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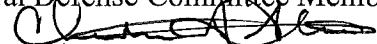
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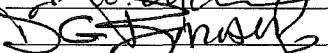
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Executive Summary

In recent years, American politicians, military leaders, the media, and the public have called upon the Marine Corps to take drastic measures to improve retention of females. In 2011, then-Commandant General James F. Amos published the General Officers' Symposium Diversity Update which expressed the Marine Corps' need for a diverse population based upon the following four factors: 1) The Corps' survival, status, and reputation depend upon its special relationship with the American people; 2) diversity leverages America's varied pool of skills and abilities; 3) diversity of the officer corps should be reflective of the force it leads because it represents opportunity, consistency, and fairness to enlisted Marines; and 4) diversity enables the ability to maximize individual differences and is a force multiplier. In White Letter 2-13, General Amos mandated the establishment of four task groups with "Women in the Corps: Attract, Develop, and Retain Women Officers" focused on attracting, developing, and retaining female officers.¹ On 12 March 2014, General Amos published White Letter 1-14, which emphasized the importance of working towards integration of female Marines into the Ground Combat Element. In this letter, General Amos stated he remained "dedicated to fielding the most combat-ready and capable force our nation can afford, and [is] exceptionally proud of all our Corps has accomplished . . . In reviewing the requirements of closed Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) and units as well as the outstanding, and in many cases heroic, performance of female Marines during the course of our nation's longest conflict, I am confident in their ability to serve in greater capacity than the previous policy allowed."²

Retention of female Officers is on the rise; however, the retention percentage of female

¹ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Commandants Diversity Task Force Initiative*, White Letter 2-13, undated, <http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/142/Docs/White%20Letter%202-13.PDF>.

² Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Integrating Female Marines within the Ground Combat Element*, Letter 1-14, 12 March 2014.

officers compared to male officers in the Marine Corps, as well as in comparison to the same age and peer group in other Department of Defense (DOD) services, agencies and the civilian sector, remains significantly lower. In the junior officer ranks, a significant gap between men and women does not exist, but there is a great decline in female retention after 10 years of service. The Center for Naval Analyses completed a Marine Corps officer retention study in 2013.³ In the five most recent years for which data is available, 70 percent of female officers stay in the Corps after five years of service, compared to 81 percent of men.⁴ At ten years, the gap widens, with 36 percent of female officers continuing to serve while 58 percent of their male peers continue to serve as well.⁵ Finally, at 20 years, the time at which officers are eligible to retire, 11 percent of women remaining in the Marine Corps compared to 24 percent of men.⁶

There are barriers that deter women from continuing their services, as well as barriers that hinder the development and advancement of women to senior ranks. This is not an issue that stems from one root cause, but rather a multifaceted problem which stems from causes such as the paucity of females in senior leadership positions, gendered career paths, lack of access to sponsors, mentors and advisors, double binds, motherhood and finding an appropriate work life balance. This analysis serves to provide insight for the development, promotion and successful retention efforts for female Marine officers. Furthermore, the author will offer potential recommendations for enhanced recruitment efforts, improved communication, changing constraints to choices, reevaluation of MOS assignments, and increased advocacy and mentorship. These will ultimately change the dialogue regarding women as a war-fighting requirement, therefore making this a Corps-wide leadership concern rather than a women's issue.

³ Rebecca G. Spahr, "Of Gender and Generals: Policy Recommendations to Enhance the Development and Retention of Female Marine Officers" (master's thesis, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 2014), 19-20.

⁴ Ibid, 19-20.

⁵ Ibid, 19-20.

⁶ Ibid, 19-20.

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Introduction: Understanding the Need

General James Mattis' words, "No better friend – no worse enemy" can be directly applied to the Marine Corps culture.⁷ Its culture is a winning one: a well trained, educated, and physically fit team in continual pursuit of excellence. This culture attracts recruits and officers alike to join the Marines and has enabled the organization to be successful since its inception. This culture, and the arrogance embedded within, has proven to be the Marine Corps' own worst enemy as its egotism has precluded taking viable action to overcome its shortfall in retaining talented women. Although the Marine Corps is not a broken organization in need of rebuilding, it must recognize women are a force multiplier. Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) have developed based upon changes in the conduct of warfare. From the Barbary Wars to Iwo Jima to Vietnam to Desert One to recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, warfare has changed, and as such the population the Marines have fought and encountered has also changed. The quest to retain more talented women is not an effort to fill quotas to ensure the Marine Corps mirrors the American population. What the Marine Corps needs are talented women to form a diverse team and enhance its operational strength. Women have demonstrated their ability to serve successfully in garrison and in combat, in different operational environments. It is time for the Marine Corps to recognize women enhance operational strength across the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) and to take viable action to retain those talented individuals who will heighten the ability to function as a war-fighting organization.

⁷ Geoffrey Ingersoll and Paul Szoldra, "19 Unforgettable Quotes From Retiring General James 'Mad Dog' Mattis," *Business Insider*, 2013, <http://www.businessinsider.com/general-maddog-mattiss-best-quotes-2013-1>.

Part One: Defining the Problem

Current Female Demographics and Work Hours

The Marine Corps' female officer population mirrors the enlisted ranks. In the Active Duty Force, women make up 6.2% of the officer corps compared to the 7.1% women in the enlisted ranks.⁸ Women currently account for only one of 96 General Officers,⁹ 16 of the 646 Active Duty Colonels,¹⁰ 5 of 141 Colonels (Select),¹¹ 64 of 1899 Active Duty Lieutenant Colonels¹² and 17 of 394 Lieutenant Colonels (Select).¹³ Of the 96 General Officers, the female is single, whereas of the 95 male General Officers, 96% are married and the remaining 4% are divorced.¹⁴ Of the 787 male Colonels and Colonels (Select), 95% are married, 2.9% are divorced and 1.8% are single, with 83.8% of the population with children.¹⁵ Similarly, of the 21 female Colonels and Colonels (Select), 76.2% are married, 19.1% are divorced and 4.7% are single, with 57.1% of the population with children.¹⁶ Furthermore, 4.7% of female Colonels and Colonels (Select) are married to fellow Marines, whereas .01% of male Officers are married to Army officers, Navy, or Marine reservists.¹⁷ One hundred percent of Dual-Active Duty female officers have children, whereas 62.5% of the same populations of male officers have children.¹⁸ On the surface, there appears to be a positive trend

⁸ United States Marine Corps, *Concepts and Programs 2013: America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness. Marine Corps Almanac* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), 230, 233.

⁹ LtCol Kristin L. McCann (currently working in Senior Leader Management Branch, Manpower Management), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 16 March 2015.

¹⁰ Col Andrew Solgere (currently working as Branch Head, Officer Assignments, Manpower Management) email to Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 23 March 2015.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² LtCol Fridrik Fridriksson (currently working as Section Head, Ground Officer Assignments, Manpower Management) email to Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 23 March 2015.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ LtCol Kristin L. McCann (currently working in Senior Leader Management Branch, Manpower Management), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 16 March 2015.

¹⁵ Col Andrew Solgere (currently working as Branch Head, Officer Assignments, Manpower Management) email to Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 23 March 2015.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Col Andrew Solgere (currently working as Branch Head, Officer Assignments, Manpower Management) email to Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 23 March 2015.

¹⁸ Ibid.

demonstrating females can manage their careers, work and life balance and be promoted to senior ranks. These numbers are deceiving, however, as women account for 3.1% of the 2782 officers O-5 and above.¹⁹

Conversely, Department of Labor (DOL) research shows the civilian sector is comprised of 45.1% women and 54.9% men.²⁰ In 2013, 74% of employed women worked full time (35 hours or more), compared to 86.9% employed men, respectively.²¹ Marines are expected to work full-time jobs of 40 hours per week or more in a demanding environment. The DOL points out “[in] many circumstances, military personnel work standard full time. However, hours vary significantly, depending on occupational specialty, rank, branch of service, and the needs of the military. In all cases, personnel must be prepared to work long hours to fulfill missions.”²²

Although there are similarities between women working in the civilian sector and the military, there are also stark differences between the two industries. These stark differences between the civilian workforce and the Marine Corps are demonstrated by the industries in which women are employed. In 2013, the four industries with the largest percentage of women were education and health services, wholesale and retail, professional and business services and leisure and hospitality.²³ The Marine Corps has no analogous industries with the exception of Community Services, which encompasses wholesale, retail, leisure, and hospitality and is limited to only 13 officers by Title 10, United States Code.²⁴ Reflecting the Marine Corps under-

¹⁹ United States Marine Corps, *Concepts and Programs 2013: America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness. Marine Corps Almanac* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), 230, 233.

