DACOWITS

Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services

2008 REPORT

Clockwise, starting at bottom left

- Picture 1: Coast Guard Lt. j.g. Jeanine Menze, the first African American female to successfully complete flight training and be assigned as a pilot. USCG photo by PA2 Jennifer Johnson

- Picture 2: Adm. Mike Mullen congratulates newly promoted Chief Aerographers Mate Eugenia Dowling at a promotion ceremony held at the courtyard of the Pentagon. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chad J. McNeeley

- Picture 3: Chief Master Sgt. Carol Dockery, Command Chief for Air Force Cyber Command at Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, La. U. S. Air Force photo by Sue Sapp

- Picture 4: Army Brig. Gen. Belinda Pinckney, principal deputy director of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, tells the audience at the Defense Department's observance of Women's History Month. Photo by Rudi Williams

- Picture 5: Coast Guardsmen stand in audience of students from Park View Elementary School in Portsmouth. The Coast Guard tutored Park View students throughout the school year as part of the Coast Guard Partnership in Education Program. USCG photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Evanson.

- Picture 6: A Marine with 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment speaks with an Arnold Heights alternative school student shortly after a game of handball at March Air Reserve Base. Photo by Cpl. Mike Escobar

- Picture 7: US Army Spc. Danielle Deal visits with a student at the Djibouti City School in Djibouti after handing out school supplies. DoD photo by Chief Petty Officer Eric A. Clement, US Navy

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- Picture 9: Commanding Officer Cmdr. Sara Joyner of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 105, puts on her gloves while dressing out in full flight gear before flight operations aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75). Joyner is the first female commanding officer of a fighter squadron. U.S. Navy photo by Seaman Kevin T. Murray Jr.

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- Picture 12: Gen Ann Dunwoody official photo

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Women in the Services (DACOWITS)**
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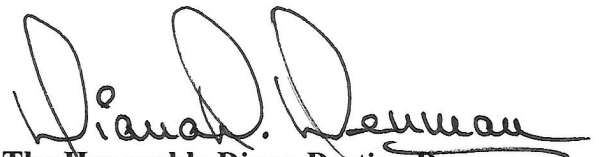
3 December 08

We, the appointed members of the Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), do hereby submit the results of our findings and offer our recommendations to improve the policies, procedures, and climate within the Department of Defense.

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DACOWITS

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON

WOMEN IN THE SERVICES

2008 REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) is to provide the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) with advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in the Armed Forces, as well as on family issues related to the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified professional military. In 2008, the Committee's two topics were (A) success strategies for female Service members and (B) educational opportunities for military children and the impact of education choices on military career satisfaction and retention.

A. SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR FEMALE SERVICE MEMBERS

Women in uniform continue to be increasingly successful in advancing their careers as they serve their country. The paths they have taken and the outcomes they have achieved are as varied as the women who have chosen a military career. They want to learn from their predecessors and to pass along the wisdom they have acquired to those who are following in their footsteps.

DACOWITS members wanted to learn how female Service members define success for themselves, whether they believe they are achieving success as they define it, and which strategies they have used to achieve success and overcome challenges. Finally, members of DACOWITS asked participants to share the wisdom and insights gained over the course of their careers. Their advice reveals as much about their personal journey as their professional military life (see pages 82–85).

Success means different things to different people. Most often, focus group participants defined success in their military career as advancement, achieving career goals, doing a good job, and making a difference. Other definitions included job satisfaction, making the most out of each assignment, finding a balance between professional and personal life, and achieving education goals. When asked whether they believe they are on track to achieve their professional goals, most stated that they are making progress, although they noted that the path has not always been a smooth one.

The career challenges cited most often by participants were those related to gender and to work-life balance. Gender issues included dealing with female stereotypes; having to prove their abilities repeatedly; and maintaining fitness standards, especially following child birth. The challenges in creating a healthy work-life balance are experienced most often in the context of parenting responsibilities. A pregnant woman may be limited in her ability to do her job (e.g., pilots). Finding adequate child care is a perennial problem, as is taking time to care for sick children. Coping with separation due to deployment is always difficult, but particularly for single parents. Given the difficulty of finding solutions to work-life balance challenges, it is perhaps not

surprising that recent studies have found that Active Component female flag/general officers are often childless.

Participants reported a wide variety of strategies used to achieve career success and overcome challenges. These included finding supportive leaders and mentors, being goal-oriented, pursuing education, networking, being self-sufficient, acting with integrity, having a positive attitude, and not allowing gender to be an obstacle. These strategies were mentioned both by focus group participants and in a 2008 study of female flag/general officers by Darlene Iskra entitled *Breaking Through the "Brass" Ceiling*.

The Committee evaluated the influence of seniority, generation, and gender on success strategies. It found that strategies tended to change with seniority; that is, as women advanced in rank and gained greater responsibilities, their strategies changed. On the other hand, when it comes to generation, senior women stated that the strategies that worked for them early in their careers continue to be relevant for junior military women today, although some expressed the view that women entering the Services today are far more intent on finding the right work-life balance than earlier generations. The question concerning success strategies and gender elicited mixed responses, with some participants stating that men do not encounter the same challenges as women, such as stereotyping or work-life balance. On the other hand, many success strategies were viewed as similar for both men and women (e.g., being goal-oriented, working hard and persevering).

The Committee also asked participants whether they knew of formal military initiatives designed to help female Service members succeed and overcome challenges, specifically in four areas: leadership development, mentoring, character development, and work-life balance. While there were differences in the ways in which these terms were used and understood, two common themes emerged: (1) there is a general absence of formal initiatives on women's behalf, and (2) many participants expressed the desire not to have female-specific programs because they see gender-specific programs as an impediment to career success.

No formal Service-sponsored leadership training exists that is designed exclusively for female Service members. Nevertheless, informal, ad hoc outreach and activities exist in which senior women make themselves available to younger women for guidance, mentoring, or to provide a sounding board. Concerning mentorship training, there were mixed responses, with some participants who said they did not know of any formal mentorship training, while others identified training they had received as part of Professional Military Education. Often, they learned how to mentor by observing their own mentors and peers.

Character training is available both for entry-level Service members and at key junctures along the career path. Participants cited integrity as an essential quality of effective trainers and mentors, whether character training is provided formally or informally.

Participants stated that little or no military training exists to assist Service members in establishing a healthy work-life balance. Work-life balance issues are viewed as not being an institutional priority, with the existence of training being highly dependent upon the leader within a particular chain of command. Stress management or time management training sometimes addresses work-life balance issues. Mentors can also be helpful in this regard.

The Committee also inquired about whether there are formal women-to-women programs designed to support women's success. According to focus group participants, initiatives such as these are not prevalent in the military, nor would they be welcome. Of the few formal programs that were mentioned, Women's History Month panel discussions, installation-sponsored women's discussions and presentations, and programs like Powder Puff in South Korea were viewed as both productive and informative. A senior leader who briefed DACOWITS stated that a key element contributing to the success of female junior officers is observing military women doing high-powered jobs successfully. Informal women-to-women support appears to be somewhat more common than formal initiatives and includes activities such as mentoring, casual conversations, networking within the military, and networking within the civilian community.

At the conclusion of each focus group discussion, DACOWITS facilitators invited participants to consider the advice they might offer, if they were invited to share their wisdom with young women contemplating military service. Several statements emerge as sage advice to the next generation: carefully evaluate the decision to join the military; know yourself and what you want; stay true to yourself and your values; be goal-oriented and work hard to achieve your goals; learn from the experiences of others; do not let gender be an obstacle; pursue education; be self-sufficient and take initiative; and stay positive.

B. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Military careers involve frequent relocations for Service members and their families. This affects both their quality of life and the educational opportunities for their children. Since the late 1990s, many initiatives have been implemented to promote improved educational opportunities for military children, yet challenges remain. Base realignment and global repositioning of forces have added to this burden by reassigning military families to highly affected communities and school systems that may lack the resources to absorb them and provide adequate education. Finally, the Global War on Terror has introduced stressors on military children that require special sensitivity.

DACOWITS wanted to learn about the views and perceptions of military parents regarding educational opportunities for their children. As a means of determining the quality of education available to military children, the Committee asked participants how they research new schools, about their level of satisfaction with available schooling options, how they supplement their children's education, whether deployment stresses are appropriately dealt with at school, and how schooling options affect career-related decisions.

Participants appeared to be quite proficient at determining the quality of schools in the area where they will be assigned. The Internet is most frequently used to determine national rankings, test scores, and teacher quality. Networking with other parents is an additional means of gathering information, as are school visits and meetings with school staff.

The following are education options that may be available for military children: local and on-base public schools, on-base Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools, private schools, charter schools, and home schooling. Nevertheless, of the parents who participated in DACOWITS focus groups, fewer than half felt satisfied with their children's education opportunities. They felt their choices were limited by both geography and cost (most could not afford private school). Some are unhappy because their children are not sufficiently challenged, while others have concerns about their children with special needs. Permanent change of station (PCS) moves can create special difficulties for high-school children due to transfer of transcripts and credits; graduation requirements that vary by school district; and lack of standardized curricula, special programs, and extracurricular activities. Despite efforts to ensure adequate education opportunities for military children, many participants still perceive a lack of schooling options for their children.

In addition to finding the best schools for their children, military parents often supplement their children's education. They work with their children on homework and school projects, develop learning opportunities outside of school, engage outside tutors, and involve their children in extracurricular activities.

Participants almost unanimously were in favor of school vouchers and home-schooling support. Vouchers would allow parents to choose the best school options without regard to cost. Although most military parents do not home school their children, participants believed that having home-schooling support might make it a more feasible option. Participants offered a wide variety of suggestions for improving their children's educational opportunities: provide tools to help them evaluate schools and compare programs; provide more on-base schools, whether DoD or public; provide "coast stability;" provide greater educational support (e.g., tutoring, transportation assistance); expand the School Liaison Officer program; and develop and market the DoD website containing school information for all areas.

Children's educational opportunities have a strong influence on important family decisions, such as the decision to live in military housing, accept or decline orders, live within a certain area, separate the family, and leave or stay in the military.

Of particular importance to military families is the stress their children experience when the Service member is deployed. DACOWITS examined military parents' perceptions regarding the adequacy of deployment-related support that is available for their children. The Committee learned that this type of support varies by geographic area and by proximity to major bases from which parents are being deployed overseas. The schools that provide this kind of support tend to be on base or are in heavily military areas, while local public schools in areas less affected by deployments often have little or no support for the children of deployed parents. In the areas where good support exists, it is often informal, although the military offers ongoing programs that reach out to family members. These programs provide services such as a children's video about deployment, predeployment support, video teleconferences with deployed parents, and respite child care. Some participants cited Family Readiness Groups as a particularly valuable source of deployment-related support that is offered at the unit level.

Recommendations about improvements in existing deployment-related support for families and educators articulate the need for effectively advertising the many programs and resources that are currently available. The report concludes with a reference list of organizations that provide this kind of deployment-related support.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) was established in 1951 with the mandate to provide the Department of Defense (DoD) with advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to the recruitment and retention, treatment, employment, integration, and well-being of highly qualified professional women in the Armed Forces. Under the current charter, in place since 2002, the Committee also provides advice and recommendations on family issues related to the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified professional military. (See Appendix A for current charter.) The individuals who comprise the Committee are appointed by the Secretary of Defense to serve in a voluntary capacity for three-year terms. (See Appendix B for biographies of the 2008 DACOWITS Committee members.)

The DACOWITS charter authorizes the Committee to advise the DoD through the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) (PDUSD (P&R)). Each year, the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary frames for the Committee the salient concerns related to the integration of military women and family issues in the Armed Forces. Based on this guidance, the Committee then selects a specific topic (or topics) to investigate. These topics form the basis of the Committee's research activities for the year and for the annual report they provide to the Secretary of Defense. With this guidance in mind, and based on a series of briefings provided by DoD and other proponents, the Committee chose to examine two topics during the 2008 research cycle: Success Strategies for Female Service Members and Educational Opportunities for Military Children.

The Committee's research on Success Strategies for Female Service Members was intended to address the following overarching research questions:

- How do female Service members define success?
- What strategies help them achieve their goals or their definition of success?
- What barriers do women encounter enroute to their goals?
- How do female Service members overcome barriers?
- How have female Service members' success strategies changed over time, and how do they differ for women at different points in their careers?
- What strategies are employed in the military specifically to develop female leaders, and how do they work?
- What women-to-women strategies are particularly effective in promoting the success of female Service members (e.g., mentoring, networking, affinity groups)?
- What strategies are particularly effective in promoting the success of women in the private sector?
- What new or improved strategies would better promote the success of female Service members?

The Committee's research on Educational Opportunities for Military Children was intended to address the following overarching research questions:

- What factors determine the school children attend when military families relocate?
- How do military parents evaluate the quality of a school or school system?
- What alternative schooling options do Service families desire for their children?
- What kind of education-related support or services expressly for military or mobile children is presently provided?
- What education-related needs do military children have that are not being adequately met?
- How do children's schooling options impact families' decisions (e.g., to accept orders, to move the family, in deciding where to live, to stay in or leave the military)?
- What schooling options are offered to mobile families by private-sector employers?
- What kind of school-related support is needed and available for *Guard and Reserve families*, in response to the stresses of deployment?

This report presents literature and research on the two topics selected by the Committee this year, including the research conducted by DACOWITS. Consistent with the research efforts of previous years, the Committee took a multipronged approach to answer the research questions, including (1) the use of existing resources, such as statistics, survey data, and other available research findings and (2) the collection of data at military sites through focus groups, limited surveys, meetings, and observation.

The primary data collection involved site visits to 12 military installations between March and July 2008. (See Appendix C for installations visited.) In addition to the in-person military site visits, "virtual site visits" were made to Iraq and Afghanistan via video teleconferences (VTCs) held at the Pentagon.

During these in-person and virtual site visits, teams of Committee members conducted 65 focus groups with a total of 507 individuals. In most cases, the site visit teams were composed of two DACOWITS members, who facilitated the focus groups. Exhibit I-1 identifies the number of focus groups conducted for each of the two topics and the number of individuals who attended them.

Exhibit I-1: Number of Focus Groups and Focus Group Participants, by Topic			
	Success Strategies	Children's Education	Overall
Number of focus groups	40	25	65
Number of participants	363	144	507

Each focus group session was transcribed, and the resulting transcripts served as the basis for data analysis. In addition to the focus group discussion responses, limited demographic and

substantive data were gathered from focus group participants via brief mini-surveys. (See Appendices D and E, respectively, for copies of the focus group protocols and mini-surveys and Appendix F for detailed mini-survey results.)

To place the current research in context, the Committee presents here background information related to the two 2008 topics. This context provides a useful point of departure for the subsequent analysis of focus group and other data.

A. BACKGROUND: SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR FEMALE SERVICE MEMBERS

The background information presented below, which depicts the setting for DACOWITS' 2008 inquiry into Success Strategies, provides a somewhat mixed picture of women's success in the military. Many women are being promoted, having successful careers, and reaching the top echelons of the military; however, DACOWITS seeks to sustain these trends, mitigate factors that adversely impact the success of women, and identify strategies that promote the success of women in the military. It is hoped that these strategies, whether individual or institutional, can inform policy and programming to facilitate lasting careers for future generations of military women.

In 2006, women comprised 15% of Service members overall.[1] Exhibit I-2 displays the percentage of women among officers and enlisted personnel, by Service, in 2006.

Exhibit I-2: Percentage of Women Among Officers and Enlisted Personnel, by Service (2006)			
	Officers	**Enlisted Personnel**	**Total**
Army	15%	13%	14%
Navy	15%	15%	15%
Marine Corps	6%	6%	6%
Air Force	18%	20%	20%
Total DoD	15%	14%	14%

Source: *Profile of the Military Community: DoD 2007 Demographics.*

As the table shows, the Air Force has the highest proportion of women (20%), and the Marine Corps has the lowest (6%).

Though they represent 15% of the force, women are underrepresented in the upper ranks of the military. Exhibit I-3 displays military women's representation among flag/general officers in 2008. Women make up 6% (57/899) of the flag/general officer corps.

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[1] *Profile of the Military Community: DoD 2006 Demographics*

		Exhibit I-3: Number of Females Represented Among Flag/General Officers (F/GOs)				
		O7	**O8**	**O9**	**O10**	**Total F/GOs**
Army	*Total*	150	92	53	11	306
	Female	12	4	1	0	17
Navy	*Total*	111	68	34	10	223
	Female	6	5	2	0	13
USMC	*Total*	41	24	15	4	84
	Female	1	1	1	0	3
USAF	*Total*	145	94	34	13	286
	Female	19	4	1	0	24
Coast Guard	*Total*	10	26	4	1	41
	Female	1	3	1	0	5
Total	*Total*	447	278	136	38	940
	Female	38	14	5	0	62

Source: Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) and March 2008 Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System (RCCPDS).

Female Service Member Retention Rates

The dearth of women in the upper ranks is explained, at least in part, by the *rates at which they leave* the military. Proportionately fewer junior females than males are *retained by* the military. Exhibit I-4 presents DoD-wide retention rates by gender and pay grade for Fiscal Years 02, 04, and 06.

Exhibit I-4: DoD Retention Rates, by Pay Grade and Gender (FY02, FY04, FY06)						
Pay Grade	**FY02**		**FY04**		**FY06**	
	Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
Enlisted Personnel						
E1	80%	82%	78%	83%	79%	83%
E2	85%	86%	85%	88%	84%	88%
E3	88%	88%	86%	88%	86%	89%
E4	81%	80%	76%	77%	78%	79%
E5	89%	90%	87%	88%	86%	87%
E6	92%	92%	90%	90%	89%	91%
E7	88%	89%	85%	85%	84%	85%
E8	85%	86%	82%	83%	79%	83%
E9	85%	84%	82%	82%	80%	82%
Officers						
O1	98%	99%	97%	98%	96%	98%
O2	92%	95%	92%	94%	85%	92%
O3	90%	93%	88%	92%	87%	91%
O4	93%	94%	91%	93%	90%	92%
O5	92%	92%	89%	90%	86%	88%
O6	87%	86%	86%	84%	82%	81%

Source: *Annual Report on Status of Female Members of the Armed Forces of the United States FY2002-06*, compiled by DMDC.

The table shows that, across all three fiscal years, the disparities between female and male retention rates are most pronounced in the junior grades. This is particularly true in the officer corps. For example, in FY06, 91-92% of male 02s and 03s were retained, as compared with 85% and 87%, respectively, of their female counterparts. Note that losses in the junior grades tend to correspond to the end of young Service members' initial service obligations.

Female Service Member Career Intent

Data on the *career intent* of currently serving Service members mirror retention trends. Proportionately fewer women than men express long-term military career intentions. Among Army officers who responded to the fall 2007 Sample Survey of Military Personnel (SSMP), 66% of males, as compared to only 49% of females, reported that they *plan to stay until retirement*.[2] This trend has remained relatively steady since the spring of 1995 (66% of male officers as compared to 51% of female officers). Within the enlisted ranks, the genders differed similarly in career intent, with 44% of males versus only 36% of females indicating that they plan to stay until retirement. The effect of various demographic factors on career intent was examined. Of all the factors considered—including gender, age, grade, and education—only gender had a statistically significant influence on career intent.

Unlike the Army SSMP, the DoD-wide December 2007 Status of Forces (SOF) Survey results showed no overall differences between male and female career intent (59% and 58%, respectively, reported that they are likely to stay on active duty). The SOF Survey did reveal gender differences in career intent by rank, however.[3] Male junior officers were more likely than female junior officers to report an *intent to stay on active duty* (63% versus 52%) when responding to the question, "Suppose that you have to decide whether to stay on active duty. Assuming you could stay, how likely it is that you would choose to do so?"

Factors That Influence Female Service Member Career Intent

There is a substantial body of literature on the factors that influence military women to leave the military. Indeed, over the years, DACOWITS research has contributed to this literature. In the

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[2] Peterson, M. (2008, May 15). *Women in the Army: Army service, career opportunities, mentoring, comparison of career plans, well-being and reasons for leaving: Results of the sample survey of military personnel.* Briefing provided to DACOWITS. U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Army Personnel Survey Office.
[3] Lipari, R. (2008, May 15). *Status of forces survey of active duty members – Topics: satisfaction, retention, and leadership, by gender.* Briefing provided to DACOWITS. DMDC.

paragraphs below, we highlight some of these factors that prevent women from further pursuing a military career. The factors are discussed under three headers:

- Female Service member advancement
- Female Service member perceptions of opportunities for advancement
- Female Service member work-life experiences

Each of these three topics is discussed separately below.

Female Service member advancement

Data are summarized here regarding three objective indicators of opportunity for advancement in the military: promotion rates, selection for command, and selection for military schooling.

Exhibits I-5 and I-6 present FY04-FY06 *promotion rates* by gender for enlisted personnel and officers, respectively. Overall, these rates show a higher percentage of men were promoted among both enlisted personnel and officers in FY04-FY06.

Exhibit I-5: **Promotion Rates Among Enlisted Personnel,** **by Service by Gender (FY04-FY06)**						
	FY04		**FY05**		**FY06**	
Service	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
Promotion to E7						
Army	25%	32%	25%	32%	30%	27%
Navy	19%	21%	24%	27%	23%	24%
Marine Corps	44%	49%	49%	51%	62%	49%
Air Force	25%	26%	25%	26%	20%	20%
Coast Guard	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Promotion to E8						
Army	8%	12%	8%	14%	13%	15%
Navy	11%	11%	11%	13%	13%	13%
Marine Corps	68%	54%	41%	61%	57%	63%
Air Force	21%	16%	26%	21%	20%	22%
Coast Guard	10%	9%	11%	9%	9%	9%
Promotion to E9						
Army	20%	17%	8%	14%	11%	16%
Navy	13%	15%	14%	15%	13%	14%
Marine Corps	43%	52%	35%	51%	64%	51%
Air Force	40%	56%	40 %	57%	40%	59%
Coast Guard	20%	21%	20%	23%	20%	23%

Source: *Annual Report on Status of Female Members of the Armed Forces of the United States FY2002-06*, compiled by DMDC.

As can be seen in Exhibit I-5, the promotion trends varied by pay grade, fiscal year, and branch of Service. The gap between male and female promotion rates to E7 decreased slightly between FY04 and FY07 but increased slightly for promotion rates to E8. Overall, a smaller percentage of females were promoted to E9 in most cases across all three fiscal years.

Promotion rates for military officers by gender for FY04-FY06 are presented in Exhibit I-6.

Exhibit I-6: Promotion Rates Among Military Officers, by Service by Gender (FY04-06)						
	FY04		**FY05**		**FY06**	
Service	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
Promotion to O4						
Army	98%	97%	98%	98%	99%	98%
Navy	82%	88%	82%	84%	73%	80%
Marine Corps	70%	86%	83%	87%	85%	87%
Air Force	92%	93%	93%	93%	92%	93%
Coast Guard	82%	85%	76%	82%		
Promotion to O5						
Army	79%	77%	84%	87%	89%	92%
Navy	72%	77%	73%	78%	66%	69%
Marine Corps	78%	61%	63%	67%	67%	62%
Air Force	78%	73%	80%	73%	82%	74%
Coast Guard	65%	70%	85%	73%	N/A	N/A
Promotion to O6						
Army	50%	53%	59%	60%	53%	60%
Navy	49%	56%	52%	56%	38%	51%
Marine Corps	25%	51%	100%	40%	33%	49%
Air Force	48%	44%	38%	47%	45%	45%
Coast Guard	50%	64%	50%	55%		

Source: *Annual Report on Status of Female Members of the Armed Forces of the United States FY2002-06*, compiled by DMDC. Coast Guard data was provided by the Coast Guard.

The promotion rates to O4 and O6 illustrate a very mixed pattern, and the percentage differences are small. However, the percentages of men and women promoted to O5 were comparable across all fiscal years.

Exhibit I-7 compares female and male officers in terms of *selection rates for command positions* for FY04-FY06. By and large, female selection rates for O5 command positions were lower than male selection rates while male and female selection rates for O6 command positions were similar.

Exhibit I-7: Selection of Military Officers at Large for O5 and O6 Command Positions, by Service and Gender (FY04, FY05, and FY06)						
	FY04		**FY05**		**FY06**	
Service	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
O5 Command Positions						
Army	14%	16%	16%	16%	10%	14%
Navy	25%	17%	31%	18%	33%	22%
Marine Corps	4%	16%	13%	18%	8%	20%
Air Force	13%	17%	13%	18%	13%	19%
Coast Guard	9%	13%	3%	12%	N/A	N/A
O6 Command Positions						
Army	24%	20%	16%	21%	18%	17%
Navy	36%	19%	76%	25%	39%	34%
Marine Corps	25%	21%	20%	23%	40%	29%
Air Force	31%	32%	33%	33%	21%	29%
Coast Guard	21%	28%	24%	29%	N/A	N/A

Source: *Annual Report on Status of Female Members of the Armed Forces of the United States FY2002-06*, compiled by DMDC. It should be noted that, in some circumstances, selected officers do not assume command. Coast Guard data was provided by the Coast Guard.

The Navy stood out among its sister Services by selecting substantially higher percentages of females than males for both O5 and O6 command positions in all three fiscal years.

Exhibit I-8 compares female and male officers in terms of *selection rates for Intermediate and Senior Service School* for FY04-FY06. We see that female selection rates for Intermediate Service School and Senior Service School are similar to that of their male counterparts. An SSMP finding that Army officers' perceptions of schooling opportunities did not differ significantly by gender reinforces this trend.[4]

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[4] Peterson, M. (2008).

Exhibit I-8: Selection of Military Officers for Intermediate and Senior Service School, by Service and Gender (FY04, FY05, and FY06)						
	FY04		FY05		FY06	
Service	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Intermediate Service School						
Army*	25%	32%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Navy	33%	53%	61%	51%	59%	49%
Marine Corps	60%	55%	60%	70%	86%	84%
Air Force	36%	25%	60%	55%	24%	34%
Coast Guard**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Senior Service School						
Army	7%	8%	8%	9%	6%	8%
Navy	7%	8%	58%	57%	50%	50%
Marine Corps	4%	10%	14%	12%	36%	22%
Air Force	35%	17%	16%	23%	12%	15%
Coast Guard	9%	7%	10%	6%	N/A	N/A

Source: *Annual Report on Status of Female Members of the Armed Forces of the United States FY2002-06*, compiled by DMDC. Coast Guard data was provided by the Coast Guard.
* In FY05, the Army began sending all eligible officers to Intermediate Service School (i.e., Command and General Staff College).
** In FY04, of 68 Coast Guard applicants, 1 female and 6 males were selected for Intermediate Service School. In FY05, of 88 applicants, 90 females and 5 males were selected.

Female Service member perceptions of opportunities for advancement

Attitudinal survey data offer insight into female Service members' perceptions of their opportunities within the military, particularly as compared to the perceptions of their male counterparts. These data include perceptions of access to developmental opportunities, superiors, and promotion opportunities. The results from these surveys are mixed.

Perceptions regarding access to developmental opportunities

Among Army personnel responding to the SSMP, significant gender differences were found among enlisted personnel but not officers. Significantly smaller percentages of enlisted females than enlisted males agreed or strongly agreed with the statements, "(I will) *get assignments needed for promotion*" (36% of females versus 44% of males) and "(I will be) *selected for developmental assignments*" (43% of females versus 49% of males).[5]

The SSMP also offers insight into the military schooling opportunities of enlisted Army personnel, albeit from a subjective perspective. A significantly smaller percentage of enlisted

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[5] Peterson, M. (2008).

female Soldiers than enlisted male Soldiers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "(I was) selected for training courses" (50% versus 56%).[6]

Perceptions regarding superiors

A number of questions on the Army SSMP tapped respondents' perceptions of their superiors. Consistently, female Soldiers rated their superiors more negatively than did their male counterparts. For the most part, this was true across officer and enlisted rank groups. These perceptions dealt with:

- Confidence in the military leadership
- Level of recognition for accomplishments
- Amount of respect received from superiors
- Level of competence of supervisors
- Quality of leadership at place of duty

Many of the differences between female and male Soldiers were statistically significant.[7]

Like the SSMP, the DoD-wide Active Duty (AD) SOF Survey also found gender differences in Service members' perceptions of superiors. On average, men were more likely than women to be satisfied "with leadership in unit" (53% versus 46%).[8]

Perceptions regarding promotion opportunities

With respect to responses to direct questions regarding promotion opportunity, smaller percentages of enlisted female than male Soldiers responding to the Army SSMP agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "(I am) confident I will be *promoted as high as warranted*" (55% of females versus 61% of males). In contrast, the DoD-wide AD SOF Survey only found notable gender differences in *satisfaction with promotion opportunity* at the O1-O3 level. Overall, 55% of men and 53% of women reported that they were satisfied with their opportunities for promotion.[9] At the O1-O3 level, however, 78% of males expressed satisfaction with their opportunities for promotion, as compared to only 70% of females.

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[6] Peterson, M. (2008).
[7] Ibid.
[8] Lipari, R. (2008).
[9] Lipari, R. (2008).

Female Service member work-life experiences

Work-life challenges are a known source of attrition in the military. While challenges in this arena are not exclusive to individuals with spouses and children, certainly having a family can exacerbate the struggle for work-life balance. Exhibit I-9 presents the family profile of military officers and enlisted personnel by gender.

Exhibit I-9: Family Status of Military Officers and Enlisted Personnel		Percent Married		Among Married, Percent Dual-Military		Percent with Children	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Army	*Enlisted*	44%	54%	17%	3%	40%	46%
	Officer	52%	73%	20%	3%	35%	60%
Navy	*Enlisted*	39%	55%	19%	3%	33%	42%
	Officer	50%	73%	19%	3%	31%	58%
Marine Corps	*Enlisted*	40%	42%	26%	2%	26%	27%
	Officer	43%	70%	26%	3%	23%	54%
Air Force	*Enlisted*	50%	60%	31%	9%	35%	46%
	Officer	56%	75%	25%	7%	34%	58%
Total DoD	*Enlisted*	45%	53%	23%	4%	36%	42%
	Officer	53%	74%	22%	4%	33%	58%

Source: *DMDC Demographic Report* (2007).

Thus, female officers are less likely to be married (53% versus 74% across DoD) and to have children (33% versus 58% across DoD) than their male counterparts. Female enlisted personnel are also less likely to be married (45% versus 53% across DoD) and to have children (36% versus 42% across DoD) than their male counterparts, although these gaps are lesser among enlisted personnel than for officers. A larger percentage of female than male officers are in dual-military marriages (22% versus 4% across DoD), and a similar trend is seen among enlisted personnel (23% versus 4% across DoD).

The difficulty that some women encounter in balancing family and work is often attributed to their role as the primary caretaker for their children. DACOWITS found in 2006 that dual-military professional females (e.g., lawyers and doctors) were often the primary caretakers of their children, whether by choice or default. Similar patterns have been documented in the civilian sector: "…at all socioeconomic levels, the responsibility for the childcare arrangements still falls mainly on the woman, and if childcare arrangements fail, she is expected to provide the solution."[10] Perhaps these differential expectations of mothers and fathers explain why junior

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[10] Olarte, S. (2000). The female professional: Parenting, career, choices and compromises. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 60*(3), 293–306.

male officers were more likely than junior female officers to report receiving family support for staying in the military (41% of O1-O3 males versus 33% of O1-O3 females responding to the December 2007 Active Duty SOF Survey). [11]

The frequent family separation that is inherent in the military lifestyle due to deployment and other mission requirements strains work-life balance for all Service members. Army officers who were either contemplating or planning on leaving the Army indicated that the amount of time they spend separated from their family was, by far, the most important consideration.[12] This was particularly true for women, however, which further corroborates the central role that women play—whether by choice or default—in the well-being of their families. Exhibit I-10 depicts the relative importance of various factors in the decision to leave the Army, for both male and female Soldiers, including both officers and enlisted personnel.

