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Band of Brothers … And Sisters: Developing a Strategy for Integrating Women into the Combat Rescue Officer Career Field

Samantha R. Bryan

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**BAND OF BROTHERS… AND SISTERS:
DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO THE
COMBAT RESCUE OFFICER CAREER FIELD**

THESIS

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AFIT-ENS-MS-18-M-112

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
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Samantha R. Bryan, MS

Captain, USAF

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Abstract

As of 1 January 2016, across the Department of Defense, every combat position was opened to females. Currently, the Combat Rescue Officer (CRO) career field has not had any women attempt the training requirements in order to become fully qualified. To prepare for this integration of women into an all-male career field, leadership needs to understand the current perception of the CROs that are in the field now. This paper presents a foundation for the development of an assimilation strategy, by triangulating the insights from a sample of CROs, historical documents and researcher observations to produce recommendations for success.

The researcher conducted a qualitative study, interviewing thirteen fully qualified CROs to gather their current perceptions, opinions, and insight on integrating women into their currently all-male career field. Data analysis revealed that the CROs are open-minded and accepting of women, as long as the entry standards are not lowered. The first step to a successful integration strategy is to understand current perceptions, as well as some drivers and barriers to culture change, and this paper provides that perspective for the career field leadership.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my advisor, Col Matthew Douglas, for his guidance and support throughout the course of this thesis effort. The insight and experience were certainly appreciated. To my sponsor, the 563rd Rescue Group from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base for both the support and latitude provided to me in this endeavor. I also want to give a special thanks to the Combat Rescue Officers, not only for participating but for everything you do. I'm truly grateful for the time I got to work with you guys and I can't wait to see you in the field. I only hope I contributed to your courageous career field.

Samantha R. Bryan

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BAND OF BROTHERS…AND SISTERS: DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO THE COMBAT RESCUE OFFICER CAREER FIELD

I. Introduction

Overview

On the first day of 2016, every United States military service occupation was open to women. Prior to that date, all of the ground combat duty titles were closed to women, due to the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule policy. Now that the policy has been rescinded, history is being made with women applying for these elite positions. The best time to deal with a problem is before it becomes a problem, and that is exactly what this research aims to do. The purpose of this research is to help prepare the battlespace for the Combat Rescue Officer (CRO) career field for a seamless integration of women. Leaders need to understand what needs to be put in place prior to integration, and what the current perspective is from the CROs.

This thesis will focus on the factors gathered from interviews, historical data, and observations in order to develop a conceptual model specific to this topic. This chapter introduces the topic's importance on what needs to happen in order to be well prepared for any number of female officers to join the CRO career field. Additionally, this chapter entails the research question, the problem statement and an overview of the methodology. Lastly, the chapter ends with the necessary research assumptions and limitations, and potential implications identified by this research.

Background

Prior to World War II, the only connection women had to the armed forces was

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through the Nurse Corps (Ebbert, Hall & Beach, 1999). With World War II underway, there was a greater threat to the United States' growing industries than it had ever imagined. The war effort demanded an all-around influx of war materials and the mobilization of men by the millions to be drafted into the Armed Forces. There were not enough men to satisfy all the United States needed, therefore, women were utilized to fulfill the labor shortage (Scrivener, 1999). Over six million women had a job in a traditionally male dominate field, such as the manufacturing of aircraft, artillery, engines, and munitions (Woloch, 1984).

Certainly, leaders of all branches of the military realized the importance of utilizing women in these blue-collar professions. Therefore, each military service created a women's corps in order to free the men to fight on the battlefield. Nearly 300,000 American women served in the Navy's WAVES, the Army's WAAC/WAC, the Marine Corps Women's Reserve and the Coast Guard's SPAR (WWII informational fact sheet, 1994). Each of these Services' women's corps started out as an auxiliary, an extension of the Service until the Navy led the transformation of women being a constituent part of the Service. The Secretary of the Navy in 1941 wanted the women corps to be absorbed within the Navy for better discipline, security, and convenience (Hartmann, 1976). Thus the Women's Reserve of the U.S Naval Reserve was created in 1942. It was nicknamed WAVES, Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service.

The Army's WAAC (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps) was established in 1942 and was used in quasi-military organizations where women would be librarians, cooks, messengers, hostesses, canteen clerks, and chauffeurs (Treadwell, 1954). A year later, Army leaders realized the advantage the Navy noticed from the beginning and wanted to

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move the WAAC within the Army command structure as well. Thus, the WAC (Women's Army Corp) was created. The Marine Corps Women's Reserve was based on the same law that established the Navy WAVES and was created in 1943. The Coast Guard's SPAR, which stands for their motto, Semper Paratus or Always Ready, was established in 1942.

Additionally, although it is not a military service, the WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots) was the first group of women flying aircraft in training missions, carrying cargo and top secret items, and serving as test pilots (WWII informational fact sheet, 1994). The WASP was a civil service organization created in 1943. In 1948 The Women's Armed Services Integration Act was passed, which meant all military services had established a permanent status for women to join their respective service (Records of Rights, n.d.).

It wasn't until 1974 when women that were actually a part of a Military Service became pilots. That year the Navy garnered six female aviators (Wilson, 2017). That same year, the Army trained female helicopter pilots. In 1976, a few more opportunities opened for women; the Air Force allowed females into their pilot training programs and women were admitted into four out of the five service academies: the Air Force Academy, West Point, the Naval Academy and the Coast Guard Academy (Purpose, 2017). It wasn't until 1993 that women could fly combat aircraft.

Finally, in 1994 the Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR) policy was established. This policy prevented women from being assigned to combat jobs. The rescinding of this policy is what allowed women to be in any duty position within all of the Armed Forces.

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Through 2011 and 2012 the Department of Defense conducted a thorough review of all the policies and laws governing the duties of women within the Armed Services. The only policy that was restricting women was the 1994 DGCDAR. This rule consisted of an umbrella prohibition against assigning women to units below the brigade level whose primary mission was to engage in direct combat on the ground (Fact sheet: WISR Implementation, 2015).

On January 24th 2013, the 1994 DGCDAR was rescinded by the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They also directed each military service to develop plans for implementing this change. Each service was tasked to review and validate all occupational standards, to ensure they were relevant to the specific job; complete all studies by Fall of 2015; and ensure full implementation by January 1st 2016 (Fact sheet: WISR Implementation, 2015).

Now that women have been given the opportunity to become operators, there are concerns about how to integrate them into combat teams. Seamlessly incorporating women into the Combat Rescue Officer (CRO) community, a crucial lifesaving career field, needs to be a top priority in order for it to continue to be the world's most effective combat search and rescue force.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand the current perspective on how to successfully integrate women into the CRO career field. The Air Force needs to have a solid understanding of how to integrate women into the CRO career field in order to alleviate issues that inevitably will arise. When changing the dynamic of a culture, there will be problems to resolve and creating a game plan is how the career field can have a

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chance at successful integration. By understanding efforts to integrate women in special operations career fields, combined with an understanding of current perceptions of CROs regarding integration of women into their currently all-male career field, this research seeks to assist leaders in integrating women into the career field and maintaining mission effectiveness.

Research Question and Investigative Questions

The overarching research question is how can the Air Force successfully integrate women into the Combat Rescue Officer career field? To answer this, the following Investigative Questions (IQ) will address the purpose of this study:

IQ1: What is the current perception on women joining the CRO career field?

IQ2: What are the barriers to successful integration of women into the CRO career field?

IQ3: What are the drivers to successful integration of women into the CRO career field?

IQ4: How do CRO's perceive the culture changing with the integration of women into the CRO career field?

Research Objective and Focus

"Showing how diversity and organizational change can further enhance, rather than threaten, individuals and institutions is one important way to foster change by addressing people's concerns about change; it also creates positive attitudes towards diversity" (Thomas, 2008; pg. 288). The research will focus on posturing the CRO career field for the successful integration of women when one or more complete all phases of training. The 563rd Rescue Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base is sponsoring this research to aid in how to prepare for this new change in their culture.

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Methodology

Chapter 3 provides great detail regarding the qualitative approach and Grounded Theory methodology used in this research. Since the researcher wanted to obtain the opinions and insight of a population, a qualitative research method was utilized to understand the current perspective of CROs. The researcher interviewed 13 CROs who represent 10% of the career field's population. The participants were asked questions in a semi-structured interview, creating more of a conversation about the topic as opposed to a strictly guided interview. Data was collected using a voice recording application on the researcher's laptop and the researcher took handwritten notes during the interview. All recordings were then transcribed by the researcher, which provided the opportunity to code and analyze the interview data.

Assumptions and Limitations

The researcher also needed to define the word success for this study. Success, for the purpose of this study, represents one or more female(s) graduating the CRO training pipeline and being assigned to a unit(s). One main limitation of this research is the potential bias, the fact that the researcher is female and all of the participants are male. Moreover, the researcher's presence in the interviews may bias the responses of the participants (Charmaz, 2014). Another source of bias was the politically correct responses from the participants, each participant was aware the interview was recorded and analyzed for academic purposes. The use of semi-structured interviews resulted in variability between participants hence, information provided from one participant may not be comparable to another participant.

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Implications

       Based on this study, leaders may have a better understanding of how to integrate the future women who graduate Combat Rescue Officer training. By collecting the current views of CROs, ranging from First Lieutenant to Colonel in the career field today, senior leaders will have the most accurate perspective they need when implementing policies, training, and other various principles. The data collected provided crucial insight on how the current CROs perceive this culture change and those insights can be used to create an integration foundation. This research effort fills a gap in the literature regarding a comprehensive study specifically on the integration of women into the Combat Rescue Officer career field.

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Overview

The integration of women into combat career fields is not a widely-researched field of study, but there is plenty of historical data to show when women joined various previously closed opportunities, as noted in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 establishes a foundation for conducting cohesion research from various sources and also reviews pertinent literature and experiences from other countries. The chapter is divided into four sections: definitions, previous military diversity and inclusion initiatives, research that supports the integration of women into combat career fields, and research that does not support integration.

Dating back to World War I, the sole method of aiding in war efforts for females was via the nursing vocation in local hospitals. In World War II, women were involved but were cast aside to perform clerical work and menial tasks until the labor shortage arose due to the extensive draft of the male population (Fieseler et al., 2014; Scrivener, 1999). Each branch of the military had created an all-women auxiliary section which did not fall under the direct authority of that service. Shortly after the auxiliaries were created, the senior leaders realized the advantages of having the talents of women within their command structure. In 1948, The Women's Armed Services Integration Act was passed, which declared that all military services shall establish a permanent allowance for women to join each branch of service (Records of Rights, n.d.).

Since 1948, women have been continually progressing towards joining the combat arena. Currently, they are directly supporting the special operations units in various branches of service. For example, in 2010, Cultural Support Teams (CST) were

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created, which consisted of women attached to an elite military team. These women weathered every mission alongside their teammates and endured all associated trials as part of a combat unit. Specifically, their role was to gather information from the Afghan women in the local areas. The CST's will be discussed in detail in the next section.

As of 2016, women are able to qualify for positions within any Armed Service's ground combat units. Women are currently in training to become members of these highly trained and highly skilled units. The Marine Corp has recently indoctrinated its first female tank officer, the Army has graduated its first female Ranger, and the Navy currently has a female in its SEAL training pipeline. History is being made by these women, now it is time to figure out how to seamlessly integrate them onto the team.

Definitions

It is important to convey the definition of terms used throughout this study. The first terms to be addressed are the roles and responsibilities of Combat Rescue Officers and the training pipeline required to become fully qualified. Following explanation of the Combat Rescue Officer duties, we discuss Cultural Support Teams and how they were a leveraged entity in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Combat Rescue Officer

"The world's most powerful and accomplished rescue force is the United States Air Force Pararescue" (Sine, 2012; pg. 7). These elite personnel are either enlisted Pararescue men, otherwise known as PJs, or Combat Rescue Officers (CROs). The Air Force CRO career field was created on 8 December 2000 to enhance the Department of Defense's (DoD) Personnel Recovery (PR) capabilities (Combat Rescue Officer-13DXA, 2013), and the CROs are the subjects of interest for this research study.

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PR encompasses the ability to quickly and accurately report an incident, locate any Isolated Personnel (IP), support the rescue operation, recover the IP using combat search and rescue forces, and reintegrate rescued personnel back into society (Sine, 2012). Both PJs and CROs operate in six geographic areas: mountains, desert, urban, jungle, water, and arctic (James, 2015). The DoD places the utmost priority and value on PR and views it as a military and moral imperative (Sine, 2012).

The Air Force created an elite force uniquely dedicated to PR, referred to as the Guardian Angel Weapon System. The Guardian Angel consist of three Battlefield Airmen Air Force Specialty Codes: Pararescuemen, Combat Rescue Officers and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) Specialists (Sine, 2012). The Guardian Angel is a non-aircraft and, equipment based human weapon system (Sterr, 2018). This weapon system is the only DoD resource that provides the full spectrum of PR capability (Sine, 2012).

Both PJs and CROs endure rigorous entry standards, they undergo weeks of physically demanding events and are constantly tested. The CROs have to prove their leadership abilities by not only being physically strong, but also by making swift and safe decisions. Figure 1 depicts both enlisted and officer Pararescue training pipelines.