²⁰ United States Department of Labor, *Population and labor force participation by sex, 2013*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). <http://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/recentfacts.htm#rates>.

²¹ Ibid.

²² United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition: Military Careers* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

²³ United States Department of Labor, *Population and labor force participation by sex, 2013*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). <http://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/recentfacts.htm#rates>.

²⁴ United States Marine Corps, *Concepts and Programs 2013: America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness. Marine Corps Almanac* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), 230, 233.

representation of women, at just .2% women are the four industries with the smallest population of total employed women, which include mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction, construction, information and transportation and utilities industry.²⁵ Coming in only a fraction higher than .2%,²⁶ only .5% of American men and women have served in uniform during the past decade.²⁷ It is unrealistic for the Marine Corps to mirror the civilian population's workforce.

Another stark difference between the civilian workforce and the Marines is the potential for Marines' temporary additional duty travel to events such as conferences and schools as well as non-combat and combat zones. Travel can be as brief as a few days or as lengthy as a 6-13 month deployment. For dual-military couples, there is the added potential for both parties to live separately, a practice the service calls living as a "geographic bachelor." Deployment cycles that may or may not occur on the same schedule and the added potential for geographic separation from not only each other, but also children, creates even longer periods of separation. Regardless of gender or marital status, the most important phrase in the Department of Labor's above-mentioned statement is that "in all cases, personnel must be prepared to work long hours."²⁸

Identifying the Need

It is imperative to identify the need for increased retention rates for female Officers. Research indicates having more women in leadership positions has tangible benefits and a lack of gender diversity has potential to limit an organization's opportunities for learning and renewal because women provide different experiences and perspectives to their workplaces.²⁹

²⁵ United States Department of Labor, *Population and labor force participation by sex, 2013*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). <http://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/recentfacts.htm#rates>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Donna Miles, Survey Shows Growing Gap Between Civilians, Military, *American Forces Press Service*, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2011), <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=66253>.

²⁸ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition: Military Careers* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

²⁹ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 389.

Furthermore, research published in a *Foreign Policy* argument states “Women are the best weapon in the war against terrorism. Fifteen years ago, the United Nations enshrined the idea that equality between men and women is inextricably linked with peace. It's time to act on that.”³⁰ It is for these reasons the Marine Corps must stress the importance of retaining women in the Corps’ senior ranks to ensure it does not miss out on a valuable resource for improving Corps’ performance.³¹ Senior leadership recognizes this gap as evidenced by General Amos’ statement in CMC White Letter 2-13:

“[t]he Marine Corps defines diversity as the varied cultures, backgrounds, talents, skills, and abilities among Marines that complement our core values, contribute to our war fighting capabilities, and ensure our connectedness to the American public. As the demographics of the nation shift, we must have an officer corps that reflects the force it will lead and the nation it will serve, ensuring that young men and women from all elements of the American community have the opportunity to share in the Marine Corps experience and, by doing so, formalize that connection.”³²

As previously stated, which will also be detailed in subsequent sections, the Marine Corps’ success is contingent upon its effective use of all available resources. The Marine Corps needs to capitalize on its diversity by employing talented women to their fullest extent and in innovative methods to outsmart enemies as modern warfare changes. To better prepare the Corps to face enemies with varied demographics and cultures than it has previously encountered, it needs more influential, talented women in the ranks. A recent Foreign Affairs study entitled “The ISIS Crisis” discussed the need for women during conflict:

“Indeed, peacekeeping initiatives often leave women out of strategic discussions...[t]his approach is unsustainable. In the end, peace is build through the inclusion of diverse perspectives, and so long as gendered assumptions persist, female voices will go unheard. Women fight for personal as well as political

³⁰ Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Radhika Coomaraswamy, “Women Are the Best Weapon in the War Against Terrorism,” *ForeignPolicy.com*, February 10, 2015, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/10/women-are-the-best-weapon-in-the-war-against-terrorism/>.

³¹ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 389.

³² Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Commandants Diversity Task Force Initiative*, White Letter 2-13, undated, <http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/142/Docs/White%20Letter%202-13.PDF>.

power, often sacrificing one for the other. If the world ignores that fact, it will miss a chance to deal with the identity politics that sustain war.”³³

The Marine Corps “Fleet Marine Force Manual 1 states that “‘War is both timeless and ever changing. While the basic nature of war is constant, the means and methods we use evolve continuously.’ Like war itself, our approach to war-fighting must evolve. If we cease to refine, expand, and improve our profession, we risk becoming outdated, stagnant, and defeated.”³⁴

Diversity is a war-fighting requirement!³⁵

Marine Corps Actions to Retain Women

Evidenced by the aforementioned White Letters, Marine Corps leadership recognizes only a fraction of the American population joins the military. It is still important for the force to increase diversity to build trust and foster a connection with the American population. The problem does not lie solely with the overall retention of women, but rather with identifying and retaining talented individuals who would significantly enhance war-fighting capabilities. The Marine Corps continues to lose talented individuals with 10-20 years experience who may have chosen to continue their service had one negative factor been eliminated. The Marine Corps recognized this problem and created a Talent Management Operational Planning Team under the Marine Corps Force Integration Office. Grooming and retaining talented individuals to lead Marines is the first, and most important, step to enhancing future retention.

³³ Gideon Rose, ed., *Foreign Affairs Abridged Version: The ISIS Crisis* (New York, Columbia Press, 2015), 27-28.

³⁴ Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, *Warfighting*, MCDP 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps, June 20, 1997), Preface.

³⁵ BGen Loretta E. Reynolds (currently working for the Office of Under-Secretary of Defense), interview by Tracy Ann Maese, February 26, 2015.

Barriers to Advancement in the Workforce

These biases potentially exist in the Marine Corps and the “underrepresentation of women in top positions reinforces entrenched beliefs, prompts and supports men’s bids for leadership, and thus maintains the status quo.”³⁶

In White Letter 2-13, General Amos stated “aspects of diversity, such as race, ethnicity and gender do impact how we experience life and, I am convinced, may influence how each of us evaluates our personal Marine Corps journey.”³⁷ It is in this statement General Amos captures what may be the critical reason why women leave the service at a much higher rate than men. Creating an inclusive work environment in which men and women feel they have the ability and the opportunity to rise to the top is a step in the right direction. Information gathered from research in both the civilian sector and other government agencies indicates “[w]omen in the American workplace face many challenges, including a lack of sponsors, forms of subtle bias . . . insufficient workplace flexibility, an increasing number of extreme jobs and the pull of outside responsibilities that lead to a higher rate of off-ramping than their male counterparts.”³⁸ This indicates women in the Marine Corps may be choosing to leave for similar reasons. According to a *Harvard Business Journal* article entitled “Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers,”

[R]esearch has moved away from a focus on the deliberate exclusion of women and toward investigating “second-generation” forms of gender bias as the primary cause of women’s persistent underrepresentation in leadership roles. This bias erects powerful but subtle and often invisible barriers for women that arise from cultural assumptions and organizational structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently benefit men while putting women at a

³⁶ BGen Loretta E. Reynolds (currently working for the Office of Under-Secretary of Defense), interview by Tracy Ann Maese, February 26, 2015.

³⁷ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Commandants Diversity Task Force Initiative*, White Letter 2-13, undated, <http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/142/Docs/White%20Letter%202-13.PDF>.

³⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, “Director’s Advisory Group on Women in Leadership,” (Washington, DC: GPO, 2013), 5.

disadvantage.³⁹

Many female Marines have worked hard to take gender out of the equation by placing more emphasis on being recognized for skills and talents. This is a leader's responsibility; leaders must recognize their subordinates for leadership traits and expertise, and remove gender from the equation altogether.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, research shows that for women in the workforce, "the subtle gender bias that persists in organizations and in society disrupts the learning cycle at the heart of becoming a leader," and the Marine Corps is not immune to these unseen barriers.⁴¹ "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers," details these biases and their applicability to females in the Marine Corps is outlined below.

First, the scarcity of role models for aspiring leaders limits their ability to experiment with different leadership styles they could have learned from senior women. Underrepresentation of female leaders may give younger women the impression that being a woman is a liability. Women feel encouraged to seek out advice from senior women, but the Marine Corps' lack of senior women results in a limited assortment of views on how to "make it."⁴² This is further exacerbated because of the vast geographical expanse in which the Marine Corps operates: the 86 senior women are stationed worldwide which minimizes junior women's opportunity to develop a mentor-mentee relationship. Furthermore, with limited female viewpoints to pick from, if those viewpoints are unappealing to the mentee, she will quickly become disenfranchised.⁴³ Therefore, this leads to a cycle in which junior women feel

³⁹ Herminia Ibarra, Robin Ely, and Deborah Kolb, "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers," *Harvard Business Review*, (September 2013 edition), <https://hbr.org/2013/09/women-rising-the-unseen-barriers>.

⁴⁰ LCDR Jared Samuelson (currently a student at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 26 March 2015.

⁴¹ Herminia Ibarra, Robin Ely, and Deborah Kolb, "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers," *Harvard Business Review*, (September 2013 edition), <https://hbr.org/2013/09/women-rising-the-unseen-barriers>.

⁴² LCDR Jared Samuelson (currently a student at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 26 March 2015.

⁴³ Ibid.

discouraged from seeking advice, support or camaraderie from those senior leaders. This may not be the determining factor as to whether a Major or Captain with ten years of service departs Active Duty; however, it gives younger women the impression that if you are a female, a successful Marine Corps career is unattainable.

Second, in the civilian sector, as well as the Marine Corps, there are, or there is the appearance of, career paths and gendered work. Due to the small percentage of women in senior leadership positions, many organizational structures and work practices were designed to fit men's lives.⁴⁴ These examples lead to the vicious cycle in which men appear best suited for leadership positions which leads more men to seek and attain those positions, reinforcing the notion that men are better leaders.⁴⁵ An example is how organizations undervalue behind-the-scenes work done by women more often than men, is not rewarded whereas heroic work, most often done by men, is rewarded.⁴⁶

The Marine Corps places the utmost value upon command and joint assignments for promotion to Colonel and to Brigadier General; however, until recently, women were often assigned to MOS with limited platoon, company, and battalion command opportunities. With serving in MOSs that lack command opportunities and are undermanned, due to increased requirements during conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, those women will have limited opportunities to command and serve in a joint capacity. Of the 96 General Officers, 48% previously held combat arms MOSs. These combat arms MOSs are closed to women due to the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Assignment Restriction.⁴⁷ Additionally, 31% of General Officers

⁴⁴ Herminia Ibarra, Robin Ely, and Deborah Kolb, "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers," *Harvard Business Review*, (September 2013 edition), <https://hbr.org/2013/09/women-rising-the-unseen-barriers>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ LtCol Kristin L. McCann (currently working in Senior Leader Management Branch, Manpower Management), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 16 March 2015.

are Naval aviators; however, the Secretary of Defense lifted the ban on women serving as pilots of combat aircraft in 1993 and the first female Naval Aviator received her wings in April 1995.⁴⁸ Under traditional promotion timelines, therefore, females have not been able to serve as Naval Aviators long enough to be eligible for promotion and it was only on 9 November 2010 that the Marine Corps put the first female pilot in command a flying squadron. Currently, there are no Colonels or Colonels (Select) that are Naval Aviators. The remainder of that peer group is made up of 28.5% Communications Officers, 19% Judge Advocates, 13.3% Logistics Officers, 9.5% Administrative, Financial Management, and Intelligence Officers, and 4.7% Supply and Air Command and Control Officers.⁴⁹

Of the current General Officers, 21% have previously served in MOSs historically open to females, including Logistics and Communications. These MOSs offer many command opportunities, beginning with Lieutenants holding platoon command. However, to date only one woman has commanded a Combat Logistics Battalion and three women have commanded Communication Battalions. From 1943 until now, only seven women from the Public Affairs, Air Traffic Control, Administration, Military Police, Financial Management, and Communications MOSs successfully completed the aforementioned requirements and enjoyed the combination of continuing their Marine Corps career long enough to be eligible for promotion to General Officer and have been selected for that promotion. Seven female General Officers serving over a seventy-two years period is an inadequate demonstration of female integration for the Marine Corps.

⁴⁸ Rudi Williams, Women Aviators Finally Fill Cockpits of Military Aircraft, *American Forces Press Service*, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2013), <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=29276>.

⁴⁹ Col Andrew Solgere (currently working as Branch Head, Officer Assignments, Manpower Management) email to Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 23 March 2015.

Third, women's lack of access to networks and sponsors is another unseen gender bias. Informal networks are an incredible resource for aspiring leaders, yet difference in organizational roles, career prospects and women's tendency to interact with other women result in decreased networking opportunities for women. There is a lack of influential colleagues for women, whereas senior men cultivate developmental opportunities to junior men. Additionally, as a result of the male-dominated General Officer and Colonel ranks, men are more likely to have mentors who sponsor, mentor and aid them in getting promoted.

The final unseen gender bias are double binds, which are the psychological predicament in which a person receives from a single source conflicting messages that allow no appropriate response to be made.⁵⁰ Double binds are prevalent in many organizations in which women aspire to become leaders and rise to the senior ranks. Women may be forced to experiment with masculine leadership traits, which may be detrimental to portraying a true sense of self in their leadership style. An ideal leader is decisive, assertive and independent, which are all deemed masculine traits.⁵¹ Women are conversely expected to be kind, caring, and selfless.⁵² These create a disparity between qualities thought to be imperative for leadership and those traditionally considered to be feminine qualities. This topic will be detailed further in the "Gender Expectations and Leadership Roles" and "Developing Leadership Traits" sections of this paper.

Barriers to Female Advancement in the Marine Corps

The above gender biases, as outlined in "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers," can be directly applied to the Marine Corps, other services, and the civilian sector. There are barriers

⁵⁰ Merriam-Webster, s.v. "double binds," accessed March 30, 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/double%20bind>.

⁵¹ Herminia Ibarra, Robin Ely, and Deborah Kolb, "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers," *Harvard Business Review*, (September 2013 edition), <https://hbr.org/2013/09/women-rising-the-unseen-barriers>.

⁵² Ibid.

specific to the Marine Corps, some of which may apply to the military writ large. Additional visible and invisible barriers for women include men fulfilling their role in reproduction while satisfying demanding physical fitness requirements, conducting field training and the ability to deploy at a moments notice. Conversely, women have nine months of pregnancy, followed by six weeks of maternity leave and then a six-months post-partum period in which their bodies recuperate while developing a mother-baby bond.⁵³ At the conclusion of the post-partum period,⁵⁴ women are required to be in adherence with Marine Corps height and weight standards.⁵⁵ This personal choice is afforded to men in the military because the demands of making this choice are less intrusive, consuming and are invisible. For military women, there is a minimum 46 weeks in which women cannot train, go to the field or travel at the same rate or level as their peers, in addition to being non-deployable.⁵⁶

Exacerbating the already challenging task of being a Marine and a mom is the Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders cycle, which rotates all personnel every one to three years. Short-term assignments preclude families from building solid, trusting support networks around them and force them to constantly rebuild that network every few years. Most military members do not live near their immediate family members, which leads them to build a support network around themselves during deployments, long work hours, or assist with children's academic and extracurricular activities. While these factors may appear as minutiae, these are factors rarely considered by male Marines because these roles are often filled by a trailing spouse. For a

⁵³ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Policy Concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood*, MCO 5000.12E, December 8, 2004, <http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/MCO%205000.12E%20W%20CH%201-2.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Body Composition and Military Appearance Program*, MCO 6110.3, August 8, 2008, <http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/MCO%206110.3%20W%20CH%201.pdf>

⁵⁶ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Policy Concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood*, MCO 5000.12E, December 8, 2004, <http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/MCO%205000.12E%20W%20CH%201-2.pdf>.

female without a trailing spouse, these activities become part of her daily routine. Shorter tours can be attributed to overseas assignments that may call for an unaccompanied one-year term, schools that are only ten months in duration, command tours, or replacing other officers placed in shorter assignments. Incurred after each school or PCS move is a period of obligated service. There are many benefits for Marines' education and professional development provided by short-term PCS moves; however, these benefits may not outweigh the loss of women due to the effects of short-term assignments.

