. Sanborn, *Marine Corps Times*, 8 August 2011]

- The Marine Corps is overhauling its sexual assault prevention training for noncommissioned officers with a new program modeled after the service's edgy new suicide prevention course.
- Marine suicides are down since senior leadership tackled the issue with renewed vigor last year, but sexual assault cases are up—from 244 in 2009 to 310 last year—and many more go unreported, officials say.
- Called "Take a Stand," the three-hour sexual assault class will be taught by "uniformed victim advocates" and satisfy mandatory NCO sexual assault prevention training requirements, which must be renewed each year... Like suicide-prevention training, the new program pressures bystanders to step in and speak up if they see something amiss.

[Corps revamps sex assault prevention training](#)

# DEOMI News Highlights

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## Diversity

[Air Force plans new diversity regulations](#)  
[Military: Increasing number of black officers in Marine Corps called overdue](#)  
[Shelter for female veterans on track to open in October](#)

## Human Relations

[Female veterans breaking silence, beating trauma](#)  
[Gen. Mattis is fighting a constant battle to keep the military innovating](#)

## Miscellaneous

[3 airmen get French medal for rescuing pilots](#)  
[Army to shut down eArmyU](#)  
[Giffords' recovery renews focus on coverage gap for veterans](#)  
[Navy program aims to get its vets civilian jobs](#)  
[New online Army app tracks training, education](#)

## Religion

[Army approves atheism-themed concert at Fort Bragg](#)  
[Enlisting Allah](#)

## Sexual Assault / Harassment

[Corps revamps sex assault prevention training](#)

## Principal Director's Corner

[McKinley: America must preserve Tuskegee Airmen's legacy](#)

# Diversity

# Air Force plans new diversity regulations

By Markeshia Ricks - Staff writer

Air Force Times, 6 August 2011 11:25:57 EDT

The Air Force is pushing ahead with plans to issue new regulations on diversity, but it might be several months before they're released.



*Kemberly Groue / Air Force Cap. Christina Hills, 403<sup>rd</sup> Wing, unsheathes a sword from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Sarah Reeves 81<sup>st</sup> Training Groups, looks on at the inaugural Diversity Day celebration at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. In June 2010*

The Air Force Instruction, or AFI, on how the service's diversity programs will unfold is to be published some time in 2012.

“We have received the comments and are currently incorporating the recommendations along with

developing performance measurements and metrics to complement the Air Force diversity priorities and definition,” said Jarris Taylor Jr., deputy assistant secretary for strategic diversity integration, in an email.

The Air Force has taken a broad approach to defining diversity.

Rather than focus on beefing up the number of historically underrepresented minority groups in the service, the Air Force now defines diversity “as a composite of individual characteristics, experiences and abilities.”

The Air Force's diversity definition includes “personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical/spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity and gender.”

Military diversity expert Nelson Lim, a senior social scientist with the Rand Corp., said that, while the Air Force's broad definition of diversity goes beyond increasing certain demographic groups to inclusive representation, “it's defined so broadly that you can have a room full of white guys or even fighter pilots ... , and they can tell you ‘We're diverse.’ ”

It would be hard for the Air Force to convince the rest of America it is diverse if it isn't also demographically diverse, Lim said.

Like its sister services, the Air Force shines when it comes to diversity among its enlisted ranks, but the service is whiter and more male on the officer side of the house.

Lim, who served as the research director for the Military Leadership Diversity Commission, or MLDC, said to create diversity among the upper echelons of military leadership, leaders must rethink the kind of competencies needed to become a general officer.

Air Force general officers tend to be pilots, while other services require a certain level of combat experience. These requirements significantly reduce the number of minorities and women qualified to be general officers.

Though the MLDC acknowledges that the service branches have made great strides in diversifying their ranks, it produced a report earlier this year that included recommendations to further

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2011/08/airforce-new-regs-defining-diversity-080611w/> eliminate what it saw as barriers that minorities and women face in moving into the upper levels of military leadership.

“We’re in an uphill battle, and that’s what the MLDC report points out,” Lim said. “The remedy is very simple [for the Air Force]. You can either convince minorities and females to fly, or reassess the mission itself and determine whether you really need 70 percent of general officers to be pilots.”

Nine months ago, the Air Force published its first policy directive, AFPD36-70, on diversity as a precursor to the forthcoming AFI. The six-page document outlines the Air Force’s definition of diversity, its policy on diversity, and the roles and responsibilities for carrying out that policy for the secretary of the Air Force down to base-level civilian personnel.

Taylor said the foundation for that directive started in 2009 when Air Force leadership began to place a renewed emphasis on the importance of inclusion throughout the total force.

“The first line of the policy directive states, ‘Diversity is a military necessity,’ ” he said. “We are on a strategic glide path to institutionalize diversity while attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining a highly qualified workforce.”

Before the directive was issued, service members were surveyed early in 2010 to determine their perception of diversity.

Of the more than 1,000 that responded, Taylor said, 88 percent believed the Air Force was doing an excellent or good job creating diversity.

The policy directive affects all of the 690,000 members of the active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian workforce because compliance is mandatory, Taylor said.

“We are a diverse and inclusive organization that mutually respects and values the contributions of all individuals,” Taylor said.

# MILITARY: Increasing number of black officers in Marine Corps called overdue

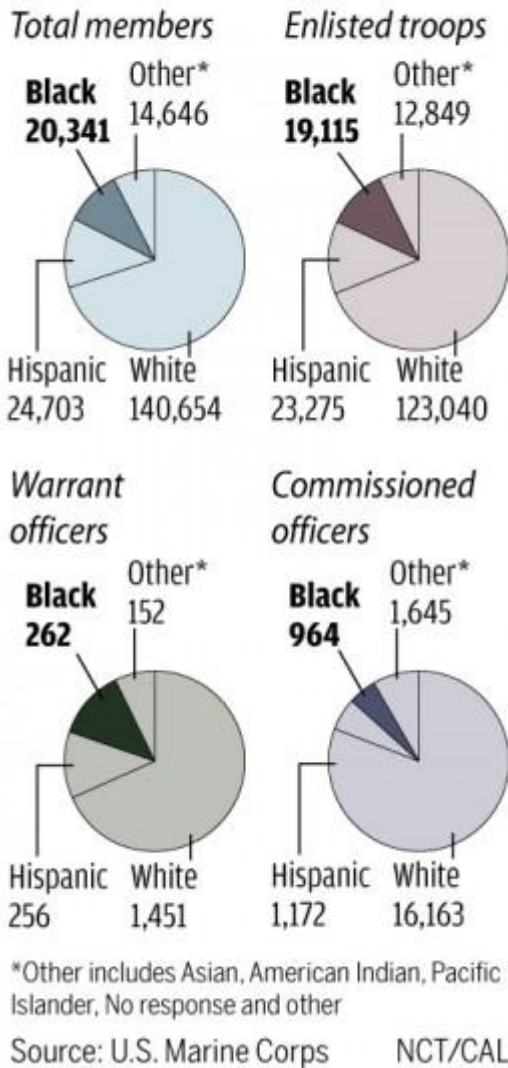
By Mark Walker

North County Times, 6 August 2011

A promise by the new commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps to roughly double the number of black officers is echoing loudly with black groups and troops.