Exhibit I-10: Most Important Reason Reported for Leaving the Army, by Officers Thinking of or Planning to Leave the Army Before Retirement		
Most Important Reason	**Female**	**Male**
Amount of time separated from family	34%	26%
Opportunity to select a job, training, or station of my choice	8%	6%
Overall quality of Army life	6%	7%
Amount of pay (basic)	6%	10%
Amount of enjoyment from my job	6%	9%
Amount of personnel available to do work	6%	3%
Overseas duty	4%	4%
Control over my job assignments	2%	4%

Source: Peterson, M. (2008). *Women in the Army: Army Service, Career Opportunities, Mentoring, Comparison of Career Plans, Well-Being and Reasons for Leaving: Results of the Sample Survey of Military Personnel.*

The results for Army enlisted personnel, by gender, are presented in Exhibit I-11.

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[11] Data from *Status of Forces Survey* (2005); Comparable gender differences in reported level of support from family were not found among junior enlisted respondents.
[12] Peterson, M. (2008).

Exhibit I-11: Most Important Reason Reported for Leaving the Army by Enlisted Personnel Thinking of or Planning to Leave the Army Before Retirement		
Most Important Reason	**Female**	**Male**
Amount of time separated from family	24%	15%
Overall quality of Army life	11%	11%
Amount of pay (basic)	9%	15%
Quality of leadership at your place of duty	7%	4%
Promotion/advancement potential	5%	5%
Amount of respect from superiors	4%	2%
Amount of enjoyment from my job	3%	6%
Overseas duty	3%	5%

Source: Peterson, M. (2008). *Women in the Army: Army Service, Career Opportunities, Mentoring, Comparison of Career Plans, Well-Being and Reasons for Leaving: Results of the Sample Survey of Military Personnel.*

When compared to their male counterparts, a larger percentage of both female Army officers (34% versus 26%) and female enlisted personnel (24% versus 15%) reported that "amount of time separated from family" was their most important reason for thinking of, or planning on leaving, the Army before retirement.

B. BACKGROUND: EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Over one million strong, military children represent an important constituency within DoD. More than 43% of Service members have children. As seen in Exhibit I-12, nearly 56% of military children of AD personnel are between the ages of 6 and 18 (i.e., school age).

Exhibit I-12: Ages of Children of Active Duty Personnel (2006)		
Ages of Children	**Percentage**	**Total Number of Children**
0-5	40%	473,703
6-11	32%	371,916
12-18	24%	283,869
19-23	4%	45,967

Source: *Profile of the Military Community: DoD 2006 Demographics.*

The educational opportunity available to their children influences how Service families' rate their quality of life in the military.[13] Access to quality schools for their children often influences

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[13] Corrigan, T. (2008, March 25). *DoDEA: Educational Partnerships…Communities Committed to Success.* Briefing provided to DACOWITS.

military families' choice of assignments.[14] Because educational opportunity is of paramount importance to military families, it is also of great concern to DoD and DACOWITS.

In the remainder of this chapter, several circumstances are summarized that uniquely impact the educational journeys of military children. These circumstances are discussed under the following four headers:

- Frequent Relocation
- Inconsistent Schooling Options
- Base Realignment and Global Repositioning
- Parent's Deployment

This overview concludes with a brief overview of major education-related initiatives that have been undertaken on behalf of military children.

Frequent Relocation

About 17% of school-aged children in the U.S. relocate each year.[15] Although many school-aged American children move, military children are especially likely to experience frequent relocation. On average, military children are three times more likely to move than their civilian peers and will move six to nine times by the time they graduate from high school.[16] Furthermore, military families may have less influence over the locations to which they are assigned, and less notice of those locations, than their civilian counterparts.

According to the 2006 Survey of AD Spouses conducted by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), 22% of spouses reported that differences in school curricula as a result of a permanent change of station (PCS) move cause a serious problem in their children's education. (See Exhibit I-13.) In addition, 17% reported that difficulties adjusting to the new school cause a serious problem. Other PCS-related educational problems that AD spouses identified include lack of special education, gifted education, English as a Second Language (ESL), or other services at a new school; difficulty with correct classroom placement; difficulty transferring school records; and exclusion from extracurricular activities.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Copeland, A. (n.d.). *Being the "new kid": What parents can do to help*. Retrieved May 20, 2008, from www.rpsrelocation.com/kids_issues.htm.

[16] Council of State Governments. (n.d.). Retrieved June 5, 2008, from www.csg.org/programs/ncic/EducatingMilitaryChildrenCompact.aspx.

Exhibit I-13: Spouses' Assessments of Children's School Problems as a Result of PCS Move (Percent of AD Spouses with Children in Respective Primary/Secondary School*)			
Nature of Problem	Serious Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Not a problem
Differences in the curriculum (e.g., repetition or gaps in subjects/books)	22%	35%	43%
Difficulties adjusting to new school	17%	45%	38%
Lack of special education, gifted education, ESL, or other services at new school	10%	17%	73%
Difficulty with correct classroom placement	9%	20%	71%
Difficulty transferring school records	8%	24%	68%
Exclusion from extracurricular activities	8%	19%	73%

Source: *2006 Survey of Active Duty Spouses*, DMDC.
* 68% of spouses with children indicated that their children attended primary or secondary school.

While moving can be difficult at any age, it tends to become more challenging as children enter high school. The issues facing high school students transferring into a new school include incomplete records; credits not transferring; varying graduation requirements possibly resulting in delayed graduation; and lack of resources that students relied on at the last location, such as special education, gifted and talented classes, or speech therapy. Extracurricular opportunities also can be impacted by PCS, such as when athletes arrive too late to try out for the varsity team. Opportunities to apply for certain scholarships may be affected. There can be administrative hurdles related to registering for school while a student is residing in temporary housing and lacks a permanent address. Sometimes students are forced to transfer during the school year. Finally, finding friends and fitting in at the new school is very important to students but can be challenging.[17, 18]

[17] Silvernail, Jean L. Office of the Military Child in Transition and Deployment. *Issues of the mobile child*. Presentation to Air and Space Command Conference. 2004; Military Child Education Coalition, 2005. Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). Retrieved January 21, 2008, from www.militarychild.org/; Military Child Education Coalition. *Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS)*. U.S. Army. (2001)

[18] Booth, B., Segal, M., & Bell, B. *What we know about Army families: 2007 update*. Prepared for Family and Morale, Welfare & Recreation Command; Department of Defense, DDESS Transfer Study Phase 3 (Quality of Life Input) Executive Summary. Retrieved January 9, 2008, from www.dodea.edu/ddess/transferStudy_0502.

The obstacles that transient students face, and the losses they experience, take a socioemotional toll. In addition, these obstacles can impact their future, both by influencing how they think of themselves and by potentially limiting the postsecondary options available to them.[19]

Inconsistent Schooling Options

Several types of schooling options may be available to military families with school-aged children. These schooling options, which vary by location, include on-base public schools, off-base public schools, charter schools, DoD schools operated by the DoD Education Activity (DoDEA), private schools, home-schooling, and distance learning.[20] According to the 2006 Survey of AD Spouses, 78% of military spouses had a child enrolled in a public school off base during the previous year, while 23% had a child enrolled in a DoD-run school. (See Exhibit I-14.)

Exhibit I-14: Types of Schools Attended by Children Last Year (Percent of AD Spouses with Children in Primary/Secondary School*)	
Public school off base	78%
DoD-run school	23%
Public school on base	14%
Private school	13%
Other	7%
Home school	6%
Charter school	1%

Source: 2006 *Survey of Active Duty Spouses*, DMDC.

* 68% of spouses with children indicated that their children attended primary or secondary school.

It should be noted that, as of 2008, DoDEA served fewer than ten percent of school-aged military children.[21] (This is discussed further under the subsequent section, "Impact of Basic Realignment and Global Repositioning.")

Most spouses responding to the 2006 Survey of AD Spouses reported satisfaction with their children's school regardless of what type they attended. That said, the proportion of satisfied spouses varied somewhat with the type of school. The lowest levels of satisfaction were reported by spouses with children attending public schools, followed by those with children attending DoD-run schools. (See Exhibit I-15.) These higher rates of dissatisfaction among parents of children

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[19] Department of Defense. *DoDEA shares teacher training opportunities with local teachers in Hawaii public schools.* Retrieved January 9, 2008, from www.dodea.edu/pressroom/releasesDisplay.cfm?print=y&prId=20070711.

[20] Daly, K. (2006). *Finding the best education for your child when you relocate.* Retrieved May 20, 2008, from www.ameriforce.net/PDF/mid_atlantic_2006/0010-12MA06schoolsin.pdf.

[21] Department of Defense Education Activity. *DoDDS celebrates 60 years!* Retrieved January 9, 2008, from www.dodea.edu/features/anniversary60.cfm.

attending public schools are of particular concern and are an area of focus for this year's DACOWITS research.

Exhibit I-15: Spouses' Satisfaction with School, by Type (Percent of AD Spouses with Children in Respective Primary/Secondary School*)			
Type of School	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Public school on base	73%	12%	15%
Public School off base	76%	10%	14%
DoD-run school	79%	10%	11%
Other	80%	16%	4%
Home school	87%	11%	2%
Private school	91%	6%	3%
Charter school	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: 2006 *Survey of Active Duty Spouses*, DMDC.

* 68% of spouses with children indicated that their children attended primary or secondary school.

Base Realignment and Global Repositioning

As families relocate to and within the continental U.S. due to Base Realignment and Closure/Global Defense Posture Realignment (BRAC/GDPR), many DoDEA schools will be closing their doors. The number of children attending DoDEA schools will decrease significantly over the next several years. In fact, military children will attend local schools (Local Education Activities [LEAs]) in unprecedented numbers.[22] Some children will be transitioning to these local schools from DoDEA-operated schools—whether overseas DoD Dependent Schools (DoDDS) or Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS). Others will be transitioning from non-DoDEA environments. In either case, many of these children will transition to LEAs, whether on base or off base, that cannot match the quality of education provided by DoDEA and/or that are ill-equipped to accommodate a burgeoning student population. This scenario potentially compromises the educational opportunities available to military children.

Parent's Deployment

While AD and Reserve Component (RC) spouses responding to the 2006 Survey of AD Spouses and the 2006 Survey of RC Spouses were much more likely to report that their children cope well than to report that their children cope poorly while his or her parent is deployed (see Exhibit I-16), more specific questioning revealed that increased child behavioral issues in conjunction

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[22] As an alternative to public schools, a relatively small number of families will choose to send their children to charter or private schools or will home-school them.

with deployment was fairly common (see Exhibits I-17 and I-18). These issues extended to the school setting, including both problem behavior and lower academic performance.

Exhibit I-16: Spouses' Assessments of Children's Coping in Response to Deployment (Percent of Spouses Who Responded About Their Children's Coping While Their Parent Was Deployed*)				
	Well	Neither Well nor Poorly	Poorly	Total
Active Duty Spouses	64%	22%	14%	100%
Reserve Component Spouses	63%	22%	15%	100%

Source: 2006 *Survey of Active Duty Spouses*, DMDC; *2006 Survey of Reserve Component Spouses*, DMDC.

Exhibit I-17: Spouses' Assessments of Children's Changes in Response to Deployment (Percent of AD Spouses with Children Living with Them While Spouse Was Deployed*)				
	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Total
Fear/anxiety	49%	50%	1%	100%
Problem behavior at home	44%	52%	4%	100%
Anger about their parent's military requirements**	32%	67%	1%	100%
Distress over discussions of the war	32%	67%	1%	100%
Problem behavior at school	21%	76%	3%	100%
(Poor) academic performance	21%	73%	5%	99%

Source: 2006 *Survey of Active Duty Spouses*, DMDC.
* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
** Corresponds to the "Anger about my spouse's military requirements" item but was reworded for clarity.

Exhibit I-18: Spouses' Assessments of Children's Changes in Response to Deployment (Percent of RC Spouses with Children Living with Them and Whose Spouse Deployed Since 9-11-2001*)				
	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Total
Fear/anxiety	61%	38%	1%	100%
Problem behavior at home	46%	51%	3%	100%
Anger about their parent's military requirements**	36%	64%	1%	101%
Distress over discussions of the war	44%	55%	1%	100%
Problem behavior at school	22%	75%	3%	100%
(Poor) academic performance	27%	66%	6%	99%

Source: 2006 *Survey of Reserve Component Spouses*, DMDC.
* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
** Corresponds to the "Anger about my spouse's military requirements" item but was reworded for clarity.

As the Global War on Terror persists, and particularly as significant numbers of the RC are activated, the nation seems to have become more attuned to the hardships faced by military

families, including the "suddenly military" (i.e., activated Guard and Reserve families). However, there is much that the uninitiated public, and the average school staff and faculty, do not understand about the military. For example, they may not realize that operational tempo can surge *before* the Service member's deployment, which in turn can impact the family, or that some personnel deploy with units and others as augmentees, and that this can influence the level of support that families receive during the deployment. They may be unfamiliar with the role of the rear detachment, Family Readiness Groups, Key Volunteer Networks, or the Ombudsman Program. They may not know about the military family support resources and youth programs— both on and off the installation—or that there are counterparts on base with whom they can confer, such as the School Liaison Officer (SLO).

The more that LEAs know about the military and the impacts of deployment on children, the better they can facilitate positive educational experiences for military-connected students and advocate on their behalf.[23] The value of informed and involved educators was reinforced by the respondents to the 2006 Survey of AD Spouses and 2006 Survey of RC Spouses, three-quarters of whom (76% and 79%, respectively) rated caregiver/teacher reaction to deployment as an important factor for their children in coping with deployments.[24]

Initiatives for the Education of Military Children

Highlighted here are some of the key efforts that have been undertaken by the Army and the other Services, DoD, and private organizations. Initially, these efforts focused on promoting seamless educational transfers of military-connected students to and across LEAs, particularly in the coordination of *procedures* for smooth school transitions.[25] More recently, the work has broadened in scope to include education-related needs created by both BRAC/GDPR and deployment.

The landmark Army Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS), conducted by the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) in 1999 at the request of the Chief of Staff, Army, documented the significant and systematic challenges that military high school students were experiencing in conjunction with PCS. In response to SETS, the Army has funded SLOs at 117 Army locations and implemented guidance in support of educational transition. This guidance includes, for example, incorporation of the SLO as part of in/out processing, designation of the

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[23] Booth, B., Segal, M., & Bell, B. *What we know about Army families: 2007 update*. Prepared for Family and Morale, Welfare & Recreation Command; Department of Defense, DDESS Transfer Study Phase 3 (Quality of Life Input) Executive Summary. Retrieved January 9, 2008, from www.dodea.edu/ddess/transferStudy_0502.

[24] 2006 *Survey of Active Duty Spouses*, DMDC; 2006 Survey of Reserve Component Spouses, DMDC

[25] Department of Defense Education Activity. (2007). *DoDEA shares teacher training opportunities with local teachers in Hawaii Public Schools.* Retrieved December 24, 2007, from www.dodea.edu/pressroom/releasesDisplay.cfm?print=y&prId=20070711.

school as a Soldier's place of duty during scheduled parent-teacher conferences, and an establishment of a stabilization policy for high school seniors. In addition, a memorandum of agreement has been signed by local superintendents of over 325 school districts agreeing to work to improve the timely transfer of records, ease the transition during the first 2 weeks of enrollment, and continue to build and strengthen child-centered partnerships between military installations and schools. The Army has also partnered with a number of military, governmental, and private institutions that share a commitment to the education of the military child. These are a sampling of the activities undertaken by the Army, whose example has served as a model for the other Services.

Air Force School Liaison positions are usually locally funded by Air Force installation commanders. In many cases, School Liaison duties are collateral duties of military officers serving in command or base support positions. The Air Force has 12 civilian School Liaison positions at Continental United States (CONUS) bases. Overseas, all bases in U.S. Air Force Europe, and four bases in Pacific Command Air Force, have at least one School Liaison.[26] Air Force installations also have Community Readiness Consultants, based in the Airman and Family Readiness Center, who are assigned as a collateral duty to work with the School Liaison and consult with school personnel and parents.

The Navy currently has filled 8 of 55 School Liaison Officer positions. It anticipates having the remaining positions filled by March 2009. The Navy intends to publish its School Liaison program policy by January 2009 and have inspection criteria implemented by October 2009. The Marine Corps has 23 School Liaison Officers located at 16 installations. The Coast Guard has Family Resource Specialists at 13 locations whose duties include assisting families with school-aged children's educational issues.

As of May 2008, the Air Force had 12 full-time School Liaison Officers at CONUS bases. All bases in U.S. Air Force Europe, and four bases in Pacific Air Forces Command, have full-time School Liaison Officers.[27] All other Air Force bases use their Community Readiness Consultants in the Airman and Family Readiness Centers to provide school liaison support as a collateral duty in conjunction with other family support services. Each Air Force base has also designated a senior military officer or DoD civilian to attend local school board meetings to advocate for the interests of military families.

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[26] Neuser, L.M. (2008, May 16). *Military child education in the Air Force.* Briefing provided to DACOWITS. Headquarters U.S. Air Force.
[27] Neuser, L.M. (2008, May 16). *Military child education in the Air Force.* Briefing provided to the Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS). Headquarters U.S. Air Force.

In response to BRAC/GDPR, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY07 (Section 574[d] of Public Law 109-364) directs the Secretary of Defense "to work to ease the transition of military dependents from military to civilian schools." DoDEA's vehicle for executing this directive is the Educational Partnership Branch (EPB), which it created in October 2007. The EPB is intended "to develop partnerships among schools, districts, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and DoDEA that will advance quality education…and ease the impact of transitions/deployments" for military students.[28]

The authority allows DoDEA to expand its reach to the approximately 92% of military students who do not attend DoDEA schools to share expertise and experience and to fund programs for these students, regardless of where they reside. The resources that DoDEA provides through EPB may include (1) academic strategies that result in increased academic achievement, (2) curriculum development, (3) teacher training resources and materials, (4) access to virtual and distance learning capabilities and related applications for teachers, (5) support for practices that minimize the impact of transition and deployment, and (6) such other services appropriate to improve the academic achievement of military students.[29] Through EPB, DoDEA intends to extend its long-time commitment to the educational needs of DoDDS and DDESS students to those of all military students wherever they may attend school.[30]

Concerned advocates for military families have established private organizations dedicated to facilitating seamless transfers for military-connected students and to raising awareness and support for the unique stresses they experience. Several of these organizations are noted below:

- MCEC was responsible for the landmark Army SETS. MCEC is a resource for innovative approaches, promising practices, and information related to the academic and school-related needs of the military-connected child.[31] For example, MCEC developed *Living in the New Normal: Supporting Children Through Trauma and Loss*, which comprises professional development, resources, research-based references, and public engagement to facilitate support for military children dealing with the illness, injury, or death of a parent.
- The Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) represents school districts in areas with high concentrations of military personnel. It deals with legislation and funding for

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[28] Department of Defense Education Activity. (2007). *2007 DoDEA releases.* Retrieved September 3, 2008, from www.dodea.edu/pressroom/releases.cfm?dtRange=2007.

[29] Department of Defense Education Activity. (2008, January 14). *Responses to questions.* Retrieved January 15, 2008, from DoDEA Educational Partnership Directorate Program Evaluation website, http://fs1.fbo.gov/EPSData/ODA/Synopses/6966/Reference-Number-HE125420072850047/3_RFIQuestions.doc

[30] Department of Defense Education Activity. (2007). *2007 DoDEA releases.* Retrieved September 3, 2008, from www.dodea.edu/pressroom/releases.cfm?dtRange=2007.

[31] Military Child Education Coalition. (2005). Military Child Education Coalition homepage. Retrieved December 28, 2007, from www.militarychild.org.

impact aid and interfaces with both school districts and installation leadership on behalf of military-connected children.[32]

- The National Military Family Association (NMFA) advocates for quality of life improvements for military families on Capitol Hill and within DoD and apprises military families of important issues, benefits, and services. NMFA has launched a comprehensive education and employment resource center for military spouses and children.[33] NMFA created *Building Resilient Kids,* an online course that focuses primarily on military students, for school administrators, support staff, and teachers.

Other entities committed to the educational needs of military children include *governmental* stakeholders such as the U.S. Department of Education; state Departments of Education; the DoD Office of Military Community and Family Policy within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; and private organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the 4-H Club, and Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations (PTSOs).

C. ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

Chapter I provides context and background information related to the 2008 DACOWITS research. The remainder of the report comprises four chapters:

- Chapter II – Success Strategies for Female Service Members
- Chapter III – Educational Opportunities for Military Children
- Chapter IV – 2008 DACOWITS Findings and Recommendations: Success Strategies for Female Service Members
- Chapter V – 2008 DACOWITS Findings and Recommendations: Educational Opportunities for Military Children

Chapters II and III provide a detailed description of the Committee's primary research findings for each topic, drawn from the data collected on site and supplemented as appropriate with data from the literature and surveys. Chapters IV and V include a summary of the Committee's major findings on each topic and provide formal recommendations. Appendices are provided in the back of the report.

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[32] Military Impacted Schools Association. (2005). *Champions for children.* Retrieved December 28, 2007, from www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org/.
[33] National Military Family Association. *Children's education.* Retrieved December 18, 2007, from www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=childrens_education.

II. SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR FEMALE SERVICE MEMBERS

DACOWITS sought to capture and catalogue the activities that facilitate success for female Service members in order to bolster future generations' opportunities for success.

> "It is important for us at the senior level to allow younger Service members the benefit of what we have learned…"
> —Participant, Senior Leader Panel

The Committee's objective was twofold. It wanted to tap the experiences of today's female Service members to create the basis of a "primer on success" for the sisters in arms who will follow them. Additionally, DACOWITS wanted to gather information about initiatives and programs for women to better enable the formulation and implementation of best practices across the Department.

While success strategies are the focal point of this study, they are best understood in context. That is, we must learn what "success" means to military women and we must appreciate the challenges to success that they encounter. Thus, following a summary of the characteristics of the focus group participants and a description of the qualitative analysis process, the chapter is organized into five main sections, as follows:

- Military Career Goals of Female Service Members
- Challenges That Female Service Members Encounter
- Strategies That Female Service Members Use to Succeed and Overcome Challenges
- Military Initiatives to Help Female Service Members Succeed and Overcome Challenges
- Women-to-Women Success Strategies
- Words of Advice to Young Women Contemplating a Military Career

Information from comparable fields within the civilian sector, such as first responders, is inserted where applicable. The findings of Commander Darlene Iskra, U.S. Navy Retired, whose dissertation research examined the success strategies of female flag/general officers, are referenced. Also included are observations from two panel discussions hosted by DACOWITS— one comprising currently serving flag/general officers and senior enlisted personnel and the other comprising civilian women who had left successful military careers.

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

DACOWITS members conducted a total of 40 focus groups with currently serving female Service members. A total of 350 women attended these sessions[34], which were held at Army (three focus groups), Air Force (three focus groups), Naval (four focus groups), Marine (six focus groups), Coast Guard (two focus groups), and Guard and Reserve (six focus groups) installations throughout the continental U.S. and Korea. In addition, 16 combined ("purple") focus groups were held, including five VTCs with Service members in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The focus groups were organized by participant rank status, as follows:

- Seven focus groups were held with junior enlisted personnel.
- Seven focus groups were held with junior noncommissioned officers (NCOs).
- Seven focus groups were held with senior NCOs.
- Ten focus groups were held with company-grade officers.
- Three focus groups were held with field grade officers.

In addition, six mixed-rank focus groups were held. The focus groups ranged in size from three to 17 participants, with an average of nine.

Characteristics of the focus group participants, based on data from the mini-survey that was administered to them at the start of each focus group, are presented in Exhibit II-1.

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[34] A total of 350 women filled out mini-surveys at focus groups on the topic of Success Strategies for Female Service Members. There were some participants who did not complete a mini-survey. Comments made from all focus group participants, regardless of whether they submitted a mini-survey, were analyzed and included in the report, as appropriate.

Exhibit II-1: Success Strategies for Female Service Members: Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants (N=350)		
Variable	**N**	**Percent**
Gender:		
Female	350	100%
Total	**350**	**100%**
Service:		
Army	110	31%
Air Force	86	25%
Marine Corps	52	15%
Navy	34	10%
Army National Guard	27	8%
Reserves*	21	6%
Coast Guard	20	6%
Total	**350**	**100%**
Pay Grade:		
E1-E4	90	26%
E5-E6	84	24%
E7-E9	59	17%
O1-O3 (including Warrant Officers)	80	23%
O4-O6	36	10%
Total	**349**	**100%**
Marital Status:		
Married	159	45%
Single, but with a significant other (e.g., girlfriend/boyfriend, fiancé)	72	21%
Single, with no significant other	71	20%
Divorced, legally separated, or widowed	48	14%
Total	**350**	**100%**

Exhibit II-1: Continued Success Strategies for Female Service Members: Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants (N=350)*			
Variable		**N**	**Percent****
Respondents with Children:			
Yes		165	47%
No		185	53%
Total		**350**	**100%**
Military Service and Deployment History*:			
Time Spent Deployed (in past 3 years)	Does not apply; have not been deployed in past 3 years	187	53%
	Up to 6 months	39	11%
	More than 6 months, to 1 year	59	17%
	More than 1 year, to 2 years	52	15%
	More than 2 years	13	4%
	Total	**350**	**100%**

* The Reserve participants included 12 Naval reservists. The remainder was Army or Marine Corps reservists.
** Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The Army and the Air Force were the most highly represented Services in the focus group sample, with 31% and 25% of the participants, respectively. Members of the Guard and Reserve (14%) comprised a small minority. Enlisted personnel accounted for two-thirds of the focus group sample (67%) and senior personnel, whether NCOs or field-grade officers, accounted for about one-third (33%).

Nearly half of the women who participated in these focus groups were married (45%). An additional 21% reported having a significant other. Approximately half of the focus group participants had children (47%).

Slightly more than half (53%) of the focus group participants reported that they had *not* been deployed within the past three years. Of those who had, most reported deployments longer than six months. For a complete summary of the mini-survey results, see Appendix F.

B. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The results from the focus group discussions form the centerpiece of the findings presented in this chapter. This section describes the qualitative analysis process that has been employed to obtain these results.

A near-verbatim transcript for each focus group session is generated based on the comments made by the participants in response to the focus group protocol and follow-up questions. An

analysis of each individual transcript identifies the most common responses. The results of this transcript-level analysis are then transferred to a sample-wide database, allowing examination of the responses across transcripts.

The purpose of the sample-wide analysis is to determine the most salient comments throughout all the focus group sessions. For this research, salience is determined by a combination of two factors—the proportion of focus group sessions in which the comment is made (i.e., frequency) and the strength of the comment within those sessions (i.e., magnitude). See Appendix I for a graphical representation of this framework.

The most salient findings from the focus groups are those with both high frequency and strong magnitude. Each substantive section of this chapter begins with the most salient findings. Somewhat less salient findings (with high frequency and weak magnitude, medium frequency and strong magnitude, and even medium-high frequency and weak magnitude) are presented after the most salient findings, in order of salience as feasible. The remaining comments, most of which occur in only one focus group, are considered not salient regardless of magnitude. However, recognizing that some may be noteworthy nonetheless, such "nonfindings" are included in the chapter on a case by case basis.

DACOWITS adopted this dual framework to impose a high level of rigor on the analysis process and to ensure that the Committee's findings and recommendations accurately represent the collective responses of the focus group participants.

C. MILITARY CAREER GOALS OF FEMALE SERVICE MEMBERS

Any discussion of success strategies must begin with the recognition that what Service members want from their military careers varies, that is, "success" means different things to different people. Indeed, when asked how they define a successful military career, the study participants responded very differently. Moreover, the study participants noted that their definitions of "success" have changed over time, rather than remaining static. Both these topics—women's definitions of a successful military career and how those definitions have evolved—are presented in this section. The section concludes with a summary.

Female Service Members' Definitions of a Successful Military Career

The study participants' answers to the question "What do you think defines a successful military career for you?" fell into three broad categories:

- A successful military career is related to one's job performance.
- A successful military career is related to one's personal life.
- A successful military career has other definitions.

Their responses in each category are described in turn.

<u>A Successful Military Career Is Related to One's Job Performance</u>

One's job performance—i.e., their success in the workplace—was by far the most common way that study participants conceptualized a successful military career. The indicator of success to which they referred most frequently was advancement, to include progressing on or ahead of schedule. Other indicators of note included doing well at one's job and accomplishing the mission, attaining one's goals, and making a difference. Participants spoke less regularly of job satisfaction.

Advancement

> "To me, part of success is the rank that we have achieved. We are in the top one to two percent, and we have an impact on those underneath us. In our rank and being women, we can serve as role models for those under us."
> —Female Airman

> "My goal is to be a master chief before I hit my 20 year mark…I'm eligible next year, but it depends on the numbers."
> —Female Sailor

> "Success for me would be not so much to make it on your appropriate rate, but early…to be ahead of everybody…Every job you do to super exceed at it, to not meet the standard… [but] go above and beyond."
> —Female Sailor

Performing one's job well; accomplishing the mission

> "Ensuring that the mission is getting done…that makes a success."
> —Female Service Member[35]

> "To me, success is being able to progress forward, not to reach any particular rank or position other than that you have to be able to stay in and to be able to continue doing a good job. To me it's the mission, to be able to do a good job with that…that helps define to me whether or not I'm successful."
> —Female Service Member (currently deployed)

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[35] Service member component was not recorded for participants in multicomponent focus groups.

"I think success is to become an expert at what you do. You need to be challenged to get to where you are. You have to become an expert. You have to know what you want and reach that position."
—Female Service Member

"Success is when you get the job done. Rank does not really mean much and it doesn't mean you get the job done. Just getting the job done is success."
—Female Service Member

Achieving one's career goals

"I think about setting goals, I think about myself…I think the best way I can help achieve the Air Force mission is to be the best person I can be…Honestly for me, I set goals, and then I look for measurable results."
—Female Service Member

"Even if you're in four years or make it a career, setting goals for yourself and actually reaching those goals…Someone can be in 20 years and not do anything…So everybody has their own goals, be it low or high."
—Female Service Member

"I think you are successful when you achieve goals that you set for yourself and not goals that everyone thinks you should have. So, reaching the goals you set for yourself."
—Female Airman

Making a difference

"Knowing at the end of my career…For us as leaders, we want to have a positive impact on our subordinates and our peers…and knowing we are an asset to that job…Knowing that you have contributed to the success of your battalion…I would want to be remembered by my Soldiers as a successful leader…I would want them to say 'she took care of me'."
—Female Service Member

"Success can be measured in lots of different ways, like the rank you get, but…it's how you influence other people."
—Female Marine

"For me it is when you make someone else's life better. When you see another Soldier that needs something and you provide assistance to that Soldier. If I can ever make a difference in a Soldier's life, that is success to me."
—Female Soldier

"Since I am in recruiting, I think all of the lives that I have changed and will change of all the new enlistees. Some of the homes you go in have dirt floors, makes you successful when you see them out of the street."
—Female Army National Guardsman

Focus group participants mentioned mentoring as an example of how they impact others.

"Reaching out to younger ones and helping them stay in—the retention. Sometimes they get discouraged, but convincing them to stay in is success for me."
—Female Navy Reservist

"The legacy you leave behind. If the guidance, the training, and the spirit of excellence continues on, [that] defines success."
—Female Service Member

"Same [goes] with mentorship. Just the impact of your troops…They will look at you and say…I'm a better person because we helped this person progress in their career. I think that's an awesome feeling, when you know you made a difference to somebody."
—Female Service Member

Less often, participants mentioned gaining the respect of one's subordinates or one's team as a variation of making a difference.