The challenges associated with being a working mother are a significant contributing factor to the cycle of female under-representation in the Marine Corps' senior ranks, and may have led those not to have significant others, children, or the combination of both. This cycle has affected junior and senior Marine Corps female officers alike; however, the reasons for why they are affected vary through the ranks. A contributing factor to senior female leadership either being single, not having children, or a combination of both, may be attributed to the Marine Corps' involvement in the War on Terror and associated deployment cycles. The average officer is promoted to captain at age 27 and to major at 33, which roughly coincides with the average age of marriage of 27 years old and first birth at 30 years old.⁵⁷ For the current crop of senior women, this timeframe overlaps the period in which these women served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Conversely, men were able to have a family without detriment to their training and deployment cycles. Having family has an adverse affect for women and gives men a distinct edge in promotion, command and advancement opportunities. It is noteworthy for purposes of this analysis that men are not forced to choose, whereas the Corps' senior women had to choose. They either delayed marriage or waited to have children until they were Lieutenant Colonels or

⁵⁷ Eleanor Barkhorn, "Getting Married Later is Great for College-Educated Women," *The Atlantic*, March 15, 2013. <http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/03/getting-married-later-is-great-for-college-educated-women/274040/>.

Colonels, or their personal life choices were made for them as a by-product of joining the military during a time in which the United States was a nation at war.⁵⁸

Many women in the younger generations of female officers are working hard to overcome the by-products of having families in conjunction with Marine Corps careers. Unfortunately, these women are often forced to do it with little to no advice on how to navigate pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, daycare schedules and child sickness, as well as navigating work and life balance every parent faces as a working mother. Junior women often mistakenly assume senior leaders willfully made the choice of career over marriage and children. This assumption plays into the aforementioned impression being a woman is a liability, with junior women feeling discouraged from seeking advice, support, or camaraderie from those senior leaders.⁵⁹

Additionally, an interview between a retired female Marine Corps Colonel (Select) and Major, both married to Officers and mothers of two, led to another revelation about mentorship that has become more prevalent in recent years. Colonel (Select) Michelle Trusso, an Intelligence Officer, stated “successful women need to look at themselves not only as mentors to junior women but also to senior men.”⁶⁰ Driven women who have demonstrated their ability to be as successful as their male counterparts, both with and without juggling family life in addition to their career, have assisted in overcoming stereotypes by allowing their seniors, peers, and subordinates to see women can perform equal or greater than their male counterparts. This understanding will lead to those Marines being more open-minded about placing a female into a position in which he would have previously only employed a man.

In a study by the *Center for a New American Security* entitled “Battlefields and

⁵⁸ Interviews with female senior officers, August 2014-March 2015.

⁵⁹ Interviews with female junior officers, August 2014-March 2015.

⁶⁰ LtCol Michelle Trusso, Ret., interview by Tracy Ann Maese, January 22, 2015.

Boardrooms: Women’s Leadership in the Military and the Private Sector,” another woman interviewed said it best: “Nothing will change people’s minds more than having a woman demonstrate what she can do.”⁶¹ As evidence, the Marine Corps has female leaders such as Brigadier General Loretta E. Reynolds, the first female Marine to command in a combat area, Colonel (Select) Julie L. Nethercot, the first female to be selected for command of Officer Candidate School, and Lieutenant Colonel Ali “Rocky” Thompson, the first female pilot to command a squadron, who have demonstrated that women can fulfill leadership positions previously filled by only men.

Not only do women advance to senior ranks in the Marine Corps at a lower rate than men, but four different civilian sector studies have documented women in traditionally male-dominated settings have difficulties breaking into the “old boys” loop of advice and professional development opportunities.⁶² Only 6.8% of the female officer population fills the ranks of Lieutenant Colonel through General Officer, as compared to 15.8% of the male population. Aspiring male Marine officers have 2782 potential male mentors with whom they can relate, whereas women have 86. Furthermore, of those 86 women access is extremely limited due to the Marine Corps’ global footprint. Having few senior female officers will lead to junior officers being less likely to experience their shared gender as a positive basis for identification with women, less likely to view a senior woman as role models with legitimate authority, more likely to experience an unhealthy level of competitiveness with female peers and less likely to find support in these relationships.⁶³ The Marine Corps’ senior leadership positions are filled with

⁶¹ Nora Bensahel, David Barno, Katherine Kidder, and Kelley Saylor, *Battlefields and Boardrooms: Women’s Leadership in the Military and the Private Sector* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, January 2015), 20.

⁶² Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 380.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 384.

leaders in combat arms and aviation MOSs. These percentages have potential to increase in the future as the Marine Corps has taken steps for inclusion of women in male-dominated fields; however, it must remain cognizant of the aforementioned unseen gender bias that may potentially preclude women from reaching its top ranks.

Gender Expectations and Leadership Roles

“Men are seen as aggressive or thoughtful while women for the same behavior are seen as whiny. I have to watch my words. I’m afraid to seem too whiny and aggressive whereas a man would be seen as fighting the battle.”⁶⁴

Women’s under-representation in leadership roles—both in the civilian sector and in the Marine Corps—is partly attributed to traditional gender expectations and practices.⁶⁵ Challenges women face when they achieve, or strive to achieve, leadership roles arise from the mismatch between qualities traditionally associated with leaders and those qualities traditionally associated with women.⁶⁶ Leadership behaviors such as assertiveness or dominance tend not to be viewed as typical or attractive in women.⁶⁷ Women who are assertive are perceived to be abrasive, whereas women who conform to more traditional feminine stereotypes are often liked but not respected; they are judged as too soft, emotional and unassertive with an inability to make tough calls, and provide the “command presence” required of leadership positions.⁶⁸ Self-promoting behavior that gives the appearance of self-confidence is deemed acceptable for men, but may be viewed as pushy, aggressive, and unfeminine in women.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Ibarra, Herminia and Jennifer Petriglieri, *Impossible Selves: Image Strategies and Identity Threat in Professional-Women’s Career Transitions*, (France: INSEAD, 2007), <http://www.insead.edu/facultyresearch/research/doc.cfm?did=18696>, 20.

⁶⁵ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 377.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 378.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 378.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 385.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 385.

Women, unlike men, face trade-offs between competence—or success—and likability in traditional male roles where effective leadership requires both.⁷⁰ Studies show attitudes towards women, as a group, are generally positive, and even more positive than attitudes towards men.⁷¹ Those views shift for women who occupy traditionally male leadership roles, and are exacerbated when those women excel.⁷² The under-representation of female leaders forces women to pursue role models whose behavior they could mimic, but because of double binds, proves unsuccessful. In the European Institute for Business Administration (INSEAD) study entitled “Impossible Selves: Image Strategies and Identity Threat in Professional: Women’s Career Transition,” researchers surveyed male and female investment bankers, drawing parallels between the aforementioned factors.⁷³ These judgments, made both consciously and unconsciously, lead to unseen barriers for aspiring women in both the Marine Corps and civilian sector.

