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PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY
WOMEN AND MEN IN THE NEW NAVY:
LIFE SINCE TAILHOOK

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE HUMANITIES FACULTY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
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NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

MARCH 2001

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The dissertation of Robert H. Gooch entitled "Women and Men in the New Navy: Life Since Tailhook" submitted to the Ph.D. Department in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Salve Regina University has been read and approved by the committee:

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ABSTRACT

WOMEN AND MEN IN THE NEW NAVY: LIFE SINCE TAILHOOK

This study shows the extent to which issues and problems concerning gender integration in the U.S. Navy evolved during the last decade of the 20th century. Specifically, it covers the period from 1991 to 2000, when the Navy attempted to integrate women more completely into the Navy's operating forces more than at any other time in its history.

Policies promulgated by the Department of the Navy (1991-2001) attempted to mandate equality and foster successful collaboration between men and women, while retaining the goal of good order and discipline in a previously all-male environment. Nevertheless, sexual harassment, fraternization, adultery, and hazing were problems that the United States Navy faced.

Navy men and Navy women are similar in their desire for satisfying work, reasonable compensation, excitement or adventure, and a chance at a fulfilling personal life. But fundamental differences between the genders are found in perceptions, behavior, and expectations about policies among persons in the Navy.

The U. S. Navy has generally succeeded in achieving equality of opportunity for women. Naval workplaces are by and large free today of gender issues such as sexual harassment, fraternization, and romance that harm good order, discipline, and the mission of the Navy's ships and stations. This success may serve as a guide to civilian organizations struggling with similar problems.

The primary method for uncovering and examining the issues studied here was an extensive literature review. To determine "how men and women were doing in the decade following Tailhook," surveys were distributed to U.S. Naval personnel of all ranks, rates, genders, and ages.

The principal findings of this dissertation are (1) Gender Integration is successful; (2) Navy men and women are Navy professionals first, and representatives of their gender, second; (3) problems of sexual attraction, and losses due to pregnancy and marriage still exist; (4) Policies governing the genders are sound but inconsistently applied.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGES.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
GLOSSARY.....	vii

Chapter

1.	INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW.....	1
	Value, importance, and relation to key ideas	
	Methodology	
	Role of the Humanities and Technology	
	Major theses/problems	
	Hypotheses	
	Contribution to important scholarship	
	Women, technology, and the Humanities	
	The Feminist Viewpoint	
	Conclusion: Towards Full Integration and Full Equality	
	Women and the technique of leadership and management	
	Overview of Findings	
2.	REVIEW/EVALUATION OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE.....	38
3.	FRAMING THE QUESTIONS.....	82
	Survey I June 1997	

Survey II June 1998
Key Issues Survey, February 2000

4.	FINAL SURVEY AND RESULTS.....	109
5.	CONCLUSION.....	276

Appendix

1.	A chronological history of women in the U.S. Navy.....	287
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	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	294
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GLOSSARY

Billets:	Navy Job Assignments.
Deployed:	At sea or in the field on an extended mission.
Deployments:	Cruises, usually lasting upwards of three months.
Detailers:	Those persons who assign individuals to jobs at ships or stations.
Detailing:	Assignment of individuals to jobs at ships or stations.
Enlisted:	Non-officers; sailors who serve for a specific period of time.
Flag Rank:	Admirals, the highest ranking officers in the U. S. Navy.
Grades:	All rates and ranks from seaman to fleet admiral.
Line:	Officers in line to command, as opposed to Staff.
Ranks:	Officer hierarchical positions, such as “captain.”
Rates:	Enlisted hierarchical positions, such as “seaman.”
Ratings:	Navy enlisted job classifications.
Surface:	A warfare specialty occurring on the Navy’s surface ships, as opposed to Submarine and Air naval communities.
Wardroom:	The shipboard space (room) where officers take their meals, meet, and relax.
Watchstander:	A person assigned to a specific duty, usually four hours, such as an Officer of the Deck, or an Engineering Officer of the Watch.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

When he retired as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1984, Gen. John W. Vessey, Jr., said, "The greatest change that has come about in the United States Forces in the time I've been in the military service has been the extensive use of women.... That is even greater than nuclear weapons, I feel, as far as our own forces are concerned." (Stiehm 1989, 235)

These were the days of evolutionary transformation. And like most days of transformation, no one at the time had any idea of what was being transformed (Pirsig 1991, 308).