Other Indicators of Good Job Performance

Having job satisfaction was cited less consistently than job performance as an indicator of a successful military career.

"I stayed past 20 years because I enjoy my job. Success is getting to go to work everyday and to be able to have fun and make a difference."
—Female Airman

"I'm retiring, so I'm ready to go, but my daughter made that decision. My whole career, I've liked coming to work. I always thought when I stop loving the Marine Corps, it's time to go, but I just kept liking it. I've done a whole lot in my career, I feel I'm successful just because I've enjoyed it, I've loved it and don't have any regrets."
—Female Marine

Making the most of one's work situation or environment, despite the challenges that it may entail, was also cited less consistently as an indicator of a successful career.

"I keep telling cooks, don't let the Military Occupational Skill make you, you make it…As long as you have a good attitude about it, you're going to put into it and it'll give back to you."
—Female Service Member

"I look at a successful career as having made the most of wherever the military has put you. Learn something from that timeframe and hopefully give back to a junior officer or someone else."
—Female Service Member

"Whatever you put into it, you're going to get out of it. Attitudes are contagious…My husband is like 'Bring the joy with you when you come into the world…If you bring it with you…then that's contagious, and everybody will lighten up a bit, the atmosphere will change.' If I can do that every day, no matter what I feel…I still have to walk in with that smile on my face. I can't let the Soldiers see that something got to me…If I can't do that and be that example for them, then I shouldn't be here…[It's all about] being positive. You got to be positive…If you walk in and you're always talking about what is bad…it starts to drag you down."
—Female Service Member

A Successful Military Career Is Related to One's Personal Life

Female Service members' definitions of a successful military career were not confined to their work experiences. With great regularity, they talked about their life *outside* of work. Achieving work-life balance was high on their list of indictors of career success. Furthering their education was also important to them.

"I think what defines a successful military career for me is balancing all three aspects of my life—being a Naval officer, a spouse, and a mother…I would not be as successful if I didn't have my daughter and husband to support me."
—Female Sailor

"Family is very important. I've been divorced before, so trying to find that balance..."
—Female Sailor

"I think being good at your job, being proficient, but also balancing your work life with other parts of your life, whatever that is, so you can be successful in all areas of your life—hobbies, family, worship, but also being good at work. Being well-rounded."
—Female Marine

"For me, having independent, adjusted kids is success."
—Female Service Member

"Speaking for myself, some people look at me and say 'she's only a Master Sergeant at 21 years,' but I am very family oriented and I am happy with the level I have reached. It's all a perception, so I am blessed."
—Female Airman

"And have a life. To me, that means be more than just what you are in the uniform...You get to grow even more as a person when you belong and involve yourself in activities or organizations beyond just the uniform."
—Participant, Former Officer Panel

For some female Service members, success involves continuing their *civilian* education.

"Also, having opportunities to expand upon what you've learned; getting picked up for graduate school or any kind of training that will help you develop yourself more. It's great to have an opportunity to apply what you've learned."
—Female Coast Guardsman

"To me, the most important thing is being able to balance my education with the military."
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

"For me, a successful military career is to get as far as I can get with what they offer— education, et cetera, so that I can get out and have a civilian career."
—Female Airman

Participants also mentioned continuing their *military* education and training as a career goal, albeit less often.

Some participants spoke about the value they place on feeling satisfied with one's life.

"Continuously striving in every area in your life—[in] fitness, life, education, religion…to excel, to be your best."
—Female Airman

"I didn't join with the intention that that this is where I would be in my career. I reassessed [my goals] several times during my career. If I am happy at the end of each day, then I am successful. I don't want long-term goals; I am an option girl, because I may change my mind as to my career goals."
—Female Sailor

"I think success is internal. If you're content with whatever you are doing, whatever service you're providing, that's success to me."
—Female Airman

"Not only do we want people who have successful military strategies, but we want them to be successful in life, too. We want them to be proud of their service, but also of their lives."
—Participant, Senior Leader Panel

Sporadically, participants shared more individual notions of a successful military career, such as maintaining one's personal integrity.

"Being able to maintain your integrity. You can have a goal… [but] I don't think I'd be satisfied with [achieving] it if I had to compromise my integrity to get there."
—Female Airman

"Being successful also has to do with being satisfied with yourself at the end of the day, knowing that you did your job with integrity. I've had bad leaders that I didn't let [get to me]. Being happy with the choices that you've done."
—Female Service Member (currently deployed)

Other more individual notions of a successful career included staying out of trouble, having the choice of deciding when one leaves the military, and being happy.

"My first two years I was so excited; now I can't wait to get out. I am just so tired and ready to get out. Now, everything is a rush; you are being pushed for no reason. Success for me is being happy, and I'm not happy anymore."
—Female Soldier

The Evolution of Female Service Members' Military Career Goals

DACOWITS asked senior-level focus groups, which generally included enlisted personnel E5 and higher and officers O4 and higher, "Have your career aspirations changed over the course of your career? If so, how?" The most recurrent response to this question was that their goals have indeed changed since entering the military. A fairly common response to this question was that participants originally *did not* plan to make the military a career, often planning to stay only for four years, but that they now have long-term military career aspirations.

"My intention with enlisting was to serve ten years or less. I told myself that if I go over ten, then I'm in it for the long haul. And I'm really glad that I did. I am proud of my accomplishment. I never would have thought that I could be Senior Chief. My goals have changed and, to be honest, it was because of other women role models that I've had."
—Female Airman

"I went with the flow in the military. I was planning on moving on after four years. I like the culture, and now I have over 20 years."
—Female Service Member

"Mine's changed because when I first came in, I didn't have an intention of staying for the full 20 [years] or more. I knew that I wasn't necessarily planning on getting out after my initial obligation, but I didn't have a plan beyond that, but I found as I stayed in the military, I enjoyed it more and more. I decided I really do want to stick around for a time and am in no hurry to leave."
—Female Service Member (currently deployed)

Less regularly, participants noted that they originally planned a longer career in the military but are now considering leaving upon retirement eligibility, if not sooner.

"For me, I think initially my goal had been [to become] Chief, but the Air Force has really changed since I originally came in and we're doing a lot more with less, working a lot harder with the few we do have in, and I think the quality of people we have coming in isn't as high as it used to be. I don't see myself staying in as long as I planned. More than likely I'll do my 20 and leave…The same goes for my husband… [He has been gone almost constantly]. He did back-to-back Iraq deployments…It's really sad when the kids don't really remember him being [at home]…For us, 20 and then we're calling it… [quits]."
—Female Airman

"My goal coming in was to make E7 in seven years…Now my goal is to do my tine, learn as much as I can, to teach and tell my Soldiers everything I didn't know… It's just me right now, so [my goal] is to go as far as I can and prepare myself for the civilian world. I get out in 2010, that'll be 10 years."
—Female Service Member

Factors That Influence Changes in Female Service Members' Military Career Goals

The study participants discussed the factors that have contributed to changes in their career aspirations. The most salient responses to this question included *family* and *children*. The participants spoke of how having a family, or anticipating a family, changed their priorities and influenced their career plans. For some, meeting the needs of their family was a reason to leave the military.

"I originally enlisted for six years…but then recently, out of every 18 months you're going to be deployed at least six…So over the last five years I also have more of a family…I don't know if I could do it in the military…I want to be home with my kids, so I might cross-train, so at that point I'd probably X out."
—Female Airman

"When you first come in, family is not high on your priority list, but now that I'm getting older, my main decision to retire is based on my family. My kids are entering high school this year, and the possibility of going to so many different schools, I don't want that. I'm starting to see the affects of my career on my family. It's not as big a deal when they are little, but as they get older, it's hard. My family is my priority now."
—Female Marine

The majority of former officers who participated in the panel discussion stated that they made the decision to leave the military for the sake of their children or children to be.

"I was engaged to marry a man who had been divorced and had three teenage children."
—Participant, Former Officer Panel

"I had a fulfilling career on active duty, and my primary reason for leaving was to become a mom."
—Participant, Former Officer Panel

"I'm a perfectionist and just didn't think I could live with myself if I wasn't the perfect mom and the perfect Navy officer."
—Participant, Former Officer Panel

For others, meeting the needs of their family was a reason to remain in the military.

"For me, it was the same, because I've been getting out every four years. Every four years, I sign a new contract…At the end, you sit down and think about 'What is the best for my kids?'…The bottom line is that this is the best environment for my kids…and that's why I'm still in the military."
—Female Service Member

"My first thoughts weren't reenlistment…and now I'm here with three kids under seven [years old]. [After having children], my number one goal was to reenlist and start making ranks so I can take care of these kids."
—Female Sailor

"I was going to do four years and get out. I was doing supply/logistics, and I reenlisted and then I knew I couldn't do 20 years in that, and I retrained in a job that I loved…It worked for me, it worked for my family…People ask if I'm going to stay in past 20 [years], and I say 'If it's going to work for my family, [I will]'…I love the military and I have no problem staying in as long as it doesn't affect my family after 20 [years]."
—Female Service Member (currently deployed)

The study participants mentioned additional factors that have contributed to changes in their career plans. Some who planned on a shorter tenure in the military have adjusted their plans as a result of their fast pace of advancement or the opportunity to further their civilian education while serving. Others who planned on a long career in the military have been motivated to leave earlier by the desire to concentrate on their civilian education or lured by highly attractive civilian-sector opportunities within their field (e.g., nurses).

Summary: Military Career Goals of Female Service Members

To provide context for understanding female Service members' success strategies, DACOWITS first explored their military career goals. The focus group discussions revealed that participants did not share a single definition of a "successful military career."

Most often, these women's definitions of success pertained to their job performance, which they frequently measured in terms of advancement. In other words, they described advancing on or ahead of schedule as an indicator of job success. The focus group participants offered other indicators of job performance as well, including doing one's job well, attaining one's goals, and making a difference. They did not typically cite job satisfaction as an indicator of success.

With great regularity, female Service members' definitions of a successful military career also encompassed their personal life outside work. Frequently, they tied a successful military career to being able to achieve work-life balance. Often, they tied a successful military career to being able to further their civilian education.

Female Service members' definitions of a successful military do not necessarily remain static. Most participants in the pay grades of E5, O4, and higher indicated that their goals have changed since entering the military. Fairly often, women who now envision a long military career entered the Service intending to serve only a few years. Less often, women who envisioned becoming careerists are now choosing to leave the military.

The most influential factor in women's changes of plans seems to be family. For some, having or anticipating a family becomes a motivator to leave the military, whereas for others it becomes a reason to remain. Some women choose to leave the military in order to focus more exclusively on their children—in fact, this was true for nearly all of the women who participated in

DACOWITS' panel discussion with former officers. Other women feel that the best choice available to them and their children is to remain in the military. There is some indication that women in the latter group are more likely to be single parents and/or to lack skills that are transferable to the civilian sector.

D. CHALLENGES THAT FEMALE SERVICE MEMBERS ENCOUNTER

As a preface to exploring the challenges that women face while pursuing a military career, DACOWITS asked the study participants "To what extent have you achieved, or are you on the path to achieve, your current career goals?" After summarizing the extent to which the participants are progressing toward their goals, this section then highlights the challenges they have encountered along the way. The section concludes with a summary.

Career Progress of Female Service Members

The most prominent response to this question was that participants are indeed making progress toward their goals. Participants noted less regularly how the path toward these goals has not necessarily been a smooth one.

Achieving or have achieved career goals

> "I think I've achieved every goal that I set for myself. When you join the Navy, they give you a little card to write your goals…I still have that card and I've hit those [goals] within the first three years, and my goals shifted as I grew in pay grade and got my degree, went for officer…I've been successful so far…I think I'm on the right track. Now, as long as I do what I'm told and be where I'm supposed to be."
> —Female Sailor

> "I think I've built all the foundation [I need] to succeed and I'm keeping all paths open."
> —Female Airman

> "I just wanted to ensure that I was promoted and given positions along with my peers. As long as you do what you are supposed to, you're going to get the positions and get promoted. I was always promoted with or before them. I've achieved everything I wanted to, so I'm happy to retire."
> —Female Marine

> "I'm where I should be…I've had to work hard for everything I've wanted. Joining the Marine Corps was a big step for me. I knew I had to get out and do things for myself, because you do have to work hard for it, you can't expect things to be given to you. I think as long as I work hard and achieve the goals I've made for myself, I'll be alright."
> —Female Marine

"My goal is to be happy. That's happened throughout my entire career. I've been very lucky. Rank is what happened, but my goal is to be happy no matter what. I am still having fun with my job. I'm just having fun and going along with it."
—Female Airman

On track to achieving career goals, but path has not been smooth

"I believe that I'm behind…The most humbling experience is going in the opposite direction [rank-wise]…I was thinking 'Where am I [in terms of] competing with my peers?'…I think I've achieved a goal in the sense that I believe everything has a purpose…I think it was not my time to do that as a young staff sergeant…I believe that now I am better prepared…I feel that when that comes [when I am promoted to Staff Sergeant], I will be ready for it…I believe that I am back on that path…I realized that my ultimate goal is that every Soldier I trained would come back from Iraq."
—Female Service Member

"Because my MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) was overstaffed, I had to go back to school and reclassify…It slightly delayed my progression, because I had to relearn an entire job. Now I'm already in the leadership position, and I've got PFCs who know more about specific parts of my job."
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

On the other hand, some participants' careers have not turned out as expected, whether in terms of their rate of advancement or the path they have taken.

"I was enlisted, I stayed here before…I was fast track. But what happened with the downsizing was a lot of the senior slots were decreased. I was given the opportunity to go to OCS (Officer Candidate School) slot. Although I'm starting at the bottom of the officer corps, it gives me the opportunity to move up."
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

"I am stuck in a captain's slot. The training in school does not train you for the job…I don't have the education that I need to do my job effectively. The training would make me a better officer; make me more successful to achieve my goals."
—Female Service Member

Career Challenges Experienced by Female Service Members

The following paragraphs recount the study participants' descriptions of the challenges they have encountered while pursuing their military careers. DACOWITS asked participants "What challenges have you encountered, or are you currently encountering, as you strive to achieve

these career goals?" The challenges that the participants described fell into three main categories, as follows:

- Challenges Related to Gender
- Challenges Related to Work-Life Balance
- Other Challenges in the Work Environment

The challenges in these areas are described below.

<u>Challenges Related to Gender</u>

According to an overwhelming majority of participants, many of the career challenges they experience are gender-related. Participants reported that these challenges pertain to meeting fitness standards, dealing with female stereotypes, and the feeling that they must repeatedly prove their capabilities.

> "Being taken seriously; I don't want to say being judged because you're a female, but it's true. If you're nice, you're seen as flirting, if you're not, you're a bitch."
> —Female Coast Guardsman

> "The assumption is that you have other priorities [because you are a woman]."
> —Female Airman

> "We have issues with promotability because we as females cannot get promotion because we can not be trained in certain fields. We do not have the opportunity to get [trainings]. In the upper officer levels they want to see someone who has combat experience, and we don't have the opportunity to get that experience. There are issues about females getting the experience."
> —Female Army National Guardsman

Meeting fitness standards

> "The challenge is having a baby…You try to control [it], but with me, a challenge was losing the weight and getting back in shape. Meeting the fitness standard…Fortunately for me at the time, I had a First Sergeant…who used to make me do extra laps around the field all the time…It took me years to figure out that he didn't hate me, he was trying to help me."
> —Female Service Member

Dealing with inaccurate female stereotypes

"There are females that can make it harder for other females by using their gender, and that makes the rest of us go down a notch. They are unprofessional and make others look unprofessional."
—Female Service Member

"We're a minority. It's not representative for women…I don't like it when people take a female Sailor [and generalize her behavior to all Navy women]; she's not a representative of women in the Navy…I've experienced this blanket view because someone had an experience with a female in the Navy."
—Female Sailor

"I think every female should be sat down and have a heart-to-heart with someone they feel comfortable with, male or female. They need to be embarrassed and answer 'If this is an image you want to portray.'"
—Female Sailor

Needing to prove selves capable

"I have experienced challenges apart from home life. The challenge for females that I've seen is that females have to prove themselves; it's automatically assumed that you can't lift something heavy. There are stereotypes that there are certain things that we can't do. I've had to say, 'Why can't she do it? Let her do it and show you that she can do it.'"
—Female Airman

"There is underlying culture in the male-dominated work place. I don't think it's intentional, but the mindset is still there. We have to go further than our male peers to make sure they understand we are equal and not just as a female. It's also most like they treat you like you're their little sister; yet I am the senior ranking."
—Female Service Member

"They got to get a second opinion even though your answer is the right one."
—Female Service Member

In Iskra's study of women who reached flag/general officer ranks[36], she too found that having to prove themselves over and over was one of the frustrations that highly successful women encountered during their military careers. There is evidence of this dynamic outside the military as well. For example, female first responders reported feeling worn down by continually having

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[36] Iskra, D. M., PhD (2008, May 15). *Breaking through the "brass" ceiling: Elite military women's strategies for success.* Briefing provided to DACOWITS.

to prove themselves even after many years on the job[37]. Women working in the international security arena also reported experiencing skepticism or resistance from the male majority until they demonstrated their expertise.[38]

<u>Challenges Related to Work-Life Balance</u>

Study participants described many career challenges related to the struggle to balance work and personal life. Most of these challenges were related to motherhood in some way. Participants perceive that there is a stigma associated with pregnancy in the military, including an undercurrent that women become pregnant to avoid deployment. Once they had children, participants experienced challenges finding childcare, taking time from work to care for their children when necessary, and coping with separation from their children due to deployment. A flag/general officer participating in the senior panel discussion suggested that "women are still struggling with this, and there are still a lot who are making the sacrifice and not having children."

A similar environment has been reported in the international security arena, where numerous interviewees described a system that is unable or unwilling to accommodate dual career spouses or family priorities. As summarized by one interviewee, "To be successful in the United Nations, one must be single, widowed, or divorced."[39]

> "There hasn't been much emphasis on [family time]…For me, I don't know that many [female] higher ranking officers. Even less of them have children. I don't know how to have children in this career. I'm about to get married; we want numerous kids—how am I supposed to do that in the military? And there's no one above me [who can help me figure out how to do it]."
> —Female Soldier (currently deployed)

General work-life balance issues

> "Everybody knows [that after] coming home from working 8 to 12 hours—because I guarantee nobody works just 8 hours—as soon as you take the uniform off, you become mommy and clean the house, and as soon as you put the kids to bed, you have to play house and go to the gym…Balancing work and personal life is really hard. I'm not saying it's not doable, but it takes a lot of effort."
> —Female Airman

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[37] Willing, L. (1996, September) *Why we quit.* I-women.org. International Association of Women in Fire and Emergencies Services. Retrieved from www.i-women.org/archive_articles.php?article=20.
[38] Conaway, C. P. and J. Shoemaker. (2008, July) Women in United Nations peace operations: Increasing the leadership opportunities. *Women in International Security.*
[39] Ibid.

"Unfortunately, I've seen both sides of the house as a reservist. My civilian job allows for job-sharing. I could be working 20 to 30 hours a week and have children and make the same money as a captain. It's hard to retain people knowing that women could [get good opportunities] if they leave. I think the Army has to recognize us as mothers and wives and look at the civilian sector and see how it could be done better."
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

Perceived stigma associated with pregnancy

"There's no safe time. Every time you get pregnant, it's [perceived that you got pregnant] to get out of [work or deployment]….It's always stigmatized…people have this perception that you got pregnant, it's going to hold you back from other opportunities."
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

"As an aviator, you can't fly. You can't do half of your job if you're pregnant."
—Female Solider (currently deployed)

Obtaining adequate childcare

"Another thing that is difficult is the daycare facility. The hours do not [meet my needs]. And the cost [is too high]. Soldiers have to do 24-hour duty, and we don't have a facility doing 24 hours…and we have to pay extra money."
—Female Service Member

"I can understand to a certain extent about the prorating [of childcare]…but the multichild discount would be the most useful. If you have four kids and you have to pay $100 per kid, that's crazy."
—Female Service Member

"For WLC (Warrior Leaders Training), you have to go there and stay there, so you have to arrange for someone to take care of your child, which is not covered by the long-term childcare plan. I do not have anyone to take care of my child while I am there since I only have a long-term childcare plan."
—Female Soldier

"They expect you to do 24-hour operations, but they don't help you with this. I was taking my kids to sitters where strippers were taking their kids."
—Female Airman

Several members of the senior panel discussion raised the topic of childcare as an issue that continues to be paramount for female Service members.

> "Childcare is a strategic imperative. Not just to have childcare but to have options that are 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, and are everywhere."
> —Participant, Senior Leader Panel

> "Childcare is an aspect that I can't hit on hard enough; it's come a long way, but the availability is not there. I think a lot of people do get out because of the lack of support. I came from unit level, so I've dealt with a lot of these issues first hand."
> —Participant, Senior Leader Panel

The difficulty of finding good, affordable childcare is not unique to the military environment. A study of female firefighters, for example, found that the childcare issue can keep women from entering this field and also can influence the performance as well as the choices of currently serving female firefighters. "When they are comfortable about where their children are, they are more able to focus on work, which makes them a more valuable and productive employee."[40]

Taking time from work to care for children

> "That's why I waited so long to have kids. I wouldn't have been able to do that before…When I came into the Navy, I don't know if I would have made it [this far without a family]…There are a lot of women who are not that strong…I don't think I could have done that."
> —Female Sailor

Coping with separation due to deployment

> "My only problem is that I am deployed from my daughter. I don't feel that there's any balance being dual military. Being deployed every year and half; I don't think that's any way to raise my child."
> —Female Soldier (currently deployed)

> "I just gave birth to my baby and I'm here. It's really hard."
> —Female Service Member (currently deployed)

Some participants noted that being dual military is a challenge to achieving career goals both because of childcare responsibilities and because of frequent mission-related separations.

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[40] Mathis, A. (2000, September). *Taking care of our families*. I-women.org. International Association of Women in Fire and Emergencies Services. Retrieved from www.i-women.org/archive_articles.php?article=17.

"As a dual military couple, it seemed to us that one parent had to focus more on the kids, and that was me. So my role for the early part of my career was the parent, and he was focused on his career. It's only been in the past few years that I have been able to focus on what I need to do to succeed. Education was put on the back burner for me. I'm sure some couples were able to balance responsibilities with kids, but that didn't happen in our household. So taking care of my kids and competing interests kept me back."
—Female Airman

"I am mil to mil, and right now I'm trying to switch career fields so that we can be together. I feel like I'm compromising with my career; apart we would be more successful."
—Female Airman

"Deployment schedules are starting to become a challenge. My husband and I overlapped for nine months last year so I had to find someone to take care of my kid. That may become too much of a struggle."
—Female Marine

There is some indication from the Iskra study that increasing numbers of women are balancing family with a successful military career. Specifically, she observed within her sample of female flag/general officers that more recent cohorts included noticeably higher percentages of married women, and women with children, than did earlier cohorts.[41]

Other Challenges Related to the Work Environment

Female Service members noted several additional ways—not obviously related to gender or work-life conflict—in which the workplace can be difficult and can interfere with the pursuit of their career goals. The workplace challenge that they noted most commonly pertained to a perceived lack of support from leadership.

"There are a lot of people that will try to hold you back and use you for what they want, not necessarily help you get what you want. You have to fight for yourself."
—Female Coast Guardsman

"I've seen that within the years that I've been in the Air Force. You always see those people that want to get promoted right now and will do anything to make themselves seen out there. And they are forgetting that they have young troops that need to be mentored. It's selfish. If that's what it takes to be promoted, then I don't want it."
—Female Airman

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[41] Iskra, D. M. (2008).

Some female Service members also expressed that deploying hinders the pursuit of their career goals.

> "Just deploying. Some of my fellow NCOs have been deployed two or three times. This is my fourth deployment out of five years in the military…Some of my counterparts might be deployed only once, and get to see different opportunities, assignments. Because we're deployed, it's hard to make certain selections at certain schools to even compete with my peers. Deployment tempo is hindering a lot of people's progression."
> —Female Soldier (currently deployed)

> "When I first came in, I wanted to get my bachelor's and master's. I didn't think it would take more than eight to nine years. Deployments knocked it out of the way completely. You don't have time to go to classes. My goal is to get my degree."
> —Female Soldier

A lack of adequate information and/or training for the job was described by some as a workplace challenge.

> "I can definitely say …the big challenge was not knowing what you are doing, lack of experience, and being constantly watched because you don't have the prior experience."
> —Female Service Member

> "With this budget stuff, it's crazy; there is no training. [I am] taking on new roles and responsibilities without the necessary training."
> —Female Coast Guardsman

Summary: Challenges That Female Service Members Encounter

To more fully appreciate the environment or circumstances in which military women strive to succeed, DACOWITS asked the focus group participants to describe the challenges that they encounter. On the whole, the focus group participants reported that they have achieved, or are on the path to achieving, their career goals. The challenges they reported relate primarily to gender and work-life balance.

For an overwhelming majority of the focus group participants, their career challenges have been gender-related. Physical fitness standards, for example, loom as a significant obstacle for many female Service members, particularly meeting weight and body fat standards after pregnancy. Coping with negative stereotypes perpetuated by a small minority of women, frequently pertaining to sexual behavior, is another challenge with which female Service members contend. Lastly, women reported having to prove themselves technically knowledgeable and capable, despite the rank they wear and their other qualifications. The finding that women must prove

themselves over and over has been corroborated by other research, including Iskra's study of female flag/general officers.

Many of the career challenges that the focus group participants described were related to work-life balance—more specifically, to balancing work and motherhood. Women perceive a stigma associated with pregnancy in the military, including an undercurrent that women use pregnancy to avoid deployment. Additionally, female Service members experience significant difficulties related to caring for their children. Quality, affordable childcare, including hours of operation compatible with job requirements, remains elusive for many military mothers, as it does for many working mothers in the private sector—a concern reinforced by the female Service members who participants in DACOWITS senior leader panel discussion. In some unit settings, taking time from work to care for sick children is frowned upon by the chain of command. During deployment, being separated from their children is a hardship for military mothers. Given the challenges involved in balancing work and motherhood while pursuing a military career, it is perhaps not surprising that Iskra found comparatively high numbers of Active Component female flag/general officers to be childless.

E. STRATEGIES THAT FEMALE SERVICE MEMBERS USE TO SUCCEED AND OVERCOME CHALLENGES

DACOWITS questioned the participants about the strategies that they employ or recommend for achieving success in the military. These questions included:

- What strategies have helped you attain success?
- What strategies have helped you overcome these challenges? (Refers to challenges they previously identified as obstacles to reaching their goals)

There was a great deal of convergence in the responses to these questions. The most salient of the strategies that emerged from these questions are summarized in this section, followed by a discussion of the applicability of these strategies across subgroups (i.e., differing by level of seniority, generation, and gender) and a section summary.

Success Strategies Identified by Female Service Members

While participants described a wide variety of strategies for reaching their career goals, there were consistent threads throughout them. They are summarized here under the following nine headers:

- Finding Supportive Leaders and Mentors
- Being Goal-Oriented
- Pursuing Civilian Education

- Networking
- Being Self-Sufficient
- Acting with Integrity
- Being Positive
- Not Letting Gender Be an Obstacle
- Other Success Strategies

These strategies are discussed below in order of their salience to the study participants as a group.

<u>Finding Supportive Leaders and Mentors</u>

DACOWITS focus group participants consistently remarked that finding supportive leaders is instrumental to their success. Many mentioned seeking mentors and leveraging their advice and experience as a success strategy. Women at the pinnacle of a military career—flag/general officers and senior noncommissioned officers who participated in the senior leader panel discussion—corroborated the importance of mentors. The Iskra study of female flag/general officers also identified "mentorship/sponsorship" as a success strategy.[42]

Finding supportive leaders

> "It helps to have a good chain of command, especially if the Chiefs go out of their way to help you. I have a [female] Chief that really helped me out."
> —Female Sailor

> "Good leadership. Having good leadership throughout your career will help you out; having someone who wants to see you succeed."
> —Female Marine

> "Having that individual that's out there that mentors you and sees something in you that you don't see in yourself. I never thought of myself as goal- [or] career-oriented…As time goes and you grow up and you mature, you have people who help…push you to achieve those goals."
> —Female Airman

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[42] Iskra, D. M. (2008).

Seeking mentors and their counsel

> "Mentorship is a big part of that. For me it wasn't gender-specific. I went out and [would] seek mentorship."
> —Female Soldier (currently deployed)

> "Mentorship; there were a lot of people as role models that I tried to mimic. I aggressively sought a mentor. I had internal mentors and also others out there that didn't know that I was watching them."
> —Female Airman

> "I would say gravitate towards who you see as successful. Someone you can take their mannerism and fix some shortages that you have. I look for heavy hitters and leaders."
> —Female Service Member

> "Senior people may not think to come and talk to you about opportunities, so go seek them out and ask for advice on what to do next."
> —Female Sailor

Successful women working in the international security field corroborated the value of having mentors and supporters, indicating that such individuals played key roles in their career development.[43]

Being Goal-Oriented

Many Service members spoke about goals. They talked about the importance of setting goals for one's self, challenging one's self with ambitious goals, working hard, staying focused on one's goals, and being persistent. Iskra's sample of flag/general officers was characterized by similar qualities of persistence, perspective, and an ability to "turn negative situations into positive outcomes."[44]

Setting goals

> "Going back to setting your own goals and knowing what you want to achieve and being aggressive at getting that accomplished. …".
> —Female Marine

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[43] Conaway, C. P. and J. Shoemaker. (2008, July). Women in United Nations peace operations: Increasing the leadership opportunities. *Women in International Security*, Page 9.
[44] Iskra, D. M. (2008).

"Start with a big goal in mind and take a step back and set up your smaller goals and how you can achieve your goals."
—Female Army National Guardsman

"Set goals, achieve those goals, don't let any one talk you out of it. Set the goals early. I was in boot camp and said I want to be a warrant, and here I am. Follow your heart, too."
—Female Coast Guardsman

"You have to have a vision and goal. When you first come in like me I didn't care. All I cared about was going to clubs and party it up. Eventually you have to find out what you want to succeed in; you have to know what you want."
—Female Airman

Working hard and staying focused

"I hold myself to a higher standard than my Soldiers. I pride myself on being able to pass the male physical training test to their standards. Because of that, I've noticed that my male peers have a little more respect for me."
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

"In corrections, most of the facilities we have are male facilities, so being female I was worried I would not be able to progress with my peers, but I used that as motivation and told myself that I could do just as good as them if I worked hard enough, and it worked. I'm the first Staff Sergeant out of my MOS. If I have to sit at a desk, I'll do it as well as I can."
—Female Marine

"In terms of success strategies, it is important that you are doing the very best you can in whatever position you are in; not necessarily trying to jockey for certain positions, but being aware of what the requirements are and doing your best to posture yourself to be competitive for those positions."
—Participant, Senior Leader Panel

Being persistent and persevering

"Just keep pushing, if you don't get your answer, look elsewhere until you get what you are looking for. Don't just take no for an answer."
—Female Soldier

"You have to make your presence known. You need to make your voice heard; don't just sit there. Just work your butt off, and show them you are as good as they are."
—Female Army National Guardsman

"You have to seek those challenges; when they challenge you with those special billets, you have to rise to those and accept them."
—Participant, Senior Leader Panel

"We have created very competent airmen as a result of professional military education, civilian education, community service, and leadership training requirements; these are key strategies the Air Force has followed. You have to push to be able to attend these schools and programs, and that helps keep people competitive. "
—Participant, Senior Leader Panel

<u>Pursuing Education</u>

Participants stated that continuing and pursuing their education has been a strategy for success, with emphasis on civilian education.

