

RETENTION OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY:
A LOOK AT THE COAST GUARD ACADEMY AND ITS GRADUATES

by

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ABSTRACT

Women have been members of the United States Coast Guard since the early 1970's. Since that time very little progress has been made in attracting and retaining women in the service. For the first time in the Coast Guard's history, future women's representation has been set at 33 percent by the year 2015. The impact of the representation level will not be felt within the organization unless women successfully reach senior leadership positions in the officer corps.

This thesis focused on the Coast Guard Academy as the primary commissioning source for providing the future senior women leadership within the Coast Guard. As success in obtaining senior status within the military is dependent upon attracting, training and retaining career-oriented women, research was conducted in three phases. The first phase dealt with examining Coast Guard Academy admissions policy and collecting admissions data on classes 1980 through 1995. Twenty-four out of thirty-seven senior women cadets in the Class of 1996 were interviewed, in the second phase, to obtain their views on the military training process at the Academy and their future career desires. The third phase consisted of a 5-part, 84-question survey distributed to the women from Academy classes 1991-1992. In addition, research was conducted through a survey of available literature, review of Coast Guard published policies and through interviews of key personnel involved with the selection process, the training program and management of the officer corps.

This thesis traces the history of the introduction of women into the Coast Guard and the policies and legislative action that have played a role in their advancement. It looks at each commissioning source and identifies the Academy as having the greatest impact on improving women's representation at the senior leadership ranks. By projecting promotion and attrition rates over the next nineteen years for Academy classes 1985 through 1992, it becomes apparent that the 33 percent representation rate by the year 2015 at senior ranks is unrealistic. The thesis then raises questions about the effectiveness of the admissions criteria

in selecting women who will not only graduate from the Academy but will remain as career officers. The lack of an active recruiting effort and low graduation to appointment rate both undermine the effectiveness of the selection process. Through interviews and surveys, it finds that the majority of women are receiving the necessary military training at the Academy to be successful in the field. However, it becomes apparent that this training is undermined by isolationism, favoritism and prejudice experienced by the women during their first tour on board afloat units. Although, many women surveyed found their second tour unit supportive and challenging, their first tour experience negatively impacted their career desires.

This thesis also identifies other issues that are impacting women's career decisions through examination of organizational attitude, past and present policies and past surveys that play a role in retaining women officers. Issues addressed include equality of treatment, co-location and family concerns.

In conclusion, the thesis calls upon the Coast Guard organization to take a hard look at its cultural atmosphere and the inability of the afloat community to make the needed adjustments to adequately train and accept women as viable members of their units. The continued high loss of these talented and motivated women Academy graduates will play an ever increasing role in the senior officer ranks as the Coast Guard strives to improve women's representation in the service.

Thesis Advisor: Lotte Bailyn

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I also wish to thank the women from the Academy classes of 1991, 1992 and 1996 who provided their thoughts, concerns and experiences so readily in surveys and interviews. In the cover letter to the Academy Women Retention and Training survey, I asked 44 women officers to spend 30 minutes of their valuable time to complete the survey. It was readily apparent from the length of their responses and thoughtful answers, that the 34 respondents contributed much more of their time. I was also amazed that twenty-three women cadets not only agreed to be interviewed but provided forthright answers to often difficult questions.

Very little of the material presented in this thesis could have been gotten without the full cooperation of the Coast Guard Academy. Everyone, from Captain Robert Thorne and his staff in Admissions, to Dean of Academics, William Sanders, to Commandant of Cadets, Captain Pat Stillman, aided my research and readily provided all files for examination. I particularly want to thank G. Phillip Boeding and Mary Crevier of the Registrars Officer who dug through old files and extracted computer data so willingly to help my research.

The Military Personnel Command, Officer Personnel Management Division also welcomed my presence during a very hectic time, allowing me to probe for information. Captain Gregg Sutton and his staff provided much of the baseline information so critical for this study.

Finally, I am deeply appreciative to the women officers of the Coast Guard who constantly amaze me with their talent, intelligence and forthrightness. Jointly with the efforts of many fine men in the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard will become the employer of choice for future generations. It has been a pleasure serving with you.

Dedication

I felt fortunate that I knew what I wanted to write about for my thesis prior to my arrival at MIT. What I didn't realize was how difficult it would be to keep my personal emotions and own experiences out of the thesis. Throughout this long and often difficult experience, I have had the good fortune of having a strong support network to keep me on track. It is to my family and friends that I dedicate this thesis:

To my Mom and Dad for their unwavering support and constant encouragement. Even though separated by 3,000 miles, the weekly phone calls provided just the right amount of "home" contact to keep me smiling. I thank them for their love and understanding.

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To my very best friend, Peggy Werkmeister, who devoted hour upon hour reading and editing my thesis providing me with invaluable suggestions for improving this thesis, I thank you for your endearing friendship and love.

Chapter One

Introduction

Since Congressional approval in 1976, women have been members of the Coast Guard Academy Corps of Cadets. As the Academy is the primary commissioning source for senior leadership in the Coast Guard, this inclusion signaled the first real commitment on the part of the organization in recognizing women as potential leaders in the service. Although some attention has been given to the progress of these women officers, recent events dictate that the situation be examined closer.

The United States Coast Guard is entering a new era in its history, that of consciously changing the diversity of its workforce to reflect society. The present Commandant, Admiral Robert E. Kramek, upon his promotion, prioritized eight strategic goals for accomplishment during his tour. One of his top three goals is to “place diversity in the Coast Guard at center stage.”¹ To achieve this goal the Coast Guard will “change the composition of the CG workforce to better reflect the U.S. population, change the workforce environment (culture) to guarantee equal treatment and opportunity and assign individuals, from groups targeted in diversity goals, to top management positions so that they can successfully compete for flag officer and SES selection.”² Based on this strategic goal, the Coast Guard is now striving for a 33 percent women’s representation rate within the organization by

¹ Commandant’s Direction, Goal 2, 1994.

² Ibid.

the year 2015.³ This includes representation at the senior ranks. How successful the Coast Guard will be in reaching its goal within senior management will depend a great deal on the effectiveness of the Coast Guard Academy in attracting and training women for service. Once commissioned, it is up to the service to retain these individuals. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to examine retention of women in the military by closely looking at the Coast Guard Academy and its graduates.

To provide the reader a frame of reference for the Academy, a brief history of women in the Coast Guard will be provided in Chapter Two. The importance of the Academy as a commissioning source and provider of senior leadership will then be compared with the other commissioning sources. Finally, based on promotion percentages and attrition rates, the Chapter will determine the feasibility of women Academy graduates to contribute their anticipated share of senior leaders by the year 2015.

Chapter Three will focus on the two areas that will have the greatest impact in eventually reaching the Commandant's goal: admissions and training at the Academy. It will first describe the admissions process and selection criteria used to award appointments to the Academy. The chapter will then look at the effectiveness of this process to select future graduates and career officers. This will be followed with a closer look at the training program in preparing cadets for their future role as officers in the Coast Guard.

³ U.S. Dept. of Transportation, "Report for the President's Interagency Council on Women," February 1996, 13.

As all Academy graduates are assigned sea duty for their first tour in the Coast Guard, Chapter Four will present the sea experiences of the women from the Academy classes of 1991 and 1992. It will examine such issues as the effectiveness of the training program and impact of the assignment on career aspirations. As a comparison to these experiences, Chapter Five will look at the women officers' second assignment and present some general observations about women and military careers.

Chapter Six will then link to Coast Guard attitudes and policies that have played a role in the assimilation of women into the Coast Guard. Additionally, the findings of Chapter Three through Five will be compared with the benchmarks established in earlier Coast Guard studies to demonstrate the Coast Guard's progress in making the service an employer of choice.

Based on the information presented in Chapters Two through Six, Chapter Seven will present a series of conclusions. This will be followed by a number of recommendations in Chapter Eight designed to assist the Coast Guard in their efforts to increase women officer representation.

As previous research on this subject is limited, information and conclusions will be based on available data. Unfortunately, only recently has a standardized record keeping system been instituted at the Academy. The information has been pulled together to give the most accurate interpretation possible. Throughout this thesis, any limitations in information will be addressed. There were a few studies

done in the late 1980's and early 1990's examining women in the Coast Guard that will be acknowledged in Chapter Six.

It has taken the Coast Guard nearly two and a half decades to recognize that women officer representation is insufficient for the needs of the organization. To reach this new goal, the organization must react now by planning and studying this issue in depth. This thesis only examines the goal from one aspect, gender. The Coast Guard must continue this work by examining the health of the minority population. The captains of tomorrow have already received their commissions and must be retained and utilized to their full potential. Shortsightedness on the part of the Coast Guard in understanding the issues at hand will have a negative impact on its ability to reach stated goals.

METHODOLOGY

The uniqueness of the Coast Guard organization as a humanitarian service under the Department of Transportation precludes direct comparisons with its sister services in the Department of Defense. For this reason, few direct comparison will be made.

The amount of data available was overwhelming, particularly from the Coast Guard Academy. However, the type of data retained varied from year to year which made direct comparisons difficult. The subjectivity of the admissions selection process makes quantifying much of the admissions data questionable.

However, it is the best data available and the only definitive information available on admissions into the Coast Guard Academy.

The scarcity of previous studies on this issue requires that a large portion of the information come from the women themselves in the form of interviews and surveys. One on one interviews were conducted on 23 of the 37 First Class women cadets scheduled for graduation in May 1996. Interviews were strictly voluntary. Confidentiality was stressed prior to each interview to allay fears of retaliation and promote honesty between myself and the interviewee. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes with the respondent being asked a set of core questions provided in Appendix A. As the answers often triggered additional questions, the number of core questions were kept at a manageable level to allow flexibility within the interview. The 30 minute time-frame was chosen to minimize interference with the cadet's daily routine.

Gathering data from the Academy women in the fleet was done through a detailed ten-page survey, provided in Appendix B. Women from Academy year groups 1991 and 1992 were chosen because they were nearing the end of their five years of obligated service. This is considered a critical retention point. Forty-six women were identified as still on active duty from these two classes. Forty-four women received the survey. Thirty-four surveys were returned for analysis which represents an impressive return rate of 77 percent. I attribute this high return rate to the emotional nature of this issue and the cooperative nature of Coast Guard officers.

Most of the remaining information was gathered through visits to the Military Personnel Command, Officer Personnel Management Division, interviews with Coast Guard Academy admissions staff and with the Commandant of Cadets, and discussions with the diversity staff. Information was also gathered from senior women officers, the Officer Candidate School and from earlier studies of Department of Defense military academies.

Chapter Two

The Past, the Present and the Future

THE PAST

Since its birth in 1790, the Coast Guard always has been a sea-going service. Images of six-foot tall sailors, white ships, isolated lighthouses quickly come to mind. But these images did not include women or minorities. That image is slowly changing as the organization promotes diversity. In some ways this “change” to include women does not seem like a change at all. Women have always played an important role in shaping the Coast Guard’s history. Therefore, let’s enhance the image.

Take for example, Marie Lee, otherwise known as “Black Marie”. In 1791, hired by a shipping company to protect a consignment of swivel guns destined for placement aboard the Revenue Cutter SCAMMEL, she fought off six smugglers attempting to steal the guns. As a result the SCAMMEL was able to set sail fully armed guarding the coasts of the United States. Then there were the over 80 women lighthouse keepers working for the Lighthouse Service in the 1800’s, who kept the lights brightly burning protecting ships from rocky shorelines. One woman in particular, Ida Lewis, keeper of Lime Rock Lighthouse in Rhode Island, was known for her daring rescues for which she received numerous honors including the Gold Lifesaving Medal. Women, although small in number, also assisted the Coast Guard in World War I.

Though important, these women were few. It was during World War II that the Coast Guard opened its doors to women on a large scale. The Coast Guard's Women's Reserve (SPARs) was formed on November 23, 1942, under Public Law 773 under the direction of LCDR Dorothy Stratton. By December 1944, now Captain Stratton was responsible for a female force of 10,000 enlisted and 1,000 officers. These women were not relegated to the administrative and clerical positions but filled billets as Boatswain's Mates, Coxswains, Gunners Mates, Machinist Mates, Parachute Riggers and Carpenters. However, similar to the experience of many women during this time, once the war was over, the SPARs lost their right to serve.

Women were eventually allowed to return to the Coast Guard's service as members of the Women's Reserve in 1949, but this time, only as Yeomen and Storekeepers. During the Korean War, women once again were allowed on active duty, and approximately forty women reservists returned as officers and enlisted personnel.

It was the end of another war, the Vietnam War, that once again opened the doors for women desiring an opportunity to serve in the Coast Guard. But this time it was for a different reason. During the Vietnam War, men had flocked to the Coast Guard's door to avoid being drafted into the Army, Marine Corps and Navy. The inevitable drawdown in the conflict meant a reduced pool size of men from which to draw. Searching for a solution, the Coast Guard realized that this potential personnel shortage could be alleviated by drawing on the female

population. Of course, it didn't hurt that Congress was very close to mandating that the services open their doors to everyone, including women!

House Joint Resolution 208 proposed an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women. Although ratification by three-fourths of the states was a requirement and the effective date would occur two years after ratification, all signals indicated passage. Therefore, the Commandant, Admiral Bender, appointed a one-man board "to determine the need for permanent commissioned women officers in the Regular Coast Guard."⁴ At the time of the study all branches of the Armed Service, except the Coast Guard, had women on active duty. The Coast Guard was, therefore, not a leader in integrating its forces but an organization facing reality.

This reality became even clearer to the Coast Guard during the study with the pending expiration of the Draft Law in 1973. Prior to 1973, the number of male applicants had decreased from 1890 in Fiscal Year 1969 to 762 in Fiscal Year 1972. (A Fiscal Year is defined as beginning on October 1 and running until September 30 of the following year.) Faced with declining application numbers, the Coast Guard faced a strong possibility that there would be insufficient talent to meet accession needs. "A survey of OCS Class 2-72 revealed that the pressure of the draft was the single most important influence or of significant influence for 67 percent of the trainees in making their decision to apply for Officer Candidate

⁴ Commandant letter 1401, "Precept of a Board to Determine the Need for Permanent Commissioned Women Officers in the Regular Coast Guard," April 10, 1972, 1.

School.”⁵ Qualified women applicants were, therefore, necessary to fill the loss in male applications in support of service needs.

Credit for this realization should also be given to the field officers interviewed during the study. All were in agreement that the Coast Guard should pursue a women’s officer program. The study stated, “The general consensus among Coast Guard officers interviewed is that women officers could be effectively employed in essentially all areas for which they are properly trained except on vessels, as aviators, on isolated units, or in billets where shipboard background is essential, e.g. MMS Field inspections.”⁶ At the time, these limitations meant women would be assigned staff duties with little career potential.

The one-man board did include the above assignment restrictions in his final report as well as a recommendation to limit the number of women on active duty to between 50-100 officers. The number of women candidates in each Officer Candidate School (OCS) class was also not to exceed ten. In 1973, women were admitted into the OCS program. That year, five women successfully completed their training and were commissioned ensigns in the Coast Guard Reserve. On December 3, 1973, legislation was passed that abolished the Women’s Reserve and allowed women entrance into the regular corps through the integration process.

⁵ Captain J. E. Johansen, “Report of the Board convened at U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C. to Determine the Need for Permanent Women Officers in the Regular Coast Guard,” May 1972, 10.

⁶ Captain J. E. Johansen, 11.

As there were only two classes a year until 1977, the number of women officers commissioned each year had little to no impact on the officer corps. It appears the prevailing Coast Guard attitude was, let them join if they want but we don't have the money or energy to find them.

Once the Coast Guard decided to accept women into the service they began to rethink their assignment restriction policy. It was not long after the first few women graduated from OCS that the Coast Guard began lifting assignment barriers for women officers. In 1975, two women were selected to attend Naval flight school which they successfully completed in 1976. In 1977, the USCGC Morgenthau and USCGC Gallatin were assigned mixed crews that included two female officers and ten female enlisted members. Two of these women went on to command Patrol boats on their next assignment. Significant progress was made when in August 1978, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Hayes, proclaimed that "all action remaining within the power of my office has been taken to assure that henceforth there will be absolutely no arbitrary restrictions based solely upon sex in the way the Coast Guard uses its people."⁷ By 1979, the Coast Guard had removed all assignment restrictions for women except those in conjunction with Navy billets and aboard vessels and small shore stations lacking berthing or hygiene facilities. As the most progressive and unrestrictive of all military services, the potential for attracting women to the Coast Guard was tremendous. Unfortunately, by 1980, after graduating 22 Officer Candidate

⁷ COMDT Publication 5312.17, Women in the Coast Guard Study, July 1990, II-4.

classes and commissioning 1020 new ensigns, only 88 women had received the gold bar.⁸ The novelty of having a woman officer assigned to a unit could never be overcome because there just were not enough to go around.

The biggest boost to improving these small numbers was the 1976 Defense Appropriation Authorization Act that mandated the admission of women to the Department of Defense academies. Although not specifically directed towards agencies in the Department of Transportation, the Coast Guard was the first to open its Academy doors to women. This meant that all avenues for entering the service or accession points were now available for women. The inclusion of the Academy was particularly significant as approximately 50 percent of newly commissioned officers come from the Academy. The class of 1980, which began training in July 1976, included 38 women of whom 14 eventually graduated. This low retention rate of 37 percent would become the average for the next ten graduating classes. Since that initial class, 311 women have graduated from the Academy and received commissions to serve in the Coast Guard. Add to that number those graduating from Officer Candidate School and a total of 695 women have received a commission in the service from these two accession points. This slow growth of approximately 32 women officers each year has kept the percentage of women below ten percent of the officer corps.

⁸ Data collected from the records of the Officer Candidate School, 1973-1995.

THE PRESENT

Legislation opened the doors for women to pursue a career in the Coast Guard, but, how successful has the organization been in getting women into the top ranks? As of January 1996, the Coast Guard had only one woman captain out of 361, 19 women commanders out of 737, and 65 women lieutenant commanders out of 1105.⁹ This slow growth at the senior ranks is directly attributed to a promotion system that requires time in grade and selection by a promotion board as criteria for advancement. Individuals can expect to reach the rank of captain after an average of 21.7 years of service.¹⁰ Unlike corporate America where an individual can enter the system at any stage of the hierarchy, individuals in the military must progress up the ladder of advancement. Required to promote from within, the officer corps is slowly funneled through a stiffening promotion system so that very few make it to the top. The first women graduates of OCS are just now meeting the time-in-grade requirement, referred to as being in-zone, for captain. Unfortunately, attrition has dwindled the number of women down to approximately two to four candidates each year for the next five years. The first Academy class of women graduates (Class 1980) just recently came in-zone for promotion to commander.

There are a lot of factors to be considered when trying to predict the fate of women officers. Up until this point the Coast Guard has felt that increasing the number of women attending all commissioning sources will have equal impact on

⁹ Reflects data obtained from the Coast Guard's 1996 Register of Officers.

¹⁰ Based on a 5-year average of captain promotion points from 1991-1995, MPC-opm-1.

increasing the number of senior women officers. However, each commissioning source is different. Therefore, examining the advantages and disadvantages of these different sources will reveal which commissioning source will have the most impact on the senior ranks.

Direct Commission

The Direct Commission program will be mentioned only briefly as the number of officers commissioned by this program generally run no larger than 40 per year. These individuals are brought on board to fill critical positions based on service needs. The majority of these officers are lawyers who will have limited opportunity for operational experience. Occasionally engineers, aviators and marine safety officers are brought on board but the percentage of women entering with these specialties is extremely small. Based on previous studies, this lack of operational experience will hamper their promotability. Direct commissioning was described here as a commissioning source for completeness but due to its small impact on women's numbers it will not be included in further discussions.

Officer Candidate School

The Officer Candidate School (OCS) program is an intensive 17-week course designed to train college graduates on the roles and missions of the Coast Guard. In addition to college graduates, enlisted personnel who have served for at least four years, have obtained the rank of Petty Officer Second Class and have

completed at least 30 hours of college level instruction are also eligible for the program.

The program consists of one week of military indoctrination followed by instruction in seamanship, navigation, Coast Guard orientation and leadership. Additionally, OCS candidates receive fire arms training, fire fighting and a training period aboard a Coast Guard cutter that normally lasts for one week. Individuals who successfully meet all requirements are commissioned as ensigns in the Coast Guard and serve for three years on active duty as a Reserve officer and three years on inactive duty in the Reserves. At the end of their active service, an individual may either ask to integrate into the regular Coast Guard or begin their inactive service.

Coast Guard Academy

Presently, the main source for Coast Guard officers is the service Academy. As one of the four federal government service academies, the Coast Guard Academy, situated in New London, Connecticut, receives its authority from the Department of Transportation. Its existence is for the sole purpose of providing commissioned officers for the U. S. Coast Guard. The Academy's policy toward applicants is one of promoting fair treatment and equal opportunity. As stated in USCGA Catalogue of Courses, "We recruit, educate, train and employ personnel based on merit so that each individual can excel and reach his/her maximum potential without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin or

where applicable, age and/or handicap. The Academy is committed to achieving and maintaining a multi-cultural environment that values diversity and encourages the full participation of all its members. To this end, we will promote diversity and develop strategies to overcome under-representation, discrimination and acts of intolerance, thereby creating a more positive and productive place in which to learn, work, and live."¹¹ Since admitting women in 1976 to join the ranks of Class 1980, the Coast Guard Academy has been making slow and sometimes halting progress in the swearing-in of female cadets. This past year, approximately one-third of the incoming class were women, the highest representation level to date.

The Academy offers eight different degree programs, half of which are engineering-related majors. Although the other four - government, management, operations research and marine science - are less quantitative, there is a heavy emphasis on the physical sciences in the core courses. This allows all graduates who meet the degree requirements to receive a Bachelor of Science. These core courses include two semesters each of Physics, Chemistry, and Calculus as well as Celestial Navigation, Basic Naval Architecture and Electrical Engineering. This emphasis on the sciences is one of the main reason why the college entrance exam math score is weighed so heavily in determining appointees. The importance of this math score will be discussed further in the thesis under the selection process.

¹¹ United States Coast Guard Academy: 1995-1996 Catalogue of Courses, 2.

Academics is only one part of the Academy experience. As the school exists to train and prepare young men and women for careers in the Coast Guard, a great deal of emphasis is placed on military training. This military training program begins with “Swab Summer” with the new cadets having no authority and extends to the cadets’ first class year when they are responsible for running the Corps of Cadets. Interspersed between the academic semesters, where the cadets learn about such things as leadership, time management and military drill, are internships at different Coast Guard units. It is during these summer sessions that the cadets acquire the majority of their sea experience which will play such a vital role in success at their first unit. All graduates of the Academy, who are found medically fit, will go to sea as their first unit. For four years of education and a variety of experiences, these newly commissioned ensigns are obligated to serve in the Coast Guard for five years.

The Academy vs. OCS as the Main Source for Senior Women Leadership

As stated earlier, the Coast Guard has placed equal emphasis on their commissioning sources for bringing women into the service. Of the two most productive commissioning sources, OCS and the Academy, OCS has the big advantage of its short time frame and significantly lower training costs. However, these advantages do not outweigh the disadvantages.

First, OCS convenes classes based on the needs of the service. In the early 1970's and late 1980's when the Coast Guard was experiencing rapid growth, OCS class sizes rivaled and at times surpassed the number of Academy graduates. It was, therefore, on equal footing with the Academy and could match the number of women commissioned each year. Recent government downsizing has reduced the OCS class output to a little less than one-half of the Academy class, which will reduce the number of women commissioned by this program.

Once commissioned, OCS officers face several disadvantages throughout their career. The Coast Guard's integration process, which Reserve Officers must go through to remain on active duty, is used as a means of downsizing the force. Where once OCS graduates were almost guaranteed integration, they now face a board that selects only 75 percent of those eligible. In other words, a year group size of 100 graduates, assuming all wished to integrate, would see 25 of their classmates packing for home.

