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CAREER PATHS TO NAVY ADMIRAL

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School of Education

University of San Diego

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

A significant disparity exists between the numbers of male and female personnel among high-ranking officers serving in the U.S. Navy. The general perception is that women have not been part of the Navy long enough to be in the flag officer's ranks. However, it has been over 30 years since the Navy first placed women in the ranks of flag officers.

The purpose of the study is to trace the most common professional career paths followed by male and female flag officers in the U.S. Navy and to examine how certain aspects of a military career might have influenced selection to the ranks of flag officer. In addition, this study explored: (1) how female flag officers visualized their roles, (2) what factors they viewed as important or prerequisites for promotion today, and (3) their opinion regarding the limited number of female flag officers in the Navy.

The following research questions guided this study: 1. What are the most common career paths among active duty officers that reach the rank of admiral (O-7 or above) in the United States Navy and what aspects of their careers might have influenced selection to flag officer? 2. What factors do female flag officers view as required for promotion to higher ranks and what do they believe is the most significant contributor to the disparity between the number of male and female flag officers? The method used to address the first research question employed the use of frequencies to analyze most commonly held positions in the career paths of all naval flag officers. The method used to get at the second research question included qualitative analyses of interviews with five female flag officers.

There were four positional themes that emerged from both the document and interview data sets. Naval flag officers most often had assignments in the following areas: military headquarters, sea and operational duty, command, and joint staff duty. Most prominent were positions at military headquarters, with some participants having been at these commands three to five times. The interview data also revealed four additional themes. The female flag officers found that mentoring, leadership styles, the changing of women's roles in the military, and personal and professional challenges were important factors in attaining the rank of Admiral.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this document to my son, Kristopher R. Hadley, as a tribute of my unconditional love. You have been my source of inspiration throughout this project and the last 20 years of my life. May God bless you always!

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I wish to thank the members of my doctoral committee, Dr. Miller, Dr. Donmoyer, and Dr. Galloway, for their support, encouragement, and patience. It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to have worked with and learned from you in the last four years. I am extremely grateful to Dan for believing in me and being there when I needed him the most.

Thank you to my husband and my mother, who made all of this possible with their endless encouragement and patience. A special thanks to my life-long mentor and friend, Captain Morgan, I could not imagine being where I am without his encouragement and wisdom. Even from afar, he continues to influence my professional growth.

Finally, I give special thanks to the five female admirals who participated in this study. I understand how busy your schedules are, yet you welcomed me with open arms. I wish the best for each of you in your military careers and hope you know what a pleasure it was to have met you.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE STUDY

Overview

High-ranking military officers are collectively known as “leadership,” because they lead, take command, and take charge. Admirals are the Navy’s senior leaders. These are military professionals, dedicated to managing large, complex organizations and tasks, motivating hundreds of people, coping with the unexpected, and performing with tact, firmness, and the utmost high level of skill. Officers are charged with complete responsibility for the readiness, performance, and safety of their ships and crews. “In our institution, we value leadership as the foundation of success. Leaders make our Navy work. We count on their influence; they are the difference between winning and losing the battle,” cited the highest ranking officer in the Navy, as he stressed the need for involvement of these leaders (referring to the Navy’s flag officers) in every level of the organization (Ham, 2002, p. 15). No other organization gives their “top executives” as much authority and responsibility as the Navy gives flag officers (Montor, McNicholas, Ciotti, Hutchison, & Wehmueller, 1998). This collective leadership includes both, men and women.

Background of the Study

For more than sixty years, a U.S. Naval officer could not be advanced further than the rank of captain (O-6). The Civil War changed this and on July 16, 1862, nine Naval officers were selected for promotion to the rank of rear admiral (O-7). Although, some Naval officers held positions higher than rear admiral, these ranks lapsed as the officers died. In 1899, after the Spanish American War, one officer was named Admiral of the

Navy until his death in 1917. In 1915, Congress allowed the commanders-in-chief¹ to hold the rank of admiral (O-10), and their seconds in command the rank of vice admiral (O-9). These ranks were only for the duration of the appointment, and the Naval Register continued to list these officers at their permanent rank of rear admiral (O-7). In 1930, Congress allowed retired officers to retain their highest World War I rank. It was not until World War II, however, that permanent ranks above rear admiral were contemplated. On July 24, 1941, the President was empowered to appoint as many admirals and vice admirals as necessary. The rank of fleet admiral (O-11) was created in 1944 to give American officers equal status with their Allied counterparts. The President appointed four officers to fleet admiral (O-11). This was the only time the Navy has had fleet admirals (Broderick, 1998). Up to this point in time, the Navy had not legally accepted women as part of the military.

Today, more and more women choose to join the military as a way out of the traditional (and historically limiting) career paths that have been open to them. In two decades, from 1977 to 1997, the number of women among active duty commissioned officers more than doubled in the U.S. Armed Forces. Female representation in the U.S. Armed Forces rose from 5.9 percent to 14 percent (Gilroy, Eitelberg, Enns, Hosek, Klburn, Laurence, Mehay, Tiemeyer, & Verdugo, 1999). Presently, there are over 56,000 active duty officers serving in the U.S. Navy. While the officer ranks range from ensign (O-1) to admiral (O-10), the Navy currently has 208 active duty “Flag Officers” O-7 or above, including both male and female (Chief of Naval Information, 2001). Although

¹The Navy's administrative chain of command flows from the President and the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations, and to the Commanders-in-Chief. The US military network is composed of five regional commands: Central, Pacific, Atlantic, South, and Europe. Each of them is led by a Commander in Chief, CINC (U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990).

there are only ten females currently among these flag officers, the Navy has had the most success of any military branch at integrating² women since the Secretary of Defense established the new direct combat definition and assignment rule in 1993 (McManimon, 1999). This rule presented women with the opportunity to serve in most combat aircraft and on most combatant ships and, therefore, increased the number of qualified women for promotion. Women's roles in the Navy were directly impacted by the Persian Gulf War which led to the creation of this new policy on assignments. Several positions critical to advancement, however, still remain closed to women. Women are still subject to the "combat" exclusion rule which restricts them from nine percent of naval jobs (Harrell & Miller, 1997). The combat exclusion law prevents women from serving in positions that would expose them to combat. Positions in submarines, tanks, coastal patrol ships, and any position that would be in "direct ground combat" with hostile forces are included (Garcia, 1999). Closed positions also include Marine Corps support that fall under the direct ground combat exclusion, Navy SEALs³, and Special Warfare Combat Crewmember (SWCC) (Navy SEALs, 2001).

Problem Statement

A significant disparity exists between the numbers of male and female personnel among high-ranking officers serving in the U.S. Navy. The general perception is that women have not been part of the Navy long enough to be in the flag officer's ranks.

² Integrating women meant placing women in positions formerly filled by men. Naval officials integrate women by ordering female officers and senior enlisted women onboard ships prior to sending junior enlisted women in order to prevent isolation or vulnerability for the junior sailors.

³ SEAL is an acronym for Sea, Air and Land. Navy SEALs are officers and enlisted men qualified in diving, parachuting, combat swimming, navigation, demolitions, weapons, and many other skills.

However, it has been over 30 years since the Navy first placed women in the ranks of flag officers. In 1972, the Navy promoted its first female flag officer from the Staff Corps⁴ (a nurse) and in 1976, the first female Unrestricted Line Officer⁵ was promoted to flag rank. This same year, and as directed by Public Law 94-106 (Holm, 1982), women were admitted to the U.S. Naval Academy and also began attending Aviation Officer Candidate School (U.S. Navy, 2001).

More than 30 years have elapsed since the first female was selected to the rank of O-7 or above; the Navy, like many of its sister services, has made minimal progress towards increasing the number of women selected for flag rank (Garcia, 1999). Many rules have changed in the Navy. Women, once relegated to second-class support jobs, are now competing for some of the most-sought-after positions (i.e. flying jets, loading weapons, leading hundreds of people, and commanding war ships). Still, there are some areas where women are still not allowed such as serving on submarines.

Submarine service is considered combat duty, so females are denied the opportunity to serve in this occupational specialty. Submarine duty is also considered to be an important route to promotion into the Navy's highest ranks (O-7 or above). Excluding women from submarine service closes a critical avenue to the top of the ranks (McManimon, 1999). A professor of military sociology at Northwestern University, Charles Moskos (Moskos & Butler, 1997), wrote that as long as women are not allowed aboard submarines, the number of women at senior levels will continue to be very limited.

⁴ Staff Corps Officers are specialists in career fields which are professions unto themselves, such as physicians, lawyers, civil engineers, etc.

⁵ Line Officers are general category officers such as surface, aviation, submarine, etc.

Although the Gulf War exposed both men and women to the dangers of attack, women were not given the status, recognition, or benefits that accompany positions carrying the “combat designation” (Stiehm, 1996). When the Office of the U.S. Under Secretary of Defense (Gilroy, et al., 1999) conducted a study on career progression of minority and women officers, it was reported that many female military officers believed promotions to military leadership positions rested largely on performance related to battle. Retired Major General Holm (1982) noted that policies on combat exclusions for women were based on cultural belief that had little correlation to women's capabilities, demonstrated performance, or requisite standards. The U.S. Under Secretary of Defense also reported that many women in the Services felt they did not have the same opportunities as men (Gilroy, et al., 1999). Retired Lieutenant General Claudia J. Kennedy, the Army's highest-ranking woman on active duty in 2001, and one of four in the military to have earned the rank of O-9, writes that no woman in the Army (or any other service) has ever been promoted to four-star flag officer (O-10) because that rank has always gone to men with combat experience (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001). Apparent differences in perceptions between men and women about evaluations, assignments, and most importantly, promotions, were also noted in a previous study (Gilroy, et al., 1999).

The promotion process in the U.S. Armed Services is well defined and widely believed to be one that advances the most qualified to the higher ranks. It is, however, also considered to be subjective. Officer promotions within the military ranks relate to military and professional training. Training is part of the formal reward system of the military and it oversees a) how much vertical movement exists in the officer career

management system, b) at what points in a career it occurs, and c) on what basis (Thie, Brown, Berends, Ehrenberg, Flanagan, Levy, Taylor, Eisenman, Fedorochko, Graf, Hoyer, Bracken, Omeara, Sollinger, Larson, Mills, Rizor, Rostker, Gotz, Roll, & Halvorsnom, 1994). The Defenses Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) and other established laws limit the length of military careers, timing of promotions (see Appendix A), and proportion of senior officers (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15559B, 2002). Military officers must meet the time-in-grade (promotion zone) requisite before a senior officer's panel can review their service records for promotion. A promotion zone is defined as a promotion eligibility category consisting of eligible officers from the most senior to the most junior officers who are being considered for promotion.

There are three groups of officers that generally fall within the promotion zone during every promotion board: 1) those called fast track candidates, which meet the minimum service requirement for promotion (only a few are selected from this group), 2) those that have met the designated promotion opportunity and timing (most officers are promoted from this zone), and 3) those not previously selected for promotion (few are selected from this group) (Thie, et al., 1994). Once the time requirement has been met, a panel of senior officers' select candidates for promotion based upon the merit of the officer's service record (job performance and recommendation from senior evaluators), professional reputation, needs of the service for their occupational specialty, and political and military influence.

The time requirement for flag officers in the Navy ranges from 24 to 26 years for flag officer (O-7 or above) (U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990). At these levels, the military

selects about 10 percent of those qualified. Female promotions, however, have not been equally considered due to lack of proper job assignments (Gilroy, et al., 1999). Some people still believe that the Services have yet to master an optimal system for consistently identifying, promoting, and developing their best leaders (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2000).

The Armed Forces have not easily transitioned women into the military ranks, as traditions run deep in what has largely been a predominately male society within society at large (Garcia, 1999). Compared to men, military women officers continue to be over-represented in administrative and logistical occupational areas. At present, restricted line and staff officers, which include health care, supply, personnel, support, and administration, have well over 70 percent of the female officer's population in the U.S. Navy (Chief of Naval Information, 2001). In 1998, more than 40 percent of female officers were in health care positions (McManimon, 1999), while tactical operations, the very area that in the past has yielded two-thirds of the generals⁶ and admirals in the military services lacks female officers (Gilroy, et al., 1999).

Career paths in the Navy usually specify a skill specialization or cross-skill experience. For military officers, the cross-skill path appears to be regarded more highly than a specialist skill path (Gilroy, et al., 1999). The success path is the path that leads to the highest positions and requires skills in management and leadership. In most cases these positions are "command"⁷ positions. Command positions are equivalent to a

⁶ General Officers are high ranking officers in all the Armed Forces other than the Navy; they are also referred to as flag officers.

⁷ Command positions give senior officers in the military the authority to lawfully exercise over their subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. It encompasses the authority and responsibility for effectively using all available resources.

CEO's position in the civilian community. Creveland (1989) uses the word "command" almost the same way most people use "management" which describes the diverse activities that go into running a business organization. Command positions are considered critical to an officer's promotion path, yet, some military women have ended their careers at a disadvantage because they "failed to select for command"⁸ (Gilroy, et al., 1999). Many female officers believe that promotion boards are fair, but they also find it difficult to be female and build a competitive performance record (Gilroy, et al., 1999). Perhaps it can be said that the absence of competitive performance records helped create the disparity in the number of men and women among high-ranking officers in the U.S. Navy.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the first part of the study was to trace the most common professional career paths followed by male and female flag officers in the U.S. Navy and to examine how certain aspects of a military career might have influenced selection to the ranks of flag officer. The second part of this study attempted to understand: (1) how female flag officers visualized their roles, (2) what factors they viewed as important or prerequisites for promotion today, and (3) their opinion regarding the limited number of female flag officers in the Navy.

⁸"Failed to select for command" is Naval jargon for a board of officer's decision not to choose certain individuals for command positions. The selection of these officers to take command positions is based on performance in well-defined prior career paths including specific qualifying jobs such as Department Head (Manager of large departments), Executive Officer, etc.

Significance of the Study

With the significant number of men and women joining the ranks of commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy, it has become increasingly important to understand the career paths of those officers who have reached the ranks of admiral. Little was found that specifically traced the career paths of this specific group of military leaders. Some investigations done in the past focused on future career management for military officers (Thie, et al., 1994); officer career progression (Gilroy, et al., 1999); opportunities for military women (Harrell & Miller, 1997); and minority and gender differences in officer career progression (Hosek, Tiemeyer, Kilburn, Strong, Ducksworth, & Ray, 2001). Although these studies dealt with military officers, their efforts were mostly on providing and improving equal opportunity and were also generic to all Services and did not focus on a specific group of officers.