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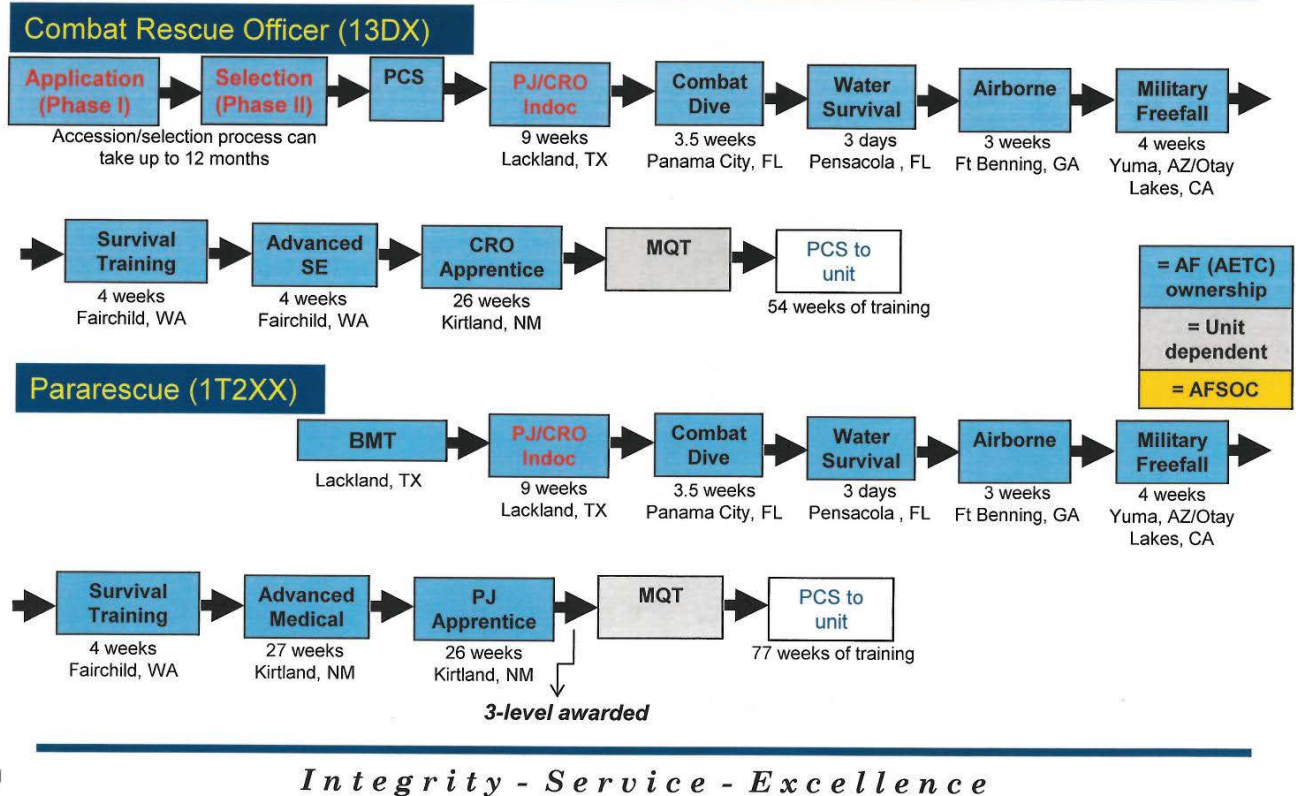
Figure 1: The Pararescue Training Pipeline (James, 2015; pg. 14).

The CRO mission is: "To rescue, recover, and return American or Allied personnel in times of danger or extreme duress, at war and in peace. To prepare personnel at high risk of isolation or capture and to reintegrate those isolated personnel, allowing them to return with honor to their families and units" (Combat Rescue Officer-13DXA, 2013). Their promise to the nation is to "Leave no Airman, Marine, Soldier or Sailor behind" (Combat Rescue Officer-13DXA, 2013).

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With the term officer in their title, the CROs are leaders within the Pararescue community; primarily leading the PJs. Pararescue Airmen are highly capable Airmen with expertise in reporting, locating, recovering and reintegrating isolated personnel (USAF CRO Selection & Training, 2016). The CROs specifically train, equip and develop necessary survival skills in rescuing personnel, while also constantly undergoing deployments into direct combat zones (Combat Rescue Officer, n.d.).

Cultural Support Teams

Essentially, women have been supporting the ground combat units behind the scenes long before the DGCDAR policy was rescinded. Starting with the Marine Corps "Lioness" program in 2003, where women from any Military Occupational Specialty were in Iraq patrolling checkpoints, conducting house-to-house missions and searching women and children for hidden weapons (Dunn, 2009). The Marines built upon that program to create the Female Engagement Teams, who deployed to the Middle East with infantry units (Seck, 2017).

In fact, women have already seen combat with the Cultural Support Teams (CST). Women were recruited to "become part of history" by the United States Special Operations Command and the Army Special Operations Command in 2011 (Lemmon, 2015). During this time, the 1994 DGCDAR was still in effect. This community of female Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors were "attached" to special operations teams, and because they were not "assigned", they could legally be in ground combat (Lemmon, 2015). Their role was to talk to Afghan women, since the Afghan culture doesn't allow women to talk to the male soldiers. CST's would accompany Rangers, SEALs and other special operations teams on various missions. The female CST member would work

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shoulder-to-shoulder with these exclusive teams in helicopters during nighttime raids, and would undertake fire, locate personnel, and gather information in order to accomplish the mission (Lemmon, 2015).

These women were vital assets to fill the security gaps that men couldn't (Lemmon, 2015). Women contributed to the ground-level problem solving required within the battlespace, and demonstrated their unique skills to give the United States an advantage (Lemmon, 2015). The CST's were learning first-hand knowledge on what was happening in their immediate vicinity through the communication of the Afghan women. They were able to avoid hazardous areas or have insight on any pertinent and impending events, all because women were brought into the battlespace. Women were able to play to their strengths, a different strength that enhanced the overall strategy in order to win the fight ("About the Cultural Support Program", n.d.). Recent topics about women in war seem to focus on which jobs women are capable of doing or should be allowed to do, but there's not enough acknowledgement for what women have already accomplished (Lemmon, 2015).

Previous Military Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

The military has endured many changes over the years, and this integration of women into the CRO career field can glean information from those changes to generate a strategy. Learning from similar examples and initiatives will help understand what has been used previously and expand the horizon of knowledge with how to handle this assimilation. Moreover, some of our allied forces have already undergone the integration of women into combat roles. The following paragraphs provide an overview of various

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gender and cohesion studies, U.S. military policies, as well as the integration methods of other countries and how they can be leveraged now and in the future.

Gender and Military Sociology

Military sociology is the systematic study of the military as a social group. The military has to be responsive to the changing society for a few reasons; society is the what the military is defending, it pays for the military's existence, and without the support of society the military is unable to do much. Examples of adopted values and beliefs of society include the integration of women, the integration of races, and the acceptance of homosexuality. As outlined in Chapter 1, the circumstance in which increased the number of women in the military was wartime (Sarma & Islamia, 2017).

Gender is defined as the social expectations regarding behavior which are seen as appropriate for the members of each sex. Gender and its respective roles are shaped by socially formed traits, such as masculinity and femininity (Sarma & Islamia, 2017). According to Winslow (2010), "One of the problems with the concept of gender is that it (like ethnicity) is all too frequently identified as biology". Women are not embracing the traditional definitions of what women and men do, they are charging at every opportunity and that includes fighting on the front lines.

Cohesion Type

"Cohesion is based on commonality of experience, shared risk, and mutual experiences of hardship, (not on gender distinctions)" (Winslow, 2010). There are two types of cohesion, task and social. Task cohesion refers to a shared commitment among members to achieve the goal that requires a collective effort from each member of the group. Social cohesion refers to the emotional bonds of friendship and intimacy among

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group members (Schaefer et al., 2015). The benefits of having strong task cohesion go beyond the group goal and flow into the individual's personal goals. Evidence proves that strong task cohesion equates to strong group performance.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue Policy

In 1993, the Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue policy came into effect, it states that having military members engage in same-sex acts would "create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion" (U.S. Congress, 2010). While this policy was active, service members were not to be questioned nor required to discuss their sexuality. Before the activation of this policy, service members were discharged for their same-sex orientation. This policy was eventually repealed on 12 October 2010 and deemed unconstitutional. The repeal of this policy is the closest relation to the rescinding of the 1994 DGCDAR policy, it demonstrates similar restraints that were eliminated and how the military progressed without this policy.

A 2009 study examined the Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue policy in the military and the outcomes of how training related to it affected military personnel. The goal was to determine if the training had a positive impact on the participant's reactions, learning and cognitive outcomes, and behavioral and organizational outcomes (Estrada & Laurence, 2009). Results indicated that the military personnel that received the training on the homosexual conduct policy perceived the policy to be more effective at preventing or at least reducing harassment (Estrada & Laurence, 2009). They were also more likely to report harassment complaints, reported higher levels of understanding and were more knowledgeable of the actual policy (Estrada & Laurence, 2009). These findings

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emphasize the need to prepare in some way for the integration of women into the combat units by providing training to personnel.

Race and Military Integration

On 26 July 1948, Executive Order 9981 was issued to establish equality among all service members in regard to race, religion and national origin. This integration has been nothing short of beneficial, in all aspects of expanding the military's acceptance. It has greatly impacted the morale and increased efficiency (Conn, 1952).

This Executive Order established a vital breakthrough in race relations within the United States military. Moreover, it established an advisory committee to examine the rules, practices, and procedures of the military services and recommended ways to make desegregation a reality (Feng, 2015). The U.S military has learned how to integrated from this Executive Order; we have the tools, experience and resources to make integrating women a seamless event.

Israeli Forces

Israel has experience with integrating women into its Israel Defense Force (IDF), utilizing women to help with border security. Although women have yet to be fully integrated into the direct combat positions, the IDF did establish an all-female battalion in 2000 called the Caracal. The creation of this battalion provided more military members; it took the pressure off of the IDF to integrate women into the ground forces, and it generated a long-term ground work on the viability of female infantry personnel. The big take away thus far from having the Caracal battalion is the result, female troops are not capable of functioning as regular combat infantry (Keller, 2017). This realization allowed Israel the freedom of knowledge, they now understand that women are different

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and it allows them to use women for their strengths. Lastly, female specific flak jackets were purchased to better accommodate their shape and size.

Canadian Forces

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), are highly regarded for being at the forefront of military gender integration (National Defence, 2016). Within the Canadian military, all occupations have been open to women since 1989, with the exception of submarine service, which was not open until 2000. The leaders in the CAF aim for equality based on qualifications, especially for promotions, training and all career opportunities.

Similar to the IDF, the CAF has specific body armor, combat boots, helmets and flak jackets for women and men to ensure everyone has equal protection and comfort. One preventative measure the CAF takes is it provides Basic Diversity Training as part of the basic training for all inbound military members (National Defence, 2016). This training includes personal conduct policies such as harassment prevention and resolution, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment; much like what was noted from the 2009 study on the Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue training efforts.

Another preventative strategy the CAF takes is post-integration data collection, they are continually monitoring the current trends of women by conducting surveys, consulting with advisory groups to identify any issues, and applying recommendations put forth in the CAF Employment Equity Plan (National Defence, 2016).

When integrating women into the U.S. ground combat units, we can learn from these lessons that other forces and countries have already endured. The U.S. could implement some lessons learned from Israel and Canada as they increase efforts to integrate women into combat roles.

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Research in Support of Women in Combat Roles

As with any change, there is support and opposition involved. Knowing both sides facilitates understanding and can help guide us in the right direction. Various resources support women in combat roles, but are upfront with the challenges associated. This research in support of women in combat roles is forcing units to break the mold of how things are done. Women have never been a part of the team, and now these brave women are penetrating the traditions.

A supporting article for women in combat units aimed to shed light on possible factors that could efficiently allow women to integrate into combat roles. Outlining some key standards women have to uphold simply by being a woman and now attempting to join the male elite. Women in combat units are expected to obtain a high level of 'military capacity', meaning they need to meet the physical fitness requirements as well as have the skills and agility for the field conditions (Tarrasch, Lurie, Yanovich, & Moran, 2011).

Since there is evidence of women's height, weight, strength, and bone mass being less than men's, they face a greater challenge right from the start (Tarrasch, Lurie, Yanovich, & Moran, 2011). Women must overcome their physiological hurdles to be considered equal to men in a combat unit. Integrating women into these combat roles is forcing the units to 'adjust accordingly' and we don't know what that looks like yet since we are in the midst of making history. They are penetrating the predefined social rules and breaking the barriers of decades-long tradition of men exclusively fighting on the front lines (Tarrasch, Lurie, Yanovich, & Moran, 2011).

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D'Amico and Weinstein (1999) mention the various coping mechanisms women have developed and use to deal with gender stereotypes that their male counterparts hold:

> Servicewomen adopt one of a variety of coping strategies for self-protection. These strategies differ in the gendering of the subject. Each day, the servicewoman must (re)construct her gender identity: Should I try to be 'one of the guys,' that is, adopt a passing strategy hoping for male bonding to extend to include me? Or should I be 'one of the girls,' that is become ultra feminized, hoping for brotherly affection or chivalric protection? Should I try to be a 'soldier,' that is, aim for a seemingly gender-neutral professionalism, hoping for mutual respect? Or should I be a crusader, mounting a conscious – and personally and professionally risky – challenge to the structure of gender relations in the institutions?

One study aimed to understand the public view of women in combat, qualitatively analyzing a sample of comments from three major U.S newspapers. The authors collected over 4,000 comments and systematically selected every 10th comment resulting in a 10% sampling ratio, 409 comments. Their objective was to identify and explain the ideologies and logics that underlie the public views on this issue (Collins-Dogrul & Ulrich, 2017). Some findings include women have already been exposed to the violence of war and military jobs should be determined based on meeting objective standards and not ascribed status. Claims were made about integration improving military effectiveness, because it expands the pool of brilliant people that can make beneficial contributions on the battlefield (Collins-Dogrul & Ulrich, 2017).

