Standing Up to Be Counted: Female Military Personnel and Online Mentoring

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"The Personal is (Still) the Political"

"[P]ersonal problems *are* political problems. There are no personal solutions…
there is only collective action for a collective solution."
--Carol Hanisch, 1969

"[T]hird wave politics reflect a commitment to building coalitions and a kind of
solidarity that fully recognizes and attempts to work with both interlocking
facets of identity and the interlocking nature of oppressions" (242). Third
wavers embrace three forms of embodied politics: "(1) redefining identity by
engaging the complexities of differences, ambiguities, and multiplicities in and
between women, (2) building and working with coalitions to forge an inclusive
solidarity, and (3) engaging in personal acts of resistance in local sites where
injustices occur."
--Natalie Fixmer and Julia Wood, 2005

Working in a "Man's World"

Prevalent stereotypes: women are intellectually inferior, **women should not try to compete in a "man's world,"** women serve primarily as objects of men's sexual desire, women are sensitive and emotional...
--Hanisch

"Slut. The only other choice is **bitch.** If you're a woman and a soldier, those are the choices you get. So if [you're] nice or friendly, outgoing or chatty—[you're] a slut. If [you're] distant or reserved or professional—[you're] a bitch."
--Kayla Williams

"[R]ampant sexual abuse among the troops persists. The reasons are diffuse and, because of fundamental military values, hard to change. They include **a stark gender imbalance (roughly seven men for every woman),** blurry lines between professional and personal lives, intense bonding that can foster lascivious rituals, and a hierarchical command structure that can inadvertently enable assaults."
--Sara Sorcher

Due to "family expectations and societal stereotypes [female veterans] often end up **downplaying their skills and values**. 'They learn that people don't get what they've done in the military, and over time, they stop telling their military service story.'"
--Tranette Ledford

Media Portrayals

"Picture it: Girls with guns. Girls with big boobs and big guns. Killer moms. G.I. Jane. Combat Barbie. The list is endless. Can you pretend these **sensational, highly sexualized images** have never crossed your path during childhood, adolescence and beyond? Those images are a lot for us to acknowledge and sit with, if we're being honest with ourselves. Despite women's integration on the battlefield, American policy makers, pundits and run-of-the-mill citizens rail against the use of women in combat; and yet they — *we* — have all partaken in and fed off, consciously or not, the exploitative, voyeuristic and pornographic industry that fetishizes women with weapons and exploits or victimizes military women. . . . **As a society, we are more obsessed and concerned with what sexualized women do with machine guns than what empowered women could do with actual political power.**"

--Anu Bhagwati
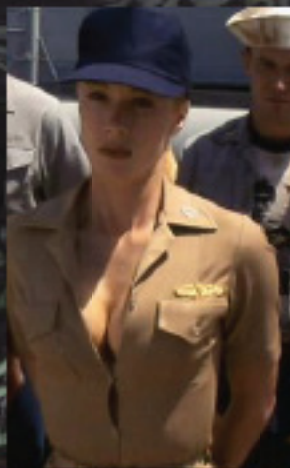
Value of Career/Life Mentoring

Mentored individuals report having "greater satisfaction, career mobility and **opportunity, recognition, and a higher promotion rate** than nonmentored individuals."
--Laura Bierema and Sharan Merriam

"[W]hen women are active in peer support groups, **they increase their opportunities to move forward, both in life and in the job hunt**. They meet others with whom they can relate, and learn more about how to best present themselves to prospective employers and how to tailor their interests to the job search."
--Ledford

Face-to-Face Mentoring

Female-2-Female: An on-post Army program "to combat isolation and encourage the expansion of female soldiers' networks."
--Maj. Gen. John Murray

The program at Ft Stewart, Georgia "featured two high-profile female flag officers who talked about balancing work and life in a male-dominated Army."
--"Divas in Boots"

Female 2 Female
Mentorship Kick-Off Event

Fort Stewart, Georgia

10 January 2014

MENTORSHIP

FF

FEMALE 2 FEMALE

Why E-mentoring?