Another disadvantage is that OCS graduates experience some initial prejudice in the assignment process. Serving in operational billets, such as sea duty, is very important to promotion. If an officer does not receive early operational experience, job selection at higher ranks will become increasingly more restrictive. Additionally, based on studies of individuals obtaining the rank of captain, 98 percent had some operational experience in their past.¹² In contrast to their Academy counterparts, who must spend their first tour afloat, OCS graduates

¹² Military Personnel Command Diversity Study, 1994, MPC-opm-2.

are rarely assigned sea duty their first tour. In fact, only approximately one-third of each OCS class receives orders to an operational billet upon graduation. These operational billets include assignment to groups, law enforcement, marine safety as well as afloat units. The Coast Guard, to help level the playing field, has made a commitment that anyone wishing an operational assignment will receive such an assignment within 18-24 months of commissioning. But not all OCS graduates take advantage of this opportunity.

A fairly large proportion of the women who graduate from OCS have prior enlisted service. These individuals bring with them an excellent knowledge of the Coast Guard and prove extremely capable in the officer ranks. Unfortunately, only a small percentage reach the senior ranks. This may be due to non-selection by the promotion boards but it is more likely due to their combined service time which allows their departure from the service prior to being in-zone for promotion to captain. Therefore, the recent push to promote enlisted women to the officer ranks through OCS will have a positive impact on the overall percentage of women in the junior ranks but will have only a minor impact at the senior levels.

These disadvantages make the Academy the focal point for providing senior women leadership. The biggest advantage of the Academy is that a higher percentage of its graduates remain for a 20 or 30 year career. An average of the past five years indicates that 72 percent of all captains graduated from the Coast Guard Academy.¹³ OCS contributed 19 percent (four percent from prior enlisted)

¹³ Reflects year groups 1965-1971 from the 1995 Register of Officers as determined by MPC-opm on 4 April 1995.

and the Direct Commission programs nine percent.¹⁴ It is even more apparent at the admiral level where all but four of the 33 top leaders graduated from the Academy.¹⁵ Except for promotion of Direct Commission officers to captain, Table one shows that promotion rates are also higher at the higher ranks (LCDR through CAPT) for Academy graduates than the other commissioning sources indicating stronger performance ratings. More importantly, Academy women are more likely to remain in the service longer than OCS graduates. Based on 1995 data, 78 percent of the women academy graduates were still in the service while only 57 percent of the OCS graduates were on active duty.¹⁶ This comparison is slightly skewed towards the Academy graduates because they have an additional two-

Promotion Rates by Paygrade & Commissioning Source

<u>Paygrade</u>	<u>Commissioning Source</u>			
	CGA	Enlisted	OCS	Direct Commission
CAPT	63%	52%	58%	67%
CDR	76%	58%	66%	59%
LCDR	80%	68%	71%	62%
LT	82%	88%	86%	86%

Table 1

Data provided by MPC-opm-1

¹⁴ From year groups 1965-1971, 1995 Register of Officers as determined by MPC-opm on 4 April 1995.

¹⁵ 1995 Coast Guard Register of Officers.

¹⁶ Based on March, 1995 data. As of that date 271 women had graduated from the Academy with 212 names still on the active duty roster as compared to 350 women graduates of OCS of which 198 remained.

year active duty service obligation. Finally, the Coast Guard Academy is a source of stability and is designed to instill and preserve the values of the Coast Guard culture. Therefore, of the commissioning sources, the Academy will be the best source of senior women leaders. However, prior to reaching the senior ranks, these women must chose from a variety of missions.

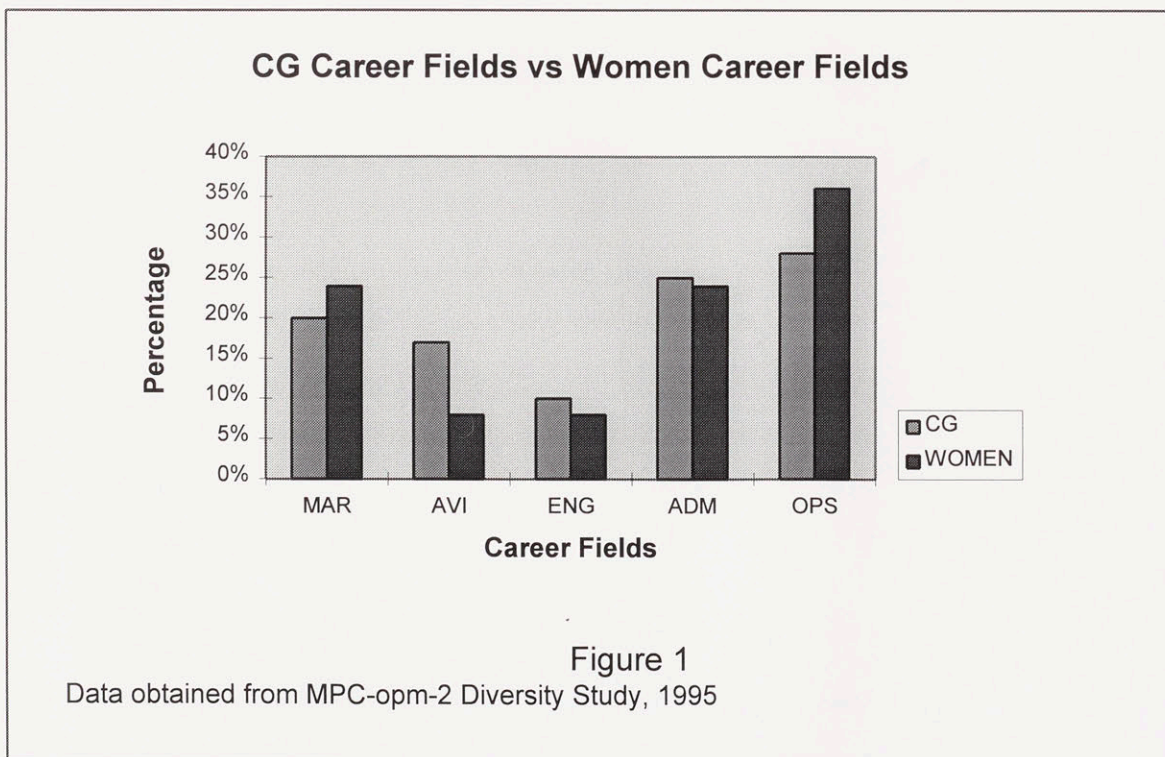
Career Development

After completing an initial two-year tour, the now lieutenant junior grade are ready to pursue a specialized field of study with which they will be identified for the remainder of their career. These career paths include afloat, group operations, aviation, marine safety, engineering, law, finance, and administration. Although positions in the Coast Guard become more staff-oriented higher up the promotion chain, the majority of all billets require an operational background and mastery in a specialty. Individuals will transfer between operational and staff billets as they climb the promotional ladder. This mastery is evaluated and reported to the Coast Guard in Officer Evaluation Reports (OER) which are used as the sole criteria for promotion.

Once an individual obtains the rank of commander, specialized skill decreases in overall importance to the organization. Demonstrated managerial skills receive increased emphasis with individuals often receiving assignments outside their area of expertise. Aviators still run air stations and marine safety

officers command marine safety units, however, the small number of specialized billets at the higher ranks falls far short of the number of specialists available.

There are no restrictions in career paths for women in the Coast Guard, however, women do tend to occupy the marine safety and group fields at a higher than expected level. As shown below, Figure 1 is a side by side comparison of billet percentage by specialty in comparison with chosen career fields. Even within the non-traditional field of military service, there are non-traditional career paths such as aviation and engineering. All occupations are treated equally at



promotion boards. However, statistically, certain specialties have lower promotion rates than others. Based on a ten-year average at each rank, as shown below in Table 2, the marine safety field is shown to be the hardest hit by promotion

boards. This problem needs further study as there is a strong likelihood that women will continue to seek assignments in the marine safety field and pursue careers in this specialty.

Promotion Rates by Paygrade and Occupational Specialty

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Occupational Specialty</u>						<u>Overall</u>
	<u>Admin</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>Eng</u>	<u>AVI</u>	<u>OPS</u>	<u>Other</u>	
CAPT	62 %	55%	59%	67%	62%	67%	61%
CDR	73%	66%	64%	72%	73%	66%	70%
LCDR	70%	71%	79%	79%	73%	60%	74%
LT	79%	80%	83%	90%	83%	87%	84%

Table 2

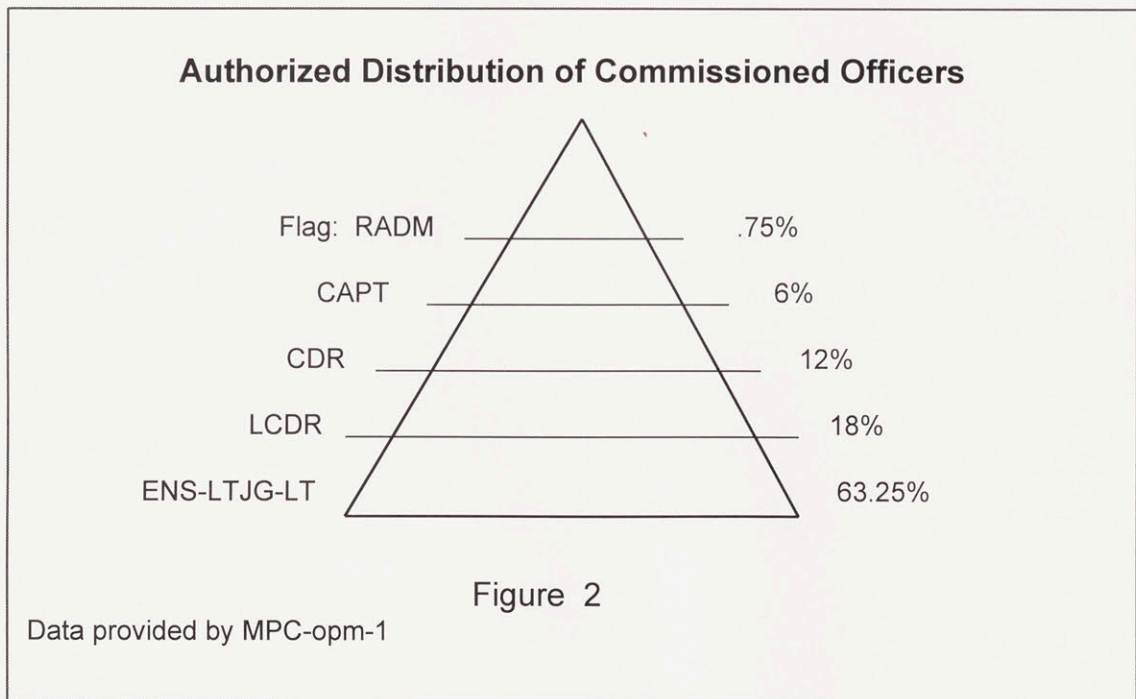
Data provided by MPC-opm-1

THE FUTURE

So how many women officers should the Coast Guard have in the future?

The present Commandant of the Coast Guard has stated that he would like to see the number of women in the service mirror society. This lofty goal, after discussions with the Office of Personnel, has been scaled down to a 33 percent representation by the year 2015. Almost 20 years away, this goal on the surface, appears achievable. But are there roadblocks?

One must first realize that the Coast Guard officer corps is limited in size by federal statute to 6,000 commissioned officers on active duty, excluding commissioned warrant officers.¹⁷ However, due to fluctuating annual budget authorizations, the actual number of officers varies each year. The Coast Guard



must also adhere to a hierarchical rank structure that is prescribed in federal statutes and outlines how many individuals may hold each rank.¹⁸ The authorized distribution of commissioned officers is depicted above in Figure 2.

Recently the officer corps has experienced a tremendous amount of fluctuation in its number of officers. It grew in strength from 5,074 in Fiscal Year 1989 to approximately 5,850 in May 1994. This period of significant growth has come to a screeching halt with the federal government's recent efforts to

¹⁷ Title 14, United States Code, Section 42: Number and distribution of commissioned officers.

¹⁸ Title 14, United States Code, Section 2: Primary Duties.

downsize. This year the corps size is being reduced to 5,550. To achieve this goal, the Coast Guard has offered for the first time early retirement to individuals who have between 15 and 20 years of active duty service. Workforce projections expect the officer corps to decrease by 2 percent each year from now until 1999. By the year 2000, it is projected that this figure will level out at 5,325 commissioned officers.

Considering these outside restrictions, the goal of 33 percent can be examined in more detail. Using the authorized distribution depicted in Figure 2, the Coast Guard should have 1,757 women officers by the year 2015 in the following ranks: 13 women admirals, 105 women captains, 211 commanders, 316 lieutenant commanders and 1,111 junior grade officers. With women's representation currently at 507, this represents a 240 percent increase in women officers. As the Academy will be the primary source of senior women leadership, let's examine how realistic a 33 percent women's representation rate is for the year 2015.

Projecting Academy Women Captains in the Year 2015

The first step to examining the 33 percent goal is to calculate the number of Academy women captains in the year 2015. As stated earlier, approximately 72 percent of all captains should come from the Academy. Therefore, this rate can be applied to the overall number of captains projected in the year 2015 to establish a target goal of 76 women Academy graduates (105 women captains X

72 percent). As it takes approximately 21.7 years to “grow” a captain, one can determine that these captains will come from the Academy classes of 1985 to 1993.

The next step is to identify the different factors which will impact the number of women in these year groups most likely to reach captain. The first hurdle is the promotion process. At each promotion level only a certain percentage will be selected for the next rank. For the purposes of this projection, I will use the selection rates shown in Table 3 for predicting future women officer’s representation. For example, if you were being reviewed for promotion to LCDR, you would have a 78.61 percent chance of selection.

Average Promotion Rates by Paygrade for the Last 5 Promotion Years

CAPT	CDR	LCDR	LT	LTJG
68.5%	77.8%	78.6%	87.9%	99.8%

Table 3

Data provided by MPC-opm-1

In addition to facing progressively selective promotion boards, three additional boards impact officer retention on active duty. The first is the Reserve Officer Extension Board, the second is the Integration Board and the third is the Captain Continuation Board which evaluates captains for continued service beyond their 27th year of officer service. The selection rate for captain

continuation has dropped to 50 percent the past two years. Only the captain continuation board will impact the Academy graduate so a 50 percent selection rate will be applied to year groups 1985 to 1987.

The Boards described above cause involuntary separation from the service. However, people also leave the service voluntarily and this will also impact the number of women available to reach captain. People decide at different times in their lives, that the military is not for them. There are identifiable key decision points in every officer's career where the majority of those voluntarily leaving submit resignations. For an Academy graduate, I know from my experience as an assignment officer, this occurs at the end of their five-year commitment, at the end of their graduate school or flight school obligation and at the 20-year retirement point. According to the Promotion and Status branch, this figure runs approximately 6.8 percent at each critical career point.¹⁹

These different hurdles, the promotion boards, Captain Continuation Board and voluntary attrition rates, can be applied to the current number of women in each of the year groups to project the number of captains the Coast Guard will have in 2015. There are currently 115 women officers in the ranks of lieutenant junior grade, lieutenant, and lieutenant commander. According to the projections outlined in Table 4, there will be approximately 43 Academy women captains in 2015. This is far short of the distribution calculated goal of 76 and assumes women will not leave voluntarily at a higher rate than 6.8 percent. As promotion

¹⁹ Based on data collected from MPC-opm-1. This figure has been quoted in a number of manpower projection papers.

rates are unlikely to improve due to downsizing, it is unlikely that this figure will be higher. If anything, this projection is optimistic based on information provided later in this thesis.

Growth of women's representation within the senior ranks may not be as quick as senior management may like, but senior management is in an excellent position to impact the careers of those presently in the service and of those yet to come.

Projection of Women Academy Captains in the Year 2015

Year Group	Present Number by Grade			Remaining Number after Boards				CAPT cont Factors	Projection in 2015
	LTJG	LT	LCDR	LT	LCDR	CDR	CAPT		
1985			8			6	4	-2.2	
1986		5			4	3	1	-0.5	1
1987		11			9	7	5	-2.5	3
1988		6			5	4	3		3
1989		15			11	9	6		6
1990		11			9	7	5		5
1991		16			11	9	6		6
1992	24			22	17	14	9		9
1993	21			19	15	12	8		8
Total									43

Notes:

1. Promotion multiplies:
 - LT = 87.92%
 - LCDR = 78.61%
 - CDR = 77.82%
 - CAPT = 68.50%
 2. Attrition Factor: Year Group 1985 - 6.8% at 20 year point, 50% CAPT cont.
 Year Groups 1986-87 - 6.8% at 10/20 year points, 50% CAPT cont.
 Year Groups 1988-90 - 6.8% at 10/20 year points
 Year Groups 1991-93 - 6.8% at 5/10/20 year points
- Note: Attrition factor applied prior to next promotion (i.e. prior to promotion to LCDR and CAPT)
3. Figures have been rounded up for promotion and attrition.

Table 4

Chapter Three

The Academy Experience

As the U. S. Coast Guard strives to increase the number of women officers, the success of the Academy to attract and then successfully train women will be critical. The admissions staff will have to maximize efforts to identify women who will most likely graduate from the program while the administration staff must provide the military training needed by these women cadets to prepare them for successful tours in the Coast Guard. A high failure rate by either staffs will not only be costly but will fail to provide the service with the needed number of career women officers. Thus this chapter will examine the admissions process followed by a brief analysis on what kinds of women are coming to the Academy - their motivation for applying and common characteristics. It will also examine the military training program at the Academy to provide a benchmark for any required improvements in the system. Finally, this chapter will summarize the results of women cadet interviews and graduate surveys concerning the success of the Academy program. This includes feedback on their self-confidence and social issues that impacted their Academy experience.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

The Coast Guard Academy has been identified as one of the hardest institutions into which to gain admission. The number of applications received

reached a peak of 9,996 in 1980, but has averaged approximately 5,000 the past two years. From these applicants, approximately 460 individuals will receive an appointment letter but only about 275 will choose to accept the appointment.²⁰ A high percentage of those who decline the appointment find themselves off to one of the other service academies. The competition is tough for the individual, but also tough for the Coast Guard Academy in convincing quality students that they would enjoy a small New England military institution over West Point, Annapolis or the Air Force Academy. One significant distinction and possible advantage over the other service academies is that the Coast Guard Academy does not require congressional appointments.

The Coast Guard Academy's Admission Statement emphasizes that appointment to the Academy is based on merit. The admissions process seeks "the best and brightest students by incorporating a wide range of desired individual attributes and character traits such as intellectual ability, extra-curricular activity, leadership, cultural perspectives, integrity, confidence, enthusiasm, et al."²¹ They use the same procedures for evaluating all applicants and have no "special admissions process or quota for any individual or group."²² Additionally, the Academy has stated that "in fulfilling our responsibility as a federal and educational institution providing future leaders to an organization that interacts widely with the American people, the Academy has both a moral and public

²⁰ Based on information gathered on Academy classes 1980-1998.

²¹ Captain R. W. Thorne, "Coast Guard Academy Admission Statement," 1995, 4.

²² Ibid.

interest in ensuring that all segments of our society are fully represented.”²³ Thus, the sole purpose of the Academy is to provide a diverse population of commissioned officers for the U. S. Coast Guard

Individuals interested in the Coast Guard Academy begin the process by completing an application which emphasizes demonstrated leadership, extracurricular activities, employment, community service, special talents, awards and recommendations. Transcripts and either the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Testing (ACT) assessment scores are submitted with the application along with an essay on why the individual should be selected for admission to the Academy. Individual applicants are pared down by a two-tiered scoring system that is both objective and subjective.

The score for the first tier is known as the Finalist score and is the most objective of the two scores. The score is comprised of High School Ranking (HSR) and college test scores and accounts for 60 percent of the applicant’s total score. The elements are weighed differently with HSR accounting for 30 percent, the math score 20 percent and the verbal score ten percent. Before individuals are evaluated by the next tier in the selection process, they must meet a minimum established score of 3,350 points. Obviously, not everyone comes from the same size high school graduating class so the HSR is adjusted to reflect class size and competitiveness of the school. The competitiveness of each high school is evaluated based on percent of students going on to four and two year colleges

²³ Captain R. W. Thorne “Coast Guard Academy Admission Statement.”, 4..

upon graduation. Based on this evaluation, the applicant is awarded between 200 and 800 points for HSR. Applicants have the option to take the SAT or ACT as many times as they desire and only the top score is used for candidate evaluation. Due to the hard science curriculum, especially during the first year, math test scores are weighed twice as heavily as verbal scores. An example of how the Finalist score is computed is outlined below in Table 5. The score of 3,965 would qualify this candidate as a Finalist. Approximately 35-40 percent of the initial applicants qualify as Finalists.²⁴

Calculation of a Candidate's Finalist Score

Sample Candidate: HSR 5 out of 100 = 675 points; SAT 670 Math, 600 Verbal

30% HSR	=	3 X 675		= 2,025
20% Math	=	2 X 670		= 1,340
10% Verbal	=	1 X 600		= 600
				= 3,965
Total score				= 3,965

Table 5

Data provided by 1995 CGA Admissions Statement

Once a candidate qualifies as a Finalist, the application is forwarded to the second tier for review and further scoring by the Cadet Candidate Evaluation

²⁴ Based on admissions data for classes 1996 - 1997.

Board (CCEB). This board is actually comprised of a series of three-member panels from the Academy faculty and staff. Each member on the panel evaluates the candidate and assigns a score ranging from 200 to 800 points. They use criteria such as academic strengths, extracurricular activities, recommendations, special talents, and demonstrated leadership to derive a score. Subjectivity plays a major role in determining this score. Once evaluated, the scores of the three members are averaged and then multiplied by 40 percent. This CCEB score is combined with the Finalist score to derive a Candidate's Principal Score (CPS) which is then used in the selection process. This score is then compared with a pre-established cutoff score.

The pre-established cutoff score usually ranges from 6,400 to 6,550. It is normally determined in the fall of the selection year and is based on historical data, trends in society, number of applicants expected, size of entering class based on graduation projections, etc. All applicants meeting the cutoff score and found to be medically qualified for military service will receive an appointment letter. Some of those receiving a letter will not accept the appointment. In addition, those accepting the appointments may not bring the talents needed to the class. For those reasons the admissions staff has an alternate list of applicants who are within 250 points of the cutoff score. These alternates account for approximately 15-20 percent of each incoming class.²⁵

²⁵ Captain R. W. Thorne, Director of Admissions, conversation on January 23, 1996.

The Academy is committed to appointing well-rounded candidates who will enrich the campus life through their differing perspectives and diverse backgrounds. To help meet this goal, an Alternate Pool Selection Panel has recently been designated by the Superintendent of the Academy. Its purpose is to select individuals from the alternate list to round out the incoming class. Prior to creation of the Panel, individuals were selected off the alternate list based on their score alone. This new process allows panel members to determine gaps in the class make-up that can be filled by those on the alternate list. For example, there may be a need for a tuba player or a woman basketball player. All candidates selected are considered fully qualified and capable of handling the rigors of the program.

Candidates for the Academy can also be selected from Coast Guard participants in the Naval Academy Preparatory School program. This is an intense one-year intensive academic and military training program designed to bring individual test scores and abilities up to service academy standards. Many of the Coast Guard attendees are individuals from the enlisted ranks who have not reached the age of 21. They are considered and assigned scores using the same criteria as for the general pool of applicants.