Tracing the dynamics of this group of flag officers' careers, exposing the roles they played, the power and prestige of some of their positions, interpersonal challenges they might encountered due to their gender, and above all, strategies used to succeed in a highly competitive military environment will not only add to the literature in the area of military leadership, it will also be of great benefit for newly commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy.

Research Questions

- What are the most common career paths among active duty officers that reach the rank of admiral (O-7 or above) in the United States Navy, and what aspects of their careers might have influenced selection to flag officer?

- What factors do female flag officers view as required for promotion to higher ranks, and what do they believe is the most significant contributor to the disparity between the number of male and female flag officers?

Limitations of the Study

Although this study involved military officers in the U.S. Navy, it was not intended to represent military officers' careers in general. The study simply shows the professional career paths followed by senior leaders in the United States Navy, and was limited to active duty commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy. By definition, this excluded reservists, retirees, warrant officers, and limited duty officers in the U.S. Navy. This study also excluded flag (general) officers from other branches of the Armed Forces (Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps), therefore, generalization for all high-ranking officers cannot be made based on this study.

While the racial makeup of the Armed Forces, including the Navy, has become more diverse, the population for this study represented those who entered military service more than 20 years ago, making the demographic profile mostly Caucasian.

Many things have changed in the military since women joined the ranks of flag officers in 1972. Their careers do not reflect the career paths of most officers today, so, while it was a limitation (and their own military career might be unusual today), their opinions regarding promotions for officers revealed factors still affecting today's military.

Definitions of Terms

Terms used frequently throughout this study (listed in alphabetical order).

Ability: the characteristics in the individual leading to adequate job performance. These characteristics include skills (what a person can do), knowledge (what a person knows), attitudes (beliefs and convictions an individual is expected to hold), and experience (previously applied use of skill and knowledge).

Combat: the ideological core of the military and it defines its very existence and meaning. The risk rule, with a new definition of ground combat, prohibits women from participating in units that engage the enemy with weapons on the ground. (Stiehm, 1996).

Direct combat: the action of directly engaging with enemy fire, maneuver, or shock effect to destroy or capture, or while repelling assault by fire, close combat or counterattack.

High-ranking officers or flag officers: commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy who have achieved the rank of admiral (O-7 or above).

Officer rank structure in the Navy: the grades of commissioned military officers.

Officers graduating from a university are normally commissioned as Ensigns (also referred to as an O-1). Successive ranks are designated as follows: Lieutenant (junior grade) (O-2); Lieutenant (O-3); Lieutenant Commander (O-4); Commander (O-5); Captain (O-6); Rear Admiral (lower half) (O-7); Rear Admiral (upper half) (O-8); Vice Admiral (O-9); and Admiral (O-10).

Pay grade: a progressive scale of office or military rank that is established and designated as a grade by law. Commissioned officer pay grades in the Navy begin at O-1 (Ensign) and advance to O-10 (Admiral).

Summary

Women play a vital role in maintaining the effectiveness of the military, and every woman joining the ranks of commissioned officers must have full confidence that she will be afforded the opportunity to reach the ranks of admiral in the U.S. Navy. Current military policies have opened 91.7 percent of all positions in the Navy, and they are thoroughly integrated into combat support roles. The number of female officers, however, is not equally represented among the flag ranks of the United States Navy.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

This chapter reviews some of the relevant literature including a variety of articles on the topic of career management systems, professional needs, military culture, military leaders as high-ranking officers, masculine and feminine leadership attributes, gender inequality and stereotypes, and support systems. It is by no means an exhaustive study, but merely points to some of the possible explanations as to why women in the Navy are still underrepresented in the senior ranks besides age old stereotypes such as the double-bind⁹ and glass ceiling effect.

Framework

Requirements for military officer service have historically been based on the need for leadership, especially command, in unique military tasks ranging from war fighting to territorial exploration and development. The basis for officer requirements has been expanded to include performance of tasks that are not unique to the military, but are recognized as supporting functions necessary to accomplish the overall mission of military organizations. The United States Navy has developed a unique process for determining its military manpower requirements. Each requirement generation process includes algorithms that are used first to determine essential military positions and second, those positions that require officer leadership, skills, and experience. If the

⁹ Double-bind is a behavioral norm that creates a situation where a person cannot win no matter what she does. When women act “feminine,” their behavior is associated with incompetence, and when they act “competent,” their behavior is associated with more masculine traits.

position requires managing military personnel, current statutes require that the position be military and filled by a commissioned officer (U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990).

Career Management Systems

An officer's career management system must provide career opportunities and career satisfaction consistent with their expectations. Cultural and environmental forces continue to change the relative importance of professional and job satisfaction, family considerations, and compensation. As members of a profession, most military officers seek an organizational culture that will contribute to their professional status. Most officers seek a culture that values loyalty and integrity and recognizes the long-term importance of their experience and dedication (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2000). Military officers as a whole seek challenge, autonomy, competent coworkers, responsibility, and accomplishment from their assignments. Most military officers also seek a career that is accommodating to future family considerations, including working spouses, dual-career couples, and single parents (Thie, et al., 1994). Often times, many officers choose to lessen family disruption rather than following career paths that would provide the greatest opportunities of advancement. (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001).

Officers are encouraged to have operational experience, staff duty, and professional education, and even set check points along their careers in order to be promoted. Captain William C. Thomas (1998) suggested that developing officers suited for modern operation should be the military's highest priority, and that the biggest change should be the attitude of senior leaders as they offer career counseling to junior officers by placing too much emphasis on trying to set up a "sure path" to higher promotion or a

higher rank instead of concentrating on the key contributions these officers can offer. He feels that more weight should be placed on attaining military success and less on developing their careers to attain military rank.

Career development in the Navy is based on a series of assignments which allow officers to learn new skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are then used to meet organizational needs. These assignments also enable the officer to gain useful experience as a base for further development. In addition, training and educational tours allow officers to develop new skills, knowledge, or attitudes that otherwise might not be gained through their regular assignments. Career paths can emphasize assignments common to the entire organization, specialized assignments, or cross-skill assignments (Thie, et al., 1994). An officer's commitment to career management also entails entry into an organization with a strong organizational culture based on values.

Fundamental policy choices about entry and attrition influence the flow of people into and out of organizations, but varying career structures, key personnel functions and, promotion, can also change the shape of the officer corps. Officers either enter the Navy at the beginning of the career path (closed) or they join at any point along the career path (open). These officers may leave by their own choice (natural attrition), or at the Navy's insistence (forced attrition). In the Navy, forced attrition has been primarily implemented through the promotion system and secondarily through the retirement system. In the past, forced attrition has also been implemented for reasons related to age, vigor, health, fitness, skill and experience, or contract completion (Thie, et al., 1994).

In World War II, senior officers were removed because of their age, health, and inefficiency. The majority of these officers were simply unable to meet the

physical requirements of command or withstand the rigors of battlefield conditions; ... Congress enacted a 20-year retirement system and a selective 'up or out' promotion system to keep promotion opportunity at an acceptable level and maintain a youthful force (Arcari, 1993, p. 35).

An up-or-out structure is characterized by entry into the military at the start of a career, and forced separation on some basis, such as failure to advance in grade. Up-or-out structure provides incentives for continued good performance and allows the Navy to retain its best performers by meeting their professional needs. This structure, however, can cause high turnover, increased movement, training costs, and organizational disruption, based on the amount of forced attrition (Thie, et al., 1994).

Professional Growth

There is little latitude for stagnation or drift in a military career; therefore, professional growth is a must. Many senior military officers have viewpoints about what is necessary, or at least, what has worked for them, when dealing with officers' professional growth and career advancement.

Developing competent leaders to effectively perform in a variety of jobs requires a significant commitment to education. The military's goal is to form future leaders by educating them through rigorous programs. Many of the Navy's educational programs follow the case-method study technique common to business graduate programs (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001). The Navy understands there is no substitute for the leadership lessons of experience; however, the Navy prepares its officers to meet the challenges of their environment through active involvement in formal leadership training.

This formal leadership training is periodically reinforced with "booster shots" in warfare and specialty pipeline training, at annual all hands training, and during development and professional assignments. An assignment officer¹⁰ assigns most of these courses and the training includes basic courses such as division officer, department head, executive officer, command, and more advanced courses, such as joint professional military education, War College, leadership continuum, etc.

Every officer is assigned an assignment officer to assist them with their professional careers. However, career success rests on the individual officer and their successes or failures cannot be attributed to the assignment officer. Over fifty years ago, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz (Naval Historical Center, 2001) expressed the need for officers to manage their professional needs and personally get involved in their careers. His statement is still being used today: "Your personal records are you, as far as the Navy is concerned, until you establish a service reputation. Therefore, make sure your records are complete, accurate, and include all your qualifications and achievements." The career goals of these officers must, however, balance themselves with the needs of the Navy.

Military Culture

The U.S. Government Accounting Office (1992) defined "organizational culture" as the underlying assumptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, and expectations shared by the organization's members. Though, civil and military cultures have common values in a democracy, they vary in the some significant ways. Civilian culture emphasizes liberty

¹⁰Assignment officers are human resources officers who have complete access to the officers' records. They place officers in available positions, keeping in mind both the Navy's needs and the individuals' needs. Assignment officers play the role of advocates and career planners for officers.

and individuality, while military culture emphasizes values such as discipline and self-sacrifice. These military values stem from the imperative of military effectiveness and success on the battlefield (Keithly, 2001). From military culture springs a common framework for those who wear the officer's uniform and common expectations regarding standards of behavior, discipline, teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, duty, and the customs that support these elements. Many military leaders feel that now, more than ever, shared, harmonious thinking about leadership in the sea-service profession is needed (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2000). Military officers are considered the ultimate keepers of the culture in the Navy. These officers shoulder the responsibility for preserving and protecting what is good about the Navy's culture, and modifying those aspects of culture that must change to meet future challenges.

The U.S. military culture is undergoing changes that profoundly affect the organization. The military is engaged in a breathless pace of operations, including international peacekeeping, homeland defense, drug interdiction, and dealing with changing conditions such as constrained resources, changing missions, shifts in the marital status and other demographics of the uniformed population, rapid advances in technology, and multiple alternating employment opportunities in the civilian community (Keithly, 2001). Military leaders, therefore, must be more committed than ever and consider all these factors when leading or planning for the future.

The military is known to be a unique organization and, in many cases unlike other public or private entities in several dimensions. The military is 1) a closed system because there are no lateral hires in the military, thus competition for promotions occurs among a closed group – moreover, under the general “up-or-out” policy, non-performing

personnel tend to leave the military, 2) a controlled system because the military is believed to have tremendous discretion to assign, train, and promote its personnel, providing a degree of control not available in any other organization, and 3) a disciplined system because individuals who are unhappy with the management priorities are likely to keep their objections to themselves or exit the service (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2000). Guthrie & Roth (1999) add one more unique factor to organizations such as the military. These authors feel that in the future the military is likely to increase the number of female leaders, since the military's formal promotion procedures now place a greater emphasis on performance and merit, diminishing the impact of independent of personal attributes such as gender.

Just as Guthrie & Roth (1999) make the claim that the Services are more likely to have a woman in a leadership position, Gerber (1998) seems to doubt the ability of women as he questions whether women can be as good at being soldiers, sailors, naval officers, and fighter pilots as men. In this increasingly gender-mixed military, military discipline must include the inner discipline of accepting "shipmates" (comrades) of the opposite sex as fellow soldiers. Some flag officers in the Navy are not fully convinced that the military has fully accepted women in their ranks, and during an interview with the highest ranking woman in the United States Navy upon her retirement in 1994, Admiral Wilmot stated that the Navy has not reached its goal of total equality for women (Fagenson-Eland & Kidder, 2000)¹¹.

¹¹ Equality in the Services is a topic that has been widely researched (Gilroy, et al., 2001; Harrell & Miller, 1997; and Thie, et al., 1994) and is not addressed in this study.

Military Leaders

When contrasted with strategy during the Cold War, current military strategy and operational planning actually requires that high-ranking officers have a much firmer understanding of the organizational concepts, structures, and capabilities of their own branch of service, as well as the other branches. This requirement is set by Title IV of the Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganization Act of 1986 (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15559B, 2002) and it mandates that all officers hold joint staff duty prior to being selected as a flag officer; some occupational specialties can waive this requirement.

Military leaders have the most powerful and direct influence on the organizational climate and, subsequently, on military culture. They turn values into action, bring coherence out of confusion, set the example, and articulate the viewpoint of the military institution. Retired General Kennedy (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001) wrote that it is essential that leaders understand that they are always "works in progress," even as they reach the highest ranks in the military. She also added that they must be in continual need of guidance and development. Taylor & Rosenbach (1996) on the other hand, believe that "leaders are continually engaged in self-evaluation (p. 207)."

Leadership Attributes

Masculine attributes. In an attempt to repeal the combat-exclusion legislation, the Moral Majority testified that leadership and authority were male attributes ordained by God, and that women in combat violated the will of God (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1976). Others favor a biological explanation which claims that men are better at "forming coalitions of support in order to attain hierarchical rank" because that was their

role during mankind's long prehistory (Cosh, 2001). Men, rather than women, fight wars because men are more aggressive (Francis, 1997) and men are also better at knowing when the best thing to do is nothing, while women have a hard time doing nothing (Barbour & Tipping, 1994). Male leaders are also seen as more successful power wielders than females (Rosen & Jerdee, 1974). Although some men may feel they have an advantage because they were part of the organization first, there are women that go into formally male-dominated groups and organizations making some men feel somehow less secure and threatened with the fear of losing their identity (Josefowitz, 1980). Some may even feel that their male enclave has been invaded.

In a study of women leaders (Allen, 1990), many followers of male leaders offered significantly more goal-oriented comments than did followers of female leaders. Her findings were interpreted as support for the gender-role hypothesis that men are more accustomed to the leadership role, particularly in power settings, than are women. Reay (1998) shows that the white male, as the exemplar of leadership characteristics and styles, leaves women in the position of being negatively evaluated. Men also tend to emerge in short-term tasks requiring minimal social interaction (Eagly & Karau, 1991) and are considered more focused when trying to accomplish goals in a meeting or an interaction (Wilson, 1995), while most women seem to compete less in groups (Josefowitz, 1980) and frequently embellish, talk, and defend before they get to their point (Davidhizar & Cramer, 2000).

