

ON THE COVER

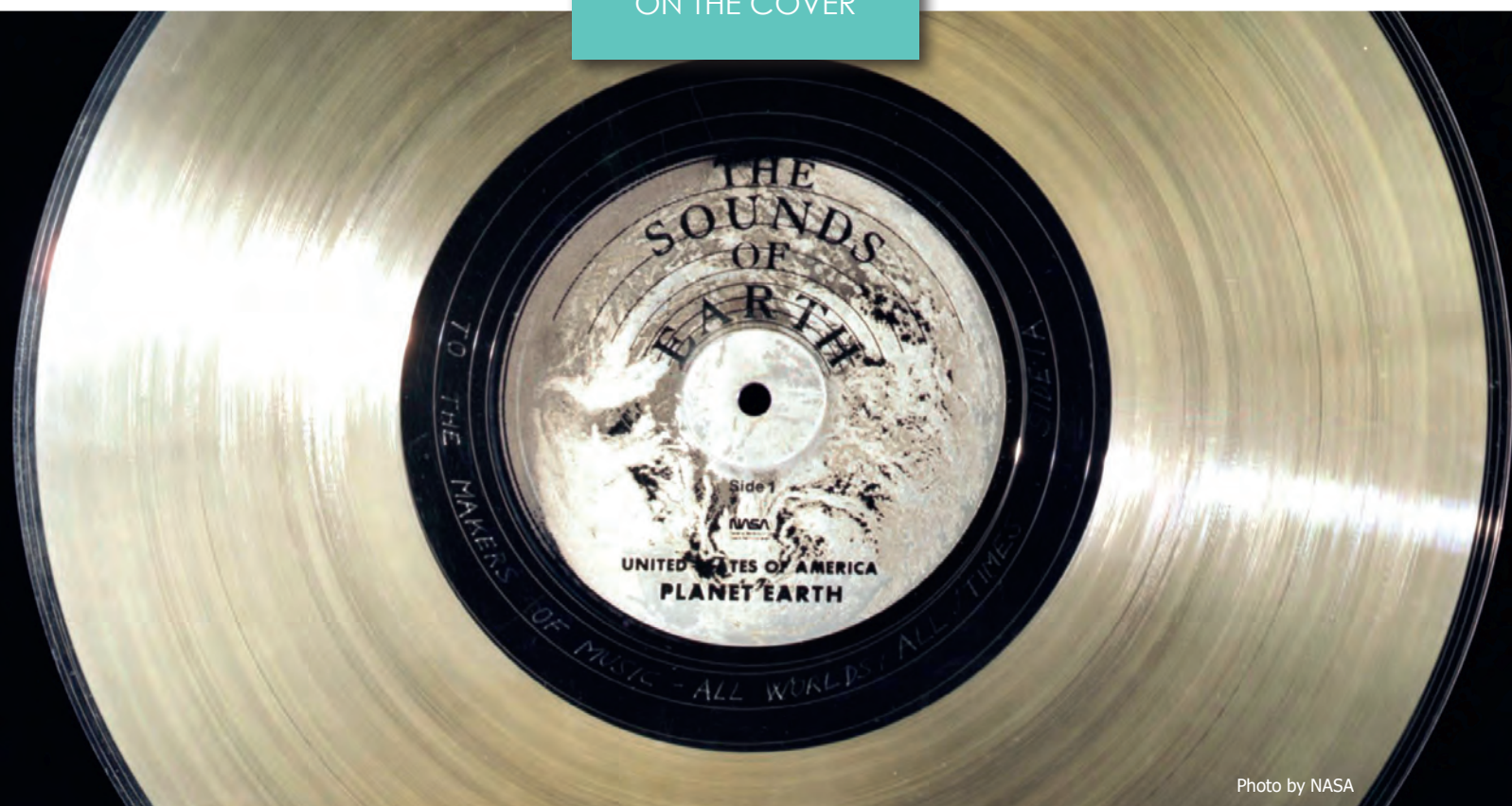


Photo by NASA

**Q:** How would you define diversity?

**A:** As both people and policy recognizing and cultivating individual differences.

We asked the Commander and nine staff members at the NATO Joint Warfare Centre what role they think diversity plays in terms of service, culture, and leadership. In the pages that follow, their multiple perspectives paint a varied and positive picture.

Brigadier General Douglas K. Clark  
Paul Sewell • Sarah Denieul • Inci Kucukaksoy

# DIVERSITY

“The path to breaking us **out of our rigid thinking patterns** is not always smooth.”



**PAUL SEWELL**  
Organizational Development



**SARAH DENIEUL**  
Gender Advisor



**BRIGADIER GENERAL DOUGLAS K. CLARK**  
U.S. Marine Corps  
Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff

# STOP!

We would like you to answer an easy question. Read the following first, the question is coming.

Every moment our attention is influenced and distorted by our own internal biases and mental filters. Our mind makes quick, almost automatic decisions, which shape what we see and experience in the moment.

For example, when we scan the headlines in a magazine, our minds quickly assess for value, for what to read and what to ignore. The downside is that these mental filters are limiting, and rarely show us something new, something different, or something which could foster growth and development. These biases are like an internet algorithm showing us only what we have seen before.

So, here is the question. Are you able to see through your own mental filters and automatic or unconscious judgements, and read an article on, say, diversity? Admittedly, the term diversity has not always received good press. Perhaps this is because we have had neither choice in its implementation, nor discussion about its benefits. Diversity has sometimes been the sour little pill we have had to swallow without knowing that it is the vitamin about to energize our environment, and invigorate our lives.