For a service that was the last to open its doors to blacks and has never had a black commandant or four-star general, the vow from Gen. James Amos creates large expectations.

## MARINE CORPS RACIAL BREAKDOWN



Amos said Tuesday his goal is to double the number of blacks among the Marine Corps' 22,155 officers from the current 1,326 to roughly 2,860. That would raise the number of black officers to roughly 13 percent, a figure that reflects the percentage of the black population in the U.S.

"It was really quite remarkable and refreshing, and you could tell it was from the heart," U.S. Navy Capt. Tony Barnes, president of the National Naval Officers Association, a group of predominantly black officers from the Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps, said of Amos' speech.

"It was clear he's not satisfied with the way things are, and that one of his primary goals is to make a difference and increase the number of minority officers," Barnes said.

It was at the association's annual gathering Tuesday in San Diego that Amos, 64, a graduate of the University of Idaho, gave what amounted to a major policy speech on Marine Corps racial equality. For a man who vigorously opposed allowing gays to serve openly in the armed services, it was an unexpected commitment to diversity.

"I take it as a call to action," said Gerald Hampton, a retired Marine and secretary of the North San Diego County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "The mindset is changing." Hampton, who spent 22 years in the Marine Corps before retiring as a chief warrant officer, was present for Amos' remarks and said he found them moving.

"I was sitting there thinking about the significance of what he was saying," he said. "It's overdue." Amos said that shortly after he became commandant, he examined the numbers and found the Marine Corps wanting in terms of its black officers. "I looked at the officer corps and said, 'Boy, we are missing the mission,'" he said. "We're not the face of society."

[http://www.nctimes.com/news/local/military/article\\_856ede56-801e-5982-b33b-41185edfe30e.html](http://www.nctimes.com/news/local/military/article_856ede56-801e-5982-b33b-41185edfe30e.html)  
Barnes said many of the naval officers association members were deeply moved by the speech. "It was so refreshing to see him stand up and walk around the room and deliver that speech without using any script or note cards," he said. "He's in the early stage of his tenure as commandant, so only time will tell, but we were beaming with pride when it was over."

Amos stressed that the quest to increase the number of black officers will not mean a lessening of expectations or requirements. "We're changing our entire approach," Amos said, detailing new outreach and recruiting efforts intended to persuade more aspiring young blacks to join the Marine Corps. "And you might ask, 'Are you going to change your standards?' The answer is 'Hell no.'"

Col. T.V. Johnson is overseeing the effort as head of the Marine Corps Manpower Equal Opportunity and Diversity Branch at Quantico, Va. He reiterated that standards of performance, test scores and qualifications to be an officer will remain unchanged. "It's not about dropping any standards," he said. "Those things are set in stone, and it would be an insult to our institution to do so."

Instead, Johnson and others in the effort are broadening their recruitment beyond black colleges and universities, planning to send more of the Corps' best and brightest black Marines to black neighborhoods and schools. "We have to go out and tell people that this is not your grandfather's Marine Corps," said Johnson, who was a top aide to Amos' predecessor, Gen. James Conway. "The commandant has said we have to think outside the box. We're telling recruiters to vary their approach, to go to cold corners and to go about this in a different way," Johnson said.

The effort could lead to more black generals. The Marine Corps has 88 generals today, but only six are black. Camp Pendleton is home to two black generals, Maj. Gens. Anthony Jackson and Ronald Bailey. Jackson is commander of Marine Corps Installations West, giving him responsibility for development of all bases in this region of the country.

Last month, Bailey became the first black to head the oldest, most decorated and most storied unit in the Marine Corps ---- the more-than-20,000-troop 1st Marine Division. During his appointment ceremony, Bailey spoke at length about the first blacks to serve in the Marine Corps and how they helped pave the way for him to win one of the service's most prestigious leadership assignments.

Amos also promised to elevate and enshrine the legacy of the nearly 20,000 blacks who were the first to enter the Marine Corps in the 1940s.

Black recruits were not allowed to train with whites. Instead, Marine Corps officials relegated them to a segregated camp created out of swampland at North Carolina's Camp Lejeune, known as Montford Point.

Amos called that part of Marine Corps history "shameful" and has ordered the story of the Montford Point Marines taught at every level of the Marine Corps. He also is pressing for the surviving members, most in their late 70s or early 80s, to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian award. And later this month, Amos is hosting more than 200 original Montford Point Marines at a parade and other activities in Washington, D.C.

For two members of the Montford Point Marine Association, Amos' gesture toward them and his efforts to sharply raise the number of black officers is welcome. And, as Hampton said, overdue.

"The commandant is serious," said San Diego's Robert Lewis, president of the San Diego chapter of the Montford Point Marine Association. "It will be a challenge, but I don't think it will be a big struggle."

I.E. Johnson, who heads the Montford Association's Los Angeles chapter, said there remains a "serious vacuum" at the top of the Marine Corps in terms of black officers. "He has taken the opportunity to pursue this, and I believe he truly feels it's the right thing to do," Johnson said.

[http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/shelter-for-female-veterans-on-track-to-open-in-october/article\\_da6d73f6-bfe7-11e0-8189-001cc4c002e0.html](http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/shelter-for-female-veterans-on-track-to-open-in-october/article_da6d73f6-bfe7-11e0-8189-001cc4c002e0.html)

## **Shelter for female veterans on track to open in October**

**Milo Dailey Butte County Post staff**

**Rapid City Journal, August 5, 2011**

BELLE FOURCHE -- A dream of assisting female veterans that began with volunteers helping a Sturgis veteran repair his home is getting closer to becoming a reality.

Russ Surdez, who heads the C-VISN Women of War project in Belle Fourche, said plans are on track to open a shelter in October that will house as many as 28 women and their dependents. "In addition to the women in our residential programs, we will train up to 100 other homeless veterans," Surdez said, adding that the program will include men and women.

Enrollment begins Aug. 15. The first residential students will arrive about Oct. 15. The grand opening will be 11 a.m. Nov. 11, 2011, Surdez said.

C-VISN is a community-based organization that was chosen by the Veterans Administration for a program that will be available to homeless veterans in 11 states. The Belle Fourche headquarters will assist the veterans in finding housing in the Black Hills during an approved job-training program. Federal grants will pay for housing costs.

Marine Corps veteran Joel Marvin will be a training coordinator and a counselor. His wife, Marlene, is on board as a counselor, as well. The two come to the C-VISN project from the now-closed Sky Ranch for Boys, a group care center for troubled teens. Marvin will launch an outreach program to enroll veterans in the program later this month, Surdez said. "We will be contacting 47 Veterans Administration installations in 11 states, plus the homeless shelters in those immediate areas," he said.

Training programs are diverse and are designed to help veterans with honorable service discharges but few civilian work-force skills. So far, Surdez said, 26 private contractors have agreed to offer internships or on-the-job training for up to 18 months, including two Belle Fourche businesses, an electrical contractor and a computer sales and service business.

"We are teaming up with Caterpillar for heavy equipment training," he said. Students who successfully complete that training will be eligible for on-the-job training with a coal company in the Gillette, Wyo., area, Surdez said.