With the exception of the alternate selection process, the Coast Guard Academy has made only minor changes to the long-standing admissions process. These minor changes, such as allowing the ACT to be used in place of the SAT, have had no impact on who was actually selected. But the admissions process

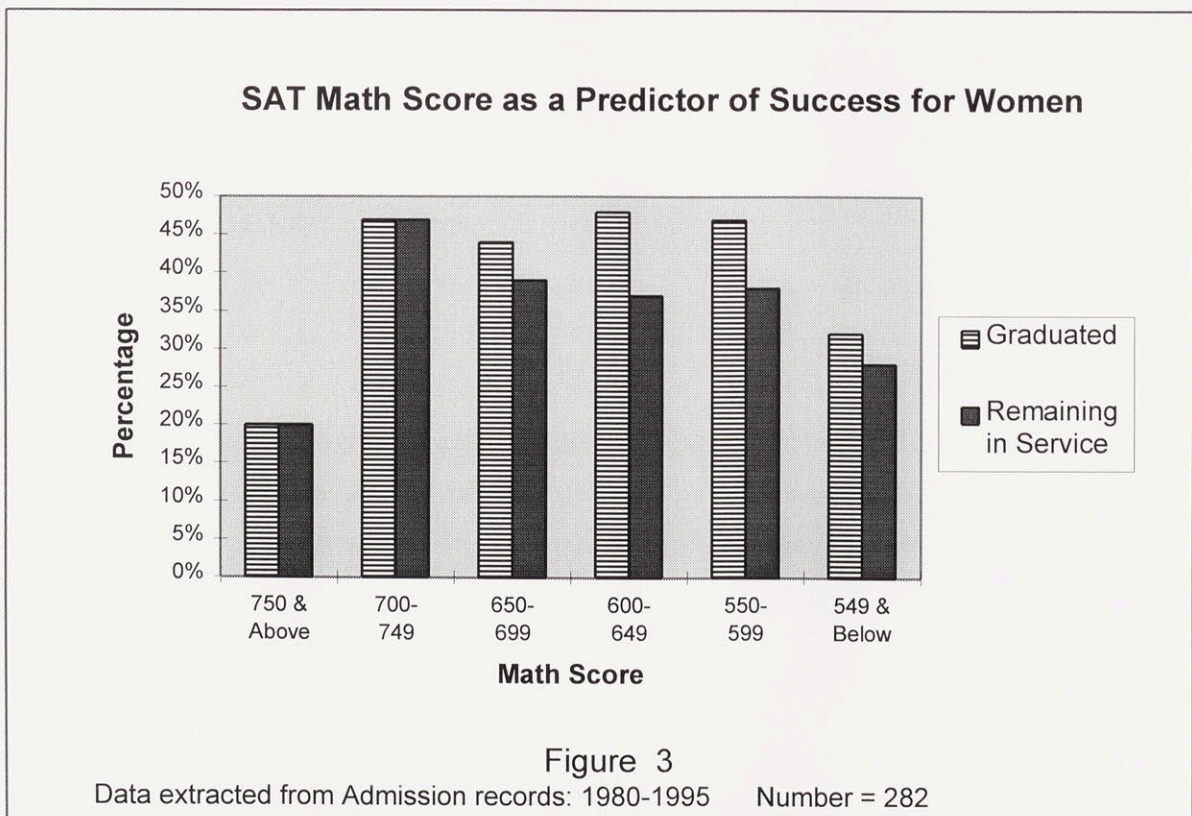
goes beyond the scope of selecting who attends the Academy as this process will determine the future leaders of the Coast Guard. Therefore, there should be a correlation between the selection scoring system and graduation and career rates. If a correlation does not exist in predicting future success, then the selection process may need revising. This is a particularly timely issue as the Coast Guard Academy strives to increase the number of women in the Corps of Cadets. For the purpose of this study, the math, Finalist and Principal scores associated with women from the Academy classes of 1980 through 1995 will be examined.

SAT Math Score

Mastery of the hard core courses such as math, chemistry and physics are considered essential for Academy graduates. For this reason the admissions process places a higher emphasis on the college math score. For the past ten years, the average SAT math score for appointees has remained steady between 640-650 points. Women math scores normally run approximately 10 points below the class average. This lower score, however, does not necessarily correspond with lower grades in the core science courses. Math data were collected on 282 of 735 women accepting appointments from the classes of 1980 through 1995. Scores on the other 435 women were either not available or the women had been selected based on their ACT scores.

The women were first tracked from their appointment to graduation to see if there was a correlation between SAT math scores and who graduated. Then an

attempt was made to find a correlation between scores and retention. Since this thesis is considering only factors related to retention of women, no attempt was made to include men in this study.²⁶ From the data available, as depicted in Figure 3, there appears to be no strong correlation between the SAT math scores above 550 points and graduation. Below 550, the percentage of women who graduate drops off significantly. However, those who do complete the program and have scores below 550 are just as likely as the majority of women graduates in this study to remain in the service. There does appear to be a slight correlation between the SAT math score and probability that the woman will remain in the service as women with higher scores are more likely to remain in the service.



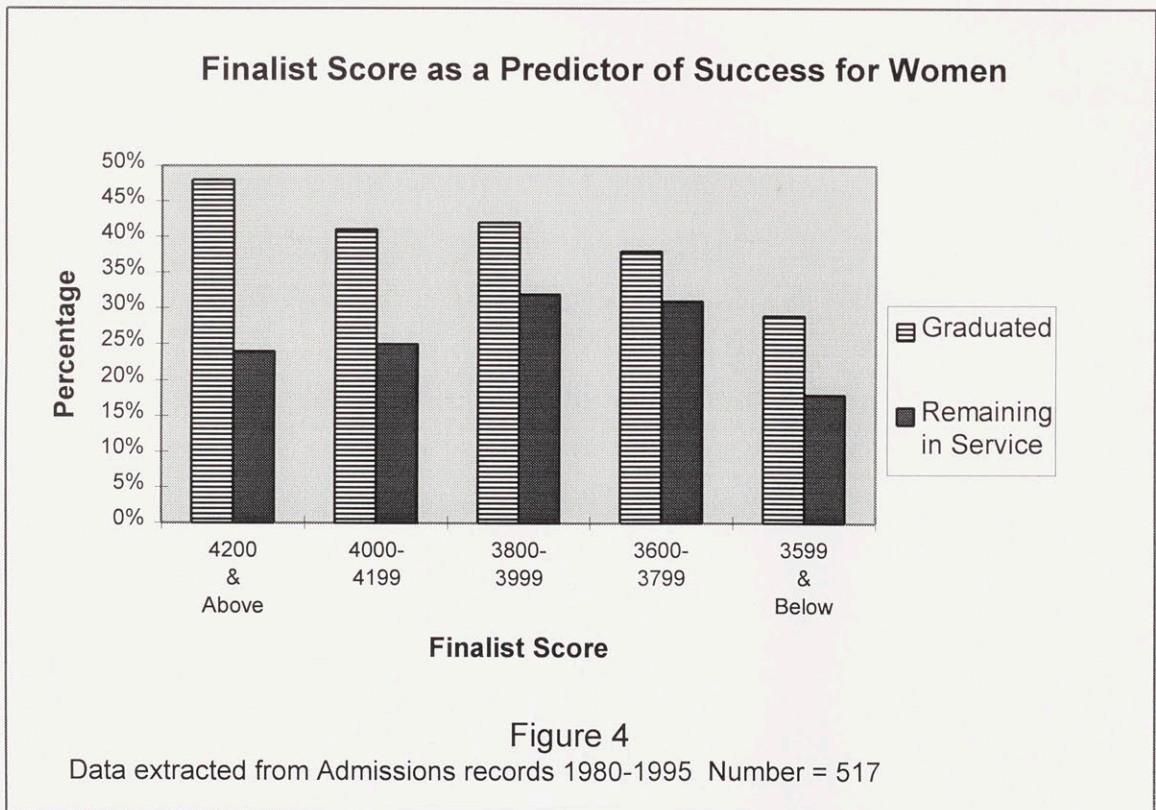
²⁶ The Coast Guard Academy may wish to start a tracking system on all cadets so that a determination can be made as to the validity of using the math score in the selection process.

Though the SAT math scores do not show a correlation with graduation, the Coast Guard Academy does have a good argument for placing a higher emphasis on the math score. Research indicates that there is a strong correlation between the women's college math score and their degree program. No woman below a math score of 550 and only five out of 282 with a math score below 600 received a technical degree. As engineers are needed in many of the mission areas, i.e. afloat, aviation and Research & Development, the Coast Guard Academy must continue to graduate a high number of engineers. Verbally this target has been set at 50 percent of each graduating class.

Finalist Score

Unlike the math score, there does appear to be an interesting correlation between the Finalist score and success at the Academy. Data were collected on 517 women which represents 70 percent of those receiving appointments in classes 1980 through 1995. As with the math scores, record keeping was incomplete and was only gathered for women. The Academy has recently instituted a computerized system that will help in future studies. As mentioned earlier, the Finalist score is the most objective and is based on high school ranking and college test scores. As shown in Figure 4 below, women with a higher Finalist score graduated from the Academy at a higher rate than those with lower scores. However, they were also found less likely to choose the Coast Guard as a career. The number of women in each score range was evenly distributed which adds

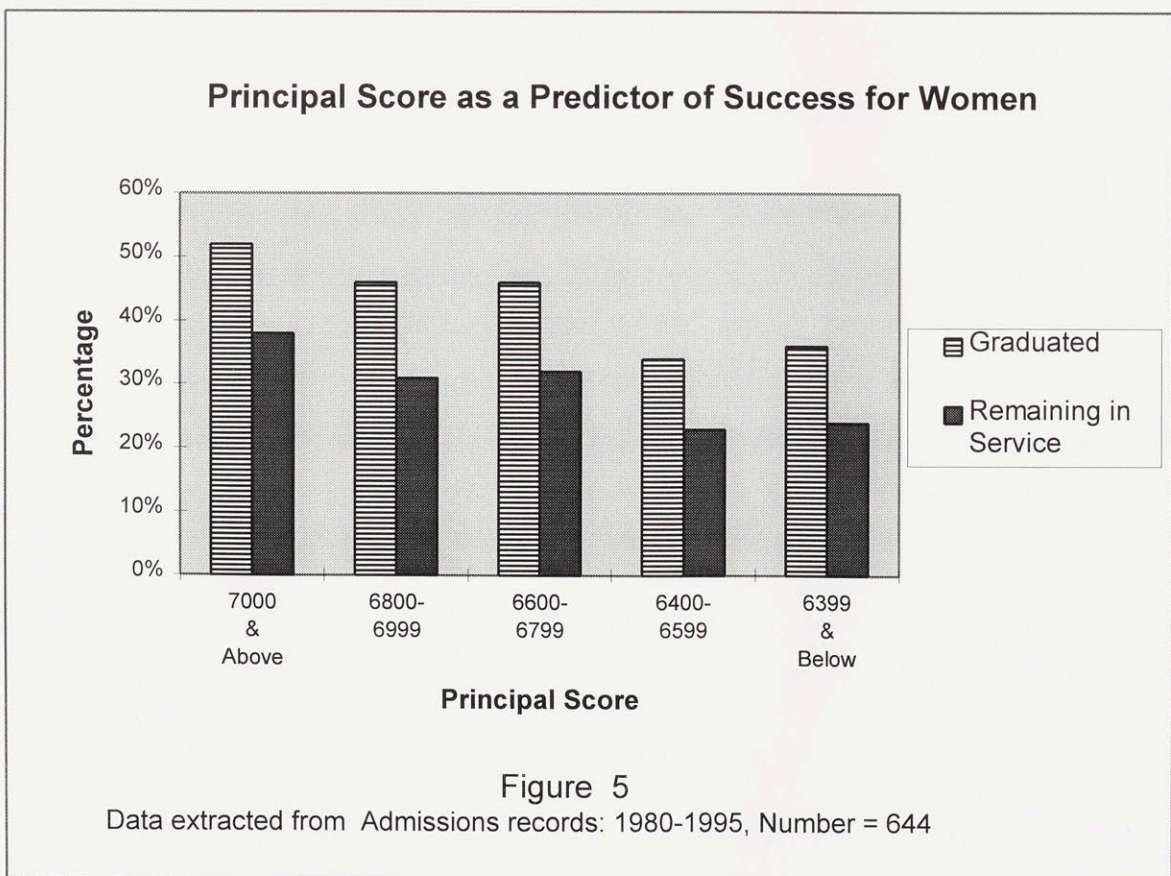
validity to the results. Reasons for the loss of these women after graduation are unknown. From comments in the interviews there can be some speculation that women with higher scores might be inclined to pursue other academic interests. The results of the data raises a concern for those women at the lower end of the Finalist scoring range. It appears women with lower Finalist scores are not only less inclined to finish the program but, if



they do, are less likely to remain in the service. The Academy may wish to examine these results further to see if it also holds true for male appointees. If so, it might suggest that the established cutoff is set too low.

Principal Score

The final admissions score that needs examination is the subjective Principal score. Data were available on 644 women appointees and scores ranged from 6,040 to over 7,600. Normally the cutoff score runs between 6,400 and 6,550. Based on the data collected there is a strong indication that the Principal score, as shown in Figure 5, correlates nicely with graduation potential. This correlation also appears valid for those remaining in the service. Again this study needs to be run on the male appointees before any clear action is taken by the Academy. While waiting for more conclusive results, the Academy should



continue to take positive steps to increase its women's applicant pool size. Even though the number of women admitted each year to the Academy has increased, the number of women applying has not significantly improved until very recently.²⁷ If the Academy is in pursuit of the best and the brightest, then it must make a concerted effort to recruit women. The fact that money and personnel have not been allocated toward this effort is a clear signal of the Coast Guard's passive commitment to improving the number of senior women officers.

All news is not discouraging as the admissions staff have worked around their lack of funding and people by soliciting the help of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. This well organized group of 37,000 volunteers already plays a significant role in introducing high school students to the Coast Guard Academy by running a one-week introductory course called Academy Introduction Mission (AIM). Individuals attend between their junior and senior high school years. Many of these individuals eventually end up applying to the Academy. This year the auxiliary members volunteered to play a more active role in recruitment and hopefully this will help increase the number of women applying to the Coast Guard Academy.

WHAT ATTRACTS WOMEN TO THE ACADEMY?

Before the Coast Guard can successfully recruit women, they must first understand what motivates women to apply to the service academy. One could speculate that women cadets would have thoroughly researched the Academy

²⁷ Coast Guard Academy Admissions Report, Women Recruitment Statistics (1980-1999).

and have a full understanding of the roles and missions of the Coast Guard prior to making this major commitment. But when 24 of the 37 First Class women cadets in class 1996 were asked why they applied to the academy, the majority responded that it meant a free education. Many of the respondents knew little about the Academy and even less about what to expect in the way of military training. Some had knowledge of the Coast Guard because their family owned a boat or they had a sibling who had attended the Coast Guard Academy. A few were attracted to the Academy because of its marine science degree program.

Four of the women interviewed had experience in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and seven had attended the Coast Guard's Auxiliary AIM program. Only three of the women confessed to harboring a long desire for attending a service academy and choosing a military career as their occupation of choice. The lack of military knowledge was expected as only four of the women came from military families although most came from families where either the mother or father had a tour in the military service. Based on the women cadets' limited knowledge about the Coast Guard and primary concern of receiving a free education, it was not surprising to hear that few women considered attending the Academy for a potential career.

These same sentiments were echoed by graduates of earlier academy classes. Results from the survey of women from Academy classes 1991 and 1992 indicated that the majority of the women came to the service academy because the price was right and they did not want to be a financial burden on their

families. A few women did mention they liked the service orientation and the opportunities for women. Two women thought the Academy experience would be adventuresome. Again, direct knowledge about the Coast Guard was limited as only one woman had a family member in the Coast Guard. However, 27 of the 34 women surveyed had a family member with at least some military experience from the other services.

OUTSIDE PRESSURES ON ATTENDING THE ACADEMY

Attending a service academy is still viewed by many as a non-traditional means for women to obtain a college education. Therefore, it would not be surprising to hear that women were not supported in their application efforts. However, this opposition to the Academy was infrequently demonstrated. Only four of the interviewees experienced any opposition towards their attending the Academy. One father wanted his daughter to settle down as was custom in his culture, one mother voiced opposition to a military career and another felt the physical distance was too great. Only one cadet encountered a guidance counselor who had reservations about her enjoying the military experience. It was interesting that none of the women mentioned any opposition from their peer group or from other siblings. Most parents were very supportive. This lack of opposition may represent a shift in societal acceptance of women in uniform or it may be due to the financial relief it brings to the family. Either way, the lack of family conflict or peer pressure eliminated a stress factor for the new cadet.

Opposition to attending the Academy was also not observed in the earlier classes of 1991 and 1992, in spite of the fact that women had only been accepted to the program for a little over ten years when they applied. The majority of the women surveyed stated they were encouraged in their efforts and indicated family support was strong. Only four women stated that they received any negative comments about their applying. These comments came from the guidance counselors of their high schools, a teacher, and from a maternal grandparent. One individual was warned about the military by her father.

Overall, this encouragement and support should be viewed as a positive sign for future recruitment efforts. What is unknown, of course, are the number of women who wanted to apply to the Academy but were forbidden by their parents to do so.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN WHO ARE SUCCESSFUL AT THE ACADEMY

So are there any common characteristics among the women attending the Academy? All the women interviewed from class 1996 had extremely successful high school experiences. All but three women indicated they graduated in the top five percent of their classes with the three exceptions well within the ten percent ranking. They all had leadership positions either in student government or in clubs. The majority of the women participated in some type of sports activity. The majority of the sports activities could be classified as individualistic, i.e. dance,

track, cross-country. Only four women interviewed played on team sports in high school, such as volleyball, basketball, softball and field hockey. Although not conclusive, these individuals more often mentioned using their teammates for moral support and appeared more inclined to mentor their junior teammates. The First Class women cadets were also heavily involved in their community through church.

These same characteristics were found in the women members of 1991 and 1992 who were surveyed. Out of 34 responses, 31 indicated they had graduated in the top five percent of their high school class. All but one woman had been involved in varsity sports. Over half the respondents had also been class leaders and held down jobs while in high school. Four women had attended the AIM program. Therefore, it appears the Academy has been very consistent in the type of well-rounded individuals they accept into their program.

MILITARY TRAINING AT THE ACADEMY

Individuals get their first taste of the Coast Guard Academy's military environment by attending the Fourth Class Summer Training Program, more affectionately known as "Swab Summer". The mission of this training program "is to prepare new cadets to function effectively as members of the Coast Guard Academy's Corps of Cadets by the start of the fall academic term. This includes being academically, militarily, and physically ready to handle the demands of their

first year at the Coast Guard Academy.”²⁸ This rigorous six-week training program introduces the new cadets to the Coast Guard culture, values and traditions and is a combination of physical and mental activities. It is “primarily used to detect those Fourth Class cadets who are not qualified for and would likely receive little satisfaction from a military career in the Coast Guard.”²⁹ This training period can almost be viewed as a part of the selection process

Once an individual successfully completes Swab Summer, which includes a week of training on board the Coast Guard bark “Eagle”, they have a brief respite before starting the academic year. Throughout this period there are military rules and regulations, including strict guidelines on associations between classes, that are spelled out in the “Regulations for the Corps of Cadets”. The regulations spell out everything from what to wear to when to sleep. This “A to Z” book defines the military environment in which the Corps of Cadets develop the discipline and skills necessary to become military officers. The military training program is also designed to provide leadership development opportunities. Throughout the academic year, cadets are challenged to run the Corps of Cadets with senior classes assuming the role of leaders and junior classes assuming the role of followers. To help prepare the cadets for their eventual role as an officer, they attend leadership classes and professional training seminars and receive practical experience from field units. Figure 6 outlines the four-year program.

²⁸ Cadet Fourth Class Summer Curriculum Manual, U. S. Coast Guard Academy, 1995, 1.

²⁹ Cadet Fourth Class Summer Curriculum Manual, 1995, 2.

200 Weeks of Leadership Development

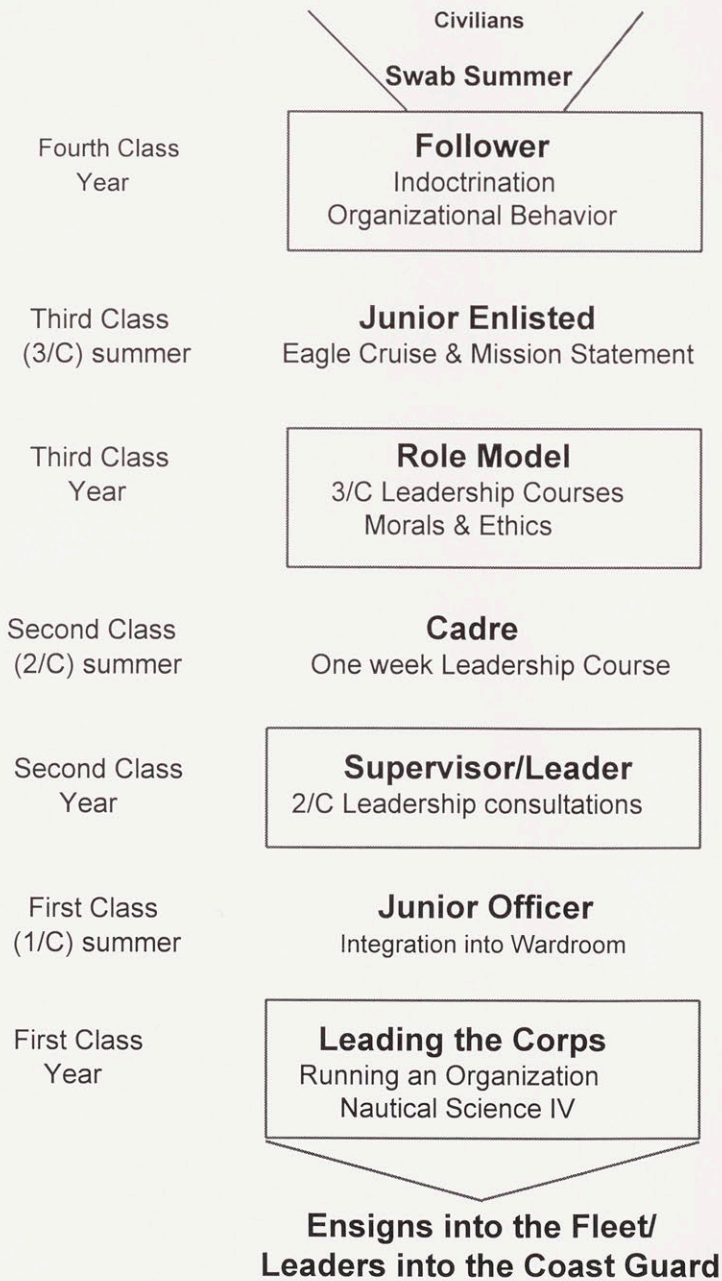


Figure 6³⁰

³⁰ LCDR Patrick Kelly, "Leadership Development at the CGA: An Update," *The Bulletin*, August 1994, 18.

Each summer the cadets are farmed out to different Coast Guard units to gain firsthand work experience. This ranges from afloat experience to visits to the aviation training center and marine safety units, and can last from a few weeks to a few months. The cadets have a choice in what they do during this period, allowing them to concentrate in areas they feel will be most beneficial to them after graduation. It is in this environment where cadets have their first opportunity to work along side commissioned officers and enlisted personnel.

Throughout their Academy experience the cadets are evaluated by their Company Officer as to their military aptitude in the form of modified fitness reports. These reports mirror the forms used in the fleet. They are also evaluated on their performance in different leadership positions as well as their performance during the summer training term. All this information will be combined to give the cadets a military aptitude score that will account for 25 percent of their class ranking. The overall goal of the military training program is to provide the cadets with enough military and leadership tools to enter the fleet as competent junior officers.

With the academic and military training received from the Academy, the new Coast Guard officers should be prepared to achieve success. The best way to see if the Academy program is hindering or helping women is to take a look at two factors. One factor is the retention rate of women at the Academy and the other factor is what women nearing graduation and in the field thought of their training at the Academy. These thoughts are products of interviews conducted on

24 of the 37 senior women cadets in class 1996 and surveys received from 34 of 44 women from Academy classes 1991 and 1992.

