STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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WOMEN: READY FOR THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE U.S. ARMED FORCES

BY

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ABSTRACT

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History is replete with examples of the role women have played in or for the military, even at a time when they were not allowed to legally enlist. The percentage of women in the U.S. military grew significantly in the later half of the 20th Century. As we engage in military transformation for this century we should fully explore contributions to be made by the entire population of the services. Technological advances will allow men and women to accomplish their duties on equal footing. Women have served well and are making great strides in gaining the trust and confidence of their superiors, peers and subordinates in today's military. As the new breed of young officer and enlisted personnel progress through their careers together, this bond can only be enhanced.

Why do women currently volunteer to serve in the military? The women that serve today have the same reasons and motives as their male counterparts. Whether they want to get an education, travel or get away from home, in many cases if not most, they have a true desire to serve their country.

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States further increased the need to understand the role women are to play in this recent, and in future, conflict. One imperative that cannot be ignored is that women are bringing talent, innovation and effectiveness to the force. Can anyone truly predict in a world of developing asymmetrical warfare, where the front lines of combat will be? The percentage of women in the military services is steadily increasing and they are being deployed in support roles all over the world. As such, services need to ensure women are trained to handle contingencies should they find themselves on the front lines.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT iii

LIST OF TABLES VII

WOMEN: READY FOR THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE U.S. ARMED FORCES 1

WOMEN IN THE U.S. ARMED FORCES: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE 2

WOMEN AND THE DRAFT 4

WOMEN IN COMBAT 7

FEMALE PRISONERS AND CASUALTIES 8

UNIT COHESION 10

PHYSICAL ASPECT 12

CONCLUSIONS 14

RECOMMENDATIONS 15

ENDNOTES 19

BIBLIOGRAPHY 25

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. MILITARY CAREER FIELDS/POSITIONS AVAILABLE TO WOMEN 3

WOMEN: READY FOR THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE U.S. ARMED FORCES

History is replete with examples of the role women have played in or for the military, even at a time when they were not allowed to legally enlist. The percentage of women in the U.S. military grew significantly in the later half of the 20th Century. As we engage in military transformation for this century we should fully explore contributions to be made by the entire population of the services. Technological advances will allow men and women to accomplish their duties on equal footing. Women have served well and are making great strides in gaining the trust and confidence of their superiors, peers and subordinates in today's military. As the new breed of young officer and enlisted personnel progress through their careers together this bond can only be enhanced.

The military services are still currently meeting their quotas for the all-volunteer force in part due to the number of women entering the services today. Why do women currently volunteer to serve in the military? It appears to be a relatively common perception that women volunteer in part because they know they won't be required to engage in direct combat. The women that serve today have the same reasons and motives as their male counterparts. Whether they want to get an education, travel or get away from home, in many cases if not most, they have a true desire to serve their country. However, if the United States needed to return to a draft would women be included in that draft?

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States further increased the need to understand the role women are to play in this recent, and in future, conflict. One imperative that cannot be ignored is that women are bringing talent, innovation and effectiveness to the force. However, some combat positions remain closed to women, consequently they are not receiving advanced combat training because they are not expected to be on the front lines. Can anyone truly predict in a world of developing asymmetrical warfare, where the front lines of combat will be? The percentage of women in the military services is steadily increasing and they are being deployed in support roles all over the world. As such, services need to ensure women are trained to handle contingencies should they find themselves on the front lines. This training should include advanced combat skills, regardless of whether or not they are allowed to serve in direct combat units. This paper will explore the history of women in the military, primarily over the past 60 years, the issues of women registering for the draft, women in combat roles and the need for increased physical and combat training.