All of the veterans in the job training programs, whether housed at the residential center or elsewhere, will be assisted by case managers.

Western Dakota Technical Institute and Black Hills State University will offer training programs. The group also plans to have someone on staff to assist Native Americans on reservations throughout the region.

Surdez said many reservations have a need for trained electrical, plumbing and bookkeeping personnel, and the Belle Fourche-based program could play a role in helping to fill those needs. He said the current economy makes solid job training increasingly important for unemployed veterans.

"Most of these people would be good employees if they just had an appropriate skill," he said. Retired Brig. Gen. Myrna Williamson, a native of Gregory, will be one of the speakers at the grand opening. Surdez said that as the program gears up, more full-time employees will be hired. Currently, there are five on the payroll and three more begin work this month.



# **Human Relations**

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110809835333.html> or

<http://www.npr.org/2011/08/08/139021309/women-veterans-breaking-silence-beating-trauma>

# Female Veterans Breaking Silence, Beating Trauma

by Amy Ta

NPR.org, August 8, 2011



*Lisa Bolling accepts the "Challenge Coin" from Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis at Arlington National Cemetery's Women in Military Service for America Memorial on July 20. The secretary shared Bolling's story of being a homeless female veteran at the launch of a new trauma guide for women. Courtesy Of The Department Of Labor*

During a military mission in Afghanistan this weekend, a U.S. helicopter came under fire, crashing and killing eight Afghans and 30 U.S. servicemen. Twenty-two of the casualties were Navy SEALs.

Families are still trying to process the weekend's loss and deal with mental and emotional fallout from the nation's wars. And women have it particularly tough.

[Significantly more women have served in the U.S. military](#) in recent years, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Many of these women suffer [post-traumatic stress disorder](#), or PTSD, and other issues after their service ends.

U.S. Air Force veteran Lisa Bolling has survived military trauma, returned to a home on the streets, and is now coping with PTSD.

In an interview with Tell Me More guest host Allison Keyes, Bolling says that she first served at the Air Force base in Florida for two years, which was a wonderful experience.

But she wanted to see the world and thus got sent to Germany. She says she was assaulted by a male service member one month after arriving at the base in Germany.

"And six months later, I was pushed out of the military. I got eight letters of reprimand and two Article 15s because I didn't want to go back on the base. And I didn't feel like I could tell anyone. It was a tactical unit. It was very cold — strictly business," she explains.

Bolling says she spent one year trying to put herself back together, but eventually began taking drugs to ease the pain and soon became homeless.

"And I decided one day, I didn't want to die like that, and so I went to Narcotics Anonymous. I've been clean for 19 years," she says.

Bolling went on to earn a degree in paralegal studies and became a therapeutic foster parent.

"One of my foster daughters got cancer at 17 and died at 18. From that point on, I couldn't function. I lost my house. I lost a car. And I knew I had some issues with depression, but I didn't know what was happening to me ... where it would snatch my whole life away," says Bolling.

How often do cases like Bolling's occur?

Dr. Sonja Batten, a psychologist who works on national mental health policy for the Department of Veterans Affairs, says 22 percent of female veterans who seek care from VA report having experienced sexual trauma in the military. By contrast, a little over 1 percent of male veterans experience sexual trauma.

Batten also points out that the Department of Defense is responsible for those on active military duty; the VA is a separate governmental branch that cares for veterans after service.

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110809835333.html> or

<http://www.npr.org/2011/08/08/139021309/women-veterans-breaking-silence-beating-trauma>

She emphasizes that the VA helps veterans recognize that they are now in a safer place. She adds that women have unique stressors clinicians should keep in mind, including child care.

"So if they're feeling stressed about that, we really need to listen to them when they're talking about those challenges so we can provide them support," she says.

But Bolling believes male and female veterans deal with stress similarly.

"Post-traumatic stress is a strange disease in that it has the same blueprint for everybody. The vets are fearful. Many of them can barely get out of the bed. Many have lost their jobs, or [are] in a position where they're being suspended because they're missing work, and their boss doesn't understand why," says Bolling.

Bolling has actively helped other veterans. She encourages them to report trauma immediately, and she refers them to VA facilities she finds helpful, such as [Bay Pines in St. Petersburg, Fla.](#)

Batten says she wholeheartedly agrees with Bolling that veterans who need help should ask for it immediately.

She adds that since 2005, the VA has been working to expand its ability to provide effective mental health services. She says the VA trains providers, making sure they are skilled in the latest treatments. It also reaches out to those who may not know what services they're eligible for or what services are available.

Most recently, the VA launched a smartphone application called The [PTSD Coach](#), which offers reliable PTSD information and coping strategies. And there's a 24-hour [crisis hotline](#) for those in need of immediate assistance.

<http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20110810835481.html> or

<http://www.slate.com/id/2300583/>

## Gen. James Mattis, USMC

**The general who is fighting a constant battle to keep the military innovating.**

By John Dickerson

Slate.com, Aug. 9, 2011

*(From: Slate's list of the 25 Americans who combine inventive genius and practicality—our best real-world problem solvers.)*

When speaking to rising officers, Marine Gen. James Mattis likes to tell the story of the British Navy. At the turn of the 19th century, it had no rival in the world, but 100 years later it had grown complacent in dominance. Officers amassed rules, ribbons, and rituals that had little to do with the changing nature of war. "They no longer had captains of wars," he tells them, "but captains of ships."



As commander of the [U.S. Central Command](#), Mattis oversees the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but his career mission has been against complacency. In modern warfare the reliance on better technology and superior firepower deadens the talent for innovation, he argues. This blinds some officers to emerging threats and slows their ability to react to them. The U.S. military, he argues "must avoid becoming dominant and irrelevant."

A student of history and the beneficiary of decades of Marine teachings, Mattis also saw the dangers of failing to adapt firsthand. He commanded the First Marine Division that led the invasion into Iraq in 2003. Two months later he was called back to Iraq to fight a far different enemy than the one he had left: An insurgency had grown largely unchecked, and some military leaders had failed to spot the change. Mattis' innovative approach to adapting to insurgent warfare where soldiers and Marines must "apply violence and chivalry often changing block by block" helped inform the doctrine contained in the Counterinsurgency Manual that he co-developed with Gen. David Petraeus, who will take over the CIA in September.

The higher your rank, the harder it is to get unfiltered information. So to keep his rank from getting in the way of seeing the battle and his men clearly, Mattis instituted reforms big and small. He uses the Marines term to "command and feedback" not the traditional "command and control" to emphasize communications. He tasked "eyes officers" to go through the ranks and report back to him those problems and concerns officers might be too tentative to report up the formal chain of command.

If you are always on the hunt for complacency, argues Mattis, you will reward risk-takers, and people who thrive in uncertainty. "Take the mavericks in your service," he tells new officers, "the ones that wear rumpled uniforms and look like a bag of mud but whose ideas are so offsetting that they actually upset the people in the bureaucracy. One of your primary jobs is to take the risk and protect these people, because if they are not nurtured in your service, the enemy will bring their contrary ideas to you."