In April 2015, the Army conducted a study on gender integration into their ground combat units to identify institutional and cultural factors. The findings from this study resulted in 17 factors and the risk level of this integration is moderate (Gender Integration Study, 2015). These identified factors and moderate risk level were associated with unit morale, cohesion and readiness (Gender Integration Study, 2015). This study is

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supportive research, but the conclusion has too many factors to create a feasible strategy for assimilating women into these cohesive units. This study needs to be scoped down in order to have a simpler and more feasible strategy for units around the world to implement.

Research That Does Not Support Women in Combat Roles

While there are many exciting current events happening right now, there are some people opposed to women in ground combat units. One author specifically, Dr. Anna Simons wrote an article entitled, *Women Can Never "Belong" in Combat,* outlining the reasons why women are not suited for the front lines (2000). Simons strongly points out that respect does not guarantee belonging, she claims there is not a military unit out there that is unconventional enough to accept this unconventional event of having a female substitute a male in the unit. Dr. Simons notes the intangible traits that make up a cohesive unit and how altering the chemistry will cause the cohesioin to plummet (Simons, 2000). Some of those intangibles include morale, behaviors, beliefs, ideals and bonds; changing any of those traits will effect the performance of a tight-knit unit. Since the "glue" that holds these units together can't be taken as a quantitative measure, they are often ignored (Simons, 2000).

Dr. Simons continues to state how no structure can guarantee cohesion when faced with gender integration, although there are factors that will assist it. Women have been excluded from combat due to the revolving point of their physical abilities in comparison to men's and their physiological differences. There is one way to deflate that argument, and that is by ensuring women are able to meet the same exact physical statndards as men. Another tackled topic in her article is menstration; she depicts an

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example of a Navy SEAL team diving into shark-infested waters and having a mentstrating woman on the team (Simons, 2000).

Raising the points about women and their inability to deploy while pregnant and their followed maternity leave, will take a toll on the unit, going back to Dr. Simmons' intangibles, altering one element shakes up the interconnectedness (Simons, 2000). Women who enter male-dominated fields are at a higher risk of leaving that job and are less likely to be promoted due to the challenges of social isolation and stereotyping (Thomas, 2008; pg. 295).

Martin van Creveld (2001), a military traditionalist and Israeli military historian said, "The feminization of the military is equivalent to its weakening and decline, leaving the armed forces in the awkward position of being successively incapable of doing what they have been invented for" (Winslow, 2010). He is clearly a non-supporter, not just of women in combat, but of women in the military as a whole.

Mitchell (1998) is a U.S. conservative and claims the military culture is seen as a "thing", which seems to be threatened with extinction and needs to be preserved, saved from the potential erosion should women be in combat positions (Winslow, 2010). He continues to describe how women in the Armed Forces negatively affect the military:

> …higher rates of attrition, greater need for medical care, higher rates of non-availability, lower rates of deployability, lesser physical ability, aggravated problems of single-parenthood, dual-service marriages, fraternizations, sexual harrassment, sexual promiscuity, and homosecuality, all of which adversely affect unit cohesion, morale, and the fighting spirit of the armed forces.

Lastly, women surrendering high-status positions after having a child or quitting their career altogether, are all reasons that submit to men's suspicions about where a woman's priorities lie (Simons, 2000). A study on gender integration in the Canadian

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combat arms in 1998 revealed that women leaders operating in a male-defined and male-dominated field resulted in ambiguous perceptions and beliefs by their male counterparts. If the women acted like one of the guys, they were suspect, but acting as themselves was also suspect. Another finding was that women leaders have as much as six times the attrition rate of males (Davis & Thomas, 1998).

Summary

In summary, this chapter looked at the previous research to identify how the CRO career field can learn from pertinent literature and countries that have undergone this integration. Cohesion is an important subject because that is a fundamental trait within a tight-knit community such as the CROs. Understanding the different between task and social cohesion provides a baseline of how it can be leveraged when assimilating a diversified team. An integration strategy such as we saw from the Canadians includes training right from the start. The diversity training embraces an inclusive environment and the continuous preventative strategy of conducting surveys to monitor post-integration trends.

Overview

Chapter 3 describes the research design used to study how to successfully integrate women into the CRO career field. Section I provides details about the qualitative approach for this study, the Grounded Theory methodology, and explains why this research utilized Grounded Theory. Section II explains the steps taken throughout each phase, including the development of the data collection instruments, the actual data collection and the analysis process. This chapter provides the readers with an understanding of how the researcher's results are founded within Chapters 4 and 5.

Section I—Qualitative Research – Grounded Theory Methodology

The researcher utilized qualitative research using a Grounded Theory methodology. Grounded Theory is a systematic method used in social sciences, which generates theory from collected data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The term *grounded* refers to the idea that the theory is derived from and rooted within data that have been collected in the field rather than taken from literature (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). This technique translates data into categories of the researcher's choice, such as main points, codes or themes. Grounded Theory provides the researcher with the freedom to choose a strategy in order to create a theory from the data collected.

The researcher chose to use Grounded Theory because it provides flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data (Charmaz, 2014). This approach offered an inductive framework for studying a new topic in research. There is not an abundant amount of research done on this topic since it is only a few years old and

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history is being made by women daily. Grounded Theory provided the tools necessary to interpret interview data from the current CROs and make inferences in order to answer the research question. Figure 2 depicts the continuous process of Grounded Theory.
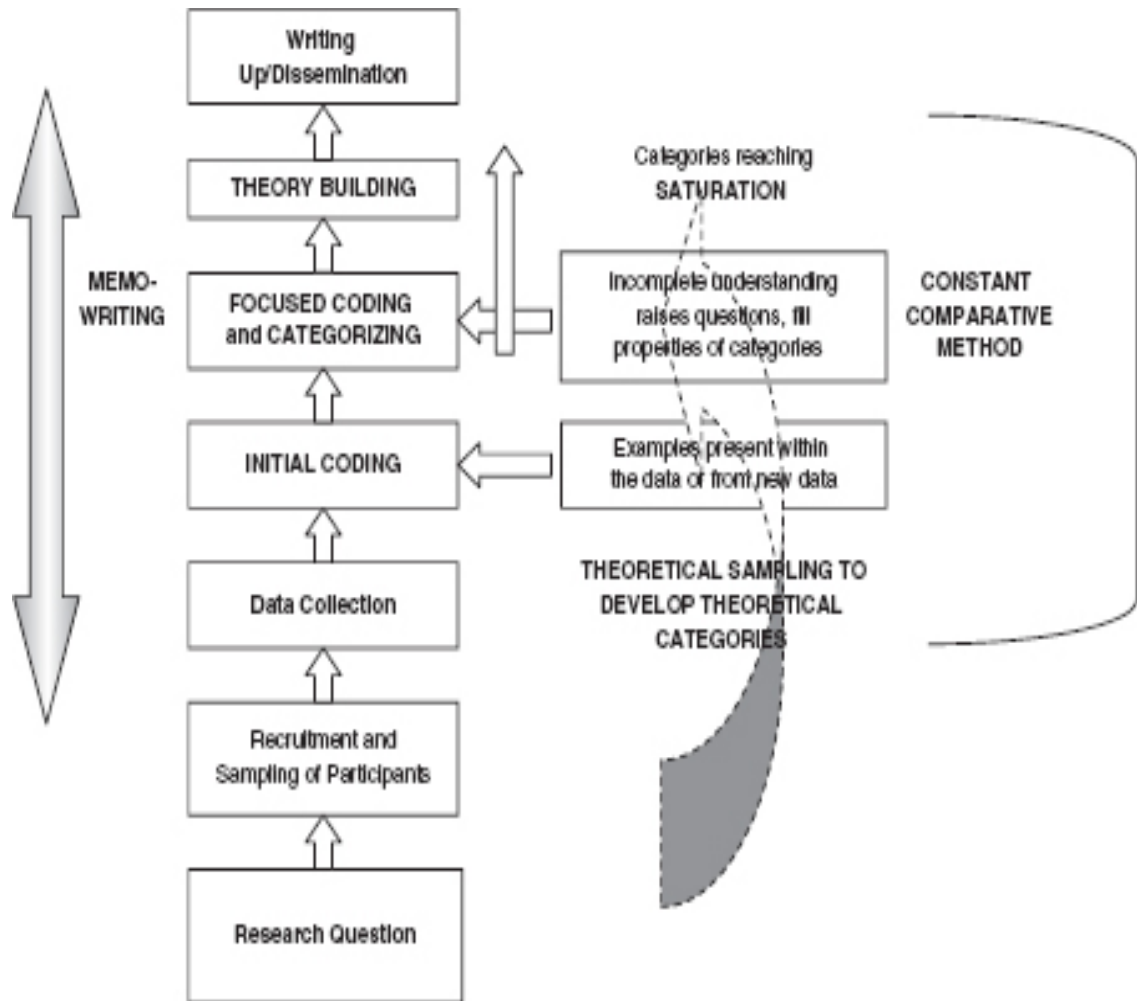
Figure 2: Grounded Theory Process. Reprinted from Constructing Grounded Theory (pg. 18), by K. Charmaz, 2014, London: SAGE Publications. Copyright 2014 by SAGE Publications. Reprinted with permission.

Section II—Process and Procedures

This research was organized into four phases (Figure 3). Phase 1 was focused on performing the measures necessary to prepare for conducting interviews. These measures included reviewing relevant literature (Chapter 2), developing the interview questions, receiving sponsorship from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (Appendix A), and lastly gain the Institutional Review Board (IRB) exemption (Appendix B).

Figure 3: Methodology Roadmap

Phases 2 and 3, which consisted of the CRO interviews and data analysis, required flexibility to accomodate the participant's schedules. Just before the researcher arrived at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, a few teams of CROs and PJs were tasked to help with

Hurricane relief. This deployment reduced availability of CROs to interview, but the researcher was still able to interview multiple qualified CROs of various ranks and experience levels. The remainder of Chapter 3 walks through specific procedures of the first three phases and introduces the steps used for the final phase, data interpretation.

Instrument Development

The semi-structured interview approach was utilized for its flexibility. More specifically, the researcher was able to ask questions based on a response given as opposed to strictly adhering to the scripted interview questions. The researcher developed the interview questions (Appendix C) based on the overarching research question and the subsequent investigative questions provided in Chapter 1. These questions derived from continuous revisions between the researcher and Advisor.

Population and Sample

This study examined fully qualified Active Duty and Reserve Combat Rescue Officers stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona from the ranks of First Lieutenant through Colonel. Due to the large amount of CROs deployed for Hurricane relief, 10 Active Duty CROs and 3 Reservists were interviewed. Of those 13 CROs interviewed, 6 of them were Company Grade Officers (CGO; Second Lieutenant to Captain) and 7 were Field Grade Officers (FGO; Major to Colonel). The entire CRO population across Active Duty, Reserves and Guard totals 130, which means the researcher was able to sample 10% of the CRO population (Sterr, 2018). The optimal number of interviews, according to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, is approximately 12 subjects—this number frequently leads the researcher to saturation (2006). Saturation was, in fact, achieved with 13 interviews.

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Once the Rescue Group Commander approved the sponsorship request, the researcher traveled to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base for one week to conduct interviews. There was no restriction on type of service (Active Duty, Guard or Reserve), nor was there a rank constraint. The only requirement was that the interviewee was a fully qualified CRO. E-mails were exchanged with a CRO Point of Contact (POC) and a tentative interview schedule was created.

Once the researcher arrived on station, the interviews were underway. The participants provided informed consent before they were interviewed. Each participant signed the consent form, granted permission for the interview to be voice recorded, and was offered a copy of the consent form. Next, the talking paper (Appendix D) that outlined the purpose of the study was provided to the participant to read, to ensure they understood the objective for the interview. And lastly, each participant was able to review the interview questions before officially starting and audio recording the interview. With minimal limitations, the researcher concluded the visit with 13 interviews from Active Duty and Reservists, and both CGOs and FGOs.

Data Collection

Data gathering must include the perspectives and voices of the population which is being scrutinized (Charmaz, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Each participant was assured anonymity to encourage the participants to voice their true thoughts and feelings on the subject matter. The pairing of interviews and Grounded Theory mend well because together they provide "open-ended but directive, developed yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted application" (Charmaz, 2014; pg. 85).

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In order to triangulate data sources, the researcher also collected historical records and made direct observations of the CRO work environment. The historical records were: the Air Force's Implementation Plan, the Physical Fitness Tests and Standards for Battlefield Airmen Study, the Women In Service Review and supplemental documentation provided by the CROs. Observations were documented while in Rescue Squadrons at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, being surrounded by CROs and in their environment and any notes taken from informal conversations. All interviews were in person and lasted between fourteen and eighty minutes in length. The tools required for the interviews included a laptop with the voice recording app and note taking materials (pen and paper). All interviews were then transcribed by the researcher.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Model

The researcher utilized both Creswell's (2014) methods for accuracy and Charmaz's (2014) methods to analyze the interview data as follows:

1. Organized and prepared data for analysis

2. Read all of the data collected

3. Coded the data

    a. Initial coding: Assigned codes to data (text of the interview)

    b. Axial coding: Grouped the codes into categories and showed the interconnections between categories

4. Provided an interpretation of the data

Throughout the analysis process, the researcher constantly reviewed the transcriptions, which confirmed the codes assigned. The research generated the definition for each code within the software. Specifically, the researcher completed steps two through four on

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different occasions to ensure consistency among how the codes and themes were recorded, and how they were applied to the data. Chapter 4 describes how the initial and axial coding were used to analyze the interview transcripts.

Validity and Reliability

Qualitative validity means that the researcher checked for accuracy of the findings by constantly validating the information throughout the data analysis phase (Creswell, 2014). The researcher used four separate methods, as seen in Table 1, provided by Creswell (2014).