This dissertation attempts to answer the question, "How do gender relations affect the full integration of women into the United States Navy?" Equality, fairness and, rather recently, the Congress of the United States, dictated integrating women into as many aspects of the armed forces as is practicable. This requirement was mandated in 1977 when Navy sponsors amended Title 10 of the U.S. Code 6015 (which forbade women from serving in U.S. Navy ships) to allow permanent assignment of women to noncombatant ships, and in 1978 when Congress approved changes to Title 10 USC Section 6015 to permit the Navy to assign women to fill sea duty billets on support and noncombatant ships.

In February 1994 the Navy notified Congress that all aviation squadrons, the Naval Construction Force (The Seabees), and all classes of ships except submarines, mine counter measure (MCM) vessels, Mine Coastal Hunters (MHC), and Coastal Patrol Boats (PC) were in fact open to women. In the same year, The United States Naval Academy revised its service selection policy and for the first time female midshipmen were directed to select warfare specialties

under the same guidelines as men. In 1994, the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Navy's first integrated combatant ship, sailed to the Persian Gulf with a mixed gender crew. (See the Appendix: A Brief Chronological History of Women in the United States Navy.) Nevertheless, the culture of the armed forces is often hostile to such integration. Oriented towards violence as required in warfare, this culture emphasizes aggression and traditional male dominance.

Unfortunately, evidence exists that some men also consider women a form of prey whether they wear the same uniform or not. Women serving in the military alongside men are not family members; they are co-professionals. Yet they are still seen by many men as sexually attractive. The military and naval systems may make rules, regulations, and policies to deal with problems relating to sex and gender. But rules by themselves do not suffice. Besides being understood, and accepted by all, they must be consistently enforced by all commanding officers and followed by all personnel.

This dissertation therefore addresses perceptions, policies, and issues resulting from gender integration in a traditionally male culture. The insights gained from this study of naval personnel may be applicable to other branches of military service and to the civilian workplace where problems between men and women are also prevalent.

In the Navy, as elsewhere, advanced technology, especially electronic technology, provides the means to achieve a partial parity between the sexes in the performance of work. Similarly, changes in both civil and military law,

including the rules governing the Navy, provide women with the right and ability to seek virtually all aspects of work or command in the U.S. Navy.

While the requirement for equal treatment is clear on paper, this study examines whether it is so in fact. Consequently, the perceptions of women and men in the U. S. Navy are examined to discover to what degree both sexes are actually collaborating in the stations and on the ships of the Navy. The evolution of attitudinal shifts, especially of men towards women in the Navy is also examined. An expected result of this study was that the Navy's concept of itself had been profoundly altered in ways that were only dimly foreseen. By implication, so too was the workplace in general. A number of speculations, based on the data collected, attempt to show what some of these changes might be.

Tailhook's Impact

In the 1970's and 1980's, women were becoming more integrated into the United States Navy thanks to the push for the Equal Rights Amendment and the far-seeing influence of Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, the Chief of Naval Operations from July 1970 to June 1974. In 1972, Captain Arlene Duerk, Nurse Corps, Director of the Navy Nurse Corps since 1968, was promoted to Flag rank without having to go through the usual process of having her name appear with other nominees on an advancement selection board. The initial trial, or pilot program for assignment of women to ships, was initiated on board the hospital ship USS Sanctuary (AH-17). Limited entry into all ratings was authorized for enlisted

women. Staff Corps and Restricted Line opened to women. Hospital Corps male/female detailing was combined. In 1972, Admiral Zumwalt dictated the following:

- No separate management of men and women;
- Command opportunity for women allowed;
- Authorized entry of enlisted women into all ratings, with selective ratings later becoming closed to women;
- Change to Navy Regulations, suspending restrictions regarding women succeeding to command ashore;
- Complete opening of all staff corps to women;
- Previously restricted line available to women;
- Integrated male/female detailing;
- Naval Officer Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) available to women. (Source: Web Site of U.S. Navy Bureau of Personnel, Feb. 1997.)