He could easily be describing himself. As a colonel in the Gulf War, he pestered his operations officer so often with new ideas, C.H.A.O.S. came to stand for: "Colonel Has Another Outstanding Solution."

# Miscellaneous

## 3 airmen get French medal for rescuing pilots

**By Scott Fontaine - Staff writer**  
**Air Force Times, 7 August 2011**

Three airmen have received one of the French military's highest honors for saving two helicopter pilots in Afghanistan.

Capt. John Mosier, Tech. Sgt. Kristopher Burridge and Senior Airman Jackson Rogers, members of the 83rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, earned the National Defense Medal for their heroic actions June 11. Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Maurin, commander of French ground troops in eastern Afghanistan, presented the awards at a July 8 ceremony at Forward Operating Base Morales-Frazier in Kapisa province.

The rescue took place at night, shortly after the 83rd canceled a training mission because of high winds. Word came in that a Gazelle attack helicopter had crashed because of the weather. The squadron dispatched two HH-60G Pave Hawks to find the downed pilots and two Army AH-64D Apaches to provide security.

As his Pave Hawk approached the crash site, Mosier noticed a village. He decided to drop off his crew and provide security from the air.

"We set up a blocking pattern, putting ourselves between our operators on the ground and the village, so the [pararescue jumpers] could focus on their mission," Mosier said.

Burridge and Rogers set up a casualty collection point and started searching for the French pilots — in the dark.

"The first person we found was the pilot," Rogers said. "He was waving a strobe light and told us he couldn't feel his legs."

The pilot had a broken back. Rogers set about treating the pilot as Burridge looked for the co-pilot.

"We found him still in the helicopter, strapped to his seat. But his seat had been dislodged and thrown to the back of the aircraft," Burridge said.

The co-pilot struggled to breathe, so Burridge made a small incision in his neck and inserted a breathing tube. Rogers and Senior Airman Andrew Nichols, another PJ, loaded the co-pilot onto the second Pave Hawk. The helicopter ferried the injured man to the hospital at Bagram Airfield. The co-pilot died shortly after arriving at Bagram, but the pilot survived and is expected to walk again.

"Getting guys out of tough spots; that's what it's all about," Mosier said. "Getting a medal is a huge honor, and I'm very grateful. But getting this guy back to his family is what's most important."

# Army to shut down eArmyU

**By Jim Tice - Staff writer**  
**Army Times, 8 August 2011**

The eArmyU civilian education option that has provided distance learning support services to 64,000 soldiers over the past decade will be shuttered next year.

The 1,429 soldiers enrolled in the program today may continue to register for eArmyU courses until March 31, 2012 even if a course runs past the shutdown date.

Each of the soldiers has been sent a letter by the Human Resources Command, encouraging them to continue taking eArmyU classes until March 31, when they will be transitioned to regular tuition assistance.

HRC officials said many of these soldiers are simultaneously enrolled in traditional tuition assistance courses, so they are familiar with that program.

“While eArmyU has run successfully for 10 years, its has reached a point of maturity, essentially meeting its recruiting and retention objective (and) increasing soldiers’ participation in their own education development,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Bruce A. Lee, command sergeant major of the Human Resources Command.

Traditional TA is available within the GoArmyEd portal ([www.goarmy.ed](http://www.goarmy.ed)), and provides financial assistance up to 100 percent, not to exceed \$4,500 per year and \$250 per semester hour.

So far this fiscal year, nearly 160,000 active-duty soldiers have taken 282,609 tuition assistance-courses at a cost of \$173.9 million, according to information provided by the Army Continuing Education System of HRC.

Online courses leading to degrees today account for nearly 78 percent of tuition assistance enrollments, which is a major reason why the eArmyU option is being discontinued.

Today more than 1,500 schools offer online degrees within the traditional tuition assistance portal of GoArmyEd, compared to 30 available under eArmyU.

When established in 2001 as a recruiting and retention incentive, eArmyU served to introduce thousands of young soldiers to computers and online learning.

Services provided by the program included access to online courses offered by 30 accredited colleges, program mentors, a 24/7 helpdesk, an Internet service provider, email account and a laptop computer, for soldiers who selected the technology package option.

Of the 64,087 soldiers who have enrolled in eArmyU since its launch at the dawn of the war on terrorism, 11,741 have earned certifications and degrees.

Ileen Rogers, director of Army Continuing Education, said, “eArmyU provided soldiers with a unique opportunity to continue their education regardless of location and in spite of increased missions and deployments.”

Today the Army spends about \$1 million annually to administer eArmyU, a total that does not include tuition assistance expenditures.

Cost savings generated by the phase-out of eArmyU will be used to supplement administration of the regular tuition assistance program, according to a service-wide message issued by the Pentagon Aug. 2.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/giffords-recovery-renews-focus-on-coverage-gap-for-veterans-1.151776>

## **Giffords' recovery renews focus on coverage gap for veterans**

**BY Curtis Tate**

**McClatchy Newspapers, 11 August 2011**

WASHINGTON — From the critical moments after she suffered a gunshot wound to the head in January to her triumphant return to Congress last week for a vote on the debt-limit deal, Rep. Gabrielle commonly concussions from roadside bombs.

Yet veterans' health care doesn't consistently cover cognitive rehabilitation therapy, the same therapy that's helped Giffords and other well-known figures — such as Sen. Tim Johnson of South Dakota and ABC News correspondent Bob Woodruff — get their lives back to normal after major brain traumas.

If we fail to give people the tools they need to do that, then we've shut them out of society," said Susan Connors, the president of the Brain Injury Association of America.

While some veterans are getting very good treatment, advocates say, others are finding it difficult to get therapy or even the testing to determine whether they need it. "It is a national disgrace," said Paul Rao, the president of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association and Johnson's speech therapist.

When people suffer traumatic brain injuries, they need more than just to learn how to walk and talk again. Cognitive rehabilitation can include speech and communication therapies, and therapies to boost memory and social skills and relearn routine tasks such as getting dressed and shopping at the grocery store.

Connors compared it to elementary school. Except that "You aren't learning it for the first time; you are relearning it," she said.

Pentagon spokeswoman Cynthia Smith said in an email that under the Tricare insurance plan, which covers members of the military, rehabilitation therapy "must be medically necessary and appropriate care keeping with accepted norms for medical practice in the U.S."

Brain-injury advocates say Tricare and civilian health-insurance providers deny payment for cognitive rehabilitation on the basis that it isn't proven effective, despite its wide embrace in the medical community and by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Part of the problem is cost, typically \$27,000 for one hour a day of treatment over six months. "Insurance companies don't want to pay for quality-of-life improvements," said Sandra Farmer, the president of the Brain Injury Association of North Carolina. But, she added, the future benefits outweigh the upfront costs. "If you go ahead and get maximum rehab early on, the long-term costs will be diminished because the person will become more independent."

Smith said the Defense Department provided 45,000 hours of treatments last year that incorporated cognitive rehabilitation techniques, but she wouldn't say how many hours an individual veteran might have received.

Farmer said that wasn't enough. "They're lucky if they get three weeks of therapy," she said. "I think the military is trying much harder than they used to, but there are gaps." The VA does provide cognitive rehabilitation, and for veterans who live in areas far from the nearest center, offers it in the form of a video conference. "Cognitive rehab therapy is a well-established area of practice within VA rehabilitation services," said Josh Taylor, a spokesman. "Expanding access to VA is a top priority."