Developing Leadership Traits

“For most men in a room, respect is a given. But women . . . are treated as if they don’t know what they are talking about until they prove otherwise.”⁷⁴

Developing leadership skills requires the combination of understanding and being true to one’s self, emulating various leadership behaviors and relying upon knowledge, principals, and values.⁷⁵ These skills, coupled with experience in leadership roles, enable an individual to pick

⁷⁰ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 379.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 385.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 379.

⁷³ Ibarra, Herminia and Jennifer Petriglieri, *Impossible Selves: Image Strategies and Identity Threat in Professional-Women’s Career Transitions*, (France: INSEAD, 2007), <http://www.insead.edu/facultyresearch/research/doc.cfm?did=18696>, 20.

⁷⁴ Joanne Lipman, “Women at Work: A Guide for Men,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 12, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/women-at-work-a-guide-for-men-1418418595>.

⁷⁵ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 390-1.

and choose traits from their role models that most closely mirror their sense of self.⁷⁶ Key factors in the development of these leadership skills include the requirement that the individual has leaders to emulate and social interactions that either validate or challenge their role as a leader.⁷⁷ Having few female leaders in the Marine Corps does not support women identifying or developing these leadership skills in themselves because “with little support or direction, a woman leader must convey a credible image – one that strikes just the blend of masculinity and femininity – to an audience that is deeply ambivalent about her authority.”⁷⁸ To further leadership skills, women “novices need to identify role models, proactively experiment with provisional identities and evaluate experiments against internal standards and external feedbacks.”⁷⁹ Prevalent in both the Marine Corps and civilian organizations with few women as leaders, “women have fewer supports than men in learning how to convey the image of a leader, receive less latitude for making mistakes in the learning process, and experience less social acceptance for their leadership attempts.”⁸⁰

Work and Life Balance

The Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice chapter entitled Women Leadership stated it best: “Women are disadvantaged by the convergence of their biological and professional clocks.”

Another factor that leads to fewer women in senior ranks both in the Marine Corps, other services and the civilian sector is motherhood and the escalating demands of leadership positions. If the Marine Corps is going to continue to set itself up as an organization in which a

⁷⁶ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 390-1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 390-1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 392.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 393-4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 394.

woman much make a choice between being a Marine or a mom, the Marine Corps will continue to lose talented women.⁸¹ A Center for Naval Analyses study showed that at ten years of service, only 36 percent of women officers continue to serve while 58 percent of their male peers do.⁸² These retention percentages indicate the majority of women leave the Marine Corps between five and ten years of service. With the assumption that a woman is commissioned through a service Academy, Platoon Leaders Course, Officer Candidate Course or Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, most officers are approximately 27 when they are promoted to the rank of captain, which coincides with the average age at first marriage for women in the U.S.⁸³ An analysis of promotion-board convening and selection messages shows, in the past three years, promotion from captain to major takes, on average, six years.⁸⁴ Therefore, the average officer is promoted to captain at age 27 and to major at 33, during the same years that most American women are getting married and having children.⁸⁵

The Marine Corps is a competitive, fast-paced organization that includes long work hours, field training exercises, early morning physical fitness training, deployments and potential short- and long-term non-deployment related travel. Starting with the pregnancy, women are forced to make tough decisions to balance the demands of motherhood while belonging to an elite war-fighting organization. These decisions include choosing the best childcare facility for a child who is 42 days old that can support 15-20 hour workdays while opening at 5:00am to

⁸¹ LCDR Jared Samuelson (currently a student at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 26 March 2015.

⁸² Rebecca G. Spahr, "Of Gender and Generals: Policy Recommendations to Enhance the Development and Retention of Female Marine Officers" (master's thesis, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 2014), 19-20.

⁸³ Eleanor Barkhorn, "Getting Married Later is Great for College-Educated Women," *The Atlantic*, March 15, 2013. <http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/03/getting-married-later-is-great-for-college-educated-women/274040/>.

⁸⁴ Rebecca G. Spahr, "Of Gender and Generals: Policy Recommendations to Enhance the Development and Retention of Female Marine Officers" (master's thesis, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 2014), 20.

⁸⁵ Eleanor Barkhorn, "Getting Married Later is Great for College-Educated Women," *The Atlantic*, March 15, 2013. <http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/03/getting-married-later-is-great-for-college-educated-women/274040/>.

support attendance at early physical training. Additional decisions include how to incorporate breastfeeding into a daily work schedules that may include unconventional areas without appropriate facilities. Tough decisions also come with work-related travel as to who will watch the child[ren] during temporary additional duty periods because childcare options do not transfer from one military facility to another for short durations. Being a parent, let alone a single parent, Dual-Active Duty parent, or a Geographical Bachelor, assigned to the Drill Field, in Command, or other demanding environments further exacerbates these stressors. This list is not exhaustive; but it provides insight on how motherhood impacts female Marines. These facts may contribute to the difficulties faced by the women when trying to simultaneously balance a career, marriage and parenthood.

Excessive hours are a major reason many qualified men and women pull themselves off the leadership track.⁸⁶ Many civilian organizations, as well as the Australian Defence Force, have adopted methods in which women can work off-site or part-time hours. The ability to work off-site has enabled women to work from home with greater flexibility in their schedules to enable them to care for their children. In taking these steps, this has also created a culture of constant accessibility through cell phones and email, and blurred the boundaries between home and work, for men and women alike. These organizations, as well as the Central Intelligence Agency, also allow females to take extended maternity leave periods if their leave balances support. Likewise, the Australian Defence Force offers Long-Service Leave for military members that have served in excess of ten years.⁸⁷ For example, “a three-month leave credit

⁸⁶ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 381.

⁸⁷ Australian Defence Force Pay and Conditions Manual, Chapter 5, Part 3, http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/pac/MG_5_4.htm

accrues after 10 years' service. After that, nine calendar days' leave accrues every year.”⁸⁸ These programs help alleviate the burnout that military service members face because of overwork or stress induced by a military career and the associated operational tempo.⁸⁹

Additionally, social networking and mentoring opportunities, although more scarce for women, are equally as important for women as they are for men. Excessive workloads and demanding family commitments leave limited time for socializing and mentorship. Junior officers and civilians working to build their careers while simultaneously raising children have difficulty finding the time for social activities that would their enhance their professional career prospects and relationships. As noted by Catalyst President Sheila Wellington, “[m]en pick up career tips; women pick up laundry, kids, dinner, and the house.”⁹⁰ Couple the previous factors with other cognitive biases, and women who are striving to raise children while simultaneously climbing the professional ladder will continue to be less successful than similarly qualified men.

American social psychologist Leon Festinger wrote a book on Cognitive Social Psychology, which indicates people are more likely to notice and remember information that confirms stereotypes rather than information that contradicts them.⁹¹ For example, if employers are making the assumption that a working mother will have to prioritize her family over the job, they tend to remember the times she left early and not remember the times when she stayed late.⁹² This also creates a cycle that starts with her potentially losing a career-development opportunity and increases her willingness to step off the leadership track. Eventually, women’s

⁸⁸ Australian Defence Force Pay and Conditions Manual, Chapter 5, Part 3, http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/pac/MG_5_4.htm

⁸⁹ LCDR Jared Samuelson (currently a student at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 26 March 2015.

⁹⁰ Deborah L. Rhode, *The Difference “Difference” Makes: Women and Leadership* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 13.