WOMEN IN THE U.S. ARMED FORCES: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although women have been a part of every United States military action in its two hundred and twenty-five year history, women's services were not formalized or recognized until the 1940's. Women's services of the time included:

- Women's Army Corp (WACs)
- Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service - In the U.S. Navy (WAVES)
- Women in the Air Force (WAFs)
- Women Air Service Pilots (WASPs)
- Women's Service in the U.S. Coast Guard (SPARS)

At that time, most women performed what was termed "gender appropriate," functions involving mostly administrative and medical duties, although some who were allowed to become pilots and mechanics performed superbly.[1]

Women's contributions to protecting the United States have significantly increased since World War II. As late as the early 1970's women comprised less than two percent of the active duty forces.[2] Changes came quickly as women were accepted into the Army Reserve Officer Corps (ROTC), on a test basis, during the 1972-1973 school year. Congress then approved the enrollment of women into the service academies in 1975. By the late 1970's women were integrated directly into the services and the separate women's services ceased to exist.

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's women were still restricted in the roles they could assume in the military but the great majority performed admirably in the tasks assigned. During the 1980's, women performed brilliantly in a number of high-profile operations, even with the legal prohibitions on women in combat.[3] These high-profile operations included, but were not limited to, deployments of: 200 Army and Air Force women to liberate Grenada in support of Urgent Fury in 1983, 170 women to Panama during Just Cause in 1989, in addition to 600 women already stationed in Panama at the time.[4]

In 1991 women's roles expanded when the Department of Defense established new guidelines governing the assignment of females within the military services. This facilitated the opening of many professional avenues for women and reduced the number of exemptions. However, "women still can not be assigned to units that engage in direct ground combat, units that collocate with ground combat units, units in which the physical demands are too hard for most women and to certain ships and submarines, if the cost of creating special berthing areas is prohibitive."[5]

Since then, more than 260,000 combat positions were opened to women when the Department of Defense took steps to remove unnecessary impediments to recruitment, training,

and assignments. This translated into the three-phased policy of the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 1993. The first phase removed legislative restrictions on the assignment of women to combat aviation.[6] Phase two followed with a lifting of the restriction prohibiting women from assignments aboard combatant naval vessels. It also facilitated the rescission of the "Risk Rule" which excluded women from certain jobs due to the possibility of exposure to hostile fire or capture. Consequently, a new definition of "direct ground combat" surfaced: "exposure to hostile fire forward on the battlefield with a high probability of physical contact with the enemy."[7] With this new definition in mind the services were provided with the flexibility and the authority to determine which positions women could now fill as long as it "excluded women from serving in units below the brigade level that engage in direct combat on the ground."[8]

The National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 1993 directed the services to make recommendations on expanding opportunities for women consistent with the new definition and rule. As a result of the services review, 80,000 additional positions in the Army and Marine Corps were ultimately opened to women.[9]

Currently, over ninety percent of the career fields in the Armed Services are open to women. However, the services vary significantly in the actual percentages of positions within those career fields that are open to women. The data displayed in Table 1 shows the differences between the career fields that are open to women and the individual positions available by service in those career fields. Positions that are open vary from a low of sixty-seven percent in the Army and Marine Corps to ninety-nine percent in the Air Force where few jobs are coded direct combat.[10]

Component	Precent Career Fields Available	Percent of Positions Available
Army	91%	67%
Navy	96%	94%
Marine Corps	93%	67%
Air Force	99%	99%
Coast Guard	100%	98%

TABLE 1. MILITARY CAREER FIELDS/POSITIONS AVAILABLE TO WOMEN

Criteria for selecting personnel to fill these jobs is dependent on capabilities, not gender. "The main reason for the increasing role of women in the military since the early 1970's is because our nation recognizes that national security would be diminished by excluding half of the nation's talent from the armed forces."[11]

With these changes, women must take the opportunities that have been opened to them and succeed in gaining the trust and confidence of those they are working with and for. "What I see as the biggest challenge for military women of the future: securing and succeeding in

leadership positions.... The opportunities that have been created by this widening spiral of career fields now lead to the challenge of career development and enhancement. In the Air Force, that means being selected for and successfully filling leadership positions. It also means training for and participating in combat positions since many military leaders still view the crucible of combat as the true test of one's mettle."[12]

Over forty thousand women were deployed in support of the Gulf War, serving in a wide variety of positions while living and working in the same austere conditions as their male counterparts. "All of the women in the Gulf endured the same hardships as men, served for the same principles and played pivotal roles in the outcome."[13] Since then, many thousands of women have deployed in support of other contingency or peacekeeping operations around the world to include: 1,000 women in Somalia, 1,200 women deployed in support of peacekeeping duties in Haiti and more than 5,000 women in Bosnia.[14] Each year women support U.S. forward presence through rotational deployments to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for the Northern and Southern Watch No-Fly Zones and other deterrent operations in Iraq.