"For me, it's been my education. Coming in, I had an associate's degree and it was my goal to find out what I'd want for a career…For me, I know for sure what my degree is going to be in, I have experience in that field, and I'm six classes away from my bachelor's."
—Female Airman

"I think setting a goal to get advanced civilian education has helped me to learn my job better and create opportunities for personal growth."
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

"You not only have to be technically proficient in your own field, but also have to outside education experiences, too. I was always doing my job and advancing, but always seeking out additional education."
—Participant, Senior Leader Panel

<u>Networking and Seeking Help</u>

Networking and actively seeking help from others were also mentioned as success strategies.

Networking

"I learned that I had to get out there, communicate and network."
—Female Airman

"When you come into the logistics world, you get close with a lot of people. So being able to network back and forth and sharing information concepts [is important]."
—Female Service Member

"You have to network; it goes along with getting a mentor."
—Female Army National Guardsman

Actively seeking help from others (also venting with peers)

"I've been helped a lot. I have a Warrant Officer that has been nothing but helpful for the past year. He's helped me achieve every goal I've set for myself. You have to show initiative, but there are people who can and will help you."
—Female Coast Guardsman

"It also helps…just to talk to your buddies, because sometimes you need 10 minutes to scream and say 'I can't believe this!'. And then you get back to work and feel better."
—Female Airman

Being Self-Sufficient

Participants described being self-sufficient and taking initiative as a strategy.

"As a woman, I saw early on that carrying my own weight was absolutely critical...It's great to be female and we are what we are, but it is not okay to be a weak female. Not in this military world, anyway. If I need to move a piece of furniture, that's my job."
—Female Service Member (currently deployed)

"You definitely have to take charge of your own career. You have to ask questions about everybody—when I have to do this, that, what do I have to learn next? I ask questions all day long. I want to know so that I make sure my supervisor puts me in for things he says he's going to put me in for. I make sure I do volunteer work…what I need to do to be promoted."
—Female Airman

"I'd just like to say success and achieving your goals is all what you make it. You have to want to be successful. I try to instill that into my children and younger Soldiers. You can't expect it from the military; you have to be the one who makes it happen for yourself."
—Female Army National Guardsman

Several participants mentioned the importance of exuding confidence—a strategy that seems to be related to self-sufficiency.

"Don't second guess yourself."
—Female Sailor

"Have self confidence; [lack of self confidence] is the biggest pitfall that I see women fall into. With self confidence, you can build up your competence, and if you walk in with confidence and desire and ability to learn then you can be successful."
—Female Service Member

Acting with Integrity

A few participants noted the importance of maintaining their integrity and doing "the right thing." The female flag/general officers who participated in the Iskra study also mentioned integrity as a success strategy.[45]

"I guess being relatively fresh out of boot camp, I think about what my senior drill instructor would think of me if she saw me right now. I try to remember the discipline and integrity and honor that we learned in boot camp, and I try to keep that in the back of my mind. I always wanted to be in the Marine Corps and the military, so just remembering those things that were instilled have helped."
—Female Marine

"It's an outlook that anyone can use; as long as you can look yourself in the mirror at the end of the day and know that what you did was the right thing to do, you should feel proud of yourself…you should know that what you did was right."
—Female Marine

"You take care of your troops; you dress to the level you want to achieve; I did all this to establish myself. I kept away from office gossip, unless they were integrity issues, in which case I took care of it. When people see you showing integrity, they look to you as a leader right away."
—Participant, Former Officer Panel

A few participants talked about maintaining appropriate personal behavior as a way to be successful in the military.

"You can't expect being a party animal to help you in your career. Reputations get around fast, and that's what they're going to know you as, and all they will see when they look at you. You need to make them see who you really are and that you can do your job and be a leader."
—Female Marine

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[45]Iskra, D. M. (2008).

> "Keep your personal life personal. Don't date the squadron. I hate this phrase, but perception unfortunately can be reality. If I would hang out with a Lance Corporal… people just assumed we were dating.
> —Female Marine

Being Positive

Some participants described the importance of keeping a positive outlook as a success strategy.

> "It is what you make of it, if you join and find it's not what you want it to be, if you stay positive, you'll make it through."
> —Female Coast Guardsman

> "No whining! You need to understand what you are coming into. Always try better, nothing is more disappointing. Understand you can't quit!"
> —Female Service Member

Some participants said that not complaining and being resilient, i.e., having "a thick skin," were important to success.

> "There are rumors that go around always. You have to have a tough skin. You have to brush it off and not care and keep going. You know what happened; your friends know how you are, so it doesn't matter."
> —Female Service Member

Not Letting Gender Be an Obstacle

Service members identified a number of strategies that were directed at minimizing the effect of gender in the workplace, including being competitive and proficient at one's job. "Not letting gender get in the way of pursuing goals" was called out as a success strategy in the Iskra study as well.[46]

> "I think it's important to know your job inside and out. To be exceptionally competent so that you don't leave any doubt—be the best you can possibly be. When you think you're the best, it's still not good enough."
> —Female Sailor

> "I got really smart in publications and troubleshooting so I was always an asset to the team even though I couldn't lift as well…I made sure I was always an asset."
> —Female Sailor

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[46]Iskra, D. M. (2008).

"The key to my success is I try to choose the Marine path... roles that are on the margin, and they may be neat, but in terms of things that are good for being in the Marine Corps, it's not always the best choice. It becomes a bias that wherever there's a woman, it becomes a 'girl' job… 'Female' jobs tend to be administration or personnel management. I've always been surprised to see how many women are aides. Those are fine jobs, and we need for all Marines to be good in those areas, but in the Marine Corps, getting back to a core specialty has been really important to be considered to have the potential to perform well."
—Participant, Senior Leader Panel

Some said female Service members should not expect to be treated differently because of their gender and should not seek special treatment if they want to succeed.

"Never play the female card 'I'm too weak, can't do it.'"
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

Some suggested that fitting in, or being "one of the guys," helps women to succeed.

"It has worked to my advantage. I've become one of the guys. They don't see me as a female; they see me as their co-worker."
—Female Airman

"I just find that for me at least, dealing with guys on this massive scale—the more like them you are, the easier it is to get ahead or get what you want. I hear guys saying they don't want to deal with women because they throw fits or you can't joke with them, so it's like walking on eggshells. It is their world, we are severely outnumbered, but in a way you just have to roll with them."
—Female Coast Guardsman

Other Success Strategies

Several less consistently mentioned success strategies are presented below.

Participants noted how they have also benefited from others' experiences, both good and bad.

"I would just say it's not really that hard, it's just disciplining yourself and listening to others. Everywhere you go, you learn something new from someone. Stay strong and learn from others' mistakes."
—Female Airman

"Seek out someone who's been there and enjoyed being in the military and has been able to balance a career and having kids…Seek out who's been there."
—Female Navy Reservist

Participants noted that relying on family for support has helped them overcome challenges.

> "I talk to my mom a lot. I go to her for a lot. I love my mom; she gets me through a lot. My family means everything to me."
> —Female Airman

> "My family are the ones that drive me to want to be better…I have to set the example [for my children]."
> —Female Airman

> "We have family at home [and] they're on our time. You got to keep that in mind."
> —Female Service Member

> "Talking to your spouse."
> —Female Marine

> "You have to have that balance and have a support system at home. If you go to college at night then you have to have someone to support your family. You have to have the support, and you have to share with each other."
> —Female Army National Guardsman

Prayer or spirituality was mentioned as a success strategy.

> "Having faith in God and knowing I can overcome all things. The key is to know who you are and what you want to do and know you can't please everyone else…To find a balance you have to know what you need. Work hard, walk away, and enjoy."
> —Female Service Member

A few participants reported that being adaptable promotes success.

> "They have to adapt, improvise, and overcome things. You just have to say this is not going to get to me…Faith in oneself and own determination."
> —Female Army National Guardsman

> "Be able to adapt. Each base and job is different."
> —Female Airman

A few participants also mentioned that being outspoken promotes success, although it was suggested that being too outspoken can be detrimental.

"If you don't want to be treated a certain way, then don't act that way. If you are being treated inappropriately, let that person know and let people around them. You can't be too timid."
—Female Army National Guardsman

"Don't be shy, speak your mind respectfully and tactfully, but do speak up."
—Female Marine

Dr. Iskra concludes from her research with female flag/general officers who have "broken through the brass ceiling" that success requires the support of the institution as well as one's spouse and family. She observes that women lacking supportive husbands sometimes adopt the strategy of ending their marriage in favor of their military career. She observes further that some women use the strategy of switching from the Active Component to the more family-friendly RC. (73% of the female flag/general officers in Iskra's Reserve sample were married and 62% had children, as compared to 61% and 33%, respectively, of their AC counterparts.)[47]

Universality of Success Strategies

DACOWITS explored to what extent strategies may be geared to specific subgroups. For example, do junior and senior personnel rely on different strategies? Do the strategies that worked for young Baby Boomers and young Generation X women address the challenges faced by young Millennium women? Are the strategies that work for female Service members the same as those that work for their male counterparts? Thus, this section addresses how success strategies may vary depending on:

- Rank Level
- Generation
- Gender

These questions are addressed in the paragraphs that follow.

Success Strategies and Rank Level

Women in senior-level focus groups (groups attended primarily by E5s, O4s, and above) were asked the question "How are the strategies that you currently use different from the ones you employed early in your career?" The dominant response to this question was that their success strategies had indeed changed since the beginning of their careers, mainly as a result of their advancement in rank.

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[47] Iskra, D. M. (2008).

> "Oh yes, as a senior NCO you are concerned with a group of people and developing those at the bottom. For example, I have to focus on my tech sergeant and I have to step back and allow others to take responsibility."
> —Female Airman

Less consistently, participants stated that their strategies have stayed the same over the course of their career.

A comparison of the success strategies that junior and senior focus group personnel identified revealed no overall differences between these two categories of participants, with one exception.[48] Exuding confidence was raised as a success strategy only by participants in senior groups.

Success Strategies and Generation

Women in senior-level focus groups were asked the question "Do you think the strategies that worked for you early in your career are still relevant to junior military women today?" The most salient response was the belief that the strategies they utilized early in their own careers still apply to junior female Service members today.

> "It's a matter of history repeating itself. In every person's life you get to a point where you look back and go 'oh my God, mom was right.' They are going through and handling it the same way we did. Ten years from now, they'll be doing the same thing, realizing 'what was I doing?'"
> —Female Marine

> "Junior female Marines are their own worst enemies. They try to be one of the boys; they stab each other in the back in a heart beat. I didn't have a female friend until I was a Sergeant…"
> —Female Marine

> "Yes, the strategies of knowing what need to be accomplished. There are certain things that need to be done to be more competitive that have not changed. We know that and share that with junior members."
> —Female Airman

> "Career field functional, the airmen in the field ask me what to do and I just tell them what I've done, and that's what I pass on and they still work. It hasn't changed much."
> —Female Airman

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[48] Junior groups were attended primarily by enlisted personnel E4 and below and company-grade officers.

Participants also said the reverse, however. They asserted that today's junior cohorts have a qualitatively different approach to the military than earlier generations, calling for qualitatively different strategies.

> "My biggest concern is the millennial generation (kids born 1987 and later – Generation Y). They are the generation that we are trying to recruit, and you can see the change in personality over time. This younger group is focused on making a difference, but not at the expense of their family. They are very into service, but not before family. If you don't give them a good offer, they will go elsewhere. They are kids of divorced families with parents with two jobs. They are very independent, into information technology, and will look to an employer to be the best deal. The strategies that we employed, we thought, 'What do we have to do to make the Navy happy?', and the new generation's mindset is 'What are you going to do to make me successful that fits into my world?'"
> —Female Sailor

Success Strategies and Gender

Participants were asked the question "To what extent do you think these are the same strategies that work for men?" The most prominent response to this question was that these strategies apply to men only minimally because the challenges that women face are female-specific. For example, some participants suggested that men do not contend with the same gender discrimination and work-life balance issues that women do. Participants also suggested that women depend on leader support for success more than men do.

Men do not deal with gender discrimination or stereotyping

> "I just think we're on two different playing fields from the time we step on the field to the time we retire. Unfortunately, some of us become complacent and become comfortable…You have to step up…You have to put yourself out there to be noticed, and sometimes men don't have to do that…You have to do that to be almost equal [in their eyes]."
> —Female Service Member

Men do not have the same work-life balance issues as women

> "The expectations of females are that they are the ones at home with kids, washing clothes, cleaning the house, and cooking dinner…This makes the strategies more challenging for women from time to time. I think the stereotypes, even our own families are a part of the challenge."
> —Female Airman

With less consistency, some participants reported that these success strategies work for men as well as women. It was suggested by some that this is particularly true for men in female-dominated career fields, such as nursing.

> "I don't see why they can't use the same strategies that we use. I use preparation…I just have to be prepared for stuff. They can use that too."
> —Female Airman

> "Within [the] intelligence field there are a lot of women, so I personally haven't sensed anything…All the advice we get is the same for everyone."
> —Female Service Member

Summary: Strategies That Female Service Members Use to Succeed and Overcome Challenges

Having explored focus group participants' military career aspirations and challenges, DACOWITS sought to learn the strategies they use or recommend for achieving career success, to include strategies for attaining success as well as strategies for overcoming obstacles. The strategies described by these female Service members clustered around eight inter-related themes. These themes are listed below, in order of their salience to the focus group participants:

- *Finding supportive leaders and mentors.* Consistently, focus group participants spoke of the importance of having chains of command, supervisors, mentors, and sponsors to encourage, advise, and advocate for them. The senior personnel who participated in the DACOWITS-hosted senior leader panel discussion corroborated that mentors are instrumental to a successful military career.
- *Being goal-oriented.* This includes strategies such as setting goals, challenging one's self, working hard, staying focused, being persistent, and persevering.
- *Pursuing education.* The focus group participants emphasized the importance of advancing one's civilian education, whether that means completing one's undergraduate degree, pursuing an advanced degree, or taking miscellaneous courses.
- *Networking and seeking help.* This set of strategies is about proactively reaching out to others, e.g., more seasoned personnel, personnel in one's specialty area (e.g., logistics, nursing), and peers.
- *Being self-sufficient.* The focus group participants felt that one must take charge of her career. They spoke of taking control and taking initiative, offering examples such as positioning yourself for jobs, proactively asking for opportunities, and ensuring your promotion packet is complete.
- *Acting with integrity.* The focus group participants indicated that it is important for them to act with integrity in all circumstances, including personal and professional.

- *Having a positive attitude.* This encompasses such strategies as maintaining perspective, persisting in the face of discouraging circumstances or discouraging feedback, and not complaining.
- *Not letting gender be an obstacle.* This set of strategies is focused on minimizing the effect of gender in the workplace. Focus group participants said they accomplish this mainly through exceptional competence and performance.

Many of the described strategies echo those identified in Iskra's study of female flag/general officers, which included mentorship/sponsorship, attitude/passion for work, integrity, and not letting gender get in the way of pursuing goals.

DACOWITS explored the extent to which the strategies may be tied to variables such as seniority, generation, and gender. Mid-career and senior women in pay grades E5, O4, and higher tended to agree that their success strategies have changed with rank, along with shifts in the scope of their responsibilities and the nature of their challenges. Conversely, most of these women felt that the circumstances that junior women experience in the military have *not* changed radically since they themselves were younger and that, consequently, the strategies that worked for them early in their military careers remain applicable to young women starting out today.[49] With respect to gender, the focus group participants typically indicated that their success strategies apply only minimally to men, because these strategies are tied to gender-specific challenges.

F. MILITARY INITIATIVES TO HELP FEMALE SERVICE MEMBERS SUCCEED AND OVERCOME CHALLENGES

The success strategies described in the preceding section of this chapter are ones that are employed by individual Service members. This section addresses success strategies that are employed by the military. Here we explore the initiatives that DoD, the Services, units, and other entities have undertaken to further the careers of military women. DACOWITS asked the study participants about initiatives on women's behalf in four specific areas:

- Leadership
- Mentoring
- Character Development
- Work-Life Balance

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[49] Those who felt the opposite suggested the current generation is less propensed to serve and to sacrifice than their predecessors were, calling for a different style of leadership from this generation's superiors.

The findings in each area are presented in turn and are summarized at the conclusion of the section.

It should be noted that certain commonalities were observed across areas. It became apparent that shared understandings of some terms were lacking. For example, many participants confused mentoring with leadership and used the two terms interchangeably. Similarly, it was not unusual for participants to interpret character education solely as ethics or core values training. Secondly, with regularity, participants described training in these areas as *part of* a broader curriculum rather than as a stand-alone class or program. Most importantly, perhaps, participants reported a general absence of formal initiatives on women's behalf—a noteworthy perception whether accurate or not. What is more, many female Service members expressed a decided preference against female-specific programming in these areas, suggesting that it could be more of an impediment to career success than a catalyst.

Leadership Training Initiatives

The importance of leadership ability to a successful military career was highlighted by several members of the senior panel.

> "Knowing your job, knowing and growing as a leader, seeking those opportunities to grow within your occupational specialty, as well as a leader, these things are not associated with gender…You can't just be good at your job; you also have to be a good leader."
> —Participant, Senior Leader Panel

> "The great thing about being successful in the Marine Corps is the leadership skills that you have to develop. Leadership is paramount."
> —Participant, Senior Leader Panel

Participants were asked the following series of questions to assess their awareness of female-specific leadership training initiatives offered by the military:

- What strategies are you aware of that are employed in the military to develop female leaders?
- In what ways are these strategies gender-specific? That is, how do they relate to women in particular?
- Which leadership development strategies employed by the military are particularly beneficial to women?
- Tell me a little bit more about these strategies. How do they work?

The overwhelming majority of participants were unaware of any female-specific leadership development programs.

"The leadership training we receive is very nongender specific and is geared towards combat-specific roles. Honestly, Army leadership training focuses on combat, what to do in situations, and not overall leadership practices such as you'd find in the civilian field."
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

"I don't know anything specific to women. I guess putting us altogether for the same leadership course as the males helps you become a better leader. I don't know of any geared towards women."
—Female Service Member

It should be noted that, with some regularity, female Service members stated that they did not want a program that singles out females.

"What would it entail? What would be different about being a female leader vice a male leader? There shouldn't be."
—Female Coast Guardsman

"Leadership training should be the same for everybody. It should not be gender specific…."
—Female Sailor

Study participants mentioned informal and/or indirect initiatives and efforts to develop female leadership.

"There's no specific strategy that's for females…Fortunately, for some people there's a higher ranking female that takes you under their wing informally."
—Female Airman

"There are still some units where a female junior Marine checks in and they are told that so and so is the senior female and if you have any issues you can talk to her. That doesn't happen as much anymore, it's more integrated. The intent is not to dismiss them using their chain of command, but it's there for them to have a mentor, in case they have a problem and need to talk to a female. Other than that, we all learned leadership the same way."
—Female Marine

"Your NCOs, they might put E4 or E3 in charge of a project and you're the one that's in charge. They give you the opportunity to be in charge … you could be in with others that are higher rank than you. It's their way of giving you leadership opportunities and you do what you are supposed to be doing."
—Female Service Member

The participants did mention two leadership development programs for women, including an annual conference for females who have deployed, sponsored by the Kentucky Guard Association, and "integration orientations" for senior females serving in Korea and Texas, which apparently focused in large part on the topic of promiscuity. It is important to note also that the study participants did not always clearly specify that the initiatives they were describing were exclusively for women. Thus, some of the above-mentioned initiatives may have been aimed at developing male leaders as well as female.

Mentoring Training Initiatives

As noted earlier, female Service members identified having mentors as an important strategy for achieving career success. To explore the extent to which the military prepares Service members to effectively mentor others, DACOWITS asked the study participants two specific questions.

- How many of you have mentored a junior female Service member?
- To what extent have you received training from the military on how to be an effective mentor?

Their responses are discussed separately below.

Prevalence of Mentoring

DACOWITS asked the study participants about their experiences both as mentee and mentor. The large majority of focus group participants reported on the mini-survey that they have had mentors while serving in the military (80%).[50] There was great variability in the number of mentors they have had—approximately as many had had one mentor as had had four or more mentors. Exhibit II-2 shows the percentage of mini-survey respondents who reported having one, two, three, or four or more mentors.

Exhibit II-2: (If you've had a mentor while serving in the military), how many mentors have you had while serving in the military?*		
Number of Mentors	**N**	**Percent**
1 mentor	68	24%
2 mentors	66	23%
3 mentors	71	25%
4 or more mentors	78	28%
Total	**283**	**100%**

* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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[50] These 2008 focus group participants were more likely to report having been mentored than the respondents of the 2004 Status of Forces Survey of Active Duty Members (of whom only 67% of males and 69% of females reported having been mentored).

The focus group participants have been most likely to have both male and female mentors (47%) while serving in the military. Twenty percent of them reported having only female mentors, and 33% reported having only male mentors. Most often, their mentors came from various sources, including the chain of command, outside the chain of command, and/or the civilian sector (46%). In approximately a third of the cases (38%), the female Service members' mentors were within their chain of command only.

Sixty-four percent of mini-survey respondents indicated that they have mentored others. This was reinforced in the ensuing focus group discussions, when the overwhelming majority of participants indicated that they have mentored a junior female Service member. This was consistently mentioned by junior personnel as well as senior. Some participants indicated that the mentoring they did was "informal."

> "Pulling over a female Marine on post and giving her a short talk on how she might better present herself, yes… But that wasn't a female specific thing; I would have done it with a male, too."
> —Female Marine

> "I've given specific guidance to junior members regarding what they should be doing and what is expected of them; it's informal."
> —Female Coast Guardsman

> "I always sit and talk to them and tell them how I achieved my goals and the same strategies may not work for them that worked for me, but at least just discuss it with them."
> —Female Airman

Some participants noted that they do not actively seek female mentees over male mentees and that mentoring may be initiated by the mentor or by the mentee.

Training for Mentoring

Slightly more than half of the mini-survey respondents (57%) reported that they have *not* received any training and/or information on how to be a mentor. This was echoed in the focus group discussions when participants typically said that they received no training from the military on how to become an effective mentor and, moreover, that they were unaware that any such training exists.

> "I've been in for 14 years this year and I've never had any mentorship training."
> —Female Service Member

After some discussion and reflection, a number of participants recalled attending or hearing about mentor training. They noted miscellaneous methods and contexts in which mentor training has been provided, whether directly or indirectly. These included, for example, unit-specific classes, a mentoring component in recruiter training, a female cadet mentoring program, the Navy instruction manual on mentoring, leadership schools (e.g., Marine Corps Institute), Professional Military Education (PME) courses, reserve training, a Nurse Corps program, ad hoc training, and online training. (It should be noted that some participants did not clearly distinguish between programs that provide training for mentoring and programs that promote mentoring.)

Leadership school

> "I would say maybe through the leadership training, which has mentorship aspects."
> —Female Navy Reservist

PME courses

> "I think it's touched on in PME, but not as much as I would like to see it. Being a mentor is more than telling someone what to do at work. It is very individual and needs to be catered to each person. PME touches on it but does not tell you how to be an effective mentor."
> —Female Airman

Online training

> "TAITC (Total Army Instructor Training Course) teaches you how to mentor and how to teach classes."
> —Female Army National Guardsman

Some participants reported that they learned how to mentor by observing and modeling their own mentors and peers or on the job.

Observation of their own mentors and peers

> "You just take what your mentors have done for you and you do it for someone else. We've talked about effective mentoring… [but] I don't think its formal training."
> —Female Airman

On-the-job training

> "Your tool bag of experiences probably includes things learned from the military, like PME, and then other experiences. We use it all, some from PME, some from our own experiences, and some from some other training and other people."
> —Female Airman

It should be noted that some participants expressed skepticism that effective mentoring is something that can be taught.

> "A mentor should be able to talk to you, not only about your specific career field…Your mentor should be able to tell you [about what to do in your career]…but they're also able to mentor me when I have difficulties at work with personal conflicts, or when my kids are driving me to the edge, or my spirituality…My best mentor…could hit me in more than one area. And I don't think that's a thing that one program will teach you [how to do]."
> —Female Airman

> "You can't teach them to care about another person, and you can't teach that in a school. You either have it or you don't."
> —Female Soldier (currently deployed)

Despite this skepticism, participants occasionally noted that mentor training could provide Service members some talking points for specific topics that are not traditionally considered mentoring, such as financial planning.

Character Development Initiatives

Many Service members enter the military at a very young age from diverse upbringings and backgrounds. Some bring with them a strong moral compass, or character, nurtured through any number of positive influences (e.g., parents, teachers, sports, church). Others have not had the benefit of this kind of input in their lives.

> "We need to continue training our Service members as they come in. It takes a long time to meld these men and women...They all come into the Air Force with their own baggage, they bring that, and you have to educate them. That's the key."
> —Participant, Senior Leader Panel

> "You also have to be a role model and clean-living citizen. They don't always realize that our standards are much higher than in the civilian world."
> —Participant, Senior Leader Panel

DACOWITS believes that a foundation of character helps young Service members make good decisions that can, in turn, support a successful military career. DACOWITS was therefore interested in the extent to which the military is helping to develop Service member character. Participants were asked "What kinds of character development information or training (e.g., ethics, honor code) have you received from the military?"

Slightly more than half of the mini-survey respondents (57%) reported that they *have* received training and/or information relating to character development. During the focus group discussions, a number of participants mentioned character development training they have received indirectly. For example, some noted having received character development training through core values training, ethics training, equal employment opportunity (EEO) training, "Consideration of Others" training, and sexual harassment training.

Participants also mentioned that training on character development is provided informally (e.g., via mentors).

> "I actually taught in DI (Drill Instructor) and OCS (Officer Candidate School) and I always pulled my females aside and talked to them. I think it is more appropriate coming from me; some of them didn't have a mom or at least one that cared about them. I tell them 'This is reality, and you can take my advice or not.'"
> —Female Marine

> "I have to say that I get a lot of informal training, I have a mentor, and she is really good at giving me an unofficial idea of what needs to be done and how to behave. I spent some time with her in Korea last year, and we were the only two females. She would teach me a lot."
> —Female Navy Reservist

Less regularly, participants identified what they described as "formal" character development training that they had received, typically at accession points (e.g., boot camp, ROTC) and in conjunction with rank-specific training including PME, ALS, and NCO seminars.

Accession points

> "They hit heavy on it in basic training…especially computer-based training."
> —Female Airman

> "We do training in basic and leadership school; we do it annually from basic."
> —Female Service Member

Rank-specific training

> "PME maybe—it actually starts in basic training and then transitions into leadership qualities over time—whether people use it or not."
> —Female Airman

> "…in the basic leadership course and intermediate leadership course…"
> —Female Sailor

> "Just the courses that you have to do before going to DCO (Direct Commission Officer) school, and then the annual stuff."
> —Female Navy Reservist

A few participants also mentioned that the military provides character development training online or through computer-based training (CBT).

> "Ours is computer-based training."
> —Female Service Member

> "GMT (General Mandated Training) online and NKO (Navy Knowledge Online)."
> —Female Navy Reservist

Study participants did not consistently comment on the quality of available character development training. The few that did, however, noted that they often find it ineffective.

> "When the trainings are forced trainings and sometimes you know that the instructor has an unethical past…it makes it a worthless training, because no one will take the training at face value from that person."
> —Female Service Member

> "It's the same stuff every year. You just tune it out because it is so repetitive. I usually stay long enough to sign my name on the roster."
> —Female Army National Guardsman

Work-Life Balance Initiatives

The impact of work-life conflict on military careers, particularly those of female Service members, is well documented in the literature. The results of the current study reinforce the salience of work-life issues for military women (see the section "Challenges That Female Service Members Encounter"). DACOWITS sought to explore in what ways the military helps military women to achieve work-life balance. Participants were asked "What kinds of information or training have you received from the military relating to work-life balance?"

Slightly more than half of the mini-survey respondents (57%) reported that they have *not* received any training and/or information relating to work-life balance. In the focus group discussions, an even larger proportion of the participants—an overwhelming majority, in fact—stated that they have received no such information or training from the military.

> "You don't bring your personal life to work. Sometimes it's hard, but they don't care. Work and personal life stay separate. Sometimes it does get crossed, but they'll just tell you to suck it up and move on."
> —Female Marine

> "The only place is during 'command philosophies'; they tell us to balance work and life, but they pile so much on [that] it's hard… [There is] too much on your plate."
> —Female Service Member

> "No one ever tells you how to take the balance with work and home, I would say zero [training]."
> —Female Marine

Less regularly, participants acknowledged receiving work-life balance training indirectly through other programs, such as family readiness classes, stress management classes, time management classes, and financial training[51].

Family readiness classes

> "There are some nice classes they give now to family members and to Service members…family members get it before and after deployment…and on our end as an active duty member, they give us that speech where 'You've been gone for six months, there's going to be an adjustment period.' They didn't used to do that. That's one of the really good things that they've been offering."
> —Female Sailor

Stress management, time management, and financial training

> "The chaplain had a stress management class. It dealt with balancing personal life with work."
> —Female Service Member

> "They have financial classes and stuff like that."
> —Female Service Member

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[51] Miscellaneous vehicles for receiving work-life balance training included Military OneSource, classes at the Family Readiness Center, guest speakers, general military training, and work-life balance training at the senior level.

A number of participants noted that the only training they have received on work-life balance was through guidance from their mentors. Others reported receiving what they described as "formal" work-life balance training through mandatory work-life classes, Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Intermediate-Level Education, and counseling. There were recommendations by some for more work-life balance information, training, and other resources, including resources for subgroups such as single parents, dual-military parents, and childless Service members.

> "With dual-military and single parents with family members, it would be nice that once the command finds out that they're a single parent, to educate them on their options and say 'These are your options, this is what we can do for you'…It's unfortunate that some people who are not yet blessed with children…that we do have the single Service members without children who don't understand us and think we're getting preferential treatment because our child's sick."
> —Female Sailor

Female Service members seemed to suggest that the answer to work-life issues in the military requires not training but a culture shift. They stated that the military must prioritize work-life balance and make it easier for Service members to achieve this balance. At the unit level, participants said, leaders must not only support Service members' pursuit of work-life balance but, as one senior naval officer suggested, they must also model balance in their own lives.

Military must prioritize and facilitate work-life balance

> "We all know what we want and have a general idea of how we'd like to be able to balance family and work, but I don't think it's an institutional priority for us. A lot of that has to do with the operational tempo, but…it's not an Army priority."
> —Female Soldier (currently deployed)

> "I do think there need to be some changes…There was mention of a sabbatical program for both males and females…I think that would be an awesome idea…for families and to work on education."
> —Female Soldier (currently deployed)

Need more leadership support

> "Learning to find that balance depends on your chain of command…If you have a chain of command who's going to kick you out every day at 1700 and says 'Go home, take care of your family,' that has a lot to do with their attitude towards your family."
> —Female Solider (currently deployed)

"Climate and leadership are important factors. The quality of life in the Marine Corps has changed; it starts at the top and rolls down. Guidance is important to trickle down."
—Participant, Senior Leader Panel

Summary: Military Initiatives to Help Female Service Members Succeed and Overcome Challenges

After identifying the success strategies employed by individual female Service members, DACOWITS then explored focus group participants' knowledge of efforts underway within the DoD, the Services, units, and other entities to promote female success. The Committee examined initiatives in four areas, including leadership development, mentor training, character development, and work-life balance.

DACOWITS observed certain commonalities in the findings across all four areas. Most importantly, the participants reported a general absence of formal initiatives specifically targeting women. What is more, many participants were against the implementation of female-specific initiatives, suggesting that singling out women in this fashion could do their military careers more harm than good. Additionally, most of the initiatives described by the participants, whether specifically for women or not, were pieces of a larger effort rather than stand-alone classes or programs. Finally, it was apparent that the participants did not necessarily share common understandings of the terms "leadership development," "mentoring," "character development," and "work-life balance."

