HOW UNITS WERE SELECTED FOR STUDY

The process of selecting units was constrained. We were limited to units that were not deployed, and the units we initially selected were given very little notice. In most cases, the units responded positively, and we were very pleased with the support the commanders gave to the study. A couple of times, the unit we had originally selected was not available, and our service contact in the service headquarters assisted us in selecting a replacement that was available. We were also limited in the number of different locations to which we could travel. In an ideal research situation, we would have maximized the number of geographical locations from which we selected units to minimize the effect of any single location. Additionally, an ideal research effort would also study units while they were deployed, to include Navy ships at sea. Nonetheless, we are confident that the research sample was sufficient to illuminate certain issues worthy of further research and to identify trends and patterns across the services, across personnel according to their experience and grades, and across different types of units.

The units selected generally represent two categories: units with newly opened occupations, and newly opened units. To determine which units had occupations newly opened to women and filled by women, we used DMDC data that listed the units with billets coded to the newly opened occupations and indicated which of those billets within the unit were filled by women.

We surveyed and conducted interviews and focus groups with individuals from five Army units. We also interviewed command per-
sonnel from other units. We included units in the study that had been traditionally open to women, units that had been open to women but included recently opened Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs), and units that had been previously closed to women. The units visited were located at two Army bases and included combat arms, combat support, and combat service support units.

We visited three Navy combatant ships and four Navy aviation squadrons; all of the ships and three of the squadrons were recently opened to women. In designing the Navy population to be sampled, we selected candidate mixed-gender combatant ships based upon their deployment schedules. Our sample included different sized ships, from destroyer to aircraft carrier; different kinds of aviation units; and units from both the east and west coasts. The ships we visited also differed in the amount of time since they had last been deployed.

The Air Force presents a much more complicated research dilemma than do the other services. Few occupations were closed to women prior to the legislative and policy changes. Thus the changes applied to only six officer occupations: fighter pilot and navigator, bomber pilot and navigator, and special operations pilot and navigator. The changes for enlisted women were considerably fewer and generally only opened positions as sensor operators aboard specific aircraft. The 26 female officers in these newly opened positions are assigned to 22 different units. Because the women are spread so thinly among units, any research effort will need to study most, if not all, of these units to distinguish issues of personality and individuals from issues of gender integration. In addition, because the emphasis of this effort was not just on evaluating the experiences of these women but on understanding the effects of gender integration upon the entire unit, this was an overwhelming task for a limited research effort. We considered telephone interviews with the personnel of these units, but this would still have been extremely time consuming. In addition, the quality of information that can be obtained from limited telephone interviews is questionable.

The most imposing constraint, and that which ultimately prevented unit visits with the Air Force, was the need for anonymity and confidentiality. Because there was most often only one female officer in
the units in which we were interested, any study of the unit would focus upon the effect of an individual upon the unit, and any comments about gender integration would refer to that single individual. We were unable, within the scope of this project, to travel to enough units that we could guarantee the anonymity of the female officers involved. An aggregate analysis of Air Force units both with and without female pilots and navigators would provide a more informative assessment of the integration.

We selected two Marine Corps units to visit. One of the units had been open to women prior to the legislative and policy changes, but had women assigned to newly opened occupations. The other unit had previously been closed to women.

**HOW INDIVIDUALS WERE SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE**

When we contacted units to arrange our visit we requested specific numbers of individuals by grade and gender, as shown in Table A.1. The units selected the specific individuals who would participate in the study. Depending upon the size of the unit, we were often short in various categories (e.g., female E7–E9s) because of a lack of personnel in that grade and gender. Upon the several occasions that we combined field site visits and included personnel from more than one unit in the focus groups, we usually still limited the focus group size to approximately ten individuals. However, we still requested the same number of survey participants from each of the units.

At each site, we gained a general understanding of how the individuals were selected. Sometimes the decision was deferred downward

**Table A.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group and Survey</th>
<th>Survey Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E7, E8, E9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5, E6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1, E2, E3, E4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
as each department was told to send a certain number of individuals; sometimes the commanding officer’s staff selected names; and sometimes we had access to almost everybody present (e.g., not on leave or temporary duty). Although we acknowledge the possibility that units might have prevented us access to individuals with objectionable views, we have no reason to believe that was the case. The range of opinions represented in the interviews and focus groups was broad, and the numbers of individuals produced for the survey would have made such selection difficult.