⁹¹ Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

⁹² Deborah L. Rhode, “Speech: Stanford Women on The Difference ‘Difference’ Makes,” Stanford Law School, March 8, 2002, <http://womenlaw.stanford.edu/pdf/rhodespeech.pdf>, 6.

attrition reinforces the stereotypes about women's lesser commitment and creates a self-perpetuating cycle of gender inequality. According to the *Harvard Business Journal* article entitled "Rethink What You Know About High Achieving Women," only 11% of women leave the workforce to care for their children full-time.⁹³ Others leave to find other opportunities in which they can continue to climb the professional ladder:

[d]ata and other research suggest that when high-achieving, highly educated professional women leave their jobs after becoming mothers, only a small number do so because they prefer to devote themselves exclusively to motherhood; the vast majority leave reluctantly and as a last resort, because they find themselves in unfulfilling roles with dim prospects for advancement. The message that they are no longer considered "players" is communicated in various, sometimes subtle ways: They may have been stigmatized for taking advantage of flex options or reduced schedules, passed over for high-profile assignments, or removed from projects they once led.⁹⁴

The many aforementioned factors including demanding work schedules, temporary additional duty periods, deployments, marriage, motherhood, paucity of female role models, gendered career paths, lack of access to sponsors, and double binds may preclude the Marine Corps from recruiting, developing, and retaining female Officers at the same rate as males. The next section will identify how it can potentially overcome the imbalance in the senior ranks.

Part Two: Recommendations

Starting at the Beginning

War is not for the faint of heart nor the weak-minded. Joining the Marine Corps means that one must be strong of mind, body, and soul. In addition, Marines must live by the Corps' values of honor, courage, and commitment. Marines take on tremendous responsibility by swearing an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, and in taking that

⁹³ Robin Ely, Pamela Stone, and Colleen Ammerman, "Rethink What You 'Know' about High-Achieving Women," *Harvard Business Review*, (December 2014 edition), <https://hbr.org/2014/12/rethink-what-you-know-about-high-achieving-women>.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

oath, they are committing to potentially giving their life for their country. Recruiting women into the exclusive, masculine Marine Corps is a daunting task and currently, Marine Corps recruiters face challenges obstacles in recruiting females. To that end, the results are the current small number of female Marines. The Marine Corps must recognize the need to recruit a greater number of females and should seek innovative measures to be more attractive to tough-minded, strong females who have the desire to join an elite team without compromising the quality of individual candidates.

Prior to doing so, the Marine Corps needs to identify what the right female demographics look like. After identifying that number, and prior to picking the exact number of candidates, it needs to analyze historical data, account for natural attrition of first-term officers, and examine the retention rates. By analyzing that data, the Marine Corps can backwards to obtain diversity in its leadership positions. Marine Corps Recruiting Command is working hard to find talented women to join the Corps; the most important step in the process is making the Marine Corps more attractive and inclusive for women and their specific needs without detriment to the organization writ large.

Finding Out Why Women are Leaving

In an effort to successfully retain female Officers, the Marine Corps must first find out why female Officers are choosing to leave Active Service. Currently, the Marine Corps does not survey female Officers in the process of leaving the Active Component nor does it actively provide surveys or another means of communication with the women in the Active Duty Force. General Amos actively sought innovative ways in which he “could attract and retain more women,” by meeting with Marillyn Hewson, chief executive of Lockheed Martin; Linda Hudson, the former chief executive officer of the United States’ unit of Britain's BAE Systems; Gisela

Ruiz, executive vice president and chief operating officer (COO) of Wal-Mart Stores Inc.; and Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook.⁹⁵ To this put approach into Marine Corps context, General Amos skipped the first and most important step in the Marine Corps Planning Process, “Problem Framing,” and rapidly moved to Course of Action Development based upon input from women in the civilian workforce.⁹⁶ By seeking outside advice prior to conducting internal research, Marine Corps leadership lack a firm “understanding of the environment and the nature of the problem” regarding retention.⁹⁷

Novel recruitment and retention ideas were discovered during those meetings; however, the industries in which those women operate have few similarities to the Marine Corps. The Executive Vice President of Wal-Mart and the COO of Facebook may know how to operate and succeed in a male-dominated environment, but that is where the parallels end. These women have a level of influence in their work environment that allows them flexibility, the ability to reschedule, or potentially opt out if there are conflicts with other facets of their lives; none of these are options for Marine officers. Marines are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Furthermore, the lack of stability in geographic assignments affects the equation. Additionally, Marines incur obligated service with each school and PCS assignment; they cannot simply resign. The female civilian leaders have worked extremely hard to obtain their successes and lead challenging lives with obstacles to overcome work and life balance; however, the culture in which Marines operate within is built upon protecting, fighting, and deploying to

⁹⁵ Andrea Shalal, “U.S. Marines tap female executives for advice on growing women in ranks,” *Reuters*, (October 19, 2014), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/19/us-usa-military-marines-facebook-idUSKCN0I80QW20141019>.

⁹⁶ Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, *Marine Corps Planning Process MCWP 5-1* (Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps, August 24, 2010), 1-5.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 1-5.

protect the homeland and its national interests.⁹⁸ The parallels between the life of these female executives and female Marines are slim.

The military is not oriented to leverage, promote, and sustain a woman's traditional roles of nurturing and raising a family. Women in the Marine Corps are not simply trying to prove themselves as great leaders or subject matter experts within their own within their respective MOSs. They have elected to be leaders and subject matter experts in conjunction with being a Marine, with all that the title "Marine" entails. Marines are inherently warriors as evidenced by the statement "Every Marine is a Rifleman." Balancing the tasks inherent to marriage and motherhood, while also working hard to fulfill the warrior role is daunting.⁹⁹ To that end, the Marine Corps, more than other services, promotes the expectation that Marines should want to deploy to protect the nation and others at need.¹⁰⁰ The women mentioned above, and other civilians, may feel obligated to work longer hours or travel for work, but being a Marine takes those feelings of obligation to another level.¹⁰¹ They cannot relate to taking part in multiple combat deployments; being torn away from their week old baby to travel on temporary additional duty; breastfeeding in unconventional areas; or balancing the demands of motherhood while serving in an operational unit that regularly conducts field training.¹⁰² They are not forced to rely on seniors, peers, or subordinates to aid in childcare for 20 hours workdays or overnight while in a duty status because there are not child care options available to meet those needs or that are affordable on military salaries or share toilet facilities, or the lack thereof, with male counterparts.¹⁰³ They are not subject to the demanding physical and combat training

⁹⁸ Capt Angela Batastini (currently a student at Expeditionary Warfare School, Marine Corps University), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 25 March 2015.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Interviews with female officers, December 2014-March 2015.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

requirements; adherence to height and weight standards and more specifically, those standards within six months of childbirth; or working in an environment alongside men where there are limitations, by law, that preclude you of being involved in every facet of the organization.¹⁰⁴

The Marine Corps needs to conduct an honest and critical analysis of the female population's potential concerns and reasons for departure from Active Service, especially because the numbers indicate that females are leaving the Active Service at a higher rate than men. These surveys should be offered periodically to gauge the pulse of the population; not simply upon a Marine's departure from Active Duty. Although the focus of this paper is women, the Marine Corps should conduct these surveys for men and women alike. Identifying the factors that lead women to leave Active Service would enable the Marine Corps to analyze those trends and seek realistic solutions that would be beneficial to the individual, the Marine Corps, and would in turn enhance future retention efforts. This analysis will then provide the framework for the right questions to be asked of those successful women at Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, Wal-Mart, and Facebook who have risen to the top of their own male-dominated organizations. Their input is extremely valuable, but should only be sought after Marines, who are living through these challenges, are asked what is important to them. Furthermore, prior to seeking advice from corporate America, there are a vast amount of like-minded government agencies that should be tapped by the Marine Corps including the Department of State and Central Intelligence Agency. The structure, competitiveness, and demands of these organizations more closely mirror the Marine Corps than civilian corporate organizations. Additionally, these organizations also have experienced similar obstacles in promoting women to

¹⁰⁴ Interviews with female officers, December 2014-March 2015.

the top and taken measures to overcome these obstacles.¹⁰⁵ The Marine Corps should not adjust its standards, but rather to find ways to empower these women to be the best Marines they can be without forcing them to make life choices that may preclude continued service. The Marine Corps must begin to open lines of communication with its own female Marines, which will enable it to take action to retain more talented women.