Men are often seen as characteristically controlling, assertive, confident, and independent (Chambers, 2000) and they seem to excel in self-esteem, self-confidence, enjoying a challenge, self-control, involvement in change, and commitment (Desjardins

& Brown, 1991). Frautschi (1999) associated males with a willingness to lead from past experience and qualifications, a willingness to lead from authority, dominance, or control, and an unwillingness to appear unknowing or vulnerable.

Feminine attributes. Women tend to be more nurturing, provide people more emotional support and praise and notice more details than most men do (Barbor & Tipping, 1994). It is also believed that most women exercise different leadership styles, approach problems differently, give priority to different issues, and make decisions in different ways than most men (Kathlene 1989; Thomas 1994; and Helgesen 1990). Rosener (1997) noted that women encourage participation, share power and information better, enhance the self-worth of those around them, and tend to energize others. During a poll of 800 likely voters, a good majority claimed that women would be more family-friendly, deal with downsizing more effectively, be more trustworthy, and instill better values in a corporation (Conline & Zellner, 1999).

Women often prefer peaceful strategies while men lean toward aggressive ones (Tiger, 1999), and any women who are seen as submissive, compliant, and dependent are assumed to lack leadership qualities and are therefore, not managerial potential (Josefowitz, 1980). Also, most women approach leadership roles differently than most men (Desjardins & Brown, 1991), and generally differ stylistically from most men in many of the things they do – reacting to events, responding to people, and the way most of them think about themselves (Josefowitz, 1980). As women advance into positions of authority, they often discover a close relationship between personal authenticity and their ability to draw on their character traits and personal history, often using experiences that lie outside the traditional leadership model (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001). Most women

leaders are known to combine traits of great strength and empathy, rather than operating solely out of a traditional “compromise” approach (Marquand, 1998). Some women are considered more focused on details (concerns about staff, gathering and organizing information, applying or implementing procedures) on the immediacy of projects, on tasks and deadlines, on procedures, and on completing tasks (Luke, 1998). Additionally, women are seen as having a more inclusive and consensual leadership style, drawing on staff resources, needs and aspirations, and staff input in the development of policies and procedures. And most women, as a general rule, tend to be more aware of their sacrifices when they’re totally focused on their careers (Josefowitz, 1980).

Thomas (1994) noted that women state legislators placed higher priorities on policies dealing with women, family, and children, while male legislators were more focused on business and economic legislation. Most women become more conscious of their identity as women and their connection to female’s issues when they have a forum for public conversation discussing obstacles women confront in the process (Zane, 1999). It is also believed that women executives are more likely to adopt female friendly attitudes when they work in an agency or department with an office devoted to women’s issues (Dolan, 2000).

Researches have been saying for years that women tend to bear down, work hard, deliver outstanding results, and then hope for a promotion while men are more apt to barging into the bosses’ office and demand a promotion (Conline & Zellner, 1999). Career goals seem to be harder to achieve for women and, as a consequence, women give up far more in terms of their personal time and private time. Although, women compete harder and give up more, they still have less chance of reaching the top of an organization

(Josefowitz, 1980). Some women exhibit less leadership behaviors than men in mixed-sex groups (Craig & Sherif, 1986), however, teams composed of all females tend to perform better than all-male groups in activities with a strong social component (Neubert, 1999). Furthermore, although most women attain higher levels of leadership status when team tasks require greater levels of social interaction (Eagly & Karau, 1991), some women can be painfully conspicuous in non-supportive work environments (Albino, 1992).

Gender Inequality

The push by women for equality in the Services began in the sixties - coincident with the women's movement and general thrust for political, social, and economic parity with men. The end of the draft in 1975 and the emergence of the All-Volunteer Force allowed the military to shift to an occupational model in which the participation of women was considered essential for the success of the new system. This new system somewhat reduced the inequalities between men and women in the military (Willenz, 1993).

Over the past two decades, an increasing number of American women have chosen careers in the armed forces. Adjusting to the reality of more women in the ranks, however, is an ongoing task for many current military leaders. Some believe that women are not capable of the aggression needed in order to win a war, while others disagree that men possess a monopoly on patriotism, physical ability, desire for adventure, or willingness to risk their lives for their country (DeGroot, 1999). Many argue that females in aircraft fighter units can degrade mission effectiveness by impeding the “bonding

cohesiveness” of their unit, (Steim, 1980) and Gerber (1998) goes as far as speaking for men already in the military, who worry about having women serving with them, by saying that the military will also suffer a decline in the cohesion and the effectiveness of the troops. In a study regarding new opportunities for women, however, Harrell & Miller (1997) claimed that gender was not perceived as affecting readiness when comparing the effects of training, operational tempo, leadership, and material. Lieutenant General Kennedy (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001) wrote about her personal experiences and the fact that she did not notice greater hardship for women in field conditions, and certainly no damage to unit cohesion when men and women served together.

Gender Stereotypes

Stereotypes of gender-linked behavior are a challenge for many female leaders. Women who wish to get out of the subordinate role in order to belong to the dominant class believe they must sacrifice an important part of themselves – the part that supports, gives, and loves (Josefowitz, 1980) and in order to get the job done, most women set aside their personal ambitions more easily than most men (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001). Some women bring traditionally approved feminine qualities to leadership roles often reinforcing a less than desirable stereotype in their organizations (Grogan, 1999). Women in leadership positions are expected to attend to, more knowledgeably and adroitly than men, whatever issues become defined or articulated as those representing the interests of women (Tiger, 1999). This expectation often places women leaders in a more difficult situation than male leaders to favor other political and economic interests over those defined as female and domestic. There are, of course, women who play into

this stereotyping for personal advantage and knowingly play the role of “nurturer” at work (Goffee & Jones, 2000). The cost of furthering harmful stereotypes continues to limit opportunities for other women to communicate their genuine personal differences.

Double-bind is a behavioral norm that creates a situation where a person cannot win no matter what she does. When women act “feminine,” their behavior is associated with incompetence, and when they act “competent,” their behavior is associated with more masculine traits. Jamison (1995) writes that as women adopt this competent behavior, it can only lead to the conclusion that they must be “un-feminine” in order to be considered competent. A woman must be tough and authoritative like most men to be taken seriously, yet, if they behave too aggressively, they are perceived as “bitches” (Jamison, 1995). The American Psychological Association (Amicus Curiae Brief, 1991) concluded that when women adopt stereotypically masculine styles of leadership that may be required for that particular job, they are considered to be abrasive or maladjusted. On the other hand, if they utilize stereotypically feminine styles, they’re considered less capable and their performance may not be attributed to competence.

The Glass ceiling often refers to transparent cultural, organizational, and attitudinal barriers that maintain rigid sex segregation in most organizations (Luke, 1998). Although some women who have achieved a high rank in the military feel they're beginning to crack the glass ceiling (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001), the military has only promoted four women to the rank of O-9 and one of them is currently serving in the U.S. Navy. The Services have never selected a female officer for the rank of O-10. The highest ranking female officer in the Army, an O-9, believes that the Services will see an O-10 female flag officer sometime in the next 20 years (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001).

Support Systems

Very few people ever get to the top alone. Most people need someone to lead the way, to show them the ropes, to tell them the norms, to encourage, support, and make it a little easier for them (Josefowitz, 1980). Women educational trendsetters have acknowledged that current support systems, such as positive reinforcement and the power of modeling, encourages them and helps them promote strong leadership (Barbour and Tipping, 1994). Erkut (2001) adds that a strong foundation of early support from family and friends, teachers, mentors, and business associates is essential for success.

Networking has long been considered a vital support system yet some women expressed frustration at not having time to network as effectively as men (Melcher & Eichstedt, 1992). Many men receive informal, but invaluable feedback regarding their job performance on the golf course and racquetball court, but women often lack such support networks (Kennedy & McConnell, 2001). During a survey of women's participation in local union leadership, frustration was expressed when it was found that the positions held by women afforded them only minimal experience, visibility, or the opportunity to make contacts or do favors essential to moving up into more responsible and influential positions (Melcher & Eichstedt, 1992). Josefowitz (1980) concluded that a network for professional women was invaluable since support groups can replace the "old boys" network and provide desperately needed support for women in positions of leadership.

Summary

Although promotion to the highest ranks in the United States Navy is believed to be based on merit, career management systems must be in place to satisfy the organization, and the individual in order for these officers to be successfully promoted. Military culture offers a unique setting for officers looking for advancement since they compete for promotions among a closed group of officers. While fundamental structures and individuals meeting their professional needs also lead to officer's promotions, they also weed out the non-performers. Gender inequalities and stereotypes women face in organizations mostly dominated by men are slowly disappearing. The perception, however, is that many women in the military still face such old and unchallenged gender inequities.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to identify the most common career path followed by military officers that had reached the rank of flag officer in the U.S. Navy. The study consisted of two parts to adequately address the research questions. The first part of the study was quantitative and involved tracing the most common career paths of flag officers, male and female, currently serving on active duty, by using autobiographical accounts of their professional careers in the military. The second part of the study was qualitative and it involved conducting interviews with five female flag officers that were participants in the first part of the study.

Research Methodology

The quantitative aspect of this study involved analyzing data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center. Descriptive statistics allowed the comparison of averages among categories in an effort to trace the most common career path and to find out what aspects of their careers had influenced selection to the rank of admiral. This method also allowed the researcher to display variation among contextual variables such as the commissioning source (U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Air National Guard Academy of Military Sciences, ROTC or NROTC Scholarship program and non-scholarship program, OCS, AOCS, OTS, PLC, Aviation Cadet Program, etc.), position (e.g., joint staff, command, sea duty, combat duty, operational units, etc.), additional qualifications (second occupational specialty), education, and communities

(e.g., surface, submarine, aviation, etc.). In an effort to determine how often positions were held by officers who had reached the ranks of flag officer (O-7 or above), data from Defense Manpower Data Center were used to create a career path profile for each of the 134 admirals in this study's sample.

The second part of the study was qualitative and involved interviewing five active duty female flag officers in the U.S. Navy. This method of inquiry involved semi-structured open ended interviews. In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the professional careers followed by flag officers, purposeful sampling was used to address research question number two. An interview protocol (see Appendix C) was used to guide the researcher on part two of the study. These questions were designed to uncover data that might help further understand (1) if selection to flag officer could be influenced by holding certain positions, (2) the significant disparity among the number of male and female flag officers, and (3) promotion opportunities for officers in the Navy.

Sampling

Sample. There were two samples used in this study. The first sample included flag officers currently serving in the U.S. Navy that had been promoted to the rank of admiral (O-7 or above). This study did not include those officers who have been selected for promotion to O-7 but not yet promoted. Due to congressional ceilings on the number of flag officers the Navy can have at one time, officers can be selected but not advanced until the actual position is available. There are, however, some exceptions made for certain prestigious staff positions where officers can be promoted without the

corresponding pay. The second sample consisted of five female flag officers who were serving on active duty.

Participants. Locating participants for the second part of the study was accomplished by using the “Publication of Record for the Sea Service” - 2002 Almanac. This publication is updated yearly and lists all flag officers in the Services with their current titles and command information. Although the intent was to locate those flag officers available and stationed in the United States, there was a good possibility that some of them would be stationed outside the United States. Those flag officers stationed outside the United States were contacted last.

An electronic letter requesting an interview (see Appendix B) was sent to seven female flag officers located in the United States; two officers did not respond. Information explaining this study’s methodology was made available to the participants with this letter. During the 2001 Leadership Summit, the study was discussed with some female flag officers who expressed interest in participating. Some of them provided personal telephone numbers for their offices so that the researcher would have easier access to them.

Data Collection

Part one. The release of parts of the professional records of flag officers on active duty was approved by the Defense Manpower Data Center. These records were provided via electronic mail including a chronological list, from the start of their military career to the present time, of the following information: date of entry into the service, commissioning source (school at the time of entry into the service), military designator

(occupational specialty), a history of all positions held, and education achieved.

Although the vast majority of such career information is available on the World Wide Web and considered public domain, complete confidentiality was guaranteed for the data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center. The results of the study were reported as summaries and individuals' names were not identified in any way.

Part two. Data for part two of the study was collected through personal interviews with five female flag officers. The aim of these interviews was to reveal individual perceptions regarding promotion to flag officer in the Navy and the reason(s) for the current disparity between the number of male and female flag officers in the Navy. The researcher used semi-structured open-ended interviews. The interviews began with questions such as "Can you walk me through your promotional career in the Navy, starting with your commissioning school?" This approach allowed the researcher to pursue issues or topics that were not identified before, and focus on the professional careers of these flag officers. This approach also facilitated the analysis of the data (Patton, 1990). It was hoped that through the use of interviews, the researcher could explore those positions that might have influenced their selection to flag officer. The researcher looked for information regarding critical factors for promotion, and their opinion regarding the limited number of female flag officers.

Interviews were scheduled when most convenient for the participants. Most flag officers hold schedules that start at 6:00 a.m. and end their daily routine at the office at 8:00 p.m., only to find themselves taking administrative work to their private residences or attending mandatory social functions. The interviews had target durations of one hour or less; longer interviews are not advised, and one hour was considered an appropriate

length before diminishing returns set in for most parties (Glesne, 1998). In an effort to better utilize the time given for the interview, a copy of the interview protocol (see Appendix C) was sent to the participants to better familiarize them with this study prior to meeting with the researcher.

The participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix D) which explained the purpose, process, and anticipated risks of their participation, and offered them the option of refusing to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, participants had the option to not have portions of their interview tape recorded. The female flag officers participating in the interviews were not stationed in the same location, so some travel had been anticipated for the researcher. To ensure privacy, one interview took place at a location chosen by the participant, while four interviews were conducted via telephone at the time they designated as appropriate. Participants did not endure any added risks or discomforts, except for possible minor fatigue. Follow-up interviews were not considered necessary since the researcher had been given a large amount of data during these interviews.

As mentioned earlier, the number of female flag officers in the Navy was very small so identification based on certain titles or positions previously held by them could be easily achieved; therefore, confidentiality for the participants in this part of the study could not be guaranteed. This was made clear on the consent form (see Appendix D). However, every attempt was made to ensure confidentiality of some data, i.e. statements made during the interviews. The results were reported in a summary format and no names were used. All audio taped interviews were transcribed by the researcher. The researcher used a single or one user computer system, to minimize the potential loss of

personal privacy. Audiotapes and transcriptions were kept in a locked cabinet after completion of the study and will be destroyed a year after the completion of the study.