One reason behind the resistance to diversity, and other similarly important topics, may be that they are often delivered in monologue designed to tell us what to believe and how to respond. This is unfortunate because diversity, as a topic, thrives in dialogue. In-

deed, dialogue gets us to the *heart of diversity* allowing us to broaden our worldview by listening and talking with others and embracing the value of difference.

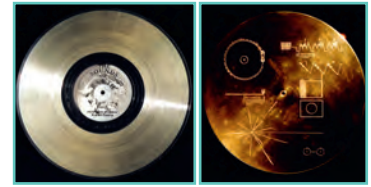
So, in the spirit of dialogue, the following articles are part of a broader package on diversity. Rather than an academic paper on the topic, this section has a series of short interviews with different staff across the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC). These are a small portion of the people that make up the Centre's "One Team". Read their take on diversity across the themes of leadership, service, and culture.

If you have read this far, congratulations! Now keep reading to be a part of these reflections and discover why diversity really is the strength of our NATO Alliance. ✦



### THE GOLDEN RECORD NASA VOYAGER 1 AND 2

The Voyager message is carried by a phonograph record, a 12-inch (30.48 cm) gold-plated copper disk, containing sounds and images selected to portray the diversity of life and culture on Earth, communicating a story of our world to extraterrestrials. Photos by NASA



## What does diversity look like to you? How would you define it?

**Douglas K. Clark:** I love the feeling of walking into a room filled with different people. I think it is human nature to notice people who are different from yourself. By different I do not mean people who look different, because you can look different, but still think in the same way, and that is not what diversity is about. When attempting to define diversity, the word "setting" comes to mind. To me, diversity is, therefore, a *setting* in which a group of people has a variety of styles and ideas. There would be even more diversity in this setting if the people are from different social backgrounds and of different genders. I believe that a setting that aggregates thoughts, concepts, and designs from people from a range of different backgrounds produces true diversity.

**Paul Sewell:** I understand the typical definition of diversity, nevertheless my personal definition is that diversity is a positively loaded word and appreciating everything around me that is different to who I am. In other words, the people I meet, the ideas we discuss and develop, the books I read, the news I follow, and so on, constitute what diversity means to me. I like to ask myself how each of these helps me become better.

**Sarah Denieul:** I spent a good part of my formative years in an environment where the simple diversity of colour and ethnic origin was not only rare, but barely tolerated, and definitely not embraced. Several decades later, diversity — for me — still begins, to a certain extent, in that room full of people who look different and are loving it! In my opinion, looking different leads to being different, but this is just one of the many indicators that point towards diverse life experiences, lead-

ing to diverse perspectives, and in turn, to diverse thinking and behaviour. I would define the concept of diversity as understanding that each human being is different. Diversity recognizes these differences, respects them, explores them, supports them, and actively seeks them out. Diversity accords equal value to individuals, and to our infinite differences. Gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexual or religious orientation, social background, education, disability, age, and more, make each of us unique beings.

## Why is diversity important and valuable to you?

**Paul Sewell:** The more exposed you are to different voices, thoughts, and perspectives, the more flexible and adaptable you become. If this happens to a group of people, that group will be defined as diverse. In my view, an individual view is always limited until exposed to other perspectives that adds more pieces to the human puzzle. There is a caveat to this thought, and that is that the value you get from being exposed to diversity depends on your attitude. Your attitude is always acts as a filter that colours your experience, and if you see the value that diversity can give you, then the experience is unlimited.

**Sarah Denieul:** Diversity is important to me personally because it is people-based, it values difference, and fosters inclusion. Inclusivity advances values that I care about such as respect, acceptance, tolerance, caring, empowerment, curiosity, and partnership. I am looking forward to the rolling out of the Insights Programme at the Joint Warfare Centre, which seeks to further capitalize on our diversity, helping us to play to our strengths and to those of others, and to learn how to enjoy teaming up with those whose approach is different from ours.

**Douglas K. Clark:** NATO is a political organization that must maintain a military capability to defend its Allies. Diversity through new and innovative ideas is important and valuable. It gives our organization more opportunities to outwit and dominate, for example, modern battlefield threats, such as information and cyber warfare. By bringing more solutions to the table, we will be in a better position to choose the right one.

## Why do you think diversity is beneficial to your organization?

**Douglas K. Clark:** Diversity is beneficial to the Joint Warfare Centre because our mission is to deliver collective training and warfare development to NATO commands in order to make those commands and the entire Alliance better. Our approach is built on a culture of respect and professionalism, enabling curiosity, innovation, and cooperation. We don't need diversity — we demand it! That is how we will meet those requirements.

**Paul Sewell:** No one has a monopoly on the truth, particularly within NATO, where consensus is a core tenet of our existence. Therefore, diversity is not only beneficial but essential. Particularly in a military organization where we are trained to comply with the chain of command, we should be concerned when we no longer hear dissenting voices. Having said that though, the path to breaking us out of our rigid thinking patterns is not always smooth, and it is common to see reactions of skepticism and hostility in the face of unexpected change or challenges. Managing diversity can get messy if organizations do not consider issues of power, inequality, politics, history, culture, and lived experiences. The fact is that the world continues to change, and the norm is diversity in many places today. Tapping into diversity is, therefore, a valuable enabler.