In 1973 the Secretary of the Navy, John W. Warner, announced authorization of aviation training to begin for women. In addition, the first female flight surgeon was designated and the first woman was selected for flight training. The Major Command Screening Board began screening women, and the separate Women Officers School (WOS), Newport, RI, was closed. Officer Candidate School (OCS) training was now open to both men and women. Pregnancy as a cause of mandatory separation was abolished, and women could now request to remain on active duty if pregnant.

In 1974 the first woman was commissioned through NROTC, and the Navy became the first U.S. service to graduate a woman pilot from flight school. In 1975 women were assigned to service craft (e.g., tug boats). Congress authorized admission of women to the military academies, but fifteen sea intensive ratings (enlisted job specialties) were closed to women. The Navy

began to screen unrestricted line officer women for Commanding Officer (in the rank of Commander) and Lieutenant Commander Executive Officer billets ashore.

In 1976, Rear Admiral Fran McKee became the first female line officer appointed to flag rank, women were admitted to the U.S. Naval Academy, women began attending Aviation Officer Candidate School, and 87 of 102 ratings or specialties were made available to women.

In 1977 the Navy sponsored an amendment to Title 10 USC Section 6015 to allow permanent assignment of women to noncombatant ships, and in 1978 Congress approved change to Title 10 USC Section 6015 to permit the Navy to assign women to fill sea duty billets or duties on support and noncombatant ships. Surface Warfare and Special Operations communities were also opened to women, and Master Chief Storekeeper Margaret I. Gramlich became the first woman assigned to a Command Master Chief billet ashore.

In 1985 the goal for the number of enlisted women in the Navy was raised to 51,300, and the first woman Special Operations (SPECOPS) officer was assigned as an executive officer afloat (on a ship). Commander Veronica Froman became the first woman to be assigned as an executive officer of a Naval Station (shore command).

In 1986 women were assigned as both Commanding Officer and Executive Officer of a recruiting district. Lieutenant Susan Cowar, SPECOPS officer, became the first woman Surface Warfare Officer assigned as a shipboard executive officer. Women were assigned to the replenishment ships

of the Military Sealift Command. Meanwhile, the Navy reduced its goal for enlisted women from 51,300 to 46,796 because of the decommissioning of the most common types of ships which had been available to women.

In 1987 the reduction mentioned above was rescinded, and the Cohen/Proxmire bill (S-581) proposed amending Title 10 of the United States Code which prohibits women from serving in combat. Section 6015 allowed women to be permanently assigned to Combat Logistics Force ships.

In 1988 Commander Debra Gernes became the first woman selected for command at sea. Naval Reserve Lieutenant Commander Kathryn Sullivan was the first woman selected to be a Navy astronaut, and twenty-four combat logistic force (CLF) ships were opened to women.

In 1989 Master Chief Petty Officer Janice Ayers became the first woman assigned as Command Master Chief at sea. The Command Master Chief is the senior enlisted billet aboard U.S. Navy ships and stations, and the incumbent serves as the primary advisor to the commanding officer on matters relating to all enlisted personnel assigned. The first woman executive assistant was assigned to the Chief of Naval Operations.

In 1990 Captain Marsha Evans became the first woman to assume command of a Naval Station; Commander Rosemary Mariner was the first woman to assume command of an aviation squadron; and Lieutenant Commander Darlene Iskra, SPECOPS officer, became the first woman to assume command of a ship, the USS Opportune, a salvage vessel.