Data Analysis

Part one of the study was addressed mostly through quantitative analysis, while part two was addressed through qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

In an effort to examine the relationship between military positions and flag officer promotions, it was necessary to answer research question number one in a quantitative basis. This included constructing frequency tables (see Table 2) from the profile worksheets for all admirals in order to identify the number of positions, such as command at sea, command ashore, combat duty, operational positions, etc. The data from the admirals' profiles were summed, and frequency tables were constructed to analyze the most common positions held by the sample. In order to better understand the abundance of or lack of, certain duties within individual careers or occupational specialties, part one included some qualitative analysis as well.

The qualitative analysis used in part one included content analysis. Five digit category codes (see Appendix E) were assigned to facilitate more subtle category and subcategory distinctions within the code. Microsoft Excel 2002 performed both numeric and alphabetic sorts, which highly facilitated the qualitative analysis process. The researcher reviewed profile worksheets and frequency tables in an effort to find patterns that were shared by the majority so that the most common career paths could be traced. Measures of central tendency (i.e., means, medians, and modes) were computed and

compared to examine the relationship between certain positions and selection to flag officer. The sample for this part of the study was represented by several communities (surface, submarine, aviation, etc.); therefore, the careers followed by these flag officers differed slightly among communities.

Content analysis was also used in part two of the study. The data were examined by using Microsoft Word 2002, a computer program, which allowed easy multiple text management, including coding, locating, and retrieving of individual categories. Profile records were created for each participant with fields that supported all relevant information regarding the selected categories and allowed easy retrieval of specific categories.

The data from the interviews were also coded numerically in the following categories of information: attributes of success in the military, leadership styles of male and female officers, command positions, women's roles, recommendations for future success, challenges encountered throughout their military careers and opinions regarding the limited number of female flag officers in the Navy. Although, these categories were set prior to the data being collected, the researcher continued to look for emerging themes throughout the data analysis. These categories were compared to those from part one of the study in an attempt to better identify those career paths most followed and those less followed by Naval flag officers.

Member Checking

In an effort to ensure the accuracy of the findings, and also as a safeguard against possible researcher bias during the interviews, member checking was employed. Valerie

J. Janesick (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) reminds us that validity in qualitative research deals with accurate description and explanation and, Lincoln & Guba (1985) recommend cross-checking our work through member-checks. Since follow up interviews were not scheduled, the researcher forwarded an electronic copy of the interview transcript to the participants inviting them to respond and add to the interpretation of the interview transcription. One participant chose to make some changes to the interview transcription while the other participants did not; the researcher made changes to reflect the corrected statements.

Triangulation of the Data

In an effort to address the need for increased validity of this study, data were collected from different sources: (1) autobiographical accounts of flag officers from the Defense Manpower Data Center, (2) semi-structured interviews with five female flag officers, (3) data provided to the participants for member checking and (4) analysis of available literature. Triangulation of data allowed the researcher to build on the strengths of each type of data collected while minimizing the weaknesses of any single method (Denzin, 1978). By including the data from the interviews, it was hoped to more thoroughly describe and understand which positions might have influenced selection to flag officer, opinions regarding limited number of female flag officers, and also investigate core elements and shared outcomes (Patton, 1990).

Researcher's Preconceptions

The researcher was serving in the U.S. Navy, as an enlisted service member, and carried with her perceptions and assumptions about the military. Therefore, it was her suspicion, regarding this study, that the most common career path for male flag officers in the Navy would include categories such as combat service, service in forward deployed areas, and demanding operational positions such as afloat commands (ships, submarines, and aviation squadrons) while most female flag officers would most likely have shore (non-operational) commands and administrative assignments.

Being a member of the culture had advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage was easier access to the participants. A disadvantage was the fact that as an enlisted member, the researcher was constrained by military protocol. In other words, despite the fact that the researcher held a senior rank in the military, she was an enlisted service member and the participants were officers who deserved the utmost respect and to be treated with a certain degree of formality and military etiquette.

The knowledge of the participants' background made "objectivity" challenging; however, the researcher's military experience greatly assisted her in probing more effectively and also helped her in interpreting the data collected (Glesne, 1998).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Overview

This study traced the career paths of 186 senior military leaders in the U.S. Navy who had achieved the rank of admiral (O-7 or above). This study included officers belonging to professional occupations such as physicians, nurses, chaplains, and lawyers, and although they are managed separately in the Navy, restricting the use of these professions would have mostly limited the study since a large number of women are in professional occupations. In order to adequately address the research questions, this study consisted of two parts. The first part of the study involved tracing the most common career paths of both male and female flag officers, currently serving on active duty by using historical accounts of their professional military careers. The second part of the study involved conducting interviews with five female flag officers who were also participants in the first part of the study. Four of the interviews were conducted via telephone and one in person.

This study was guided by two research questions:

- 1) What are the most common career paths among active duty officers that reach the rank of admiral (O-7 or above) in the United States Navy and what aspects of their careers might have influenced promotion to flag officer?
- 2) What factors do female flag officers view as required for promotion to higher ranks and what do they believe is the most significant contributor to the disparity between the number of male and female flag officers?

This chapter provides the results of the data analyzed in conjunction with the findings from interviews conducted with the female admirals.

Demographic Summary of Participants

A request was sent to the Defense Manpower Data Center requesting a chronological list for military careers of all active duty admirals. The list included the start of their military career to the present time (year 2002) and it included the following information: date of entry into the service, commissioning source (entry school into the service), occupational specialty (officer designator), a history of all positions held, and the level of education achieved. Although the population consisted of 198 admirals, records could only be extracted for 186 admirals, which included 10 female admirals. Table 1 shows the pay grades for all participants.

Table 1

Summary of Participants by Pay Grade (n=186)

Pay Grade	Female	Male
O-7	4	86
O-8	5	58
O-9	1	26
O-10	0	6

The age of the participants varied from 45 years old to 60 years old. The mean, median, and mode were calculated and the results were the same: 53 years. Ninety-seven percent of all participants had a spouse; this was consistent for female officers, since nine out of the ten were married. It was not possible, based on the data provided, to identify those participants married to other military members. In terms of the participants' time

served in the military, the mean for the participants was 30.4 years, while Table 2 shows the range and mean by pay grade.

Table 2

Summary of Participants' Range and Mean for Years of Military Service

Admirals		Mean	
Pay Grade	Range	Female	Male
O-7	19 to 34	28.5	28.7
O-8	21 to 36	30.8	31.3
O-9	31 to 36	33.0	33.2
O-10	32 to 36	NA	34.2

Commissioning source refers to the school or the type of commission given to the participants as their entry into the military. While the U.S. Military offers a variety of entry programs for those who qualify, Table 3 shows the participants' sources of entry into the Navy.

Table 3

Summary of Participants' Commissioning Source

Commissioning Source	Female	Male
U.S. Naval Academy	0	89
ROTC/NROTC	0	33
OCS/AOCS	2	25
Direct Appointment	8	9
Reserve Officer Candidate	0	20

While all commissioned officers must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university prior to being commission as officers, 39 percent of the participants also had master's degrees, two percent of the participants had education beyond the master's level but less than a doctorate, and one percent had doctoral degrees.

Additional experience and qualifications are also of interest. Some officers were assigned to commands that offered the opportunity to qualify in more than one designator, e.g., a pilot stationed aboard a carrier may seek the opportunity to qualify as a surface warfare officer. There were seven male participants with a second or third officer designator. Four participants at the O-7 pay grade had a second designator, one participant at the O-7 pay grade had a third designator, one participant at the O-8 pay grade had a second designator, and one participant at the O-9 pay grade had a second designator. The individual mean for the time in service for these admirals was computed in an effort to find a difference in promotion time for those officers who had more than one military designator. When compared to the sample's mean, however, there were no significant differences in time in service for these admirals.

Results

The results are presented in two major sections. Each section will address one of the research questions.

Research Question One:

What are the most common career paths among active duty officers that reach the rank of admiral (O-7 or above) in the United States Navy and what aspects of their careers might have influenced promotion to flag officer?

A number of positions were identified prior to reviewing the data from the Defense Manpower Data Center. These positions were assigned five digit category codes (see Appendix E) so that profile worksheets could be constructed for each admiral in the sample. As the data were reviewed and more positions emerged, they were added to the list. After reviewing each record individually and assigning numerical codes, the researcher created Excel profile worksheets (see Table 4). As shown in Table 4, a typical profile worksheet listed the name, designator (occupational specialty), rank, numerical assignments of positions held throughout his/her naval career, additional qualifications, and education. Positions were also assigned pay grade by the researcher to better facilitate identification of certain positions. Although this information was requested from the Defense Manpower Data Center, it was not provided so the researcher assigned pay grades by taking those positions assigned them to pay grades consistent with typical career progressions.

Table 4

Sample Profile Worksheet for Admiral Navy

Name	Designator	Rank	U. S. Navy Pay Grade					Additional	
			O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6	O-7	Qualifications	Education
Admiral									
Navy	1120	M007	12850	12850	12050	12700	12200	1110	0
			12000	12875	12900	12550	0		
			12850	0	0	12050	0		

A frequency table (see Table 5) was created from the profile worksheet for each of the admirals in the sample. The table listed all positions previously identified with the frequency and time spent on each position. For example, the admiral shown in Table 5 held 11 assignments throughout his military career and eight different types of positions. For this particular admiral, the submarine duty position (12850) was held three times, while the shore duty position (12050) was held twice. The time spent at each position was represented as a percentage of time throughout the admiral's military career, i.e., 27 percent of the admiral's time had been spent onboard submarines (12850) and 18 percent on shore duty. Once the frequency tables were completed, they were merged into one table representing all of the admirals in the sample (see Appendix G).

Table 5

Sample Frequency of Positions Held by Admiral Navy

Positions	Frequency	Percent of Time spent at each Position
12000	1	9%
12010	0	0%
12020	0	0%
12025	0	0%
12050	2	18%
12075	0	0%
12100	0	0%
12150	0	0%
12175	0	0%
12200	1	9%
12250	0	0%
12300	0	0%
12350	0	0%
12400	0	0%
12500	0	0%
12525	0	0%
12550	1	9%
12575	0	0%
12600	0	0%
12700	1	9%
12750	0	0%
12800	0	0%
12850	3	27%
12875	1	9%
12900	1	9%
Total	11	100%

Due to the vast number of occupational specialties, only the four most popular occupational specialties (1110, 1120, 1310, and 1320) (i.e., those containing the greatest number of admirals) are presented in Table 6. Table 6 is provided to clarify the procedures for computing mean scores for positions held by admirals during their careers. Table 6 identified 23, out of 25, positions held by the admirals in four occupational specialties, some positions were not held by all admirals in the four occupational specialties; i.e., exchange officer (12010) was held by one participant in the 1310 occupational specialty. Since it is not uncommon for officers to hold positions more than once at various stages in their careers, each time a position was held by a single officer, it was counted. Therefore, the number of positions held in each category often exceeds the number of officers in the sample. Thus, the number under each occupational specialty is the frequency; representing the times those positions were held by the admirals in that occupational specialty. The column labeled “Total” represents the total number of times each position was held by the admirals in the four occupational specialties. The column “Time” represents the average number of times admirals in this group held this type of position throughout their military careers. So, for the position of 12000, the average admiral held the position less than once (i.e., .43) during their careers. The last row in the table provides the means for occupational specialties across designators. The total mean, 13.19, represents the average number of positions held by the entire sub-sample in the four occupational specialties in the table. A complete table which contains the entire sample of the study is included in Appendix G. The mean number of positions held by the entire sample is 12.75. After a description of Table 6, an analysis of the entire sample is presented.

Table 6

Sample Frequency Table for Four Occupational Specialties

Positions	Occupational Specialty				Total	Time
	1110	1120	1310	1320		
12000	12	8	29	8	57	0.43
12010	0	0	1	0	1	0.01
12020	2	0	1	0	3	0.02
12025	13	5	4	3	25	0.19
12050	43	33	46	14	136	1.01
12075	2	4	11	6	23	0.17
12100	0	0	2	2	4	0.03
12150	44	1	18	6	69	0.51
12200	50	27	41	16	134	1.00
12250	7	2	11	1	21	0.16
12300	82	5	23	8	118	0.88
12350	0	0	14	5	19	0.14
12400	34	23	28	16	101	0.75
12500	39	4	134	50	227	1.69
12525	0	0	29	9	38	0.28
12550	28	35	76	30	169	1.26
12575	4	1	1	1	7	0.05
12600	22	5	21	11	59	0.44
12700	116	64	72	25	277	2.07
12750	1	0	0	0	1	0.01
12800	126	3	18	6	153	1.14
12850	1	69	1	0	71	0.53
12875	0	20	1	0	21	0.16
12900	0	33	0	0	33	0.25
Total	626	342	582	217	1767	13.19
Mean	13.3	11.8	13.9	13.6	13.19	

In order to compare and better identify the positions most frequently held by admirals, a bar chart was constructed from the frequency tables using Microsoft Excel. Figure 1 represents the data for Table 6 and includes additional data from Table G-1 (see Appendix G). Figure 1 presents the total number of positions by most common occupational specialty. In addition, the remaining twelve occupational specialties have been summed to create the category of "Other." Note that the total of all other occupational specialties is only slightly higher than the total for the 1110 and 1310 occupational specialties.

Figure 1

Position Frequency in Occupational Specialties

Figure 2 is another representation of the frequencies of positions held in each of the four major occupational specialties. It provides a more dramatic illustration of the predominance of the number of positions held in the four major specialties relative to the twelve “other” specialty areas. This look at the sub-sample of four most commonly held specialties gives major clues as to the most common career paths to Navy admiral. However, a more detailed analysis of the entire sample, which would include all 16 occupational positions, may reveal more subtle aspects of the career paths of these flag officers. To that end, the following section will analyze the entire sample, looking for more subtle findings that will more accurately address the research questions.

Figure 2

Comparison of Positions Held within Occupational Specialties

Analysis of the Entire Sample

Officer career patterns must be maintained to ensure development of required Navy leadership and expertise, officer tour lengths, therefore, are based on constraints of policy, the needs of the Navy, professional career development, and when possible, the officers' desires. Time spent at each assignment varies depending on the type of positions, usually between 18 and 36 months (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15559B, 2002).

Military positions (job assignments) are strong determinants of how fast and how far an officer will advance (Gilroy, et al., 1999). One element of a competitive record is assignment diversity which allows an officer to have a variety of duty assignments; a combination of large, medium, overseas, staff, sea and operational duty, etc. An analysis of the data reviewed showed much diversity on positions held by the participants, regardless of their occupational specialty (officer designator). The participants held 25 different positions (see Appendix G). The mean for positions held indicates the number of tours, or number of positions held, these officers took throughout their naval careers.