Table 1: Validity Strategies (Creswell, 2014)

Methods	Action Taken
Experience in the Field	Researcher has previously worked with CROs
Researcher Bias	Researcher was cognizant of her experiences and opinions and strove not to include her bias in the data analysis and report
Triangulation	Multiple data sources were used to build a coherent justification for themes
Peer Debriefing	Advisor reviewed, questioned, and helped clarify established themes

The researcher worked with CROs at her previous assignment which provided an understanding of the career field and how they operate. Creswell (2014) noted that the more experience a researcher has with the participants, the more valid or accurate the findings would be. Conversely, this experience and her gender provided a gateway for the researcher's bias to seep into the results. The researcher's awareness of her opinions

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helped ensure that she did not impose those into the interviews and did not alter the definitions of codes established in the data analysis phase.

Reliability measurement of data in qualitative research, according to Rust and Cooil (1994), is critical to comprehend the stability and the quality of the data. The researcher followed Creswell's (2014) recommended methods, which include documenting procedures or steps, checking transcripts for accuracy, and constantly comparing data to codes in order to confirm the meaning remained consistent.

Summary

In summary, 13 fully qualified CROs from the Reserves and Active Duty were interviewed, in order to understand the current perception of how the Air Force can successfully integrate women into this career field. The Grounded Theory approach provided the researcher with a flexible structure for gathering and analyzing the interview data. The data collected from the participants provided a foundation for answering the research and investigative questions.

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IV. Analysis and Results

Overview

The goal is to demonstrate the analysis used to study how to successfully integrate women into the CRO career field. This chapter presents the analysis of the interview data, archival data, and the observations and reveals findings from the analysis process.

Analysis

The researcher transcribed all 13 interviews by listening to them and typing them into a Word document. From there, each interview was imported into an online qualitative data analysis software called Dedoose. Within Dedoose, the researcher was able to code and tally the number of times participants mentioned a specific code. The Dedoose software gave her the ability to compare the amount each code was used or referenced, which enabled a platform to organize the codes into themes, and finally provided a few visual analyses to examine the importance of each theme based on the number of referenced codes within each theme. Initial coding was utilized primarily, which according to Charmaz (2014; pg. 117) are "provisional, comparative and grounded in the data". The advantage of using initial coding is it helps the researcher refrain from inputting their own motives, fears or personal issues in the collected data (Charmaz, 2014). Table 2 shows the initial codes generated from the interviews with the CROs.

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Table 2: Data Analysis—Initial Coding Interview Data

Code	Total
Acceptance	32
Advantages	34
Attitude	39
Challenges/Concerns	16
Communication	12
Comparison	26
Culture	23
Disadvantages	9
Equipment	3
Identical	7
Integrating Suggestions	6
Leadership	14
Manpower	14
Mental Strength	5
PT Test	7
Physical	12
Politics	4
Preparation	30
Professionalism	14
Recruiting	26
Significant Others	2
Standards	46
Team Work	17
Training	23
WISR	9

The researcher went line by line of each interview and used Dedoose's coding tools to highlight text, phrases, sentences, and/or paragraphs that represented feelings or mentioned the code itself that related to the research question. When generating these codes, a 'resistance' code was created, but by the end of the interview coding, that category was not used once. Therefore, the code was not documented. This qualitative software enabled the researcher to view the codes through multiple outlets.

As new topics came up throughout the initial coding of the interviews, the researcher created new codes within Dedoose to organize the data. Upon completion of initial coding, there were 25 different codes utilized 430 times throughout all the interviews. Semi-structured interviews were helpful because it allowed the participants to bring up topics that they felt needed to be addressed, that were not asked by the researcher.

After all of the interviews were initially coded, using the initial coding technique, axial coding took place. In axial coding, the researcher looked for similarities between the codes to consolidate into themes. These themes coincided with the IQs, each IQ has a group of codes associated with it. Table 3 categorizes the codes into their themes/IQs. After completing axial coding, the theme total column summed the frequency of the codes in each theme.

Table 3: Data Analysis—Axial Coding Interview Data

Theme/IQ	Theme Total	Initial Codes	Total
Current Perception	178	Attitude	39
		Comparison	26
		Identical	7
		Manpower	14
		PT Test	7
		Physical	12
		Politics	4
		Standards	46
		Training	23
Barriers	56	Disadvantages	9
		Challenges/Concerns	16
		Equipment	3
		Recruiting	26
		Significant Others	2
Drivers	68	Advantages	34
		Integrating Suggestions	6
		Mental Strength	5
		Professionalism	14
		WISR	9
Culture Change	128	Acceptance	32
		Communication	12
		Culture	23
		Leadership	14
		Preparation	30
		Team Work	17

Next, was overlaying the codes from the interviews with the archival documents acquired, including the Women In Service Review (WISR), the Air Force's Final Implementation Plan submitted to the Secretary of Defense, and the Physical Fitness Tests and Standards for Battlefield Airmen Study.

The observations made while at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base were limited due to many of the small teams being gone for hurricane relief. Since so many people were

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missing from the Group, none of the regular meetings were scheduled nor were any training sessions. The researcher did receive a tour of the facilities and areas of operation for the different Squadrons within the 563rd Rescue Group. Each building had a female restroom, most had a locker or two inside of the restroom and a shower. Along with tours, she was taken to the jump zone about an hour away from the base and was able to see students train on how to properly jump out of a helicopter as a team. While she stayed on the ground, she was able to be a part in the behind the scenes safety precautions and de-briefs that take place whenever a Pararescueman is jumping.

Along with the assigned personnel, there were lots of males performing custodial and administrative tasks within the Squadron buildings. They are there waiting for their next flight to endure another stage in their training, affectionately known as "CRONES". They are CROs in the making, awaiting the next milestone in order to become fully qualified.

The researcher was able to interact with not only the CROs stationed there, but also enlisted and officer support personnel and civilians, both contracted and government employees. Most individuals mentioned the fact that there was only one "Cage Area" in all of the Squadron buildings; the "Cage Area" is where each CROs has their own "Cage" to store all of their gear, uniforms, and equipment. Therefore, that space is used almost as a locker room because the men will get notified of a tasking and run to their "Cage" and change into the required uniform, grab necessary equipment and be out the door. The concern is for when women are a part of the team, they suggested either getting a separate "Cage Area" for women or putting up some sort of divider so that everyone can still use the space as a place for rapid uniform changes.

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Results

The results garnered from this research are divided into the four IQs. Each includes excerpts from CROs and archival documents. A conceptual model was created to gather a better understanding of how these IQs help answer the research question. Recall that each IQ/theme had codes associated with it, therefore, the codes will be mentioned throughout each IQ.

Investigative Question 1

What is the current perception on women joining the CRO career field?

The current perception includes insights about the attitudes, standards, manpower and comparisons made between different organizations that the CROs mentioned within their interviews. Most of these have been addressed in the Implementation Plan and various literature.

Standards were a major topic for every CRO interviewed, and they are addressed in the Air Force's Implementation Plan (James, 2015; pg. 5).

> The Services will continue to apply previously developed and validated operationally relevant and objective standards for all career fields to ensure that leaders assign tasks and career field throughout the force based on ability, not gender. This approach is integral to preserving unit readiness, cohesion, and morale, and it will continue to form the foundation for all integration.

Every time a CRO mentioned the lowering of standards, the researcher affirmed that the literature states the standards will not be lowered. Regardless of that affirmation, every one of the CROs stated "if the standards were lowered" and continued to share the negative impact it would have on the CRO community. Here is one instance from an FGO:

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If the standards change I think you'll get a lesser product. It doesn't matter if they are a male or female, I don't want crappy guys to make it through. I think more of those guys—honestly the repercussion for dropping the standards for getting a few females in, if they decide that's the route they want to go, which you don't have to there are girls that can meet our standards. But if they did, the repercussions would be more crappy dudes, just because more males traditionally want to do this job, the few females would probably be pretty good. I don't want that.

They failed to notice the Implementation Plan's address of the standards specifically. It appears that leaders outside of the career field are able to recognize how crucial it is to keep the standards where they are, everyone is in agreement with that.

Another commonly mentioned hypothetical action was if a quota was put in place, a quota of women within each BA career field for example. The Implementation Plan addresses that as well stating, "there will be no quotas, critical mass, or special preference based on gender" (James, 2015; pg. 5). One CGO noted that the only directive that would do something would be a quota directive, which according to him, would be a terrible idea.

I don't know what good a directive would do. Unless that directive comes and says 'No you will graduate 5 females in the next year'. Unless that quota comes down, which I think would be a terrible idea. As long as that quota doesn't exist, I don't know what good any directive would come down.

This finding also correlates with what many of the CROs mentioned about the females getting preferential treatment. There is no desire by the CROs nor the Implementation Plan to treat the women any differently than any male that made it through the training. One CGO mentions how males act differently when women are injured:

It comes down to chivalry, I've seen guys that respond to men getting shot up or blown up and it didn't really phase them. But when they responded to women being shot up or blown up it messed some guys up pretty bad. There is something internally built into us, I don't really know what it's because of. That same very

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protective mentality that we have. If we're on a team together and there's a woman who's on your team, whether she's a PJ or if she is the officer in charge, if something happens to that woman. It will probably affect the team to a greater extent than had it just been a man. If stuff hits the fan and you have both a man and a woman who need care, I've watched it even just in training scenarios, with active role players, guys are more likely to get heads down and focused on treating the female as opposed to potentially treating the greater life threats on the male.

His comments strongly correlate with what Winslow (2010) observed from Kummel's

German Armed Forces study (2008):

Women are portrayed as needing male courtesy and protection and as housewives who should receive flowers when entertaining officers in their homes. This only reinforces male attitudes towards women in combat as Kümmel remarks that these constructs of the female as someone to be courted and to be protected symbolically makes war a man's business. This is reflected in interviews with German servicemen who feel that it would be difficult for them to see a woman buddy dead or suffering and that the idea of a woman inflicting violence is "strange." Of course none of these men would find it strange if the woman was protecting her child. But the line is somehow crossed in protecting the state. Chivalry and its attendant stereotypical views of male and female roles are promoted in the military and particularly in officer training. Kümmel concludes that chivalrous behaviour works to maintain existing traditional images of gender roles. As a consequence, it contributes to and nourishes sexist attitudes and behaviour in the military and may complicate the process of integrating women into the armed forces.

 Some form of comparison was made frequently by the CROs, whether it was to a

Sister Service, a different Air Force career field or to a University. There were many

mentions of different organizations that have integrated in the past:

The Citadel had a terrible experience with its integration with women. In that it chose to integrate a freshmen class and those 6 women were the only ones in that school. When the Virginia Military Institution integrated they brought in transfer students in all grade levels. And the entire school integrated at the same time. As to minimize the buffoonery, every grade level had to deal with the integration.

Rescue is very much so a problem-solving mission, much like EOD.

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I've worked with other female athletes when I was in ROTC, and they didn't want to be treated any different. They didn't want you to mind your p's and q's, they didn't want to be called ma'am. They wanted to be an intricate part of the team.

I talked to one of the first females in CANSOF (Canadian Special Operations Forces), she randomly admitted that there were some missions that she wasn't necessarily suited for. It didn't seem to me that the guys had much problems with her being in there at all. And they totally used her to the advantage to being able to interrogate females and everything else. She had no problem also saying that she can't carry this 220-pound person.

These comparisons aid in the understanding of what has been done before and what methods have proven successful. The Canadian Armed Forces were discussed in Chapter 2, and also served as a source of insight from one of the FGOs interviewed.

Lastly, recall the newspaper study mentioned in Chapter 2 that aimed to understand the public view of women in combat. One comment from that study was that claims were made about integration improving military effectiveness, because it expands the pool of brilliant people that can make beneficial contributions on the battlefield (Collins-Dogrul & Ulrich, 2017). The current perception from the CROs was that expanding the applicant base will increase the number of potential candidates. Here are a couple excerpts from the interviews:

The end state is we are undermanned and we need more people. So whatever gives us the potential to get more candidates is great. We need more bodies to do the job, we need more bodies that are trained, more volunteers, more folks that are able to accomplish the tasks.

Maybe this opens up a different population. I need more people. Maybe this just gets me more people because we're always undermanned. If it's another person that gets through selection, squared away. Giddy up. Now I get another person, I'm not so undermanned as I was yesterday.

The biggest pitfall the CROs feel that they have right now is low numbers of personnel, both on the CRO and PJ side. Opening up the applicant base, only increases

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their hope for more people within the Pararescue world and that is what they are striving for most. Fully qualified people, not males specifically just people to share the duties.

Investigative Question 2

What are the barriers to successful integration of women into the CRO career field?

According to the Air Force's Implementation Plan, the Military Department has seven focused overarching concerns: transparent standards, physical demands and physiological differences, population size, talent management, conduct and culture, periodic assessment and adjustment, and operating abroad (James, 2015; pg. 5). To address the IQ each concern will be clarified.

Transparent Standards

The physical aspect of the job is a commonly addressed barrier for women, but according to the Implementation Plan, each BA career field physical standards were measured and validated. Therefore, every physical demand was deemed gender-neutral, operationally relevant and occupationally specific (James, 2015; pg. 6). The Implementation Plan goes further to say, "These occupational physical standards all have direct ties to battlefield tasks and will not change unless the actual missions and tasks required for our BA change" (James 2015; pg. 5). Since it was mentioned in this memo, each BA career field was measured and validated via the Physical Fitness Tests and Standards for Battlefield Airmen Study (Appendix E).

While the CROs did mention their concern for women's physical ability, they were more concerned with maintaining the same entry standards. As noted within IQ 1, the CROs do not want the standards to be lowered to allow women in for two reasons.