**Sarah Denieul:** Training and developing warfare in preparation for the constantly evolving and ever more complex face of conflict requires innovative and agile thinking. This thinking is generated by the coming together of a diverse set of people with their different experiences, angles of approach, and ways of thinking. In this respect, I think diversity must be the Joint Warfare Centre's absolute best asset, as it allows for an energetic, positively disruptive and open environment that enables the organization to adapt, remain at the top of its game, and respond to the needs of those we train. In summary, this is us together, in all our diversity, making NATO better!

## When did you realize diversity was important in the workplace during your career?

**Sarah Denieul:** I don't really remember any particular defining moment in my working life when I realized that diversity was essential. However, in recent years, I can think of several instances at the Joint Warfare Centre, when I have been reminded that diversity is good for all business, not only for our core tasks as mentioned before. Two examples are the "Vision 2025" workshops, which have sought and valued the experience, opinions, and ideas of the whole organization in order to initiate change and adapt to future needs. The "One Team" workshops have, for years now, provided space for teams to discover and appreciate their individual differences and interdependencies in order to work better together.

**Douglas K. Clark:** I believe the value of diversity really resonated with me in 2009-2010, when I worked at the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Headquarters in Kabul. With 48 nations working together, I witnessed true diversity where intelligent people provided great ideas from a myriad of backgrounds, all unified by the same cause.

**Paul Sewell:** I was lucky to start my career in international education. The scholars were from over 60 different countries, which meant that I was exposed to 60 different perspectives over time. This helps you understand, and eventually appreciate that if there was a

clash, then it was often a misunderstanding rather than malice. Curiosity is vital! Later in my career, as I started with NATO, I learned many other ways in which we constitute a diverse workforce. For instance, there is diversity in our services, our military forces, civilian staff, and gender. Moreover, having worked in NATO for over 16 years now, and as I get older, I am becoming more aware of generational differences too, which is also an asset.

## How do you think the Alliance should embrace and harness diversity?

**Douglas K. Clark:** I think the Alliance embraces and harnesses diversity starting from the top, that is of each command's leadership. Initially, all officers and enlisted leadership must share the fact that each individual is unique. Moreover, we need to continue to recognize individual differences as a source of strength in our organization. Every NATO command acknowledges that race, religious beliefs, ethnicity, gender, and other means of differentiation provide opportunity to the Alliance. Every member of the Alliance must know that discrimination of any kind is not acceptable or tolerated. That is the easy part. The hard part is the next step, where each NATO entity solicits and captures new thinking and innovation from every member of each command to capitalize on our diversity of ideas.

Creating and maintaining a command climate that is open and rewarding to new thoughts, concepts, and designs from people from a range of different backgrounds will provide the diversity the Alliance demands.

**Sarah Denieul:** With a pool of 30 nations and more partners, a mix of civilian and military personnel from different services, and the regular rotation of military leaders and staff, the Alliance is practically defined by diversity! But, is the Alliance able to galvanize and nurture its innate diversity enough to achieve that different, innovative thinking that keeps it fit for purpose in today's world? For example, are some nations under-represented in our military and civilian bodies? Are native English speakers the ones who, more often than not, take the floor? Language should be an inclusive, rather than an exclusive tool, or a barrier to having your voice and ideas heard. The "NATO Gender-Inclusive Language Manual" is a step towards ensuring that everyone feels equally involved, valued, and accountable. Do we have a balance of men and women across our headquarters and across rank and grade? Can we recommend that nations promote a better gender balance in the military they send to NATO? Do our civilian recruitment packages and remote working policies attract single parents or young professionals? COVID-19 has forced an acceptance of teleworking. Could this be a solution moving forward to recruit and retain the diverse people we want and need?



Vision 2025 workshop

## THE JOINT WARFARE CENTRE (JWC) VISION

The JWC drives the delivery of collective training and warfare development at the operational and strategic levels. We are NATO's trusted advisor bridging Operations and Transformation, underpinning NATO readiness and future capability development. The JWC attracts and develops the most capable staff, both permanent and augmented, based on a reputation for excellence built on a culture of professionalism, curiosity, innovation, and cooperation.





**Paul Sewell:** Embracing and harnessing diversity are two very different things in my opinion. I don't think you can really harness diversity until you have embraced its value first. What I do see is that there are lots of efforts and initiatives on individual aspects of diversity, especially culture and gender, but no overarching principles or approaches to embrace all kinds of diversity. We also need to focus on understanding psychological and cognitive diversity, especially within our teams. These are very important for getting the most out of our people. You can have two people who are from the same service, culture, and gender and still be completely different from each other! This is why I am really excited with the work we are now doing at the Joint Warfare Centre on examining the different working styles within our teams and how we can harness these differences. We are surrounded by more diversity than we realize. We just need the eyes and ears to be open to it. ✦



▶ SCAN ME

WATCH the Interview

# 3

## THEMES: LEADERSHIP, SERVICE, CULTURE



"I think diversity within organizations leads to a greater acceptance of differences all around."

**Helena Potter**



"Communication and getting to know each other are essential to avoid problems."

**Colonel Peter Teeuw**



"It is important that the leadership of every organization takes the value of respect seriously."

**Major Melissa Sawyer**



"The JWC achieves its mission successfully, because we are a diverse workforce."

**Rear Admiral Jan C. Kaack**



"A diverse group of people tends to look at a problem from all angles."

**Chief Petty Officer Matthew English**



"Unconventional warfare requires unconventional approaches."

