The role of the military and how it works has fascinated Patricia Shields for a long time.

In 2001, that fascination led the Texas State political science professor to become the first woman to edit the journal *Armed Forces & Society*, the leading interdisciplinary publication examining the military establishment and civil-military relations in countries around the world.

Her interest in military and civilian societies began in 1970 when, as a freshman at the University of Maryland, she witnessed significant campus unrest related to the ongoing war in Vietnam. National Guard troops patrolled her campus with rifles, and while she didn’t blame the military as many protesters did, the nation’s war policy confused her. So, in an effort to contribute to a broader understanding of the Vietnam era, she wrote her dissertation at Ohio State University on the equity of the military recruitment process, sections of which were published in *Armed Forces & Society* and the *Journal of Military and Political Sociology*.

“It’s quite a thrill to edit the journal in which I published my dissertation,” Shields said. *Armed Forces & Society* is read by scholars and military personnel worldwide.

Shields said she is committed to producing objective research on military institutions and to leading thoughtful discussion about the definition and role of the armed forces in theory and policy. The journal is not associated with any ideological, political or strategic orientation, and Shields says she tries “to keep in mind that readers include junior officers around the world who have been identified as the future leaders in the command structure. Scholars at the Marshal Center in Germany have told me that the young Eastern European officers who train there are always xeroxing AF&S articles. My hope is to maximize the journal’s influence on the future leaders of the world’s militaries.”

Seven months after Shields began editing *Armed Forces & Society*, the nation’s international security environment changed radically on Sept. 11, 2001, and the journal’s content has reflected the nature of that change. Shields recently produced a special issue devoted to casualties of war. Scholars have also contributed to a spirited debate about the factors that influence the cohesion of combat units, arguing whether, for example, combat training, “swift trust” or social bonding is more responsible for a combat unit’s motivation and effectiveness.

The journal also publishes broadly on the American military, focusing since 2001 on topics such as ethnicity and the coping of military spouses, why youth enlist, obesity and fitness in the U.S. military, service members’ mental health, deployed troops’ demand for the sexual services of trafficked women, poetry at West Point, and women in the military.

The international, interdisciplinary nature of the journal means that the subject matter remains diverse, Shields explained. Society’s understanding of the role of the military has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War, and these changes have influenced both how militaries are organized and the security environment around the world.
around the world. Recent international topics have included the theory of civil-military relations in emerging democracies, the impact of the European Union on civil-military relations in Turkey and Greece, Dutch peace support missions, postmodern militaries, Kenya’s coup prevention strategies, combat readiness in the Russian military, biodiversity and the military in Botswana, and the Israeli reserve force. Upcoming issues will feature articles on India’s nuclear doctrine and the command structure, North Korea and the Republic of Korea-U.S. security alliance, and changes in America’s perceptions of its professional military leaders. Shields will also devote a special issue to veterans and veterans’ issues.

Looking ahead, Shields says that the war on terrorism will continue to have profound effects on the field of civil-military relations. Recent shortfalls in Army recruiting goals, as well as the extensive use of contractors in a war zone, will probably influence discourse about how militaries are organized and financed, she said, wondering, “Is conscription on the horizon?”

Other changes such as the increasing use of international peacekeeping forces in conflicts across the globe and the use of armed forces in law enforcement and domestic actions will influence the field over the next few years, she continued, adding, “Basic assumptions about warfare, the role of the nation-state, civil-military relations, and the definition of an armed force are changing. The field is evolving so fast that it is a challenge to keep up with the changes.”

*Armed Forces & Society* can be viewed online at http://afs.sagepub.com.

Compiled by College of Liberal Arts writer Ann Friou from conversations with Shields and from interviews appearing in *Bridging the Gap*, the newsletter of the Section for Women in Public Administration, a working group of the American Society for Public Administration; and *Incites* (http://www.in-cites.com/journals/ArmedForcesSociety.html).