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One reason is that female(s) would not be seen as having earned her beret and therefore, not respected by her peers. The second reason is not wanting unqualified males into the career field, most of the CROs have faith in women's capabilities but not in the men that cannot make it through now and are waiting for lower standards to qualify.

Physical Demands and Physiological Differences

This topic of physical differences between males and females is constantly at the forefront of discussion, but in the comparison of the concerns outlined within the Implementation Plan and the CROs comments, they are vastly different. The Implementation Plan discusses the higher rate of injuries among females than males in a couple of their other Service's studies, while the CROs mention physical capability, the level of physical demand required and the weight differences in males and females.

Many CROs recalled moments in their lives where they witnessed women doing high level of physical activities, such as running in adventure races, Cross-Fit Games participants, and collegiate athletes. Only a few instances involved the suspicion of women's inability to meet the physical requirements, most are very optimistic, such as this FGO; "I could teach anyone the physical standards given time."

Population Size

Recruiting was mentioned 26 times by 13 CROs, that equates to every participant bringing it up twice within their interview. Clearly, they are worried about recruiting and how to go forward now that their candidate pool has expanded. CROs mentioned how other Services, such as the Navy SEALs are recruiting at events such as the Cross-Fit Games and the Air Force needs to do the same. In order to direct their recruiting efforts

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to the right audience, both the people participating in events such as Tough Mudder's, Triathlons, and the like, and the attendees.

The Implementation plan does not try to hide the fact that there is not a good method in place at this current time. "There is currently no advertising content in use to depict women in Battlefield Airmen and Special Operations Forces direct ground combat specialties" (James, 2015; pg. 2). Along with just recruiting, are some of the equipment implications cited by both the CROs and the Implementation Plan (James, 2015; pg. 6).

The Implementation Plan (James, 2015; pg. 6) states:

Small numbers of women in demanding career fields pose challenges that will vary by occupation and services and will impact the entire Joint Force. Throughout this process, implications for equipment sizing, supply, and facilities have been thoroughly studied and will continue to be addressed.

One FGO mentioned:

Female plate carriers are probably cut differently than male plate carriers. Female combat uniforms are probably cut differently…equipment that would need to be specifically female.

He is thinking ahead and trying to proactively observe where or how the career field can be two steps ahead, such as researching gender specific equipment.

The Air Force's planned action is for the MAJCOM to monitor and address facility, supplies, equipment, and gear, as well as costs associated with all of those, as integration continues (James, 2015). One FGO made a comment related to these implications:

We have all these organizations that now need to be retrofitted and that's fine, but that's a cost. When do you do that? Do we retrofit all these buildings right now? Where's that money coming from? Where are the top down programmed funds to

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help facilitate the changes that need to come along to adequately and safely ensure that we are taking care of those Airmen?

While there are no answers to his questions right now, it is still a pertinent topic and needs to be addressed.

Talent Management

The definition of talent management within the Implementation Plan is not accepting preferential treatment, evaluating all Airmen based on their performance and not their gender, and ensuring females have a viable career path. The only part of this definition initiated by the interviewed CROs is the preferential treatment piece. None of them want the female(s) to be treated any differently, from both the CGO level and the FGO level. An FGO stated the expectation he would set:

> I want equal, fair and honest treatment of her exactly the same as you treat the guys. And I want all the leadership to hold the guys accountable to do exactly the same thing. I was her taken care of like every other Airmen, I want her treated the same and I expect you to make that happen. Ensure it happens, don't just make it happen.

The expectation is already set, even with no prospective women in the training pipeline. The base level leaders are setting the foundation of not affording the future female(s) any preferential treatment.

Conduct and Culture

"Our core beliefs in good order, discipline, leadership, and accountability are foundational to our success in gender integration" (James, 2015; pg. 7). That sums up what the CROs suggested the Air Force does for this integration; "fix this and the rest will follow", that was a headline from the latest CRO Defense Connect Online meeting (Sterr, 2018). Let the training do what it does, mold the trainees into the CROs we need,

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like it has for the last 18 years. There is no need to do anything differently, she will join our unit and she will be integrated because she made it through the training. Everyone is on the same page for this topic.

The Implementation Plan reiterates the resources available for leaders, females, and all Airmen, since they are all Wingmen to each other (James, 2015). It mentions specifically how there is now a 7-hour training module for all BA instructors, emphasizing gender integration concerns, mitigation strategies and how unprofessional behaviors are never acceptable. It is unclear if this is already in existence or not, there is mention of a "central repository" that has information to assist with gender integration, which includes advice on BA followership and leadership, drinking environment scenarios, hygiene, unit culture, and positive encouragement (James, 2015; pg. 8). None of these resources were mentioned by the CROs; it was noted that the females that eventually make it through will need mentors, and guidance through their new combat position.

Items regarding culture that the CROs mentioned were topics related to leadership setting the tone, not treating this as a big deal but as the new norm, doing the job for the right reasons, and their tribal nature. One CGO refers to the instructors at the Indoctrination course when there is a female student and treating that like the new norm:

> I think we have to instill that professionalism and that expectation of professionalism, in our instructors that it's not a question of whether this instructor is going to do the right thing or not. Because you're already entrusting them in a very special situation and you have been entrusting them for years. So what's changed now? I know something's changed, we all do, but if we continue to treat this as a big deal, you're not going to get rid of that aspect of favoritism, which is going to inevitably just drive a very difficult situation for the culture of those teams and that career field.

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His concerns are valid due to the fact that most in the CRO community will share his same apprehensions. Involving women from the onset of training is the only method by which this new concept will be fully adopted and received as the new operative norm.

Assessment and Adjustment

According to the Implementation Plan, this topic relates to the constant review of integration, policies, and mitigation actions. The goal of this barrier is to be transparent across the Total Force and share lessons learned in order to facilitate to the integrations long-term success (James, 2015). Communication is key, but not to all the CROs. When asked if there was anything that should be said to the unit of an inbound female CRO, most of them said no; that there was no need to do or say anything. Here are a few responses:

I don't think we're preparing for that. To say the least. I think we're just going to have to learn as we go really. I don't think there's going to be any big issues.

I don't think it will be hugely different for the Squadron to get ready for it.

I think it would actually be detrimental to even say anything. I really don't think that this is a big deal.

Oh, we could do it tomorrow. It would be easy. If someone arrived tomorrow, I don't think it would be a big deal.

It's pretty easy to prepare, because I think we have such a lead.

Honestly, I don't think we would do anything. I don't think we would do anything different. I feel like you'd just be another new CRO showing up just like any new CRO showing up. I don't think we would really do anything.

No one sees it happening anytime soon so it's not like the preparations are super urgent because if you get a woman who just made it through Phase 2, you're still going to have a gap of time probably until she starts the pipeline. And then once she starts the pipeline, you're going to have 2 years before she's actually a CRO, at least. So we have plenty of time to figure it out.

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Overall, the main theme is simplicity; nothing will need to be discussed ahead of time. The CROs are very confident in the fact that they can handle anything.

Operating Abroad

"The presence of women in some units may complicate cooperation with allies and partners who are culturally opposed to working with women, and conversely, the addition of women has the potential to enhance operations in those same societies" (James, 2015; pg. 9). This topic was brought up a few times by the CROs, both as an advantage and disadvantage just as it was mentioned within the Implementation Plan. One FGO described women's presence for both hindrance and enhancing of operations:

> Even down range it could be a help or it could be a hurt depending on what type of culture you're with. If you're over there working with different types of cultures, 'hey this could soften up our approach' because somebody could perceive this differently too. That it's a female that they're involved in this good so it could actually be a help. The other side of that if we were in the middle east, obviously that would probably be a hinderance because they would not accept that very well. Across Europe or Asia, it could be a help with how we do things. Maybe in some environments where they can soften our approach so we don't look like a brute force, that's the person I want, way out front because that's going to help open doors for us and make us more successful.

There are pros and cons to having women deployed on the CRO teams, it varies on which environment they are in at that time. This knowledge should be leveraged and utilized when beneficial, perhaps hidden when detrimental.

Evidently there are many barriers to break through, noted by both the CROs and the Implementation Plan, in order to make this integration seamless. Identifying the hardships is the first course of action when trying to produce a solution. This only brings the career field closer to finding the right solution tailored for them.

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Investigative Question 3

What are the drivers to successful integration of women into the CRO career field?

A common driver mentioned by the CROs was the different perspective women could bring to the fight. Different analyzing techniques, the angle or lens in which events are seen through, and various strategies, are all advantages women can provide with potentially having a different perspective.

Different Perspective

There are claims that males and females have varying perspectives, and the CROs support those claims. They describe how the different perspective presented by women will benefit the team. Here are some of the noted perspectives:

The advantage of a different perspective, I believe, is always good.

I think the more diversity you have, reflects how advanced you are. And so with that diversity you're going to think of things even more critically. I think every leader should be challenged by different ideas. So I think it's just going to bring a different perspective. Physiologically, women and their minds are different. They can multitask differently and may have different perspectives, different emotional—emotional intelligence may be somewhat different. I think it's a healthy thing to have within your organization.

Men and women look at problems very differently. If you look at an extrication mission, you have someone trapped in a car. I bet if you want to do a crazy social experiment, just put women and men through, without any real training, and ask them how would you solve this problem? And I bet you would see some cool data points of women being on one end of the spectrum and men being on the other. Because men will be like 'I'll break the door, I'll lift that, lift this' and women probably won't, they will be like 'I'll call for this and I'll use that'. It's problem solving but its different perspectives which is great!

Anything you can do to avoid that, all those problems that come when you have a group of people sitting around a table and they're all like-minded like confirmation bias and group think. It could probably affect that in a positive way.

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Adding more angles only increases power and knowledge, it will allow the CROs to think even more critically and become stronger. The career field wants to hear another perspective and prevent group think as much as possible.

Another frequently mentioned topic of drivers for women was the various ways that they can help in different cultures. The CROs do deploy into various locations often, and they were attesting to those situations in which a woman could vastly help.

Deployments

A few of the CROs noted how women can be leveraged for their benefit while deployed to different cultures:

> I could see it in a Building Partnership Capacity mission or Foreign Internal Defense, having a female CRO would be greatly beneficial to be able to teach females in other countries who aren't as progressive as we are in the U.S. If there's a niche that women can fit into the CRO career field and make us more lethal, more capable at our job. I'm all for it.

> Culture's in which there's a real patriarchal system, women aren't allowed to interact with other strange male persons, then a woman could be a huge asset! Sometimes women can do things men can't do. They can blend in with the female populous that men can't blend in with. So in that way, women are special and capable of things that men aren't.

Stratigizing how women's presence can be utilized is the best way to include everyone on the team. Each person using their strength to accomplish the mission at hand.

The drivers noted by the participants do not stop there, they provide some integration suggestions, describe how professional their career field is and how the Women In Service Review (WISR) helped them come to this overall acceptance of

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women into their career field.

Integration Suggestions

The integration suggestions that were given by the CROs were only allowing women to enter into the CRO career field before opening the PJ career field and maintaining the same standards. Here are some of their suggestions:

> I think it would be best to have women CROs come in before women PJs because that would help set the tone and provide motivation.

> Navy EOD started off with female officers before they opened it up to female enlisted, there might be something to that.

> To have a female CRO who's in charge puts her in an opportunity where she can have a sphere of influence and an ability to develop her own culture with her senior enlisted for her team. There's no way they're going to come close to affecting a culture change unless they put officers in there first.

The CROs are aware of the influence women are going to have and how placing them in a higher position will create a greater impact. Unfortunately, there is no way to prevent women joining the PJs prior to the CROs.

The Implementation Plan mentions the positive outcomes of incorporating female Officers before Enlisted learned from the other Services, but since this restriction was not applied, there was an alternative method put in place. "Where possible, there will be a combination of senior female(s) with junior female(s) together in technical training" (James, 2015; pg. 4).

Professionalism

The CROs are very proud of the way they carry themselves, they claim to be quiet professionals. They stand behind that so much so, that their professionalism is claimed as a driver for this integration. Here are some examples:

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I think the professionalism and manner with which the leaders and the leadership run the organizations and just the way that the service culture. The expectations of how the services work and our professionalism and our standards of conduct between each other. Any change as dramatic as adding the gender, yes, that's going to change the culture of any organization. But as far as being professional to each other and taking care of each other and all serving professionally, respecting each other and I guess I don't see--sure is there potential sure. There is potential to have challenges.

As long as we just stay professional, we're probably 10x more professional now than when I came in. That's why I say I think we're here now, if it would have happened 20 years ago we may have had serious problems.
As long as we cultivate the quiet professional subculture and we develop our operators to start being more mature and the second they get out of selection. I think we'll be alright.

Culturally, I don't think, if there was a qualified female that was subject to the same standards as all the male candidates; that she went through selection, Indoc, pipeline, everything. I honestly do not believe that anybody would have a problem with that female being part of our career field at all.

You've done what's been asked of you to be here, to wear that beret and you're one of us as far as I'm concerned. All the brothers, band of brothers, hey now here's a sister.

Being a 'quiet professional' is one of the mantra's for the CROs, they do not believe in striving to be in the limelight, to get all the credit. They are there to rescue people and save lives, not to earn awards and medals. Therefore, the profesionalism that is engrained in them is part of who they are.

Women In Service Review

Lastly, the CROs mentioned some of the information they had about the WISR and how it will help with the integration. Here are quotes from one FGO and one CGO about the WISR:

I'm glad we're doing all the research through the WISR, we need metrics and if we don't get effect out of some physical testing then let's get rid of it and put something harder in there to get an effect out of it. I think we've actually learned

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more about ourselves, it's been a good process.

I know that the WISR was developing better standards, more relevant standards because I'll be the first to say, our standards at Indoc are not based on anything job related, they're just really really hard.