Leadership Development. Although several members of the DACOWITS-hosted senior leader panel highlighted the importance of leadership ability to succeeding in the military, the overwhelming majority of participants were unaware of any formal female-specific leadership development programs. The two programs that were mentioned included an annual conference sponsored by the Kentucky Guard Association for females who have deployed and "integration orientations" for senior females serving in Korea and Texas. The focus group participants did mention informal leadership development efforts—namely the actions of individual superiors who take it upon themselves to mentor subordinates, motivate them, provide them opportunities for growth, and so on.

Mentor Training. The mini-survey completed by the focus group participants revealed that the large majority (80%) have had mentors while serving in the military, which is consistent with SOF Survey results. Nearly two-thirds (64%), including junior personnel as well as senior, have mentored others. More than half of those who have mentored others (57%), however, indicated that they have *not* received any training and/or information on how to mentor. This finding was echoed in the focus group discussions, during which participants indicated that they had neither received mentor training nor were aware of any such training. Upon reflection, some participants

noted that the topic of how to mentor was addressed in conjunction with other military training such as leadership schools and other PME courses.

Character Development. Slightly more than half of the focus group participants (57%) indicated on the mini-survey that they have received training and/or information related to character development. Most implied that they have received this input indirectly, through other military training such as core values training, ethics training, EEO training, "Consideration of Others" training, and sexual harassment training. Some mentioned that character development is a focus of mentoring. The few instances of "formal" character development training that focus group participants mentioned typically occurred at accession points (e.g., boot camp or ROTC) or in conjunction with rank-specific training.

Work-Life Balance. Slightly more than half of the focus group participants (57%) indicated on the mini-survey that they have *not* received training and/or information from the military related to work-life balance. During the ensuing focus group discussions, an even larger proportion of the participants stated that they have received no such input. There were some exceptions, including participants who acknowledged receiving work-life balance training indirectly through classes on other topics (e.g., family readiness, stress management, time management, managing personal finances), who said that their mentors addressed work-life balance or who received "formal" work-life training through mandatory classes, PME courses (e.g., CGSC), or counseling. While there were recommendations by some that the military provide more work-life balance information, training, and other resources, the participants also suggested that the military must make a clear priority of work-life balance and ensure that this imperative is operationalized at the unit level.

G. WOMEN-TO-WOMEN SUCCESS STRATEGIES

This section addresses the use of initiatives and strategies that involve women helping women, both within the military and the private sector. The section concludes with a summary.

DACOWITS was interested in assessing to what extent women helping women is a key feature of the various individual and institutional strategies that women use to succeed in the military. Study participants were asked "What women-to-women success strategies have you been involved in or are you aware of to help you and other women reach your career goals?" Based on their responses, it appears that the implementation of formal women-to-women success strategies is not prevalent in the military. This section addresses the use of both formal and informal women-to-women success strategies in the military and concludes with a description of several women-to-women initiatives that have been implemented in the private sector. (Note that some of the material presented below has been discussed earlier in different contexts. See the sections

"Strategies That Female Service Members Use to Succeed and Overcome Challenges" and "Military Initiatives to Help Female Service Members Succeed and Overcome Challenges.")

Formal Women-to-Women Success Strategies for Female Service Members

The overwhelming majority of participants could not recall any formal women-to-women success initiatives. (In fact, some participants commented that these DACOWITS focus groups comprised their first women-to-women initiative.)

> "They don't have a group session you can go to with different rank females…like to be involved in something like this where I can sit with all kinds of females to know that it's okay to be feeling this…You go home, you have another life, and being a woman…if you have issues at work, you're taking it home, and if you don't have anybody to talk to who finds the differences, you're just stressed."
> —Female Service Member

> "This is the largest congregation of females I have seen since boot camp."
> —Female Marine

It was not uncommon for participants to state that they *would not* like to see female-specific groups or programs. This echoes earlier comments from participants indicating that they would not like female-specific leadership programs or mentoring programs. Others stated that they *would* like to have access to more women-to-women resources, although this was reported less regularly.

Sporadically, participants identified a handful of formal women-to-women activities employed in the military. Many of these seemed to be location-specific. For example, "Powder Puff" was enthusiastically described by female Service members stationed in Korea as an initiative for women to informally mentor each other and discuss work-life and other female-specific challenges and solutions. Other formal programs identified by study participants included installation-sponsored women's discussions and presentations and a luncheon and panel discussion held during Women's History Month.

Powder Puff

> "It's called Powder Puff…She calls it Powder Puff so you can take the makeup off and reveal who you are as a person…That's the only arena you could have females talk about real issues…It originally came about because of all the sexual assaults that were happening …There were a lot of females doing dumb things."
> —Female Service Member

"This last time they did this class—that was outstanding. It's called Powder Puff training…It is head on…We talk about female issues from the name calling to everything…to how to react when you're being harassed…It wasn't like you're talking to an NCO. Everybody takes off their rank."
—Female Service Member

Installation-sponsored women's discussions and presentations

"There was a colonel on our base who would hold lunchtime meetings with senior O4s, O5s, and O6s to discuss things over the lunch hour and mentor [them]. It was a pretty good idea…I've had that on other bases as well. It's finding the right person to bring people to get together so we can ask questions."
—Female Soldier (currently deployed)

"Some of our bases have established a women's monthly meeting that they all get together and talk about issues. It may be installation specific."
—Female Airman

"My last base had a woman reviving the women officers mentoring phase. It was big—we had about average of 15 women. We would get a female retired general to come and speak about true life points. They stayed away from a military briefs structure. They covered topics like… I want to know how to survive military life, inner life balance…That was probably the best."
—Female Service Member

Women's History Month panel and discussion

"During Women's History Month, they had a chiefs panel…We thought they should do that more…They had a panel with three women chiefs and invited people, and they gave their career history and fielded questions and talked about how they balance family and career, and it was good. But since it was a one-time thing, we thought it'd be better to do more than once a year."
—Female Airman

Informal Women-to-Women Success Strategies for Female Service Members

While most responses suggested that formal women-to-women success strategies are a rarity, some participants reported that they have been involved in *informal* women-to-women success strategies. They specifically mentioned mentoring relationships, including casual conversations initiated by senior women with junior women, and networking and other support systems.

Mentoring

> "My maintenance officer is a great mentor. I work in ammo, and I work with 30 guys and there are only five girls. Our maintenance officer is a female and she'll talk to us on a personal level. How being in an office full of men has changed the way she communicates. You have to be yourself in and out of uniform."
> —Female Service Member

> "For me, it's seeing women in certain positions…succeeding."
> —Female Airman

Networking and support systems

> "Sometimes we get a group together and cook and talk and deal with life issues."
> —Female Service Member

> "It's very informal, though. There are two women prosecutors now, and I offer to take care of her son if she needs to stay late for trial, things like that. You have to come together like that. We have obligations that men, for whatever cultural reasons, don't have. You have to get together and help each other."
> —Female Marine

Several participants noted that they also network with civilian women—for example, through church-sponsored women's groups, civilian women in the same career field, and professional organizations.

Church-sponsored women's groups

> "At our church we have WOWs, Women of Worship…We get together and have slumber parties, tea parties, and talk about things we're dealing with as women. A lot of us in the group are NCOs, officers…We set that this is not a gossip group, this is a group to help women who have women's issues…It's not only your career, it's your life, at home, at work…[Whatever issue you have,] somebody in the group has dealt with it."
> —Female Service Member

> "I haven't had it in the military, but I've had it through my church…I've taken many classes…One was [on] how to be a better person to your friends, how to be more hospitable when you have company. How to be a better friend, a better mom. Etiquette…"
> —Female Airman

Civilian women in the same career field

> "The nurse corps has annual get-togethers. It's civilian and active duty…but it's like for every five women, there might be one man…When I went to the one in Vegas, I was astounded…Just to have us get together and talk about everything, from nursing school to the high divorce rate and how people stay married and balancing working nights and children."
> —Female Airman

Professional organizations

> "I have a professional organization, but it's all women. It's labor and delivery…it's women because that's just the nature of the field. That's professional, and most of the different military branches send their nurses there…We have a special military section of that organization where we do our own conference, where we talk about just military."
> —Female Sailor

A flag/general officer who participated on the senior panel observed that what junior women need from their more seasoned counterparts is an example that they can emulate, role models: "What I see evolving in our junior officers is they want to see successful examples of women who are doing high-powered jobs and having families."

Women-to-Women Initiatives in the Private Sector

A literature search identified a number of women-to-women types of initiatives that have been implemented in the private sector.

- Deloitte[52]—a group of firms with over 165,000 professionals providing audit, consulting, financial advisory, risk management, and tax services to clients—has an extensive initiative to attract, retain, and advance female employees. The program includes the following, for example:
    - Formal mentoring programs
    - Women networking and role model events, for example:
        - The Corporate State: A Women's CEO and Senior Management Summit
        - Summit on the 50 Most Powerful Women in American Business
        - Women's leadership events that include speakers and leadership training
    - Leading Edge, a training program that offers courses in self-assessment, career planning and reflection, peer networking, decision-making, and presentations by female leaders

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[52] Deloitte. (2003). *Women's initiative annual report.* Retrieved May 13, 2008, from www.public.deloitte.com/wiar/.

- Women firefighters have created local support networks in many parts of the country. These range from informal groups that allow women to share problems and solutions over breakfast once a month or more established organizations that hold regular meetings, put out a newsletter, and offer workshops and speakers on topics of interest.[53]
- One local network of African-American women firefighters has developed a program that helps women prepare for fire department jobs, from strength training through the application and interview process.[54]
- The Johns Hopkins Medical School has established the Women's Leadership Council, which "is composed of all female professors in the School of Medicine and provides a forum for both communication and discussion of important issues affecting all faculty, and in particular women faculty." The council also provides mentoring for female faculty members.[55]
- Circle mentoring is a mentoring method that is being used by some cable companies. "Circle mentoring involves two senior women, meeting with four or five mid-level women, on an accelerated schedule of two or three times a month, for a set period of several months."[56]

These and other private-sector women-to-women strategies potentially offer best practices that can be utilized within the military.

Summary: Women-to-Women Success Strategies

DACOWITS was interested in the extent to which both individual success strategies and existing military initiatives capitalize on women helping women. The focus group participants' comments suggest that not only are formal women-to-women initiatives a rarity but, as noted previously, a fair number of female Service members are not in favor of female-specific programs. The few formal women-to-women initiatives that the participants mentioned included "Powder Puff" (a program in U.S. Forces Korea for women to discuss work-life and other female-specific issues and solutions), installation-sponsored women's discussions and presentations, and a Women's History Month luncheon and panel discussion. Informal women-to-women support appears to be somewhat more common than formal women-to-women initiatives and includes activities such as mentoring, casual conversations, networking within the military, and networking within the

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[53] International Association of Women in Fire and Emergency Services. (1999, November). *Issues concerning women & firefighting: Supporting a diverse fire service.* Retrieved from www.i-women.org/issues.php?issue=15.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Training women surgeons and their academic advancement. (2008, May 13). *The Annals of Thoracic Surgery.* Retrieved from http://ats.ctsnetjournals.org/cgi/content/full/71/2_suppl/S22.
[56] 2007 PAR initiative advancement opportunities key findings. (2008, May 13). *Women in Cable Telecommunications.* Retrieved from www.wict.org/WICT/Research/PAR/2007/2007PARInitiativeAdvancementOppKeyFindings.htm

civilian community (e.g., church-sponsored groups, career field groups, professional organizations). Programs to promote the success of women in the private sector, several of which were described in this section, offer additional examples of women-to-women initiatives.

H. WORDS OF ADVICE FROM FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS TO YOUNG WOMEN CONTEMPLATING A MILITARY CAREER

When asked at the conclusion of each focus group "What strategies would you advise if you were speaking to a group of young women (at a high school or college) about how to be successful in the military?", the focus group participants were quite forthcoming. Highlighted here are the participants' most common responses to this question, including advice that mirrored their previously identified success strategies, which are captured in Section E, "Strategies That Female Service Members Use to Succeed and Overcome Challenges."

Carefully evaluate your decision to join the military, and understand the magnitude of the commitment.

> "I would say first thing, the military is not for everybody. There are a lot of wonderful things that you can get out of the military—education, discipline, meeting great people. When you choose your rate, you choose your fate. So do research before, make sure everything you want is in your contract before you sign. You have to look at it realistically. It's a defense department, so you might have to go to Iraq, and you might have to be gone for a year…Even as a reservist, the days of being attached to a reserve center for 20 years is no longer, as you most likely will have to deploy at some point. You have to consider if this fits into your life."
> —Female Navy Reservist

> "You need to realize what the lifestyle changes will entail. You might be from sunny southern California and get sent to Alaska...You shouldn't do it for anybody but yourself. You just really need to be aware of everything…It is a good opportunity, but you need to do your research and talk to someone who has nothing to gain from it."
> —Female Coast Guardsman

> "Dig deep in your soul and heart and ask why you want to join the military, particularly a male-dominated organization that is going to be very challenging. Nothing is easy, but the rewards and accomplishments are even greater."
> —Female Marine

Get to know yourself, and know what you want.

> "Know who you are! Don't let people tell you who you are. I have no regrets. I learned who I am and what my purpose is."
> —Female Soldier

> "Know yourself, believe in yourself no matter what."
> —Female Soldier

Stay true to yourself, and stand up for your beliefs. Do not be afraid to be outspoken, to take risks, to upset the status quo.

> "I would tell them to be themselves and not feel pressured to be something they're not. Don't try to fit in with the guys if that's not their personality; don't try to be too girly if that's not their personality."
> —Female Service Member (currently deployed)

> "Stay true to yourself and your decisions. You make a decision, and you're going to have to deal with it."
> —Female Marine

> "Don't be afraid to maybe stir the pot a little bit to create change."
> —Female Service Member

The following advice from the participants is also captured under Section E:

- Be goal-oriented. Set goals for yourself, pursue challenging tasks, stay focused on your goals, and work hard to achieve them. Be persistent and determined.
- Network and seek help. Learn from the experiences of others.
- Do not let gender be an obstacle. Do not expect special treatment because you are a female; prove female stereotypes wrong.
- Pursue education. Go to college and complete your education first.
- Be self-sufficient. Take initiative.
- Stay positive.

The members of DACOWITS believe that the experiences, perspectives, and advice of currently serving female members of the Armed Forces—such as those presented throughout the preceding chapter—can help future generations of young women to forge successful careers in the military.

III. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

For military members and spouses, the impact of the military lifestyle on their children is an important driver of quality of life and career intent. Particularly critical to parents are the educational experiences available for their school-aged children. The schooling challenges associated with relocation have been well documented, beginning with the Army SETS in 1999; since then, many initiatives have been implemented, and resources developed, to promote seamless educational transitions for military children. Today, the educational needs of military children are also challenged by base realignment and global repositioning, which is reassigning military families to communities and school systems that may lack the resources to absorb them. The educational needs of military children are further affected by the deployment of their parents in support of the Global War on Terror, which is introducing additional stressors into the lives of military families and children.

This chapter presents the views and perceptions of 2008 DACOWITS focus group participants, including Service member parents of school-aged children and their spouses,[57] regarding the educational opportunities that are available for their children.

Following an overview of the characteristics of the focus group participants and the qualitative analysis methodology, the remainder of this chapter is divided into two main sections:

- Quality of education available to military children
- Deployment-related support available to military children

The Committee's focus group findings are supplemented with results from mini-surveys completed by focus group participants, information from briefings presented during 2008 DACOWITS meetings, and civilian and popular literature where applicable.

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Knowledge of the characteristics of focus group participants permits a better understanding of the findings that emerge from their responses. The 2008 DACOWITS members conducted a total of 25 focus group sessions, at 13 different locations, on the topic of educational opportunities for military children. There were 144 total focus group participants, with an average of six participants per session, representing all the Services and several Reserve communities.[58] Service

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[57] In some instances, parents of only non-school-aged children attended focus groups. Their comments were included in the analysis where appropriate.

[58] Nineteen participants did not indicate having any school-aged children and were therefore excluded from the presentation of the mini-survey data, resulting in 124 participants. Their comments were included in the analysis of focus group findings where appropriate.

members and civilian spouses participated jointly in the same focus groups. The demographic characteristics of each of these two subgroups are presented separately in Exhibits III-1 and III-2.

Exhibit III-1: Educational Opportunities for Military Children: Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants (*Service Members*) (N=114)*		
Variable	**N**	**Percent**
Gender:		
Female	91	80%
Male	23	20%
Total	**114**	**100%**
Focus Group Attendance:		
Alone	93	82%
With spouse (civilian or military)	20	18%
Total	**113**	**100%**
Branch:		
Navy	26	24%
Army	27	25%
Air Force	26	24%
Marine Corps	14	13%
Coast Guard	9	8%
Navy Reserve	3	3%
Air Force Reserve	1	1%
Army Reserve	1	1%
Total	**107**	**100%**
Pay Grade:		
E4	7	7%
E5-E6	38	39%
E7-E9	27	28%
O1-O3 (including Warrant Officers)	9	9%
O4-O6	16	17%
Total	**97**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Exhibit III-2: Educational Opportunities for Military Children Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants (*Civilian Spouses*) (N=10)* **		
Variable	**N**	**Percent**
Gender:		
Female	7	70%
Male	3	30%
Total	**10**	**100%**
Education:		
Associate's degree or some college	3	30%
Bachelor's degree	2	20%
Master's degree, doctorate, or professional degree	5	50%
Total	**10**	**100%**
Focus Group Attendance:		
Alone	4	40%
With Service member	6	60%
Total	**10**	**100%**
Branch of Service member:		
Navy	3	30%
Marine Corps	5	50%
Other	2	20%
Total	**10**	**100%**
Status of Service member:		
Enlisted	2	20%
Officer	8	80%
Total	**10**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

** To protect the privacy of the small number of civilian spouses who participated in these focus groups, certain demographic variables are not reported and certain response categories are combined.

As the exhibits show, the participants in these focus groups, whether Service members or civilian spouses, were mostly female. The Army, Navy, and Air Force were more or less equally represented in the focus groups, each accounting for approximately 23% to 25% of the participants. Two-thirds of the attendees were in pay grades E5 to E9 or married to personnel in that range. The educational level of the civilian spouses was fairly high, with 70% having at least a bachelor's degree. The focus group participants had children of all ages, including kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school-aged children. Most of the focus group participants (79%), including both the Service members and the civilian spouses, attended alone. For a complete summary of the demographic characteristics of these focus group participants, see Appendix F.

B. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The results from the focus group discussions form the centerpiece of the findings presented in this chapter. This section describes the qualitative analysis process that has been employed to obtain these results.

A near-verbatim transcript for each focus group session is generated based on the comments made by the participants in response to the focus group protocol and follow-up questions. An analysis of each individual transcript identifies the most common responses. The results of this transcript-level analysis are then transferred to a sample-wide database, allowing examination of the responses across transcripts.

The purpose of the sample-wide analysis is to determine the most salient comments throughout all the focus group sessions. For this research, salience is determined by a combination of two factors—the proportion of focus group sessions in which the comment is made (i.e., frequency) and the strength of the comment within those sessions (i.e., magnitude). See Appendix I for a graphical representation of this framework.

The most salient findings from the focus groups are those with both high frequency and strong magnitude. Each substantive section of this chapter begins with the most salient findings. Somewhat less salient findings (with high frequency and weak magnitude, medium frequency and strong magnitude, and even medium-high frequency and weak magnitude) are presented after the most salient findings, in order of salience as feasible. The remaining comments, most of which occur in only one focus group, are considered not salient regardless of magnitude. However, recognizing that some may be noteworthy nonetheless, such nonfindings are included in the chapter on a case by case basis.

DACOWITS adopted this dual framework to impose a high level of rigor on the analysis process and to ensure that the Committee's findings and recommendations accurately represent the collective responses of the focus group participants.

C. QUALITY OF EDUCATION AVAILABLE TO MILITARY CHILDREN

Unlike many of their more stationary private-sector counterparts, mobile military families relocate repeatedly. As Exhibit III-3 shows, the majority (73%) of focus group participants reported that their family has experienced a PCS three or more times with the military.

Exhibit III-3: Focus Group Participants' Number of Military Relocations*		
Number of Relocations	**N**	**Percent**
One (Moving here was my first military move)	10	8%
Two	22	18%
Three or four	38	32%
Five or six	30	25%
Seven or more	20	17%
Total	**120**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Military families often move to destinations that are not of their own choosing. At each location, those with school-aged children must place their children in new schools. DACOWITS asked focus group participants a series of questions to explore how this lifestyle impacts the education of military children. The Committee's findings are presented under the following five headers:

- How Military Parents Research New Schools
- Military Parents' Satisfaction with Available Schooling Options
- What Military Parents Do to Augment Their Children's Education
- How Schooling Options Impact Important Military Family Decisions
- Looking Forward: Ideas from Military Parents and the Private Sector

How Military Parents Research New Schools

To better understand the challenges that military parents face each time they move and have to place their children in new schools, DACOWITS asked focus group participants the following questions:

- What factors do you consider when you are evaluating the quality of a school or school system?
- Where do you look to get information on these factors?

Participants' responses to these questions are summarized below in two sections.

Factors That Parents Consider When Evaluating Schools

The overwhelming majority of parents who participated in the focus group sessions cited several factors that they consider in their evaluation of new schools for their children. They consistently reported looking at a school's ranking or ratings on a national scale. In particular, participants often mentioned looking at school test scores and the school's national ratings, which are based on multiple evaluation factors.

"I look online to see how the schools rank, their test scores. If you have a choice between two schools, that's something to look at."
—Coast Guard Parent

"I look at standardized test scores in comparison with the rest of the U.S., especially as my children get older and are trying to find colleges. I want to make sure they will learn what they need to in order to be competitive for college. I won't put them in a school that is only meeting minimum standards."
—Navy Parent

"I look at State average to the school average. I look at which schools can help my child with what his deficiencies are."
—Army Parent

Parents frequently said they also consider factors relating to the quality of a school, including other academic measures, availability of quality teachers and staff, and school facilities and resources.

"We also looked at the percent of students moving on to college, preparatory classes, academic program, such as AP classes, and gifted programs."
—Air Force Parent

"For middle schools and up, I want to see the course selection. The only thing that normally comes up is test scores, but that doesn't tell about what sort of classes they offer. Those are more important when trying to get into top schools."
—Marine Corps Parent

"Personnel…and teachers who care. You can tell they care even if you walk in and they can tell you one trait about a student."
—Marine Corps Parent

"The first thing I look at is what schools do they have, what's the quality of the teachers…If it's 40 minutes from the base (instead of 10), it doesn't matter as long as the schools are good."
—Air Force Parent

"Discipline from the teachers, who hold the kids accountable. We get this from the feedback from the teachers."
—Air Force Parent

"…environment, facilities; you can really tell if a school takes care of itself if it's clean, there's a good library."
—Marine Corps Parent

"School equipment matters."
—Marine Corps Parent

"Other things like resource availability of computers, how much money is going into the school, also affect the choices."
—Service Member Parent

Parents also reported that they consider environmental aspects of a school, such as the surrounding area, school safety, and school diversity, when moving to a new location.

"I looked into the criminal backgrounds of the area to make sure my kid isn't going to a bad school. I try to get some feel of the demographics of what the home lives of the area was."
—Navy Parent

"I would walk through the school to make sure it's not an area that is run down. I just look for a healthy environment for my child."
—Army Parent

"So many people were trying to get their kids out of that school because fighting was high…That is a main thing because a violent environment is not conducive to learning. I want them to be safe, too."
—Navy Parent

"I look at the demographics for a combination to learn from each other."
—Army Parent

Where Parents Obtain Information About Schools

Focus group participants consistently reported that they actively search for information to help them evaluate the quality of a school or education system. They retrieve this information through a variety of methods. An overwhelming majority of parents reported using the Internet as a primary mechanism to find information on schools and school systems.

"The school, the state government's education website, you Google the school and find out what other people are saying about it, read the blogs, as well as talking to other parents…The Internet is going to be your first stop to try and figure out what area you want to live in."
—Navy Parent

"When I came here, I looked at the school's website because they tell you the previous year's test results. So, I look at the school's website."
—Army Parent

An independent search confirmed that there are indeed many online resources for parents seeking school information, often providing a one-stop shop for various pieces of information. For example, several state and local government websites provide information on the schools and school districts within their geographical boundaries. Other websites provide access to data on schools and school districts, such as contact information, school year schedules, student-teacher ratios, extracurricular and special programs, technology resources available to students, percent of college-bound seniors, et cetera.[59] In addition to information they find on the Internet, focus group participants cited using word of mouth from friends and other members of the military community. Also, participants reported that they make direct contact with the schools, whether by phone or in-person visits.

Word of mouth

"Get parent input as to their opinions on the schools."
—Navy Reserve Parent

"Word of mouth from other military folks. After your first couple of assignments, you know somebody or somebody who knows somebody and can get a good read of which schools parents love and hate."
—Air Force Parent

Direct contact with schools

"I try to walk through the school, see the interaction between the students and teachers. It gives at least a small snapshot. Does it look like a prison or a school?"
—Marine Corps Parent

"I go in, I ask for a meeting with the assistant principal, and I want to talk to the head guidance counselor about whether there are police in the school. There are just questions you have to ask up front. I just ask the bad questions that no one wants to talk about at the nice orientation. I'm going to ask them because I have to trust the school with my child. I want to be able to focus on my work and not be worried. To be honest, most of them are very forthcoming and they will tell you exactly what is going on. I like to have eye contact, to see what they are saying."
—Marine Corps Parent

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[59] Copeland, A. (n.d.). *Being the "new kid": What parents can do to help.* Retrieved May 20, 2008, from www.rpsrelocation.com/kids_issues.htm.

An independent search revealed a variety of offline resources for parents seeking to evaluate the quality of schools for their children, including local newspapers, local libraries, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Committee for Citizens in Education, among others.

In response to a mini-survey question, the vast majority of focus group participants (93%) reported that they would find a one-stop educational resource useful or very useful for their transitioning family (See Exhibit III-4).

Exhibit III-4: If there was a one-stop educational resource for transitioning military children, how useful do you think this would be for your family?*		
Rating of usefulness	**N**	**Percent**
Very useful	81	66%
Useful	33	27%
Neither useful nor not useful	8	7%
Not useful	1	1%
Total	**123**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Summary: How Military Parents Research New Schools

DACOWITS recognizes that military families relocate repeatedly and that frequent moves may have an impact on the education of military children. To understand how military parents go about placing their children in new schools, DACOWITS talked with them about the factors they consider when evaluating the quality of new schools and the sources they use to get this information.

The military parents who participated in the DACOWITS focus group sessions cited multiple factors that they consider when evaluating new schools for their children. They consistently reported looking at factors related to the quality of a school, including test scores and national ratings, quality of teachers and staff, school facilities, and other school resources. In addition to criteria related to school quality, military parents consider the environment within and outside a new school, including the area surrounding it, safety concerns, and school diversity.

The top source that the focus group participants cited for obtaining information about new schools was the Internet. Other common sources of school information included word of mouth communication, often with other military parents, as well as direct contact with schools, whether by phone or in person.

Military Parents' Satisfaction with Available Schooling Options

After military parents gather information to determine the quality and acceptability of schools for their children, they decide on the best available schooling option. From their standpoint, the available options do not always equate to a quality education for their children.

To understand military parents' opinions regarding available schooling options, the 2008 Committee asked focus group participants:

- When you received PCS orders to this location and faced a new educational environment, what schooling options did you have for your school-aged children?
- Are you satisfied with your children's education opportunities? Why or why not?
- Have you ever felt restricted from sending your child to your school of choice? If so, please talk a little about that.

Participants' responses to these questions are summarized as follows.

Available Schooling Options

The focus group participants described a wide range of schooling options that may be available for their children. These options varied by location and included:

- Local public schools
- On-base public schools
- On-base DoDEA/DDESS schools
- Private schools
- Charter schools
- Home-schooling

Parent Satisfaction

A show of hands revealed that fewer than half of all the focus group participants (42%) felt satisfied with their children's education opportunities.[60] Participants expressed a variety of reasons for their dissatisfaction, the most prominent being a lack of choices.

> "I never considered that there was an option. It was, 'This is where you are going to live, and this is where your kids will go to school.' Most of us can't afford private schools."
> —Air Force Parent

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[60] Hand counts were not collected in four focus group sessions.

"I don't think I ever determined that the school was acceptable, other than that was the school district that we lived in, and I didn't have the option to move them because of when we got our orders. I could have looked somewhere else, but the cost factor comes into play."
—Marine Corps Parent

"For me to move into a specific neighborhood I might not be able to afford the district. I had to look at affordability and then the school. I did not have that choice. Where I could afford, that's where my kids went to school."
—Service Member Parent (currently deployed)

The overwhelming majority of participants reported feeling that their options have been restricted, typically by factors related to where the family is residing. Some participants observed that, in their experience, the residential areas immediately surrounding military installations tend to have the least desirable school systems and schooling options.

"When we came here, we had a child in elementary school. We opened the paper one day and saw there was a stabbing at one of the schools nearby…The SAT scores are terrible; they are some of the lowest in the country."
—Marine Corps Parent

Parents living on base tend to appreciate the on-base schools available to their children, whereas those living off base wish that their children could also attend them.

"I'm fine. It's great…I love the fact that living on base allows him to go to that school. I'm extremely satisfied with that."
—Navy Parent

"The housing I live in is disgusting, and I've complained, but the only reason I won't move is because now my child can go to school on base."
—Marine Corps Parent

"There is a really good DoD school…that I can hit with a rock from my house, but my kids can't go there because we don't live on base. They give the students laptops, the student-teacher ratio is 15-1, and all the teachers have master's degrees, but my kids can't go."
—Navy Parent

"We wanted to get our kids on base school and we couldn't."
—Navy Parent

Parents also cited being constrained by zoning restrictions.

> "Here you have to pay to stay in the same school if you are rezoned."
> —Air Force Parent

Some parents expressed that quality schooling alternatives were out of reach—due primarily to cost but also to distance, transportation challenges, and waitlists. When parents could take advantage of such alternatives, it usually entailed significant financial sacrifice and/or lengthy daily commutes. It should be noted that such comments regarding the barriers to quality schooling alternatives were expressed primarily by enlisted Service members/parents.

> "There is no way I could afford private schools up here. We interviewed at more than a dozen private schools and came home from each and just laughed because we would be working just for our kids to go to schools and nothing else. We could afford it before, but not here."
> —Navy Parent

> "Especially if you have two or three children. Is it fair that maybe we can afford to send our kids to private schools but the LT(jg)s or E-5s can't?"
> —Marine Corps Parent

Some military parents reported that they are not satisfied with their children's educational opportunities because they feel that their children are not being sufficiently challenged academically.

> "When he started…my son was way ahead of the other kids and now I have a problem because he is very bright and gets bored quickly so he becomes distracted and is not learning as much as he should."
> —Navy Parent

> "I like the school, love the teachers, but as far as academics go, they could do a lot more. We supplement a lot at home with workbooks, etc. I expect school to be a lot harder."
> —Navy Parent

Parents of special-needs children expressed particular concern about their children's schooling options.

> "My son has a lot of issues, he's very OCD and ADHD and ODD, there's options, though sometimes you have to force their hands."
> —Marine Corps Parent

"My child needs special attention in school, and when we moved he was put into a regular class. The DoD school had already sent prepared paperwork and proof of test stating that he needed to be put into a special class. Even though the DoD prepared documentation, the public school refused to put him into a special class until they could test him themselves. By the time they got around to testing him, he ended up failing the class."
—Service Member Parent (currently deployed)

Parents also expressed dissatisfaction with the impact of frequent PCS moves on their children's educational opportunities—a problem first documented by SETS. Parents mentioned difficulties related to the lack of standardized curricula, transferring transcripts and credits, differing state graduation requirements, and transferring into special programs, whether for special-needs students or gifted/advanced students.