An analysis of the means of positions held by participants ranged from 8.5 for 2500 officer designator, staff corps officers – judge advocate general, to 22.85 for 3100 officer designator, staff corps officers – supply corps. The total average of positions held by the study's sample is 12.75 (see Appendix G). One reason for the low mean for admirals in the judge advocate general occupational specialty is that these positions had longer tenures – transferring, on an average, only eight times during their naval careers. While the tenures for officers in the supply corps occupational specialty were shorter – transferring, on an average, 22 times during their naval careers.

Based on the 12.75 sample mean, the researcher selected the 12 positions with the highest frequency as the career path most frequently taken by these admirals. These career paths included positions at 1) military headquarters (12700), 2) shore duty commands (12050), 3) command of shore activities (12200), 4) sea duty commands (12800), 5) operational duty (12500), 6) command of operational commands (12550), 7) joint staff commands (12400), 8) overseas shore duty (12075), 9) command of ships (12300), 10) submarine duty (12850), 11) instructor duty (12000), and 12) combat operations (12600).

Military headquarters commands (12700) allow officers to be exposed to policy making in the Navy and also provide them the opportunity to seek senior mentors within their own community. Many officers are recommended for positions of more responsibility and leadership as a result of their exposure to senior leadership at military headquarters.

Shore duty positions (12050) are held by all naval officers. The type of position depends on the officer's occupational specialty and most of these positions are identified in some other category. Some of the shore duty positions may include recruiting duty, staff duty, instructor duty, etc. which have previously been identified.

Command positions at shore installations (12200), operational commands (12550), and command of ships (12300) which start as early as the O-4 pay grade, allow officers to demonstrate potential for leadership; these are accountable positions and require a combination of leadership, considerable intellectual work, and substantive mission knowledge.

Sea duty commands (12800 & 12850) and operational commands (12500) are positions that target specific communities, i.e., surface, submarine, aviation, etc. During an officer's first tour at these commands, warfare qualifications are usually achieved. Some officers can lose their occupational specialty if they do not achieve their warfare qualification.

Joint staff positions (12400) are mandatory by law prior to an officer being selected to flag officer (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15559B, 2002). These positions foster the development of an officer that is more educated and experienced in joint operations.

Positions at overseas (shore) commands (12075) are considered career enhancing, and officers are highly encouraged to serve overseas some time in their careers. These positions offer a prime opportunity to fill gaps in an officer's professional development and to practice leadership in environments that are less familiar and with fewer resources. The type of overseas positions available for officers varies according to the officer's occupational specialty and pay grade.

Instructor duty (12000) is usually held within their own occupational specialty. There are many opportunities for officers to hold positions as instructors. Positions are based on the officer's designator and may include flight instructor, academic instructor, etc.

Combat operations (12600) are positions that cannot be selected and few officers get the opportunity to participate in.

Career Paths Based on Community Designator

The sample was divided into 16 different occupational specialties or officer designator codes (see Table 7). Officer designator codes (see Appendix F) are four-digit numbers used to identify the primary naval specialty qualifications and to administratively categorize officers for proper management and identification (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). They are often referred to as “community designators.”

In order to analyze the differences between each occupation specialty and the entire sample, frequencies were compared to indicate the most frequently held positions. The following paragraphs examine each occupational specialty vis a vis the entire sample.

General unrestricted line officers, designator 1100, are involved in planning, research, and administration of the procurement, selection, classification, distribution, training, performance, and separation of naval forces (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, all five admirals were female (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included four of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., military headquarters, command of shore activities, joint staff duty, and overseas shore duty. Most of these participants had been stationed at military headquarters several times and most of them had held command positions at naval bases supporting communities in which they had not been qualified; i.e., surface, aviation, etc. These participants’ records showed no sea or operational duty.

Table 7

Summary of Participants by Pay Grade and Officer Designator

Officer	Female Admirals			Male Admirals			
Designator	Pay Grade			Pay Grade			
	O-7	O-8	O-9	O-7	O-8	O-9	O-10
1100	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
1110	0	0	0	20	18	8	1
1120	0	0	0	13	10	4	2
1310	0	0	0	21	11	8	2
1320	0	0	0	10	4	1	1
1440	0	1	0	4	2	1	0
1500	0	0	0	3	1	1	0
1610	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
1630	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1650	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
1804	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
2500	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
2700	0	2	0	6	1	1	0
3100	1	0	0	2	3	1	0
4100	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
5100	0	0	0	3	2	0	0

Unrestricted line officers qualified in surface warfare, designator 1110, are involved in almost every aspect of Navy missions, i.e., anti-submarine warfare, anti-air warfare, anti-surface warfare, land attack, theater air missile defense, support for Marine Corps missions, etc. (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, all 47 admirals were male (see Table 7). This occupational specialty had the largest number of admirals. When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals included ten of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., sea duty [ships], military headquarters, command of ships, command of shore activities, shore duty, operational duty, joint staff duty, command of operational commands, combat operations, and instructor duty). This is considered a sea-intensive occupational specialty and most sea duty positions are on board naval ships. Forty-six percent of these admirals had participated in combat operations.

Unrestricted line officers qualified in Submarine Warfare, designator 1120, are involved in managing and operating the submarines that patrol the world's oceans. This community provides the most pivotal service in the military by deterring conflict through its powerful offensive capabilities (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, all 29 admirals were male (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals included seven of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., sea

duty [submarine], military headquarters, operational commands, shore duty, command of shore activities, joint staff duty, and instructor duty).

Unrestricted line officers qualified as pilots, designator 1310, fly from land bases and sea platforms performing missions across the globe. Aviation is a high-skill in the military and features some of the most advanced training and technology utilized by the Services. In this sample, all 42 admirals were male (see Table 7), the second largest number of admirals. When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals included nine of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., operational duty, command of operational commands, military headquarters, shore duty, command of shore activities, joint staff duty, instructor duty, command of ships, and combat operations). Forty-three percent of these admirals had participated in combat operations.

Unrestricted line, naval flight officers, designator 1320, maintain navigational data and equipment, supervise pilot flight, ground training, and air navigation, and instruct pilots in air and celestial navigation (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, all 16 admirals were male (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals included ten of the twelve positions identified in the most common path of the entire sample (i.e., operational duty, command of operational commands, military headquarters, command of shore activities, joint staff duty, shore duty, combat operations, command of ships,

instructor duty, and sea duty [ships]). Sixty-eight percent of these admirals had participated in combat operations.

Restricted line, engineering duty officers, designator 1440, are involved in the acquisition, construction, maintenance and modernization of ships, combat and weapons systems, ordnance systems, and electronic and space warfare systems (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). Most of these officers started their naval careers in other designators; i.e., submarine, surface, aviation, etc., and later applied for lateral transfer to this community. In this sample, seven admirals were male and one female (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included six of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., shore duty, military headquarters, sea duty [ships], command of shore activities, operational command, and sea duty [submarines]). Command, or its equivalent, for this group of admirals involved assignments with other occupational specialties or directors of specific divisions within their current occupational specialty.

Restricted line, aerospace engineering duty officers, designator 1500, provide professional management and technical direction in the design, development, acquisition, production, and logistic support of naval aircraft, air and space weapon systems and their support equipment (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, all five admirals were male (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included six of the twelve

positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., command of shore activities, military headquarters, shore duty, operational commands, instructor duty, and sea duty [ships]). A noticeable factor for this community was that 80 percent of these officers transferred from the aviation community. Command, or its equivalent, consisted of joint depot maintenance analysis groups, naval air systems commands, aircrew systems programs, and various program managers.

Restricted line, special duty officers (cryptology), designator 1610, perform Navy cryptologic services and national signals intelligence operations (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). Some of their responsibilities include interception of foreign electromagnetic emissions; therefore, these participants had specialized in Chinese, Russian, and Slavic Linguistics. In this sample, all three admirals were male (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included five of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., shore duty, military headquarters, command of shore activities, overseas duty, and sea duty [ships]). Command, or its equivalent, consisted of command of naval technical training centers, naval security groups, and various naval security group activities. Sixty percent of these officers held positions as assignment officers for their own communities.

Restricted line, special duty officers (intelligence), designator 1630, provide tactical, strategic, and operational intelligence support to U.S. Naval Forces, joint, and multinational military forces (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, one admiral was male and one female (see Table 7). When comparing those

positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included six of the twelve positions in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., overseas shore duty, joint staff duty, command of shore activities, combat operations, shore duty, and operational duty). Part of the requirement for this occupational specialty includes serving with joint staffs; these participants averaged between three and four joint staff assignments. Command, or its equivalent, consisted of director for naval intelligence departments, director for intelligence at joint staffs, and command of joint intelligence centers. Sixty-three percent of these admirals had participated in combat operations.

Restricted line, special duty officers (public affairs), designator 1650, are involved in the preparation and dissemination of information regarding the naval service to the general public and also recording naval history (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, the two admirals were male (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included four of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., military headquarters, sea duty [ships], shore duty, and command of shore activities). A large majority of the participants' positions had been at military headquarters and on board ships, while command, or its equivalent, consisted of director of public affairs, chief of public information, and chief of information which oversees all aspects of the Navy's public affairs program.

Restricted line special duty officers, oceanography, designator 1804, implement all phases of the naval oceanography program. These officers maintain liaison with

operational units, responding to fleet requirements and advising on the application of responsive sciences to naval warfare (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, there was one male admiral (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by this participant to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by this admiral only included four of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., military headquarters, command of shore activities, sea duty [ships], and overseas duty). Command, or its equivalent, consisted of president, National Defense University, chief of naval research, and command of oceanographic and naval meteorology units.

Staff Corps officers (judge advocate general), designator 2500, provide services associated with the administration of legal matters, and with the general or specialized practice of law as applied to the needs of the Navy (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, all two admirals were male (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included five of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., military headquarters, shore duty, command of shore activities, joint staff duty, and sea duty [ships]). These admirals held positions at military headquarters three and seven times which is not uncommon since they provide legal counsel to various commands including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Command, or its equivalent, consisted of command of naval legal services, executive assistant to the judge advocate general, deputy judge advocate general, fleet judge advocate, and Judge Advocate General of the Navy.

Medical Corps officers, designator 2700, are involved in research and planning, providing and administering medical, surgical, dental, and nursing services. These officers provide health care services to all branches of the military (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, eight admirals were male and two female (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included four of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., shore duty, command of shore activities, military headquarters, and sea duty [submarines]). These officers provide most of their health care services at shore medical installations. Although, some larger ships in the Navy have positions for medical officers, the number of positions is very limited. Command, or its equivalent, consisted of director of health services, task force surgeon, and command of defense medical readiness training institute, fleet hospitals, naval dental centers, and medical officer of the Marine Corps.

Staff Corps officers (Supply Corps), designator 3100, provide logistical and operational support to the Navy in areas such as finance, retail, food service, acquisition, contracting, and supply management (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, all six admirals were male and one female (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included six of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., shore duty, command of shore activities, sea duty [ships], military headquarters, sea duty [submarines] and overseas shore duty). Command, or its

equivalent, consisted of director, defense logistics agency, comptroller and chief financial officer, force supply officer, fleet logistics operations, naval inventory control point, and naval supply systems command. This occupational specialty is considered sea-intensive and these admirals averaged two assignments on board ships.

Staff Corps officers (chaplain), designator 4100, provide religious services, spiritual counsel, and moral guidance to naval service personnel and their dependents (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, all two admirals were male (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample, it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included five of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., shore duty, sea duty [ships], joint staff duty, overseas shore duty, and command of shore activities). Although some of these officers had held positions at sea (ships), joint duty, and overseas, a large portion of their careers had been spent at shore commands. Command, or its equivalent, consisted of director of the naval chaplain's school, assistant staff chaplain, chief of Navy chaplains, assistant fleet chaplain, director for operational ministry, and chaplain to the U.S. Marine Corps.

Staff Corps officers (civil engineering), designator 5100, support the operational elements of the Navy through planning, design, construction and maintenance of shore and ocean facilities. Many of these officers manage 400 to 600 enlisted workers in building airfields, bridges, ports, and buildings (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002). In this sample, all five admirals were male (see Table 7). When comparing those positions most frequently held by these participants to the entire sample,

it was revealed that the twelve most frequently held assignments by these admirals only included three of the twelve positions identified in the most common career path of the entire sample (i.e., command of shore activities, military headquarters, and overseas shore duty). Command positions, or its equivalent, consisted of command of naval facilities engineering commands, mobile construction battalions, public works officer, and naval construction regiments. These admirals had also held positions on board ships and operational units; this is an occupational specialty that usually does not have positions on board ships for officers.

Summary

Even though these admirals belonged to 16 different occupational specialties, and their professional careers are managed separately, the overview of their careers clearly identified positions (i.e., military headquarters, command of shore activities, shore duty, sea duty [ships], and operational duty) critical for selection to admiral in the U.S. Navy, regardless of their occupational specialty. Of these positions, military headquarters, command of shore activities, and shore duty were the most numerous assignments and clearly are critical to attaining the rank of admiral. While sea and operational duties appear to have less importance, they are still a significant component of the career path to Navy admiral.

Research Question Two

What factors do female flag officers view as required for promotion to higher ranks and what do they believe is the most significant contributor to the disparity between the number of male and female flag officers?

Interview Results

Five semi-structured open ended interviews were conducted with female admirals in an effort to achieve a deeper understanding of the professional careers followed by flag officers. Four interviews were conducted by telephone and one in person. The participants consisted of one at the O-9 pay grade, two at the O-8 pay grade, and two at the O-7 pay grade. These participants belonged to four different officer designators.

A letter was sent to seven female admirals via electronic mail; two did not answer. It contained the request letter (see Appendix B), a copy of the abstract for the study, the consent form (see Appendix D), and the interview protocol (see Appendix C). The electronic letters were sent directly to the admirals with a copy to their personal aides. They took between two and three days to answer and agree to be interviewed. Four of them recommended telephone interviews because the possibility of having to change or postpone the interview was high and there was going to be much travel involved for the researcher. One admiral was going to be in the researcher's area and agreed to be interviewed in person during that time.

The admirals forwarded an electronic mail to their aides to set up the appointment with the researcher; the researcher was carbon copied on these e-mails. The time allotted by the admiral's aides for these interviews was set at no more than 30 minutes; this was

the longest time they would grant for this type of activity. These interviews, however, ranged from 40 to 55 minutes, with participants controlling the time.