**Captain Tom Robertsen**



"Culture is so much more than national culture."

**May Linn Bie**



"Diversity is a strength that is preferred over marginalization."

**Colonel Flavio Lauri**



"Be polite, appreciate others, and learn from the differences."

**Lieutenant Colonel Stefan Kuehling**



"We usually tend to think that we are at the centre of the universe."

**Commander Robert Mikulski**

ONE TEAM



## I. LEADERSHIP



Rear Admiral Jan C. Kaack  
German Navy  
Commander

### How would you define your leadership style?

— As you might have realized already, I am a devotee of German-style mission command, which was invented to take account of the ever-growing complexity on the battlefield, and the understanding that a military leader cannot "control" everything. Instead, this concept stands for trust. Trust of the leader in their subordinates that they will use their "freedom of manoeuvre" to the best of their abilities within the boundaries of a given intent, and trust of the subordinates into their leader that they will stand in front of them regardless of the force of the wind that is blowing against them. This all requires a positive attitude towards your people, and the will to encourage them to try and test their ideas, a *"fail-safe environment"*, and the acceptance of risk that learning requires. I personally enjoy working in an atmosphere of "making-things possible". Why should anyone of our One Team accept less for themselves?

Such an atmosphere has been the foundation to develop — together — the JWC's Vision 2025 and its innovative approaches, and has always inspired me to self-improve, think outside the box, and be innovative. And all that with a good sense of humour.

### What sources, texts, and experiences have helped you develop as a leader, and why?

— I had the pleasure of being able to experience the beauty of leadership since I was a young scout leader at the age of 13. What I learned there over the years definitely primed my skills that I would have later needed in commanding fast patrol boats in the transitional Cold War times, ships and maritime task groups, a flotilla, or lastly, the Joint Warfare Centre. In fact, throughout my life, I have done my best to learn from others through observation and communication. And, as every personality has a different approach towards other people, there were really bad examples, but also those that inspired me. Reading has always been a part of this "observation" and helped me tremendously to sharpen my own approaches as it gave me the opportunity to extract principles from the examples of other leaders, and to see how they applied themselves and their talents. Especially in the domains of "leading by example", "look at your crew", "don't leave anyone behind", and "don't take yourself too seriously", just to name a few. Furthermore, and especially in command, one should always be open to direct feedback on you, your ideas, and your decisions from the people you work with every day. I have always enjoyed this — but you need to find those who dare to speak up. The higher in rank you get, the harder it becomes to receive real (and sometimes hard) feedback. But without it, you cannot develop further. Having said this, I believe I have been very fortunate to have great teammates, who dare to speak up and share their thoughts with me, be they the different command master chiefs that I had the pleasure of working with, friends, or my military assistant, and aide-de-camp. The toughest feedback, the most honest and blunt comments though I have always received from my family. Thank God!

### How do you, as a leader, seek out diverse perspectives and what value do they bring?

— As such, diversity offers different perspectives on our life, our business, our thinking, and our approaches to challenges. Sitting together on a daily basis with different nationalities, cultures, and genders, and discussing the challenges of the day and tomorrow ensures that a multitude of different perspectives are considered, which ultimately makes our own decisions more encompassing and better. The JWC, with its One Team Programme, achieves its mission successfully, because we are a diverse workforce. I fully embrace that approach, and do think that further investing in our new Insights Programme will make us even better in understanding,

appreciating, and exploiting our own diversity. Thus, it will help us achieving our goal, which is that *"Together! We make NATO better!"*

### Have you ever experienced any leadership challenges due to a diverse work environment?

— From my own experience in the German Navy, I can tell you that opening-up the navy for female personnel definitely challenged the organization as it did with many other military organizations. Pregnancy, paternity leave, different behaviours — all was new, and many were not willing to accept the change, and thus exclusively focused on the new challenges. Challenges and opportunities however, go hand in hand, and it is the leader's responsibility to make the opportunities prevail. Thus, when "we" became pregnant, it was clear for me that my wife and I needed some kind of "fair share". Why? Because I had married a wonderful woman, who also had a career with a bright outlook in the Navy Medical Corps. Thus, I chose to take my share of paternity leave, which had just recently been made available within the forces. Another reason was that I felt I had to set an example as a well-trained young officer, so that my fellow sailors would also dare to take their due time. As the first general staff officer who chose to take "paternity leave" my superiors guaranteed that this would be the end of my career — which it obviously was not.

### Can you please explain, as a leader, your thoughts on affirmative action with regard to achieving diversity?

— At the end, it is the leader's task to promote their leadership beliefs. Organizations are always somewhat reluctant to change, and might need a little push from time to time. Affirmative action in that respect can provide that push, but needs follow-up action to make its effects long-lasting and help to make better use of the then diverse workforce and its potential.

When I had the pleasure of commanding my very own frigate in the early 2000s, I realized that the Navy was not really seeing the advantages of a more diverse working environment on board their units. This resulted in female sailors being sent in small numbers of one or two, or in my case seven, in a crew of over 240, and obviously, the imbalance created many challenges. In fact, research from other navies showed that challenges become opportunities when you reach a certain percentage of diversity in any given organization. When we finally achieved this in the German Navy (after applying quite some affirmative action), results immediately improved. ✦





**Helena Potter**  
Financial Controller  
Office of Budget and Finance



My primary leadership style would be to always strive to be an enthusiastic, forward-looking, inclusive, and supportive leader. However, I am also conscious of the need to adapt my leadership to the context, to each situation, and to the team I am leading. For example, in a normal situation, I would involve and consult the team on most matters, but in an emergency, where more rapid decisions are required from me, I can be more directive in order to create a clear plan of action. Adopting a 'chameleon' type of approach is also part of my leadership style, in that I use my values to guide my actions. I endeavour to lead the way I would like to be led, staying mindful that different members of my team might have different needs.