The proportion of women in the armed forces has grown from two percent in the early 1970's to the current sixteen percent. Today's composition of women in each service consists of about fifteen percent of the Army, thirteen percent of the Navy, nineteen percent of the Air Force and six percent of the Marines.[15] Many bright young women are continuing to choose military service. "Female recruits tend to have more education and better scores than men. And as technology continues to advance, so will women."[16]

It is refreshing to hear men talking about the contributions women are making to the military's total team effort. "Increasing numbers of them ... have a daughter, a wife, or a sister in the military and see no reason why she should not be able to go where and a far as her talents and hard work will take her."[17] So what is next for women in the U.S. armed forces?

WOMEN AND THE DRAFT

As the Vietnam conflict came to an end the need for large numbers of personnel was drastically reduced. Government officials no longer saw a need for the draft and ended it in 1973. This opened many opportunities for women since the steady influx of men was greatly reduced. The U.S armed forces now had to expand their recruiting in order to find enough qualified young people to volunteer to meet their missions. As a direct result of this reality, technical qualification instead of gender became the determining factor in who was accepted into the military.[18] Since that time however, men have been required to register with the

selective service in preparation for large numbers of them being drafted in support of a major war.

Numerous Senate hearings have debated the issue of women being included in the selective service registration. They have discussed the fact that it is in the national interest to ensure that the best-qualified people are available for a wide range of tasks required of the military during war. "The performance of women in our armed forces today strongly supports the conclusion that many of the best qualified people for some military jobs in the 18-26 age category will be women."[19] Although women have made significant contributions to the military for many years, there continues to be great hesitation and reluctance on the part of the American public or at least on the part of Congress to have women register for the draft. Numerous reasons for this are deeply ingrained in the American public's mind.

A common reason was voiced in one of the many articles that surfaced after the start of DESERT STORM. "The reason women aren't required to register with the Selective Service is because the purpose of a draft, as currently conceived, is to create a combat-ready force. Since women aren't permitted to fight in direct combat, a female draft is irrelevant."[20] This is a common misconception. In reality, "over 70 percent of the men drafted into the Army, during a wartime draft, were not assigned to combat positions.[21] With this information in hand, the constitutionality of only drafting men was challenged and upheld in the1981 Supreme Court decision of Rostker v. Goldberg. The court ruled that registering only men did not violate the due process clause of the constitution.[22]

However, since that 1981 ruling, public perception may be changing and it is time to once again review the policies on this subject. In September after the attacks on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, AOL.com conducted a nation wide poll on this subject. The questions were "is it time to reinstitute the draft and if so should women also have to register for the Selective Service. Of the 384,260 people that responded 208,804 or 53 percent responded yes, women should be included if a draft were necessary.[23] Although one of the listed responses receiving thirteen percent of the votes, "Yes, make women register and we'll see them want to give back 'egual' status," could be interpreted a less then positive response, a solid forty percent answered "yes, its only fair." This is an interesting but uncompelling statistic or reason to change if U.S. government and military officials do not agree that it is in the best interest of the country to add women to the selective service pool.