Participants were contacted at the designated time. Permission to tape-record the session was requested prior to the interview. After a few minutes of personal conversation, mostly about the researcher's study and military career, the researcher started the dialogue with "Can you walk me through your promotional career in the Navy, starting with your commissioning school?" Although there were eight protocol questions (see Appendix B), occasionally follow up questions were asked to clarify responses. However, most of the questions were answered as the interviewees described their military careers.

The five participants were all in their early fifties. Two participants had entered the Navy by attending women's officer school and three by attending officer's candidate school. Four participants came in through a general unrestricted line and one came in through the restricted line with an occupational specialty. Two participants in the general unrestricted line chose to remain while the other two chose to transfer to an occupational specialty later in their careers. All participants had attained a bachelor's degree prior to joining the military. While these degrees had little to do with their professional occupation in the military (mathematics, political science, education, and liberal arts), their master's degrees were more in line with their occupational specialty (operations' research, intelligence communication, inventory management, and science). Four participants had earned master's degrees by attending the Navy's Post-Graduate school, while one participant was forced to cancel her school in order to remain stationed with

her military spouse. Four participants were married and one was single. Four had no children and one had one child who had just graduated from high school.

According to the promotion flow (see Appendix A) set by the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act¹² (DOPMA), it usually takes 24 to 26 years of service for an officer in the military to reach the O-7 pay grade. While four participants took 25 to 26 years of service to reach the pay grade of O-7, one participant achieved that pay grade within 22 years. That is considered a “fast track candidate,” and the number of officers selected from that category is very limited (Thie, et al., 1994). This was regarded as a major accomplishment, especially for someone who did not have any warfare qualifications.

Most of the participants joined the military for the opportunities offered by the Navy, especially management positions given to officers early in their careers. One participant commented that she was looking for “equal pay for equal work,” while another participant cited the opportunity to “do what very few women could do with the amount of responsibility and authority given from the start.” One participant recalled her reason for joining the Navy: “it was difficult to get a job with a Liberal Arts Degree and no professional work experience.” She also added that her intentions were to come in for two years, get a master’s degree, and two years of work experience then get out and “get a real job.” Most of these participants did not plan to go beyond their initial two or three year obligation. They attributed their stay in the Navy to the opportunities given to them as well as the importance of their mentors.

¹² DOPMA defines the overall seniority combination of the Services and recommends how long officers are expected to serve in each pay grade (Bureau of Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15839I, 2002).

At the conclusion of the interviews, the participants were thanked and informed that a copy of the interview transcription would be sent to them for review. At that time, any additional reflections that they might have regarding their experiences was encouraged.

Positions that Influence Selection to Flag Officer

Strong performance in challenging, visible, competitive positions is paramount for promotion to flag officer. An analysis of the data from the interviews revealed that positions at sea and operational commands, military headquarters commands, command, and joint staff commands were considered essential for an officer's record to be competitive for selection to flag officer. Positions are only one part of an officer's records however, depending on the responsibility and the leadership involved, certain positions can be very important when officers' records are being reviewed for promotion.

Sea and Operational Positions

Sea duty positions vary depending on the officer's designator; officers can serve sea duty on board ships and submarines. Operational positions can also take the place of sea duty for designators such as aviation and others. Although, most operational commands are not on board ships, officers stationed in operational units usually make long deployments as part of a ship's crew. Positions for commissioned officers at sea duty commands are assigned based on the officer's rank; therefore, officers can start as division officers (usually at the rank of O-3 and below), followed by department head¹³

¹³ The department head tours, when served at the O-4 level, usually allow officers to be promoted to commander (O-5) and place them in a position to be "selected for command," or lead their own units.

(usually at the rank of O-4 and above), executive officer, and culminating with the much desired position of commanding officer (command).

Most of the participants interviewed understood the importance of positions at sea and operational commands. One of the participants discussed how it was “absolutely essential that you have the right weight balance,” although she was talking about holding different types of positions which are considered important aspects of an officer’s well-rounded career, she emphasized the need to hold “what we call sea tours.”

Some officer occupations are sea-intensive, while others have few opportunities to hold sea-duty positions. One participant who had the opportunity to serve on board ships commented: “fundamental to our success is success at sea.” She also added that officers’ promotion boards understand that not every officer designator has the opportunity to hold sea duty positions. She believed, however, that “no matter what your designator is, getting sea duty helps.”

Sea and operational commands allow officers to demonstrate their leadership abilities under extremely stressful conditions. Most of the participants interviewed did not have the opportunity to hold positions at sea or operational commands. They strongly believed, however, that based on their participation in officer selection boards, that these positions allowed officers to build competitive records.

Military Headquarters Positions

Positions at military headquarters allow officers to get exposure to the Navy’s top leadership. These positions help officers learn about the Navy as an organization, how

policy is made, the decision making process, matters relating to military strategy, doctrine and policy, strategic planning, and contingency military planning.

This theme emerged on all the participants' interviews as critical for promotion to admiral. Some of their comments included: "you need what we call policy... headquarters," "I think that it is absolutely essential that you understand how policy is made," and "they must come to Washington¹⁴ at some point in their careers." One participant remembered how she was not happy with her position but understood the importance of being there: "it got me to the Washington scene and that was important." She also added: "I got a lot of recognition and visibility in that job."

One participant discussed her encouragement for these positions: "I tell people who talk to me, if you have an opportunity to come to Washington (military headquarters) as a senior lieutenant (0-3) or lieutenant commander (0-4); you ought to take that opportunity." She explained how taking these assignments at an early stage in their careers allowed them the opportunity to learn without being involved in the decision-making process. One participant had spent 15 years at military headquarters commands and her comment indicated the expectation for senior officers to hold positions at military headquarters commands: "get to know this place before you have to come back in a more senior position."

These participants believed that holding positions at "the largest military headquarters in the land," as one participant called them, were important in order to build competitive records for selection to senior ranks.

¹⁴ When talking about commands, most military personnel, refer to military headquarters as "Washington."

Command Positions

Command positions allow officers to demonstrate their leadership ability. Officers that hold command are charged with absolute responsibility (US Navy Regulations, 1990). Most officers selected for command positions possess technical or tactical expertise, staff experience, and an outstanding performance record. These officers assume titles such as commanding officer, officer in charge, commander, commodore, etc. Depending on their designator, officers usually hold command of afloat units, squadrons, operating forces, special warfare teams, naval construction forces, naval shore activities, etc. Holding these positions can start as early as the O-3 or O-4 pay grade, followed by what is called “commander (O-5 pay grade)” command, and lastly being selected for major command (usually at the O-6 pay grade).

These positions were highly regarded as important for promotion to admiral by the participants interviewed and they strongly believed that it was the best avenue for officers to demonstrate extraordinary leadership and executive abilities. One participant who had participated in several promotion boards commented: “major command of an activity... that, selection boards are very familiar with and they understand what the responsibilities are,” and also “what the board is generally looking for, is that you held command of what is considered major command,” she was referring to holding positions at the O-6 pay grade. Another participant also commented: “it is very hard to make flag... if you have not held command as a captain (O-6), even if you held command as a commander (O-5),” she explained the reason: “there are commands that are not challenging enough to have measured your command ability as a captain,” while another participant added: “there is a difference in commanding as a captain from commanding

as a commander... you need both of those experiences not just because the board (promotion board) says that you should do it twice but because you'll do it better the second time." One participant recalled: "I was told that I needed to be a CO (Commanding Officer) in order to make captain." Another participant explained the extent of these officers' responsibilities in operational commands: "when talking about holding command at sea or what is considered equivalent for staff corps officers, you've got a chance to really apply your leadership skills in an operational environment where you're making decisions that have an immediate impact," and also "in an operational command, commanding officers make decisions which have instantaneous effects and they're life and death decisions."

All participants agreed that command, or its equivalent for staff corps officers, are key assignments in officers' occupational fields which afford them the opportunity to emerge as leaders in their own communities. These officers are also expected to mentor their junior officers since they are ultimately responsible for evaluating junior officers' performance. Professional evaluations are critical for an officer's career progression and also required for career management.

Joint Staff Positions

Joint staff duty experience is an important part of a naval officer's professional development. These positions are in a multi-service which is involved in the integrated support of land, sea, and air forces of at least two of the military departments. At joint commands, officers can demonstrate their ability to perform in an environment that is unfamiliar to them. Although, joint duty is a requirement for most occupations in order

to be selected to admiral, officers can waive this requirement if they are in occupations such as the scientific/technical fields (oceanography, civil engineering, etc.) and professional fields (medical, law, religious practices, etc.).

Three of the participants were in occupational fields, allowing them to waive the joint duty requirement; however, only two did not show positions with joint staffs.¹⁵ The three participants that held joint staff positions believed these positions were critical for selection to admiral. This was explained by one participant who commented: “it is very useful to have been exposed to the issues, changes, and U.S. Military roles.” She was talking about current issues, changes, and roles that affect the military in general.

Holding positions in connection with another service came with some difficulty for one participant. She conveyed that there was a lot of pain associated with the Navy integrating with the Air Force. She was referring to merging two different sets of standards within the same occupation. She also believed that working with an organization of which she knew very little “tests your endurance and your commitment.”

One participant described some of the duties involved with her joint staff position: “we were standing up lots of special operations so I did a lot of presentations to the Joint Chiefs of Staff,” she also explained how it made her feel important to be among the highest military leaders in the United States. Another participant commented how she got selected for admiral without having served at a joint staff: “I did not have a joint assignment... so I had to go to a joint job right away.”

The Navy routinely operates in joint environments afloat and ashore, therefore, it is extremely important that Navy officers be well versed in joint interoperability and some of these participants clearly believed this.

Promotion opportunities for officers in the U.S. Navy

An analysis of the interviews conducted clearly revealed an abundance of factors that contribute to an officer's competitiveness for promotion to the ranks of admiral. The need for officers to be warfare qualified was well understood among participants, especially those who did not have a warfare qualification and had participated in several officers' promotion boards. One participant commented, "It is clearly the expectation in the Navy – that most flag officers will be people who have warfare qualifications."

Some of the participants understood that their careers did not reflect today's naval officers and when asked about promotion opportunities for officers, some of their comments included: "can't do what I did (referring to her career path) and still be promoted to admiral," and "people who would try to start and do (also referring to her career path) what I did, would fail."

Senior leaders in the Navy make policies and set goals that have impact many years beyond their tenure. One participant strongly believed that opportunity for officers to reach the ranks of admiral are good, these officers, however, "must get exposure to what the issues are and how decisions are made about those issues in a policy forum" She was referring to positions at military headquarters commands. It is expected that senior officers have strong abilities in strategic planning and policymaking (Taylor & Rosenbach, 1996).

One participant shared that although she had not had the opportunity to participate in combat operations, "we clearly want the majority of our flags to be people who are combat qualified." Only one of the participants had been involved in combat operations

¹⁵ The researcher was unable to ascertain whether these officers had attained waivers.

and she commented: “it put my leadership to the test and part of my performance demonstrated, at least to the Navy that I had potential as a flag officer to perform under that kind of pressure.”

All participants agreed that attaining higher ranks required the demonstration of a sustained manner of excellence in performance regardless of the position. These participants believed the officer corps expected top level performance from adaptable officers who learn quickly, never stop looking for new opportunities or learning new skills, and practice leadership.

Disparity of the Number of Male and Female Flag Officers in the US Navy

One of the goals of this study was to attempt to identify the reason(s) for the significant absence of female officers in top Navy leadership. Of the 208 (10 were selected but not yet promoted) Navy flag officers on active duty, there were only 12 (two were selected but not yet promoted at the time these data were provided) females among them. Part one of the study identified 50 percent of the female participants in a general unrestricted community who had not been given the opportunity to achieve a warfare qualification. The other 50 percent of the female participants were in occupational specialties and had followed paths much like their male counterparts (considering the constraints of the law regarding certain positions for women).

When asked what they perceived to be the major contributor to the disparity between the number of male and female admirals, most agreed that there was a very limited number of women coming up through the ranks. One participant in an occupational specialty recalled: “I was the only woman officer... in my class,” while

another participant explained the reason for the small group of women in the Navy: “it was recognized that women couldn’t do (military policy did not allow) some things in the Navy.” Another participant recalled checking in her first command and how “there weren’t any other women there.”

These participants were also aware that the lack of warfare qualifications stopped some women from reaching the ranks of admiral. Two participants, who believed that warfare qualifications were critical for selection to admiral, mentioned that today, the Navy has more warfare qualified women: “the first women, surface warfare, are just at the senior captain ranks. So where you have more opportunity (for promotion), the women are just starting to get there,” and also “women are just starting to come in for a look, and they are in small numbers.” Most of these participants clearly understood that “the admiral slots are with the unrestricted line (surface and aviation for women),” and one participant also added: “these women are just starting to come in with their wings and surface warfare officer pins.”

Most participants also attributed the limited number of female flag officers to the lack of competitive jobs for women during their earlier years. Comments included: “the system wasn’t comfortable putting a non-warfare qualified officer in the job,” and “the culture looks to warfare qualified people to be able to do anything no matter what their background is.” One participant recalled not being nominated for some jobs: “the fact that I have not been to sea has made it hard for some people to accept me as candidate for some jobs.” She also added: “in theory... I don’t have any sense that my issues were driven by the fact that I was a woman, it’s really been that I was not a warfare qualified

officer,” and “there were many things women couldn’t do (not allowed to do) but that wasn’t the issue.”

One participant believed that some women left the Navy in order to start their own families: “I can say that when I first came into the Navy... women were not allowed to have any children, if you got pregnant you had to get out.” This policy ended after the 1976 U.S. Supreme Court decision that declared it illegal (Allen, 2002).

One participant added one more aspect: “I think it’s a long road, even to captain (O-6) and just like the men, I think there are women who sell themselves short,” she was referring to people who decide to retire before they go up for promotion to admiral, and she further explained: “this way they can say that they retired as a captain and they chose to retire instead of saying I went before a flag board but I didn’t get selected.” She also believed that this issue had a greater impact on women than men in the military. This issue also surfaced in a study of military women by the office of the U.S. Under Secretary of Defense (Gilroy, et al., 1997).

Most of these participants agreed that the lack of more women in the top ranks of the Navy was the result of policy which had precluded women from staying in the Navy, holding certain positions, and as a result, not getting warfare qualifications.