The executive MBA that I did in my early 30s has given me a good leadership foundation. I found that learning from fellow students fosters deeper understanding of the material and a positive attitude toward what we were studying.

A book that really inspired me back then was *Leading Change* by John P. Kotter, as it armed me with the tools I needed to lead my team through a difficult period of a company-wide reorganization. A couple of years later, my boss at the time embarked his leadership team on a personal development journey, which

meant taking a week out every quarter during a year to do a retreat somewhere in the Swiss mountains. As part of this project, we got a long list of books to read, which included titles such as *The Alchemist*, *The Art of Happiness*, *The Four Agreements*, *The Art of War*, *How to Win Friends & Inspire People*, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* etc. His idea was that in order to become better at leading people you first need to lead yourself (take charge of your self-development).

For me, having a diverse perspective is essential when leading diverse multinational teams. You have to keep an open mind to other people's beliefs and cultures. Sometimes it means agreeing to disagree. Moreover, I find the best way to keep an open mind is by reading widely, listening to different talks, podcasts, conferences, and keeping up to date on what is happening in the world and in your areas of interest. I like the idea that I will continue to evolve as the world around me changes, i.e., my opinions, my certitudes, and the way I tackle situations, and that I am able to adopt different mindsets. Diverse perspectives on various topics help nourish new ways of looking at things and can lead to paradigm changes that bring leaps forward.

Most of my career I have been the only woman in the leadership teams I have been part of. Those have been non-gender diverse environments at the top of the hierarchy. This said, I rarely felt left out or less part of the team, and in terms of nationalities and cultures, they were all diverse teams. I think diversity within organizations leads to a greater acceptance of differences all around.

I can imagine though that it can be hard for someone who has never worked in a diverse environment to start doing so without preparation. The challenges I have faced have been with external entities from homogeneous environments, and who were consequently not used to dealing with diverse teams.

An example was when I was leading a procurement process for a new multi-million-euro billing system, and the vendors sent all male teams to pitch. I found it hard to get the lead salesperson to address me directly and maintain eye contact. Despite being the most senior person and the decision maker in the room, they would consistently address my male deputies. After this, I made sure that having diverse sales and leadership teams was a criterion for selecting vendors, incorporating

this criterion in a solution requirements brief.

I am in favour of affirmative action, as I find that change is too slow if you wait for people to become more accepting of diversity and go outside their comfort zones. However, I see it as an intermediate step that will allow organizations to reap the benefits of diversity faster. In due course, mentalities will evolve and implementing diversity will be seen as a matter of normal working practice. In other words, affirmative action will be a thing of the past." ✦



**Chief Petty Officer**  
**Matthew English**  
British Navy  
Former Head, Shared Admin



As a leader, I normally switch leadership styles depending on changing requirements of organizations and employees. At the JWC, I am surrounded by individuals who have a great deal of experience that I can 'tap into'. This generally means that I have the confidence in my team being able to take an active role in the decision-making process. In other words, I can expect the 'troops' to share their ideas and opinions, despite the Branch Head retaining the final say over decisions.

At a later stage in my career, I was introduced to the academic side of leadership with Maslow's hierarchy of needs establishing what



humans need and what drives and motivates them. This basic source led me to understand how mutually beneficial relationships and positive environments are conducive to work, which is something that we all want. I think we can all cite good and bad leaders from our own experiences, and I have tried very hard not to turn into the bad leader that I have had the displeasure to work for.

The definition of diversity is illustrated very well in NATO with the inclusion of people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds, and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc. The JWC benefits from this practice with a diversity of talents, which enables a broader range of skills among employees. With diversity of experience and perspectives come strong and sustainable results. I find that it is important to encourage contributions from everyone in my team, even from those who are less vocal of nature. The solutions of a diverse group of people are more durable, as they tend to look at a problem from 'all angles'.

The aim of any workplace is for its employees to work together towards a common goal. The organization must embrace personal differences, ensuring a transition towards a more inclusive workplace. At the heart of this transition is the common enemy: change! Many times, I have witnessed employees react to changes, sometimes with outright rejection and protests. Whatever the problem may be, the management needs to help the employees adopt the changes with the minimum amount of hassle. I believe that diversity in the organization is already an asset. Nevertheless, we should continue towards balancing diversity within the organization too. An equal opportunities policy allows a step towards managing diversity by providing employment without fear of discrimination. I can do my part, and that is: as a leader, I can treat everybody fairly. However, this key principle is sometimes forgotten within high pressure and demanding business environments.