<http://www.stripes.com/news/giffords-recovery-renews-focus-on-coverage-gap-for-veterans-1.151776>

Giffords' return to Congress has renewed attention to efforts to close the gaps in coverage. The Arizona Democrat fought to designate such rehabilitation essential care under the health care overhaul that Congress passed last year, and her staff has continued to push it during her absence.

"We believe they deserve the best possible treatment," said C.J. Karamargin, a Giffords spokesman. Closing the coverage gap has bipartisan support in both houses of Congress.

A Senate bill co-sponsored by Sens. John Boozman, R-Ark., and Mark Begich, D-Alaska, would improve rehabilitation services for veterans with traumatic brain injuries.

Reps. Pete Sessions, R-Texas, Bill Pascrell, D-N.J., and Todd Platts, R-Pa., crafted an amendment to the 2012 defense appropriations bill that would establish a five-year pilot program under which more veterans could seek treatment from private doctors.

In civilians, common causes of traumatic brain injury include strokes, sports, auto accidents and gunshots. But Connors said that until the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the National Institutes of Health had dedicated "minuscule" resources to brain injury research. "There's been a dearth of research in traumatic brain injury for years," she said. Connors said that Giffords and others were case studies, so they weren't considered the "gold standard," a definition that usually requires years of research and trials, much the same way drugs are tested.

Tricare relies on the federal definition of "effective treatment" to determine what it will and won't pay for. But Connors said the standards were written years ago. People's health outcomes and lives "shouldn't hinge on that sort of stuff," she said. "We want people to get the care that they need, not just discharged to the couch."

Connors credits James Brady, President Ronald Reagan's press secretary, who was shot in the head in 1981 during an assassination attempt on the president, for first raising the profile of the issue. His survival and recovery have helped others with similar injuries.

There have been other examples in more recent years: Woodruff was critically injured by a roadside bomb in Iraq in 2006 and he's since returned to work at ABC. Johnson was absent from the Senate for nine months after a brain hemorrhage in 2006. He won re-election in 2008 and is now the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee.

"Those first-person accounts are hugely motivating to other people with brain injuries," Connors said. Giffords was shot through the left side of her head Jan. 8 as she met with her constituents in Tucson, Ariz. Six people were killed in the shooting, including a member of Giffords' staff, a federal judge and a 9-year-old girl.

After emergency surgery, she spent weeks in the hospital, followed by months in rehabilitation. Although she was discharged in June from the nationally recognized Institute for Rehabilitation and Research in Texas, Giffords faces years of treatment. "It's a lifelong recovery process," said Peter Rhee, the battlefield-trained trauma surgeon who helped save Giffords' life. "It's not something you just overcome."

Giffords' friends and colleagues have noticed a dramatic improvement. "I can see the progress each time I see her," said her close friend Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida. "Her personality is 100 percent there." Brain injury experts and advocates are thrilled about Giffords' prognosis.

"She's really rewriting the script," Rao said. "She may be doing even more than we thought she could."

"She has been a champion," Connors said. "And she looked great when she voted."

<http://www.military.com/news/article/navy-program-aims-to-get-vets-civilian-jobs.html>

# Navy Program Aims to Get Vets Civilian Jobs

by **Melissa Nelson, Associated Press**

**Military.com, 8 August 2011**

CORRY STATION NAVY BASE, Fla. -- The president and some members of Congress want tax breaks, expensive studies and even a "reverse boot camp" to tackle the unemployment rate among veterans, which runs higher than the national average. Another option the Navy would like to see: Expand a program that has helped tens of thousands of soon-to-be-ex-Sailors get certified to use their skills outside the military -- medics leave ready for health care jobs, cooks are trained for restaurant work and so on.

The Credentialing Opportunities On-Line program aims to ensure that expensive military training isn't mothballed once a Sailor hangs up the uniform. More than 45,000 Sailors have obtained certifications or licenses paid for by the Navy to help them qualify for jobs as everything from pharmaceutical technicians to welders, police officers or restaurant chefs.

## [Turn Your Military Service Into a Civilian Career With Our Skills Translator](#)

Program leaders say it could be a piece of the solution to curbing alarmingly high unemployment rates, particularly among younger vets. A March report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that more than 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans were unemployed last year, while the civilian unemployment rate for the same 18-to-24 age group was 17.3 percent. For Iraq and Afghanistan veterans of all ages, the unemployment rate last year was 11.5 percent compared with a national jobless rate of 9.4 percent.

With the military drawdown in Afghanistan and Iraq and the economy still wobbly, the problem is expected to get worse.

On Friday, [President Obama proposed \\$120 million worth of tax credits](#) to help companies hire the nation's 1 million out-of-work veterans. He also called on private employers to hire or train 100,000 veterans by the end of 2013.

But often the transition to the civilian workforce gets held up because qualified veterans lack the right paperwork. A Navy corpsman might work in a pharmacy or hospital on a military base or in a war zone, but frequently has to complete extensive outside training courses to do similar civilian jobs.

"A machinist mate can run a nuclear power plant on a ship without any certifications or licensing, but as soon as they get off that ship, they cannot go to the TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority] and run a nuclear power plant," said Keith Boring, who directs the certification program headquartered at Corry Station near Naval Air Station Pensacola, in the Florida Panhandle.

A veteran with experience on a nuclear sub would be "at the top of the agency's hiring list," TVA spokeswoman Barbara Martocci said. "But that would not streamline any of the training. There may be some things that are redundant but a submarine is a different job than a civilian nuclear plant," she said.

That's where the Navy's program comes in. Launched in 2006, it paid for certification tests for 13,818 Sailors last fiscal year at a cost of \$3.7 million, getting them a step closer to walking directly into another job.

Among those who have benefited from it is Navy Chief Ron Clement, an electronics and information technology specialist who faced mandatory retirement in 2009 after a 23-year career. "I was scared, very scared. I don't think it hit me until I got out just how bad it was going to be," said Clement, who was 41 at the time.

<http://www.military.com/news/article/navy-program-aims-to-get-vets-civilian-jobs.html>

He quickly found work as an investigator for a private company doing background checks, a job he got partly because he had earned the certifications that qualified him to work as a Department of Homeland Security contractor long before he was discharged.

Thousands of veterans seek employment through Military.com, an offshoot of the job website Monster.com that caters to veterans. But Military.com's CEO, retired Adm. T. L. McCreary, said state government licensing rules often prevent veterans from finding good jobs that are equal to their military skills.

"Servicemembers often cannot leave the military right away and find a job because of some state's licensing requirement. The servicemember will have to pay out of their own pocket to take a state program even though they might be qualified to teach the course they are paying to take. This is a major problem that the state and federal government need to fix," he said.

"We have medics or corpsmen who are performing surgery on the battlefield and have dealt with trauma like you cannot believe, but they have to go through a several month [paramedic] program when they go back home to work."

