**Module 9: Women in the Military**

**Judges 4:4-22**

**4Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, “Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, ‘Go and deploy *troops* at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; 7and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand’?”**

**8And Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!”**

**9So she said, “I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men underhis command, and Deborah went up with him.**

**11Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which *is* beside Kedesh.**

**12And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. 13So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who *were* with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.**

**14Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this *is* the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. 15And the Lord routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot. 16But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.**

**17However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for *there was* peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. 18And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear.” And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.**

**19Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. 20And he said to her, “Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there any man here?’ you shall say, ‘No.’ ”**

**21Then Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. 22And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, “Come, I will show you the man whom you seek.” And when he went into her *tent,* there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.**

# **Careers for Women in the Military**

By [Dawn Rosenberg McKay](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/dawn-rosenberg-mckay-524726)

Updated April 30, 2019

Women in the military, as in the civilian workforce, can choose from a [variety of careers](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/military-enlisted-jobs-3354010). Although there are a set of challenges that are unique to female workers, female members of the armed forces face additional ones.

**Background of Women in the U.S. Military**

Today, approximately 2.5 million women serve in the U.S. Armed Forces, according to The [Service Women's Action Network](https://www.servicewomen.org/). The all-volunteer force is comprised of four branches, all under the auspices of the Department of Defense (DOD). They are Army, [Marine Corps](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/things-to-consider-when-choosing-to-join-the-marine-corps-3354316), Navy, and Air Force ([Know Your Military: Our Forces](https://www.defense.gov/Know-Your-Military/Our-Forces/). US Department of Defense).

[The Defense Advisory Committee of Women in the Services (DACOWITS)](https://dacowits.defense.gov/) is mandated to advise the U.S. Secretary of Defense on matters and policies related to women serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. This independent entity reports that, as of July 2017, 17.6 percent of all active duty officers and 15.8 percent of all active duty enlisted personnel were women ([2017 Annual Report](https://dacowits.defense.gov/Portals/48/Documents/Reports/2017/Annual%20Report/DACOWITS%202017%20Annual%20Report_FINAL.PDF?ver=2018-02-28-222504-937). DACOWITS. February 28, 2018). "Historically, the air force has had the highest percentage of enlisted and officer women; however, by 2016, the navy had nearly caught up ([Demographics of the U.S. Military](https://www.cfr.org/article/demographics-us-military).

Council on Foreign Relations [CFR]). CFR looked at the demographics:

**Percentage of Enlisted Female Service Members by Military Branch (2016)**

* Army: 14%
* Navy: 19%
* Marines: 8%
* Air Force: 19%

**Percentage of Female Officers by Military Branch (2016)**

* Army: 18%
* Navy: 18%
* Marines: 7.5%
* Air Force: 21%

**What Factors Motivate Women to Join the Military**

Women aren't drawn to military service for the same reasons as men. According to a 2016 survey of recruits by the DOD’s Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies (JAMRS) Office, 73 percent of women recruits versus 58 percent of male recruits cited travel as their reason for signing up. Fifty-two percent of female recruits joined in order to pay for future education while only 39 percent of males did so for that reason. Women sought out careers in the armed forces as a way of helping others. Only 39 percent of men gave that reason.

Forty-five percent of female recruits saw the educational opportunities within the service as a good reason for joining, but only 34 percent of male recruits did. More females (39 percent) than males (27 percent) chose to become members of the armed forces to make a positive difference in their communities (2017 Annual Report. DACOWITS. February 28, 2018).

While civilian women face a substantial pay gap—by many reports women who work full time make just 80 cents for every dollar men earn—women and men in the military earn equal pay. That can make it a very appealing option. There is a gender gap, however, in their rate of promotion. Not as many women as men move up the ranks in the armed forces, but that can be attributed to the fact that, due to some challenges, many don't stay in the service long enough for that to occur. With that said, military women may be more likely to be promoted than those working for Fortune 500 companies (Hammons, Megan.

"[Is There a Gender Gap in the Military](https://www.veteranaid.org/blog/2017/01/25/gender-gap-u-s-military/)" VeteranAid.org. January 25, 2017).

What attracts more women to the Navy and Air Force over the Marines and Army? Deciding which branch to join is a personal decision that "deserves much study and thought," according to the balance careers writer, Stew Smith ("[Deciding Which Military Service to Join](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-the-recruiter-never-told-you-3332707)." The balance careers. November 5, 2018). Since women often say travel was their reason for enlisting, it is no surprise that many choose to serve in the Navy. Smith says it is "the best place for those who like to travel." He describes the Air Force as being far ahead in quality of life issues such as housing which may influence other women's decision.

**Challenges to Women in the Military**

Although women have been serving in the military for a very long time, it wasn't until 2016 that the DOD lifted all restrictions against women being in combat roles. Female members of the military still face significant challenges that contribute to relatively few joining to begin with and not many staying long enough to become officers.

