

Living Your Values
By TERRY ELLIS
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In many ways, Evelyn “Pat” Foote, 67, exemplifies the Army’s hope not only for gender equality but the future of leadership as an art — the return to values such as respect, dignity, pride, honor and integrity; the responsibility of the individual for his or her actions, and the setting of high standards through behavior.

No wonder she was called out of retirement last November to help lead, along with Maj. Gen. Richard Siegfried, the Army’s Senior Review Panel on Sexual Harassment. The panel just released its report last month.

Born in Durham, N.C., Foote graduated from Wake Forest University in 1953 with a degree in sociology. Frustrated by her early attempts to find a satisfying job, she did what other young people have done when they want to be all that they can be: She joined the Army — the Women’s Army Corps, to be precise — in 1959. “The pay was miserable,” she said in a recent interview with *Investor’s Business Daily*. “But it was equally miserable for men and women.”

During her 30 years in the military, she rose to brigadier general — a one-star general in a succession that reaches to four stars — before retiring in 1989. (Today, four women on active duty hold this rank; a fifth has earned two stars and a sixth, three stars.)

Foote was a leader in the Women’s Army Corps when the first female officers commanding both genders were promoted in 1970. And she was there in 1978 when the corps was decommissioned, and women were fully integrated into the Army.

Along the way, Foote earned many firsts, among them first woman to teach at the Army War College and first woman to command Fort Belvoir in Virginia. She also learned her share of lessons on dealing with sexism, such as “keep an even keel” and “don’t get distracted by a skirmish when the real battle is down the road.” Foote insists that women who are “firsts” must accept the fact that they have to work harder. But she also believes the Army should live up to its advertisements.

The information set out in the report of the sexual harassment panel’s eight months of work surveying some 30,000 people wasn’t news to Foote: “Sexual harassment exists throughout the Army, crossing gender, rank and racial lines,” according to the Army news service’s account of the report. But she saw in this largest self-evaluation in Army history concrete data from which to work.

And her personal conclusion matched that of the report: Army leaders are the critical factor in “creating, maintaining and enforcing an environment of respect and dignity.” Too many leaders, the report concluded, have failed to gain the trust of their soldiers.

“We fail them,” Foote said at the time the results were released, “when we don’t give them the most rigorous, demanding training and set standards that apply to the man or the woman. No difference. Our soldiers need leaders who set the standard, enforce the standard and live the standard.”

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