"When we lived in Georgia and had to PCS to Texas, the Georgia and Texas requirements were different. Since the requirements are different, our children lost certain credits when we moved to Georgia."
—Service Member Parent (currently deployed)

"When my daughter left [her old] school, we had a problem because however they count quarterly hours for GPAs is different than how they do it in [her new] school. When she left, she had all these courses that were not transferable or had the same curriculum but were under a different name so she had to take them again. She was a junior but had to take classes with freshmen. Her GPA changed…She spent a whole semester trying to catch up with kids she was already ahead of. She did not need any more requirements for graduation by the end of first semester of her senior year but she had to attend anyways because of laws. Getting transcripts together for applying to college also became a real issue. It affected her GPA because of the way the different classes were counted."
—Navy Parent

"We left a school with an individual education plan (IEP) and came out here, sat down and explained everything, but they would not accept it, even though that is supposed to be universally accepted."
—Marine Corps Parent

The overwhelming majority of military parents who participated in the focus groups suggested that they would like to have more choices and fewer restrictions when it comes to obtaining quality education for their children. Particular options that would help parents feel more comfortable with their choices are summarized later in this chapter (see the section "Looking Forward: Ideas from Military Parents and the Private Sector.")

Summary: Military Parents' Satisfaction with Available Schooling Options

After receiving PCS orders, military parents gather the information they need to determine the quality and acceptability of schools for their children, and then they decide on the best available schooling option. From their standpoint, the available options do not always equate to quality educational opportunities for their children. The schooling options that parents identified varied by location and included local public schools, on-base public schools, on-base DoDEA/DDESS schools, private schools, charter schools, and home-schooling.

Overall, the DACOWITS focus group participants tended to express dissatisfaction with their children's educational opportunities. The participants' comments revealed a variety of reasons for this dissatisfaction, the most prominent being a perceived lack of schooling options from which to choose. Much of their dissatisfaction revolved around location. For example, some parents observed that the communities immediately surrounding military installations tend to have the least desirable school systems. Some also noted that they cannot afford to live in the more desirable school districts. Parents observed that their children's schooling options are further limited by installation policies precluding children living off base from attending on-base schools, and by the zoning in their off-base neighborhoods. Somewhat less frequently, parents expressed concerns regarding level of academic rigor, access to special-needs resources, and the transfer of school transcripts and credits during PCS moves.

What Military Parents Do to Augment Their Children's Education

The military parents who participated in the focus groups were actively working to provide the necessary supplements to their children's education and to fill in any gaps that exist. Some of the participant parents are supplementing their children's education with additional tutoring, including one-on-one sessions and after-school learning centers.

> "I pay for tutoring…which was necessary because she wasn't getting all the education that she needed. We had to pick up the slack from when the teacher was busy disciplining their children."
> —Coast Guard Parent

> "I use a tutoring program like Sylvan, after we PCSed. It costs a lot, but it helps my kid keep up."
> —Service Member Parent (currently deployed)

"My daughter goes to night school to help with the daytime classes. She is in honors classes, but the ratio is usually way too high. She asks for help and the teacher says 'hold on, in a bit,' but later never comes. It's like a tutor, but in a group session…It's not one-on-one, but because it's at night, the teachers are more focused on that particular class, and it's more individualized."
—Coast Guard Parent

In addition, some focus group participants reported that they are supplementing their children's education by helping with homework and school projects as well as encouraging additional homework and reading.

"I ask my son's teachers about what they're doing that month…We go home and we practice writing, coloring within the lines, just to reinforce what he's being taught within the day."
—Navy Parent

"We have one set of homework assigned by the teacher, and one set by mom."
—Coast Guard Parent

"Also, after school, when we all get home, they sit down together and we all work on homework, make sure it gets done. The school they go to has an online program called Study Island, and the kids have a login and password and it's designed towards one of the tests they take so they can go in and do extra work and the teachers can track their progress. It's designed to help their national progress, so we do that. We've cut down on their TV and video game time."
—Marine Corps Parent

Less consistently, focus group participants reported that they are supplementing their children's education with extracurricular activities, such as music and sports.

"[My] first grader is in Tae Kwon Do and Cub Scouts. Before that…we had them in gymnastics and they did things at the church, vacation bible school. As a family, we try to go to things in the local area…Exposing them to historic or cultural things in the area."
—Navy Parent

"We do Cub Scouts; my wife is a den leader…On base they offer sports for kids, both of my sons are signed up for that, one does baseball, the other does t-ball, so it helps with interaction and math, having to add scores and such. And it's not outrageously priced."
—Marine Corps Parent

DACOWITS also found that parents are supplementing their children's education through the use of academic activity books, as well as educational media and computer programs.

"A lot of good workbooks are out there. I picked up a third grade math book. He's not going to get through the whole book, but there's a lot out there, much more than there used to be."
—Air Force Parent

"My son does an online skills tutor, where they load work for the next grade, and the children have the option to work on it. It's not required, but I encourage my son to do that, especially because the schools here are so bad, I don't want him to have to struggle to be caught up when we move. It's based on national standards, and it doesn't go beyond the ninth grade, but they grade them and score them and the teachers in the school actually do take a look at them. And it's free."
—Marine Corps Parent

<u>Summary: What Military Parents Do to Augment Their Children's Education</u>

Several of the military parents who participated in the focus groups reported that they were actively working to supplement their children's education. Participants cited examples such as tutoring, including one-on-one sessions and after-school learning centers. In addition, some focus group participants reported that they help their children with homework and school projects and encourage additional studying, providing their children extra educational media such as academic activity books and computer programs. Military parents also mentioned that they supplement their children's education with extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, and organization membership (e.g., Cub Scouts).

How Schooling Options Impact Important Military Family Decisions

DACOWITS asked the focus group participants to what extent their children's schooling options impact various decisions, and this section provides their feedback regarding:

- Decision to accept or decline military housing
- Decision to accept or decline orders
- Decision to live within a certain area
- Decision to separate the family
- Decision to remain in the military beyond retirement eligibility
- Decision to leave or stay in the military

The majority of focus group participants indicated that children's education opportunities have a strong influence on important family decisions and often trump other considerations. Occasionally, participants indicated that the benefits of being in the military outweigh the potential drawbacks of poor education options for their children. The participants' responses regarding the various decisions are summarized as follows, in order of salience.

Decision to Accept or Decline Military Housing

Focus group participants consistently reported that a school's reputation would influence their decision to accept or decline military housing.

> "It depends on the base and the school, but I put my kids first. I don't want my kid to have to suffer because I have chosen to be in the military. It's tough enough for them to be moved from location to location."
> —Navy Reserve Parent

> "It's a temporary situation; I've never been on base for more than three years. If I can get my kids into a good school, and it means a crappy house, I would definitely make that sacrifice."
> —Air Force Parent

> "I'm selling my house in town so I can move on base and send my kids to DoD schools here."
> —Marine Corps Parent

Less regularly, participants indicated the opposite—that a school's reputation would not influence their decision to accept base housing or not.

> "I wouldn't accept it. Either way, I am not moving into base housing. Bad school, good school would not affect us. We would just try to find a house around there if the best schools are around there."
> —Navy Parent

Decision to Accept or Decline Orders

Participants often reported that the quality of a school system would affect their decision to accept orders or not, to the extent members have a choice.

> "I've recently turned down orders for school reasons for my kids."
> —Air Force Parent

> "I've done two back-to-back special duty orders, and it's very important where we're going…I turned down potential assignments due to school."
> —Air Force Parent

However, participants regularly commented that they do not always, if ever, have the option to accept orders or not, and that they must go where assigned.

"They call them orders, not options. If you refuse orders, your career is over with. You finish your contract and you get out."
—Marine Corps Parent

"We do not have a choice of accepting orders."
—Army Parent

Decision to Live Within a Certain Area

Focus group participants consistently reported that schooling options impact where they choose to live within a certain area.

"We used the Internet as well and chose our house based on the school."
—Air Force Parent

"The schooling comes first and then the house."
—Army Parent

Decision to Separate the Family

Some participants explained that, whenever possible, Service members do not want to move without their families; however, there have been times when schooling options have impacted that decision, particularly when PCS orders came in the middle of the school year.

"I would not move without my family."
—Army Parent

"I will be gone for 18 months to officer trainings but I will leave my daughter here for her academics and stabilization. So, I chose to be separated so she gets the education."
—Army Parent

"I deployed alone…because I wasn't going to uproot my kids from their schools. My husband persevered with all four kids for the times I was gone; to make sure they were stable, I would do it again, but I would get out if I was offered that option as an alternative. Even though they could maintain schools, not having both parents around was miserable for them."
—Navy Parent

Decision to Remain in the Military Beyond Retirement Eligibility

Some participants mentioned that educational opportunities for children impact whether military parents stay in the service past retirement eligibility. This issue becomes especially pertinent as children grow older and enter high school.

> "I make a decision in a year, but I'm making the decision to retire…Because every time we move, it's crushing them (the children). I cannot continue to lose one and two year chunks of their education…I can't afford it anymore."
> —Navy Parent

> "My husband got out of the military because of this. It was too hard to do joint spouse and get to a base with good schools. I was in longer, so he opted to get out because of that. It was a huge issue."
> —Air Force Parent

> "I would say it's very important…I can always find another job; my children won't recover from the four years of being in [a bad school district]. Or give me a voucher so my kids can go to private schools. It definitely would impact my decision-making."
> —Marine Corps Parent

> "I don't want to have to move my son in the middle of high school. I'm in two more years, but then I will seriously think about it. I just think in high school is when it really starts to matter for everyone, parents and kids. Friends, athletics, school, they all start becoming more comfortable. That's when you start seeing the geo-bachelors, because they don't want their kids to have to move for two years in high school."
> —Marine Corps Parent

Decision to Leave or Stay in the Military

Occasionally, participants mentioned that the benefits of remaining in the military outweigh decisions regarding school opportunities.

> "At some point the sacrifice is too great, and giving up my career is too much."
> —Air Force Parent

Summary: How Schooling Options Impact Important Military Family Decisions

After establishing the education-related concerns of military parents, DACOWITS explored the impact of these concerns—specifically, the impact of their children's schooling options—on family decisions. The types of decisions that DACOWITS discussed with the focus group

participants regarded accepting orders, moving with or without the family, where to live, and whether to stay in the military.

The majority of focus group participants indicated that the educational opportunities available to their children have a strong influence on important family decisions and often outweigh other considerations. The types of family decisions that appeared to be most impacted by education-related concerns pertained to where the family should live. For example, participants consistently reported that a school's reputation influences their decision to accept or decline military housing. They also consistently reported that schooling options influence where they choose to live within a certain area. In a similar vein, participants often reported that schooling options affect their decision regarding accepting orders, to the extent that they have a choice. However, participants regularly commented that they do not always, if ever, have the option to reject orders, and that they must go where assigned.

Some participants explained that Service members prefer not to move without their family. They noted, however, that there are times when families must be separated for the benefit of the children's schooling, particularly when PCS orders come in the middle of the school year. In some cases, military parents mentioned that the available educational opportunities for their children impact whether they stay in the service past retirement eligibility—an issue that becomes especially pertinent for families with children entering high school.

Looking Forward: Ideas from Military Parents and the Private Sector

This section offers ideas provided by the focus group participants as well as concepts being implemented in the private sector.

<u>Military Parents' Views on School Choice, School Vouchers, and Home-Schooling Support</u>

To understand military parents' opinions regarding additional schooling options, the 2008 Committee asked focus group participants:

- Would you like to have the option to choose which school(s) your children attend within a certain school district?
- How many of you would be interested in using educational vouchers if they were offered to you? (show of hands)
- In what ways do you think that educational vouchers would or would not help your family obtain quality education for your children?
- How many of you currently home-school your children? (show of hands)

- How many of you would find it beneficial if the military were to provide home-schooling support? (show of hands)
- What other types of schooling options do you think would help you to obtain the quality education you seek for your children?

Participants' responses to these questions are summarized as follows.

School choice

The option to choose a particular school within a certain area or district was regularly characterized as a desirable option by the military parents who participated in the focus groups.

> "It would be nice if, in our situation where our kids had to go to poor quality schools, there was an exemption. And we have no choice; we can't afford private schools, so we'd like to choose which school within a district to go to. Especially as new parents, who don't know how to select a good area to live based on schooling."
> —Air Force Parent

> "Being able to find a school that meets academic requirements for your child and being able to get into those schools. You should have the option and not be limited."
> —Air Force Parent

> "Especially for military personnel, because we are put in places that are not the best schools. And because of the things that we do for the country, we should have an option for a good education for our family."
> —Air Force Parent

School vouchers

Less consistently, participants expressed an interest in educational vouchers if offered; they suggested these may help pay for private schooling or for additional educational support, such as transportation, tutoring, or after-school programs.

> "If you could put the money where you want to go, hopefully the schools would recognize, again, getting what you pay for, they would be able to hire the teachers and create the programs that you pay for. That's the power of the immediate dollar."
> —Navy Parent

> "With a voucher, you could take your kids somewhere else, maybe it's still a public school, but you have that option. Now, you have to go to school where you live."
> —Coast Guard Parent

"If they could be used to offset, for example in our case, to offset some of the expected costs of an autistic child, then maybe the district would be more inclined to [help]. That might give you a little leverage."
—Navy Parent

"You wouldn't have to stress as much about how to pay for the private school."
—Marine Corps Parent

Home-schooling

Most focus group participants indicated that they do not home-school their children. However, over a quarter (26%) of participants reported that they would consider home-schooling their children if the military were to provide home-schooling support (see Exhibit III-5).

Exhibit III-5: Would you consider home-schooling your children if the military were to provide home-schooling support?*		
Response	**N**	**Percent**
Yes	32	26%
No	89	72%
Maybe/don't know	2	2%
Total	**123**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Participants consistently reported that it would be beneficial for the military to provide home-school support for those families who choose to home-school.

"I believe it is necessary, because each state has different standards, and it's confusing. Those who decide to home-school their children could really use support. If you're transferred to a state with poor schooling…you may want to provide better education than what the state provides to your kids and therefore home-school."
—Air Force Parent

"If positions were reversed and my husband was in and I was retired, I would like to be able to have that option. On some of the locations…that would have been a location I would have deeply felt the need to home-school."
—Navy Parent

Military Parents' Recommendations

Military parents offered thoughtful suggestions for ways that the military could better support their children's educational opportunities. They expressed the belief that these suggestions will have a positive impact on retention.

Develop and provide tools to help parents evaluate schools and compare school programs, curriculum, and quality across states.

> "I think the theme from my perspective is that we owe parents consistent tools to measure school to school, state to state, district to district…I think we need to find ways to close the seams that cause military kids to be penalized when they move…Something tied to impact aid money that allows parents to be more in control of their school decision rather than be a victim of it. And we need to look at ways to give parents a document for special education that districts have to be compliant with. And if they don't, a very easy mechanism to hold schools accountable for it."
> —Navy Parent

Provide more on-base schools, whether DoD or public, that all military children have an option to attend, regardless of whether their parents live on or off base.

> "I'm a fan of DoD schools. Their…schools do really well. They have a successful model; while you couldn't incorporate them everywhere, but they'd make sense here."
> —Navy Parent

> "Schools on base, for the communities that need it the most."
> —Air Force Parent

> "I wish that every command had a DoD school, at least the large commands. The more DoD schools, the better. I like the structure, their curriculums; our children are ahead in those schools, and when we transfer, it's the same thing from one place to another. It's been comforting for me having my son in DoD."
> —Marine Corps Parent

Provide Service members with the option of coast stability or greater influence over the timing of assignments so that they can arrange to take care of both their careers and their children.

> "If you could at least arrange to stay in one place for high school. I don't know if that's feasible, but that would be my dream come true."
> —Navy Parent

Provide greater educational supplement support, including tutoring, transportation assistance, etc.

"Even if they had an online tutorial website, they don't have the bodies to throw behind it…They used to have an interactive math website that would walk you through each math topic you're on…It would take you through all the steps with a verbal explanation as each stage came onto the screen…It gave you the rationale for the mistakes you made, and what you did correctly…So you know where you were making your mistake."
—Navy Parent

"The military can do a system something like Sylvan where they employ educated teachers, so even during the summers our kids can go to a summer school and reinforce the grade they are going into or even what they learned already. It would help more so than giving me money to take the kids where I want to. I know they will be safe. No matter where we end up, I know there is a group there that will have experience."
—Army Parent

Expand programs similar to the Army's SLO program in other branches of Service.

"I wish there was a liaison between base education and public education, to help with things such as 'why doesn't this transfer?' or 'why this grade level?' or 'why this repeating information?' They could work with them to adjust accordingly."
—Air Force Parent

"Those people [SLOs] could add a lot of quality of life to those families…Need to be familiar with special-needs law [and the] difference from state to state…Specialized training who can nudge districts in the way they need to go."
—Navy Parent

Develop and market a DoD-run website that helps to consolidate information on school districts wherever military families could be located across the country. This would help ease the stress of an already difficult transition.

"It would be nice if there was somewhere collectively you could get this data so at least you wouldn't be surprised by it. Right now it's just word of mouth or figure it out yourself…It would be nice if it was available someplace."
—Navy Parent

Promote the new law allowing the GI bill to be transferred to children. (The Committee acknowledges that this recommendation of the focus group participants pertains to higher education, which falls outside the purview of this research. The Committee also notes that the potential impact of this law on recruiting and retention is unclear.)

"Today, I'm extremely excited over this new GI bill that's coming down the line. I never thought I'd see the day where you can transfer your benefits to your dependents. You paid into it; it should be your choice. It's a huge weight off our shoulders. That's a retention thing for me."
—Coast Guard Parent

"With the new GI bill, I will immediately start transferring that as soon as it goes through. I have been thinking about different things, with this new bill being passed. Now they will pay for housing, too, if you get out and go to school. For my case, I'll stay in, use the 100% tuition assistance and give that money to my family."
—Coast Guard Parent

As the NMFA noted in a briefing to the 2008 Committee[61], another ongoing effort that will enhance the educational opportunities for military children is the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.[62] This compact, developed cooperatively by the Council of State Governments and the DoD Office of Personnel and Readiness,[63] addresses issues such as eligibility, enrollment, placement, graduation requirements, record transfer, course sequencing, extracurricular activities, redundant or missed entrance and exit testing, varying age requirements for entering kindergarten and first grade. The compact also supports the legal authority of custodial parents while military parents are deployed.

Practices from the Private Sector

There are several relocation support initiatives in the private sector that provide assistance to relocating parents with school-aged children. Many higher educational institutions, in particular, provide quality initiatives for those who are a part of their organizations. Harvard University, for example, provides one-on-one consultation, informal materials, and referrals to relocating faculty, staff, and students regarding preschools, private and public schools, after-school programs, and resources for children with special needs.[64] Johns Hopkins University has WORK*life* programs, which offer information on local public and independent school systems as well as on the local communities.[65] The University of Minnesota provides a list of websites and a link to *Schoolhouse Magazine*, where a copy can be requested that provides a long list of criteria

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[61] Wheeler, C. A. (2008, March 25). *National Military Family Association: Education for military children.* Briefing provided to DACOWITS.

[62] Council of State Governments. (n.d.) Retrieved June 5, 2008, from www.csg.org/programs/ncic/ EducatingMilitaryChildrenCompact.aspx.

[63] As of August 25, 2008, the compact has been adopted by 11 states and is now active.

[64] Harvard University. (n.d.). *New employee guide*. Retrieved May 6, 2008, from www.employment.harvard.edu/newemployee/relocating.shtml.

[65] Johns Hopkins University. (n.d.). *Human resources worklife: Relocation assistance program*. Retrieved May 6, 2008, from http://hrnt.jhu.edu/worklife/programs/relocation/index.cfm?SMSESSION=NO.

that parents can use to compare schools, such as age of the buildings, education of the teachers, special classes offered, ACT and SAT scores, and continuing education statistics.[66]

Other noneducational organizations in the private sector provide excellent support programs as well. Some employers cover the cost of school location assistance by outsourcing this task to a commercial service provider, by providing monetary support for finding a school, or by linking new employees to previously relocated employees with school-aged children.[67] Many companies will pay registration fees, tuition, books, and local transportation costs for children attending grades K-12 and even boarding school costs if the family finds local schooling inadequate.[68] In addition, there are several organizations that specialize in relocation services, including school evaluation and location.[69]

There are several international education programs that are designed to improve youth education. The U.S. Department of State, for example, seeks to improve the educational programs of American overseas schools through its Overseas Schools Advisory Council (OSAC) Educational Assistance Program.[70]

The North American Council for Online Learning is an international, nonprofit association that provides leadership, advocacy, research, training, and networking in K-12 online learning.[71] Proponents of online learning argue that online learning increases schooling options for children regardless of where they live, their background, or their income. Online learning is growing at a fast rate both in the U.S. and internationally. Within the U.S., 42 states have policies or programs for online learning, 26 states have statewide virtual schools offering supplemental courses, and 18 states allow for full-time virtual schools. Internationally, China, Mexico, the European Union, Singapore, and South Korea offer digital curricula, teacher training, and/or virtual schools.

Summary: Looking Forward: Ideas from Military Parents and the Private Sector

Several ideas for enhancing quality educational opportunities were gleaned from the focus group discussions as well as from a review of civilian literature relating to practices in the private sector. The overwhelming majority of military parents who participated in the focus groups

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[66] Schoolhouse Magazine. (n.d.). Retrieved May 2, 2008, from www.schoolhousemagazine.com.
[67] Collie, C. (1998, March). The changing face of corporate relocation. In *HR Magazine*. Retrieved May 6, 2008, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m3495/is_n3_v43/ai_20853290/print.
[68] Forsythe, A. & Bainbridge, W.L. (1993). *Expatriate schooling: Coping with issues and costs*. Retrieved May 20, 2008, from www.schoolmatch.com/articles/RJWIN93.htm.
[69] Companies that specialize in relocation services include Ricklin-Echikson Associates Relocation Assistance, Countrywide Relocation Solutions, SchoolMatch.com, and others.
[70] United States Department of State. (n.d.). *Overseas Schools Advisory Council educational projects*. Retrieved May 22, 2008, from www.state.gov/m/a/os/c14053.htm.
[71] Patrick, S. (2008, May 16). *Online learning: Around the country and around the world.* Briefing provided to DACOWITS. North American Counsel for Online Learning.

suggested that they would like to have more choices and fewer restrictions in the educational opportunities available to their children.

DACOWITS asked the participants about several prospective options that may or may not come to fruition, including school choice, school vouchers, and home-schooling support. Most participants reported that they would like the option to choose a particular school within a certain area or district. Less consistently, participants expressed an interest in educational vouchers; those in favor suggested that vouchers could help pay for private schooling, transportation, tutoring, or after-school programs. Although most focus group participants did not home-school their children, some reported that they would consider doing so if the military were to provide home-schooling support. Participants consistently reported that families who currently home-school would benefit from military support for home-schooling.

Military parents offered additional thoughts on ways that the military might better support military children's educational opportunities:

- Develop and provide tools to help parents evaluate schools and compare school programs, curriculum, and quality across states.
- Provide more on-base schools, whether DoD or public, that all military children have an option to attend, regardless of whether their parents live on or off base.
- Provide parents with the option of coast stability or timing choices in their careers so that they can arrange to take care of both their careers and their children.
- Provide greater educational supplement support, including tutoring, transportation assistance, and so forth.
- Develop programs similar to the Army's SLO program in other branches of Service, and expand the existing program within the Army.
- Develop and market a DoD-run website that helps to consolidate information on school districts wherever military families could be located across the country. This would help ease the stress of an already difficult transition.
- Promote the new law allowing the GI bill to be transferred to children.

There are several relocation support initiatives in the private sector that provide assistance to relocating parents with school-aged children. These initiatives, which seem to be particularly prevalent in colleges and universities, include resources such as one-on-one consultation; informal materials; referrals for preschools, private schools, and public schools; after-school programs; resources for children with special needs; subsidies for school relocation assistance; and other monetary support for finding a school. These initiatives also link new employees to previously relocated employees with school-aged children.

A rapidly growing initiative is online learning. Within the U.S., 42 states have policies or programs for online learning; 26 states have statewide virtual schools offering supplemental courses; and 18 states allow for full-time virtual schools. Internationally, China, Mexico, the European Union, Singapore, and South Korea offer electronic curricula, teacher training, and/or virtual schools.

D. DEPLOYMENT-RELATED SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO MILITARY CHILDREN

For some branches of the Service, such as the Navy, deployments are a regular occurrence; in others, deployments have become routine in the last seven years, since the Global War on Terror began. Both situations require support for family members, particularly the children, who are left behind.

To examine military parents' perceptions regarding the deployment-related support that is available for their children, DACOWITS asked focus group participants:

- What deployment-related programs do the schools provide?
- What additional deployment-related programming for children and youth is offered through the military?
- Do you feel these programs are adequate to meet your family's needs? If not, in what ways could they be improved?
- Has extended or block leave been an issue with your children's schools?

Participants' responses to these questions are summarized in three parts as follows.

Available Deployment-Related Support for Children Through the Schools

The overwhelming majority of focus participants reported that they are not aware of school support or services for military children, particularly from civilian schools.

> "When my husband went on deployment, my daughter went to school and said my dad went to Iraq today; the teacher gave her a piece of paper for a test, and nothing so much as a hug. And that year she had to go to three different schools for the year. The teachers were completely unsympathetic, in three entirely different school systems. There aren't any programs on base."
> —Marine Corps Parent

Military parents cited that, in their experience, whether schools provide deployment-related support varies by geographic area. Focus group participants reported that most schools that do provide deployment-related support have been on base or in heavily military areas. Frequently, the support has been on an informal level.

"My husband deployed twice, and where my kids are in school, a lot of military live there. When my son was in elementary school, they'd send some things home in the newsletter, they had a program the kids could join, just to help them deal with the deployment of one of their parents, and when the units were coming back, they helped them do special projects to welcome their parents home. I know that helped me with my child a lot because he and my husband are very similar. The elementary school was really involved, not so much at the middle school. There is a little, but it's only okay."
—Marine Corps Parent

"The elementary schools…have groups where they pull the kids together who have parents that are gone and they do projects, e-mail them, things like that."
—Marine Corps Parent

"I'm allowed to e-mail teachers and keep in contact with them to get updates on my children."
—Service Member Parent (currently deployed)

Available Deployment-Related Support for Children Through the Military

Focus group participants were also asked about deployment-related programs for children and families offered through the military. Typically, military parents were aware of no such military-provided deployment-related programs.

"The support my husband and kids got here was from family and friends; from the Coast Guard was nothing. Connectivity is terrible. I would have some of my friends call them. I'd send them a box right before I go underway for two or three months, but it's so hard to get in touch when you're all the way out on a ship."
—Coast Guard Parent

Focus group participants who were aware of military deployment-related support for children and families were asked about its adequacy. Their responses were mixed.

"I think so, because when you have children with parents who are deployed, they can mingle with other kids going through the same thing, so yes."
—Navy Parent

"It bothers me that we've been at war for years now and finally someone is saying 'I wonder what we can do for the kids.' We provide counselors for everyone who swallows two Motrin and says they are suicidal, but we can't provide counselors for the kids."
—Marine Corps Parent

Several participants acknowledged that the military offers various deployment-related programs and tools that military families have found useful (e.g., VTCs with the deployed parent, childcare to provide periodic breaks for the custodial parent).

> "I've seen it set up for kids, but we deploy a lot so the community knows about it. They have a program on reading to your kids where you sit in front of a camera and read to your kids. My community has stuff for kids. Ombudsmen have things going on, there was a spouse group, I had my husband help run the program."
> —Navy Parent

> "I know here one weekend a month they give the parents who are here alone one day so they can do what they need to do."
> —Army Parent

Some participants cited Family Readiness Groups as particularly valuable deployment-related support that is offered at the unit level.

> "In terms of our deployments, family readiness groups…We have been sponsoring once-a-month events on base. Free bowling nights, free pizza nights…"
> —Navy Parent

> "Through the Key Volunteer Network that all the units have set up for when they deploy, there is something that is set up to ensure everyone's family who is deployed is taken care of. They get together so the wives and kids can get together and be with people who understand what they are going through."
> —Marine Corps Parent

Military Parents' Recommendations and Private Sector Practices Regarding Deployment-Related Support for Children

Focus group participants have no concrete suggestions for programs or support that would better serve military children during times of deployment, although some suggested that the programs that do exist should be better advertised.

> "The FRG (family readiness group) at every company level does that, but you rarely see it because the information doesn't get put out. People do not turn out."
> —Army Parent

An independent online search revealed a variety of resources to help educators support children of deployed parents. Some of these resources come from individual installations, and some come

from organizations such as the Public Schools of North Carolina State Board of Education Department of Public Instruction[72] and the National Association of School Psychiatrists.[73]

<u>Summary: Deployment-Related Support Available to Military Children</u>

The deployment of military personnel imposes unique stressors on families left behind, often creating the need for family support. DACOWITS examined military parents' perceptions regarding the deployment-related support that is available for their children.

The overwhelming majority of focus participants reported that they are not aware of school support or services for military children, particularly from civilian schools. They perceive that the level of deployment-related support provided by schools varies by geographic area, and they reported that schools that do provide deployment-related support tend to be located on base or in heavily military areas. Often this support is provided on an informal level.

Typically, focus group participants were not aware of deployment-related programs provided by the military for children and families. Several participants acknowledged that the military offers various deployment-related programs and tools that military families have found useful, such as a children's video about deployment, predeployment support, and childcare during deployment. Some participants cited Family Readiness Groups as a particularly valuable source of deployment-related support that is offered at the unit level. Several participants suggested that the deployment support programs that do exist should be better advertised.

An independent search revealed a variety of resources to help educators support children of deployed parents. Some of these resources come from individual installations, while others come from state and professional organizations (e.g., Public Schools of North Carolina State Board of Education Department of Public Instruction and National Association of School Psychiatrists).

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[72] Public Schools of North Carolina State Board of Education Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.). *Deployment information*. Retrieved May 20, 2008, from www.ncpublicschools.org/militarysupport/deployment/educators.
[73] National Association of School Psychologists. (2003). *Parents called to active duty: Helping children cope*. Retrieved May 20, 2008, from www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/parents-called-to-active.pdf.

IV. 2008 DACOWITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR FEMALE SERVICE MEMBERS

This chapter presents the views and perceptions of female Service members who participated in the 2008 DACOWITS focus group and panel discussions, including junior enlisted personnel through flag/general officers. DACOWITS' objective was twofold in this chapter. It wanted to tap the experiences of today's female Service members to create the basis of a "primer on success." Additionally, the Committee sought to gather information about initiatives and programs for women to better enable the formulation and implementation of best practices across the DoD.

1. Military Career Goals of Female Service Members

1.1 Female Service Members' Definitions of a Successful Military Career

In order to understand the successful career strategies of today's female Service members, DACOWITS inquired into their definition of a successful career and career goals**.**

a. Findings

    i.   Female Service members have varied definitions of a "successful military career." Focus group participants' definitions of success pertained to their job performance, which they frequently measured in terms of advancement, doing one's job well, attaining one's goals, and making a difference. Job satisfaction was not typically cited as an indicator of success.

    ii.   Female Service members frequently tied a successful military career to being able to achieve work-life balance, which often included the ability to further their civilian education.