As demonstrated by the chronology outlined above, these strides were slow and incremental. Although not intended to do so, the Tailhook convention of September 5-8, 1991 hastened the integration of women in the Navy. This event occurred just two days before hearings began on the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court (Boyer 1996, 71). The Tailhook (the term “tailhook” refers to the hook dangling from the rear of an airplane as it lands on an aircraft carrier and catches a cable stretched across the carrier’s deck) convention, although ostensibly a professional symposium of aviators to discuss the particulars of their hardware and skills, had in fact devolved, over the years, into an old-fashioned sailors-on-liberty drunken debauch. Except that the “sailors” were naval officers – both men and women. And these women considered themselves Naval professionals: tough, no-nonsense, fun-loving aviators. However, when some of them were singled out for their gender and literally found themselves up for grabs, things changed drastically.

LT Paula Coughlin was representative of the tough Navy woman aviator. She enjoyed being a naval officer and was not shy about talking like a sailor. She considered herself “one of the boys” and felt as though she was part of a proud team. But when she found herself being overpowered and groped at a party which had gotten out of hand, she decided things had gone too far. Hijinks and fun had become non-consensual sexual assault, and she reported it.

The mishandling of her complaint, by the admiral for whom she worked, and the botched investigation of the Naval Investigative Service, contributed to the media frenzy (in a public atmosphere of heightened awareness of sexual

harassment). The “Tailhook incident” led to the eventual resignation of the Secretary of the Navy and the early retirement of the Chief of Naval Operations.

The Navy’s top leaders had initially responded with a cover-up, then hastily capitulated to political pressure. The political and military head – Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III and Admiral Frank Kelso – had both been at Tailhook. In the damage-control scramble after the first Navy investigation, early in October, Kelso and other top Navy leaders echoed the outrage expressed in Congress and the press, and vowed to take steps to eliminate sexism in the forces. Sensitivity training was ordered, and Kelso abruptly became an ardent supporter of the idea of women in combat. He and his Pentagon staff ordered that women combat pilots be aboard the aircraft carriers Eisenhower and Abraham Lincoln on their next deployments. That meant rushing women to the head of the training line, which not only caused resentment among the men who were pushed aside but made clear to the women’s commanding officers that their success was an imperative. (Boyer 1996, 73)

While this summary may appear somewhat partial, the admiral’s orders had an immediate effect. So the last big Navy Party (Tailhook 1991), seemingly a celebration of the way the Old Navy operated while partying ashore, served to accelerate the evolution of women’s increasing participation in the Navy’s operating forces at sea, on land, and in the air.

Women and Technology

“What does it mean to be human in an age of advanced technology?”

The topic of men and women in the U.S. Navy is particularly germane to this question, since, to the traditional member of the armed forces, women represent the Humanities. And from anyone’s perspective, the U.S. Navy is an aggregate of technological devices (including ships). These two statements, perhaps,

describe why the integration of women causes such a seismic culture shift in the Navy and the rest of our country's armed forces.

Saying that "women represent the Humanities" means that men are born of women, are mothered by women, are traditionally expected as adults to protect women, and are generally inclined to seek women to provide them with the familial joys of life. Women have created, nurtured, and provided men with those qualities considered to be most worth protecting. The Humanities have been described as branches of learning concerned primarily with people's expression as intellectual and creative beings; as exemplifying pure learning which leads to the achievement of the "good life," and as a discipline which may bolster, interpret, or modify the people involved in the "hard" professions (The American People's Encyclopedia 1967, vol. 5, page 124).

As for the Navy being largely a technical entity, the history of warfighting is essentially a history of the ever-evolving increase in the ability to terrify or kill one's enemies before they can do the same. Naval technology could be paraphrased into J. K. Galbraith's definition as "skilled application of knowledge to [the] practical purposes [of being able to win against one's adversaries]" (Galbraith 1985, 13). Technology will be treated from a female perspective within this chapter.