There are many more excerpts taken from the interviews related to the advantages women bring to this career field. And clearly, the current CROs take notice of these drivers and how they can be leveraged.

Investigative Question 4

How do CROs perceive the culture changing with the integration of women into the CRO career field?

The biggest factor when changing a culture is accepting the change, acceptance was one of the highest tallied codes during the CRO interviews.

Acceptance

All of the participants were very receptive and accepting of women joining their team, a few excerpts demonstrate their acceptance:

> It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when, because there is a woman who both has the drive, the mental acuity, the leadership, the physical capability to pass the pipeline. It's hard but it's not herculean.
>
> I think we would like to be a part of the solution not opposition to the process, so it turns out to be a good experience for everyone. For the guys that are already here and the ones that we will pick up. We need help, that's for sure.
>
> I think we should have the confidence in women to say 'Ok here's the standards', you guys have always risen to the standards in everything else when you were allowed the opportunity to. Go get it.
>
> I think if a woman can meet the requirements and has the fortitude to lead this type of organization than she's more than welcome to partake.

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I think if there is a female that can perform all those standards right now, I don't think there would be any cultural problems frankly, with her being part of our community.

The CROs want to be a part of the big picture, a part of the solution, and not wait for a problem to arise. They are willing to help and partake in any research that will provide guidance on this new assimilation.

Communication

Communication was mentioned as a tool that needs to be utilized by leadership to prepare for this culture change. Most of these quotes involve both leadership's role and how communication can both benefit and aid in the preparation:

> If it was me and I had a female CRO coming in. 'Hey guys we have such and such coming in, this is the first female CRO, let's make her feel welcome. Make sure she has all the support she needs, make her feel part of the team. Let's be professional, let's give her every opportunity to succeed and have a buy-in on the mission and do what she's got to do.' I think that's the kind of thing we need our leaders and our Squadron Commanders to do when we have our first females come in to the teams.

> I think it would be on the Commander and maybe the Director of Operations to sit down and say hey, how are we going to handle the logistical aspect of reconfiguring things a little bit to accommodate some level of privacy for females.

> I'd probably say it at a Commander's Call. I think my reaction to it is going to set the tone probably for the rest of the unit and so I would explain it that way. I don't expect you guys to do anything different than you would like when a new PJ that comes in or CRO that's coming in. I expect the same professionalism. Like who's her sponsor? All the same stuff. The last thing I'd want to do is typecast them into being something different, just get ready. You're going to be filling this job and I expect this out of them. I'd want to give the Squadron a voice to communicate back up. Like if they had any questions or concerns about it, then let's talk it out.

> I think as long as you know what the desired end-state is. What's your game plan? And let the Squadrons do it. A clear end-state of what they want it to look like and then let the Squadron Commander execute that integration and I think it would be fine.

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There needs to be an expectation put in place, and that is to treat the new inbound personnel, regardless of gender, with the proper care and support that all new CROs receive when they arrive at their duty station. The CGOs and FGOs want to hear the Commander's support, they want to understand the "game plan" from their leadership.

There is literature that supports the CROs need for leadership's role in this integration, taken from an article about gender and military sociology. Winslow emphasizes the importance of effective leadership and the influence it has over the organization (2010). That is why the role leadership plays in this matter is so vital, each leader will set the tone and expectation for their organization on how it accepts or rejects the future female(s).

Cultivating an inclusive environment and establishing what is not tolerated is key when incorporating diversity. The CROs want to be given the left and right boundaries for what lies ahead with this integration, because it is an unknown situation right now they are unsure of what needs to happen.

Culture

Culture is one of, if not the biggest, factor associated with this entire integration. Culture is part of the very definition of what a CRO is, how a CRO operates and is an underlying tone in most of the excerpts already noted. Thus, it was mentioned in a multitude of ways by the participants:

> As far as a woman being the right person, it's about if they have all the right stuff to be a member of the community. And whatever comes later we deal with it later.
>
> Do I fear that cultural difference? No, because I think the right people no matter what will be selected and make it through the training no matter what. I have a lot of faith in the training, I think it does produce good personnel.

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We're very tribal and that's proven over time, the tribal side is actually a very good benefit. We have a lot lower rates of PTSD, fairly good retention rates and we also have pretty good rates at maintaining marriages. Even though we're some of the most highly tasked people, we see a lot of combat, we have all the indicators for things that should tear all those things apart, but we don't.

Culture-wise, I don't think there's anything to just push away, I think it will be different. I think it'll actually, as long as it's the right person and they're there for the right reasons and they've done all the same things we've done. That's the cultural acceptance.

I don't think we would have any problem. I don't think as a community would have any problem taking females that have the right motivation.

There is no fear of this change, the CROs are confident that they will be able to press forward regardless of what changes are made. Their training has prepared them for anything in the battlefield and adding women to their team does not shake them in the slightest.

In the end, the culture change is going to take a lot of work not only from leadership, but from the men at the CGO level and enlisted. Preparing for this change is the best thing any organization could do, be proactive instead of reactive. Although, it is difficult to set up a strategy that has yet to be encountered, it is none the less crucial to at least have an outline of what needs to be done ahead of time.

Conceptual Models

The conceptual models generated by the researcher were developed to visually demonstrate the CROs current perceptions. In some ways, the CROs do not understand the bigger picture of the delicacy of this situation. "Our core beliefs in good order, discipline, leadership, and accountability are foundational to our success in gender integration" (James, 2015; pg. 7). That is similar to what the CROs suggested; let the training do what it does, mold the candidates into the CROs we need, like it has for the last

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18 years. There is no need to do anything differently, she will join our unit and she will be integrated because she made it through the training.

While the CROs understand the need for this research, they do not fully recognize it as a problem or even a potential problem. There was an underlying tone of implied resistance, and is displayed in Figure 4. This conceptual model depicts the implied resistance on how this is a "non-issue" to them, BUT there are some aspects that cannot change when integrating women into their career field. The CROs are resisting by adding in the catch, the elements that cannot change. While they are open-minded about the assimilation, they also have some concerns that will need to be addressed such as any facility changes or upgrades, additional equipment that may need to be purchased, and how the CROs react to her presence.
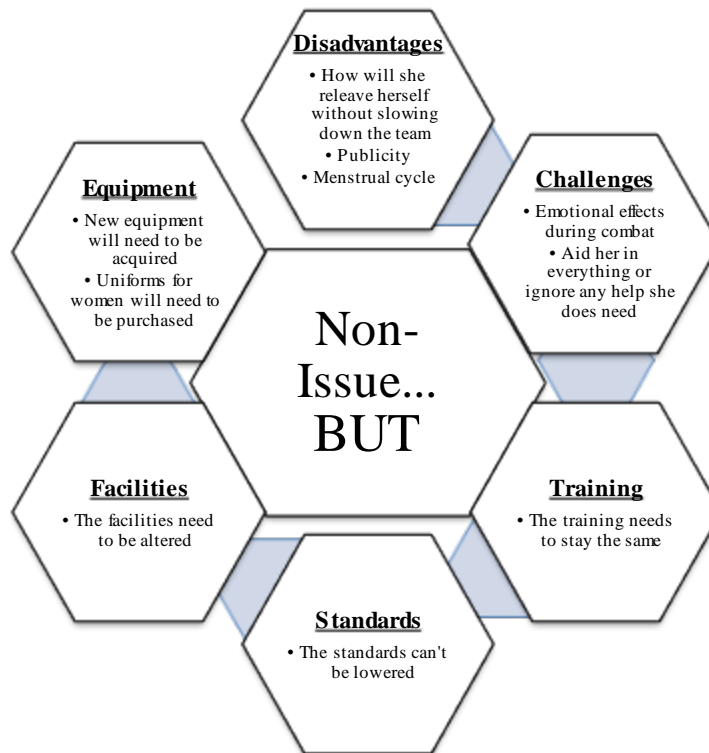

Figure 4: The Non-Issue Model

The bottom line was that the CROs were overall open-minded in regards to having women join them in the career field. The sheer number of codes relating to advantages, acceptance, and their faith in women's abilities greatly outweighed any noted disadvantages, concerns and challenges. That was evident throughout their excerpts displayed in answering the IQs. They are eager to have a bigger pool of eligible candidates to increase their manpower deficiency, and recognize the positive way women can improve their current state, both deployed and at home station. The CROs were able to produce positive comparisons of other organizations that have undergone this assimilation and are not fearful for when that day comes. Figure 5 illustrates the optimism the CROs have for women joining their team.
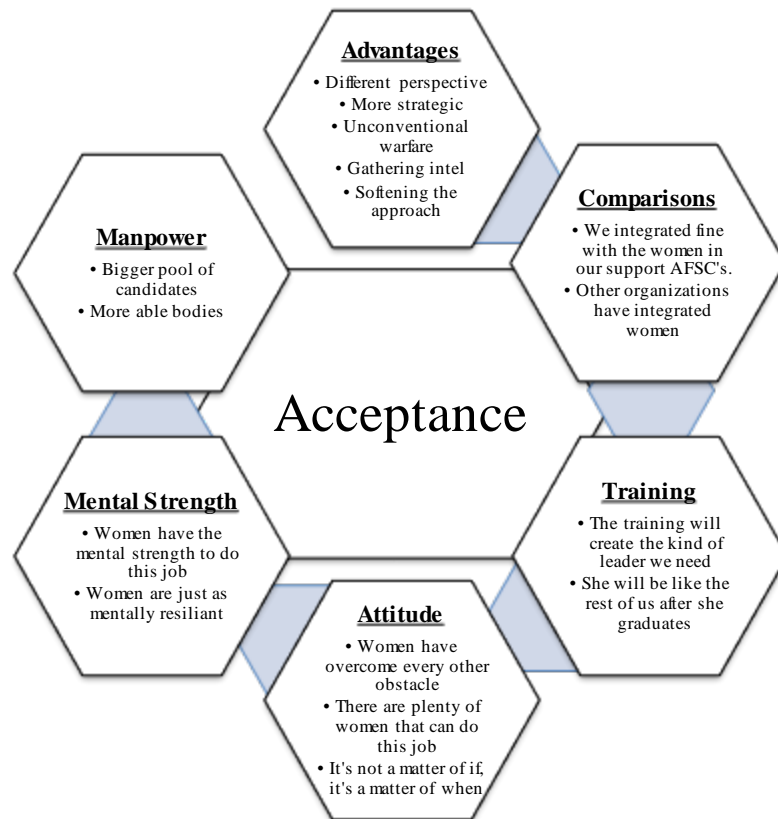

Advantages
- Different perspective
- More strategic
- Unconventional warfare
- Gathering intel
- Softening the approach

Comparisons
- We integrated fine with the women in our support AFSC's.
- Other organizations have integrated women

Manpower
- Bigger pool of candidates
- More able bodies

Acceptance

Training
- The training will create the kind of leader we need
- She will be like the rest of us after she graduates

Mental Strength
- Women have the mental strength to do this job
- Women are just as mentally resiliant

Attitude
- Women have overcome every other obstacle
- There are plenty of women that can do this job
- It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when

Figure 5: The Acceptance Model

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Summary

Chapter 4 detailed how the researcher analyzed the data and comprehensively reviewed the IQ results by comparing what was said by the CRO and what was written within the Implementation Plan. By carefully coding the interview data, the researcher identified the barriers and drivers to lay the foundation for integrating women into any combat career field. Chapter 5 will offer further conclusions and recommendations for what could be done with these results, as well as further research opportunities.

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V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Overview

This study collected insight from current CROs on their perception on women joining their career field. Since the rescinding of the 1994 DGCDAR, there has been little research conducted on integrating women into these combat units. A qualitative study, using Grounded Theory methodology answered the research question and IQs. Data collection occurred via semi-structured interviews, and applied initial and axial coding during the data analysis phase to identify the main themes. This chapter summarizes the conclusions of the overarching research question and subsequent IQs, provides recommended actions, provides future research opportunities and concludes with implications.

Conclusions of Research

The participants were consistently open-minded to incorporating women into their career field, noting many advantages women bring in order to make them an even stronger force. Many of the participants provided their confidence in women's ability to be a CRO and complete all of the training requirements, their only concern with that was maintaining the standards that are in place now. It was stated multiple times by multiple CROs that if a female(s) could complete the training requirements with the same standards as the rest of them, she would be welcomed and accepted.

The barriers associated with what the participants stated were the least amount of codes compared to the other IQs/themes (see Table 2 in Chapter 4). The barriers that were mentioned by the CROs did correlate with the seven concerns outlined in the Air

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Force's Implementation Plan (James, 2015). Hence, research is needed within those areas that were noted by both senior leaders and the men on the ground. The most common barrier identified during the interviews was recruiting, and how there needs to be more emphasis on it, especially now that the scope of applicants has expanded. This career field needs more people, men or women and the lack of recruiting is not helping anyone.

Participants had a lot of input on the drivers associated with this integration. Some of the CROs provided suggestions for integration, either from previous experience or watching other career fields undergo this same assimilation. The WISR was noted often and how the research on the physical needs of this job was an excellent method of research. The goal of the WISR was to understand the operational requirements and test women's capability of completing them, which coincided with the CROs confidence in women's capabilities, both physically and mentally. The CROs know there will be women joining them, it's just a matter of when and they firmly believe in their professionalism as a subculture to handle this change.

The culture change is the ultimate goal, striving to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued. Some of the CROs voiced how their senior leaders need to communicate more, and have transparent conversations with what needs to change and when. This community is already accepting of new-comers, they simply want to understand what programs, policies and/or tools are available to help, and that's where their CRO leadership comes in. All of the CROs are in agreement when it comes to the standards, that they should not be lowered. According to them, it will prevent any reduction in mission effectiveness.