1.2 The Stability of Female Service Members' Military Career Goals

a. Finding

Female Service members' definitions of a successful military career do not necessarily remain static. Most participants in the paygrades of E5, O4, and higher indicated that their goals have changed since entering the military. Fairly often, women who entered the Service intending to serve only a few years now envision a military career.

1.3 Factors That Influence Changes in Female Service Members' Military Career Goals

a. Finding

    i.   Changes in women's military career goals tend to be influenced by family considerations.

    ii.   For some focus group participants, having or anticipating a family became a motivator to leave the military, whereas for others, it was a reason to remain.

2. Challenges that Female Service Members Encounter

To appreciate more fully the environment or circumstances in which military women strive to succeed, DACOWITS asked the focus group participants to describe the challenges that they encounter.

a. Findings

    i.   On the whole, the focus group participants reported that they have achieved, or are on the path to achieving, their career goals, although the path is not necessarily a smooth one.

    ii.   For an overwhelming majority of the focus group participants, many of their career challenges have been gender-related, including meeting physical fitness standards (particularly postpartum) and overcoming female stereotypes.

    iii.   A significant number of participants reported needing repeatedly to prove themselves technically knowledgeable and capable in order to be accepted in a male-dominated workplace, despite their rank, experience, or other qualifications.

    iv.   Many of the career challenges described by focus group participants were related to work-life balance—more specifically, to balancing work and motherhood. Timing of pregnancy can be problematic due to limitations pregnancy places upon deployments, upon job performance, and in the progression of some career paths. Additional challenges involved in balancing work and motherhood include child care and separation from children during deployment.

b. Recommendations

    i.   DACOWITS recommends that DoD study the impact on readiness, and applicability to other Services, of the Navy's 1-year postpartum deployment deferment policy.

    ii.   DACOWITS recommends DoD study the Army's Pregnancy/Postpartum Physical Training Program addressing pregnancy and postpartum health and wellness,

described by the Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, including its applicability to other Services.

   iii.   DACOWITS recommends further consideration and study of off/on ramps for all branches of Service to determine the return on investment of such programs.

   iv.   DACOWITS recommends that installations continue to expand child care availability consistent with the operational tempo of the installation.

3. Strategies that Female Service Members use to Succeed and Overcome Challenges

Having explored focus group participants' military career aspirations and challenges, DACOWITS sought to learn the strategies female Service members use or recommend for achieving career success and overcoming obstacles.

a. Findings

   i.   An important success strategy used by the focus group participants is finding supportive mentors, leaders, and sponsors who encourage, advise, and advocate for them. Additionally, it is helpful to network, seek help, and proactively reach out to others (e.g., more seasoned personnel, personnel in one's specialty area, peers).

   ii.   Other success strategies employed by the participants include being goal-oriented, pursuing education, maintaining a positive attitude, being self-sufficient, and acting with integrity. Service members also identified being competitive and proficient at one's job as a means of minimizing the effect of gender in the workplace and of preventing gender from obstructing the pursuit of their goals.

   iii.   Mid-career and senior focus group participants tended to agree that their success strategies have changed with rank and associated shifts in the scope of their responsibilities and the nature of the challenges they face. Conversely, most felt that the circumstances that junior women experience in the military have not changed radically and the strategies that worked for them early in their military careers remain applicable to young women starting out today. The focus group participants typically indicated that their success strategies apply only minimally to men, because their strategies are tied to gender-specific challenges.

b. Recommendation

DACOWITS recommends the continuation, expansion, strengthening, and support of current mentorship programs.

4. Military Initiatives to Help Female Service Members Succeed and Overcome Challenges

DACOWITS explored focus group participants' knowledge of efforts within DoD and the Services that are designed to further the careers of military women. These encompass initiatives in four specific areas: leadership, mentoring, character development, and work-life balance. It should be noted that participants did not necessarily share common understandings of the terms "leadership development," "mentoring," "character development," and "work-life balance."

4.1 Leadership Training Initiatives

a. Findings

    i.   The overwhelming majority of participants were unaware of any formal female-specific leadership development programs. Many said they do not want to be singled out, preferring to be recognized as effective team members and/or believing that female-specific programs could do their military careers more harm than good.

    ii.   Focus groups participants mentioned the importance of informal leadership development efforts (e.g., the actions of individuals who mentor and motivate other Service members, providing opportunities for growth).

4.2 Mentoring Training Initiatives

a. Finding

A preponderance of focus group participants (80%) said that they have had mentors (both male and female) while serving in the military, and nearly two-thirds of participants, including both junior and senior personnel, have mentored others. The majority of those who have mentored others indicated that they have not received any formal training on how to mentor. Some participants reported that they have learned how to mentor by observing their own mentors and peers.

b. Recommendations

    i.   DACOWITS recommends the Services ensure that mentorship training is included at all school points along the career path and in professional development opportunities.

    ii.   DACOWITS recommends the Services continue to encourage members to seek mentors and to be mentors.

4.3 Character Development Initiatives

a. Finding

Slightly more than half of the focus group participants indicated that they have received training and/or information related to character development, through military training such as core values training, ethics training, and so forth. Formal character development training typically occurred at accession points (e.g., basic training or ROTC) or in conjunction with rank-specific leadership training.

b. Recommendations

i. DACOWITS recommends DoD and the Services assess current character development programs such as the Coast Guard Training Center Petaluma Petty Officer Indoctrination Program, the Army I. A.M. Strong Program, and the National Guard Bystander Intervention Program, to determine best practices for possible implementation across the Services.

ii. DACOWITS recommends the Services ensure they provide dynamic and interactive programs for junior personnel that address personal behavior and decision making.

4.4 Work-Life Balance Initiatives

a. Findings

i. Most focus group participants indicated that they have not received desired training and/or information from the military related to work-life balance.

ii. Some participants acknowledged receiving work-life balance training indirectly from mentors, mandatory Professional Military Education courses, counseling, and classes on other topics (e.g., family readiness, stress management, time management, managing personal finances).

iii. Some female Service members suggested that the answer to work-life issues requires not only education but also a culture shift and leadership support at all levels for greater emphasis on work-life balance.

b. Recommendation

DACOWITS recommends a work-life balance component be added to all leadership school opportunities.

5. Women-to-Women Success Strategies

DACOWITS was interested in the extent to which both individual success strategies and existing military initiatives capitalize on women helping women.

5.1 Formal Women-to-Women Success Strategies

a. Findings

i. The overwhelming majority of participants could not recall any formal women-to-women success initiatives. It was not uncommon for participants to state they would not like to see female-specific groups or programs.

ii. Participants identified a few formal women-to-women activities employed within the military at specific sites, e.g., installation-sponsored women's discussions and presentations, as well as luncheons and panel discussions held during Women's History Month.

b. Recommendation

DACOWITS recommends the Services continue to maximize installation-sponsored women's discussions and presentations, such as those that occur during Women's History Month.

5.2 Informal Women-to-Women Success Strategies

a. Finding

Informal women-to-women support appears to be somewhat more common than formal women-to-women initiatives and includes such activities as mentoring, casual conversations, networking within the military, and networking within the civilian community (e.g., church-sponsored groups, career field groups, professional organizations).

b. Recommendation

DACOWITS recommends commands cultivate and encourage dynamic and creative opportunities to develop local initiatives for women that facilitate career success.

5.3 Women-to-Women Initiatives in the Private Sector

a. Finding

There are myriad women-to-women initiatives in the private sector, some of which could have applicability to the military Services.

V. 2008 DACOWITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

This chapter presents the views and perceptions of 2008 DACOWITS focus group participants, including Service member parents of school-aged children and their spouses, regarding the educational opportunities that are available for their children.

1. Quality of Education Available to Military Children

1.1 How Military Parents Research New Schools

Military families typically relocate repeatedly. At each location, those with school-aged children must place their children in new schools. DACOWITS asked a series of questions to explore how this lifestyle impacts the education of military children.

a. Finding

According to the focus group participants, parents consider many factors when evaluating schools and they find this information through a variety of sources.

b. Recommendations

i. DACOWITS recommends the Services continue to support and promote the various sources of information for parents preparing for PCS, including Military OneSource. Some of these sources are included in the appendices, including a consolidated list of websites offering information and assistance for military families PCSing with school-aged children (Appendix J) and websites offering general information regarding K-12 schooling (Appendix K).

ii. DACOWITS recommends the Services expand and publicize School Liaison programs and make them a key point of contact and first stop for parents seeking information regarding public, private, and home-schooling options.

1.2 Military Parent's Satisfaction with Available Schooling Options

a. Findings

i. Schooling options for military children vary by location. Overall, the military parents who participated in the DACOWITS focus groups expressed dissatisfaction with children's education options. The overwhelming majority of participants reported that their children's options have been restricted due to base policy, zoning, distance, cost, inability to get on a wait list in a timely manner, or the absence of school choice. Parents who are able to send their children to an installation school are typically more

satisfied with their children's school than those who send their children to schools off the installation.

 ii. The Coast Guard and the Air Force do not have dedicated School Liaisons. In the Coast Guard, 19 Family Resource Specialists at 13 support commands assist families with school-aged children as a collateral duty. While the Coast Guard has a strong education services program for Service members, no resources are committed for K-12 education services. In the Air Force, Community Readiness Consultants provide limited assistance to military families for the educational needs of families and school-aged children.

 iii. There was also some indication that parents are dissatisfied with their children's education opportunities due to PCS moves. Difficulties include transferring transcripts and credits between schools, meeting differing state graduation requirements, and transferring into special programs (e.g. special needs, gifted or advanced programs, fine arts and sports).

b. Recommendations

 i. DACOWITS recommends DoD pursue broader options, e.g., addressing open enrollment within the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and within other agreements at the state level.

 ii. DACOWITS recommends DoD and the Services promote practices at the local level that remove barriers to attending public schools of choice, e.g., providing transportation, negotiating open district enrollment polices, and reserving slots at charter/magnet schools for late transfer students.

 iii. DACOWITS recommends the Federal Impact Aid Program be fully funded.

 iv. DACOWITS recommends the Services facilitate home school support, e.g., through increased access to installation facilities and local school programs such as libraries, science laboratories, gymnasiums, music and arts programs, and so forth.

 v. DACOWITS recommends DoD consider partnering with local school districts, in situations where it would be advantageous to both the military community and the local school district, to locate schools on installations or near military family housing. For example, in highly impacted school districts, the installation might provide leased land or similar support for such schools. These schools could better coordinate with other base support activities (e.g., before-school and after-school activities, child care, family support). The proximity of schools to housing and the coordination between schools and base support activities that this proximity would facilitate, in turn, would help the military parent stay mission-focused.

vi.   DACOWITS recommends all the Services establish and fund dedicated School Liaison positions.

vii.   DACOWITS recommends the Coast Guard and DoD establish memorandums of agreement to support Coast Guard families where DoD School Liaison support is available.

viii.   DACOWITS recommends DoD continue to support and advocate for the adoption of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children by all states.

ix.   DACOWITS recommends DoD continue to create and support grant programs, professional development opportunities, enhancement of virtual school capabilities, and greater collaboration and coordinated efforts with the Department of Education.

1.3 What Military Parents Do to Augment Their Children's Education

a. Finding

Many military parents who participated in the focus groups reported that they were actively working to supplement their children's education.

b. Recommendations

i.   DACOWITS recommends DoD and the Services continue to support youth programs and partnerships that provide after-school homework assistance and extracurricular activities.

ii.   DACOWITS recommends DoD continue development of virtual school opportunities, including nationally accredited courses and online tutoring for this highly mobile student population.

1.4 How Schooling Options Impact Important Military Family Decisions

The types of family decisions that DACOWITS discussed with the focus group participants regarded accepting or declining PCS orders, moving with or without the family, accepting or declining military housing, where to live within the new civilian community, whether to stay in the military or leave, and whether to retire at or beyond retirement eligibility.

a. Finding

The majority of focus group participants indicated that the educational opportunities available to their children have a strong influence on important family decisions. The types of family decisions that appeared to be most impacted by education-related concerns pertained to where

the family should live, whether the Service member should accept PCS orders, and whether the family should move with the Service member to the new station.

2. Deployment-Related Support Available to Military Children

a. Finding

The overwhelming majority of focus group participants reported that they are not aware of existing deployment-related school support or services for military children, particularly from schools located off the installation.

b. Recommendations

i.   DACOWITS recommends the Services more effectively market deployment support programs to local schools and highlight current best practices.

ii. DACOWITS recommends the Services more effectively inform military families about school-based deployment support programs and highlight available online resources. Websites offering deployment-related information/assistance for military families with school-aged children are provided in Appendix L.

VI. APPENDICES

A. DACOWITS Charter

B. Biographies of DACOWITS Members

C. Installations Visited

D. Focus Group Protocols

E. Mini-Surveys

F. Mini-Survey Results

G. Briefings Presented to DACOWITS

H. Acronyms used in Report

I. Finding Salience Grid

J. Websites Offering PCS Information/Assistance for Military Families with School-Aged Children

K. Websites with General References for Education Grades K-12

L. Websites Offering Deployment-Related Information/Assistance for Military Families with School-Aged Children

APPENDIX A:
DACOWITS CHARTER

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DACOWITS CHARTER

Charter Defense Department Advisory Committee
on Women in the Services

A. <u>Official Designation</u>: The Committee shall be known as the Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (hereafter referred to as the Committee).

B. <u>Objectives and Scope of Activities</u>: The Committee, under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (5 U.S.C., Appendix, as amended) shall provide the Secretary of Defense, through the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) and within the staff cognizance of the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), independent advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to the recruitment and retention, treatment, employment, integration, and well-being of highly qualified professional women in the Armed Forces. In addition, the Committee shall provide advice and recommendations on family issues related to the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified professional military. The Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) may act upon the Committee's advice and recommendations.

C. <u>Committee Membership</u>: The Committee shall be composed of not more than fifteen Committee Members, who represent a distribution of demography, professional career fields, community service, and geography, and selected on the basis of their experience in the military, as a member of a military family, or with women's or family-related workforce issues. Committee Members appointed by the Secretary of Defense, who are not full-time Federal officers or employees, shall serve as Special Government Employees under the authority of 5 U.S.C. § 3109. Committee Members shall be appointed on an annual basis by the Secretary of Defense, and shall normally serve no more than three years on the Committee; however, when necessary the Secretary of Defense may authorize a Committee Member to serve longer than three years on the Committee.

The Secretary of Defense, based upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) shall select the Committee's Chairperson. Committee Members shall, with the exception of travel and per diem for official travel, serve without compensation. In addition, the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) or designee may invite other distinguished Government officers to serve as non-voting observers of the Committee, and appoint consultants, with special expertise, to assist the Committee on an ad hoc basis.

D. Committee Meetings: The Committee shall meet at the call of the Designated Federal Officer, in consultation with the Chairperson, and the estimated number of Committee meetings is four per year.

The Designated Federal Officer shall be a full-time or permanent part-time DoD employee, and shall be appointed in accordance with established DoD policies and procedures. The Designated Federal Officer and/or Alternate Designated Federal Officer shall attend all Committee and subcommittee meetings.

The Committee shall be authorized to establish subcommittees, as necessary and consistent with its mission, and these subcommittees or working groups shall operate under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, the Government in the Sunshine Act of 1976 (5 U.S.C. § 552b, as amended), and other appropriate federal regulations.

Such subcommittees or workgroups shall not work independently of the chartered Board, and shall report all their recommendations and advice to the Board for full deliberation and discussion. Subcommittees or workgroups have no authority to make decisions on behalf of the chartered Committee nor can they report directly to the Department of Defense or any Federal officers or employees who are not Committee members.

E. Duration of the Committee: The need for this advisory function is on a continuing basis; however, it is subject to renewal every two years.

F. Agency Support: The Department of Defense, through the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), shall provide support as deemed necessary for the performance of the Committee's functions, and shall ensure compliance with the requirements of 5 U.S.C. Appendix, as amended. Additional information and assistance as required may be obtained from the Military Departments and other agencies of the Department of Defense, and from the Department of Homeland Security, in the case of the U.S. Coast Guard, as appropriate.

G. Termination Date: The Committee shall terminate upon completion of its mission or two years from the date of this Charter is filed, whichever is sooner or unless the Secretary of Defense extends it.

H. Operating Costs: It is estimated that the operating costs, to include travel costs and contract support, for this Committee is $575,000.00. The estimated personnel costs to the Department of Defense are 5.0 full-time equivalents (FTEs).

I. Recordkeeping: The records of the Committee and its subcommittees shall be handled according to section 2, General Records Schedule 26 and appropriate DoD policies and

procedures. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act of 1966 (5 U.S.C § 552, as amended).

J. Charter Filed: April 17, 2008

APPENDIX B:
BIOGRAPHIES OF DACOWITS MEMBERS

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BIOGRAPHIES OF DACOWITS MEMBERS

Denise W. Balzano -- McLean, Virginia

Ms. Balzano is a co-founder of Balzano Associates, a grassroots lobbying firm. She has served as Assistant to the Vice President and Chief of Staff for Marilyn Quayle and as Executive Director of the Republican Women's Federal Forum. Ms. Balzano is a member of the National Board of Childhelp, one of the nation's oldest and largest child abuse treatment and prevention programs, and she serves as a pro bono lobbyist for this nonprofit organization. Ms. Balzano received a bachelor's degree in political science from Hollins College and a master's degree in international relations from Georgetown University.

The Honorable Diana Denman -- San Antonio, Texas

As a presidential appointee under President Ronald Reagan, she served as the Peace Corps Advisory Co-Chairman and a member of the Institute of Museum Services Board. She currently serves on the Jamestown Foundation Board, Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) Board of Visitors, and Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS). Ms. Denman's long-time interests in issues of national defense and national security have led her as an Election Observer to the nations of Ukraine, Russia, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

Kerry H. Lassus -- Fort Belvoir, Virginia

Ms. Lassus has been in government service at both the federal and state levels, having served as an Assistant District Attorney in Louisiana; as Director of Consumer Affairs for U.S. Forces Korea in Seoul, Korea; and in the Office of General Counsel for the Panama Canal Commission. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of New Orleans and a juris doctorate from Tulane University. As an editor and legal writer for the National Legal Research Group, Ms. Lassus has authored/edited more than 25 legal publications. Ms. Lassus is an Army spouse and continues to be involved in volunteer work for both the civilian and military communities. She is currently a Sales Director with Mary Kay, Inc.

Dr. Mary Ann Nelson, Chairperson -- Lafayette, Colorado

Dr. Nelson has taught mathematics at all levels over the past 40 years, and she is currently an applied mathematics instructor at the University of Colorado at Boulder and the Applied Math Director of Assessment. Her focus is improvement of college mathematics teaching. Previous college teaching positions included George Mason University, the University of Maryland Overseas Division, and Front Range Community College. Dr. Nelson has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in mathematics from Marquette University and George Mason University, respectively. She also holds a PhD degree in mathematics from the University of Colorado–Boulder, where she completed her dissertation in Research and Evaluation Methodology. She

was an Army spouse for 26 years including 10 years in Germany and 2 years in Moscow, Russia. In Moscow, she managed an AID program through the Commerce Department, which brought scientists and businessmen from all over the former Soviet Union to the United States for internships.

Judith Page O'Flaherty -- Norfolk, Virginia
Ms. O'Flaherty is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and served in the U.S. Navy for 5 years as an Aviation Maintenance Officer. During her work in industry, she was a team leader opening a new manufacturing center with the Frito Lay Company in Visalia, California. Additionally, she was an elementary school teacher in Lemoore, California. Ms. O'Flaherty is a military spouse and has served in numerous leadership positions in military spouse and family organizations. She served as the Asia Representative Advisor for the Command Spouse Leadership Course in Newport, Rhode Island, and is currently living in Norfolk, Virginia. She is a licensed real estate professional and works in Norfolk and Hampton Roads. In addition to volunteering for military support organizations, Ms. O'Flaherty is an active volunteer in her children's school.

CSM Roberta Santiago, USAR Retired -- Castro Valley, California
Roberta Santiago served in the U.S. Army Reserve for 24 years in a variety of assignments including Senior Legal Specialist, Personnel Staff Noncommissioned Officer (NCO), Senior Financial Sergeant, First Sergeant of a Cargo Transportation Company, and Command Sergeant Major of three U.S. Army Reserve hospitals. Her last Army Reserve assignment was as the Command Sergeant Major of the 352nd Combat Support Hospital in Oakland, California. She has been a federal civil servant for more than 30 years working for the Departments of Justice, Army, Navy, and Homeland Security in resource management, human resources, and reserve program management. She has extensive experience volunteering with the Association of the United States Army at the local and national levels, supporting the Army through interaction with local installations, reserve and National Guard units, local joint services organizations, and family support groups. She currently serves as a Department of Homeland Security civilian for the U.S. Coast Guard.

Colonel Felipe (Phil) Torres, USMC Retired -- Helotes, Texas
Phil Torres served in the U.S. Marine Corps for over 34 years and rose from Private to Colonel. He served in a variety of command, joint, and staff assignments in infantry, law enforcement, corrections, security, and other arenas. He is a Vietnam War veteran and the recipient of the third highest combat decoration, the Silver Star Medal, for actions while serving as an Infantry Platoon Sergeant. His last assignment before retiring in 2000 was as the Base Inspector, Marine Corps Bases Japan. Since culminating his Marine Corps career, he has been a Leadership, Management, and Teamwork Consultant and an Independent Security Contractor/Consultant in the U.S. and overseas. He is presently on the staff of Henley-Putnam University, is involved in security training for different organizations, and is active in volunteer civic responsibilities. He

received his master's degree in management from Webster University in San Diego, California; his BAAS (cum laude) in occupational education from Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas; and has done PhD course work in organizational leadership at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas.

APPENDIX C:
INSTALLATIONS VISITED

APPENDIX C:
INSTALLATIONS VISITED

2008
INSTALLATIONS VISITED FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Site	Members	Dates
Anacostia Naval Station, Washington DC	All	26 Mar 08
VTC with Iraq and Afghanistan	Colonel (Retired) Phil Torres and Ms. Judith Page O'Flaherty	16-18 Apr 08
Randolph Air Force Base, Texas	Colonel (Retired) Phil Torres	21-22 Apr 08
Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Arizona	Ms. Denise Balzano and Colonel (Retired) Phil Torres	29-30 Apr 08
Naval Air Station, Lemoore, California	CSM (Retired) Roberta Santiago and Ms. Kerry Lassus	20-21 May 08
Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort, South Carolina	CSM (Retired) Roberta Santiago and Ms. Page O'Flaherty	4-5 Jun 08
Naval Operational Center, Alameda, California	CSM (Retired) Roberta Santiago	8 Jun 08
Camp Humphreys, Kunsan Air Base, Yongsan Army Garrison, Korea	Ms. Denise Balzano, Colonel (Retired) Phil Torres, The Honorable Diana Denman, and Ms. Kerry Lassus	10-13 Jun 08
U.S. Coast Guard, Alameda, California	Dr. Mary Nelson and CSM (Retired) Roberta Santiago	24 Jun 08
Fort Campbell, Kentucky	Dr. Mary Nelson and Ms. Denise Balzano	10-11 Jul 08
Wendell H. Ford National Guard Training Center, Kentucky	Dr. Mary Nelson and Ms. Denise Balzano	12 Jul 08

APPENDIX D:
FOCUS GROUP PROTCOLS

Success Strategies for Female Service Members

Session Information

Location:

Date:

Time:

Facilitator:

Recorder:

# of Participants present for entire session:

# of Participants excused:

Reason(s) they were excused:

_____

_____

_____

[Scribe: highlight in bold type the appropriate focus group categories.]

The Focus Group Kick-Off: Key Points to Cover

- Distribute and gather mini-surveys (can occur before or after introductions)
- Welcome attendees
  - Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion today.
  - I am ___ (insert name)___, and I am a member of the Department of Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), and this is ___ (introduce partner), also a member of DACOWITS.
- Introduce/define DACOWITS
  - "Department of Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services"
  - DACOWITS is responsible for advising the Department of Defense on issues relating to integration of women in the Armed Forces and military family matters.

- o Every year, with input from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, DACOWITS selects specific topics on which to prepare a report for the Secretary of Defense.
  - o Current topic under examination:
    - Success strategies for female Service members
- Explain DACOWITS data collection process
  - o Committee members visit sites across the military.
  - o Hold focus groups with spouses/female Service members to tap their experiences/perspectives.
- Describe how the focus group session will work
  - o This session is intended for participants who are female Service members.
  - o We have scripted questions.
  - o The session will last approximately 90 minutes, and we will not take a formal break.
  - o Each of us has a role to play.
    - I serve as an impartial data gatherer and discussion regulator, with help from my co-moderator.
    - Our scribe serves as recorder—note she is taking no names.
    - You serve as subject matter experts.
- Emphasize that participation is voluntary
  - o Your participation in this session is voluntary.
  - o While we would like to hear from everyone, feel free to answer as many or as few questions as you prefer.
  - o If you would prefer to excuse yourself from the focus group at this time, you are free to do so.
  - o You may also excuse yourself at any point during the focus group if you so wish.
- Address confidentiality
  - o Information you share is confidential to the maximum extent permitted by law; in fact, my colleagues and I sign a confidentiality agreement pledging to safeguard the confidentiality of the information we gather in these sessions.
  - o No information will be attributed to you by name.
  - o You should likewise treat what you hear in this room with confidentiality.
- Explain ground rules
  - o Speak clearly and one at a time.
  - o There are no right or wrong answers.
  - o We want to hear the good and the bad.
  - o We respect and value differences of opinion.
  - o Please avoid sidebar conversations.
- Conduct introductions
  - o Our scribe, ___ (insert name)___, is with ICF International, a research firm hired to record these sessions.

Warm-Up/Introductions

We are here to hear your experiences relating to the strategies you use or have used to attain your career goals in the military. Before we get started, let's go around the room and please tell us:

- How many years you have served in ___(branch of Service)___
- Your career field
- A little bit about your current family status: Married or single? Any children?

Career Goals of Military Women: How Female Service Members Define Success in the Military

As I mentioned earlier, today we will be discussing success strategies. As we are each unique, we may have different ideas regarding what success means. So we will start by talking a little bit about how we each define success.

1. What do you think defines a successful military career for you?

2. *(Focus groups with senior personnel):* Have your career aspirations changed over the course of your career? If so, how?

Career Goal Attainment and Challenges of Female Service Members

Let's now discuss the extent of your success in attaining these career goals.

3. To what extent have you achieved, or are you on path to achieve, your current career goals?

4. What strategies have helped you attain success?

5. What challenges have you encountered, or are you currently encountering, as you strive to achieve these career goals?

6. What strategies have helped you overcome these challenges?

7. To what extent do you think these are the same strategies that work for men?

8. *(Focus groups with senior personnel):* How are the strategies that you currently use different from ones you employed early in your career? Do you think the strategies that worked for you early in your career are still relevant to junior military women today?

We are interested in learning more about the way in which the military develops female leadership.

9. What strategies are you aware of that are employed in the military to develop female leaders?

10. In what ways are these strategies gender-specific? That is, how do they relate to women in particular?

11. Which leadership development strategies employed by the military are particularly beneficial to women?

12. Tell me a little bit more about these strategies. How do they work?

13. How many of you have mentored a junior female Service member? (show of hands)

    a. To what extent have you received training from the military on how to be an effective mentor?

14. What kinds of character development information or training (e.g., ethics, honor code) have you received from the military?

Balancing work and personal life can be a challenge for many working professionals. We realize that this may be especially true for female Service members.

15. What kinds of information or training have you received from the military relating to work-life balance?

We are interested in understanding more about the career development programs available to those serving in the military.

16. What *women-to-women* success strategies have you been involved in or are you aware of to help you and other women reach your career goals?

    Prompt:
    - Women-to-women mentoring
    - Women-to-women networking
    - Women-to-women affinity groups
    - Other types of women-to-women success strategies

Wrap-Up

We have just a few final questions before we are done with our discussion.

17. What strategies would you advise if you were speaking to a group of young women (at a high school or college) about how to be successful in the military?

18. What more would you like to say regarding success strategies for female Service members that we have not yet covered?

19. Reinforce confidentiality.

This concludes our discussion. Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions and experiences with us. Your thoughts are valuable to our efforts to inform the Office of the Secretary of Defense on these matters, so that they can be more effectively addressed.

Once again, thank you very much.

DACOWITS 2008 FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Educational Opportunities for Military Children

Session Information

Location:

Date:

Time:

Facilitator:

Recorder:

# of Participants present for entire session:

# of Participants excused:

Reason(s) they were excused:

_____

_____

_____

[Scribe: highlight in bold type the appropriate focus group categories.]

The Focus Group Kick-Off: Key Points to Cover

- Distribute and gather mini-surveys (can occur before or after introductions)
- Welcome attendees
  - Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion today.
  - I am ___ (insert name)___, and I am a member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, and this is ___ (introduce partner)___, also a member of DACOWITS.
- Introduce/define DACOWITS
  - "Department of Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services"
  - DACOWITS is responsible for advising the Department of Defense on issues relating to integration of women in the Armed Forces and military family matters.
  - Every year, with input from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, DACOWITS selects specific topics on which to prepare a report for the Secretary of Defense.
  - Current topic under examination:
    - Educational opportunities for military children
- Explain DACOWITS data collection process
  - Committee members visit sites across the military.
  - Hold focus groups with spouses/female Service members to tap their experiences/perspectives.

- Describe how the focus group session will work
  - This session is intended for participants who are female Service members with children and couples with children.
  - We have scripted questions.
  - The session will last approximately 90 minutes, and we will not take a formal break.
  - Each of us has a role to play.
    - I serve as an impartial data gatherer and discussion regulator, with help from my co-moderator.
    - Our scribe serves as recorder—note she is taking no names.
    - You serve as subject matter experts.
- Emphasize that participation is voluntary
  - Your participation in this session is voluntary.
  - While we would like to hear from everyone, feel free to answer as many or as few questions as you prefer.
  - If you would prefer to excuse yourself from the focus group at this time, you are free to do so.
  - You may also excuse yourself at any point during the focus group if you so wish.
- Address confidentiality
  - Information you share is confidential to the maximum extent permitted by law; in fact, my colleagues and I sign a confidentiality agreement pledging to safeguard the confidentiality of the information we gather in these sessions.
  - No information will be attributed to you by name.
  - You should likewise treat what you hear in this room with confidentiality.
- Explain ground rules
  - Speak clearly and one at a time.
  - There are no right or wrong answers.
  - We want to hear the good and the bad.
  - We respect and value differences of opinion.
  - Please avoid sidebar conversations.
- Conduct introductions
  - Our scribe, ___ (insert name)___, is with ICF International, a research firm hired to record these sessions.

Warm-Up/Introductions

We are here to hear your experiences relating to your children's education. Before we get started, let's go around the room and please tell us:

- How many years you/your spouse have been in the military
- How many children you have and what level/types of schools they attend
- Whether you are involved in your children's schools
- How you came to be a participant in this focus group

Options for Obtaining Quality Education for Your Children

As I mentioned earlier, today we will be discussing the educational opportunities for your school-aged children. We will start by talking about the options currently available to your family.

1.   When you received PCS orders to this location and faced a new educational environment, what schooling options did you have for your school-aged children?

2.   Are you satisfied with your children's education opportunities? (show of hands)

      a.   Why or why not?

We are interested in understanding the process that you go through when evaluating the quality of a school or school system when you move to a new location.

3.   What factors do you consider when you are evaluating the quality of a school or school system?

      Prompt: For example, size, distance from home, availability of school bus, test scores, characteristics of the population served, cost, etc.

4.   Where do you look to get information on these factors?

      a.   Is this information readily available and easily accessible?

5.   Once you have gathered any relevant information on the school or school system, how do you determine whether the school is acceptable? What is your yardstick?

6.   Have you ever felt restricted from sending your child to your school of choice? If so, please talk a little about that.