All people are valuable and deserve to be treated respectfully. A leader who practices fairness promotes harmony, good will, and a sense of equity among colleagues. In addition, a good leader seeks to gain as many perspectives as they can. Simply put, I believe affirmative action with regards to diversity is about fairness, not only in the workplace, but also in life in general." ✦

## II. SERVICE



**Captain Tom Robertsen**  
Royal Norwegian Navy  
Director of Management

### **What are the core values of your military branch, and how do these values differ from other branches?**

— My affiliation is with the Navy, but I have served most of my career in the Norwegian Naval Special Operations Command. Why do I start with this piece of information? Armies and Navies have historically established units to solve those "odd tasks" that either did not fit the classic definition of their branch, or the mission profile simply was assessed too risky, or could cause more collateral damage to either force. This also applied to the Norwegian Naval Special Operations Command (Marinejegerkommandoen), which was established in the early 1950s. So, while I will claim that my values are different from those who remained in the Navy, it is, nevertheless, the Navy culture that defines my core values as a member of the Special Operations Command. Remember that special operations is not a branch on its own, but, in warfighting terms, I will argue it is. Hence, I claim I am different from the regular branches, but my Navy background has heavily influenced how I define my values to this day.

### **Are there aspects of special operations that are misunderstood by other forces?**

— Special operations versus conventional forces is a small versus big brother, or sister, analogy. Operationally, special operations missions are conducted by the "few and brave". Obviously, for a small team conducting a high-risk mission, competency of each single person is critical. The team is as strong as the sum of all its components. In other words, everybody's voice needs to be heard, an attitude that often clashes when we are cooperating with conventional units. Additionally, conventional units would normally have a completely different mindset for everything from hierarchy to staff process. Unconventional warfare requires unconventional approaches, and for that, you need unconventional people. The clue and way forward is to accept the others' perspective.

### **What mindsets and values of other services have you benefited from?**

— For years, Norwegian Naval Special Operations Command was subordinated to the Navy's submarine flotilla. I like to think that the way the submarines operate, and the missions they solve, are very similar to those of special operations units. Stealth, silence, risk, small team, team competency, flat structure are all common traits that ultimately create mindsets and values. When working together with submarine missions, I believe this common mindset improves chances of mission success, at least on forming a joint team.

### **How has your service embraced the value of diversity in the past, and where is there still room for improvement?**

— Six to seven years ago, the Norwegian Naval Special Operations Command was organized outside its parent service. Throughout NATO you see a similar development. Due to my affiliation within the Navy, I have to move back and forth between the conventional and unconventional world, which allows me to look at things from a wider perspective. Moreover, I can also promote the ideas I value from my background into a conventional world that often misunderstands, or even dislikes, "unconventional" people — our toughest warriors. ✦





**Colonel Flavio Lauri**  
Italian Army  
Programme Director 2

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I believe that every soldier, regardless of the uniform they are wearing, embraces and shares common values. In my opinion it is the common traits of each service that make it unique. This is also true within the Army, where each unit has its assigned role carried out by a diverse team.

When I joined the Military Academy in 1985 to join the Italian Army, I found an environment that really appealed to me, and where I felt a sense of belonging. In other words, the Italian Army really suited my character and personality, as it allowed me to grow while working for the collective good. *'Una acies'*, which is the motto of one of the eldest and most prestigious military institutes, comes from Latin and means *'one host'*. Its deep ethical and moral meaning explains the basic value of being a soldier in the Army. In other words, *'a thousand soldiers, one heart'*. Being a soldier in the Army brings with it the military tradi-

tions of crafting weapons, a tradition, which goes back 2,500 years to the classical Hellenistic period, where citizen-soldiers (*hoplites*) represented by free citizens were armed with only spears and shields. The military organization of the Roman Empire was made up of first *centuriae*, then century cohorts, and also support staff organized in *contuberniums*.

These organizational concepts illustrate the importance of belonging to a unit. The success, glory, and very survival of your unit depend on loyalty, the sense of duty, dedication, courage, contribution of each fellow member, and trust in the brothers and sisters in arms. The soldier is the Army's most important weapon, and their physical, intellectual, and moral solidity constitute the core of the entire organization and discipline: The strong sense of discipline that you manifest with the strength of cohesion and the sense of belonging to one's own unit, generated by extreme trust in our brothers and sisters in arms — this constitutes the hallmark of belonging to the Army.

While respecting the characteristics and specificities of other services, I see them as elements of the military organization that looks at the military as a field of development of scientific research and technological evolution as opposed to emphasizing the central role of the soldier, their physicality, and the importance of a physically fit and robust force.

In my 36 years of experience in uniform, I have witnessed how my service has become more inclusive, and I have also made my contribution to this increased willingness to give everyone an opportunity and to recognize the added value of diversity. Diversity is key to every organization that works on solving complex problems in society. Being inclusive is also about knowing how to communicate our values to show others how diverse we are.

Considering everyone, and recognizing the genuine effort that each one of us makes in safeguarding and following the fundamental principles are important to promote inclusion effectively, and treat diversity as a strength that is preferred over marginalization.” ✦



**Major Melissa Sawyer**  
United States Space Force  
Head of the Wargaming Branch

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Established on December 20, 2019, within the Department of the Air Force, the United States Space Force (USSF) is in the process of developing its own core values. Until the values are released, the USSF is keeping as its foundation the United States Air Force (USAF) core values: *Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do*. The value of excellence is unique to the USSF and USAF among the U.S. Military Services. For me, living the value of excellence means that I am professionally obligated and morally responsible to always strive for my best performance and search for innovative ways to accomplish the mission. This value fuels my drive to seek out educational opportunities, stay in shape physically, mentally, and morally, and enhance my professional competence.

Given the Space Force's recent establishment, the main question I get is, 'why does the U.S. need a Space Force?' The integration of space systems into our daily lives and our

**“Diversity is key to every organization that works on solving complex problems.”**



economy means they are essential to the security and prosperity of the U.S. and its Allies. China and Russia are both developing counterspace capabilities that could disrupt or destroy space-based assets, so we need a service uniquely positioned to deter and defend against those threats. That service is the U.S. Space Force.