Ian Barbour, in Ethics in an Age of Technology states:

Feminists have pointed out that technology has been a predominantly male enterprise and that in our culture men are identified with reason and mastery - to the exclusion of intuition and the nurture of relationships which are assumed to be characteristic of women. (Barbour 1993, xvii)

The study of women in today's society generally, and in the armed forces of the United States particularly, is directly related to several humanities disciplines, including ethics (what rules do we follow to get along with each other?); literature (what do modern writers say about men and women collaborating with each other?); human resource management (how do male and female managers deal with dual-gender environments, especially in the military?); philosophy (should/can women serve as "warriors"?); and sociology (what social dynamics are at work when women serve alongside men in the military, and what are the effects on their respective spouses?). These human values are not necessarily male or female. They are individual, personal, and parental issues since both men and women serving in the Navy are parents (though more men with children are found in this service).

While focused on the U. S. Navy, the findings of this dissertation can well apply to all branches of American armed forces. Specific goals of this study are to illuminate how men and women can share power, and, to some useful degree to learn from what women have experienced in an organization traditionally representative of (and largely restricted to) the male culture.

Much of the research for this dissertation has been based on what women themselves have written, especially in books and articles, as related to women and power. It is reflected in media reportings of what is happening at the cutting edge of today's society. This study may therefore help Navy men who worry about being either sexual harassers or sexual discriminators; Navy policy makers (men and women) who are struggling to provide humanistic guidance with firm,

fair rules; and to everyone who tries to learn how to guide intelligently parts of our society with dual gender organizations while keeping in mind the connections and relations between the men and women who make up these organizations.

Men and women often see things from different perspectives and make differing evaluations about how much power is possessed by one gender or the other. In such situations it is useful to bring these gender-based differences out into the open. These distinct feelings and stirrings, which are a part of our biological beings, cannot be separated from our social lives. This dissertation seeks to discover how men and women can communicate, work, play, and interact romantically with each other without disrupting the smooth operation of our nation's military organizations, that is, those dedicated to controlling violence by being ready to use violence.

New technology is changing many aspects of warfare. Combat that relies heavily on digital communications, satellite-guided missiles, radar-evading stealth aircraft, computer processing of reams of data, and maneuvers in outer space could require a smaller number of foot soldiers, fewer vehicles, and far less hand-to-hand combat. Even driving tanks and shooting guns could become outmoded as sophisticated military machines take over such routine tasks. This dissertation also contends that such factors as education, birth control (although birth control has caused many problems, too), computers, the Internet, and the cessation of wars, all have the potential of making women more equal than before.

Today's technology enables women literally to fly. Physical strength is seldom anymore a requirement for employment, and where it is a requirement, women can usually achieve it. Women may exercise choice over marriage and child-bearing, thanks to birth-control technology, although such technology has its own shortcomings related, for instance, to youthful promiscuity and perhaps, even, increased cases of breast cancer. Electronic communication all but eliminates gender entirely; one does not usually know the sex of the sender or receiver, so those biological factors are less evident (and thus less distracting). Formerly, men tended to talk world-wide with ham radios while women talked to each other on the telephone. Now both genders can communicate on the World Wide Web. Computers might even give the orders: "Select enemy; insert weapon; delete." These innovations could render men's physical strength and propensity for physical aggressiveness less important in many types of military operations – and open the way to female participation in some forms of distant battle (Fisher 1999, 160-161).

Particularly regarding physical capabilities, technology has truly leveled the playing field, especially in modern warfare, which is fought with push-button weapons frighteningly similar to children's computer games. The age of swords, bayonets, pikes, and hand-to-hand combat has largely passed. In spite of these changes, U. S. military institutions hold onto combat traditions. For example, the Military Academy at West Point still maintains a title, "Master of the Sword." As Rowan Scarborough wrote:

West Point has named the first woman as its "Master of the Sword," the top physical fitness director at a school where sports are viewed as crucial