Female soldiers and sailors still face gender discrimination, and an alarming number are victims of sexual harassment and assault. There are also other severe problems that keep recruitment and retention of women in the military low. For example, equipment such as body armor is made to fit men and must be customized to women's bodies. Mothers face criticism for leaving their families to serve.

Many female enlistees don't stay in the armed forces long enough to reap the benefits of career advancement to become officers. According to DACOWITS, "women leave the military at higher rates than their male counterparts at the junior and mid/field grades." This advisory group seeks ways to keep that from happening by suggesting ways to increase retention rates, including improvements in parental leave. They have recently made great strides in this area but have more work to do. The Department of Defense implemented a maternity plan that includes 12 weeks of continuous leave after childbirth across all services.

 Fathers may take 14 days of paternity leave. Adoption leave is in flux (2017 Annual Report. Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services. February 28, 2018). Each branch handles pregnancy of active duty members differently. It does not mean the end of a military career but jobs are typically modified

**BIAS: THE HIDDEN FIGURE IN DIVERSITY**

By [Rand Rodriguez](https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/author/rand-rodriguez/) July 26, 2018

[LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&ro=true&trk=EasySocialShareButtons&title=BIAS%3A+THE+HIDDEN+FIGURE+IN+DIVERSITY&url=https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/bias-hidden-figure/)

Diversity alone, without a climate that fosters it, does little to root out latent racism, sexual harassment, and other manifestations of bias

*There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.  
There are not more than five primary colors, yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever been seen.  
There are not more than five cardinal tastes, yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.*

― [Sun Tzu](https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/233643-there-are-not-more-than-five-musical-notes-yet-the), The Art of War

The Army [strives](https://taskandpurpose.com/why-the-military-needs-diversity/) to [increase](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/04/09/vice-chief-army-wants-more-diversity-ranks.html) diversity in its ranks, particularly since the [advent](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/MG265/images/webS0838.pdf) of the All-Volunteer Force – and it has made significant [progress](https://www.army.mil/article/171727/army_reviews_diversity_in_combat_arms_leadership) – but such changes appear to be [occurring](https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Resources/Commission/docs/Business%20Case/Strategic%20Options%20for%20Managing%20Diversity%20in%20the%20Army.pdf) rather [slowly](https://medium.com/@Doctrine_Man/diversity-at-what-cost-207a499a4978). One of the reasons is how latent biases, especially with regard to race and gender, inhibit achievement of diversity’s goals. This article aims explores why diversity is important to the Army, how biases may affect personnel advancements, and what can be done to reduce biases in order to diversify the senior leadership of the Army. The Army [depends](https://www.army.mil/article/174964/americas_diversity_is_our_armys_strength) on recruiting people from a society that is increasingly diverse, and it needs to reflect that diversity at all levels.

**Diversity Makes the Army Stronger**

Diversity is important because it makes it easier for the Army to [recruit](http://www.armydiversity.army.mil/document/Army_Diversity_Task_Force_Final_Report_Chapter%202.pdf) from a wider racial and ethnic population, thereby accessing skills and abilities that are not readily available in the majority population. The Army’s ability to tap populations with specific language and cultural skills is a prime example of why diversity is important. [Iraq](https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2018/03/13/army-wants-more-iraqi-and-eqyptian-language-experts-but-that-could-affect-pay-for-some-arabic-linguists/), [Afghanistan](https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/Archives/2018/June/Socio-Cultural-Intelligence/), and [World War II](https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/24/world-war-two-german-jewish-interrogation-intelligence-215606) demonstrate the need for the Army to have personnel who understand the language and the operational environment in which they are to fight. There are numerous [examples](https://taskandpurpose.com/why-the-military-needs-diversity/) of diversity skill success stories for the Army such as the [Navajo Code Talkers](https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/28/us/navajo-code-talkers-trump-who/index.html) and [Tuskegee Airmen](https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/tuskegee-airmen) in World War II, and the [Marine Corps Lioness](https://www.3rdmaw.marines.mil/News/News-Article-Display/Article/548497/following-the-paw-prints-of-the-lioness-program/) program in Afghanistan. A wider recruiting population also allows the Army better odds for success in meeting its recruiting goals. This is especially important in a country where only a fraction of the population is fit, meets recruiting criteria without waivers, and of age to fight [as defined in Army doctrine](http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/tp525-3-7.pdf). If diversity is so important to the Army, why is it unable to see it in the Army’s general officer ranks?