A bill sponsored by Sen. Patty Murray, a Washington Democrat, would require all services do some of what the Navy is doing. Murray's bill also would eliminate some of the red tape currently required for veterans to enter the federal workforce, and it would make sure all retiring military members participate in a transition program that teaches job-search skills.

Murray's bill would cost \$30 million over 5 years largely to expand efforts to look at what people do in the military and how to more easily adapt those skills to the civilian workforce when they leave the military. Her office says the bill could save the federal government money in the long haul by lowering the military's unemployment costs.

The American Legion plans a national meeting on veterans' employment and credentialing in October. The tragedy is that veterans are often so qualified and have done so many amazing things that they can bring to employers. It is a missed opportunity for employers," said Joe Sharpe, director of the legion's economic division and an Army reservist with 28 years in the military. Today's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines work with advanced technology and often have useful management and communication skills, he said.

"The transition to leaving the military should start the day you enter the military. The private sector should be more involved in the training so they know what they will be getting when someone leaves the military," he said.

Navy Master at Arms Kris Thompson plans to leave the military in October after 10 years as a military police officer and dog handler. To work in the K-9 unit of most local police agencies, Thompson would need to spend several years as a beat officer before progressing to the K-9 unit. But the numerous anti-terrorism and Homeland Security certifications he's earned through the Navy's program will allow him to work immediately as a dog handler and security specialist for a private company.

"Especially within the K-9 industry, we do a lot of anti-terrorism work -- they haven't found anything better than a dog to detect explosives," Thompson said. "The companies ask for these certifications, and if you have them, it improves your chances of getting a job."

Petty Officer Michael Garwood, 28, works with Thompson as a dog handler and doesn't plan to leave the Navy anytime soon. Still, he has obtained his Homeland Security and anti-terrorism certifications through the free online site. "I'm not thinking about my post-military career but I know it will look good on my resume when I get out," he said.

## **New online Army app tracks training, education**

**By Jim Tice - Staff writer**  
**Army Times, 6 August 2011**

FORT MONROE, Va. — Soldiers now have a one-stop online tool they can use to map their careers, assignments and training opportunities.

Called Army Career Tracker, the personalized professional development application is being fielded with enlisted soldiers now, and will go live with commissioned officers, warrant officers and Army civilians later this year.

When fielded with the entire force, Career Tracker will provide 1.3 million soldiers and Army civilians with a tool that integrates training, assignment history, and formal and informal education information from 15 databases and systems into one interactive and easy-to-use interface.

Soldiers will be able to monitor their career development and history, search education and training resources, and receive personalized career-planning and goal-setting advice from leaders and mentors. They will also be able to research the possibility of switching to another military occupational specialty.

For the first time, soldiers using ACT will be able to assess their own situation and see how they stand in comparison to other soldiers of the same MOS and rank.

“What brought us to this point is that while soldiers can access education and professional development information, it is not easily accessible and is not personalized for them,” said retired Command Sgt. Maj. John Sparks, director of the Institute of NCO Professional Development, which is part of Training and Doctrine Command. “Essentially there is so much stuff out there now that much of it is hard to get to or even know about.”

Initial efforts at tying these resources together in an online application focused on enlisted soldiers, but as development of the system progressed, it became apparent that the concept also could be applied to officers, warrant officers and the service’s 340,000 civilians.

Sparks cautions that the Career Tracker systems, as currently designed, are not perfect solutions.

“We know that as soldiers use these systems, we will have to add to or revise some of the functions, and that may take some time,” he said.

The new career tracker goes beyond the career map pamphlets of the past that laid out generic professional development goals and timelines for specialties, branches and corps of the enlisted and officer job systems. Now ACT delivers that information in a personalized way that takes into account an individual soldier’s experiences, education, training and needs.

In a totally new aspect to professional development, ACT is designed to show the general career progression status of other members of a soldier’s peer group.

For example, the system is designed so that it can show what percentage of soldiers in a particular MOS and grade have completed the recommended level of professional military education for that grade.

ACT is designed so that leaders can view files and keep tabs on a soldier’s professional development, then counsel and mentor the soldier as needed.

When a soldier initially signs into ACT, the first thing he must do is enter the name of his first-line leader. The leader will then be notified that the soldier is enrolled in the system.

<http://www.armytimes.com/news/2011/08/army-releases-online-career-tracker-application-080611/>  
ACT also allows soldiers to designate a mentor or mentors to assist them in their professional development planning.

“Mentorship is huge in the Army, and a mentor can be someone a soldier previously has served with, or just someone he or she holds in high regard as a professional,” Sparks said.

ACT will assist soldiers in locating and requesting a mentor, and then in sharing information for collaboration on professional development plans.

“I can remember being a first sergeant for soldiers in several different MOSs, which made it difficult to provide professional development guidance to those soldiers because each MOS has its own career map,” Sparks said.

ACT eliminates that problem because career maps are built into the system for each soldier.

“Army Career Tracker is not a database,” Sparks said. “It’s a tool that pulls information from other systems, such as the personnel record for assignments and the education record for school credits.”

If information is incorrect or out of date, the corrections have to be made in the source file, not in Career Tracker, officials here said.

Professional development information available for access via Career Tracker is not limited to a soldier’s current MOS.

Soldiers who are interested in reclassification can draw on information provided by an MOS proponent, typically a branch service school, in regard to the physical, educational, experience and security clearance requirements of a specialty, as well as the professional development model in terms of assignments and future training and schooling requirements.

### **Officer careers**

The officer components of Career Tracker are designed to provide access to the descriptions of leader development goals for branches, functional areas and specialties of the officer and warrant officer corps, according to Keith Beurskens, deputy director of the School of Advanced Leadership and Tactics, Command and General Staff College.

“It allows them to identify what their requirements are, how they measure up to those requirements, and to share that information with leaders in their chain of command, and mentors who may or may not be in the chain of command,” he said.

Officers and warrant officers typically work with their assignment officers and career managers on near-term goals, such as assignments and schooling, and Career Tracker will not change that.

ACT will provide officers with the type of information they need for the near term, midterm and the long haul, Beurskens said. A career plan report can be printed out and shared with managers at Human Resources Command.

An officer can share his long-term goals with HRC managers so they can help the officer achieve career milestones. This is a departure from the assignment preference statement or “dream sheet” of the past.

ACT comes at a time when the Army is encouraging officers to broaden their professional experiences by seeking nontraditional assignments outside their branch or functional area, or even the Department of the Army.

ACT will help give officers information about such assignments, and when these should occur in the career timeline.

### **Help for reservists**

ACT’s tailored information and online delivery should make life easier for the reserve components.

<http://www.armytimes.com/news/2011/08/army-releases-online-career-tracker-application-080611/>  
“I think it’s especially important to us that we’re being brought in on the early phases of Army Career Tracker,” said Sgt. Maj. Donald Johns, a National Guard enlisted policy integrator in the Office of the G-1 at the Pentagon.

“Our soldiers are geographically dispersed, and they have one drill weekend a month with their unit,” Johns said. They may not have the advantage that active soldiers do in setting aside blocks of time when needed for career development guidance and counseling.

“Army Career Tracker gives us the same capability, because the data that is accessed by the system is there every day, and the leaders, mentors and soldiers do not have to go to the training NCO or readiness NCO to obtain professional development information,” Johns said.