Emergent Themes

An analysis of the interviews revealed four other important themes: “mentoring” was highly attributed to their success in the military; different “leadership styles” between male and female officers; “roles” played by the participants as military leaders and “challenges” they overcame in order to succeed.

Mentoring

Kram (1983) reports on the basic roles a mentor performs. One of them is career functions, which she defined as the aspects of a relationship designed to enhance career advancement through sponsorship, exposure, visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging work assignments.

Most of the participants mentioned having male mentors and felt strongly about the role these men played in their military careers. These mentors exposed them to new career fields, coached them throughout most of their careers, protected them as they encountered road blocks, and recommended them for certain assignments. Some of their comments included: “he was a true mentor, sea-daddy” and he, “gave me a lot of guidance,” and “my mentors played a big role there” (referring to the positions at military headquarters). While two participants remembered their mentor’s involvement: “I went to an assignment that he thought was the right kind of assignment,” and “he tried to venture me into something more substantive for my follow-on assignment.” One also added: “I... realized how much he influenced and shaped my ideas... and the importance of having senior people who take an interest in your career.” One participant remembered his mentor’s counseling: “because of his direction, assistance, and his mentorship... I ventured into...(referring to her occupational specialty).”

One participant strongly believed his “mentoring shaped my leadership style and how I provide mentoring today.” While another participant felt mentoring was the reason she was an admiral: “mentoring is very much a part of why I am where I am today.” Another participant was more excited about the process: “the mentoring that I got in the

whole process was awesome.” She also attributed her staying in the Navy to having good mentors.

While all the participants attributed some of their success to having mentors, one participant who agreed she had been mentored by great leaders did not think of them as mentors: “I don’t look at any one person as a mentor; I believe that once I’ve proven myself, people have given me opportunities.” Another participant attributed her leadership style to the mentoring received: “the mentoring and the experiences that we have allow us to develop our own styles (leadership).”

Leadership Styles

As the interviews progressed and the participants talked about their careers, it became clear that most of them believed their leadership style was different than most male officers. One participant who “absolutely” believed there was a difference in the styles of leadership between male and female officers described her decision making process as part of her leadership style: “I have the tendency... to make my decisions after a fairly collaborative process; I just like to know whether there are any second and third order effects that haven’t been anticipated.” She believed that this process was seen as a very uncomfortable decision making process by those who work with her. She also believed this process worked for the kinds of jobs that she had filled which were not combat related.

One participant recalled: “I have seen that males are more prone to leading through volume,” while “women lead more through mentoring and respect and explaining the whys and where,” she believed, however, that this was certainly not

universally true. Some of these participants felt that some of the challenges women leaders face, were being decisive, firm, and fair. One participant added: “Most of the successful senior women I have met... have been very well versed in their specialties and they’re decisive and fair.” They believed that men and women face similar issues regarding leadership; however, it’s the way decisions are approached and while some female officers were decisive, firm, and fair, others had a difficult time reaching a decision.

Other comments regarding leadership styles included: “look at how men are trained, trying to run a ship or squadron... a little different leadership style than it is running a shore activity where you have to run it more like a business rather than a military organization,” and “women are much more collaborative, get more teams involved, and not as autocratic as men.” One participant had a very different view on this issue: “I don’t think there are differences between male and female; I think their differences are driven by individual personalities and leadership styles that people have developed over the years.” So she said her take on this issue was: “personality vs. gender.”

Military Women’s Roles

Women have volunteered to serve their country throughout history and they have played many roles and displayed numerous examples of courage and heroism. A variety of phrases were used by the participants interviewed to describe some of the roles they had played as military leaders. One participant described her roles as a senior advisor

within her occupational specialty: “a key position in advising ... in terms of the situations in which we would have to deploy forces.” Another participant described her accomplishments: “there were measurable differences when I left from when I started. One of the hard things in a large activity is, knowing that you actually put in place things that make a difference and that are going to outlast your assignment. I knew this had happened... so it was very satisfying.” While another participant remembered the thrill of being among high ranking officers making decisions that would impact the Navy. Her comment was: “every morning... we sat at this u-shape table with 12 people and I was one of them... the highest military headquarters in the land and I was part of the twelve people.”

Some of the participants remembered playing traditional roles early in their careers: “women recruited other women and I was responsible for both, enlisted and officer” and “I was doing stuff that was very traditional; I wasn’t threatening any male egos.” One participant believed many women officers adopted masculine traits in an effort to be part of the majority, she preferred, however, not to compromise her ethical beliefs: “I thought that it was very important that I maintained my femininity along with every thing else that I was doing, many of my peers felt that they needed to be very masculine.”

Challenges

The women recalled encountering challenges in many aspects of their military careers. These challenges ranged from being a woman stationed in a country that did not

accept women as equals; lack of warfare qualifications; lack of support systems at home and peer networks; and having to prove their leadership abilities.

One participant commented on the challenge of being a woman stationed in Saudi Arabia: “it was a very restrictive society so I just chose to work (referring to actually working instead of leaving the military base and having to comply with the social beliefs women had to follow such as wearing a black abaya, not driving a car, sitting in the back seat of a car, etc.).” One participant discussed the challenge of her command position as a non-surface warfare qualified in charge of a naval base: “if there was a place that was challenging being a woman..., it was...,” she explained how this naval base was the 2nd largest homeport in the pacific fleet and her job was to support those officers in command of ships; officers who usually frowned when the commanding officer of the naval base was a non-surface warfare officer.

One participant described challenges not driven by the fact that she was a woman but instead: “it’s really been that I was not a warfare qualified officer.” She also added: “occasionally, I thought that there were jobs that I couldn’t put for – there were things I could put in for but I understood the culture.”

Comments regarding lack of support systems included: “the detailers couldn’t send my husband to post graduate school, so I cancelled my post graduate school.” She explained how she could have gone by herself but she chose to be with her husband. One participant explained how she did not have the proper support at home: “he was very jealous of the time I spent at work” she went on to explain that “the more senior you get the more time you spend at work.” Some of the participants saw the lack of peer networks, as challenges: “the challenges there were, the fact that there were not very

many women,” and also “there wasn’t much of a network; we thought we could do it by ourselves,” and “there were only a couple of female officers on board.” The lack of peer networks for military women also emerged in a study performed by RAND (Gilroy, et al., 1999). One participant discussed the challenge of being the senior female on board a ship: “it was probably from that standpoint one of the biggest challenges; making sure that they (other women) were properly integrated into the ship.” She was responsible for ensuring that women coming to the ship were culturally integrated.

Many of these participants had encountered gender discrimination during their first tours in the Navy; however, they did not refer to it as discrimination, instead they viewed it as a challenge: “for the first six months, I was not accepted (as a woman in command) at all. I worked very hard for six months to prove that I could do the job,” and “you had to prove yourself.” One participant described taking command as the first woman and her biggest challenge was: “to be accepted by the waterfront¹⁶.” Other participants described the lack of certain positions as challenges: “the fact that I have not been to sea and it’s really been that, not that I was a woman,” and “I was told that because I had so many administrative jobs and I didn’t have much that was connected with the waterfront (sea duty positions).” She was discussing a position she had been offered but was later found ineligible for the position.

One participant remembered comments made to her as she was being interviewed by her future boss for a position as an executive officer: “this is an experiment, women don’t belong here, and you don’t understand what it is to be at sea and you need to have that experience to be the XO (executive officer) of a naval station.” She explained that

¹⁶ Waterfront is naval jargon for operational units and ships home ported on a naval base. The commanding officers for these units are warfare qualified.

the lack of sea duty positions was the sole basis for his assumption that she would not understand the commands she would be supporting. Another participant also recalled her interview as a young officer with a prospective commanding officer: “he said that he did not believe in women in the Navy; he said he never had, he never would, he didn’t think he wanted women working for him but it was me or no one else.” Another participant thought that “professionally... men didn’t really understand how a woman needed to interact in the Navy.” These participants also added that by the time they had left those positions, they had become more than the right person for the job.

Interview Findings Summary

In reviewing the responses from the interviews conducted, the researcher concluded that although the career paths of the participants were very different than most officers today (occupational specialty, warfare qualification, training, positions held, etc.), the opinion of the participants interviewed identified positions at sea and operational commands, military headquarters, command (including afloat and ashore commands), and joint staff commands as major contributors for selection to the highest ranks of commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy. In addition, the data revealed that mentoring, leadership style, women’s roles in the military, and cross cultural challenges impacted the trajectory of the women’s career paths.

Summary

Based on the careers of 186 Navy military leaders, the career path most often taken to reach the rank of admiral included military headquarters, shore duty commands,

command of shore activities, sea duty commands, operational duty, command of operations commands, joint staff duty, overseas shore duty, command of ships, submarine duty, instructor duty, and combat operations. When contrasting part one of the study to part two of the study, the researcher can safely conclude that sea and operational duty, military headquarters, command, and joint staff positions are viewed as factors critical for officers who aspire to reach the ranks of admiral in the United States Navy.

Though the participants interviewed noted that the lack of warfare qualifications mattered more than their gender, it is the researcher's conclusion that it was their gender that kept them from achieving warfare qualifications. It is interesting that the women's lack of opportunities to serve in critical positions was not coded by the female admirals in the study as being a form of discrimination. Rather, the women seemed to accept that those missed opportunities were a sign of the times and did not feel personally impacted. However, there was institutional discrimination against women that clearly limited number of opportunities for female officers to serve in positions critical to the advancement to the rank of admiral. These institutional practices were inherently discriminatory and impacted many women's ability to get warfare qualifications and gain other necessary experience in order to build a competitive record for promotion to the ranks of flag officer in the United States Navy. Although policies that had previously kept women officers out of combat-related occupations were significantly changed in 1993 and 1997 (Harrell and Miller, 1997), it will take some time for these women to reach the ranks of admiral. The female flag officers in this study felt that in today's Navy, more opportunities exist for women to fill critical roles at sea and in combat.

Given this, they expect that more women will continue to rise up the ranks and join the naval “leadership.”

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Overview

This chapter briefly summarizes the results of the study with an emphasis on linking the findings with the literature review. The strengths and limitations of the study are also discussed. This chapter closes with recommendations for further research.

Summary and Interpretation of the Findings

Flag officers, the senior leaders of the United States military, face a complex and constantly changing environment. These leaders make decisions that affect the nation's readiness. They must constantly evaluate, develop, and implement plans that create an environment which maximizes the advantages of a diverse work force and fosters an environment where people are put first (Ham, 2002). At the same time, they are asked to concentrate on several other converging factors that influence the Navy's tempo. These factors range from rapid technology advances, a more educated and diverse work force, work issues, facilities and equipment issues, to the critical issue of retention and readiness of personnel. These factors are constantly challenging their leadership practices.

Part one of this study traced the most common career paths followed by Navy Admirals (n=186) with pay grades ranging from O-7 to O-10. Historical data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center were analyzed by constructing Microsoft Excel worksheets for each admiral. Statistical analysis was then used to identify the positions most frequently taken by these admirals, and also within each occupational specialty.

Part two of the study involved conducting interviews with female flag officers in an effort to complement or validate the findings of part one. Four interviews were conducted by telephone and one in person. This part of the study used a sample drawn from ten targeted individuals. The researcher opted to limit the convenience sample to participants stationed in the U.S. as well as participants belonging to different occupational specialties.

This investigation provided responses to the following questions of the study:

- 1) What are the most common career paths among active duty officers that reach the rank of admiral (O-7 or above) in the United States Navy and what aspects of their careers might have influenced selection to flag officer?
- 2) What factors do female flag officers view as required for promotion to higher ranks and what do they believe is the most significant contributor to the disparity between the number of male and female flag officers?

Most Common Career Paths

The results suggest that the most common career paths for commissioned officers who reach the rank of admiral included military headquarters, shore duty commands, command of shore activities, sea duty (ships), operational duty, command of operational commands, joint staff duty, overseas shore duty, command of ships, submarine duty, instructor duty, and participation in combat operations. While some positions targeted specific occupational specialties, i.e., command at sea (ships) positions were mostly held by line officers qualified in surface warfare (officer designator 1110) followed by line officers qualified as pilots (officer designator 1310). The majority of command positions

on aircraft carriers were held by line officers qualified as pilots (officer designator 1310) and naval flight officers (officer designator 1320); while command positions on submarines were only held by line officers qualified in submarine warfare (officer designator 1120); command positions at operational units were distributed among four occupational specialties: surface (officer designator 1110), submarine (officer designator 1120), and aviation (officer designator 1310 and 1320). Line officers qualified as pilots (officer designator 1310) had the highest mean for holding command of operational units. Command positions are critical to an officer's career success and holding these positions allows officers to demonstrate potential for leadership through strong performance (Gilroy et al., 1999). Joint staff duty is a requirement prior to an officer being selected as an admiral. Twenty-six percent of the study's population belonged to occupational specialties where joint staff duty could be waived, the study showed, however, that only 66 percent of participants held joint staff positions.

Variables Influencing Promotion to Admiral

Variables evaluated in the study included: age, gender, marital status, time in service, commissioning school, and level of college education. Data on these variables were provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center and analyzed by the researcher. This study found a relationship exists between those who had entered the service through the U.S. Naval Academy (commissioning source) and promotions to admiral in the U.S. Navy (see Table 8). This study also found that two occupational specialties in particular (surface warfare [1110] and aviation [1310 & 1320]) seem to have the most impact on promotion to admiral in the U.S. Navy. Prior research on officer progression, including

this study, have found that commissioning source and occupational specialty are influential factors in promotion (Bowman [1990], Mehay [1995], North, Goldhaber, Lawler, & Suess [1995], and Hosek, et al., 2001).

Table 8

Summary for Participants that Attended the U.S. Naval Academy

Community	Participants	U.S. Naval Academy
Surface	47	48 Percent
Submarine	29	86 Percent
Aviation	58	51 Percent

Note: Aviation includes pilots (1310) and naval flight officers (1320).

A RAND (Hosek, et al., 2001) study found that U. S. Naval academy graduates have higher rates for selection to flag rank and offered these justifications: academy graduates begin their careers with the advantage of 1) more time to learn procedures and expectations of the service before their active duty; 2) enter with a large cohort of peers which allows them to form friendships and working relationships; and 3) these officers are more likely to be placed in a desirable occupational specialty.

Many female military officers who participated in a study (Gilroy et al., 1999) related combat participation to promotions of leadership positions. While involvement in combat operations is highly desired among flag officers, the study showed that only 36 percent of the participants had been involved in combat operations.