INTERVIEWS, FOCUS GROUPS, AND SURVEYS

Interviews

Our field research was based upon three main components: interviews, focus groups, and a written survey. Interviews were conducted with the commanding officers, executive officers, and ranking enlisted persons (e.g., command sergeant major) for the units we visited. From one to three RAND researchers were present for each of the interviews, which concentrated on the following issues:

- Unit mission
- Whether gender integration affects the deployability and readiness of the unit
- Effects of gender integration upon cohesion and morale
- Discipline and indiscipline issues in the unit
- Harassment issues
- Capability and performance of women in the unit
- Career paths for women in the unit.

At the close of the interviews, we provided interviewees the opportunity to examine the survey vehicle and ensured that they understood we would not provide substantive feedback to them.

Focus Groups

The focus groups were conducted with one or two researchers and a group of approximately ten individuals. The focus groups were
divided by grade and gender into eight groups, as shown in Table A.2. Grades E1–E4 were included in the same group; E5s and E6s were combined with one another; and E7–E9 (excluding the ranking enlisted individual, if he or she was included in the CO’s interview) met in a single focus group. Officers (excluding the CO and XO) constituted the final group. Male and female groups met simultaneously but separately. For units with few women, the focus group was necessarily smaller.

We began the focus groups by introducing ourselves and describing the purpose and reason for the study. We stressed that the study was nonattributable and addressed all the services; that we traveled to a sufficient number of locations that no one would be able to determine the source of any comments or input; and that their comments would not be reported to their chain of command. We also described ourselves as unaffiliated with any political party and not predisposed toward any particular study outcome. We differentiated ourselves from the media and said that we were not seeking sensationalized stories; any well-founded research conclusion was an acceptable conclusion. The participants were told that their participation was voluntary and that, if they felt uncomfortable with any survey question or any issue discussed, they were welcome to skip that question.

**Table A.2**

**Typical Research Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Research Vehicle</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0700-0750</td>
<td>CO, XO, CSM</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0800-0950</td>
<td>Female E1–E4</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0800-0950</td>
<td>Male E1–E4</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000-1150</td>
<td>Female E7, E8, E9</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000-1150</td>
<td>Male E7, E8, E9</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1150-1230</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1230-1420</td>
<td>Female E5, E6</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1230-1420</td>
<td>Male E5, E6</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1430-1520</td>
<td>Assorted</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1530-1720</td>
<td>Female officers</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1530-1720</td>
<td>Male officers</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-1800</td>
<td>CO and XO</td>
<td>Interview and outbrief</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
or not participate in that part of the discussion.¹ We also identified whether the opening of particular occupations or the entire unit had prompted us to survey their unit. We stressed that the decision to select their unit from other similar units (e.g., another ship from the same class) had been a scheduling and availability issue and that we were not there to investigate any particular problems.

Once we had completed our introduction and explanation, the focus-group discussions centered around the following questions and issues:

- Whether (and how) they were selected or they volunteered for their jobs
- Whether women felt any pressures to perform better than the men or to prove women's abilities
- Whether women are treated differently by commanders, colleagues, or subordinates
- Their assessment of the readiness, morale, and cohesion of the unit
- Whether they are happy in the unit and in their jobs
- How they balance work and family or social life
- Whether other problems in the unit are related to the presence of women
- Whether women are as qualified as men
- Whether women treat subordinates differently
- Whether and how the gender integration has changed the unit
- Whether the unit or commander conducted special preparations for the arrival of women personnel in the unit
- Whether the men are concerned about how they conduct themselves around female colleagues, subordinates, and superiors
- Whether their spouses express concern about the gender integration.

¹In general, we had very few people who did not contribute to the focus-group discussions, and only a very few surveys were returned blank during the entire study.
Questionnaires

The written questionnaire was completed by all the personnel who participated in the focus groups prior to the focus-group discussion. We also requested permission to distribute the questionnaire to additional personnel, who were generally gathered together in one central location to take the survey. Our introduction to those who participated in the survey was very similar to the introduction we used with the focus groups. We ensured that participants knew their participation was voluntary and that they could skip any questions with which they were uncomfortable. We also told them that we read each survey ourselves, that we welcomed additional written comments, and that they could change any of the provided answers to customize their responses.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Our study relies primarily on self-reported perceptions of cohesion, morale, and readiness by the unit commanders and unit personnel. Additional research could complement our findings by gathering evaluations of unit performance made by people outside the units. Evaluations of the units already recorded during training exercises (such as those at the National Training Center and the Joint Readiness Training Center) have been made without gender integration as a stated focus of those evaluations. We did not have the opportunity to collect such evaluations and compare units before and after integration, or to compare currently integrated units with units that are still all male. Such comparisons could provide data regarding the effect of integration upon objectively measured unit performance. It is important to note that the units surveyed were operationally unemployed at the time of this study. This relative inactivity may have negatively affected the perceived cohesion within the units.