Right now, the budding service of 6,400+ personnel is mainly comprised of transferred Air Force members like me, but the Army, Navy, and Marines have also transferred in around 400 personnel. This service diversity is so important that it is built into the Space Force's Delta symbol through four bevelled elements that symbolize each of the military services supporting the Space Force mission.

Beyond incorporating personnel from each military service, the Space Force is also incorporating aspects of other Services' culture such as the Navy's doctrine of 'command by negation' and the Army and Coast Guard's value of respect, which have both helped me grow as a leader. When a ship is underway, its commander executes the pre-planned actions for their vessel but is also empowered to act on their own initiative rather than needing permission for every action from their superior. Leading with this mindset fosters trust and enables faster, lower-level decisions; both of which are necessary for the Space Force to generate advantage in competition or conflict.

Likewise, it is important to build teams in which members respect each other and treat each other with dignity. When leaders do not uphold the dignity of the human person, it undermines their credibility and can affect their reputation. It is important that the leadership of every organization takes the value of respect seriously. Betrayal of such an important value also undermines unit cohesion, so living my Army and Coast Guard brethren's value of respect is non-negotiable from my perspective.

I look forward to serving among such a diverse team, just as I do here at the JWC, as we fuse the best aspects from every military service into the values and culture of the U.S. Space Force!" ✦



**Commander Robert Mikulski**  
Polish Navy  
Concepts, Capability Integration  
and Experimentation Branch



I would like to turn the question, 'what sets your service apart from others?' around, and rather ask what the Navy means to other services. In the 1992 movie *A Few Good Men*, Marine Corps Lieutenant Kendrick introduced the role of the Navy and its competencies in a descriptive way. 'I like all you Navy boys. Every time we've gotta go someplace to fight, you fellas always give us a ride.'

We, the Navy, see ourselves as our country's ultimate weapon. The naval ensign of the Republic of Poland shows the National Coat of Arms, and the Navy is a key component of the deterrence system. Of course, one can say that no matter who we are, we usually tend to think that we are the most important; we are sure that we are at the centre of the universe. That's how I feel about the Navy.

In addition to deterrence and defence, the naval forces also fill the important social, cultural, and scientific missions. I think that

the Navy is the best option for presenting a force capable of responding to an attack. It is based on what is called 'Flag display' where we show the presence of the armed forces and their readiness to take action by responding with arms to acts of aggression. Due to the unique opportunities that the sea environment presents to the maritime forces, the Navy is one of the most important instruments of influence, not only in the military, but also for political and economic aspects.

During my years in the Polish Navy, I served on many ships and participated in rescue operations, some of which involved multinational teams. One standout memory is a trip around the world on the sailing ship ORP Iskra. We spent 300 days at sea experiencing countless situations, maturing, and forming lifelong friendships. That journey showed us what we would face during our service.

Another 'sea story' occurred when I was already an officer and commander. My ship was on rescue duty and had to save a pilot who had catapulted over the Baltic Sea. His life depended on our efficient action. I remember well the pride of the young sailors when the crew was congratulated on saving the pilot.

Engaging with different navies from around the world is a great experience, especially during NATO exercises in support of the Alliance's naval interoperability. At the JWC, we achieve interoperability of the NATO Forces at the operational and strategic levels.

Theorists of the art of war developed a vision of the future wars, and what they will bring. Although many things have changed, some things remain the same in warfare, such as the strength and value of the Navy, and the importance of securing the sea lines of communication. In my opinion, the paramount concern of maritime strategy is to determine the mutual relations between the Army and Navy in a plan of war. Simply put, the Armed Forces defends the interests of the state on the ground close our home, while the Navy defends the state in maritime areas by keeping the 'storm' far away." ✦

“Engaging with **different navies** from around the world is a **great experience.**”



## III. CULTURE



**Colonel Peter Teeuw**  
Netherlands Army  
Head of the Opposing Forces Branch

**When did you first notice the effect of national culture in your career?**

— You don't see the effect that your own culture has had on you until you start working internationally. During shorter international exercises the cultural differences in behaviour might not always be visible. It was only when I was deployed as a military observer in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) mission in the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1994 that I started to notice our Dutch national military culture. The UN observers worked in teams of up to nine persons, and never with two officers of the same nationality. There were 42 nations participating in the UN observer mission, and to my surprise, the majority of the UN military observer teams had a Dutch officer as deputy team leader, or team leader. My interpretation is that the ability to lead an international team of officers in a dangerous environment was apparently something we Dutch officials did well.

To illustrate the importance of cultural consideration, I was deputy team leader in a

multicultural team of eight. When I once challenged the team leader during an informal morning meeting, he was extremely disappointed. "How could you do that. I thought you were my friend," he said. To him, being challenged in front of subordinates undermined his authority and weakened their respect for him.

**Can you think of any mistakes that have been made because of people ignoring culture?**

— When ignoring culture, people can get upset, offended, or even angry. Communication and getting to know each other are, therefore, essential to avoid problems. Often, we skip this stage due to lack of time.