According to the Army Diversity Office, “*The* [*Army defines diversity*](http://www.armydiversity.army.mil/adoAbout/index.html) *as the different attributes, experiences, and backgrounds of our Soldiers, Civilians and Family Members that further enhance our global capabilities and contribute to an adaptive, culturally astute Army.*” While this sufficiently defines *diversity*, it falls short of linking the benefits of diversity to the workplace environment. Diversity alone, without a climate that fosters it, does little to root out latent racism, sexual harassment, and other manifestations of bias. While the Army needs to improve diversity in the senior ranks, it also needs to improve the racial and gender climates which allow diversity to flourish. Achieving diversity for its own sake, as reflected in demographic statistics, without achieving a climate of inclusion that fosters diversity, may hide the underlying feelings of some individuals and enable them to shrug off the Army’s values.

**Diversity in the Senior Leader Ranks**

Army officer leadership in the ranks from Brigadier General through General during the past 12 years, by race and gender were compiled by reviewing annual [Defense Manpower Requirements Reports](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_reports.jsp). The data shows that of the 320 general officers on active duty in 2017, more than 80% are white and only 6% are female. Blacks and Asians have fared better than any other race during the past 22 years. Hispanic senior officers are well below national demographic percentages. Comparing Army senior officer data to [2016 U.S. census](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217) data shows that females and Hispanics continue to be under-represented in the general officer ranks. While there have been slight gains during the past 22 years, barriers to greater diversity remain. These barriers may be found in organizational dynamics, bias, and institutional practices that prevent greater diversity in the Army.

While many have [lauded](https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/diversity-as-power/) the military’s increasingly inclusive policies over the years, many military leaders remain entrenched in the belief that these policies can only hurt the quality of the Army, and they have protested change. They see diversity and effectiveness as a trade-off, and ask questions like “Does our Army really need to [reflect society](https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/08/20/should-women-serve-in-combat-roles/the-military-shouldnt-have-to-reflect-society)?” and “Do we want to win wars or become a [’social experiment’](https://taskandpurpose.com/military-social-experiment-history/)?”

According to Lawrence M. Hinman, [three types of organizations](https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/tiso-ebooks/reader.action?docID=1602608&query=) in the United States employ diversity as a method of change. The first is the *monolithic organization*, which is almost homogeneous in the upper management positions with females and people of color in lower-ranking positions. While monolithic organizations may espouse diversity as a value, demographic disparities between the leaders and the led create tension. Minority followers are more likely to view the organization and its leaders as duplicitous, of preserving majority power while saying otherwise.

The second is the *plural organization*, which is more heterogeneous and seeks to ensure diversity via its own rules and regulations. The organization presumes that formal policies and procedures alone would help institute greater fairness and merit-based advancement. The risks, however, are artificial barriers placed before majority members, thereby inadvertently creating reverse discrimination.

The third organization is the *multicultural organization*, which is defined by valuing diversity and the absence of administrative practices that impede diversity. According to Profession Hinman, multicultural organizations are the “[most successful type of diverse organization,](https://books.google.com/books?id=9_fGbfXLqysC&pg=PA275&lpg=PA275&dq=monolithic+pluralistic+and+multicultural+organizations&source=bl&ots=kBEz5Y3uh9&sig=XA1fStP2AaeFhuCT47AM1jGRYDY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj6spv9mqTcAhVOtlMKHa1wDjI4ChDoAQhHMAg#v=onepage&q=monolithic%20pluralistic%20and%20multicultural%20organizations&f=false)” because more heterogenous organizations encourage productive dissent and generate better ideas.

The Army’s official position on diversity aligns with Hinman’s concept of the power of multicultural organizations. But what does the Army practice? The [disparity](http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/parameters/articles/2010autumn/smith.pdf) between diversity representation in the enlisted and officer ranks suggests that the Army is bifurcated. It is a multicultural organization in the enlisted ranks, with large numbers of minorities serving in senior roles, but it is a [monolithic](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1288.html) [organization](https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Special%20Feature/MLDC_Final_Report.pdf) in the officer corps, with higher rates of attrition (and lower promotion rates) among women and minorities, and little minority and female representation in senior leadership. There are many explanations for this discrepancy, including that minorities in the Army’s officer corps [are less likely](https://sites.duke.edu/tcths_fellows/files/2015/09/ClarkCRPfinal-GrowingtheRanksofAfrican-AmericanInfantryandArmorOfficers.pdf) to pursue combat arms career fields that continue to produce the majority of general officers. However, an explanation is not an excuse. If service in the combat arms is essential to advancement to senior leadership positions, then it is incumbent on the Army to learn how to attract more qualified  minority and female officers into those branches.

The proof is in how the Army acts on a daily basis over time. Leaders and followers alike must acknowledge and address problems

If the nation is going to have a diverse Army, then the Army’s leadership must reflect that diversity. Army [boards](https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2968&context=key_workplace) consider diversity and do look for past discrimination on Officer Evaluation Reports (OERs). If this is the case, why is there not more diversity among Army leaders? What structural barriers still exist after decades of diversity training? What is the greatest inhibitor towards more diverse leadership? These questions may be answered by what sociologists call Unconscious Bias.