RETENTION

Retention of women at the Academy has been poor in spite of the selective appointment process. With the exception of classes 1987, 1993 and 1995, women have graduated at a lower percentage than their male counterparts as shown in Figure 7. For the past 16 years the Coast Guard Academy has lost on average 57 percent of the women from each incoming class prior to graduation. Although the Academy has made progress in reducing attrition, this is almost twice what is experienced by the other service academies as depicted in

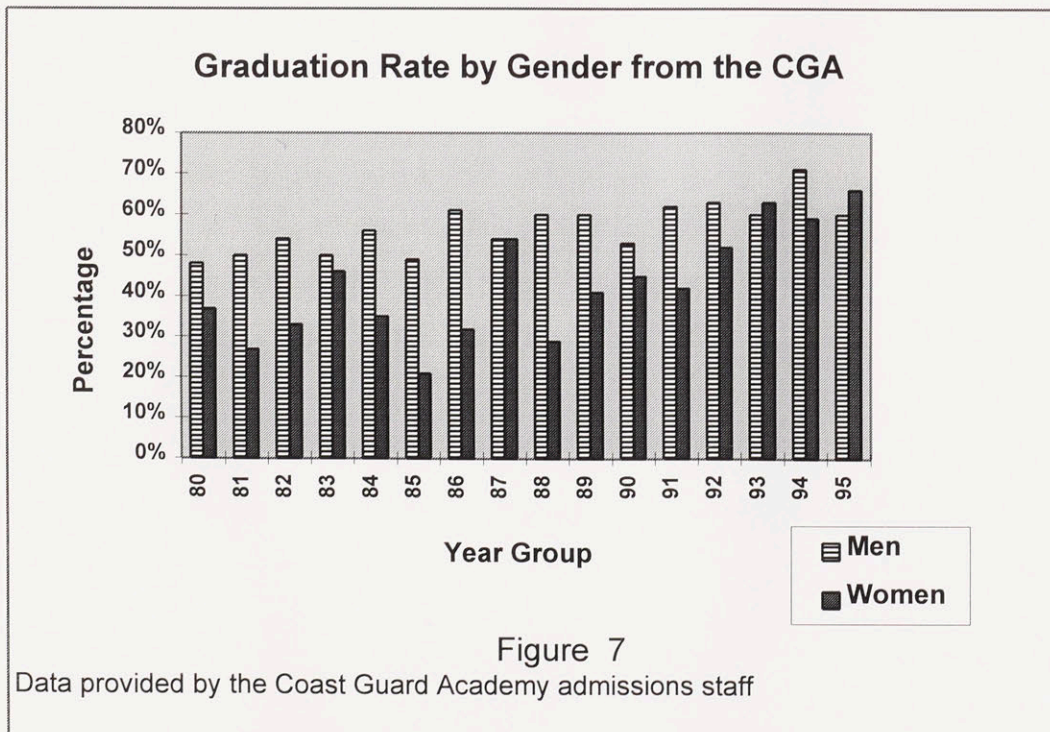
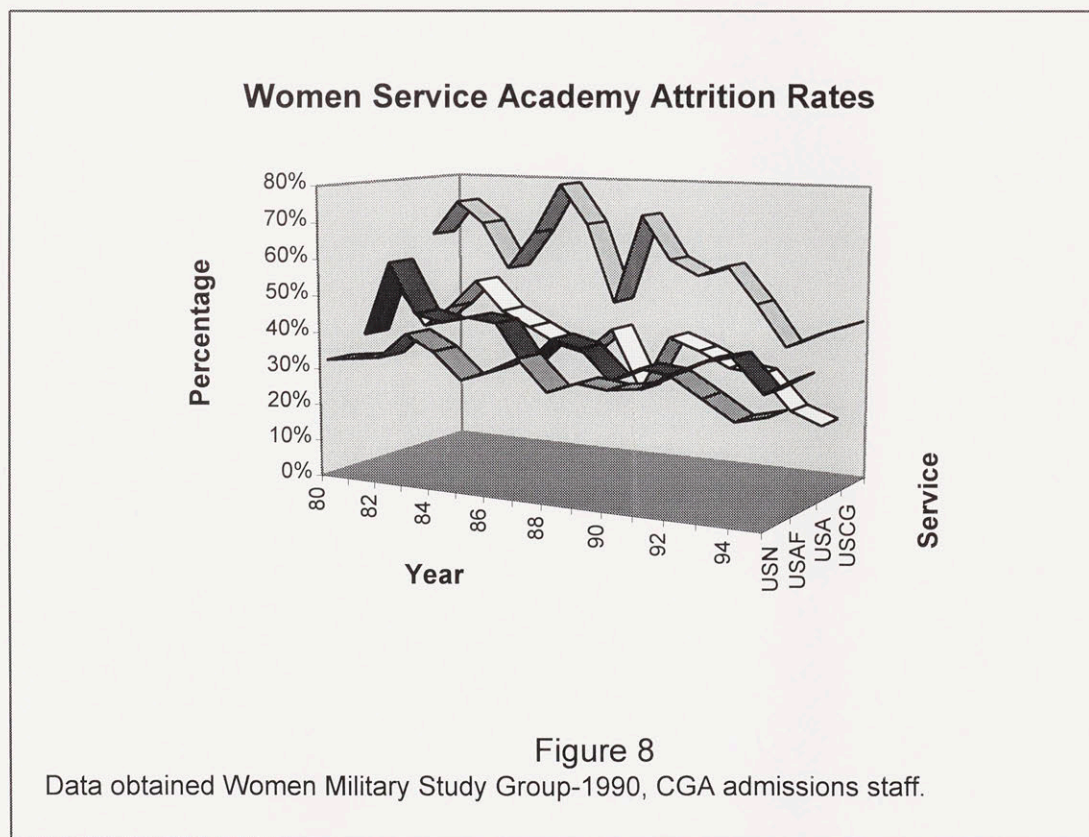


Figure 8. There are some who argue that women leave the Academy due to a small support system. But for the past 16 years women have averaged 18 percent of each entering Coast Guard class with the smallest percentage being eleven percent in 1982. This is far above the other service academies who have averaged 13 percent in the Air Force, eleven percent in the Army, and nine percent in the Navy. In spite of these low representation levels, each of these service academies has retained women at a level that equals or is slightly better than those of the Coast Guard's male population at the Academy.³¹



³¹ Based on Coast Guard admissions data for year groups 1980-1995. Average attrition rate for Coast Guard males during this period equaled 43%.

In looking at the retention statistics for the past five years, 71 percent (70 out of 98) of all involuntary separations were due to academics. Only four percent were forced out of the Academy due to military aptitude. Individuals leaving voluntarily are more likely to leave because of changes in career goals. Voluntary departures due to academics amounted to 25 percent whereas 21 percent left because of a failure to adjust to the military environment. Although academics are important for graduation and potential acceptance for graduate school, it is the effectiveness of the military training program that will have the largest impact on the organization. The low percentage of individuals leaving due to military aptitude indicates that the military training program is not a barrier to graduation.

The Academy with its many rules and regulations is not a typical college so it was not surprising that the majority of the women interviewed and surveyed seriously considered leaving the program. Academic difficulties, feelings of not belonging, desires to get married, stress, and just plain “not having fun” were the most common reasons given as to why women left the Academy. There were very few comments about sexual harassment being an attrition factor. The women who decided to remain stayed out of pride and a need to prove to themselves and others that they were not “quitters”. A few of the women stated they stayed because of strong family pressures.

THE MILITARY TRAINING PROCESS AND WOMEN

The second factor used to examine the success of the Academy program deals with the effectiveness of the training program. As mentioned earlier, few of the women interviewed knew what to expect upon arrival at the Academy. They did know from the appointment letter and information booklet "Can You Meet the Challenge" they received that the summer would be mentally challenging and physically demanding. What they could not tell was to what degree the program would test their skills. When I asked the women in class 1996 if they felt physically and mentally prepared for Swab Summer, the answers were mixed. Some were disappointed that the physical portion of the training was not harder and those who attended the AIM program felt Swab Summer was easier than it should have been. More women found themselves not physically prepared than not mentally prepared. The women who had the most difficult time were those who experienced an injury early in the training. These individuals all stated that they were labeled by their classmates and the Second Class as "sick and lame" and felt they spent a great deal of energy erasing this stigma. This is a prime example of how quickly a stressful situation can unite a group of individuals and close the doors to latecomers.

A few women did mention that individuals began to stand out during Swab Summer as natural leaders due to their physical ability and this was reflected in some favoritism by the Second Class cadets. Therefore, it appears that physical prowess may initially be associated with leadership potential. Very few women felt

they could make a physical impression on their classmates and had to wait until they were assigned leadership positions in their second year to demonstrate their leadership ability.

The women surveyed from classes 1991 and 1992 had similar responses to those interviewed regarding Swab Summer. They felt the Academy did a decent job at accurately portraying the Academy lifestyle. This corresponds to the fact that women felt mentally prepared for the summer indoctrination period as 27 out of 34 women disagreed with the survey statement, "I was not mentally prepared for Swab Summer." Similarly, 26 of 34 women felt they were physically prepared for the Academy training program. The training conducted during Swab Summer also had a positive impact in helping the women cadets adapt to the military environment. Half of the women surveyed indicated they entered the Academy unsure of their abilities to be successful in the military even though they felt mentally and physically prepared for Swab Summer. However, by the end of the summer training program both those interviewed and those surveyed felt prepared for the academic school year.

The military training program currently appears to prepare the women well for their assignments during the school year and for the summer training program at Coast Guard field units. Most women interviewed expressed positive training experiences out in the field and felt these opportunities were essential not only for their professional growth but in their understanding of Coast Guard missions. Additionally, they felt the present summer leadership training program prepared

them well for indoctrinating the incoming class during Second Class summer. There were, however, a few isolated incidents that hampered the learning process. One woman stated she was ignored by the junior officer conducting training at her summer unit while her male classmates received attention. Another woman stated that only through her own initiative did she gain something from the experience because people did not go out of their way to help.

The earlier graduates of the Academy were not as positive in their views of the training program. Unlike the class of 1996, 16 of 31 women surveyed did not feel prepared to assume the role of trainer for the incoming freshman class during their Second Class summer. There was, however, an incremental improvement in the summer training program so that by First Class summer 79 percent felt adequately trained to perform their assigned tasks. Since the summer training program varies for each individual, it is difficult to say whether the women felt unprepared because they did not receive the necessary training or whether they had not mastered the skills necessary to feel comfortable.

CONFIDENCE AND MILITARY APTITUDE

One of the main goals of the military training program is to instill confidence in the cadets. Some of the women interviewed felt they were on a roller coaster while others felt they had been slowly regaining their self-confidence since Swab Summer. Almost all stated their self-esteem was extremely low after Fourth Class year. When asked about a turnaround point, they pointed to their first selection to

a leadership position. Not only were they able to demonstrate to themselves they could do the job, but the male cadets also took notice of their abilities. They found out they could be effective leaders without assuming male characteristics like low voice and stature. The majority felt they had received enough leadership positions to develop a leadership style with which they were comfortable and that they felt would be effective in the fleet.

A few stated they felt women are sometimes given high positions within the corps because of their gender. Women who had the higher level positions all felt they deserved their position and were angered by inferences to the contrary. Women who felt they had not received enough leadership roles expressed more concerns about their ability to succeed in the fleet.

As military aptitude accounts for 25 percent of the overall class ranking, the women were asked where they felt they should have been ranked in comparison to where they were ranked by their Company Officers. Women who felt they performed militarily in the top quarter of their class were ranked in the top quarter by their Company Officers. However, those who felt they should be ranked in the second quarter were often ranked lower by their Company Officers. Many of these individuals stated that they had started their military career on shaking ground, i.e. had an injury during Swab Summer, were involved in a fraternization situation or other class offenses, but had worked hard to improve their image. One woman stated her rating improved with a new Company Officer who was

unaware of her past performance. First impressions appear to be very difficult to overcome.

As with the present class, the women surveyed also identified leadership positions as providing a major boost to their confidence. In the survey of Academy graduates, only eleven out of 34 women felt they were not given the leadership positions needed to prepare them for the fleet. Second Class year had the largest impact in their military aptitude development. Additionally, the First Class cruise was cited as being a turning point in their performance. All but three individuals felt their military performance remained the same or improved during their Academy experience. The women's perception of their military aptitude and their rankings from their Company Officers matched in 19 of the 34 surveys. In the other cases, seven women felt their performance improved while their Company Officer rated their performance as being consistent and five women felt their performance remained constant while the Company Officer felt it had improved. Only one individual indicated her military performance decreased which corresponded with her company officers ranking. The majority of the women surveyed rated their confidence level as medium which corresponded with their overall class ranking in military aptitude.

CONFIDENCE AND ACADEMICS

Academically, the road to success has been very difficult and appears to be a major factor in the women's confidence level. Although all of the interviewees

had strong academic backgrounds, all but three had a difficult Fourth Class year. Associated with this poor showing were feelings of low self-esteem and doubts about their qualifications for being in the class. Of the women interviewed, approximately one-half were pursuing government and management degrees. Approximately 40 percent were studying for an engineering degree with the remainder seeking marine science degrees. The only complaint about the engineering programs was that, due to the small class size and high likelihood of joint projects, the women found themselves the odd person out. The male cadets would often pair with each other or start the project without contacting the woman cadet. The women did not think these actions were intentional, just a lack of awareness on the part of the male cadets to recognize what was happening. Many of the women have raised their grades to a level of personal satisfaction which has manifested itself in a higher level of confidence.

Like the cadets, the women surveyed also expressed difficulty with the academic program with eleven of 34 women having low confidence in their academic abilities. These low academic confidence ratings were often matched with low or medium military aptitude ratings. Only one woman who had low confidence in academics felt highly confident in her military aptitude.

CONFIDENCE AND OTHER ISSUES

Confidence issues also arose in other areas. Almost all the women expressed dislike for the uniforms because they made them feel unfeminine. The

women stated that the uniforms fit poorly and were of an old design. They were aware that the Coast Guard had new uniforms in the planning stage for over three years and expressed concern over the long delay. This point, although an irritant for the women cadets, was not as alarming as the indication that weight may still be a major issue at the Academy. Many women expressed pressure from their male classmates to diet and some had experienced humiliating comments about their weight. Although the well-known eating disorders of anorexia nervosa and bulimia have been recognized by the administration as a problem, lesser known disorders, such as bingeing, have not. The women appear to be doing whatever it takes to make themselves look acceptable to their classmates even if it is harmful. Only one woman stated she did not care what people thought of her.

SOCIAL ISSUES

There were some social issues that seemed to affect the women's success in military training at the Academy. These included competition, lack of mentoring and a poor social climate. When asked the question who is more competitive, men vs. men, women vs. women or women vs. men, the majority of women interviewed stated women vs. women. This feeling was also echoed by the women surveyed, as slightly more than 50 percent agreed with the statement that women are more competitive with each other than with men. One cadet stated that women are more competitive with each other because they feel they must stand out from the other women to be accepted by the men. This has to be

accomplished without giving up their femininity. Another said that women have to stand out to get noticed and that all it takes is one poor performing woman to bring all women down. These feelings of competition between women may be a major factor in why mentoring other women occurred infrequently.

Mentoring is playing only a minor role in military training at the Academy. Very few of the interviewees had a mentor and those who did stated their mentors were men. Only a few had developed a mentor relationship with a junior woman even though the Academy had established a formal mentor program. All stated that senior women should play a more active mentoring role and found visits from senior women officers in the fleet rejuvenating. The need for women role models was mentioned in almost every interview. Individuals who participated in team sports did appear to spend more time mentoring their teammates than those in individual sports.

This problem has been persistent for many years as the women from classes 1991 and 1992 also had strong feelings about mentoring. Seventy-six percent of the women surveyed believed that senior women cadets should play a more active role in mentoring other women cadets. They also felt that this contact with senior women cadets was more important than contact with women officers at the Academy. Only 47 percent indicated that contact with women officers strengthened their desire to graduate. Competition has been identified as one factor which may be inhibiting mentoring between women. Another factor may be whether the Academy encourages women to socialize.

The women interviewed felt the social climate was not conducive for women to socialize with each other. This was particularly true during the first few years of training when many of the women had low self-esteem and felt isolated from their male counterparts. When they did get together, they were often questioned by their male counterparts as to what they were doing and why. Credit must be given to the senior women of Class 1996 as they have decided to buck the social pressures and go out to dinner as a group every six to eight weeks. They have found this all-female experience an excellent avenue for discussing concerns and providing support. It is unfortunate that these women did not feel comfortable meeting as a group earlier in the program.

This supportive atmosphere was not present for the women of classes 1991 and 1992 as only eleven of 34 respondents agreed with the statement that "The environment at the Academy encourages women to socialize with each other".

SUCCESS OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM IN PREPARING WOMEN FOR THEIR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

Within four months, all but one of the interviewees will receive her diploma and a commission as an ensign in the U.S. Coast Guard. As with all Academy graduates, the first tour of duty will be assigned to an afloat unit. The vast majority of the women interviewed felt prepared for the experience although a few had misgivings about their shiphandling ability. They did feel the training program

at the Academy adequately prepared them to perform their duties and those who had spent most of their previous summers aboard ship appeared more confident in going to sea. This preparation for sea duty was not mirrored in the other career paths as many of the women knew little about the other Coast Guard mission areas.

The majority of the women surveyed also felt well-prepared to handle their first assignment at a floating unit with only eleven out of 34 women indicating they did not feel comfortable with their Academy training. These responses show that the Academy has generally been successful in preparing women for their first assignment.

THE ACADEMY AND CAREER GOALS

As the goal of the Academy is to produce the military officers for the Coast Guard, it is important to see how the Academy training experience impacts career aspirations. When women in classes 1991 and 1992 entered the Academy, 15 had career aspirations of 20 years, ten were unsure of their goals and nine were looking to leave the service after completing their obligation. Although 18 women agreed that the summer training program strengthened their desire for a military career, eight women strongly disagreed with this statement. This strong negative signal was mirrored in their responses to the question of whether the overall military training received strengthened the cadets' desire for a career. Eighteen women did not feel the military training improved their career aspirations. In spite

of these feelings, overall career aspirations remained the same as when the cadets entered the academy. Thirteen women expressed a desire to remain for 20 years, two individuals wanted command and eleven were unsure of their desires. Only seven individuals wanted to leave the service at the end of their obligation. Interestingly, not one women selected a 30-year career or had aspirations of making admiral in the service.

Chapter Four

Women at Sea

The mission of the Coast Guard Academy is to “graduate young men and women with sound bodies, stout hearts, alert minds, and with a liking for the sea and its lore, and with that high sense of honor, loyalty, and obedience which goes with trained initiative and leadership, well grounded in seamanship, the sciences, and the amenities and strong in the resolve to be worthy of the traditions of commissioned officers in the United States Coast Guard in the service of their country and humanity.”³² To this end, all Academy graduates must go to sea for their first assignment. This is **the** critical step in developing a career officer as performance on board the afloat unit will weigh heavily on future assignments and promotion and as the experience itself often affects career aspirations. To examine how Academy women viewed their assignments at sea, responses were gathered from the survey sent to the 1991 and 1992 classes.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT

The sea experience is a continuation of the training process that began at the Academy. According to the survey, 22 of 33 women felt prepared to handle their first assignment at a floating unit. In addition, 29 of 34 felt confident in their

³² United States Coast Guard Academy, 1995-1996 Catalogue of Courses.

leadership abilities. Therefore, with few exceptions, the majority felt prepared to be successful on their ship.

Since the newly commissioned ensigns report to their units unqualified to stand engineering and bridge watches, their first task is to become qualified as a watchstander. This is done by completing a Coast Guard wide qualification book known as Personal Qualification Standards (PQS) and by standing supervised watches. Failure to qualify within a reasonable period of time will be reflected in the officer's performance report and could mark the end of a career.

Although there are training manuals for some tasks and organization guidelines for others, the majority of the training is "hands-on". The training responsibility rests with the Executive Officer, but in most cases that responsibility is delegated to the Operations and Engineering Officers. Actual

Q. B-11 Most of the training I received aboard ship was conducted by:

CO 7 XO 11 OPS 11 EO 6 LTJG 15 Peers 9 Other 1
Warrants 12 Chiefs 21 Leading Petty Officer 15 Own Initiative 25

Q. B-12 Who did you rely upon most to help you during your first assignment?

CO 0 XO 4 OPS 5 EO 3 LTJG 10 Peers 8 Other 4
Warrants 6 Chiefs 17 Leading Petty Officer 6 Own Initiative 12

Table 6

training is conducted by experienced deck watch officers and assistant engineers, while peers exchange tips on the likes and dislikes of the Command. Survey results shown above in Table 6 indicate that the training was fairly evenly split among the officer ranks (CO, XO, OPS, EO, LTJG, Peers & Warrants), though enlisted members (Chiefs, Leading Petty Officers) carried a larger share of the training responsibilities. Women relied heavily on their own initiative to become qualified which is a desired quality in all junior officers. The survey indicated that the official trainers are not necessarily the ones the women relied upon most during their first assignment. The fact that the women did not feel comfortable relying on their official trainers suggests a less than optimal training environment.

This afloat qualification system was viewed very positively by the women surveyed as 29 out of 34 felt PQS aided their qualifying as a watchstander. However, the women were not as positive about their hands-on experience. Only six women out of 34 strongly agreed with the statement, "Assistance provided me by my fellow officers enhanced my professional development." Twenty women disagreed with this statement. It appeared that the Command was a little more involved as 20 women felt their Command had helped their professional development. However, ten women felt strongly that their Command had not helped their professional development.

When questioned on what would have improved the training process, the women presented a variety of ideas. Five women offered no suggestions and

three felt the training program was perfect. The remaining women's comments can be grouped under the headings of more training, command and control leadership and support, gender relations and gender support. Additional types of training requested by four women included Search and Rescue, shiphandling, more engineering training at the Academy, and Leadership and Management. Two women felt ensigns should not receive collateral duty responsibilities until they are fully qualified. The women also felt more feedback and command support from their superiors would have helped. One woman stated that her ideas on how to improve the training process were to, "Assign a CPO or LTJG to be responsible for providing needed guidance. Have that person rated on their guidance. Ensure CO/XO/OPS care about JO (junior officer) development. Not many do." Another woman wrote that the process needed "A CO who gave a damn about me as a JO. He did nothing but try to belittle and humiliate me and hold me back." Still another woman wrote she would have liked "More feedback from my supervisor (EO) and up. I always had the feeling ... was willing to let me hang myself on my mistakes."

The issue of command support came up in one woman's comment when she wrote, "Increase the opportunities to excel individually & as team members by more day to day training on Admin issues, shiphandling, leadership do's and don'ts, navigation, msg. writing. I was surprised to discover the attitude of 'what do you mean you don't understand,' or 'I can't believe you don't know that' vice 'Let me explain why'..." The issue of gender relationships came up three times

with one woman answering the question with “an XO who did not feel adamantly that women should not be on those ships.” Three women also expressed a desire for more women officers aboard their unit. In spite of these statements, there were no indications that any of these women failed to qualify. However, this is not to indicate that they do not have problems.

One would expect all newly commissioned officers to experience some difficulties on their first assignment due to the significant learning curve. All but two of the women surveyed indicated they experienced difficulty during their first assignment. But these difficulties, with rare exception, were not due to performance problems. The difficulties can be grouped under four headings: sexual harassment, misperceptions, inequality in training and fraternization. Four women indicated they had been sexually harassed aboard their unit. One woman wrote “CO w/inappropriate feelings/made advances, wrote me love letters...supervisor who resented CO’s attention to me, made accusations.” Another woman wrote “Unprofessional XO during 1st year of assignment. He ‘solicited an unprofessional relationship’ on several occasions. This caused me to withdraw from the wardroom for a couple of months until situation was handled by new CO.” The other two women indicated that the command and/or wardroom did little to help the women escape from unwanted advances.