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Process Model

In order to answer the overall research question, a process model was generated. The results were utilized within the process model, Figure 6 depicts the items that need to be identified. This model can also be adapted by any organization undergoing a similar change. Starting at the top and working clock-wise, the current state of the CROs was identified. From there, the barriers and drivers were identified. These drivers motivate and encourage the organization to make the change that is occurring, it creates the momentum needed in order to adapt to the change. The last module is to assess the culture and change, the researcher was able to assess the culture but the change has not occurred yet. The arrow encompassing all of the modules indicates this process will need to be repeated as necessary and more than likely will become a continuous cycle.
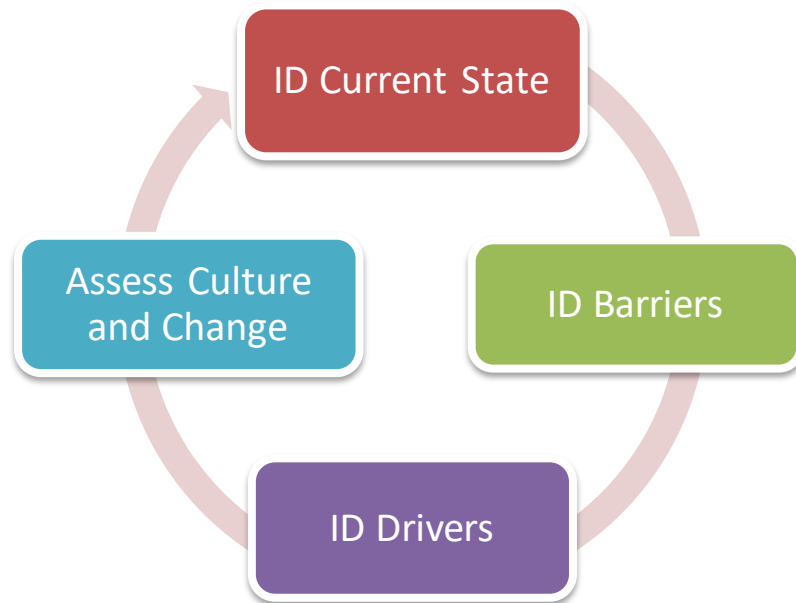

Figure 6: The Process of Change Model

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Change is always occurring and this process can help alleviate the stress that comes with the preparation of any change. This model provides a process for any military service, private company, or organization of any kind to follow and utilize. It is flexible and malleable to what that particular organization needs, and will potentially increase the success of integrating the next change.

Using the Process of Change Model as a foundation for understanding, the researcher generated another model, Figure 7 is the Circle of Change Model. This model was used to visually demonstrate how we will achieve the successful integration of women into the CRO career field. Starting in the middle with the current perception, which is open-mindedness. By maintaining the entry standards and ensuring there's no perceived or actual preferential treatment, we move through the barriers. These propel the CROs into the driver portion of the circle, which is an increase in manpower and talent pool. Based on these elements the culture will change as women are introduced into the career field. The culture change will help recognize the advantages associated with diversifying the career field and how it can be leveraged and not viewed as a hindrance.
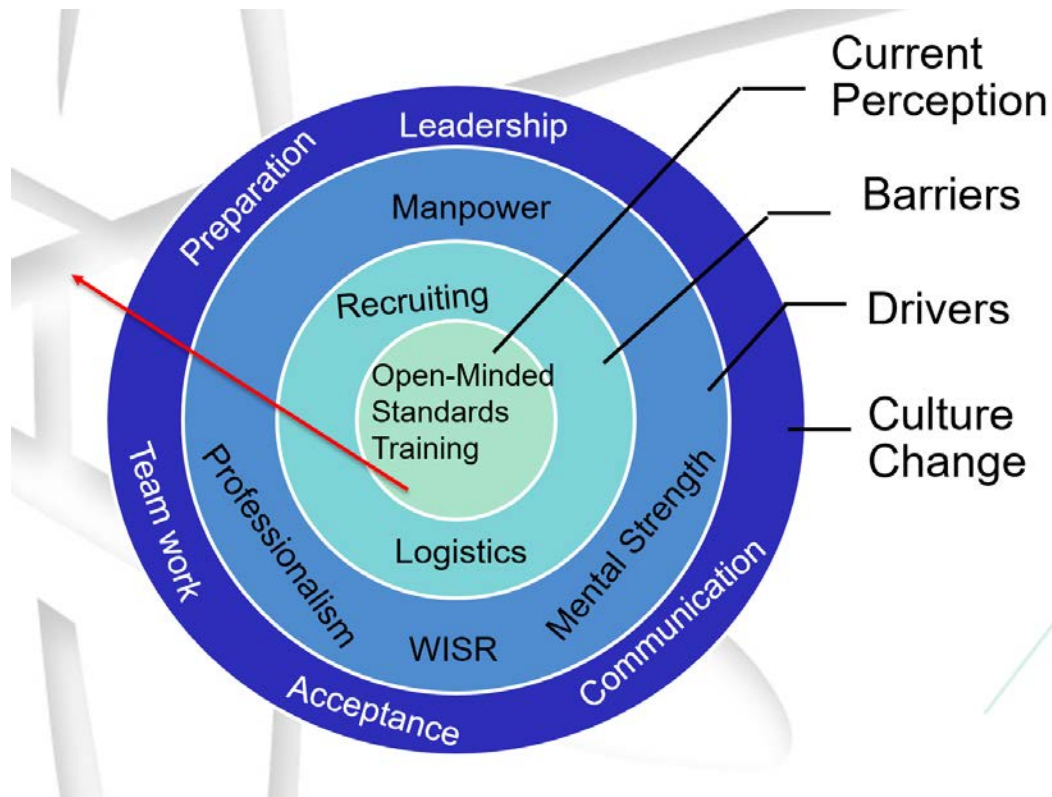
Figure 7: Conceptual Model—Circle of Change

Recommended Actions

Based on the conclusions, the CRO leaders were not communicating down what has already been presented within the Air Force's Implementation Plan. There needs to be more communication within this career field especially in regards to such a big change as most of their concerns were addressed within this plan.

For a more successful integration, the CROs should implement a training program to prepare them for the addition of women on their teams. Learning from the Canadians and their personal conduct policy training could potentially guide the CROs in the right direction. Finding a method that works for them and the best way to do that is by learned from proven practices.

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Overall, they need to be proactive, in the words of legendary football coach Vince Lombardi, "The best defense is a good offense". The CROs need to be preparing for this assimilation more than they currently are. They are depending too heavily on the time between a female entering the training pipeline and when she will arrive at the unit, and the Indoctrination Course molding her into the cookie-cutter CRO. She may not come out of that training identical to all the CROs that came before her.

An inclusive environment will aid in the ease of this assimilation, including CROs at the Squadron level would provide ownership. Ownership in this process will add to the overall support of this integration, people are more on-board with a decision when they felt they had a say in it. Having each unit identify how they could adjust their buildings or procure equipment and uniforms for women will include more CROs and therefore, create an inclusive environment.

Plausible Alternative Corroborations

One European study conducted in 2017 conducted research on institutional transformation and gender, and developed the Structural, Personnel, Output and Results (SPO) Model. The goal of this model was to ensure an outcome that contributes to gender equality. The researchers determined there were three different but related dimensions to an organizational change; which generated the SPO model. The three sides to the triangle are Structural, Personnel dimension of change, and an Output and Results that contributes to gender equality. To achieve the goal of gender equality, the internal mechanisms of the institute would have to be adjusted for a process of organizational development. Which demonstrated both an internal (organizational and personnel development) and external (service provision) dimension of gender integration.

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The changes within the structural and personnel dimensions were determined as a precondition for achieving results that correspond with the object of gender equality (Gender Institutional Transformation, 2017).

This European study supports the findings within this research and corroborates with the Circle of Change Model created. The researchers note the organizational or structural changes that will need to be adjusted with the integration of women, they need to understand how the current personnel perceive this change, and know the desired end state of a successful integration. Further demonstrating how the Circle of Change Model can be easily adapted and show potential to aid in a successful integration.

Another study conducted in 2012 aimed to provide guidance on integrating gender into their organization. The researchers developed steps to determined how to implement the gender integration framework. Those steps include: identify the barriers to achieve the objective of gender equality, articulate synergy between gender and development goals, identify drivers to address harmful norms, incorporate the drivers into the designed plan, and identify ways to measure the impact of the drivers on gender equality and development outcomes (Gender Integration Framework, 2012).

Those steps encompass pieces of this research, from the Circle of Change Model to the recommended actions. Both studies stress the importance of identifying the barriers and drivers with gender integration and utilizing those to propel into an organizational change. Articulating the synergy between gender and development goals falls into the recommended communication from the CRO leaders. Strengthening that synergy will keep every person on the same page and understand the direction of this assimilation. And lastly, determining ways to measure the impact is similar to the post-

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integration monitoring we can adapt from both this study and the Canadian Armed Forces.

Gender integration is an important topic, not only for the military but for the private sectors as well. These studies correlate strongly with what was determined inductively for this study, which strengthens the findings and emphasizes the process that can be followed for a successful integration.

Future Research Opportunities

This expansion of combat positions to women is still so recent that there needs to be further research conducted on this topic, whether it is for a different Service or another career field within the Air Force. Looking into the enlisted side of Pararescue, the PJs, would potentially provide deeper insight on the Pararescue community as a whole. Further research could also be done on the countries mentioned in Chapter 2, or expanding to other countries that have previously integrated. Utilizing those lessons to create a platform to build a strategy. Post-Integration research will be a big opportunity once time has passed and more women are within this combat career fields. Gaining the insight from the women that have been through the training requirements will potentially build the foundation for the future women who join these elite teams. Any future research on this topic will be beneficial, it would provide a better understanding of how to proactively approach or, if necessary, how to reactively approach women in these career field.

Implications

Throughout this research, it was evident that the CROs understand the benefits associated with this integration. They are open to accepting women and more able

bodies, but with no changes to their career field. The CROs only want the small changes of a separated 'Cage Area', bathrooms, locker rooms; basically the essential privacy necessary between males and females. Integration is not a quick, easy, one-time logistical fix, which makes it appear as a daunting task to tackle. This assimilation needs to be in the preparation stage for every ground combat unit and a constant topic of conversation if leaders want their organizations to remain successful. Even the units that have women in them now will still have new issues to face that they haven't had to encounter before.

The findings suggest that the sample of current Active Duty and Reserve CROs are not resistant to this change in their culture. They are confident in the time they have to prepare, because the training pipeline is typically two years long, they do not recognize the need to do anything right now. Until a female(s) is almost done with the training pipeline, they do not want to change anything about their facilities or purchase additional equipment. They are also confident in that they will have no issues with the caveat of not lowering the entry standards and not giving the female(s) any preferential treatment through the training.

The results from this study can be used to benefit other ground combat units in that it can be applied and adjusted as needed for a specific career field in any DoD Service. The insights and suggestions can be used as a foundation for an effective integration strategy. However, it is not just the CROs that benefits from a study such as this. Any organization that is undergoing a new assimilation of any sort can learn from this study on how to create their strategy.

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A proactive approach to integrating women should be a priority for the senior leaders in the CRO community. The potential issues that arise need to be addressed before they become real problems. This study showed what the current perception is for the CROs in the field right now, the barriers and drivers, as well as provided a foundation for the senior leaders to build an effective integration strategy.

Appendix A: Sponsor Letter

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR UNIVERSITY (AETC)

29 August 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL JASON D. PIFER

FROM: AFIT/EN

SUBJECT: TDY Request for AFIT Thesis Data Collection (Capt Samantha Bryan)

1. Capt Samantha Bryan is currently a full-time graduate student in the Master of Science in Logistics and Supply Chain Management degree program at the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT). All AFIT graduate students are required to complete an independent research study (thesis). Capt Bryan is studying the integration of women into the CRO career field. Her research is designed to yield a better understanding of how the AF might effectively assimilate women into this combat unit. The findings could reveal factors that are important to the successful integration of women in CRO and other combat units. I have attached a copy of Capt Bryan's thesis proposal for reference.

2. AFIT students rely on sponsors to fund thesis data collection efforts, particularly when data are not currently available. Given the exploratory nature of Capt Bryan's research, her data collection effort would be significantly more rigorous, and she would be able to gain more detailed insight, if she had the opportunity to visit Davis-Monthan AFB. The site visit and face-to-face interviews would provide her with a better understanding of the CROs' environment and requirements, which would increase the validity of her findings. Therefore, we respectfully request sponsorship of Capt Bryan to travel to Davis-Monthan AFB to collect data for her thesis effort. The site visit would cost approx. $1,500.

3. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at DSN 785-3636 x4737 or matthew.douglas@afit.edu. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

MATTHEW A. DOUGLAS, Lt Col, USAF
Dean of Students
Graduate School of Engineering and Management

Appendix B: IRB Exemption Letter

DEPARTMENT·OF·THE·AIR·FORCE
AIR·FORCE·INSTITUTE·OF·TECHNOLOGY
WRIGHT-PATTERSON·AIR·FORCE·BASE·OHIO

11 August 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR LT COL MATTHEW DOUGLAS, PHD

FROM: William A. Cunningham, Ph.D.
AFIT IRB Research Reviewer
2950 Hobson Way
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433-7765

SUBJECT: Approval for exemption request from human experimentation requirements (32 CFR 219, DoDD 3216.2 and AFI 40-402) for your study on Integration of women into the Combat Rescue Officer career field, package number REN20170020R Douglas.

1. Your request was based on the Code of Federal Regulations, title 32, part 219, section 101, paragraph (b) (2) Research activities that involve the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior unless: (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

2. Your study qualifies for this exemption because you are not collecting sensitive data, which could reasonably damage the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. Further, the demographic data you are utilizing and the way that you plan to report it cannot realistically be expected to map a given response to a specific subject.

