



## @USNPEOPLE WEEKLY WIRE

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## 1.) Another Military Barrier is Lifted / 1 JULY 16 [LINK](#)

Washington Post, Dan Lamothe

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter repealed the Pentagon's long-held ban on transgender people serving in the military Thursday, ending a year-long process that was bogged down by internal conflict and concerns among senior service officials about how the change could be made.

Carter said at a news conference that the policy change will take place over the next 12 months, beginning with guidance issued to current transgender service members and their commanders, followed by training for the entire military. Beginning Thursday, however, service members can no longer be involuntarily separated from the services solely on the basis of being transgender, he said.

"Our mission is to defend this country, and we don't want barriers unrelated to a person's qualification to serve preventing us from recruiting or retaining the soldier, sailor, airman or Marine who can best accomplish the mission," Carter said. "We have to have access to 100 percent of America's population for our all-volunteer forces to be able to recruit from among them the most highly qualified — and to retain them."

The decision marks the latest way in which the military has blazed new trails in the last few years on issues that have divided the country. In 2011, the Obama administration repealed the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which prohibited gay service members from serving openly. Last year, Carter lifted a ban on women serving in units in ground combat assignments.

For decades, the Pentagon considered transgender people to be sexual deviants who had to be discharged from service. The military decided last year to move the authority to discharge to higher-ranking commanders, making it tougher to force out those who came out as transgender. Still, many service members have been living in limbo.

The Pentagon chief said that a Rand Corp. study commissioned by the military found that there are about 2,500 transgender service members among the 1.3 million active-duty members of the military and an additional 1,500 among reserve units.

The "upper end of their range of estimates" found that there are about 7,000 transgender troops on active duty and 4,000 in the reserves, Carter said. Other organizations studying sexuality, such as the Palm Center, have found that there were about 15,500 transgender service members a few years ago and 12,800 now because of reductions in the overall size of the force.

The decision brought a mixed reaction on Capitol Hill. Rep. Duncan D. Hunter (R-Calif.), a Marine Corps veteran who played a key role in a failed effort five years ago to slow the demise of "don't ask, don't tell," discussed what to do with his staff and decided it was better to focus on other issues, according to his chief of staff, Joe Kasper.

"He's thought about it. We talked about it," Kasper said ahead of time when the announcement was imminent. "But he'd likely be alone in the effort. On these issues — most members won't touch them with a 10-foot pole. Hunter will, but he can't get others on board."

Rep. Mac Thornberry (R.-Tex.), the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, called Carter's decision the latest example of the Pentagon and President Obama prioritizing politics over policy.

"Our military readiness — and hence, our national security — is dependent on our troops being medically ready and deployable," he said in a statement. "The Administration seems unwilling or unable to assure Congress and

the American people that transgender individuals will meet these individual readiness requirements at a time when our Armed Forces are deployed around the world.”

Thornberry and Sen. James Inhofe (R.-Okla.), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said they would consider legislative options on the subject.

The details of the transgender policy change appeared to strike a compromise between some issues at play. Notably, transgender people who want to join the military will be required to wait 18 months after a doctor certifies that they are stable in their new gender before they can enlist. Defense officials familiar with the discussions have said that the Army and Marine Corps pressed to wait two years, while the Navy and Air Force thought 12 months were sufficient.

Carter, who appeared Thursday without military leaders in uniform alongside him, said the decision to make the change in policy was his. But he added that he tried to build consensus among military officials before forging ahead.

Senior Airman Kiana Brothers waves the pride flag and cheers on participants of the Pride Month 5K at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois on June 24, 2016. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Fowler/ Air Force)

“I have a general principle around here which is that it’s important that people who have to implement decisions be part of the decision-making, and the armed services are the one who are going to have to implement that,” he said. “They’ve been a part of this study, but now they are a critical part of implementation.”

Gen. Robert B. Neller, the Marine Corps commandant, said in a statement that integrating transgender service members will require understanding, coordination and discipline.

“As we develop our implementation plan, we will pay particular attention to maintaining our readiness and standards, while respecting those who share the esprit de corps to serve as Marines,” Neller said. “We fight and win as a team. In that, we will continue to treat all Marines with dignity and respect.”

Cynthia Smith, an Army spokeswoman, said the service will work diligently to develop an implementation plan.

The decision was greeted with jubilation by transgender service members, who have lived in an awkward world over the last year in which Carter noted their difficulties and established a working group to research the issue.

“We all knew the change was coming ever since he acknowledged our service,” said Staff Sgt. Patricia King, a transgender member of the Army infantry who recently was assigned to Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state. Her new unit was prepared for her when she arrived and has treated her warmly, she said.

“All they saw was a soldier and woman ready to do her job,” King said.