In spite the fact that these women had successfully graduated from the Academy, their abilities were questioned. One woman wrote, “Command totally over-reacted to our presence, they expected us to be dim-witted and treated us

that way." Rumors and misperceptions occurred regularly. One woman was warned by her CO, whom she considered a fair and decent fellow, not to hang out with only one member of the wardroom. She was advised to go out with groups of officers only. Another woman wrote, "a great deal of the officers believed (since I was a woman) I was sleeping around with the crew. That was totally untrue." Some of the women were also expected by their Commands to join the wives' club. This often created an awkward situation for both the new ensign and the wives.

Since adequate training is so critical for professional development, it was disheartening to read that eight out of 29 comments centered on inequality of treatment. The most damaging comment stated "the OPS officer was very intolerant of females, esp. female officers, and did not mentor all new ensigns equally. Four ensigns arrived from the CGA together, 3 males (and) 1 female (myself) and he blatantly ensured they were always given preference in numerous tasks, duties, etc. He was very belittling in public and broke much of the confidence I arrived with." Still another woman wrote, "When I first arrived I had problems getting PQS signed off. I didn't recognize it at first until one of the Chiefs apologized to me in front of everyone at sexual harassment training. Not one of the chiefs would be in the same room with me if there wasn't another chief in there." She later found out that the three out of four women previous to her assignment had been removed due to an inappropriate relationship.

This inequality also was evident in the behavior of the crew towards the women. One woman wrote “As the only 2 women on board, the CO had the crew so scared of us that the mess cooks would not come in to empty the trash even when the door was latched open & we weren’t there! As women, we started off at a serious disadvantage from the other JO’s and I can’t stand feeling I have to prove something more, just because I’m female!” Finally, another woman wrote, “I didn’t feel I was offered the same opportunities as my male peers. I thought favoritism existed.”

Two women indicated the reason for their difficulty stemmed from fraternization with enlisted members. Another woman indicated she was accused by her Command of having an inappropriate relationship but did not indicate whether any disciplinary action was taken against her.

Adding to the women’s difficulties, 14 of 32 women felt isolated from their fellow officers in the wardroom. This isolation did not carry over into the enlisted ranks as 29 out of 34 women surveyed felt fully accepted by their subordinates.

The women departed their afloat units with 73 percent of the women surveyed feeling that their Officer Evaluation Reports (OER’s) accurately reflected their performance. This feeling of fairness did not carry over into recognition as almost 60 percent of the women indicated they did not receive the formal recognition they felt they deserved for their performance. One woman commented “When my male peers left the ship they (as stated in the ships newsletter) ‘would be sorely missed-Best of luck.’ No mention was made of my

or my female roommates departure. The comment was noticed by the crew and brought to my attention.” Overall, 18 out of 34 women surveyed were disappointed in their first assignment.

This afloat experience appears to have had a significant impact on the career aspirations of the women surveyed. Upon completion of their first afloat tour, twelve women indicated they planned to leave the service at the end of their obligation to the Coast Guard. Three women desired an afloat command and only six women were planning to stay for twenty years. Nine women indicated they were unsure of their desires. Overall, the afloat experience had a negative impact on the surveyed women's career aspirations.

SECOND ASSIGNMENT

In spite of these trying experiences, seven women requested sea duty for their second tour with four women requesting command. Five received orders to afloat units, but no one received command. Two women felt receiving this tour improved their potential for remaining in the service while two women felt it decreased their chances. One woman was undecided. All but one woman felt it improved their promotion potential. As before, four out of five felt sufficiently prepared for their new assignment and all were confident in their abilities to succeed. Only one woman felt she did not receive the necessary training to do her job.

All but one woman felt supported by her Command although one woman indicated she did not feel supported by her first boss but did by her second. Similar to the relationships aboard their first afloat unit, the women felt more accepted by the enlisted members than by their fellow officers. In fact, two women strongly disagreed with the statement "I feel accepted by other officers at my unit." Sixty percent felt their OER's accurately reflected their performance.

There was a shift in whom the women went to for training and this was most likely due to their position in the chain of command. While own initiative still was the overall driver in learning, CO/XO/OPS played a much larger training role. They were also relied upon more by the women.

The suggestions given by the women on how to improve the training program fell more along the lines of skill development. They wanted more ship handling opportunities and desired a standardized training program. Two women felt they would have benefited from a more understanding or forceful Commanding Officer.

When asked to comment on whether they had experienced any difficulties during this assignment, four out of five women indicated yes. One woman had a problem with a tough micro-manager for a boss and three had difficulties with the chain of command. Describing a subordinate, one woman wrote, "1st LT undermined me constantly, going over mine & XO's head complaining about everything. CO listened to him instead of putting him in his place." Another wrote, "On several occasions, my command (CO/XO) supported my chief fully

without consulting me on a departmental issue. Although I was a 2nd year Dept. Head with a 'Boot' BMC who hadn't been to sea as a Petty Officer, the command chose to support him, I feel largely because of the gender difference." Another woman experienced difficulties with "Chiefs who did not think that young women JO's should be in charge of anything in the engine room and rumors that were untrue that the command did little to stop."

Three of the five women who received afloat assignments will be out of the service within the next year or two. Only one woman indicated that she intended to pursue a 20-year career and command. The fifth woman surveyed has not decided her intentions.

From personal experience, I can fully empathize with the women's comments. Sea duty is extremely demanding physically and is mentally challenging. Not having Command support or trying to defend one's honor from false accusations takes up entirely too much energy and severely detracts from the experience. From this survey, it appears the issues facing the women almost 20 years ago have been passed along with time.

Chapter Five

General Experiences and Observations

The second assignment is critical to a woman's career as it will shape which career path she will follow the remainder of her career. Although service needs may direct an officer down a particular path, the majority of officers will have a voice in their second assignment. This chapter will examine the experiences of Academy women graduates in their second assignment by looking at the responses to the survey for the classes of 1991 and 1992. It goes on to include some general observations from the survey indicating how well women are doing in the Coast Guard.

GENERAL EXPERIENCES

The women surveyed requested a variety of positions representing all mission areas. The assignments they received closely matched these desires

Q. B-17 What career path did you desire after your afloat assignment?

Admin 2 Command Afloat 1 Afloat 5 Aviation 5 Group 3
Engineering Afloat 0 Engineering Ashore 3 Marine Safety 5
PG School 1 Other 5.

Q. C-1 What is your second assignment?

Admin 3 Command Afloat 0 Afloat 6 Aviation 4 Group 0
Engineering Afloat 1 Engineering Ashore 4 Marine Safety 4
PG School 0 Other 12.

Table 7

and 23 women received the assignment they requested as shown in Table 7. They viewed this effort on the part of the organization positively with 20 women out of 34 indicating they felt receiving this new assignment improved their potential for remaining in the Coast Guard. Twelve women indicated that it decreased their desire and two were undecided. Only four of the women who indicated their new assignment decreased their desire to remain in the service did not receive their choice of assignment.

The women also felt their new assignment improved their promotion potential in 66 percent of the cases and only 16 percent felt it harmed their chances for promotion. The women felt that the type of job and one's job performance were the key factors in promotion selection. Eight women, however, felt that who you know and how well your boss writes Officer Evaluation Reports (OER's) were the most important factors for becoming promoted. Politics was also considered important to promotion.

Command support of professional needs was very high with 27 out of 34 women indicating they felt they had their Command's support. Similar to their afloat experiences, 30 out of 34 women felt support from the enlisted personnel at their unit and 26 out of 33 women felt accepted by their fellow officers. This high level of acceptance by the "wardroom" was a marked improvement over the women's afloat experience. The women also felt their OER's accurately reflected their performance in 27 of 32 cases. In spite of this apparent support system and sense of being treated fairly in evaluations, seven women strongly agreed with the

statement, "My second assignment has decreased my desire to remain in the Coast Guard." Twenty-three women disagreed with this statement.

As with the afloat assignment, the women felt sufficiently prepared for their second assignment and felt very confident in their ability to be successful. Twelve women indicated that they would have liked more training. Unlike their first assignment where the enlisted personnel were responsible for a significant portion of the training, the women surveyed received a higher percentage of their training from their peers. They also found themselves relying on their own initiative to acquire the necessary knowledge to be successful in their new assignment. They also relied upon these same training sources, peers and own initiative sources for most of their help whereas on the ship the women surveyed tended to rely more heavily on their subordinates as shown in Table 8. The high number of responses in "other" referred to the number of women who received formal training for their second assignment. For example, women entering aviation attend Naval Flight

Q. C-13 Most of the training at my second unit was conducted by:

CO 5 XO 4 OPS 1 EO 2 LTJG 4 Peers 13 Other 14
Warrants 5 Chiefs 6 Own Initiative 21

Q. C-14 Who did you rely upon most to help you during this assignment?

CO 2 XO 8 OPS 3 EO 2 LTJG 3 Peers 18 Other 8
Warrants 3 Chiefs 7 Own Initiative 20

Table 8

Training for up to 18 months and Marine Safety officers attend three months of classroom instruction at the Coast Guard Reserve Training Center.

Officers in command and control positions also played a larger role in the training of the junior women officers. The comments by the women, besides those who went to sea and were discussed in Chapter Four, on what would have improved the training process during their second assignment revolved around training. The women identified training needs in how to be an instructor, and felt they would have benefited with additional training in administration, planning, and finance areas. Individuals assigned to marine safety units also wanted formal training prior to reporting to their first shore unit. Only three out of 34 women expressed dissatisfaction with the training process and their problems dealt with underutilization of their talents.

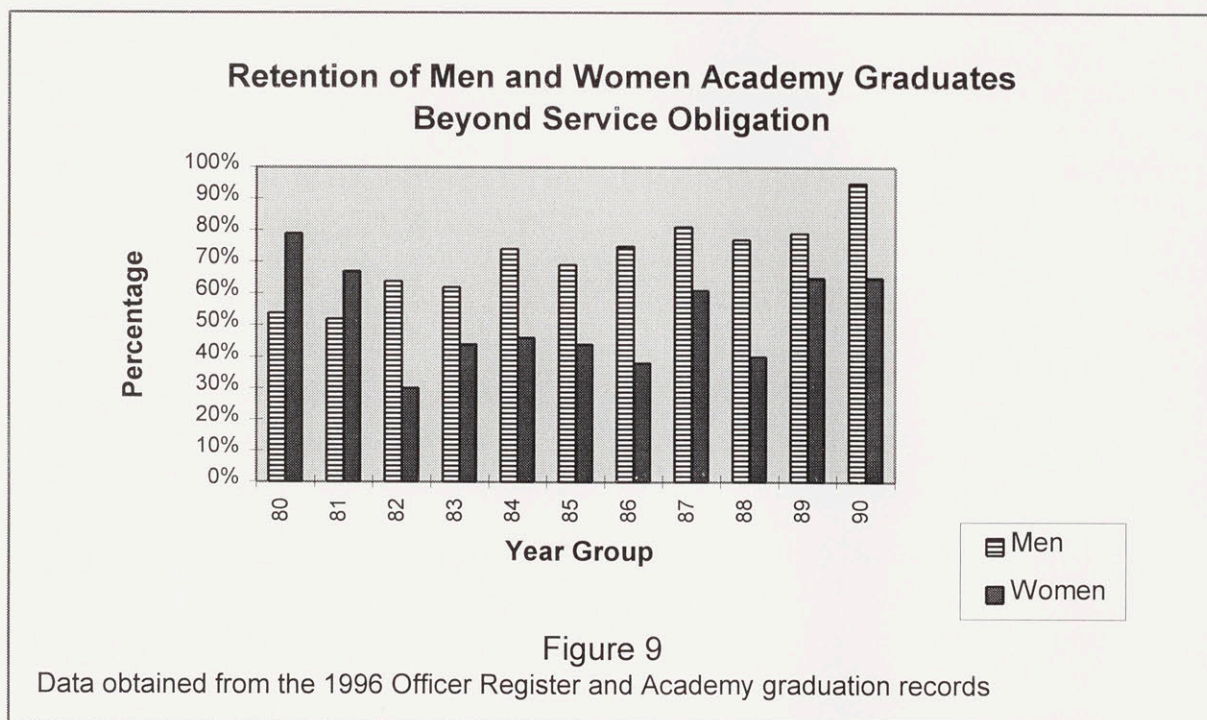
Overall, the second tour experience was almost a reversal of the first with only 12 out of 34 women experiencing some difficulties. The afloat experiences of five women have already been discussed in the previous chapter. For the rest of the women their difficulties dealt more with performance issues than with socialization issues. For example, one woman wrote, "I was terrible at formation flying & I lacked aggressiveness/confidence in my flying." Another woman expressed her concern about her experience level by writing, "Because 'they' wanted a woman in my job, I was shoehorned into it. I'm the most junior by 2 years and don't have as much experience as everyone else, therefore, I'm not on a level playing field." Yet another woman wrote she's had "trial by fire. I made a

lot of mistakes as port engineer for my first contract. I was very stressed out, and did not receive a lot of help from my new office mates.”

There were a few problems experienced other than performance issues. One woman expressed concern over the attitude of her Command when she wrote, “District staff has been truly disappointing. All JO’s here (except OPCEN/Aide jobs) have been labeled as having little promotion potential (most had problems on 1st unit). This year 4 out of 5 up for O-3 were passed over. Empowerment, initiative, leadership are buzz-words, but nothing more.” Another woman expressed overall general feelings, such as “lack of performance feedback. Adjusting to working w/people and now reporting to others. I’m not allowed freedom to express ideas/creativity.” The majority of the women expressed a desire to remain in the same career field for their next assignment.

Even though the women indicated a more positive experience during their second tour, it did not reverse the trend of a high number intending to leave the service. Fourteen women indicated that they plan to leave the service at the end of their obligation. Only five women are looking for a 20 year or more career. Three of these five women are aviators who have had an additional five-year commitment tacked onto their academy obligation. Twelve women are uncertain about their future. Although some of these women are being lost due to non-selection for promotion to Lieutenant, this 41 percent loss of women Academy officers is alarming and far exceeds the 6.8 percent attrition rate used in the women captain projections for the year 2015.

I would like to report that this heavy loss is atypical of Academy women graduates but, unfortunately, I cannot. Figure 9 clearly shows that, except for the first two classes in 1980 and 1981, a lower percentage of women Academy graduates remain in the service after completing their service obligation than their



male counterparts. Women in the first two classes may have struggled for so long to be a part of the service that they refuse to relinquish their role as trailblazers.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The survey also presented some general observation statements to help gain some insight into how women are doing in the Coast Guard. Women regardless of whether they are single or married, still appear to have gender-related difficulties. A little over half of the women disagreed with the statement

that it is difficult for a single woman to have a career in the Coast Guard. However, 15 women did agree. The respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the statement that it is difficult for a woman to have children and a career in the Coast Guard. They did not feel quite as strongly about balancing a career and a personal relationship, but it was still overwhelmingly considered difficult. All but three of the women surveyed planned to have a career even if they do have a personal relationship or a family. It appears these women do not envision the military lifestyle and career path as accommodating to their personal needs.

This issue of pursuing a career and raising a family was of grave concern for the First Class cadets interviewed. When asked whether a woman could be married with children and have a successful career, the answer was a resounding “no”. Most felt that a Coast Guard career is incompatible with raising children and stated that their family is their number one obligation. The individuals who stated it might be possible indicated that they would most likely remain in the service past their obligation. The cadets appear to be forming their opinion about career and marriage from women officers they observe. Presently serving on the Academy staff are two mid-grade officers who are married with children. Their presence on staff has caused some of the women to challenge their initial beliefs that marriage and career are incompatible. But most of the senior women with whom they have come in contact are single. Therefore, they assume having a family and a career is difficult.

Career opportunities may not be as forthcoming for women as 15 out of 32 surveyed disagreed with the statement that women receive as many leadership positions and special assignments as men in the Coast Guard. This was in spite of their unanimous belief that women perform as well as men in their occupational specialty. The women's view of their performance did not carry over into how they perceived their Commanding Officers (CO's) viewed women. Eleven women felt their CO's believe women do not perform as well as men. This perception of the CO's disbelief in their abilities may explain why over 36 percent of the respondents felt women were not formally recognized as often as men for their job performance. These feelings that women have to work harder for the same recognition as men have been around for years and may explain why over one-third of the women still believe women require or need special consideration to be successful in the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard established work-life policies to improve the quality of life for its personnel. One of these policies is allowing geostability, which has been used as a cost-saving measure as well as allowing additional stability for families. Although allowing individuals to remain in a geographical area for five to six years occurs frequently, these Academy women felt strongly that transferring officers every three to four years is necessary for officer development. Therefore, even though the women may wish to remain in a geographic location, they will be hesitant to do so for fear they could be hindering their career. This new emphasis

on work-life issues is not having a large impact on women as only half the women felt the Coast Guard is taking the right steps to retain women officers.

Mentoring is a big issue as 24 of 34 women believe senior women need to play a more active role in mentoring junior women officers. However, the women themselves are not being mentored. Only seven out of 34 women surveyed indicated they had a mentor while assigned to their ship and this number only increased slightly on their second assignment to eleven out of 34 women.

The women's comments concerning what they believe the Coast Guard should be doing in order to retain and attract women were insightful and practical. They can be summarized to say that the Coast Guard should promote itself and take care of its people. The women also felt that the Coast Guard should concentrate on the talents of women in the service rather than the number of women officers. Since these comments on this subject were particularly valuable, all comments are included in Appendix C.

The women were also given an opportunity to provide additional comments or suggestions. The response was overwhelming. As the comments provide a great deal of insight into the health of these women officers as well as their concerns, I have generalized similar comments and listed them below.

- The opportunities available to women in the Coast Guard are outstanding.
- Senior leadership lacks the skills to deal with women officers and they treat them as novelties rather than professional officers.

- Marriage to another Coast Guard officer requires someone to sacrifice their career at each transfer point.
- The Care of the Newborn Children policy is a positive step, however, women desiring an afloat career cannot afford the two-year absence to remain competitive with their peers.
- The Coast Guard is still not addressing the problem of personal relationships and senior leadership is not holding people accountable for their actions.
- Balancing a family with a Coast Guard career is challenging but is possible. However, if it comes down to a choice between family or the Coast Guard, the family will come first.
- The Coast Guard is trying so hard to boost the number of women that they retain many who are unqualified for service.
- Low self-esteem is still a problem among women Academy graduates and may be a contributing factor to women seeking companionship with enlisted members.
- Performance is measured on hours worked not quality of product, negatively impacting women with family obligations.
- The Coast Guard needs to allow women to reach their full potential in the service.
- All commissioning sources should be considered of comparable value.

I found it very interesting that none of the themes revolved around training issues and only one dealt with the Academy and other commissioning sources. The fact that women are experiencing biases from senior officers does not bode well for an organization which takes extra steps to select their leaders. These concerns have been with the organization since women were first commissioned in 1973. These issues must be addressed further if the Coast Guard is serious about the retention of women Academy officers.

Chapter Six

Attitudes and Progress

The high loss of women from the Academy classes of 1991 and 1992 clearly indicates that the Coast Guard has not made the transition into being an employer of choice. No one expected that the inclusion of women into the military service would be an easy task, however, after 20 years, one would have expected the Coast Guard, of all the military services, to have made the most progress due to its humanitarian mission, unrestricted career paths and progressive work-life policies. Instead the Coast Guard finds its women's representation a distant fourth behind the Air Force, Navy and Army. Only the Marine Corps is below the Coast Guard. I believe that some of the answers in why the Coast Guard is having such a difficult time in improving its women officer's representation may be found in exploring how the service approached the issue of assimilating women into the service. Still other answers may be found in Coast Guard policies and their implementation and in earlier Coast Guard studies.

INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO THE ACADEMY

The admission of women into the Coast Guard Academy in 1976 was a major turning point in the service's history as it erased all accession barriers for women. It also signaled that the organization truly recognized that women were staying for the duration and were likely to pursue military careers. But how does one go about integrating females into a previously all-male college?

One undated university study conducted during the mid-seventies addressed the issue of female integration into previously all-male universities.³³ Responses from 14 of these educational institutions were used to develop specific guidelines on what institutions should do to make a successful co-educational transition. All responses indicated that there should be an equal mix of males and females with a minimum mix of 1:3 to decrease social problems. Below this level, the institutions found that females would be treated as different, would be regarded as inferior and would be socially rejected by males but would attempt to make more male friends to gain a portion of the power base. The women would also need an unusually high sense of self in order to maintain their self-respect. Some would be content with their minority role while others would assume “super woman” roles. The study also noted that the female students needed female role models and needed to see women high in the administration.

As a result of the research, specific recommendations were made for the military academies which included increasing the number of female faculty and staff, increasing the number of high-ranking women and including information on female contributions to the services and society into all possible classes. The study also stressed that women *must* be treated as equals and that the men should not be overcrowded in preference to women. So how well did the Coast Guard do in 1976 and how well have they done since then?

³³ Published notes from lecture titled “Integration of Females into Previously all Male Universities,” undated. Obtained from the Coast Guard admissions staff.

The Academy class of 1980 included 38 women out of 289 cadets enrolled. This ratio of almost 1:8 fell far short of the 1:3 minimum ratio recommended by the study. The Academy has just this year reached the 1:3 ratio. This failure to achieve the 1:3 female to male ratio earlier has had the expected results. The comments gained from the interviews of the senior women cadets and addressed in Chapter Three parallel closely the findings of the study mentioned above. Feelings of receiving different treatment, having to do everything better for the same recognition and being ridiculed by their male counterparts all hindered their professional development. The Academy also did not address the issue of senior women representation on faculty and on the administration staff.

The one area the Academy did follow the specific guidelines provided by the study dealt with treating the women as equals to men. The Academy was so concerned about being fair to everyone that its assimilation policy for bringing women on board was summed up in one word: equality. "The training program is envisioned as being identical for men and women with deviations from the standard equality being permitted only when necessitated by physiological differences or directed by Coast Guard or Department of Transportation policy. Women will be expected to achieve and maintain the high standards and levels of excellence that have always been required of men cadets."³⁴ There was no change in the academic program other than a foreseeable need for the "identification of and/or hiring of a faculty person to teach women physical

³⁴ United States Coast Guard Academy OPLAN 2-76, Admission of Women Cadets, A-1.

education classes.”³⁵ However, no attempt was made to bring on women faculty members or even require women coaches for the sports teams.

The Academy felt equality between men and women cadets could be attained with very few changes. The Academy continued to use the same selection process basing their decisions on test scores, class standing and leadership potential. There was no quota established for the number of women appointed. All women were required to participate in intramural sports. However, the establishment of women sports teams at the Academy would occur only when sufficient numbers of women cadets showed interest. The visiting team locker room became the site of the women’s locker room. The flexed arm hang was substituted for pull-ups. Times and levels of performance were modified to accommodate the basic physiological differences between men and women. Specific women’s uniform items were minimized to maintain uniformity among the Corps. Provisions were made to train and procure barbers proficient in cutting and caring for women’s hair. (Note that it was a barber and not a hair dresser that cut the women’s locks to military standards.) Modifications to the cadet diet were also investigated to accommodate special requirements for women. Thus, the Academy opened its doors to women by making as few adjustments as possible to their overall program. So how successful was this program?

During the summer of 1976, the Academy did have on board a women counselor to meet with the women cadets to address their concerns. Her initial

³⁵United States Coast Guard Academy, Admission of Women Cadets, B-1.

report of August 27, 1976, stated "The women cadets seem to have made the adjustment to the military regimen (sic) of Academy life and have no complaints or criticisms in this regard at present."³⁶ Concerns were more of a social nature, such as how to project and maintain a feminine image and why there were restrictions in dating only classmates. Although the Academy would bring on board civilian women as partners for male cadets at summer dancing lessons, the same consideration was not given to bringing on board civilian men as "there are already many times more men than women here at the Academy."³⁷ She further added. "Generally speaking, women are more socially mature than men of the same age at this particular time in their development and, therefore, tend to be more attracted to the older cadets. If they are to be frustrated in this regard, yet given little or no support in their search for alternatives, they may be very unhappy indeed."³⁸ As a result of this report, the Cadet Counselor made the recommendation to the Director of Admissions that changes in the coming year include the "assignment of one woman officer to the faculty, one civilian or officer woman in physical education/coaching, and a part-time civilian woman in cadet counseling".³⁹ The Director of Admissions in turn added his comments to the Superintendent's stating, "It is encouraging to note that their concerns are primarily socially oriented and that they feel they are generally receiving equal

³⁶ Memo from Mary Munkenbeck to Dick Slimak, Cadet Counselor, dated August 27, 1976, 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ First Endorsement on memo from Mary Munkenbeck to Dick Slimak, Cadet Counselor.

treatment in all other aspects”.⁴⁰ He also pointed out that a GAO Attrition study did find that social aspects of cadet life had considerable effect on attrition.