3. This determination pertains only to the Federal, Department of Defense, and Air Force regulations that govern the use of human subjects in research. Further, if a subject's future response reasonably places them at risk of criminal or civil liability or is damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation, you are required to file an adverse event report with this office immediately.

WILLIAM A CUNNINGHAM, PH.D.
AFIT Exempt Determination Official

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Appendix C: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Thank you for allowing me to interview you. Please state your name, rank, unit.

Please tell me a little bit about your current job in your unit.

You know I'm here to gather information on women joining your career field. How do you feel about that? / What do you think about that?

Do you see any challenges associated with this?

Do you see any advantages with this integration?

What do you think needs to happen to make sure this process is successful? From the Air Force level? From your unit level?

Is your unit preparing for this?

Appendix D: Research Talking Paper

TALKING PAPER

ON

THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO THE COMBAT RESCUE OFFICER CAREER FIELD RESEARCH PROJECT

- The purpose of this talking paper is to introduce a research study being conducted by the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT). The purpose of the study is to identify how the Air Force can successfully integrate women into the Combat Rescue Officer (CRO) career field. The findings from this study will help senior leaders to create a plan for the assimilation of women with the perspectives of the current active duty CRO's that will be a part of the biggest mission change; working alongside a female in daily operations and training.

- Issue / Research Problem Statement

-- The Air Force needs to have a solid understanding of how to integrate women into the CRO career field in order to alleviate issues that inevitably will arise. When changing the dynamic of a culture, there will be problems to resolve and creating a way-ahead is how we can have a chance at success. By understanding efforts to integrate women in other career fields, combined with an understanding of current perceptions of CROs regarding integration in their career field, this research seeks to assist leaders in integrating women into the career field and maintaining mission effectiveness.

- Research Objectives

-- Posturing the CRO career field for the successful integration of women

-- Collect the perspectives on how to integrate women from current active duty CRO's

- Research Methodology

-- Semi-structured interviews

- Points of Contact

-- Researcher, Capt Samantha Bryan

-- Advisor, Lt Col Matthew Douglas

--------------Page Break--------------

Capt Bryan/AFIT/ENS/DSN 785-6565/srb/01Aug2017

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Appendix E: Physical Fitness Tests and Standards for Battlefield Airmen Study

Physical Fitness Tests and Standards for Battlefield Airmen Study

Executive Synopsis

STUDY PURPOSE - develop and validate occupationally-specific, operationally-relevant, science-based criterion physical fitness tests and standards for Battlefield Airmen AFSCs

GUIDANCE - in January 2013, the Secretary of Defense rescinded the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule policy restricting women from certain occupations engaged in direct ground combat or long range reconnaissance. In response to the policy change, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed the Services to develop, review, and validate individual occupational physical standards for all occupational specialties, with emphasis on previously closed AFSCs to women, in compliance with law. The following AFSCs are currently closed to women in the Air Force:

1C2XX - Combat Control	13CX - Special Tactics Officer
1T2XX - Pararescue	13DX - Combat Rescue Officer
1C4XX - Tactical Air Control Party	1W0X2 - Special Operations Weather

METHODS

AF Fitness Testing and Standards Unit (AF Fitness Unit) executed four major steps in the study: three to develop and validate tests and standards and one post-study step to implement and verify. Battlefield Airmen career fields engaged in each study step.

STUDY RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Requirement: SecDef / CJCS directive (above) - AF develop, review, and validate occupational performance standards for all AFSCs, with emphasis on closed AFSCs. Eligibility for training and development within designated occupational fields should consist of qualitative and quantifiable standards reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for each occupation. For occupational specialties open to women, the occupational performance standards must be gender-neutral as required by Public Law 103-160, Section 542.

Study Results: developed occupationally specific, operationally relevant, critical physical tasks for each BA AFSC in the Physical Demands Analysis (PDA) Phase of the Physical Tests and Standards for BA Study. The PDA included Battlefield Airmen focus groups, electronic Battlefield Airmen objective scoring assessments, full mission profile observations, and Battlefield Airmen leadership interviews.

Recommended Action: AF submit AFSC-specific, critical physical tasks -based physical requirements and occupational performance standards to SECAF to validate compliance with law

PJ-CRO Critical Physical Tasks (CPTs)

SMALL UNIT TACTICS

CONDUCT OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE MANEUVERS; MANEUVER TO COVER/FIRING POSITION (CRAWL TO SPRINT) (Context: perform immediate action drills & small unit tactics)

TRANSITION FROM PRONE TO KNEELING TO STANDING POSITIONS (Context: perform immediate action drills & small unit tactics)

TRAVERSE ADVERSE TERRAIN AND URBAN AREAS (Context: maneuver through operational environment)

MANEUVER OVER OBSTACLES IN AN OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT (Context: maneuver through operational environment, e.g., climb walls/obstacles)

ASSIST OTHER OPERATORS TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES (Context: maneuver through operational environment)

CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE

MANUALLY BREACH ENTRY WITH TOOLS OR BY KICKING (Context: perform building entry, clearing, and close-quarter combat operations)

ATTACK OR DEFEND SELF AGAINST ENEMY AND ESTABLISH CONTROL (Context: perform hand-to-hand combat with or without weapons)

RESTRAIN AND CONTROL ENEMY COMBATANT OR NONCOMPLIANT SURVIVOR (Context: restrain/control enemy combatant or panic stricken/noncompliant survivor)

CASUALTY COLLECTION

DRAG CASUALTY OVER ADVERSE TERRAIN WITHOUT LITTER (Context: move casualties over adverse terrain to cover (without litters))

CARRY CASUALTY OVER ADVERSE TERRAIN WITHOUT LITTER (Context: move casualties over adverse terrain to cover (without litters))

ESTABLISH A LIFT POSITION AND RAISE OR LOWER LITTER FROM GROUND TO ABOVE HEAD (Context: maneuver litter over adverse terrain)

MANEUVER LITTER OVER ADVERSE TERRAIN WITH TWO LITTER BEARERS (Context: maneuver litter over adverse terrain)

MANEUVER LITTER UP AND OVER EDGES / LEDGES (Context: maneuver litter over adverse terrain)

HAUL ROPE / RESCUE SYSTEM TO RAISE RESCUER AND PATIENT (Context: operate high/low-angle rescue system)

ARCTIC OPERATIONS

EXECUTE MOVEMENT IN SNOW WITH CROSS COUNTRY SKIS, SNOW SHOES OR CRAMPONS (Context: maneuver through arctic/mountainous environment)

PERFORM ICE AXE AXE ARRESTS OR SELF RECOVER PROCEDURES (Context: perform crevasse recovery procedures)

WATER OPERATIONS

EXECUTE SURFACE FIN SWIM (IN COMBAT GEAR) TO PACKAGE (Context: deploy packages into water using static line/free-fall jumper procedures; perform swift-water operations or water hoist recovery operations)

RIGHT THE VESSEL (Context: perform Combat Rubber Raiding Craft (CRRC) surface operations)

LIFT AND MOUNT MOTOR ON TRANSOM (Context: perform Duck deployments (H,K,S,T) and RAMZ deployment de-rigging)

PROPEL MANUALLY WITH OARS (Context: perform CRRC surface operations)

MANEUVER VESSEL THROUGH SURF ZONE AND NAVIGATE CURRENTS (Context: perform surf zone shoreline rescue)

MAINTAIN BODY CONTROL, POSTURE / STABILITY IN CHALLENGING CONDITIONS (Context: control/stabilize self on aircraft, vessels, mantelshelves, ladders, uneven ground, in the sea, etc.)

TRANSIT VIA SWIM (LEAD MAN) (Context: perform individual and team water-crossing techniques)

MANEUVER UNDERWATER CONDUCTING SEARCH AND RESCUE PROCEDURES (Context: perform closed-circuit/open-circuit dive operations including subsurface, infil/exfil ops)

PERFORM UNDERWATER BUDDY RESCUES (Context: perform SAR / buddy rescues using open-circuit dive equipment)

RECOVER / TRANSFER OBJECTS OR PERSONNEL IN WATER ONTO VESSEL OR SHORE (Context: perform recovery operations from water via vessels, aircraft or shoreline)

ROPE LADDER ACTIVITIES

SECURE AND CONTROL LADDER FOR TEAM MEMBERS TO CLIMB (Context: maneuver into aircraft or vessel from water, land or another vessel)

ASCEND LADDER TO AIRCRAFT OR WATERCRAFT (Context: maneuver into aircraft or vessel from water, land or another vessel)

TRANSITION YOUR BODY OVER THE EDGE OF A VESSEL OR AIRCRAFT (Context: maneuver into aircraft or vessel from the water, land or another vessel)

PERFORM CLIMBING PROCEDURES
ASCEND TREE TO RESCUE HUNG JUMPER (Context: perform tree parachute rescue evacuations)
ASCEND VERTICAL PITCH USING VARIOUS CLIMBING TECHNIQUES (at a minimum 5.10a difficulty) (Context: perform climbing procedures)
EXECUTE COMMANDO CRAWL / INVERTED HAND OVER HAND CROSSING ACROSS A GAP (Context: construct and cross high lines)
FAST ROPE INSERTION EXTRACTION SYSTEM
STOP AND LOCK OUT ON ROPE WHILE EXECUTING FAST ROPE DESCENT (Context: perform fast-rope insertion extraction system (FRIES) procedures)
PARACHUTE OPERATIONS
DON EQUIPMENT, PARACHUTE, AND RUCK (Context: perform full combat equipment static line/Military Free Fall (MFF)/water parachute ops to include scuba utility deployment system (SPUDS) parachute jumps)
DON PARACHUTE, PERSONNEL (TANDEM) AND EQUIPMENT (BUNDLE), SQUAT / STAND, MOVE TO THE DOOR, HANG AT THE DOOR RAMP (Context: perform military tandem/tethered bundle (MTTB) operations)
MAINTAIN STABILITY IN FREE FALL (Context: perform full combat equipment MFF parachute ops)
MAINTAIN CONTROL / GRIP ON TOW BAR OR RISERS (Context: perform full combat equipment static line/MFF/water parachute ops and surface searches, such as diver tow)
RIG AND DE-RIG EQUIPMENT
CONSTRUCT EQUIPMENT BUNDLE / PACKAGE AND MANEUVER INTO POSITION ON AIRCRAFT (Context: rig and de-rig equipment, door/ramp bundles, motorcycles, ATVs, RAMZs or ARCs for land, sea, or aerial deployments)
MANUALLY DEPLOY EQUIPMENT OUT OF THE AIRCRAFT DOOR / RAMP (Context: rig and de-rig equipment, door/ramp bundles, motorcycles, ATVs, RAMZs or ARCs for land, sea, or aerial deployments)
RIG / DERIG EQUIPMENT (Context: rig and de-rig equipment for aerial deployments, dive operations, cast and recovery operations)
ASSEMBLE EQUIPMENT AND RIG VESSEL FOR DEPLOYMENT (Context: pack deployment or contingency equipment for shipments or movements)
MANUALLY LOAD EQUIPMENT, BUNDLES, AND PALLETS ONTO TRUCKS, VEHICLE, AIRCRAFT (Context: pack deployment or contingency equipment for shipments or movements)
MANEUVER BUNDLE TO DOOR / RAMP ON AIRCRAFT (Context: pack, rig, and de-rig equipment door/ramp bundles for land or sea aerial deliveries)
PERSONNEL EXTRACTION
TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT AND GEAR TO OBJECTIVE, *e.g.*, WRECKAGE SITE, DIVE SITE OR VESSEL (Context: remove survivors from aircraft or vehicle wreckage, structures, and confined spaces)
EMPLOY AND OPERATE EXTRICATION DEVICES AND EQUIPMENT (Context: remove survivors from aircraft or vehicle wreckage, structures, and confined spaces)
CONSTRUCT AND INSERT SHORING SYSTEMS TO STABILIZE WRECKAGE (Context: perform lift-bag recovery and confined space collapsed structure procedures)
REMOVE SURVIVORS FROM AVALANCHES, AIRCRAFT OR VEHICLE WRECKAGE, COLLAPSED STRUCTURES, OR CONFINED SPACES (Context: remove survivors from avalanches, aircraft or vehicle wreckage, structures, and confined spaces)
RECOVER / REMOVE SURVIVORS / REMAINS AND SENSITIVE MATERIALS FROM WATER, WRECKAGE, OR VEHICLE (Context: remove personnel from aircraft or vehicle wreckage, structures, and confined spaces)
DIG AND DISPLACE SNOW OR DIRT TO EVACUATE VICTIM (Context: perform avalanche search and recovery procedures)
REMOVE DEBRIS, OBJECTS, OR OBSTACLES TO GAIN PATIENT ACCESS OR ESTABLISH LANDING AREA (Context: clear building entry and landing areas for recovery forces at incident sites)

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14. ABSTRACT

As of 1 January 2016, across the Department of Defense, every combat position was opened to females. Currently, the Combat Rescue Officer (CRO) career field has not had any women attempt the training requirements in order to become fully qualified. To prepare for this integration of women into an all-male career field, leadership needs to understand the current perception of the CROs that are in the field now. This paper presents a foundation for the development of an assimilation strategy, by triangulating the insights from a sample of CROs, historical documents and researcher observations to produce recommendations for success.

The researcher conducted a qualitative study, interviewing thirteen fully qualified CROs to gather their current perceptions, opinions, and insight on integrating women into their currently all-male career field. Data analysis revealed that the CROs are open-minded and accepting of women, as long as the entry standards are not lowered. The first step to a successful integration strategy is to understand current perceptions, as well as some drivers and barriers to culture change, and this paper provides that perspective for the career field leadership.

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