**Biases and Their Impact on Selections**

According to the University of California, “[*Unconscious biases*](https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias) are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one’s tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.” Unconscious biases are prejudices we are unaware of because they are embedded in our subconscious. They are “[mental shortcuts](https://web.archive.org/web/20180330064304/http:/www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu:80/~/media/Files/documents/executive-development/unc-white-paper-the-real-effects-of-unconscious-bias-in-the-workplace-Final) based on social norms and stereotypes.” Unconscious biases can be based on myriad personal factors or attributes to include skin color, age, gender, marital and parental status, and name, among others. The tendency toward bias is [rooted](https://blackislegroup.com/unconscious-bias-survival-mechanism/) in the human brain at birth. Over time, we learn to mentally group things to help us make sense of our environment. Doing so feeds our survival instinct by grouping things that are either safe or unsafe. For example, bias keeps us safe knowing what or what not to eat. It helps us determine who is friend or foe. That unconscious bias is [still with us](https://www.inc.com/michael-schneider/google-beats-unconscious-bias-by-teaching-its-employees-these-4-tactics.html) today despite centuries of evolution. Even though the Army has had years of diversity, equal opportunity, and equal employment opportunity training, bias still exists in the workplace.

The current promotion systems for senior military leaders allow biases to flourish. For example, the Department of the Army photo cannot help but identify race, and the Officer Record Brief (ORB) lists the name, birthplace, education, and religion of every officer being considered by a promotion board. Boards also see the Officer Evaluation Reports which have names on them, identifying the officer being considered for promotion, and possibly identifying race or ethnicity as well. If bias exists in all of us, is there some methodology for to mitigate it?

**Reducing the Perception of Bias**

If the Army is to transform from a largely monolithic organization to the desired multicultural one, tackling unconscious bias is a both a first step and a long-term ongoing process. The Army is now recruiting lieutenants who will join the cohort of general officers in 2040-2045. Without a persistent effort, discrete episodes of bias any time during the next two decades might be enough to dissuade today’s young men and women from entering and staying in through selection to brigadier general.

While it may be impossible to remove any individual’s personal biases, the Army must develop and practice cultural norms and formal procedures that mitigate the effects of such biases. It is essential to prevent biased personnel practices in the selection and promotion systems.

Army senior leaders should consider the following four recommendations:

First, the selection/promotion systems should be modified to remove photos, names, birthplace, religion, and any other identifying information from officer record briefs, efficiency reports, and other records presented to boards. Officers can be identified by their social security numbers rather than by names. If there is concern that an officer may not present a proper military appearance, the rater and senior rater should be the ones who determine that, not a selection board looking at a photo. This type of process is known as [“blind hiring”](https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0418/pages/can-blind-hiring-improve-workplace-diversity.aspx) and it has proven successful in a number of organizations.

Second, eliminating bias must be [part](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/03/we-all-suffer-from-unconscious-bias-here-is-how-to-fight-it/) of the Army’s diversity training. [*Project Implicit*](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html) is an online tool that allows a person to gauge his or her level of bias along a number of lines. Taking the test and reviewing the results should be part of initial diversity training. In addition, a discussion of the *contact hypothesis* should be part of mandatory training. The contact hypothesis is a belief held by psychologists that greater contact with people of different races and genders is the [only way](http://www.apa.org/monitor/nov01/contact.aspx) to reduce—but not necessarily eliminate – racism and prejudice. This suggests that increasing contact between white mentors and non-white mentees, especially at the senior leader level, is a way of reducing bias across the institution. Moreover, leaders should ensure that mentoring and improving diversity are listed as performance objectives on officer evaluation support forms.

Third, the Army should update [Army Regulation 690-12](https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/AR690-12_Web_Final.pdf) (Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity) to require training in the identification of bias.

Fourth, the Army must increase senior leader messaging on diversity and elimination of bias. Currently, there are no senior military leaders addressing diversity on the homepage until one clicks on the [Diversity Roadmap](http://www.armydiversity.army.mil/index.html) where a message from the Army’s senior leaders is buried. Consistency in words and actions by Army senior leaders is critical for demonstrating commitment to diversity and not allowing it to become a mere bumper sticker or fad.

While the above recommendations help embed diversity into Army culture, the proof is in how the Army acts on a daily basis over time. Leaders and followers alike must acknowledge and address problems and challenges when individuals, units, or the Army as a whole fails to uphold its stated values. Despite significant progress during the last 70 years, the Army still has much more to accomplish. To increase diversity in the general officer ranks, the Army must revise its diversity training and remove the negative influence of unconscious bias.  But above all, because the Army must promote from within, it must keep its sights set on the target – a multicultural organization that leverages the strengths of all its members to fight and win on complex, dynamic battlefield. This means we have to become more self-aware about our own biases, as individuals and collectively.

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