Sgt. Maj. Mario Reyes, senior enlisted adviser to the deputy commanding general of Training and Doctrine Command (Army Reserve), said the system will have a payoff for the Army Reserve.

“It clearly will help us deliver important information to our widely dispersed soldiers, most of whom are not located near a military installation where they would have easy access to information,” he said.

# Religion

<http://news.yahoo.com/army-approves-atheism-themed-concert-fort-bragg-154759732.html>

## **Army approves atheism-themed concert at Fort Bragg**

**By TOM BREEN - Associated Press**

**Yahoo.com, August 8, 2011**

...RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — A concert event organized by atheist, agnostic and other non-theist soldiers has been cleared by the Army to take place next spring at Fort Bragg, concert organizers and a spokesman for the post said Monday. Organizers planned to hold the Rock Beyond Belief event this year, but they canceled after saying Bragg leadership was not providing the same support it gave to an evangelical Christian concert last fall.

Supporters hailed the Army's decision. "You know those goosebumps you get when your favorite song hits that sweet spot? I got those," said Sgt. Justin Griffith, main organizer of the event and the military director of American Atheists, in an email. "I was overcome with joy and a sense of vindication."

The plan is to hold the event on March 31 at the main parade field at Fort Bragg, where the Christian-themed Rock the Fort concert was held. Famed atheist Richard Dawkins is scheduled to appear, along with musicians, speakers and other entertainment. "This just might be the turning point in our struggle for acceptance," Griffith said. "I mean it. I get letters daily from service members asking for advice on how to 'do something like what's going on at Fort Bragg'."

Final approval for the event came last week, Bragg spokesman Ben Abel said. The festival will get the same treatment from Bragg that other groups receive, he said. "Our logistical support will be the same as what we did for Rock the Fort," he said, meaning Bragg will provide the venue, security and basic utilities. "That's what we provide for any private organization."

The event had its origin in the Rock the Fort concert last fall, which was organized by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Groups like Americans United for the Separation of Church and State opposed the event, saying it was an unconstitutional use of military resources aimed at winning converts to Christianity. Military leaders at the time said any private event, regardless of religious orientation, would receive the same level of support, and Griffith, stationed at Bragg, decided to take them up on that.

The initial Rock Beyond Belief concert was scheduled to happen in April, but Griffith called it off after saying Bragg leadership wasn't offering the same support it had given to the Christian event, which Bragg leaders denied. There were disagreements over the venue, the potential size of the crowd and promotional materials, but especially on the subject of funding.

This time around, organizers of the secular festival raised \$50,000 for the event, which will pay for speakers and entertainers and other expenses. "There is no going back in to the 'atheist closet,'" wrote Griffith, who has also organized a local chapter of Military Atheists and Secular Humanists for like-minded soldiers and veterans. "We're going to be supported on post for the first time."

Bragg, home to the U.S. Army Airborne and Special Forces, is one of the military's largest bases. It has about 58,000 uniformed military personnel and roughly 13,000 civilian workers. The surrounding community, like much of North Carolina, is home to countless churches, including some with dedicated military ministries and pastors who participated in the Rock the Fort event.

But the Army's decision to allow Rock Beyond Belief shouldn't be seen as threatening to religious belief, said Mikey Weinstein, president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, which had promised to file a lawsuit if the concert wasn't allowed to go ahead. "It's not a victory for atheism or agnosticism over any type of religion, it's a victory for the Constitution," he said.

Weinstein, who is scheduled to speak at the event, said that while he's happy with the Army's decision, his group is waiting to make sure the concert happens as planned before celebrating. "I'm going to believe it when I see it," he said. "We've been down this path before. It reminds me of Lucy pulling the football away from Charlie Brown at the last minute."



# Enlisting Allah

**To thwart the Taliban, marines in Helmand province are teaching the locals to read the Koran.**

**By Brian Mockenhaupt, writer and a former infantryman.**

**The Atlantic Magazine, September 2011**

SOON AFTER HE DEPLOYED to southern Afghanistan this spring, Lieutenant Commander Nathan Solomon, a Navy chaplain, learned of a disconcerting and persistent belief among the locals in northern Marja: the Afghan soldiers stationed there weren't Muslim. The Taliban had convinced many in this stretch of Helmand province that the Afghan soldiers—most of whom were from northern and eastern Afghanistan and spoke Dari instead of Pashto, the local language—were nearly as foreign as the U.S. marines patrolling alongside them.

Solomon and his Afghan liaison, Abdul Khabir, a mullah and an army captain, suggested that installing audio speakers at the joint patrol bases to announce the five-times-daily Muslim call to prayer might help. The first speakers brought quick results. "We didn't know they pray like we do," one man told a joint patrol of marines and Afghan soldiers. "It makes us trust them more, knowing we all share the same faith."

A chaplain since 1999, Solomon had arrived for his first Afghanistan deployment ready to deliver sermons, lead Bible studies, and offer counsel about marital problems, fear, and the sharp grief of losing friends. He has performed those staples of military chaplaincy, but he and his colleagues have also increasingly found themselves in the unexpected role of counterinsurgent.

This is tricky territory for chaplains, whose job is to facilitate religious expression, but not, as noncombatants, to participate in the prosecution of war. That's an easy distinction on a battlefield: say prayers with the troops; don't fight beside them. But what about when interpretations of religion can either feed violence or quell it?

For years, America viewed religion in Afghanistan as a minefield. Worried that the war on terror would be seen as a crusade against Islam, the U.S. military mostly tried not to cause offense, and instead focused on killing insurgents and building up the local government, economy, and security forces. But the Taliban has long wielded religion as a weapon, presenting the Talibs as true believers, and coalition forces and their Afghan allies as infidels and apostates. Though the U.S. military's counterinsurgency manual makes slight mention of religion, the few references neatly summarize Taliban efforts:

In their patch of Helmand, Solomon and his Afghan and American colleagues started meeting this spring to brainstorm ways to counter the Taliban's message.

"The Taliban are Muslim too, but they do bad things against Islam," Khabir's assistant, Sergeant Muhammad Nabi, another mullah, told 20 American and Afghan soldiers and religious advisers crowded into a tent in May. "Islam doesn't say 'Kill the people, bury IEDs in the road, and ambush the Afghan army.' Islam doesn't say 'Do suicide attacks against other Muslims.' We have to talk to those who have dark ideas."

The relative lack of education in rural Afghanistan complicates this challenge. Many of the area's mullahs, the equivalent of small-town preachers, can't read and write in Pashto, never mind

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/09/enlisting-allah/8597/>

Arabic, the language of the Koran. That makes it hard for them to deeply understand the Koran and the tenets of Islam, and easy for the Taliban to spread its version of both the duties of good Muslims and the motivations of the Afghan and coalition security forces.

“We have to explain that the Marines are our partners,” Khabir told me during a break in the meeting, as soldiers drank Gatorade and energy drinks and picked at trays of cookies and raspberry-jelly-filled doughnuts. “We work together, and it’s not against our religion.”