Since half of the population of the U.S. is not required to register for the draft we must do everything possible to avoid the need for another draft. In an effort to reduce the conditions that would lead to another draft, the services must recruit and train the highest quality people

available in an ever-shrinking pool of recruits. To do this they must utilize the talents of the entire force to accomplish the mission as the military shrinks and technology becomes more demanding. "Having all positions open to women makes our recruiting job much easier. For as most of you know, gender is rarely, if ever, the best criterion to determine who fills those jobs."[24]

If recruiting actions fail to attract enough qualified personnel to accomplish the mission then a draft may become necessary. Since the object of the draft is to provide enough qualified personnel to fill the necessary roles, both combat and non-combat, drafting women would provide a larger pool of personnel to choose from. The draft would need to be re-advertised, concentrating on the need to create a smarter, more adaptable force not just a combat force.

There will of course be differing opinions and much debate should the need for a draft become apparent. There are those that would have us believe that a significant portion of the eligible women would go out and get pregnant just to avoid the draft. "Were Congress to enact a female draft, the post-World War II baby boom would look like a puddle next to the ensuring obstetrical tsunami. America suddenly would be awash in single, 18-year old mothers."[25] This is certainly a possibility, but this train of thought doesn't give our young female population much credit. Believing that a woman would choose a lifetime commitment of having a child, versus a few years of commitment to learn volumes about themselves and serve their country, is a drastic notion. During Desert Storm many people identified pregnancy as a reason for women not deploying or being returned home early. However, a General Accounting Office (GAO) report found that "group participants generally identified few actual instances" of women not deploying or returning home early.[26] In reality, men and women did not deploy and were returned early for the same reasons: medical condition, family hardship and deficient childcare packages, to name a few.[27] As an example, "of those personnel who were deployed, 2.5 percent of the women and 2 percent of the men returned to the United States earlier than their units for a variety of medical and administrative reasons."[28] Certainly there are those women who would do anything to get out of a draft, but then how many young males really want to serve? Didn't our young male population also include those that found any way they could to avoid the draft during the Vietnam conflict, even though a good portion would never have seen combat? Men certainly couldn't become pregnant, but they could cross the border to Canada to escape the draft.

The bottom line is that those that want to serve will do so gladly, those that don't will go reluctantly or find a way to avoid it, whether they are male or female. "Willingness to endure the hardship of a military lifestyle persists strongly among nearly all men and women in uniform."[29] Including women in the selective service registration and if necessary, a draft would double the

pool of eligible young people to fill necessary positions during times of war, including direct combat unit positions albeit sometime in the future.

WOMEN IN COMBAT

The topic of women in combat has been widely debated for years and, although women have proven capable of succeeding in many combat support fields in the military, the fact is that women will not be assigned to direct combat units in the foreseeable future. It is evident that some of our female generals like Marine Corps Major General Carol Mutter, are resigned to this fact. "I don't think we're ready to have women in front-line units with rifles and fixed bayonets But, I think the face of combat may change to an extent as we evolve through this process."[30] However, in the same article she expresses some optimism when she recommends that those women who want to be on the front lines should simply wait for a while, because the current environment and thinking will probably change and doors will open one at a time.[31]

Although the resistance from many senior leaders against placing women in direct combat units will prevent this from occurring in the near term, the subject still deserves discussion and consideration. It may be time to test the waters once again to see if public opinion is changing toward women in combat. In 1997 *Time* magazine conducted a telephone poll on the subject of women in combat. A majority of those polled, 67 percent, supported the statement that women should be allowed to serve in combat roles.[32] However, just because public opinion and climate may be changing does not mean that there are not those still vehemently opposed to women filling combat roles. There are a myriad of reasons given for these objections but the three that appear most frequently are:

- Assertions that the American public would not stand for females being killed in action or becoming prisoners of war.
- The impact women would have on unit cohesion.
- Women's physical ability to endure combat.