Interview Results

In addition to the quantitative analysis performed on research question number one, this study used five interviews to answer the qualitative section of research question number one and research question number two, and also add meaning to the quantitative data. These interviews were conducted with female flag officers.

Positions that Influence Selection to Admiral in the U.S. Navy

There were four positional themes that emerged from the interviews which highly correlated with part one of the study: military headquarters, sea and operational duty, command, and joint staff duty. Positions at military headquarters were widely held by all participants interviewed, with some participants having been at these commands three to five times. These participants entered the Navy at a time when sea and operational duty was not an option for most women. Only one of the participants belonged to an occupational specialty that had a limited number of positions on board ships. The participants held a wide variety of command (mostly shore commands) positions and joint staff duty was held by those with a requirement.

There were also four other themes that emerged throughout the interviews: mentoring, leadership styles, women's roles, and challenges. The most significant theme mentioned by these participants was mentoring. A RAND (Hosek, et al., 2001) study in officers' career progression also found that those who participated saw mentor relationships as key to a military officer's career success.

Although the majority of the participants attributed their success to having good mentors throughout their careers, frustration was expressed by some of the participants

for the lack of support systems and peer networks as they were coming up the ranks; this was consistent with the findings of Melcher and Eichstedt (1992) and Hosek, et al., (2001). Participants provided a wide range of recommendations for commissioned officers to build a competitive record for selection to the highest ranks in the U.S. Navy. These participants recommended that officers “get advice from a lot of people,” get “exposure to large staffs (referring to military headquarters),” “understand and demonstrate understanding the Navy’s mission,” and above all “practice leadership.” They encourage officers to manage their careers by finding an area in the Navy that they enjoy and work their way into areas they are best equipped to contribute, taking advantage of the opportunities available and ensuring their professional needs are met by working with their assignment officers. The participants highly encouraged Naval officers to seek out mentors and also get involved in the mentoring process.

Attaining higher ranks requires the demonstration of a sustained manner of excellence in performance and one of the participants commented: “success in any endeavor is simply hard work.” The participants interviewed indicated that the overall success of officers was primarily a function of job performance; this also agrees with the findings of by the U.S. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Gilroy et al., 1999).

The admirals understood and supported those elements of a military culture, such as the common expectations, placed on them regarding standards of behavior, discipline, loyalty, self-sacrifice, etc. They were satisfied with the competency levels of the coworkers and their supervisors and they found their jobs mostly challenging. They attributed their decision to remaining in the military to many positions that had challenged them, as well as their mentors.

These participants encountered some challenges with the culture as they were coming up the ranks but they attributed it to military structure. The participants also believed the Navy had a promotion system that was based on performance and merit. This belief is consistent with the findings of Guthrie & Roth (1999).

Some of these participants reported themselves as collaborators and practicing collaborative leadership; also called interactive leadership (Rosener, 1997) where influence derives from relationships rather than position, power, and authority. Daft (1999) states that this type of leadership seems appropriate for the future of diversity and learning organizations. Taylor and Rosenbach (1996) talked about one of the most common references to leadership style and behaviors being the democratic approach – democratic representing a more collaborative approach between leader and followers. These authors also stated that this type of leadership is more open for its creation of positive, long-term effects on both, the people and the organization. Although most of the participants believed they practice collaborative leadership, they also recognized that this type of leadership might not be suitable for combat situations where time is of the essence.

Kathlene (1989), Thomas (1994), and Helgesen (1990) wrote about different styles of leadership for men and women, most of the participants also agreed male and female officers in the Navy have a different style of leadership, but these participants attributed the difference to the training most men receive in the military.

Disparity among the Number of Male and Female Flag Officers

Although the number of women in the military has more than doubled in the last two decades, the military service is still a non traditional career choice for women. The majority of the participants interviewed attributed the small number of female flag officers to the limited pool of female officers in the military, or “inventory” as they called it; especially with occupational specialties such as surface and aviation which they believed were the communities with the most opportunity for selection to flag.

The participants also saw the restrictions on women from holding certain occupations, positions and, assignments as an important factor which inhibited the potential advancement of more women to the senior ranks. These restrictions were also responsible for most of the participants not obtaining a warfare qualification. However, they also stated that this was not the case today since most occupational specialties in the Navy are open to women officers. The participants discussed some of the cultural changes they had gone through in the Service and were proud to see that female officers are currently in command of major commands, combatant ships, aviation squadrons, civil engineering corps commands, special operations units, and numerous shore commands.

Invisible barriers such as the glass ceiling, double-bind, and other gender stereotypes tend to limit either the opportunity to demonstrate ability, or adequacy received for performance; these participants believed that actions that purposefully excluded them or actions that failed to include them, were not present throughout most of their careers; however, actions that tested their leadership ability as an individual had been encountered by some of the participants. This was also indicated by military women in a previous study (Gilroy, et al., 1999). The participants added that after

successfully demonstrating competence and leadership on the job, they were then treated better.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

An unforeseen sampling error was the corruption of 22 historical records. These data were provided via electronic mail so it was not possible to identify where the records were corrupted. Once the records were identified as corrupt, another attempt was made to retrieve those records from the Defense Manpower Data Center but was not possible due to time constraints. Although the difference between the total population size and the actual number of records was small, the sample size was large enough not to affect the validity and the generalizability of the results.

The researcher had requested historical records on positions held by pay grade, the historical data, however, were provided with no sequence of precedence regarding positions held during specific pay grades; therefore, constructing individual worksheets by pay grade was done to simplify the process but not as a reflection of their records.

Access to the female admirals was easier than had been anticipated. These admirals welcomed the opportunity to help with this type of research. Four participants recommended telephone interviews other than personal interviews, the researcher was able to reach three of them on the first appointment. One interview was changed twice due to unforeseen commitments.

Recommendations for Future Research

Understanding the career paths of military women would benefit the organization and could result in higher retention of female officers. The first recommendation, therefore, is to encourage research on issues relating to the full integration of women officers in the U.S. Navy. At a time when the military is struggling to retain its most qualified officers, it is important that female officers have a clear path to follow; therefore, a second recommendation is for a study to examine opportunities for career progression of female officers in the United States Navy.

Although the Navy instituted a mentor program (Burlage, 1995) designed to help officers reach their full potential throughout different stages of their careers, few studies have addressed the mentoring experiences of women officers; therefore, the third recommendation is to conduct a study in the mentoring roles of senior female officers in the United States Navy.

Summary

This study investigated the career paths followed by active duty flag officers in the United States Navy. First, the researcher analyzed historical data in an effort to find the most common career path taken by commissioned officers that had been advanced to the rank of admiral. Second, the researcher sought out explanations for the quantitative findings and also to provide information regarding part two of research question number one and research question number two by interviewing female flag officers. These interviews involved female flag officers that represented four different occupational specialties.

The participants initiated their careers when few women were entering the military and also at a time when many military occupations and assignments were closed to women. They were, however, happy to be in the military at a time when 91.7 percent of the military occupations were opened to women in the Navy and some of the participants commented on the satisfaction of having contributed towards furthering women's issues in the Navy.

In a culture that once saw women as second class citizens, the military now embraces the participation of women and understands that it must continue to change to facilitate the expanding role of women in all occupational specialties.

The participants saw themselves as leaders in an environment that required their utmost personal sacrifice. They were driven by values that had been shaped in their military training, military careers, and times. They expressed considerable pride in their military careers and in the institution.

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APPENDIX A: Military Officers' Promotion Flow

Promoted to the grade of	Years after commissioning
ENSIGN (O-1)	0 Years
Lieutenant Junior Grade (O-2)	2 Years
Lieutenant (O-3)	4 Years
Lieutenant Commander (O-4)	9 to 11 Years
Commander (O-5)	15 to 17 Years
Captain (O-6)	21 to 23 Years
Rear Admiral (O-7)	24 to 26 Years
Read Admiral (O-8)	26 to 28 Years
Vice Admiral (O-9)	28 to 30 years
Admiral (O-10)	30 years or more

Note: Promotion flow is the average number of years recommended by the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) that commissioned officers serve in each rank before they are eligible for promotion to the next rank.

APPENDIX B: Request Letter

Dear (Admiral),

I am an active duty Senior Chief Storekeeper pursuing a Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies at the University of San Diego. I understand the significant role our Admirals have played in our military as leaders and mentors; but most of all, the impact our female Admirals have had on the careers of other women. I have chosen "The career paths to Navy Admiral" with an emphasis on promotion opportunities as the topic for my dissertation.

I am respectfully requesting an approximate 30-60 minute interview with you. The reason for this interview is to identify key factors that have led to your promotions and also solicit your expert opinion regarding promotion career paths for officers in the Navy. I have attached a copy of the study's abstract, the consent form, and the protocol questions so that you may have a better idea of the process.

If feasible, I would like to conduct this interview in person however, if that is not practical or your schedule does not permit, a telephone interview will suffice. If you agree to participate in this study, please provide a telephone number and e-mail address for your personal aide to coordinate the appointment.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I look forward to speaking with you.

Very Respectfully,

Lilly (Ericka) A. Jordan

APPENDIX C: Interview Protocol

1. Can you walk me through your promotional career in the Navy, starting with your commissioning school?
2. What are some of the challenges you encountered in your professional career as a military officer?
3. What positions or types of duty, would you say, have been important for your selection to flag officer?
4. What leadership style differences have you observed between female and male officers in the Navy?
5. Reflecting on women leaders in the military, what do you see as effective and what do you see as ineffective?
6. How has the professional status of women changed throughout your military career?
7. What do you believe is the reason behind the small number of female flag officers currently serving on active duty?
8. What would you recommend for young female officers today in order to achieve what you have accomplished?

APPENDIX D: Interview Consent Form

Career Paths to Navy Admiral

This study will gather information from active duty Navy Admirals regarding the careers followed by military flag officers. Results of this study will allow the researcher to trace the most common professional career path to Navy Admiral.

I understand that the procedure for this project will be as follows:

- I will be interviewed about my working experiences inside the military.
- The questions asked will relate to my professional experiences.
- I am free to decline to answer any question, without providing justification to the interviewer.
- My participation is voluntary, and I understand that I am free to stop participation at any time. Also, I can ask questions about the study and receive answers.
- There will be no expense involved in participating in this project.
- I understand that due to the small number of female admirals in the U.S. Navy, identification of names can easily be achieved by specific titles held by very few women. However, every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of statements made during the interview.

The interviews will take place during the year 2003. I will have the opportunity to review the portion of the transcript utilized in the study for accuracy. No further participation in this study is expected of me.

I, the undersigned, understand these statements and give my consent to my voluntary participation in this study and give permission for the study's data to be incorporated into published writings and professional presentations. Questions related to the study may be directed to Lilly (Ericka) A. Jordan, siempre58@aol.com or Dr. Dan Miller, Danmmiller@aol.com.

Signature of the Participant

Date

Interviewer

APPENDIX E: Position Category Codes

Position Code	Description
12000	Instructor Duty
12010	Exchange Officer
12020	Recruiting Duty
12025	Assignment Officer (Detailer)
12050	Shore Duty (Shore Commands)
12075	Shore Duty (Overseas Commands)
12100	XO (Executive Officer) Shore Commands
12150	XO (Sea Commands)
12175	XO (Overseas commands)
12200	CO (Commanding Officer) Shore Commands
12250	CO (Overseas Commands)
12300	CO (Sea Duty Commands)
12350	CO (Aircraft Carrier)
12400	Joint Staff Commands
12500	Operational Commands
12525	XO (Operational Commands)
12550	CO (Operational Commands)
12575	Operational Duty (Overseas Commands)
12600	Combat Operations
12700	Military Headquarters Commands (Washington)
12750	Duty with U.S. Vice-President
12800	Sea Duty (Ships) Commands
12850	Sea Duty (Submarines) Commands
12875	XO (Submarines)
12900	CO (Submarines)

APPENDIX F: Navy Officers' Occupational Specialties (Officer Designators)

Code	Description
1100	General Unrestricted Line Officer
1110	Line Officer Qualified in Surface Warfare
1120	Line Officer Qualified in Submarine Warfare
1310	Line Officer Qualified as Pilot
1320	Line Officer Qualified as Naval Flight Officer
1440	Engineering Duty Officer
1500	Aerospace Engineering Duty Officer
1610	Special Duty Officer (Cryptology)
1630	Special Duty Officer (Intelligence)
1650	Special Duty Officer (Public Affairs)
1804	Special Duty Officer (Oceanography)
2500	Staff Corps (Judge Advocate General)
2700	Medical Corps Officer
3100	Staff Corps (Supply Corps)
4100	Staff Corps (Chaplain Corps)
5100	Staff Corps (Civil Engineering)

APPENDIX G

Table G1: Frequency of Positions for Sample

Positions	Occupational Specialties or Officers' Designators																Total	Time
	1100	1110	1120	1310	1320	1440	1500	1610	1630	1650	1804	2500	2700	3100	4100	5100		
12000	1	12	8	29	8	2	4	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	70	0.37
12010	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.01
12020	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	7	0.04
12025	3	13	5	4	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	36	0.19
12050	11	43	33	46	14	30	9	11	2	3	0	6	29	23	11	13	284	1.52
12075	1	2	4	11	6	2	1	5	7	0	1	0	3	75	2	4	124	0.66
12100	4	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	3	18	0.1
12150	0	44	1	18	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	69	0.37
12175	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.03
12200	11	50	27	41	16	12	11	6	0	2	5	5	22	20	2	12	242	1.29
12250	3	7	2	11	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	6	38	0.2
12300	0	82	5	23	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	119	0.64
12350	0	0	0	14	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	20	0.11
12400	6	34	23	28	16	0	1	0	6	1	0	2	3	2	2	0	124	0.66
12500	0	39	4	134	50	6	7	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	5	201	1.07
12525	0	0	0	29	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	0.2
12550	0	28	35	76	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	173	0.93
12575	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	8	0.04
12600	1	22	5	21	11	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	68	0.36
12700	22	116	64	72	25	18	9	8	0	8	4	1	18	14	1	8	387	2.07
12750	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.01
12800	1	126	3	18	6	14	4	2	0	5	1	2	2	16	2	2	204	1.09
12850	0	1	69	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	81	0.43
12875	0	0	20	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	0.11
12900	0	0	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	0.18
Total	67	626	342	582	167	87	49	37	26	20	11	17	97	160	21	63	2372	12.68
Mean	13.4	13.32	11.8	13.9	10.44	11	9.8	12.3	13	10	11	8.5	9.7	22.86	10.5	12.6		12.68