Khabir graduated from law school in Kabul, then studied at an Afghan military school for religious and cultural advisers. Last year he started working in northern Marja, a few months after the Marines made their initial push into the longtime insurgent stronghold. Along with setting up mosques at army outposts, he teaches Afghan soldiers to read and write and gives lessons on the Koran. “We have to train our soldiers and officers. They have to believe,” he said. “If we cannot change ourselves, how can we change others?”

Khabir and Solomon started similar Koran lessons for local citizens, delivered weekly by Sergeant Nabi via radio, and they invited area elders and mullahs for a *shura*, or meeting, where speakers from influential tribes told the 238 men who showed up that the Taliban has perverted Islam, and that as leaders they have a responsibility to help their people understand Islam’s true nature.

In May, the Marines sent 15 elders and politicians from Marja district to Amman, Jordan, on a trip called Voices of Religious Tolerance. For a week they toured mosques, parks, and shopping malls—middle ground between the severe lifestyle demanded by the Taliban and a Western culture many Afghans see as too secular and lenient. Afterward, Solomon and Khabir set up another *shura* between two dozen mullahs from northern Marja and the three local trip participants, who told the mullahs what they’d seen in Jordan. “They have a mosque across the street from a church, and it is no problem,” Hajji Gul Mulwah said. “Amazing.”

Mulwah said he felt chastened and embarrassed that Afghanistan can’t solve its own problems and be a prosperous Muslim nation. For an hour, the men at the meeting debated the source of the country’s ills—corruption, poverty, meddling by neighbors—and then the Afghan army colonel responsible for the area issued a challenge: Take a risk, he said, and partner with the government. A few who had been on the fence said they were ready. “We should take charge of our own land and protect people ourselves,” a mullah named Fakir said. “It is shameful that they had to send Marines to do what we should be doing ourselves.” And with that, Solomon the noncombatant, who sat quietly throughout the discussion, had perhaps shaped the battlefield as powerfully as any bullet fired or bomb dropped across Afghanistan that day.

# **Sexual Assault / Harassment**

## Corps revamps sex assault prevention training

**By James K. Sanborn - Staff writer**  
**Marine Corps Times, 8 August 2011**

The Marine Corps is overhauling its sexual assault prevention training for noncommissioned officers with a new program modeled after the service's edgy new suicide prevention course.

Marine suicides are down since senior leadership tackled the issue with renewed vigor last year, but sexual assault cases are up — from 244 in 2009 to 310 last year — and many more go unreported, officials say.

Set to debut this fall, the new prevention training will look similar to the Corps' "Never Leave a Marine Behind" program, which addresses the tough subject of suicide not with mind-numbing PowerPoint slides but with a Hollywood-quality short film that includes gritty scenarios and salty language meant to make the message more engaging.

Called "Take a Stand," the three-hour sexual assault class will be taught by "uniformed victim advocates" and satisfy mandatory NCO sexual assault prevention training requirements, which must be renewed each year.

During the training, participants will see a video featuring fellow Marines who have been the victims of sexual assault. The new course also will likely include a realistic short film portraying Marines in difficult real-world situations as they struggle to protect fellow Marines from sexual assault and cope with the fallout. It will be accompanied by guided discussion.

Like suicide-prevention training, the new program pressures bystanders to step in and speak up if they see something amiss. NCOs will also be expected to return to their units and brief the junior Marines under their command using short videos and presentations.

"This course stresses the responsibility of NCOs to one another, as well as to the Marine Corps' most at-risk population — junior Marines," said Capt. Patrick Boyce, a Manpower and Reserve Affairs spokesman.

The Corps also is touting other Defense Department initiatives such as "Safe Helpline," which launched earlier this year. It provides an anonymous forum for victims to speak with counselors and seek help reporting an assault, if a victim chooses.

A Department of Navy survey — also anonymous — is underway. Marines, sailors and civilian employees can access it online until Sept. 30 at [www.donsapro.navy.mil/survey.html](http://www.donsapro.navy.mil/survey.html).

Consisting of 47 questions, it delves into the personal sexual assault history of individual Marines and asks about attitudes toward sexual assault.

# **Principal Director's Corner**

## **McKinley: America Must Preserve Tuskegee Airmen's Legacy**

**By Lisa Daniel**

**American Forces Press Service, 8 August 2011**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 8, 2011 – As the accomplishments of the World War II-era Tuskegee Airmen fade into U.S. history, a grateful nation must work to keep their legacy alive, the chief of the National Guard Bureau said at the 40th annual Tuskegee Airmen convention.

“The reality of human behavior is that the further in time we get from an event in history, the further it slips from our memory,” Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley said Aug. 5 at the gathering of the group named for the nation’s first African-American fighter pilots at National Harbor, Md. “I don’t want to see this happen to the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen.”

The military made a tangible step in preserving the unit’s heritage when in 2007 the 187th Fighter Wing of the Alabama Air National Guard deactivated its 160th Fighter Squadron and reactivated it as the 100th Fighter Squadron in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen, said McKinley, who was director of the Air National Guard at the time. But, there is more the military and the nation can do to preserve and replicate their legacy, he said.

McKinley spoke of the airmen’s commitment to service, noting that it came during a time of Jim Crow segregation laws when “this country was telling African-Americans they couldn’t stay in the same hotels as white people, they couldn’t attend the same schools as white people, and in some cases, they couldn’t even enter a building through the same door as white people.

“Why then would the Tuskegee Airmen in the 1940s choose to fight for our country?” the general asked. “I’ll bet that if you asked the original Tuskegee Airmen ... a common answer would be commitment to service and preserving our nation for the next generation to make it better.”

All service members can carry on the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen by striving for excellence, McKinley said. He noted the accomplishments of the airmen, which include more than 16,000 combat sorties with 115 German aircraft destroyed in the air and another 150 on the ground, and 950 German vehicles destroyed. Their commendations include three Distinguished Unit Citations, about 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, at least one Silver Star, 14 Bronze Stars, 748 Air Medals and eight Purple Hearts. “If you want an example of excellence, there it is,” McKinley said to applause.

The military can do more to carry on the Tuskegee Airmen’s legacy, he said, by conducting outreach to make more young people eligible for recruitment. Pentagon statistics show that three out of four Americans ages 17 through 24, and more often minorities, cannot be recruited due to inadequate education, health problems or criminal history, he said.

The services also must continue with efforts to promote diversity as a core value, making its leadership as diverse as America, and hold senior officers accountable for progress, McKinley said. Also, the general said, the nation needs to prime its young people to maintain U.S. superiority in science and technology, noting increased competition from China, Russia, Canada and Brazil in aviation and aerospace. “We have to ask ourselves, who is going to design America’s unmanned aerial vehicle technology of the future?” he said. “Who will build the next stealth bomber? Who will go to Mars?”

With fewer and fewer Americans having a family member who served in the military, McKinley said, service members and veterans must serve as the example. And, for those who cannot serve in the military, he encouraged other forms of service, such as the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps.

“Those of us who have influence over the younger generation of Americans can encourage them to continue the tradition of American aviation and to follow the Tuskegee Airmen’s example of service to our nation above self,” he said. “For 70 years, the Tuskegee Airmen have rightfully been hailed as America’s heroes. Through the actions we take starting today, we can ensure that their legacy lives -- then, now and in the future.”