It was the Coast Guard Academy’s belief from the beginning that if women have equal opportunity in training then assimilation of women into the Corps would naturally follow. However, there could be no equality as long as men far outnumbered the women and faculty women representation existed in one’s and two’s. The Academy had been an all-male institution for 100 years prior to admitting women so their introduction had to alter the existing group dynamics established within the Corps. The fact that women were not allowed into the Academy earlier could easily have been construed by the men to mean that women were inferior or incapable of handling the missions of the Coast Guard.

Admitting women set up a dominant - subordination relationship between the male and female cadets. According to Jean Baker Miller in her book Toward a New Psychology of Women “subordinates are described in terms of, and encouraged to develop, personal psychological characteristics that are pleasing to the dominant group.”⁴¹ These characteristics would be submissive in nature. However, the military cannot afford to develop leaders who display weakness or helplessness, so the women were caught in a paradox between developing characteristics of assertiveness and initiative required by the organization while trying to assimilate into the dominant group, the Corps of Cadets. Each time a member of the subordinate group departed, those still at the Academy had to

⁴⁰ Second Endorsement on memo from Mary Munkenbeck to Dick Slimak, Cadet Counselor.

⁴¹ Jean Baker Miller, Toward a New Psychology of Women, 2nd ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986, 7.

have doubts about remaining. The Academy wanted everything to be equal, however, this equality could never be achieved as long as a dominant-subordinate group dynamic existed.

The attention given the women when they first joined the Academy also affected the equality scale. Each time a woman was asked to do a live interview or talk with the press, it emphasized the differences between the men and women. The majority of women were trying to blend into the Corps and this only aggravated the situation. Men and women both resented the extra attention, although, I believe the women recognized this as a means to attract additional women to the Academy. This same dynamic occurs each time a woman is specifically required to conduct a tour, give a speech or talk with the media simply because she is a woman.

As expected from the undated university study, not maintaining the 1:3 ratio did cause social problems. Although many of the problems still exist, there are indications that the environment has improved for women over the past 20 years. First, the Coast Guard Academy has slowly improved the percentage of women in each class. Starting out in 1980 at 13 percent the percentage of women cadets is now up to 34 percent in class 1999.⁴² The Academy has also made improvements to its leadership training program. "Performance management, motivation, goal setting, and counseling skills are emphasized much more than (shall we say) the 'fear and domination' tactics of yesteryear."⁴³ As part of the

⁴² U. S. Coast Guard Academy Class of 1999 Profile.

⁴³ Kelly, Patrick, "Leadership Development at CGA: An update," 18.

Fourth Class core course in Organizational Behavior, topics like power and authority, conflict resolution and, most importantly, group dynamics are now introduced.

These changes in leadership training have also flowed into Swab Summer. For the first time in Coast Guard history, physical discipline could not be used to correct improper behavior and the training was designed to more closely mirror the service. Although this new approach has been met with skepticism by the cadets, mostly because they must now manage people rather than intimidate them, it should benefit women. The senior class women interviewed mentioned that the physical ability of the men during Swab Summer often allowed them to be recognized as leaders earlier in the program. This new approach will place more emphasis on mental rather than physical toughness.

INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO THE COAST GUARD

Equality in opportunities for women at the Academy would be meaningless until women also had equity in the field. Women who entered the service in 1973 were restricted from sea duty, aviation and inspections in the marine safety field. It was determined in January 1976, by the Coast Guard's Chief Counsel that exclusion of women from sea duty was clearly discriminatory. Although steps to implement nondiscriminatory Coast Guard assignment policy was slated to occur with the graduation of Academy class 1980, Secretary Adams of the Department of Transportation lifted the barriers to sea duty in 1978. Simply lifting the barrier

did not guarantee the Coast Guard would change its practices as there were those who believed this new policy directly opposed the combat exclusion rules of the Department of Defense. This was an important issue because during times of war the Coast Guard falls under the authority of the U.S. Navy. To handle this problem initially, a plan was designed to remove women from their ships during wartime and replace them with identified men in ashore billets. However, this plan was viewed as an impractical solution. In a February 24, 1983, memorandum from the Chief of Staff to the Commandant, he stated:

“It is not considered a practical matter to remove women from those Coast Guard cutters which might be assigned combat missions when operating with the Navy...The removal of these key personnel on short notice would weaken our military readiness capability and have major operational impact on some units due to the training and expertise needed for these jobs. Any provisions which would require the Coast Guard to train one crew for a vessel’s peacetime missions and another for its wartime missions are fundamentally unsound.”⁴⁴

The result of this memorandum was to provide women equal assignment status on board the afloat units. But this did not mean that the learning environment on board afloat units was equal.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, all Academy graduates, including women, are required to go to sea. Since women were first commissioned into the Coast Guard, the issue of isolationism has always been prevalent. Men are always surrounded by other men but women are often assigned alone. The Coast Guard does address this issue in the Personnel Manual which reads: “Every attempt will be made to assign women to units in groups of two or more for medical and

⁴⁴ Decision memorandum (unserialized) from Chief of Staff to Commandant dated February 24, 1983.

companionship reasons; however, women will not arbitrarily be denied an assignment solely because of the lack of a second woman.”⁴⁵ Implementing a stronger policy that required women to be assigned in groups would deny them equality in choice of assignments.

Myrna Rottman addressed the issue of isolationism in her 1983 paper “Their View from the Bridge: The Women Graduates of the U. S. Coast Guard Academy.” One woman quoted in her paper commented, “During my first tour, as the only woman aboard, I was very alone. Being on a ship is hard because it’s a truly male environment. A group of talking, laughing men would become silent as I approached. My presence continually infringed on their inalienable right to be men. To feel at all times like a guest was very unpleasant.”⁴⁶ This feeling of isolation was prevalent in the responses from Academy women graduates surveyed from classes 1991 and 1992. They felt isolated from the wardroom and ignored in the training process. With feelings of support and a high percentage of training coming from enlisted personnel, it is not surprising that many junior women officers are drawn toward relationships with their subordinates.

This sentiment was echoed in Rottman’s paper by one woman officer having difficulty dealing with the fraternization issue. She said, “When you go to a unit with few junior officers, you may find yourself being the only officer living on board, surely the only woman officer, and maybe the only single officer. It can get

⁴⁵ COMDTINST1000.6, Personnel Manual, 4-A-10.

⁴⁶ Myrna N. Rottman, “Their View from the Bridge: The Women Graduates of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.” Paper presented at the International Conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Chicago, Illinois, October 21-23, 1983, 16.

very lonely in a new place with no friends and no family, and you may find the enlisted crewmen are the only ones around in your spare time. When you're in a situation like this, it's hard to understand why you shouldn't get too friendly with the crewmen. Or perhaps you understand, but for your own mental well-being, you feel you have to make friends with someone."⁴⁷

The issue of assigning a second woman to a unit was also addressed by Rottman. She found that the problems experienced by two women were similar to those experienced by those alone. She also found that having a second woman often created an extra problem called a two-token situation. This situation was described by Kanter in Men and Women in the Corporation, where in a male environment, the traits of two women were compared and exaggerated to view one as successful and the other as the opposite. In Rottman's interviews, one woman had this to say about the second woman assigned: "The CO talked about how great he was about treating women equally. He treated her well, praised her and nurtured her, but nothing I did was right. The others followed his leadership. I tried not to hold it against her. She was a nice person, and it was not her fault."⁴⁸ This comparison does not always occur but Commands should be made aware of its potential. Personal experience has shown that when women have a choice between being totally isolated or being assigned with another woman, they will choose the company. Not all pairings will result in friendship, but, having a familiar ear to express concerns can be beneficial.

⁴⁷ Rottman, 19.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 18.

Based on the survey results presented in Chapter Four, equality for women on sea units is far from a reality. In spite of almost 20 years of women assigned to ships, senior leadership still appears to be at a quandary as to what to do with women. There are many enlightened leaders and these individuals were highly praised by the women officers surveyed. Women who had been associated with these leaders not only had a positive sea duty assignment but felt recognized for their performance and indicated a stronger likelihood of pursuing a career in the military. Those who felt isolated or under appreciated wanted nothing to do with the service.

These 1996 survey findings mirror those of Rottman's paper of 1983. She found that support by the individual in power is critical and women who had command support felt fortunate. In her paper one officer stated, "I have no problem because my CO cares. He's committed to equal rights and his attitudes pervades the command. Equal rights are not an issue in the most positive sense."⁴⁹ Many women in Rottman's study considered their performance high but its recognition low indicating a lack of command support. One explanation of what is occurring is addressed by Kanter. He wrote, "The token does not have to work hard to have her presence noticed, but she does have to work hard to have her achievements noticed."⁵⁰ One woman who was discouraged by lack of support commented, "If the CO or XO thinks you're a joke because you're the first

⁴⁹ Rottman, 20.

⁵⁰ Kanter, 216.

woman on his ship, your career will be seriously restricted.”⁵¹ Even those in command who disapproved of women but accepted the Coast Guard’s decision to send women to sea could strongly influence the crew’s acceptance of women.

This all points out how critical selection for command and control positions, which includes Operations and Engineering Officers, is to bringing equality to sea duty. The fact that so many women are still negatively impacted by attitudes of senior leadership does not bode well for how these positions have been selected. Equality in experiences will never be achieved until senior leadership takes positive steps to improve the working environment for women on board ships.

INTEGRATING WOMEN THROUGH CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Maintaining equality within the Coast Guard organization also flowed over into the promotion process. The promotion board system is designed by laws and regulations to ensure impartiality and fairness of board proceedings. Therefore, the board members are carefully selected to reflect the diversity of experience and backgrounds of those up for promotion. Career specialties and commissioning sources are represented on the board as well as women and minorities. This board selection process appears to be doing a credible job as the promotion selection rates for women closely match the overall rates as shown below in Table

9. The five percent difference at the lieutenant level may require further study to determine whether the non-selection is based on performance problems

⁵¹ Rottman, 23.

or related to personal failings, such as inappropriate relationships. Comparison at the higher grades is extremely difficult because of the small number of women considered for promotion.

Promotion Rates of All Coast Guard and Women at Different Ranks		
	WOMEN	ALL COAST GUARD
CAPT	80.0%	57.4%
CDR	76.5%	65.4%
LCDR	77.6%	75.5%
LT	78.0%	83.4%

Table 9
Data obtained from MPC-opm-1. Based on 5 year average (1992-1996)

Until recently, a perception existed among men and women that the boards were given quotas for selection of women. The results of the boards are now being published on a yearly basis to remove this misunderstanding. Some men may still make comments that they were non-selected for promotion due to quotas for women but the facts prove otherwise.

Achieving this same level of equality in the assignment process is not so easy. The biggest difficulty with this process is the heavy reliance on the assignment officers to make the best recommendation for each position. These recommendations are based on an individual's performance record and

background and require a subjective judgement by the assignment officer to choose one individual over another. With few exceptions, i.e. Command Selection Panels, and Captain and Commander Assignment Panels, final assignment decisions are made by the Chief of the Officer Assignment Branch on the recommendation of the assignment officer. Having had a tour as an assignment officer, I can say that the decision to select one individual over another is extremely difficult. I also know each assignment officer attempts to be as fair as possible in the final recommendation. However, needs of the service can often tip the balance during this difficult process.

For the past two years the Officer Assignment Branch has been attempting to provide women with leadership and special assignments which will enhance their potential to assume senior leadership positions. Unfortunately, due to the limited number of women officers and the strong push by senior management to support women, there has been a tendency for the organization to give women what they request regardless of qualifications. This approach is only beneficial if the woman is successful in the new assignment. Those who are not successful because they lack qualifications are often lost from the organization. Therefore, it is not clear whether the Coast Guard will benefit more from having women in leadership positions for visibility's sake or having women placed in positions due to qualifications. I do know that if officers are rewarded for poor performance, it cheapens the accomplishments of those deserving recognition.

Both the women interviewed at the Academy and the women surveyed in the field expressed concern over what they perceive as the organization pushing too hard to promote woman. They felt they had worked hard and wanted to be awarded accordingly. Each time an unqualified woman received an undeserved leadership position or highly sought after assignment, they found themselves on the defensive in supporting that woman to her male critics. It also made them question whether their assignments were legitimately acquired based on performance. This issue of fairness versus favoritism will exist as long as women are severely outnumbered by men.

WOMEN, WORK-LIFE AND POLICY CHANGES

As with most businesses, the Coast Guard is also addressing the problem of coordinating work and private life. This issue became such a concern within the Coast Guard that a work-life division and, subsequently, money and personnel support were thrown in that direction. Three main work-life issues that affect men and women and their possible retention deal with geostability, child care and co-location.

The issue of geostability has been a hot topic in the Coast Guard for years. Most tours in the Coast Guard last between three to four years and then the individual is transferred to a new position, which often requires an actual move out of the area. This frequent movement of personnel has been justified by the organization as necessary for the career development of its members. This

appears to be especially true for officers. Even the vast majority of the women surveyed strongly believed that an officer must move every three to four years for their career development. These frequent job shifts do allow individuals an opportunity for new experiences and a chance to develop leadership skills through assignment to command and control positions.

However, the expressed desire of many service members to remain in one location for family stability is one reason why the Coast Guard has loosened its policy on transfers. Individuals, unless in command and control positions or special assignments, are almost always granted an extension on their tour if requested. This extension can often be repeated the following year. This liberalizing of the transfer policy allows service members to experience stability in their family life and, hopefully, will encourage retention of those members. Of course, there is always the possibility that a family will become entrenched in the local community and decide never to leave! This issue has other complications unrelated to retention, but this new policy does appear to be a positive step towards improving retention for women.

A bigger issue for the women in the military service deals with child care. The Coast Guard has addressed this issue by installing day-care services in many of the large units, such as Headquarters or the Academy. The service has also instituted a Care of the Newborn Children (CNC) policy that allows women and men to leave the service for a period of up to two years. These individuals are guaranteed a position in the Coast Guard without loss of rank upon their return to

service. There are some policy restrictions in that “the effective start date of separation shall be within 12 months after the birth of a child (including an adopted child) “ and all obligated service commitments have been met.⁵² As of March 1996, 15 women and four men officers have been released from the service under CNC of whom five have returned.

But this policy has not always received the command support that would aid the individual’s transition into the civilian world and back into the military. One woman from the survey stated that her Command did not support her decision to take CNC leave. Others surveyed expressed real concern that leaving the service would severely impact their career opportunities and would put them behind their competition. This was especially true for women pursuing afloat careers and facing Command panels for choice assignments. If these women decide not to use this policy because of wrong perceptions then this must be addressed by the organization.

Co-location is a major concern of the Coast Guard, especially since a high percentage of its women officers are married to military members. Each new assignment is a nightmare in coordination between the assignment officers and, when necessary, the other services. It is further complicated because each career path requires different types of assignments at different paygrades. As the Coast Guard is small and units are often isolated, the number of co-location assignment choices quickly diminishes as an officer is promoted. This requires a great deal of

⁵² COMDTINST M1000.6, Personnel Manual, 12-D-21, Ch-14.

flexibility on the part of the service members and an extra effort on the part of the assignment officers to think creatively. The Coast Guard will not, however, guarantee co-location. The reasons for this are to allow the organization flexibility in meeting the service needs and to maintain an even playing field for single members.

FRATERNIZATION

As discussed earlier in this chapter, feelings of isolationism can lead women to seek companionship with enlisted personnel. This issue of fraternization has been a major problem for the Coast Guard and has been a main contributor to the loss of women officers. The Coast Guard has responded to the problem by rewriting the fraternization policy and by conducting training on the issue at pre-Command schools and at mentor training courses to clear up any ambiguities in the interpretation of the policy. In spite of these efforts, Commands have responded differently when faced with a fraternization situation and this inconsistency in enforcement has further complicated the issue. The only safe way to eliminate the problem is to not allow officers or enlisted to associate with anyone. Obviously, this is not practical or desired by the Coast Guard. Understanding the dynamics behind the cause of the problem may be much more practical.

This issue was of major concern for the senior woman cadets interviewed and the women officers surveyed. Almost all the cadets interviewed mentioned a

fraternization case aboard the Academy training ship, Eagle, that involved many of their classmates. As the enlisted members conducted the majority of the training and provided the most encouragement for the women cadets, the cadet-enlisted relationships developed naturally. Unfortunately, these relationships were also against regulations and many of the women found themselves up on charges. Those not involved found the situation very uncomfortable. Women who became involved felt they were not adequately prepared to handle the advancements from the enlisted crew members.

The women surveyed also confirmed that fraternization is a problem when 14 women out of 34 indicated they felt isolated from the wardroom and 29 women out of 34 felt accepted by their subordinates. This points back to the importance of the Command in setting the right atmosphere within a wardroom.

WOMEN IN THE COAST GUARD STUDY (WICG)

Women made significant progress within the ranks of the organization the first decade after gaining admission to the Academy. They could be found flying aircraft, commanding ships, conducting demanding rescues and representing the Coast Guard in high visibility roles. This perception that all was well, however, began to quickly crumble in the late 1980's. The percentage of women in the workforce had leveled off at seven percent while the numbers in the other services were still growing. Independent checks of units and staffs confirmed that there was a growing gap between reality and senior management's belief that women

found the Coast Guard's working environment healthy. "This information did not fit well with the Coast Guard's self image as an equal opportunity service, but was not far from the Coast Guard's cultural characteristic of being extremely flexible and aggressive in operational situations, yet somewhat conservative at integrating social change."⁵³

Prior to uncovering these problems, the Coast Guard had assumed a rather passive attitude toward women. No attempts were made to actively recruit women, no budget was set aside for advertisement and those of us in the service rarely saw another woman officer. Following the Navy's example the Coast Guard could have brought highly educated women in at various ranks to support assimilation of women into the Coast Guard. Instead, the Coast Guard chose to grow their own and wait the 20 years before having a woman eligible for captain.

As a progressive organization in an unfavorable position, the Coast Guard was forced into conducting a survey of its workforce called Women in the Coast Guard (WICG) in 1989. The need for this study was spurred on in part by the implications of the Workforce 2000 literature which predicted a shrinking male population for employment by the year 2000. Therefore, the Chief of Staff of the Coast Guard established a team to study the utilization of women in the Coast Guard. In his memorandum dated August 14, 1989, he stated, "In view of the fact that the number of women in the workforce is growing rapidly and that women are relatively more numerous in other military services... it is timely to review their

⁵³ Harvey Johnson, "Women in the Coast Guard, At the Crossroads Again", August. 1992, 5.

roles in the Coast Guard.”⁵⁴ This was the first large study concerning women in the workforce that the Coast Guard had attempted since women entered the service 16 years earlier.

Although the study covered both enlisted and officer issues, for the purpose of this thesis only officer concerns will be addressed. Overall, 2,600 service members were interviewed and every women in the Coast Guard received an 85-item questionnaire. At the time of the study approximately four percent of the officer corps were women and approximately 60 percent of these women received their commission from the Academy.

For the first time, men and women where asked their opinions about women in the Coast Guard. As a result, it gave the Coast Guard some interesting insights into the health of the organization and identified 16 barriers to women in the Coast Guard. These barriers are listed in Appendix D.

The first task of the study was to identify how many women should be in the Coast Guard. Both men and women indicated that the service needed more quality people but the women also indicated that more women were needed in the service. The argument was made that “too few women...no critical mass.”⁵⁵ However, neither gender liked the idea of imposing a quota, but their reasons for this were different. Men “appeared to feel that this could mean bringing in people -- qualified or not -- just because they were women. Women seemed to feel that

⁵⁴ Coast Guard Memorandum Study Team Charter (5621B);: “Women in the Coast Guard” study from Chief of Staff Adm. A. Bruce Beran to RADM(L) Roland M. Polant dated August 14, 1989.

⁵⁵ Commandant Publication 5312.17, “Women in the Coast Guard Study,” (WICG) July 1990, IV-10.

this would reflect negatively on them.”⁵⁶ In spite of the resistance by service members for quota setting, the study group did propose that female Academy graduate levels be raised to 20 percent by year 2000 and that there be a 20 percent graduation rate for both reserve and temporary commission graduates from OCS. However, these goals were all commissioning goals. The study did not cover predictors of retention.

Interestingly, the study did uncover that men and women had different opinions as to the impact more women would have on them personally. The women tended to be more optimistic believing that increasing the number of women would not only increase the number of bodies in the Coast Guard but would provide role models and alleviate problems associated with the minority group status. The majority of the men were against more women in the Coast Guard citing problem areas, such as berthing limitations, physical strength, pregnancy and the potential for their own increased workload due to women’s limitations.

All indications from the study pointed towards the Coast Guard having a difficult time recruiting more women. The Coast Guard was found to be an unknown among the military services and the public had little knowledge of its roles and missions. Cited within the WICG study was the Youth Attitude Tracking Study which showed that women have only a slight inclination for military service.

⁵⁶ WICG, IV-10.

The fact that the Coast Guard had no plan, program or policy specifically designed to recruit them makes improving women's representation difficult at best.

What positive steps came from recruiting efforts were found to be offset by a high attrition rate among women officers. According to the study results, 16.9 percent of female officers were more likely to resign their commissions, while only 13.4 percent of their male counterparts were likely to resign. One of the major contributing factors to attrition was the issue of compatibility of a career and a family. Similar to the concerns expressed by the women interviewed and surveyed, the study found that "most Coast Guard women reported they do want to marry and have children and many stated that this can be incompatible with a Coast Guard career. This was especially true when the woman was married to a fellow Coast Guard member."⁵⁷ This conflict between career and family will continue to be a major contributing factor to women leaving the service.

Other contributing factors to attrition as identified by the study were co-location issues, sexual harassment, fraternization and geostability. Women uniform items were also a big concern. This appears to be an irritant that women can point to as just another example of the Coast Guard's lack of commitment towards women.

More pertinent to the results of this thesis were study findings on women at the Academy which mirrored the concerns of the senior women interviewed. The study found that support among male cadets was very limited with a large portion

⁵⁷ WICG, V-14.

stating that they “did not want women in the Coast Guard in general and at the Academy in particular.”⁵⁸ The women in the WICG study were aware of these attitudes and articulated that some classes were worse than others and that sexist imprints were allowed to persist. More disturbing was “in the opinion of many women who have been there, the Academy is a bastion of male chauvinism fueled by an old boy network reaching far beyond the Academy itself.”⁵⁹ The women interviewed expressed exasperation at the maturity level of their male classmates and stated it took the men two years before they began to look upon the women as equals. Maturity may be a factor in why the men are having a difficult time accepting women at the Academy.

In support of this maturity issue, the WICG study compared the 1993 Academy freshman class with select public colleges and found them to differ in a number of areas.⁶⁰ The areas that stand out as important to understanding some of the dynamics at the Academy deal with levels of self-confidence. Academy freshman expressed lower self-confidence in social abilities, competitiveness, emotional health, leadership ability and math ability than freshman from the select public colleges. The only area in which the Academy freshman scored higher was in intellectual abilities.⁶¹ No conclusions may be drawn from only one set of data but this area may warrant further study.

⁵⁸ WICG, VI-7.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The 1993 freshman data is believed to come from the UCLA Comparative Institutional Research Program conducted annually at the Academy.

⁶¹ Ibid., VI-3.