Changing Constraints to Choices

Marriage and motherhood should not be a stressor or a sacrifice; however, in the Marine Corps these two personal choices often turn into constraints for women. The Marine Corps has recognized this and introduced the Career Intermission Pilot Program, which offers a three-year sabbatical to women, and men alike, “to pursue personal or professional goals or objectives outside of the Marine Corps.”¹⁰⁶ This program offers an off- and on-ramp for a Marine from Active Duty. During this one- to three-year period, selected Marines join the IRR, are provided full Active-Duty TRICARE health benefits for themselves and their dependents, receive a monthly stipend, and rate to a location in the Continental United States’ location of their choice.¹⁰⁷ These participants can then on-ramp by returning to Active Duty at the end of the prescribed period, incurring two months of obligated service for every month of program participation.¹⁰⁸ This is a great opportunity for female Marines looking to start a new family while still being able to return to the Marine Corps without penalty. Due to its recent implementation, there is no historical data to show if this will help or hinder women in their

¹⁰⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, “Director’s Advisory Group on Women in Leadership,” (Washington, DC: GPO, 2013).

¹⁰⁶ Commandant of the Marine Corps. *Career Intermission Pilot Program*. MARADMIN 418/13, August 23, 2013, <http://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/MessagesDisplay/tabid/13286/Article/148599/career-intermission-pilot-program.aspx>

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Commandant of the Marine Corps. *Career Intermission Pilot Program*. MARADMIN 418/13, August 23, 2013, <http://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/MessagesDisplay/tabid/13286/Article/148599/career-intermission-pilot-program.aspx>

pursuit of their career goals. To that end, the Marine Corps needs to provide greater options for maternity leave for women. Six weeks of maternity leave is insufficient for the mother to recuperate, find appropriate childcare options, develop the essential mother and baby bond, and for the child to build up his immunity.¹⁰⁹ The Marine Corps needs seek out research and determine the appropriate amount of maternity leave that will help enable women to make the right choices and not feel constrained by their decision to have a child.

The United States Office of Personnel Management offers the Voluntary Leave Bank Program, in which an employee may contribute unused accrued annual leave for use by a leave bank member who is experiencing a personal or family medical emergency and has exhausted his or her available paid leave.¹¹⁰ Each government agency does not have to use this program but it is open to employees in agencies of the Federal Government, which is currently used by both the Central Intelligence Agency and other government agencies.¹¹¹ Furthermore, the Australian Defence Force offers Long Service Leave; an entitlement for service members who have served in excess of ten years. These programs, or similar-type programs, should be offered to men and women like. These may help to alleviate concerns women face with childbirth, children's illnesses, as well as enabling women to find their own appropriate work and life balance. Furthermore, these programs are conducted with buy-in from the member by either their long-service commitment or their willingness to donate leave when others are in need. These programs may prove to be beneficial to the Marine Corps and its retention efforts, as well as demonstrating that it is keeping the faith with those who are committed to serving.

¹⁰⁹Sharon Lerner, "Is 40 Weeks the Ideal Maternity
http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2011/12/maternity_leave_how_much_time_off_is_healthiest_for_babies_and_mothers_.html

¹¹⁰Office of Personnel Management, *Pay and Leave Administration*. (Washington, DC: Office of Personnel Management, <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/leave-administration/fact-sheets/voluntary-leave-bank-program/>

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Assignment of Military Occupational Specialties

While opening up previously closed MOSs to females may enhance women's chances at command opportunities and promotion, this initiative will affect the retention of female Officers. If the Marine Corps is going to push these two initiatives simultaneously, it must take methodical approach on both fronts. The Marine Corps' Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force is systematically conducting "individual and collective level skills training in designated ground combat arms occupational specialties in order to facilitate the standards based assessment of the physical performance of Marines in a simulated operating environment performing specific ground combat arms tasks."¹¹² Conversely, the current procedures that The Basic School, a school whose mission is to "[t]rain and educate newly commissioned or appointed officers in the high standards of professional knowledge, esprit-de-corps, and leadership," is using to assign Officers their MOS may need to be revamped in order to attract females, and their families, to join the Marine Corps.¹¹³ The Marine Corps should review different business recruitment, interview and questionnaire models that have brought success in the civilian sector. Currently, Majors and Captains assigned to the student company staff are responsible for conducting these interviews with the student Lieutenants.¹¹⁴ These officers rely primarily on their own experience, including subject matter expertise in their Primary MOS and their personal experience with other MOSs, which is often limited.¹¹⁵ Student Company Staff members do not receive any training on how to determine a Lieutenant's suitability to an MOS, creating an

¹¹² "Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force," *Mission*, last accessed 24 March 2015, <http://www.gceitf.marines.mil>

¹¹³ "The Basic School, Training Command," *Mission*, last accessed 22 March 2015, <http://www.trngcmd.marines.mil/Units/Northeast/TheBasicSchool.aspx>.

¹¹⁴ Maj Jennifer Kukla (currently a student at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 31 March 2015.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

environment ripe for the application of personal bias.¹¹⁶ These staff members are tasked with evaluating their Lieutenants' tactical skills, academic and physical prowess as well as personality traits and advise on the best assignment suited based upon the duties encompassed within that MOS.¹¹⁷ The Marine Corps should look at the Special Operations Forces assignment process and other career assignment models and their use of professionals and psychologists who are specially trained and educated to assess MOS suitability.¹¹⁸ This interview should be conducted either prior to joining the Marine Corps to assess service suitability or during the MOS assignment process to assess MOS compatibility, both conducted by trained professionals and psychologists.¹¹⁹ This approach will lead to a greater percentage of officers assigned to roles that capitalize on their strengths and will, in turn, lead to higher personal satisfaction, improved performance and increased retention.

If the results of the GCEITF conclude that the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Assignment Restriction is lifted, the assignment to a combat arms MOS should remain 100% voluntary. Currently, to become an Infantry Officer, that individual must list the infantry MOS in their top three choices. During the fourth month of The Basic School, each Marine provides their Staff Platoon Commander with a final list of their desired MOSs in order of preference. The current goal is that every Marine Corps officer be assigned an MOS within their top five choices and furthermore, men must list infantry in their top three choices to serve to qualify as an infantry volunteer. Currently, women are not assigned to combat arms MOSs; however, they are given the opportunity to volunteer to attend Infantry Officers Course. Furthermore, this guideline

¹¹⁶ Maj Jennifer Kukla (currently a student at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 31 March 2015..

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Maj Gregory E. Dunay, (currently a student at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 1 April 2015.

¹¹⁹ Maj Jennifer Kukla (currently a student at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 31 March 2015.

absolutely needs to be followed because if women are put into combat arms MOSs without volunteering, the Marine Corps has created distrust between the Corps and the American population; therefore not achieving one of its top priorities of maintaining a special relationship with the American people. These two priorities, female combat and integration and increased female recruiting are potentially working at cross-purposes. In opening up MOSs previously restricted to women, the Marine Corps may find themselves unable to meet recruiting needs.

Military Occupational Specialty Advocacy and Sponsorship

Furthermore, while lifting the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Assignment Restriction will remove another constraint for women, it may have the opposite effect. The results of physical stress and muscular deterioration during combat training and operations may result in women not being able to enjoy the longevity of Marine Corps careers due to injury and may ultimately lead to lower female retention rates. Future data will demonstrate if women's bodies are physically built to sustain heavy combat loads and the physical demands that being a ground combat arms officer places on the body for the duration of an Infantry Officer's career in the same way that the male body can. This career can last up to thirty years; spans from a Platoon Commander at the rank of Lieutenant to Battalion Commander as a Lieutenant Colonel to Regimental Commander as a Colonel to a Division or Marine Expeditionary Force Commander as a General Officer.