Many policy details still need to be decided, however. Over the next 90 days, the Pentagon will follow up by completing and issuing a commanders’ guidebook for leading current transgender service members and medical guidance to military doctors for providing gender transition care if required for those already in uniform. The Defense Department also will immediately initiate changes so that transgender troops can alter their gender in personnel management systems.

Beginning in October, the services will begin training rank-and-file service members about the change. By no later than next July, the military services will begin allowing transgender people who meet all standards to

openly join the military, provided that they are considered stable in their identified gender for 18 months, as certified by their doctor and verified by a military doctor.

## **2.) DoD's Updated Transgender Policy: Nine Things you Need to Know / 30 JUNE 16 [LINK](#)**

Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter today announced after a year-long review, transgender individuals will be allowed to serve openly in the U.S. military.

### DoD Transgender Policy Timeline

Following this announcement, the Navy is moving forward to implement the Department of Defense's new policy that allows transgender service. The Navy has begun the process of implementing this decision in consultation with the Department of Defense and other services. We will develop a plan that provides training to our Sailors as well as updates our policies and procedures so that this change will proceed smoothly across the Navy in the coming months and years. We are committed to removing barriers that prevent service members from serving in any capacity based on their abilities and qualifications and want men and women in the Navy who are the right fit for the right job regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or creed.

"We welcome today's announcement that the Department of Defense will lift the restrictions preventing transgender individuals from serving their nation," said Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus. "The Department of the Navy remains committed to ensuring that all who wish to serve have the opportunity to do so, and the Navy and Marine Corps, making implementation of this new policy a priority, will work to expedite the process to the maximum extent possible. Our diversity is one of our force's greatest advantages and today's announcement will only make us stronger."

Here are nine things you need to know about the Department of Defense's new policy change.

- 1.The Navy and the other services will follow the implementation timeline outlined by the Department of Defense. We will develop a plan that updates our policies and procedures and provides training to the force so that this change will proceed smoothly across the Navy.
- 2.Effective immediately, transgender service members may serve openly, and they can no longer be discharged or otherwise separated from the military solely for being transgender individuals.
- 3.These policies will be implemented in stages over the next 12 months—starting most immediately with addressing the needs of current service members and their commanders, and followed by training for the entire force, and ultimately, beginning to admit transgender recruits.
- 4.For those transgender service members already serving today, they will be able to begin the process to officially change their gender in our personnel management systems no later than Oct. 1 (90 days after this announcement).
- 5.Those Sailors who desire to transition will be required to submit a "Treatment Plan" developed with their medical provider. This plan will assist in the development of a Transition Plan as agreed to by the Sailor, their commanding officer and their medical provider. We expect more guidance on transition procedures to be released in the coming months.
- 6.We are in the process of completing a variety of training products for the Fleet. Training will be conducted in the coming months by command triads via mobile training teams or DVDs with a facilitation guide for units in

remote areas and unable to receive the face-to-face training. There will also be webinars for COs to ask questions prior to delivering training to their commands. Additionally, in order to best serve the Fleet, a DoD guide and a Commander's Tool Kit will be available to provide resources, guidance and to help answer questions in the coming months.

7. To help answer Sailors' questions, the Navy will establish a call center on July 5. To talk to someone, or to leave a message, please dial: 1-855-628-311 (1-855-NAVY-311). Sailors will need to follow a series of prompts, or they can email: [Navy311@navy.mil](mailto:Navy311@navy.mil).

8. As part of the Navy's implementation process, we are looking at what changes will need to be made for the physical readiness program, uniform and grooming standards, urinalysis, personal privacy and equal opportunity policies. We are taking a hard look at how to provide personal privacy for all our Sailors and recognize this is a concern for many.

9. Updated active and reserve policies will be very similar. We are working on a policy that applies to transgender Sailors in the reserves as per DoD policy and will outline specific reserve considerations as part of the Navy's implementation process.

### **3.) Navy Punishes Nine in Capture of Two Patrol Boats / 1 JULY 16 [LINK](#)**

New York Times, Michael S. Schmidt

WASHINGTON — Four hours behind schedule and 300 miles from their destination in Bahrain, the crews of two Navy patrol boats figured they had to make up time somehow. Immediately after leaving port in Kuwait, they veered off their planned route through the Persian Gulf, and their troubles began.

First they accidentally sailed through Saudi Arabia's territorial waters. Then one of the boats broke down while passing less than two miles from an Iranian-controlled island. When Iranian military boats swarmed the American vessels, they tried to get away. But the Iranians blocked their path and took the crews captive.

Navy officials on Thursday gave that account of the encounter in January that resulted in the detention of 10 American naval personnel for about 15 hours by the Iran's Revolutionary Guards. In a stinging report, the officials described numerous mistakes in the way the mission was planned and executed, and they laid out the reasons some sailors were responsible, both on the boats and up the chain of command.

Nine officers and enlisted sailors — including a captain and the commanding officer of the boats — face discipline, with some being relieved of command because of the episode, which embarrassed the service and occurred just hours before President Obama gave his last State of Union address.