Further evidence as to the importance of maturity and assimilation is found by examining the Officer Candidate School (OCS) program. The WICG study found that the Academy levels of unacceptability of women were not mirrored in OCS. According to the findings of the study the staff officers at OCS stated they did not notice sex-related bias or stereotyping by either officer candidates or the staff. This perception was backed by women graduates who expressed no complaints to the contrary. A possible reason for these findings is a higher level of maturity (average age 27) among the candidates due to co-educational college experience, to work experience, to working with and for women, and to an increased awareness level through marriage.

The women surveyed and interviewed identified false perceptions by men as a problem for them. As with any minority group, there is always the potential for the majority to perceive the minority as being singled out for special treatment. According to the WICG study 35.5 percent of the female respondents and 19.3 percent of the male respondents believed that women earned their positions in the Coast Guard.⁶² However, the majority of both men and women felt women for the most part earned their position but that some women have received preferential treatment. Almost none of the women and 4.1 percent of the men felt that women received their positions due to preferential treatment alone. The First Class women interviewed expressed frustration on this point because although most

⁶² WICG, VII-2.

believed they earned the leadership positions they were given, many felt others thought quotas came into play.

In another example of perceived special treatment, almost 48 percent of the men but only 15 percent of the women felt men had to work harder than women for promotion/advancement.⁶³ When asked if there was anything standing in their way towards advancement or promotion, men stated affirmative action and quotas, the Coast Guard's new roles and missions and collateral duties. Men may thus feel less inclined to assist women and conduct the necessary training needed by women to be successful in their jobs. This may lead also to feelings of exclusion on the part of women forcing them to seek assistance elsewhere, i.e. enlisted personnel.

Probably one of the biggest revelations of the WICG study was that women had no internal point of contact for women's issues. The study found that many of the problems perceived by women in the Coast Guard could be alleviated through referrals to information sources. As a result, a Women's Policy Advisor billet was authorized and a Women's Advisory Committee was formed to address issues impacting the women's careers in the service. The first of these council meetings occurred in September 1991, some 18 years after women were brought into active duty service.

⁶³ WICG, VII-3.

OFFICER EVALUATION REPORT STUDY

Introduced within the WICG study was a 1989 study examining the Coast Guard Officer Evaluation Report (OER) system. This study was prompted by a widespread perception among women that the existing system worked to their detriment. Earlier discussions in this chapter pointed out how important these reports were in receiving promotions and assignments. According to the study, numerically, the women in the junior ranks generally did better on their reports than their male counterparts. The women also fared equally well at the lieutenant level.

Above Lieutenant, though, the women's reports began to change. Although the numerical totals were equal to the men, women "got smaller proportions of certain crucial high scores than would be expected."⁶⁴ Missing along with higher numerical scores in crucial areas were strong comments about performance of duties and career potential, the types of comments important to promotion boards. Additionally, the women had on average a lower comparison score, the score where their superiors rank them in comparison with their peers. This score is considered critical at promotion boards and is the only comparison score on the performance report. All other scores are based strictly on performance during the last time period and pack far less weight during promotion selection.

⁶⁴ WICG, VII-12.

However, it is the written comments supporting the marks that receive most of the attention by the promotion boards and the assignment officers. The OER study found major differences between the written comments for men and those for women. According to the study: “

- Proportionally fewer female officers than white male officers received any promotion recommendation. The difference was statistically significant at the lieutenant grade level.
- Minority and white male officers received more specific assignment recommendations.
- Overall, female officers had fewer specific duty accomplishments listed.
- When describing Performance of Duties, females at the lieutenant commander grade had fewer accomplishments listed and fewer lines of text describing performance. Moreover, they had more negative comments.
- In the Reporting Officer Concurrence block, the reporting officer concurred with the female’s supervisor fewer times. Female officers had fewer accomplishments listed here, and more negative comments both at the lieutenant and lieutenant commander grades.
- Although female officers got higher numerical scores in Representing the Coast Guard block, their achievements got fewer lines of text, and they had fewer accomplishments cited and more negative comments than male officers.”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ WICG, VII-15.

So this study showed that the perception of an unfair reporting system towards women was true. Unless the individuals sitting on the promotion boards are well aware of these differences between men's and women's reports as pointed out in this study, women will be at a distinct disadvantage at promotion boards.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE ASSESSMENT OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD ACADEMY

While the Coast Guard as a whole was going through an awareness and identification stage on women's issues, the Academy self-initiated a study examining the climate and culture of the institution. In September 1991, Princeton Economic Research, Inc., developed an academic specific questionnaire that would eventually be given to 1,442 faculty, staff, and cadets. "The overall findings suggested that the Academy has an extremely strong set of values and assertive, respected leaders, which make for a healthy organizational culture."⁶⁶ The survey addressed the issue of sexual harassment at the Coast Guard Academy. The survey found the incident of some type of harassment was particularly high for women cadets at 84.9 percent as compared to a rate of 27.5 percent for male cadets. This figure was significantly higher than the 58 percent reported by women in the Women in the Coast Guard study. The women cadets responding to the Princeton study still felt that it was riskier for the accuser than the accused in making sexual harassment charges.

⁶⁶ Gwendolyn Stevens, "Culture and Climate Assessment of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, A Summary Report", Dec 1, 1992, 2.

On the positive side, both men and women reported that there was a slight improvement in the treatment of women. However, males were less accepting of women in the military and the women felt there was less assimilation into the Coast Guard Academy. Women reported more symptoms of stress and had more concerns about weight and binge eating. These same problems were identified by the women interviewed in the class of 1996.

INFORMAL WOMEN STUDIES

There have been a few internal studies conducted within the Military Personnel Command, Officer Personnel Management Division that provide some interesting insights into the health of women in the Coast Guard. In particular, they show that things still need improving. The main points from these studies are:

- Women Academy graduates are more likely to have derogatory OER's based on misconduct (i.e. report of fraternization, alcohol incident) than women from other commissioning sources.
- The mix of women Academy graduates to other commissioning sources is below the overall representation of Academy graduates in the Coast Guard.
- A higher than expected number of women are direct commission lawyers and prior enlisted who are less likely to remain beyond 20 years.
- Women are under represented in the engineering and aviation mission areas.

- Women are over represented in the marine safety field which historically has had a higher non-selection rate for promotion at more senior ranks.
- The majority of the women are located in the junior ranks.
- There is a very low representation of women in command and control afloat billets (CO, XO, OPS, EO).

Overall, these studies received very little attention by senior management even though they were the first to look at occupational and commissioning source issues as they related to future growth of women at senior ranks.

To my knowledge the only retention study done on women in the Coast Guard focused its efforts on enlisted women. There have been increasing attempts by the diversity staff to address retention issues but no major effort has been initiated. One minor study, examining retention over a four-year period, found "there appears to be a growing trend in the numbers of women and minorities in both the inventories and losses between FY90 and FY94. However, their numbers are too small to permit statistically valid analysis of the rates of increases."⁶⁷ As no discussion addressed the reasons for attrition the data provided little insight on how to improve retention. It also did not address the issue of when women were choosing to leave the service.

Aware that women's attrition is a problem, the Coast Guard is currently conducting a survey analyzing the women's assignment policy including retention

⁶⁷ 1995 Coast Guard Retention Data, 1.

issues related to assignments. It should provide some additional answers as to why the Coast Guard has been having difficulties retaining women officers.

This chapter has looked at a number of issues to help identify why retention of women academy officers has been so difficult. The Coast Guard's intent to make the service equal in every respect for women has never been achieved and women have yet to experience like treatment at either the Academy or in the field. The organization maintained an attitude that as long as we make opportunities equal and women are successful then the assimilation process is going well. It wasn't until the Coast Guard realized they might face a manpower shortage in the year 2000 that senior management became concerned over women's retention. As a result, the Women in the Coast Guard study was done, a review of the OER's was completed and a culture and climate assessment of the Academy was conducted. The issues raised in these studies are the same issues raised by the women from the Academy classes of 1991, 1992 and 1996. The Coast Guard is also conducting a workforce cultural audit to gain an understanding of today's workforce environment. It is my opinion that it will take more than a few rewritten policies, increased recruitment efforts and other studies to solve the issue of retention of women officers in the Coast Guard.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

For the first time since allowing women into the Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard is redefining its workforce. No longer satisfied with low retention and under representation at all ranks, the Commandant has stated that by the year 2015, 33 percent of all service members will be women. As the Academy is and will continue to be the primary source of senior leadership in the Coast Guard, the burden of achieving this goal through assimilation and training falls mostly on its shoulders. Once commissioned the burden shifts to the organization to provide a working environment and career path that women find rewarding. As tomorrow's success in promoting women into senior leadership positions is a direct reflection on today's existing conditions, a closer examination of the Academy's admission policy and training program as well as a look at the working environment facing women graduates is warranted.

From the very beginning of the Coast Guard's history, women have played an important role. The thousands of women who joined the Coast Guard as SPARs during World War II clearly demonstrated women's interest in military service. However, after the war this attitude was not reciprocated and it took congressional mandates and a shrinking male application pool to rejuvenate interest in bringing women back into the Coast Guard. This renewed interest first manifested itself in the inclusion of women in the Officer Candidate School

program and peaked with the admission of women to the Coast Guard Academy in 1976.

The Academy was found to overwhelmingly provide the majority of the Coast Guard's senior officers. As such the Academy also must be the accession point that will have the most impact on whether the Coast Guard achieves the 33 percent women's representation rate by 2015. Unfortunately, based on an extrapolation of Academy classes 1985 through 1993, this goal at the captain level will fall well short. But knowing this should not be discouraging for the organization. It should instead serve as a wake-up call for the Coast Guard to look at both the Academy process and the organization's environment so that more women will select and remain in the Coast Guard as the employer of choice.

The first step in developing future leaders is to attract and appoint women who have the potential to successfully complete the Academy program and who are inclined to remain in the Coast Guard beyond their initial commitment. Surprisingly, the number of women applicants has not significantly changed over the years which may be due in part to the shrinking number of high school graduates.⁶⁸ This parallels the recruitment effort which has not been funded and lacks personnel. The admissions staff is trying to work around the money issue by empowering the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

The Academy Admissions Division has designed their selection process to bring in highly motivated, intelligent individuals with demonstrated leadership

⁶⁸ As per telephone conversation with Captain Robert Thorne on April 24, 1996.

ability. The scores used to select these appointees, however, showed some unexpected results. Appointment decisions were found to rely heavily on a quantitative score mostly based on High School ranking (HSR), SAT or ACT math scores, and demonstrated leadership. From a review of the data available it was determined that there was not the expected correlation between a woman's SAT math score and her probability of graduating from the Academy. There was also only a slight correlation between the SAT math score and the probability of a woman remaining in the Coast Guard after completion of her obligated service. And a review of the Finalist score, based on HSR and college test scores, presented an interesting dilemma. The higher the score, the more likely the woman would graduate from the Academy. But she was also less inclined to remain in the service. It was the Principal score, based on the Finalist score and subjective scoring of a three-member panel, that proved to be the best predictor of future success. The higher the score, the more likely the woman would graduate and remain in the service.

The women who choose to attend the Academy give some insight as to how to conduct recruitment efforts in the future. They were found to be successful in academics and sports, sought leadership positions and were heavily involved in their communities. They appeared to be lacking in neither self-confidence nor assertiveness, traits the Coast Guard Academy has linked to successful cadets and future officers. Surprisingly, only a handful of the women knew of the Coast Guard's roles and missions prior to attending the Academy and most admitted

they applied only because it meant a free education. Encouraging to future recruitment efforts is the finding that women applying to the Academy are encouraged by their families and rarely experience negative pressure from outside sources.

The Academy military training program is designed to prepare cadets for their future role as leaders in the Coast Guard. This is done through practical experience which occurs during summer training programs and through leadership courses taught throughout the four year program. For the most part, women felt prepared for their military training experience even though they knew little about the Academy. This does not mean they found the experience pleasant or easy.

Success during the “Swab Summer” program was found to be a precursor to acceptance by the Corps of Cadets. Those who were injured or who were labeled by their peers and training cadres as “slackers” felt excluded. Women also felt that their leadership talents were not initially recognized because they lacked the physical size and strength of their male classmates. This lack of acknowledgment was not overcome until Second Class year when the women were selected for leadership positions within the Corps of Cadets.

With few exceptions, the majority of the women interviewed and surveyed felt the Academy military training program adequately prepared them to be successful in the field. The more training the women received the more comfortable they became, especially on afloat units. The women did voice a need

for more shiphandling experience and more engineering training for those choosing an engineering career.

Despite the positive feelings about their military training, retention of women at the Academy was found to be a problem. Even though the Coast Guard Academy has a higher percentage of women in attendance, attrition is almost twice that being experienced at the other Academies. There was no indication from any of the women that they felt they did not belong at the Academy or that they could not succeed in a military environment. Some of the senior women cadets did express doubts about going to sea, but these feelings were associated more with their fear of the unknown than with a lack of confidence in their abilities.

The low retention rate may be explained in part by a failure of women to assimilate into the Academy. Through interviews and surveys, current women from the Academy were found to be experiencing many of the difficulties faced by their predecessors. Issues such as male acceptance, low self-esteem in military and academic abilities, and feelings of having to work harder for minimal recognition came up more than once. Competition was found to be more prevalent between women which partially explains why women are so reluctant to mentor other women. Besides this conflict between competition and mentoring, the Academy environment was found to have other problems making it not conducive for women to socialize with each other. Additionally, minor irritants such as ill-fitting uniforms and an almost compulsive attitude toward weight

hindered the assimilation process. Therefore, although the military training program appears to be preparing the women well for their first assignment, social issues appear to be having a major impact on the assimilation of women into the Coast Guard and may actually hinder the training process.

To further examine how the Academy process affected women, senior women cadets were interviewed and women graduates were surveyed. Overall, the Academy did not get rave reviews. Many indicated they would not have applied if they knew then what they know now. Most of the women respondents stated they remained at the Academy because they did not wish to be labeled a “quitter”.

The most disheartening finding of this study on Academy women was the discrimination they experienced on board their afloat units. The Coast Guard has always viewed itself as a sea-going service and only recently has begun shifting towards the idea of being a maritime service. Customs and traditions revolve around the sea making sea duty the cultural core of the service. Preventing women from being successful at sea duty is a way to prevent their full acceptance by the Coast Guard.

The Academy women surveyed indicated feelings of isolation, lack of acceptance by the wardroom, discrimination in training and poor demonstrated leadership traits by those in command and command positions. They also found themselves the source of rumors and false perceptions. A few turned to enlisted personnel for support and became involved in inappropriate relationships. As a

result, their careers were short-lived. Those few who did have supportive leaders found sea duty to be a wonderful learning experience and were more inclined to indicate a desire to continue their career. Those not as fortunate to have effective leaders indicated their intentions to leave the service at the end of their Academy obligation.

This lack of acceptance of women officers was not seen in the other communities, as very few women besides those assigned afloat experienced difficulties in their second assignment. They found themselves more accepted by their peers, supported by their commands and confident in their abilities. The biggest complaint from the women centered on the need for more formal training prior to assuming responsibilities at their new assignment. These positive experiences, however, did not overturn upcoming high attrition from the Academy classes of 1991 and 1992.

Further impacting retention of women Academy graduates are feelings that a Coast Guard career and a family life are incompatible. The feelings were strongest among the senior cadets. However, the vast majority of women who have been in the field for four years also found it extremely difficult. If a decision had to be made between choosing a career in the service or taking care of the family, the family came out on top. Along this same line, the women surveyed also expressed concern about co-location and work-life policy issues that they felt could have a negative impact on their retention.

In an attempt to identify why the Coast Guard is having a difficult time improving women officer's representation, this study explored the Coast Guard's approach to assimilating women into the service. The introduction of women into the Academy was based on equality in training and not as a shift in the culture of the organization. As this culture was steeped in 200 years of male tradition, women had little hope of inclusion. The sheer lack of numbers kept the playing field unequal. Opening all career fields to women was also designed to help women successfully integrate into the Coast Guard. To this end, the majority of the mission areas have successfully made the transition. Unfortunately, the one mission that has the biggest impact on Academy women, sea duty, has not.

The Coast Guard, due to their progressive approach on work-life issues, is often used by the other military services as a model. Development of the Care of the Newborn Children policy, providing geographic stability for military personnel and working hard towards co-location assignments are viewed positively by most women officers. It was found, however, that Academy women generally believe their careers may be side-tracked if they took advantage of what the system offers.

Fraternization between junior women officers and enlisted personnel is still impacting retention. The Coast Guard has responded by rewriting the policy covering this and by conducting training at pre-Command schools. However, until the Coast Guard truly understands the dynamics behind what is occurring, this issue will remain a major concern for the organization.

The Coast Guard, although progressive in comparison with the other military services, was found to be slow in examining the status of women within the organization. There were a number of studies done in the late 1980's and early 1990's that explored the Officer Evaluation Report system, the climate at the academy and the level of acceptance of women in the Coast Guard (WICG). There have also been some informal studies conducted within the Officer Personnel Management Division that identified the low senior women officer's representation. This year a workforce cultural audit will be conducted as well as an assignment survey on retention.

All of these studies and surveys may provide more details, but the bottom line is a need for the organization to step away from its cultural past and recognize the changes women have brought to the organization. Because of 23 years of slow progress, the Coast Guard is now trying to quickly recover from its passive approach to actively bringing women into the service. Funding for recruitment, improving the Academy's social environment, selecting enlightened leaders for command, and instituting progressive work-life policies will all help in attracting and retaining women. What the Coast Guard must do to be successful is to worry less about the number of women and concentrate more on recognizing their abilities.

Chapter Eight

Recommendations

THE ACADEMY

1. Provide funding and personnel to the Academy for the recruitment effort.

The need to bring highly qualified and motivated women into the Academy is critical. The Coast Guard needs to expand its efforts and seek out those who desire a military career by first introducing the Coast Guard to the high school public and then by targeting women to apply for admissions. During the interviews with the senior women cadets, it became apparent that women who had attended an all-girl high school felt fairly comfortable from the onset in the military environment so this may be an area to consider. If the Coast Guard is to raise its women officer representation level to 33 percent, the Academy must receive the support required from the organization to bring in the qualified women most likely to pursue a military career..

2. Continue efforts to update the computer system within Admissions.

The admissions data collected for this study was incomplete and laborious to gather. The last four Academy classes have been included on a computer file but there must be a linkage between the admissions staff, the Registrar's office and the Military Personnel Command, Officer Personnel Management Division. Otherwise, the Academy will not have all the information needed to determine if they are emphasizing the correct criteria in their selection process.

3. Determine the service need for engineering majors.

Only a handful of women in each graduating class pursues an engineering degree with the vast majority pursuing management and government majors. The Coast Guard will need to determine the requirement for engineers in the service and establish a set percentage for each graduating class. If the number of women in each class continues to increase, then there is a strong likelihood that the Academy may not produce the number of engineers needed for the Coast Guard to carry out assigned missions. This will become increasingly more important as the Academy supplies a higher number of each year's new officers. However, if the Coast Guard finds that the majority of the missions in the Coast Guard no longer require engineers, then the Academy should take a hard look at its curriculum. A reduced hard science curriculum may be more attractive to women.

4. Investigate why the Coast Guard Academy retention rate is so low.

The low retention rate problem was raised in 1976 when the Coast Guard was graduating approximately 50 percent of each class.⁶⁹ The fact that retention is low for both men and women at the Coast Guard Academy in comparison with the other service academies raises concerns about the selection and training process.⁷⁰ The Academy appears to have the mentality of weeding out people to get to the required graduation level, rather than the mentality of only selecting the best and taking the necessary steps to see them graduate. Obviously, as a military service, not all incoming freshmen will be capable of adapting to the military environment. However, the present system appears to be a costly way of doing business and requires further study.

5. Conduct group dynamics training earlier in the program.

The women cadets are still having difficulties being accepted at the Academy. This is especially true during the first few years when they are not in a position to demonstrate their leadership abilities. The women are still viewed as anomalies within the Corps and are having a difficult time adjusting in a non-traditional career field without losing their identity as women. Including group training early in the leadership program will help both the men and women understand the dynamics behind dominant-subordinate group behavior. This awareness will provide both genders with tools to improve the assimilation process.

6. Continue efforts to change the Academy training program to be more relevant to today's Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard Academy has had a long and distinguished history in preparing men for service. However, when women were introduced in 1976, no decision was made to examine how their inclusion could actually improve the Academy. The hazing and harassment that existed at the Academy are archaic, but recent efforts to humanize the summer training program to better reflect the Coast Guard and its missions are on the right track. Efforts to understand the advantages of having a diverse workforce are also being recognized through the introduction of Academy programs such as "Excellence through Diversity: A Comprehensive Implementation Strategy". These initiatives appear to be positive steps in changing a culture designed for and by men.

⁶⁹ Enrollment Analysis Incorporated, "United States Coast Guard Academy Confidential Retention Report and Training Program Proposals," July 12, 1976, 3.

⁷⁰ This comparison may not show the whole picture. The Academy compares its retention rate to that of small engineering colleges and has found itself comparable to their rates.

7. Continue efforts to improve senior women officer's representation at the Academy.

The need for more women role models on the faculty and on staff is critical. The cadets need to be able to see women in senior roles as a sign of the Coast Guard's commitment to improving the diversity within the service and as an indication that women are successful. Having only a few women in leadership roles speaks of tokenism and places an extra load on these women to represent all women.

8. Continue efforts to increase women's representation for incoming classes.

The Academy effort to increase the percentage of women in each incoming class is to be commended. However, the high attrition rates often sabotage these efforts. A fifty-fifty split would be an ideal male-female mix but may be unrealistic based on the percentage of high school women entertaining the idea of joining the military. Therefore, the Academy should continue to maintain the 1:3 ratio of women to men which it recently obtained and should now work toward a 1:2 ratio.

9. Provide counseling to help women overcome feelings of low-esteem.

Every woman surveyed and interviewed expressed feelings of low self-confidence in either military aptitude, academics or in both. This was especially true in the first few years when many of the women found the academic program difficult, received no acknowledgment of their abilities from their male classmates and struggled to maintain a feminine image dressed in male-oriented clothing. Many of those interviewed felt that low self-esteem was one of the driving factors behind their development of eating disorders. The women need to be reassured that they belong in the Coast Guard and that even though they have become part of a large organization, they have not lost their identity as women and individuals.

10. Consider allowing cadets to retake courses to erase poor grades.

Unlike most colleges, cadets are not allowed to retake a course and have their earlier failing grade expunged from their record. This keeps an individual's grade point average artificially low even though they have demonstrated a mastery of the subject. Many individuals barely recover from earlier poor grades. A handful of cadets in each class are allowed to drop their course load down to a more manageable level by extending their stay at the Academy one extra term. This adds to the training expense, but if the Academy is able to bring in fewer people in each new class by improving the retention rate, then more individuals can be allowed this opportunity.

11. Conduct fraternization training prior to any shipboard experience.

Many of the women interviewed spoke of a fraternization situation aboard the CGC Eagle that left many on the verge of expulsion and those women not involved isolated from those who were involved. Training is critical for all cadets and for the crews of all units receiving cadets. The Academy is in an excellent position to clearly spell out what fraternization means and spell out the consequences of inappropriate relationships. This should help avoid unnecessary disciplinary action and stress.

12. Expand the mentor training program at the Academy.

Very few women are benefiting from the present mentor program. When present, the mentor was cited as a positive influence on the woman cadet's life. Overall, the women do very little mentoring and appear to avoid mentoring other women although they expressed a desire for senior women mentors. Women must learn the value of mentoring and realize that mentoring other women helps both parties. The idea of mentoring must be planted at the Academy so that it can grow and develop as the cadet matures and graduates to the field. This should eventually cut down training costs associated with sending Academy graduates to a separate mentor training program once in the field.

13. Conduct career counseling during the First Class year.

Many of the women stated they had little knowledge of the Coast Guard's mission and what to pursue for a second assignment. Providing career counseling up-front will help expand the women cadets' understanding of the Coast Guard plus allow the women to tailor their summer training programs for their future careers.