**What have you learned in your career regarding other national military cultures?**

— When working as an exchange officer in the Norwegian Army, I noticed that all Norwegian colleagues arrived at around 07:45 hrs. and left around 15:30 hrs. I just came from a position in the Dutch Army where we worked from 07.00 – 18.00 hrs. At the beginning, I didn't understand why my Norwegian colleagues came so late and left so early, until I realized that they shared the responsibility of dropping off and picking up their kids from school, as most partners in Norway also have a fulltime job.

**What do most people get wrong about your national culture?**

— Dutch directness is often perceived as aggressive, offensive, or even interfering in other people's matters. However, from a Dutch perspective, being direct is only meant in a positive way. The reason is probably that the Dutch are known for not being good at reading between lines. In a way we are quite transparent, and you would easily be able to read us.

**How has your own culture affected your perspective while working in NATO?**

— Working from home is quite common in the Dutch Armed Forces, and we have done it for more than a decade. At the Joint Warfare Centre, during COVID-19, we have seen how this novel method influenced new ways of working. Teleworking amid the coronavirus pandemic required serious internal planning and many adjustments to our programme of work. ✦



**Lieutenant Colonel**  
Stefan Kuehling, German Army  
Head of the Public Affairs Office/  
Media Simulation Branch



As an officer candidate, I had my flight training in Alabama. This was also my first stay in the United States, and I found it interesting to compare with the German Bundeswehr. In Germany, service people in uniform were sometimes verbally criticized in public at the time, and I remember how much I appreciated the gratitude that the public felt for the Armed Forces in the United States.

The culture element is a very important aspect, especially within our diverse Alliance with at least 30 different military cultures. When NATO officials from the different nations bring their own behaviours and expect others to follow, it can lead to frustration; situations that are difficult to deal with, and a drop in the performance of a team.

Fortunately, we have the One Team Programme at the Joint Warfare Centre, which is completed by all newcomers. During this programme, cultural differences and how to deal with them are brought up and discussed in plenary, thereby getting to know one another from the start to prevent cultural barriers.

We Germans may sometimes be seen as impolite at first because we often express ourselves in a very direct, concise, and clear way. In my experience, it may take a while to



understand and see this directness as a quality. When colleagues do learn to appreciate it, they see that Germans tend to give honest feedback, which again makes it difficult to misunderstand what is being communicated, and could in fact make decision-making more efficient. Colleagues also know that they can always discuss openly and straightforward with me.

Working at the JWC is not my first experience in a multinational environment. It takes time to gain trust from colleagues in such a multifaceted cultural environment. I have internalized a simple philosophy: Be polite, appreciate others, and learn from the differences." ✦



**May Linn Bie**  
Head of the Community Services  
Section, Support Directorate



I became aware of the effect of national culture when I started my career in France, and later in Italy, and Uganda. All of my former workplaces have been multicultural.

I would say differences in national culture became very apparent to me in Uganda when I worked mostly with local staff. It surprised me to see how important and integrated religion was in the national culture. This was also apparent in the workplace. I had, for instance, never seen prayer observed during

“It was interesting to discover **military culture**. I had, for instance, never come across the term '**Staff Order**' before.”

breakfast meetings at work before. I also became aware of tribal culture(s) influencing the work environment in Uganda. I would say diversity enriches the team, but could also lead to misunderstanding at times. Ignoring culture can negatively influence communication and perception. We may unknowingly offend others, or be unintentionally offended, if we ignore culture. It can also be a mistake to attribute characteristics to personality and ignore the culture aspect.

I have had the opportunity to work with several Koreans and have realized how different the national cultures are. On one occasion, when I worked with food procurement for the World Food Programme, I unintentionally and unknowingly offended a Korean colleague who had covered my shift while I was on leave. When I got back, I asked my colleague, in direct Norwegian fashion, how far she had come in the procurement process in order to know where I should pick up (i.e., what had been done and not done). I discovered the Norwegian and Korean approach and way of communicating are very different.

Thankfully, my colleague explained to me how it had made her feel. It was shocking to me since I was totally unaware. I remember trying to politely explain that I had not meant any of my questions in a rude way or as she had perceived it. It was a bit awkward when it happened, but things were good after we had talked about it, and this incident became a valuable part of my cultural learning curve.

The fact that I am adopted from Korea, and grew up here within my Norwegian family, proves that national culture is something we learn, and that we also have to make an effort in order to understand other cultures.

I have learned that in a work environment national culture influences both communication and organizational structure. As an example, my experience is that the Norwegian private sector companies tend to have more informal communication and flatter organizational structure, i.e., less hierarchy, than non-Norwegian organizations I have worked for. My experience is also that a mix of cultures enriches the workplace, but requires open-mindedness and higher cultural awareness.

I think the Norwegian culture can sometimes be perceived as a bit unfriendly, impolite, or too direct. We don't use the word 'please' very much, and we are also more reserved than others. We are also honest in that we say things in a matter-of-fact kind of way without meaning to be rude. Personally, I try to adapt when I speak to other nationalities, and I probably say 'please' and 'thank you' more than I would when speaking Norwegian.

I think culture is also so much more than national culture. For me it was quite a transition and a small culture shock when I joined NATO coming straight from the commercial, non-military world. More than national culture, I guess the culture shock was related to the military world, which was all new to me. It was interesting to discover military culture and how it translates in an office environment: ranks, language, order-based system, etc. I had, for instance, never come across the term 'Staff Order'!

I am aware that I am influenced by Norwegian culture, but I try to have an open mind and adapt. I find that being surrounded by good colleagues here at the Joint Warfare Centre makes it enjoyable to work for a multicultural military organization." ✦