While placing women in combat arms MOSs has not yet occurred and therefore, data on its impacts to retention rates is not available, the Marine Corps needs to take additional steps put women in MOSs that provide greater command opportunities. The facts indicate that the Marine Corps "must consider and address all aspects of the 'choice versus constraints' challenge when

seeking to increase women's participation in non-traditional careers and occupations.”¹²⁰

Scholars and practitioners generally agree that the most important factor in ensuring equal access to leadership opportunities is a commitment to that objective, which is reflected in workplace priorities, policies and reward structures.¹²¹ The Marine Corps must demonstrate its commitment to this objective by placing women in MOSs with increased command opportunities. This process needs to begin during the MOS assignment process and then be furthered by a combination of performance by the individual, the individual's leadership, and advocacy, or sponsorship, by the Marine Corps' Deputy Commandants. The Marine Corps has Deputy Commandants that advise and assist the Commandant by “planning, directing, coordinating and supervising” all matters within the purview of their organization.¹²² Every MOS should have a Deputy Commandant, whose role should also include advocating for the talented men and women in their purview. The Commandant needs to hold the Deputy Commandants accountable, which includes them staying actively engaged to ensure that talented female officers, and male officers alike, are identified early on and managed as a resource. A collective approach needs to be taken by the Deputy Commandants, advocates, Manpower Management Officer Assignments, and the officer herself to ensure that those who have held command positions and attended Top Level School are assigned in a joint capacity, if fully qualified and suitable, to further enhance their chances of promotion. Moreover, when those identified talented individuals are pondering resignation or retirement, the Deputy Commandants need to assess the reasons for which the individual may leave Active Duty and review options to retain

¹²⁰ Donna Bridges, Jane Neal-Smith, and Albert J. Mills, ed. *Absent Aviators, Gender Issues in Aviation*, (Australia, Ashgate, 2014), 287.

¹²¹ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 401.

¹²² “Manpower and Reserve Affairs,” *Mission*, last accessed 22 March 2015, https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME.

that talent. Sponsorship and advocacy is an absolute necessity if the Marine Corps desires to retain more talented women.

Mentorship

Sponsorship needs to take place simultaneously with mentorship. There are currently visible and invisible barriers for women in the Marine Corps, but the reality is that women currently are taking ownership of, and need to continue, their responsibilities to pursue excellence and pave the way for future successful female Marines. Women have been partially to blame for the lack of access to network, sponsors, and mentors. Women have often viewed their female counterparts as competition and instead of pursuing excellence in a healthy form of competition, women often make the lives of those other women harder. Women need to embrace their roles as mentors and advisors to other women by actively engaging those women and coaching, mentoring, or sponsoring them in an effort to guide them towards a successful career. Male mentors have guided women to achieve success in the Marine Corps, but women need other women to help guide them in areas in which men may not be equally as familiar. As “[o]ne female senior executive said, ‘Mentorship has to happen organically, where the mentor takes an inherent interest in that person.’”¹²³

In the last decade, women have broken through their inclination to take gender out of the equation and now actively seek out mentors, mentees, and peers. Both men and women are leaning in to mentor women and to provide guidance and support for their personal and professional development. Marine Corps women cannot be solely responsible in providing sponsorship and advocacy for female Marines because of the under-representation of women in the senior ranks. The recently published study entitled “Battlefields and Boardrooms: Women’s

¹²³ Nora Bensahel, David Barno, Katherine Kidder, and Kelley Saylor, *Battlefields and Boardrooms: Women’s Leadership in the Military and the Private Sector* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, January 2015), 20.

Leadership in the Military and Private Sector” found that men and women alike need to play a greater role in the advancement of professional women.

Advancing the cause of gender equality has too often been seen as a “woman’s issue,” but in order to bring about genuine social and cultural change, men must be an integral and equal partner in the fight for gender equality and women’s rights. In both the military and the private sector, the disproportionate number of men in senior leadership positions makes them effective catalysts for meaningful change and the most influential advocates for professional women. At the highest level, men must take an active role in mentoring and sponsoring women ascending in their careers in order to develop the leadership skills and incubate the confidence necessary for them to permeate the top ranks. At the more junior level, men must take more ownership of gender-related issues by promoting awareness, encouraging innovative solutions, and challenging the social norms that have traditionally been dictated by gender stereotypes.¹²⁴

Ownership and Leadership

If the Marine Corps’ male and female leadership take ownership of the advancement of talented women because it is a war-fighting necessity, the Marine Corps should then set “aspirational goals for the proportion of women in leadership roles, insisting on diverse slates of candidates for senior positions, and developing mentoring and training programs.”¹²⁵ As previously stated, women account for only one of the 96 Active Duty General Officers,¹²⁶ 16 of the 646 Active Duty Colonels,¹²⁷ 5 of the 141 Colonels (Select),¹²⁸ 64 of 1899 Active Duty Lieutenant Colonels¹²⁹ and 17 of 394 Lieutenant Colonels (Selects)¹³⁰ in the Marine Corps. Gender is particularly salient in the Marine Corps and this salience negatively affects women

¹²⁴ Nora Bensahel, David Barno, Katherine Kidder, and Kelley Sayler, *Battlefields and Boardrooms: Women’s Leadership in the Military and the Private Sector* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, January 2015), 28-29.

¹²⁵ Herminia Ibarra, Robin Ely, and Deborah Kolb, “Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers,” *Harvard Business Review*, (September 2013 edition), <https://hbr.org/2013/09/women-rising-the-unseen-barriers>.

¹²⁶ LtCol Kristin L. McCann (currently working in Senior Leader Management Branch, Manpower Management), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 16 March 2015.

¹²⁷ Col Andrew Solgere (currently working as Branch Head, Officer Assignments, Manpower Management) email to Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 23 March 2015.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ LtCol Fridrik Fridriksson (currently working as Section Head, Ground Officer Assignments, Manpower Management) email to Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 23 March 2015.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

lower in the organizational ranks in which female representation is relatively balanced.¹³¹ This is a self-perpetuating cycle because the women in the lower ranks view the under-representation of senior women and associate feminine attributes as a hindrance to success and because of those factors are unable to develop professional styles that are consistent with the needs of the Marine Corps and are simultaneously personally satisfying.¹³² Enabling opportunity for women will result in the placement of more successful women in key Marine Corps leadership roles. These actions will position the Corps' current talent for the future and will enable the Marine Corps to build the right team with the right dynamic.¹³³ These initial investments will demonstrate that “when women perform consistently and substantially above expectations in male-dominated contexts. . . their effectiveness may carry special positive weight.”¹³⁴ With more highly regarded women in the senior ranks, this will create “the illusion that the glass ceiling has been shattered for everyone else” and female Marines will be able to find a mentor to emulate, which would potentially encourage women to stay in the Marine Corps.¹³⁵ Until there are more qualified women in top leadership positions and the paradigm of which billets these women can lead from has been broken, the cycle of low retention rates will continue.

Conclusion

Diversity is a war-fighting requirement and women are a resource that needs to be managed.¹³⁶ Research into programs used to retain females in other U.S. governmental agencies, foreign militaries, and the civilian work force has indicated that there are options to empower

¹³¹ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 384.

¹³² *Ibid*, 384.

¹³³ LtCol Julie L. Nethercot (currently working as the Executive Officer, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force), interview by Maj Tracy Ann Maese, 28 January 2015.

¹³⁴ Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Press, 2010, 387.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 387.

¹³⁶ BGen Loretta E. Reynolds (currently working for the Office of Under-Secretary of Defense), interview by Tracy Ann Maese, February 26, 2015.

women to pursue their aspirations to lead and rise to the top of their organizations. To that end, the Marine Corps has identified that it is lacking in this resource and needs to take appropriate measures to identify talented female officers and innovatively work to retain talented females to continue their service in the Marine Corps.

The development and retention of female officers is a multifaceted issue that requires an all-encompassing approach. The scarcity of females in senior leadership positions, gendered career paths, lack of access to sponsors, mentors and advisors, double binds, motherhood and the challenge in finding an appropriate work/life balance have led to the cycle of women leaving Active Duty at a higher rate than their male counterparts. The Marine Corps needs to change the dialogue regarding women as a war-fighting requirement, therefore making the retention of females a Corps-wide leadership concern rather than a women's issue. This analysis has provided insight as to the reasons why women are leaving Active Duty and served as the driver to increase the dialogue on innovative methods essential to develop, promote and retain talented women. It is time for the Marine Corps to recognize that women enhance its operational strength and to take viable action to retain those talented individuals who will heighten the ability to function as a war-fighting organization.

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