14. Include gender studies at the Academy.

An excellent proposal to include gender studies at the Academy was developed in 1994 by women staff members. This proposal should receive strong consideration due to its potential in affecting the culture at the Academy and in the field.⁷¹ The proposal recommended a course be made available first to the senior class. I feel an understanding of women's issues is needed earlier in a cadets curriculum and would recommend it be offered as close as possible to the beginning of a cadets experience.

⁷¹ Flammang, Lucretia, Gwendolyn Stevens, Linda Huzzy, and Sharon Zelmanowitz, "Proposal for a Gender-Studies Program at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy," dated 16 June 1994.

SEA EXPERIENCE

15. Examine the afloat community for acceptance of women officers.

Academy graduates have been going to sea since its founding in 1876. However, the afloat community has yet to make the cultural shift that allows women the opportunity to learn and develop in a non-hostile environment. As long as this environment is allowed to exist, highly qualified women will be lost for outdated reasons. This is a costly way to do business and detrimental to retaining women in the service

16. Require all command and control personnel going afloat to attend mentor training.

It was apparent from the information received that many of the individuals in command and control billets had no clue how to deal with women much less mentor them. These senior officers must be educated prior to reporting to their units so that their actions are not the cause of women leaving the service. Almost all recommendations for mentor training attendance to date have focused on junior officers who are usually from a diverse background. Unfortunately, it is senior leadership who can gain the most from this training.

17. Hold individuals in command and control positions accountable for training junior officers.

There was no evidence provided by the women surveyed that any action was taken against officers in command and control positions for their failure to properly train the new ensigns. Commands must recognize their training responsibilities. The Coast Guard commands of LANTAREA and PACAREA should have a monitoring system to check the progress of all junior officers afloat to ensure the needed training is being received. It appears training takes a backseat to mission accomplishment in the Coast Guard which allows senior leaders to shirk their responsibilities in developing junior officers.

18. Screen all command and control positions carefully.

All perspective Commanding Officers (CO's) undergo a careful screening process prior to an afloat assignment. This process has been fairly successful. However, the survey indicated that some CO's may have inadequate management skills to deal with women. A heavier emphasis should be placed on the individual's past human relations and training record to ensure the best managers are selected for command positions. Shiphandling skills may no longer be the driving factor for selection. Closer examination should also be done for Executive, Operations and Engineering Officers to ensure they have demonstrated the management skills necessary to assume a training role.

IN GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

19. Meet with all the senior women officers in the Coast Guard.

Until the creation of the Women's Advisory Council in 1991 and the creation of the Women's Policy Advisor position there was no official sounding board for women's issues. The majority of all decisions affecting women had been made by the senior leadership in the Coast Guard, i.e. male, Academy graduates. Occasionally one or two women were brought into the discussion, but because they had spent the majority of their careers isolated from other women, they were not in a position to represent all women. The Coast Guard now has over 20 women officers in the grades of commander and captain from a variety of fields and commissioning sources. They are a wonderful source of information and are in an excellent position to provide senior leadership with ideas and concerns on assimilating and retaining women in the service.

20. Train all officers on the writing of Officer Evaluation Reports (OER).

The OER study uncovered some discrepancies between reports on women and those on men. Until it can be conclusively shown that this discrepancy has been eliminated, officers should be made aware of this study and receive formal training in writing unbiased OER's.

21. Consider expanding the Care of the Newborn Children policy and institute a computerized tracking system.

At present, the Care of the Newborn Children policy is restricted to parents with children under the age of twelve months. Waivers have been granted to cover older children. However, not everyone will be inclined to ask for a waiver even though they may need the release from service to take care of family matters. When researching this issue, it was surprising to find that no formal tracking system was in place identifying who was on the program and when they planned to return to active duty. This makes it difficult to measure the effectiveness of the program and determine the impact it will have on future personnel projections. If the program expands to include older children so more personnel can take advantage of the program, this will be a critical need for personnel planners.

22. Place emphasis for retaining women in the military on quality.

One of the most frequent complaints from both the women surveyed and those interviewed was the tendency of the Coast Guard to emphasize the number of women in the service over the quality of the women. They also felt women were given assignments based on their gender rather than their ability. This undermined the effort of those who worked hard for their assignments as it allowed others to speculate on why they were chosen. It is important for the Coast Guard to retain as many women as possible but it should not compromise the system for the sake of improving the percentage if the Coast Guard truly wants to become the employer of choice.

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Appendix A

Core Questions for Senior Women Cadets

1. What attracted you to a military Academy?
2. Who in your family has or has had military experience?
3. Was anyone opposed to you applying to the Coast Guard Academy?
4. How would you characterize your high school days in terms of academics, leadership roles, sports, volunteer work, and work experience? Were you involved in JROTC or did you attend AIM?
5. How much did you know about the Coast Guard Academy prior to applying?
6. Did you feel prepared for Swab Summer - physically and mentally?
7. How well has the military training program prepared you for your responsibilities within the Corps of Cadets, summer internship programs, your first assignment?
8. What is your major and how would you rank your academic performance?
9. How would you rank your military aptitude? How does this compare with where your Company Officer ranked you?
10. What leadership roles have you been assigned? Have you been given enough opportunities to feel comfortable in your leadership abilities?
11. Can you identify a turnaround point in your performance and what is it?
12. How would rank your self-esteem and what factors have impacted it the most during your 4 years?
13. Why do women leave the Academy and have you ever considered leaving?
14. Do you have a mentor and do you mentor?
15. Who are more competitive - women vs. women, men vs. men or women vs. men?
16. What are your thoughts about women role models and are women encouraged to socialize with each other?

17. Do you feel prepared for your first assignment?
18. What were your career aspirations upon entering the Coast Guard Academy?
What are they now?
19. What are your thoughts about women having a career in the Coast Guard
and having a family?
20. Would you reapply to the Academy?
21. Do you have any general comments about women in the military?
22. What changes would you recommend in the training program?

Appendix B

Academy Women Retention & Training Survey-RESULTS

The information obtained in this survey is confidential and no names or information protected by the Privacy Information Act will be used. Overall results will be incorporated in writings to fulfill the thesis requirement for the Degree of Master of Science in Management at the Alfred P. Sloan School of Management. If you would prefer to complete this survey verbally, please call me at (617) 674-3125.

A. Academy Experience - (NUMBER OF RESPONSES IN PARENTHESES)

1. My career aspirations upon entering the Academy were: (A few women selected more than one field-mostly command and 20 years):

8 Graduate 5 Complete Obligated Service 3 Command 15 20 Year Career
0 30 Year Career 0 Admiral 10 Unknown*

On the following questions, please circle the number that matches the level to which you agree or disagree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
2. Admissions material I received accurately portrayed the military environment at the academy.	2	11	17	4	(34)
3. I was not mentally prepared for Swab summer	11	16	6	1	(34)
4. I was physically prepared for Swab summer.	3	5	15	11	(34)
5. The training received during Swab summer helped me adapt to the military environment.	4	5	19	6	(34)
6. I entered the academy unsure of my abilities to be successful in the military.	7	11	14	2	(34)
7. The military training received at the academy strengthened my desire for a military career.	6	14	11	2	(33)
8. The summer training program strengthened my desire for a military career.	8	7	11	7	(33)
9. I felt comfortable in the military environment by the end of fourth class year.	5	8	14	7	(34)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
10. I felt I was not given the leadership positions I needed to prepare me for the fleet.	5	18	7	4	(34)
11. Contact with women officers strengthened my desire to graduate.	6	12	11	5	(34)
12. Senior women cadets should play a more active role in mentoring other women cadets.	3	5	13	12	(33)
13. I felt comfortable in the military environment by the end of second class year.	2	3	20	9	(34)
14. Leadership training at the academy adequately prepared me for indoctrinating incoming cadets during Swab summer.	4	12	12	3	(31)
15. Women are more competitive with each other than with men.	2	13	10	8	(33)
16. I felt accepted by my peers at the academy.	7	10	13	4	(34)
17. The environment at the academy encourages women to socialize with each other.	9	14	10	1	(34)
18. Military training received during the year prepared me for summer training:					
Third class summer	6	8	19	1	(34)
Second class summer	4	11	16	3	(34)
First class summer	4	3	19	8	(34)
19. I believe my military aptitude performance in comparison with my class mates:					
<u>15</u> improved each year <u>16</u> remained the same <u>3</u> decreased					(34)

Was there a year that you identify as a turning point in your performance? If yes, which year and why?

20. My military aptitude ranking by my company officer:

12 improved each year 18 remained the same 1 decreased (31)

21. How would you rate your confidence level during your tour at the academy?

Academic: 11 Low 12 Medium 11 High (34)

Military Aptitude: 8 Low 19 Medium 7 High (34)

Comment _____

22. Individuals resign from the academy for a variety of reasons. Based on your own personal knowledge, what were the main reasons why women left the academy prior to graduation?

23. During the course of your training, did you seriously consider resigning from the academy? 28 Yes 6 No. If yes, what issues made you consider leaving and what made you change your mind? _____

24. What was the top leadership position you were chosen to fill and in what academic year did your selection occur?

25. Class ranking upon graduation by quartile:

a. Academic: 9 Top 1/4 8 2nd 1/4 8 3rd 1/4 9 4th 1/4 (34)

b. Military: 8 Top 1/4 5 2nd 1/4 12 3rd 1/4 8 4th 1/4 (33)

c. Overall: 7 Top 1/4 11 2nd 1/4 7 3rd 1/4 8 4th 1/4 (33)

26. Upon graduation my career aspirations were: (Some women selected more than one field)

7 Complete Obligated Service 6 Command 13 20 Year Career

0 30 Year Career 0 Admiral 12 Unknown

B. First Assignment

On the following questions, please circle the number that matches the level to which you agree or disagree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1. Upon graduation, I felt prepared to handle my first assignment at a floating unit.	4	7	15	7	(33)
2. My OERs accurately reflected my performance as an officer.	4	5	20	4	(33)
3. The Coast Guard afloat qualification system aided my qualifying as a watchstander.	1	4	22	6	(33)
4. I consider my first assignment successful.	3	4	17	10	(34)
5. Assistance provided me by my fellow officers enhanced my professional development.	8	12	8	6	(34)
6. My first assignment was a disappointment.	6	11	12	5	(34)
7. My command assisted my professional development.	10	4	12	6	(32)
8. I felt isolated from my fellow officers in the wardroom.	7	11	6	8	(32)
9. I felt fully accepted by my subordinates.	2	3	10	13	(34)
10. I lacked confidence in my leadership abilities while aboard my ship.	14	15	4	1	(34)

11. Most of the training I received aboard ship was conducted by (Check all applicable):

7 CO 11 XO 11 OPS 6 EO 15 LTJGs 9 Peers 12 Warrants
21 Chiefs 15 Leading Petty Officer 25 Own Initiative 1 Other _____

12. Who did you rely upon most to help you during your first assignment (Check all applicable)?

0 CO 4 XO 5 OPS 3 EO 10 LTJGs 8 Peers 6 Warrant
17 Chiefs 6 Leading Petty Officer 12 Own Initiative 4 Other _____

13. What would have improved the training process during your first assignment?

14. Did you experience any difficulties during your first assignment? 31 Yes 2 No
If yes, please elaborate. _____

15. Were you assigned or did you have a mentor? 7 Yes 27 No

16. After my afloat experience my career aspirations were: (Some women selected more than one field)

14 Complete Obligated Service 5 Command 7 20 Year Career
0 30 Year Career 0 Admiral 10 Unknown

17. What career path did you desire after your afloat assignment?

2 Administration 1 Afloat Command 3 Afloat 5 Aviation
0 Engineering Afloat 2 Engineering Ashore 3 Group 5 Marine Safety
1 PG School 5 Other (_____)

18. I received the formal recognition I felt I deserved for my performance:

13 Yes 19 No

C. Second Assignment

1. What is your second assignment?

3 Administration 0 Afloat Command 6 Afloat 4 Aviation
1 Engineering Afloat 3 Engineering Ashore 0 Group 4 Marine Safety
0 PG School 12 Other (_____)

2. How has receiving this assignment impacted your potential for remaining in the service?

20 Improved 12 Decreased 2 Undecided

3. How do you feel this assignment will impact your career?

21 Improves promotion potential 5 Decreases promotion potential
6 Will have no impact

4. What do you feel is the most important factor in getting promoted within the Coast Guard?

1 Type of job 2 Performance in the job 19 Combination
8 Other (Please explain _____)

On the following questions, please circle the number that matches the level to which you agree or disagree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
5. After my first tour, I felt I was sufficiently prepared for my second assignment.	4	7	17	5	(33)
6. I feel confident in my abilities to succeed in this second assignment.	1	2	18	13	(34)
7. I received the training necessary to be successful in my second assignment.	4	8	11	11	(34)
8. My second assignment has decreased my desire to remain in the Coast Guard.	12	11	4	7	(34)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. My command has been supportive of my professional needs.	1	5	12	15 (33)
10. I feel accepted by enlisted personnel as an officer in the Coast Guard.	0	4	17	13 (34)
11. I feel accepted by other officers at my unit.	2	5	13	13 (33)
12. My OERs accurately reflect my performance.	2	3	16	11 (32)

13. Most of the training at my second unit was conducted by (Check all applicable) :

5 CO 4 XO 1 OPS 2 EO 4 LTJGs 13 Peers 5 Warrants
6 Chiefs 21 Own Initiative 14 Other (Schools)

14. Who do you rely upon most to help you during this assignment (Check all applicable) ?

2 CO 8 XO 3 OPS 2 EO 3 LTJGs 18 Peers 3 Warrants
7 Chiefs 20 Own Initiative 8 Other

15. What would have improved the training process during this assignment?

16. Have you experienced any difficulties during this assignment? 12 Yes 22 No
 If yes, please elaborate.

17. Were you assigned or do you have a mentor? 11 Yes 23 No

18. What career path do you desire after this assignment?

0 Administration 3 Afloat Command 2 Afloat 5 Aviation
0 Engineering Afloat 1 Engineering Ashore 3 Group 4 Marine Safety
3 PG School 8 Other (_____)

D. General Observations

On the following questions, please circle the number that matches the level to which you agree or disagree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1. I believe it is difficult for a single women to have a career in the Coast Guard.	4	15	10	5	(34)
2. I believe it is difficult to have a personal relationship and a career in the Coast Guard.	0	10	12	12	(34)
3. I believe it is difficult for a woman to have children and a career in the Coast Guard.	1	3	15	15	(34)
4. Women receive as many leadership positions and special assignments as men in the Coast Guard.	4	11	17	0	(32)
5. The Coast Guard is taking the right steps to retain women officers.	6	9	16	0	(31)
6. The Coast Guard policy of transferring officers every 3-4 years is necessary for officer development.	2	5	22	3	(32)
7. Whether in the Coast Guard or in a civilian organization, I plan to have a career.	1	2	11	18	(32)
8. I am more attracted to a civilian position because I will have more control over my upward mobility.	2	16	11	5	(34)
9. Barriers to advancement for women commonly identified in corporate America also exist for women officers in the Coast Guard.	1	9	18	4	(32)
10. I believe women no longer require or need special consideration to be successful in the Coast Guard.	3	8	14	4	(29)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
11. Senior women officers need to play a more active role in mentoring junior women officers.	2	6	15	9	(32)
12. Women perform as well as men in my occupational specialty.	0	0	13	19	(32)
13. Women are perceived by senior officers as performing as well as men in my occupational specialty.	1	10	12	9	(32)
14. Women are formally recognized as often as men for their job performance.	2	10	15	6	(33)
15. My present career aspirations are: (Some women selected more than one field)					
<u> 14 </u> Complete Obligated Service					
<u> 2 </u> Command					
<u> 7 </u> 20 Year Career					
<u> 1 </u> 30 Year Career					
<u> 0 </u> Admiral					
<u> 12 </u> Unknown					
16. What do you believe the Coast Guard should be doing in order to retain and attract women?					

E. Background

1. How did you find out about the academy?

2. What attracted you to a military college?

3. Did any family member(s) serve in the Coast Guard? 1 Yes 33 No

Other military service? 27 Yes 7 No

4. Were there any outside pressures discouraging you from applying (voiced opinions from peers, teachers or parents)?

5. In High School (please check all applicable answers), I participated in:

32 Varsity Sports 22 Class Leader 19 Had a job 4 Attended AIM

Academic Standing: 31 Top 5% 3 Top 10% 0 Top 20% 0 Top 50%

6. Additional comments or suggestions: _____

I thank you for your time and wish you the very best in your career.

Appendix C

Q. C-16 What do you believe the Coast Guard should be doing in order to retain and attract women?

1. Attract - Advertise the Coast Guard more and the opportunities it has to offer equally.
Retain - Advertise it accurately as a military service. Most people don't realize that it is the military at all and then get out.
2. Include them in the wardroom; not make them "token models" for the CG; Give them more leadership positions; Don't force them to go on ships if they do not choose that career path; Educate 0-4/0-5 level (men) that they need to be mentoring junior women officers.
3. Allow more flexibility in geographic assignments; don't send women or minorities to certain jobs because of their gender or race; Help women to learn ways to cope/socialize as singles in new areas.
4. The CG does an outstanding job at attracting women. However, the CG must realize that women want to be treated equally & not differently. At my current unit there exists a "Good Old Boy" network. The males don't know how to act toward myself and the one(1) other female JO. Most of the time they just ignore us.
5. The USCG does a good job of attracting women (by the nature of our operations). Retention (both of officers and enlisted) is the problem. The women we get are already leaders - forward thinking and innovative. They have already "thought outside of the box" by accepting a commission in a traditionally male career path. What the Coast Guard wants is for these women to become one of the pack instead of staying ahead of the pack. They want them to look, walk, talk, act and speak the same as everyone else in the organization. That is the same as being a follower and not a leader, and is generally contrary to the very nature of these women that join. After about 5-10 years of doing things contrary to their personality, their drive and their values, they get out. Either that, or they are classified as "non-team players" and passed over.

In my job at the district - I see the same thing happening to our junior enlisted women. The Coast Guard makes them choose between being the person they are and becoming the person they're not sure they want to be. To me, that's an easy choice - maintain your personality, your moral and personal values, your femininity, and get out of the Coast Guard. I know the majority of these women will make a profound difference wherever they are, but the Coast Guard wouldn't allow them to develop to their full potential, so we lose.
6. More opportunities for command. Not really sure - Have a definite dating policy between Officer and enlisted, not based on command preference.
7. Keep up the worklife & wellness policies. Women are different and have different needs. It's good to recognize it, be willing to work with it, and maintain the differences as good rather than a hindrance to the CG.
8. Publicizing the great opportunities women get in the Coast Guard.
9. Active recruiting at schools; senior women mentoring and supporting junior women personnel.

10. Not single them out as minorities. Women stay because they want to, not because the CG does something.
11. Get rid of the double standard. So many senior male officers/single male officers do not recognize that women officers play the same roles as their wives/girlfriends as well as roles as professional Coast Guardsmen. As a supervisor of 18 E-3's/E-2's, 2 PO's, 1 CPO, I often witnessed the females getting counseled on not letting single parenthood issues interfere with work while males were being granted liberty very liberally to pick up friends for the airport, get cars fixed, etc. What kind of msg. is this sending ? And this type of mentality prevails from E-2 to O-6.
12. Really treat them like men. An aggressive, smart, outspoken women is considered obnoxious, irritating bitch. But in a man it's considered great.
13. Tell the truth about what to expect, support them when they are performing well, hold them accountable when they break regulations. Hold everyone accountable for their actions towards women.
14. Treat collocations better - one should not be sacrificed due to money concerns.
15. Offer compressed work schedules - even at Operational Commands (MSOs). This helps with working parents. Active mentor program - senior women officers.
16. Increase women and minorities to reflect the civilian workforce.
17. Ensure qualified women are offered high visibility assignments (i.e. command, XO, etc.).
18. Provide more options for daycare, work hours, etc. Push the mentoring program **HARDER.**
19. Reach out to women on the Junior High/ High School Level.
20. A fairly strong attitude adjustment is necessary. In an Admin position things seem pretty even, but afloat there is such a strong bias against the women (sometimes overt, sometimes quiet). With some exceptions, it appears to be the younger men who most resent the women (primarily other young JO's). Most of the senior officers are more concerned with the job. Women afloat are still in such a minority that particularly on smaller units, they end up isolated. They are also in such a spotlight that whoever they are friends with, they are sleeping with which results in accusations against them (often for something they are not, but the male JO's are doing).
21. Don't try so hard to retain any woman, retain women who are good officers and role models.
22. Recognize them - nurture their ideas and give them proper guidance to become leaders.
23. The Coast Guard asks its people for a lot of personal sacrifice (moving, changing jobs, leaving family). For some this is worth the sacrifice because they feel camaraderie, security with the Coast Guard, etc. Most women I know that share my circumstances don't feel the sacrifices are worth the returns. The Coast Guard needs to make a mental shift to treating women like they are part of the team. This is a tall order I know. The Coast Guard can only change as society changes. But knowing that I can do the same job I do now on the outside (even with the stereotypes, male attitude, etc.) and stay in a place with family is too attractive to pass up.
24. Offer assistance (via programs/initiatives) in balance family & career. Improve climate for women. Stop disparate enforcement of regulations.

25. Understand that women will date and may very well fall in love with an enlisted person. As long as they are not in the same command, I don't see the harm. 5 of 20 of the women in my class were passed over for LT because of this. I do believe in good order & discipline, but feel relationships can coexist with it. It is acceptable when the two people meet when both are enlisted & one went to OCS. What is the difference?

26. Not go overboard to make the numbers they want. If the CG keeps/promotes/gives good jobs to unqualified women just so they have their tokens- it hurts everyone. I'm tired of being teased about being "The Token." If it didn't happen in the past, maybe I'd be more accepted based on my performance - NOT just - "oh yeah, probably one of those women they're pushing through flight school."

27. Keep up what they are doing but don't make so many concessions for women that they feel like they can't succeed on their own merits.

28. The Coast Guard is doing a great job, but I want things the military won't provide, like a personal life.

29. I think worklife was a failure - women at some point are required to choose between a family or the CG - most pick their family (as I know I will). It's just a question of when. The CG needs to address this specifically and directly.

Five women chose not to address this question.

Appendix D

Identified Barriers to Increased Women in the Coast Guard

IBM Groupware Results¹

Rank-Ordered by Women in the Group

1. Sexist attitudes and the lack of attention to this at the top.
2. Issues involving child care.
3. Lack of total equal opportunity for women (promotion, assignment, training, etc.).
4. Conflicts between professional and mothering roles and responsibilities.
5. Male-dominated upper echelon.
6. Issues involving pregnancy.
7. Scarcity of role models/mentors for women.
8. Collocation of military spouse.
9. Too few women -- no "critical mass."
10. Cultural values and norms that condition us all.
11. Problems encountered as a result of mobility.
12. General Coast Guard lack of awareness of the need to get and retain women.
13. Availability of suitable head and berthing facilities.
14. Inability of Coast Guard to recruit suitable women.
15. Getting women to the operational units and keeping them there.
16. We don't send a recruiting message that really attracts women.

Rank-Ordered by Men in the Group

1. Sexist attitudes and the lack of attention to this at the top.
2. Male-dominated upper echelon.
3. Lack of total equal opportunity for women (promotion, assignment, training, etc.).
4. Conflicts between professional and mothering roles and responsibilities.
5. Issues involving child care.
6. Issues involving pregnancy.
7. Scarcity of role models/mentors for women.
8. Too few women -- no "critical mass."
9. Problems encountered as a result of mobility.
10. Collocation of military spouse.
11. Inability of Coast Guard to recruit suitable women.
12. Cultural values and norms that condition us all.
13. General Coast Guard lack of awareness of the need to get and retain women.
14. Getting women to the operational units and keeping them there.

¹ WICG, C-2, C-3.

15. We don't send a recruiting message that really attracts women.
16. Availability of suitable head and berthing facilities.