"[A] computer mediated, mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and a protégé which provides learning, advising, encouraging, promoting, and modeling that is **often boundaryless, egalitarian, and quantitatively different than traditional face-to-face mentoring . . . the** medium promotes easier access and perhaps more candid communication than would occur face-to-face. . . . By offering a 'safe' context for establishing relationships between diverse parties, **e-mentoring holds the potential to erode some of the traditional power dynamics that tend to structure mentoring relationships.**"

--Bierema and Merriam

Mentoring Through Social Media

Social networks "enable their members to contribute to, and pull from, the network to **accomplish more than the sum of the parts would indicate**" and therefore, "increase professional success" by acting as "platforms for the exchange and promotion of information and ideas, [thereby] accelerating [members'] acquisition of skills and knowledge."
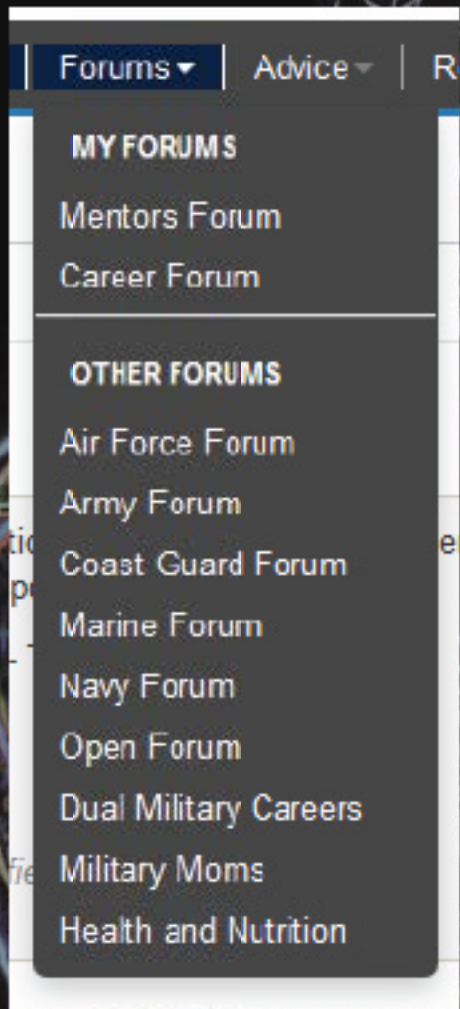--Krawcheck

Forums ▾ | Advice ▾ | R

MY FORUMS

Mentors Forum

Career Forum

OTHER FORUMS

Air Force Forum

Army Forum

Coast Guard Forum

Marine Forum

Navy Forum

Open Forum

Dual Military Careers

Military Moms

Health and Nutrition

Work Life Balance
Any advice for a new mom who is returning to work after having her first child? For the moms out there, how was your transition?

Dual Military Careers
If both spouses are serving in the military, how do they manage to have a successful career AND marriage?

Exhaustion is not a status symbol
•http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/exhaustion-is-not-a-status-symbol/2012/10/02/19d27aa8-0cba-11e2-bb5e-492c0d30bff6_story.html

AcademyWomen Facebook Group

AcademyWomen is a non-profit organization which **supports the personal and professional growth** of current, former and future women military officers. It is our belief that every woman who chooses to serve her country should be fully prepared to do so. We stand behind this belief by providing programs that support and enable women to reach their full potential as leaders.

Closed Group

Service: When Women Come Marching Home

"This is the social media platform of the multi-platform documentary project SERVICE, supporting women veterans.

We have created a space in which veterans can connect with each other and share information/opinions in a respectful fashion. It also provides an opportunity for civilians to better understand those who have served.

This open group is a safe haven. Anyone using violent language or expressing ideas in a fashion upsetting to women in the group or its administrators will be summarily blocked."

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