We understand that sometimes parents desire alternative schooling options for their children. We would like to hear your thoughts on alternative schooling options.

7.   How many of you would be interested in using educational vouchers if they were offered to you? (show of hands)

8.   In what ways do you think that educational vouchers would or would not help your family obtain quality education for your children?

9.   Would you like to have the option to choose which school(s) your children attend within a certain school district?

10.   How many of you currently home-school your children? (show of hands)

11.   *Ask of everyone:* How many of you would find it beneficial if the military were to provide home-schooling support? (show of hands)

        iii. Can you provide some examples of the kind of home-schooling support that you would find helpful?

12.   In what ways are you currently supplementing your children's education?

Prompt: (only if necessary)
- After school or weekend tutoring
- Music lessons

13.   What other types of schooling options do you think would help you to obtain the quality education you seek for your children?

The Relationship Between Where You Live and Your Children's Education

Let's shift gears a little bit and discuss the ways in which housing and schooling decisions are related.

14.   For those of you who live in military housing, how satisfied are you with the education options available to your school-aged children?

15.   To what extent would a school's reputation influence your decision to accept military housing?

16.   To what degree have your children's schooling options impacted your family's decisions regarding: (ask each separately)

a. Accepting orders
b. Moving with or without your family
c. Deciding where to live

Deployment Support in the Schools

Most children experience the deployment, if not multiple deployments, of their military parent(s). We'd now like you to think about your children's deployment-related needs.

17.   Has extended or block leave been an issue with your children's school(s)? (Moderators: Verify what type of school they are referring to.)

18.   What deployment-related programs do the schools provide? (Moderators: Verify what type of school they are referring to.)

19.   What additional deployment-related programming for children and youth is offered through the military?

a. Do you feel that these programs are adequate to meet your family's needs? If not, in what ways could they be improved?

20.	*(Focus groups with Reserve/Guard Service members):* What kinds of school-related support in response to the stresses of deployment are available for Guard and Reserve families?

    a.	Do you feel that the deployment support that schools provide Guard and Reserve families (if any) is adequate?

    b.	If not, in what ways could it be improved?

Transition and Schooling

We'd now like you to think about your child's education during times of transition (PCS).

21.	What are one or two specific examples of when a school was (or was not) willing to work with you to find solutions to transition-related difficulties?

22.	When transitioning, have you ever had any problems transferring into special programs such as remedial, gifted, sports, music, etc.?

23.	What kind of education-related support or services expressly for military or mobile children is presently provided?

24.	What additional education opportunities or programs would you like to see provided for your family during times of transition?

Wrap-Up

We have just a few final questions before we are done with our discussion.

25.	To what extent does the quality of educational opportunities available to your child(ren) influence your decision to stay in the military?

26.	What more would you like to say regarding the educational opportunities for your school-aged children that we have not yet covered?

27.	 Reinforce confidentiality.

This concludes our discussion. Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions and experiences with us. Your thoughts are valuable to our efforts to inform the Office of the Secretary of Defense on these matters, so that they can be more effectively addressed.

Once again, thank you very much.

APPENDIX E:
MINI-SURVEYS

APPENDIX E-1:
DACOWITS 2008 MINI-SURVEY

2008 DACOWITS Success Strategies for Female Service Members Mini-Survey

1. What is your branch of Service?
- ○ Air Force
- ○ Army
- ○ Coast Guard
- ○ Marine Corps
- ○ Navy
- ○ Navy Reserve
- ○ Army Reserve
- ○ Air Force Reserve
- ○ Army National Guard
- ○ Air Guard
- ○ Marine Corps Reserve

2. How long, in total, have you served in the military? PLEASE ROUND TO THE NEAREST YEAR.
_____ **Years**

3. In the past 3 years, about how much time in total have you spent deployed?
- ○ Does not apply; I have not been deployed in the past three years
- ○ Up to six months
- ○ More than six months, to one year
- ○ More than one year, to two years
- ○ More than two years

4. What is your marital status?
- ○ Single, with no significant other
- ○ Single, but with a significant other (e.g., girlfriend/boyfriend, fiancé)
- ○ Married
- ○ Divorced or legally separated
- ○ Widowed

5. How many dependent children do you have in the following age groups? MARK ALL THAT APPLY.

_____ Infant/Toddler (birth to 2 years)
_____ Pre-K - Kindergarten (3 - 5 years)
_____ Elementary (6 - 10 years)
_____ Middle School (11 - 13 years)
_____ High School (14 - 17 years)
_____ Post-Secondary (18 or over)

6. What is the highest degree or level of education that you have completed? MARK ONE.
- ○ Some high school or less, but no diploma, certificate, or GED
- ○ High school diploma or GED
- ○ Some college, but no degree
- ○ Associate degree
- ○ Bachelor's degree
- ○ Master's degree
- ○ Doctorate or professional degree, e.g. MD, DDS, or JD

7. While serving in the military, have you ever been a mentor?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

8. While serving in the military, have you had any mentors?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

9. If yes, how many mentors have you had while serving in the military? MARK ONE.
_____ Mentors
- ○ **Check here if you have had <u>no</u> mentors**

10. Please indicate the gender and type of each mentor that you have had while serving in the military, beginning with your current or most recent mentor.

○ **Check here if you have had <u>no</u> mentors**

	Gender		Type		
	M	F	Chain of command	Non-chain of command	Civilian
Mentor 1 (Current/most recent mentor)	○	○	○	○	○
Mentor 2	○	○	○	○	○
Mentor 3	○	○	○	○	○
Mentor 4	○	○	○	○	○
Mentor 5	○	○	○	○	○
Mentor 6	○	○	○	○	○

11. While serving in the military, have you ever received any training and/or information on how to be a mentor?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

12. While serving in the military, have you ever received any training and/or information relating to work-life balance?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

13. While serving in the military, have you ever received any training and/or information relating to character development?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

14. Please check the military leadership schooling that you have attended. MARK ALL THAT APPLY.
- ○ Initial Leadership School
- ○ Intermediate Leadership School
- ○ Senior Leadership School

15. Please check the leadership position(s) for which you have been selected. MARK ALL THAT APPLY.
- ○ Junior Leadership Position
- ○ Intermediate Leadership Position
- ○ Senior Leadership Position

16. What is your pay grade?
- ○ E1
- ○ E2
- ○ E3
- ○ E4
- ○ E5
- ○ E6
- ○ E7
- ○ E8
- ○ E9
- ○ WO1
- ○ CW2
- ○ CW3
- ○ CW4
- ○ CW5
- ○ O1
- ○ O2
- ○ O3
- ○ O4
- ○ O5

2008 DACOWITS Education Opportunities for Military Children Mini-Survey

1. **Please check which status best describes you:**
   ○ Service member
   ○ Spouse
   ○ Service member married to another Service member
   ○ Other (Please specify):_____

2. **With whom are you attending this focus group?**
   ○ I am attending by myself
   ○ I am attending with my spouse

3. **What is your (your spouse's) branch of Service?**
   ○ Air Force   ⬤ Army Reserve
   ○ Army   ⬤ Air Force Reserve
   ○ Coast Guard   ⬤ Army National Guard
   ○ Marine Corps   ⬤ Air Guard
   ○ Navy   ⬤ Marine Corps Reserve
   ○ Navy Reserve

4. **What is *your* gender?**
   ○ Female
   ○ Male

5. **What is the highest degree or level of education that *you* have completed? MARK ONE.**
   ○ Some high school or less, but no diploma, certificate, or GED
   ○ High school diploma or GED
   ○ Some College, but no degree
   ○ Associate degree
   ○ Bachelor's degree
   ○ Master's degree
   ○ Doctorate or professional degree, e.g. MD, DDS, or JD

6. **How many times has your family PCSed with the military?**
   ○ One time (Moving here was my first military move)
   ○ Two times
   ○ Three or four times
   ○ Five or six times
   ○ Seven times or more

7. **How long have you been at this location (this installation or community)?**
   ○ Less than one year
   ○ At least one year but less than two
   ○ At least two years but less than three
   ○ Three years or more

8. **In which type of housing do you currently live?**
   ○ Government housing (on base)
   ○ Government housing (off base)
   ○ Privatized housing (on base)
   ○ Privatized housing (off base)
   ○ Off base (own)
   ○ Off base (rent)
   ○ Other (Please specify):_____

9. **If there was a one-stop educational resource for transitioning military children, how useful do you think this would be for your family?**
   ○ Very useful
   ○ Useful
   ○ Neither useful nor not useful
   ○ Not useful
   ○ Not at all useful

10. **Please indicate the type of school(s) that your child(ren) currently attend in each level by checking the appropriate box(es) in the grid below.** (use one check mark (✔) per child, so the count of all of the check marks equals your number of school-aged children.)

	Public	DoDDS	Parochial	Other Private	Other (Please specify): _____
Pre-K - Kindergarten (3 - 5 years)					
Elementary (6 - 10 years)					
Middle School (11 - 13 years)					
High School (14 - 17 years)					

11. **Would you consider home schooling your children if the military were to provide home schooling support?**
    ○ Yes
    ○ No

12. **For each of the below levels of schooling in which you have dependent children currently enrolled, please indicate your level of satisfaction with the quality of education that your children are receiving.**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral/ Not sure	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	Does not apply – I have no children in this level of school
Pre-K - Kindergarten (3 - 5 years)						
Elementary (6 - 10 years)						
Middle School (11 - 13 years)						
High School (14 - 17 years)						

13. **What is your (your spouse's) pay grade?**

   ⬤ E1   ⬤ E6   ⬤ WO1   ⬤ O1
   ⬤ E2   ⬤ E7   ⬤ CW2   ⬤ O2
   ⬤ E3   ⬤ E8   ⬤ CW3   ⬤ O3
   ⬤ E4   ⬤ E9   ⬤ CW4   ⬤ O4
   ⬤ E5   ⬤ CW5   ⬤ O5

APPENDIX F:
MINI-SURVEY RESULTS

APPENDIX F-1:
MINI-SURVEY RESULTS:

Success Strategies for Female Service Members

Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants (N=350)*		
Variable/Response	**N**	**Percent**
Gender:		
Female	350	100%
Total	**350**	**100%**
Service:		
Army	110	31%
Air Force	86	25%
Marine Corps	52	15%
Navy	34	10%
Army National Guard	27	8%
Coast Guard	20	6%
Navy Reserve	12	3%
Army Reserve	5	1%
Marine Corps Reserve	4	1%
Total	**350**	**100%**
Pay Grade:		
E1	2	1%
E2	16	5%
E3	37	11%
E4	35	10%
E5	55	16%
E6	29	8%
E7	36	10%
E8	17	5%
E9	6	2%
CW2	3	1%
CW3	2	1%
CW4	1	0.3%
O1	13	4%
O2	13	4%
O3	48	14%
O4	18	5%
O5	13	4%
O6	5	1%
Total	**349**	**100%**

Marital Status:		
Single, with no significant other	71	20%
Single, but with significant other (e.g., girl/boyfriend,	72	21%
Married	159	45%
Divorced or legally separated	47	13%
Widowed	1	0.3%
Total	**350**	**100%**
Highest Degree or Level of Education Completed:		
High school diploma or GED	39	11%
Some college, but no degree	114	33%
Associate's degree	54	16%
Bachelor's degree	76	22%
Master's degree	57	16%
Doctorate or professional degree (e.g., MD, DDS, JD)	8	2%
Total	**348**	**100%**
Respondents with Children:		
Yes	165	47%
No	185	53%
Total	**350**	**100%**
Number of Children in Family (of respondents with children):		
1	75	45%
2	58	35%
3 or more	32	19%
Total	**165**	**100%**
Level of Schooling of Children:**		
Infant/toddler (birth to 2 years)	54	21%
Pre-K–Kindergarten (3-5 years)	55	21%
Elementary school (6-10 years)	54	21%
Middle school (11-13 years)	35	14%
High school (14-17 years)	29	11%
Postsecondary (18 years or more)	33	13%
Total	**260**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Some participants may have more than one child in each school type.

Military Service and Deployment History*			
Variable/Response		N	Percent
Total Years Serving in the Military (rounded to the nearest year)	Under 3 years	55	16%
	3-5 years	77	22%
	6-10 years	78	22%
	11-15 years	47	13%
	16-20 years	59	17%
	More than 20 years	34	10%
	Total	**350**	**100%**
Time Spent Deployed (in past 3 years)	Does not apply; have not been deployed in past 3 years	187	53%
	Up to 6 months	39	11%
	More than 6 months, to 1 year	59	17%
	More than 1 year, to 2 years	52	15%
	More than 2 years	13	4%
	Total	**350**	**100%**

* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

While serving in the military, have you ever been a mentor?*		
Response	N	Percent
Yes	223	64%
No	124	36%
Total	**347**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

While serving in the military, have you ever had a mentor?*		
Response	N	Percent
Yes	280	80%
No	70	20%
Total	**350**	**100%**

* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

If yes, how many mentors have you had while serving in the military?*		
Response	N	Percent
One mentor	68	24%
Two mentors	66	23%
Three mentors	71	25%
Four or more mentors	78	28%
Total	**283**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Please indicate the gender of each mentor(s) that you have had while serving in the military.*		
Response	**N**	**Percent**
Only male mentor(s)	92	33%
Only female mentor(s)	57	20%
Mentors have been male and female	132	47%
Total	**281**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Please indicate the type of each mentor that you have had while serving in the military.*		
Response	**N**	**Percent**
Only chain-of-command mentor(s)	104	38%
Only non-chain-of-command mentor(s)	42	15%
Only civilian mentor(s)	4	1%
Different types of mentors (e.g., chain of command, non-chain of command, civilian)	126	46%
Total	**276**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

While serving in the military, have you ever received any training and/or information on how to be a mentor? *		
Response	**N**	**Percent**
Yes	152	43%
No	198	57%
Total	**350**	**100%**

* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

While serving in the military, have you ever received any training and/or information relating to work-life balance?*		
Response	**N**	**Percent**
Yes	149	43%
No	194	57%
Total	**343**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

While serving in the military, have you ever received any training and/or information relating to character development?*		
Response	**N**	**Percent**
Yes	196	57%
No	150	43%
Total	**346**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Please check the military leadership schooling that you have attended (mark all that apply).*		
Response	**N**	**Percent of Respondents**
Initial Leadership School	192	55%
Intermediate Leadership School	114	33%
Senior Leadership School	51	15%
Total	**357**	**-**

* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to the possibility of selecting multiple responses and rounding.

Please check the leadership position(s) for which you have been selected |(mark all that apply).*		
Response	**N**	**Percent of Respondents**
Junior Leadership Position	157	45%
Intermediate Leadership Position	147	42%
Senior Leadership Position	74	21%
Total	**378**	**-**

* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to the possibility of selecting multiple responses and rounding.

Educational Opportunities for Military Children

Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants*, **		
Variable/Response	**N**	**Percent**
Gender		
Female	98	79%
Male	26	21%
Total	**124**	**100%**
Status:		
Service member	92	74%
Service member married to another Service member	22	18%
Civilian spouse	10	8%
Total	**124**	**100%**
Branch of Service Member:		
Navy	29	25%
Army	28	24%
Air Force	27	23%
Marine Corps	19	16%
Coast Guard	9	8%
Navy Reserve	3	3%
Air Force Reserve	1	1%
Army Reserve	1	1%
Total	**117**	**100%**
Pay Grade of Service Member:		
E4	7	7%
E5	17	16%
E6	22	21%
E7	16	15%
E8	8	8%
E9	4	4%
WO1	1	1%
CW3	1	1%
CW4	2	2%
O1	1	1%
O2	2	2%
O3	5	5%
O4	6	6%
O5	14	13%
O6	1	1%
Total	**107**	**100%***

Highest Degree or Level of Education Completed:		
High school diploma or GED	7	6%
Some college, but no degree	47	38%
Associate's degree	12	10%
Bachelor's degree	30	24%
Master's degree	23	19%
Doctorate or professional degree (e.g., MD, DDS, JD)	5	4%
Total	**124**	**100%**
Focus Group Attendance:		
Alone	97	79%
With spouse (whether military or civilian)	26	21%
Total	**123**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**19 participants did not indicate having school-aged children and were therefore excluded from the mini-survey data, resulting in 124 mini-survey respondents. Their comments relating to the education of school-aged children were included in the presentation of focus group findings, however, where appropriate.

Military Relocation History and Current Housing of Focus Group Participants*			
Variable/Response		**N**	**Percent**
Number of Times Family Has PCSed with the Military	One time (Moving here was my first military move)	10	8%
	Two times	22	18%
	Three or four times	38	32%
	Five or six times	30	25%
	Seven times or more	20	17%
	Total	**120**	**100%**
Length of Time at Current Location	Less than 1 year	26	21%
	At least 1 year but less than 2	22	18%
	At least 2 years but less than 3	27	22%
	3 years or more	49	40%
	Total	**124**	**100%**
Type of Current Housing	Government housing (on base)	24	19%
	Government housing (off base)	3	2%
	Privatized housing (on base)	10	8%
	Privatized housing (off base)	4	3%
	Off base (own)	51	41%
	Off base (rent)	31	25%
	Other	1	1%
	Total	**124**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

If there was a one-stop educational resource for transitioning military children, how useful do you think this would be for your family?*		
Rating	**N**	**Percent**
Very useful	81	66%
Useful	33	27%
Neither useful nor not useful	8	7%
Not useful	1	1%
Total	**123**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Number of School-Aged Children in Family*		
Response	**N**	**Percent**
One child	58	47%
Two children	40	32%
Three or more children	26	21%
Total	**124**	**100%**

* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
**Data in table were drawn from the mini-survey question that asked, "Please indicate the type of school(s) that your child(ren) currently attend in each level by checking the appropriate box(es) in the grid below. (Use one check mark [✓] per child, so the count of all of the check marks equals your number of school-aged children.)"

Please indicate the type of school(s) that your child(ren) currently attend in each level. *			
Level/Response		**N**	**Percent** (of those with children in each age group)
Pre-K–Kindergarten (3-5 years)	Public	22	39%
	DoDDS	20	35%
	Parochial	6	11%
	Other private	7	12%
	Other	6	11%
	Total	**61**	**-**
Elementary School (6-10 years)	Public	49	70%
	DoDDS	13	19%
	Parochial	3	4%
	Other private	1	1%
	Other	4	6%
	Total	**70**	**-**
Middle School (11-13 years)	Public	31	82%
	DoDDS	4	11%
	Parochial	0	0%
	Other private	0	0%
	Other	3	0%
	Total	**38**	**-**

Please indicate the type of school(s) that your child(ren) currently attend in each level. * (cont.)			
Level/Response		**N**	**Percent** (of those with children in each age group)
High School (14-17 years)	Public	18	78%
	DoDDS	3	13%
	Parochial	0	0%
	Other private	1	4%
	Other	2	9%
	Total	**24**	**-**

* Some participants may have more than one child in each school type and age range category. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to multiple responses and rounding.

Type of school(s) that your family is using (across age groups)*		
Response	**N**	**Percent**
Public	120	97%
DoDDS	40	32%
Parochial	9	7%
Other private	9	7%
Other	15	12%
Total	**193**	**-**

* Some participants may have more than one child in each school type. Percentages do not sum to 100% due to multiple responses and rounding.
**The data in this table are drawn from that collected from the mini-survey question asking, "Please indicate the type of school(s) that your child(ren) currently attend in each level by checking the appropriate box(es) in the grid below. (Use one check mark [✓] per child, so the count of all of the check marks equals your number of school-aged children.)"

Would you consider home-schooling your children if the military were to provide home-schooling support?*		
Response	**N**	**Percent**
Yes	32	26%
No	89	72%
Maybe/don't know	2	2%
Total	**123**	**100%**

* Not every participant answered each question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

	For each of the below levels of schooling in which you have dependent children currently enrolled, please indicate your level of satisfaction with the quality of education that your children are receiving.*		
Level/Rating		**N**	**Percent**
Pre-K-Kindergarten (3-5 years)	Very satisfied	21	40%
	Satisfied	18	34%
	Neutral/not sure	4	8%
	Unsatisfied	8	15%
	Very unsatisfied	2	4%
	Total	**53**	**100%**
Elementary (6-10 years)	Very satisfied	22	34%
	Satisfied	30	46%
	Neutral/not sure	6	9%
	Unsatisfied	7	11%
	Very unsatisfied	0	0%
	Total	**65**	**100%**
Middle School (11-13 years)	Very satisfied	9	25%
	Satisfied	14	39%
	Neutral/not sure	3	8%
	Unsatisfied	6	17%
	Very unsatisfied	4	11%
	Total	**36**	**100%**
High School (14-17 years)	Very satisfied	6	29%
	Satisfied	10	48%
	Neutral/not sure	2	10%
	Unsatisfied	2	10%
	Very unsatisfied	1	5%
	Total	**21**	**100%**

* Some participants may have more than one child in each school type and age range category. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

APPENDIX G:
BRIEFINGS PRESENTED TO DACOWITS

APPENDIX G:
BRIEFINGS PRESENTED TO DACOWITS DURING FY08 BUSINESS MEETINGS

National Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) -- Presented by Charles Feldmayer

Educational Partnerships Briefing – Presented by Taffy Corrigan, Director, Educational Partnerships Directorate, DoDEA

National Military Family Association (NMFA): Education for Military Children – Presented by Candace Wheeler, Deputy Director, Government Relations

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) Highlights of Accomplishments – Presented by Dee Steele

Military Spouse Education, Training, and Careers – Presented by the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP)

Navy's "Quality of Life" Task Force Report – Presented by Lt. Stephanie Miller and Lt. Hope Brill, Office of Women's Policy

Army Research Institute Sample Survey of Military Personnel 2007: Women in the Army – Presented by Dr. Morris Peterson, Chief, Army Personnel Survey Office

Marine Corps Mentoring Program – Presented by Lt. Col. Joseph Shusko, Director, Marine Corps Martial Arts Program

Highlights from Civilian Literature Review – Presented by Amy Falcone, ICF International

Status of Forces (SOF) Survey of Active Duty Members – Presented by Dr. Rachel Lipari, Team Lead, Human Relations Surveys, Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)

Breaking Through the Brass Ceiling: Elite Military Women's Strategies for Success – Presented by Dr. Darlene Iskra, Deputy Director, LEAD Program

Policy Update on Civilian Women in the Defense Department – Presented by Charmane Collins, Equal Employment Manager, Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity

Army School Liaison Transition Support, Communities Working to Improve Student Transitions – Presented by Van Chaney and P.K. Tomlinson, Installation Service Division, Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management

Navy Child & Youth Programs – Presented by Madie McAdoo, Deputy Program Manager, Child and Youth Programs, Department of the Navy

Marine Corps Education Initiatives – Presented by Terri Ann Nelson, Program Specialists, Children, Youth & Teen Programs, Personal Family Readiness Division

Military Child Education in the Air Force – Presented by Lorraine Neuser, Deputy Chief, Airmen and Family Readiness Policy

Coast Guard Child Education Initiative Opportunities – Presented by Marta Denchfield, Dependent Care Program Manager

Charter School Opportunities – Presented by Dean Kern, Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement

Improving American Education with School Choice – Presented by Jeanie Allen, Public Relations and Government Affairs, Center for Education and Reform

Online Learning: Around the Country and Around the World – Presented by Susan Patrick, President and CEO, North American Council for Online Learning

APPENDIX H:
ACRONYMS USED IN REPORT
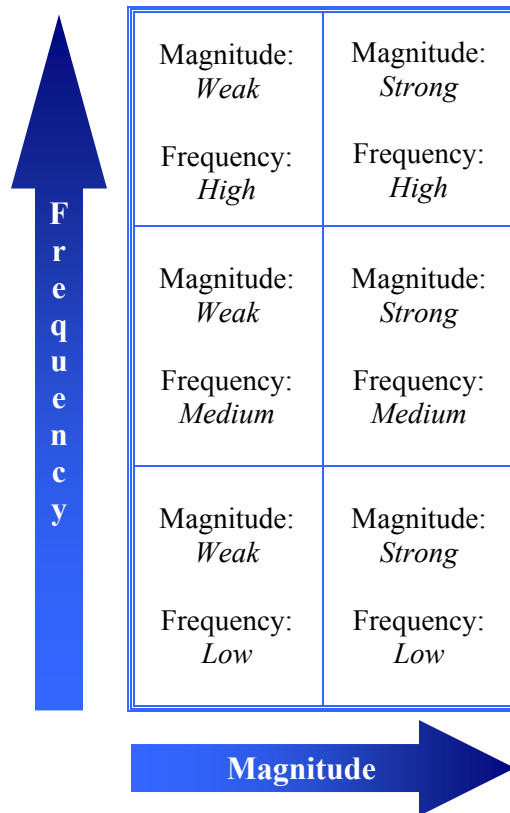
APPENDIX H:
ACRONYMS USED IN REPORT

AD	Active Duty
ADHD	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
BRAC/GDPR	Base Realignment and Closure/Global Defense Posture Realignment
CBT	computer-based training
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
CONUS	Continental United States
DACOWITS	Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services
DCO	Direct Commission Officer
DDESS	Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools
DI	Drill Instructor
DMDC	Defense Manpower Data Center
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDDS	Department of Defense Dependent Schools
DoDEA	Department of Defense Education Activity
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EPB	Educational Partnership Branch
ESL	English as a Second Language
FTE	full-time equivalent
GMT	General Mandated Training
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LEA	Local Education Activity
MCEC	Military Child Education Coalition
MISA	Military Impacted Schools Association
MOAA	Military Officers Association of America
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NAFIS	National Association for Federally Impacted Schools
NCO	Noncommissioned Officer
NKO	Navy Knowledge Online
NMFA	National Military Family Association
OCD	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
OCS	Officer Candidate School
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
OIC	Officer-in-Charge
OMK	Operation: Military Kids
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
PFC	Private First Class

PHA	Periodic Health Assessment
PME	Professional Military Education
PTO	Parent-Teacher Organization
PTSO	Parent-Teacher-Student Organization
RC	Reserve Component
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SETS	(Army) Secondary Education Transition Study
SLO	School Liaison Officer
SOAR	Student Online Achievement Resources
SOF	Status of Forces (Survey)
SSMP	Sample Survey of Military Personnel
TAITC	Total Army Instructor Training Course
USAFE	U.S. Air Forces in Europe
VTC	video teleconference
WLC	Warrior Leader Course
WOW	Women of Worship

APPENDIX I:
FINDING SALIENCE GRID

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FINDING SALIENCE GRID

The purpose of the sample-wide analysis is to determine the most salient comments throughout all the focus group sessions. For this research, salience is determined by a combination of two factors—the proportion of focus group sessions in which the comment is made (i.e., frequency) and the strength of the comment within those sessions (i.e., magnitude).

	Magnitude: *Weak* Frequency: *High*	Magnitude: *Strong* Frequency: *High*
	Magnitude: *Weak* Frequency: *Medium*	Magnitude: *Strong* Frequency: *Medium*
	Magnitude: *Weak* Frequency: *Low*	Magnitude: *Strong* Frequency: *Low*

Frequency (vertical axis)

Magnitude (horizontal axis)

APPENDIX J:
WEBSITES OFFERING
PCS INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE
FOR MILITARY FAMILIES WITH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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WEBSITES OFFERING
PCS INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE
FOR MILITARY FAMILIES WITH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Military One Source. An online source for information for Service members and families, Military One Source provides online articles, worksheets, and suggested reading lists; educational materials: booklets, CDs and audiotapes; monthly newsletters; links to additional information and much more.	www.militaryonesource.com
Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA). MISA is a national organization of school superintendents. Their mission is to serve school districts with a high concentration of military children. The organization works on funding (Impact Aid), legislation, partnerships, and smooth transitions for military families. MISA conducts workshops for educators and provides resources on connectedness, building resilience, military life, transition, and deployment.	www.militaryimpactedschoolsassociation.org
Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). MCEC's work is focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, deployment, and transition. MCEC conducts workshops for educators, provides resources on school transition support and deployment for Active and Reserve Component military.	www.militarychild.org
National Association for Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS). NAFIS is a national organization that works on funding for the education of federally connected children. NAFIS works with school districts and organizations that represent military children (MISA), children residing on Indian Lands (NIISA), children residing in low-rent housing (Low Lot), and federal lands (Section 8002).	http://joomla.nafisdc.org
USA4Military Families. The USA4Military Families initiative seeks to engage and educate state policymakers, nonprofit associations, concerned business interests, and other state leaders about the military.	www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil
United States Army. The Army has made an unwavering commitment to ensure transition challenges for their children are minimized. There are two general websites that provide an array of information. In addition, each Army garrison has a website linked to www.army.mil with a section specifically designated for Child & Youth School Liaison Services and local community education information.	www.armymwr.com/portal/family/ childandyouth www.army.mil
United States Air Force. The Air Force is committed to ensuring Airmen and their families have access to helpful information and community-related services. The official community website of the United States Air Force provides a 24/7 resource for Airmen and their families with helpful military-related support information that affects daily life.	https://www.afcommunity.af.mil www.afcrossroads.com

APPENDIX K:
WEBSITES WITH GENERAL REFERENCES FOR EDUCATION GRADES K-12

APPENDIX K:
WEBSITES WITH GENERAL REFERENCES FOR EDUCATION GRADES K-12

U.S. Department of Education	www.ed.gov
National Center for Education Statistics	www.nces.ed.gov
Center on Education Policy	www.cep-dc.org
Public School Review	www.publicschoolreview.com
International Baccalaureate Organization	www.ibo.org
Association for Effective Schools	www.mes.org
Military Child Education Coalition Resource Center – School Quest	www.schoolquest.org
Standard & Poor's School Matters	www.schoolmatters.com
GreatSchools	www.greatschools.net

APPENDIX L:
WEBSITES OFFERING DEPLOYMENT-RELATED INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE
FOR MILITARY FAMILIES WITH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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WEBSITES OFFERING DEPLOYMENT-RELATED INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE
FOR MILITARY FAMILIES WITH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Educational Partnership Branch. This website focuses on providing information that directly relates to the work of educators and administrators in military-connected school systems. The site provides a wealth of information about resources available for schools located around the country that serve military families.	www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu
Military Homefront. This Defense Department online resource provides reliable quality-of-life information for the military community.	www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil
Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress. The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress conducts research, education, consultation, and training on preparing for and responding to the psychological effects and health consequences of traumatic events. These events include natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, floods, tsunamis) and human-made disasters (e.g., motor vehicle and plane crashes, war, terrorism).	www.centerforthestudyoftraumaticstress.org
Operation: Military Kids (OMK). OMK is the Army's collaborative effort with America's communities to support the children and youth impacted by deployment. This initiative was officially launched in April 2005.	www.operationmilitarykids.org
USA4Military Families. The USA4Military Families initiative seeks to engage and educate state policymakers, nonprofit associations, concerned business interests, and other state leaders about the military.	www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil
Talk, Listen, Connect by Sesame Street. Sesame Workshop presents this bilingual educational outreach initiative designed for military families and their young children to share on deployments, homecomings, and changes.	www.sesameworkshop.org
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Scholarship Fund. MOAA will give out $9.1 million in loans and grants for the 2008/2009 year. Around 1,650 students are benefitting from the program this calendar year. It is open to any child of a member of the uniformed Services.	http://moaa.org/about_scholarship_aboutfund/index.htm
Student Online Achievement Resources (SOAR). The Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA), through a grant from DoDEA, offers a new program to help ease the transition process for military families. Available for children in grades 3-12, SOAR is an Internet-based program designed to help students with math, reading, and language arts. By taking the state learning standards test online, children can identify their strengths and areas for improvement and receive tutorial help. Once their child is enrolled in the program, parents can monitor progress from anywhere in the world. In addition, parents are provided with resource materials to help their child in areas where they may need additional help.	www.soarathome.org