"Our actions on that day in January and this incident did not live up to our expectations of our Navy," Adm. John M. Richardson, the chief of Naval operations, said Thursday.

Photo

A photograph released by the Revolutionary Guards in January showed detained American sailors at an undisclosed site in Iran.

He added: "Big incidents like this are always the result of the accumulation of a number of small problems. And so it's just the nature of these things."

At the time of the encounter, Republicans assailed the Obama administration for tolerating the way the sailors were treated by their Iranian captors, who blindfolded them and held them at gunpoint.

But senior administration officials — including Secretary of State John Kerry, who corresponded with his Iranian counterpart during the episode — thanked the Iranians for quickly resolving it. Administration officials said that was a positive outgrowth of the diplomatic channels between the United States and Iran opened by the nuclear deal struck last year.

The report issued Thursday was much more critical of the Iranians and painted a starker picture of what occurred after one of the boats — known as riverine command boats — began having engine problems. As it was being repaired, two Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps navy boats approached the American boats at high speeds, the report said. Shortly thereafter, two more Iranian boats arrived at the scene.

“Now overmatched, the riverine command boat crews submitted to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps navy’s direction,” the report said.

The Iranians “boarded, searched and seized the riverine command boats, and then searched, blindfolded and bound the crew. They struck the U.S. flag, replacing it with their own. Two sailors were forced at gunpoint to drive the riverine command boats to Farsi Island.”

#### Sailor Apologizes to Iran for ‘Mistake’

On the island, the crews were put in a room and interrogated as a group. Then several of them were questioned individually, and at least some of those interviews were taped. The following morning, the crews were given food and filmed by an Iranian television crew. The crew’s captain was given a script to read off to the camera, apologizing for the episode. He refused but was told that if he did not read it, they were not going to be released. He read the statement, and this was shown on Iranian television.

The crews were then blindfolded, taken back to their boats and given permission to leave. They met up with an American Navy ship and were taken off the boats and flown to an American base in Qatar, where the military interviewed the sailors.

The report acknowledged that the American boats were in Iranian waters, but said Iran had violated international law by preventing them from leaving. “These two boats and their crew members had every right to be where they were on that day,” Admiral Richardson said at a news conference at the Pentagon.

Although the Iranians were within their rights to investigate why the boats were near the island, Navy officials said, they violated international law by holding the sailors at gunpoint, videotaping interviews with them and damaging equipment on their boats.

In a speech a day after the episode, Mr. Kerry said that “all indications suggest or tell us that our sailors were well taken care of, provided with blankets and food, and assisted with their return to the fleet earlier today.” He said “this kind of issue was able to be peacefully resolved and efficiently resolved, and that is a testament to the critical role that diplomacy plays in keeping our country safe, secure and strong.”

But in March, Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Iran may have violated international law when it seized the sailors, saying “Iran’s actions were outrageous, unprofessional and inconsistent with international law.” The report released Thursday was far more explicit.

#### **4.) Update: Sailors’ PCS Orders Lead Times / 29 JUNE 16 [LINK](#)**

Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

Last week, the Navy announced that due to budget constraints and current fiscal environment, Sailors were experiencing shorter lead times for permanent change-of-station (PCS) moves this summer.

The results of our recent efforts should bring the Navy closer to its three-month average for issuing PCS orders in the coming weeks and months ahead.

### **What we're doing.**

While the Navy was able to make adjustments in some of its budget accounts to help fund PCS orders, the Chief of Naval Personnel convened a working group comprised of representatives from throughout the Fleet, to help improve PCS lead times.

The working group recommended several initiatives, most will be transparent to Sailors, to help maintain current readiness and Fleet manning levels reduce overall costs, and minimize additional impacts to our service members as we carefully navigate PCS orders for the remainder of the fiscal year (FY).

As part of these recommendations, the Navy will shift remaining accessions for FY16 in non-critical and over-manned rates to FY17. In other words, approximately 2,100 Sailors will begin their training a few months later than previously scheduled. Also, the Navy will not recruit additional individuals to replace Delayed Entry Program Sailors who do not complete training as is normally the case. The Navy remains on track to meet its recruiting goals for FY16, as it has for the last 109 consecutive months.

Additionally, Navy Personnel Command will continue to issue letters of intent for overseas moves. That way, while orders may not be in hand, individuals can start the process of doing overseas and medical screenings, dependent entry approval, passport applications and security clearance requests.

### **The future.**

Funding for all fourth quarter PCS moves is on the way. We will continue to work with the Fleet to develop PCS phasing plans to fund priority moves and put in place processes that ensures the Fleet is manned properly as we come to the end of the fiscal year and move into the next.

The Navy recognizes that these shortened lead times limit Sailors' time to prepare for moves, and burdens them and their families. Our focus and priority remains on manning the Fleet, and taking care of Sailors and their families.

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