These perceptions are deeply ingrained and will continue to be as long as our senior leaders follow the status quo thinking. In 1997, Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) stated his intention to be a co-sponsor of a bill to keep men and women separate in most of their training. In his opinion, "our national security is undercut by what is being done in the name of political correctness."[33] He goes on to state that:

> Some claim that studies show women are performing equally with men. They carefully omit that most "equal" results are accomplished by "gender-norming," giving women scores just as high as men's, even though they are given lighter packs to carry, or more time to complete an obstacle course, or other less-

> challenging physical requirements. Manipulated test scores make the sexes seem equally capable ... In combat, performance is all that counts; fellow soldiers worry whenever weaker "buddies" might drag down their unit in a fight.[34]

If the senior leadership of our government professes this negative impression, is it any wonder there is still public sentiment against the full integration of women in the military? The services must continue to work diligently to demonstrate, to Congress and to the American public, the positive contributions and accomplishments that women have made in the military. This is the only way that a full integration will be possible and the only way that the American public's view of women in the military can change. "Over time these changes, if not handled properly, could turn out to be detrimental to both the military and the society it serves... It is not a topic to be ignored."[35]

Using the term full integration in this context is not necessarily referring to the immediate removal of all combat exclusions, nor is it saying that this would be appropriate for the services at this time. If there are some obstacles, for one reason or another, which cannot be overcome at the present time then the exclusion may be justified for the greater good.[36] In particular, when the cost of modifications, to provide a modicum of privacy, becomes a drain on the military budget, the issues must be critically examined. In a time when budgets continue to dwindle there are other mission related considerations that are more critical. However, this does not negate the possibility of ensuring these modification costs are included in future weapon systems integration and procurement budgets. There are other major issues also preventing the full integration of women into the military and particularly into direct combat units.

FEMALE PRISONERS AND CASUALTIES

The American public sensitivity to military casualties is not a new or unique topic of discussion. "People of all countries love their children and their soldiers, but only we in the United States have the opportunity, the wealth, and the technology to protect them, even in battle. One way to protect personnel is to remove them as much as possible from the violent edge of the battlefield."[37] This concept is certainly applied to women when it comes to the subject of direct combat units. Although women are now serving in fields that place them in hostile areas, such as combat aircrews, maintenance, munitions/ordnance, engineering etc., senior leaders of each service still feel very strongly against placing women in direct combat units.

Since the Gulf War, where thirteen military women were casualties of combat incidents and two became prisoners of war when captured by the Iraqi's, the American public has

become more accepting of women's role in the military.[38] Because of the news media coverage, the American public has seen women in dangerous and austere conditions alongside of men. Women appeared to adapt as well as men to these conditions. "Contrary to some predictions, the American public appeared resigned to the fact that women as well and men could lose their lives or be taken prisoner."[39]

Although female pilots dropped bombs on Afghanistan the law prohibits them from being assigned to special-operations ground missions designed to kill terrorists.[40] The strong stance of our senior leaders on this issue was once again demonstrated at the start of the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, when the Bush administration reconsidered former President Clinton's proposals to allow women into battle zones. Defense officials have been adamant that front-line units would not involve women in Afghanistan or anywhere else. This change in policy comes at a time when the Army is creating new reconnaissance and surveillance units open to women, despite a tradition of keeping female troops out of firefight zones. "The change represents a victory for brass who opposed the Clinton rules and the private Center for Military Readiness, which has fought applying political correctness to the Pentagon."[41]

In light of recent events it is definitely time for leaders at all levels of government and the military to think outside of the box. President George W. Bush recognized this when he spoke at the Citadel. "We have to think differently. The enemy who appeared on September 11 seeks to avoid our strengths and constantly searches for our weaknesses. So America is required once again to change the way our military thinks and fights."[42]

This comment may not have been intended to address thoughts about women in combat but this issue could be part of the "new" thinking. Our enemies are using the tools of terror and guerrilla warfare, we are finding and must continue to find new tactics and weapons to defeat them.[43] What will the future battlefield look like? Will asymmetrical warfare completely replace the fixed formations we have known in the past? If so, the front lines of combat will be blurred and all participants will be exposed to the dangers associated with combat. A new front line may materialize in an instant anywhere on land, sea, in the air or wherever a SCUD missile could impact. No rear or support location is completely safe; bombs, bullets and missiles do not discriminate by gender.[44] Those in non-combat related areas will not be insulated and must be prepared to react to the threats presented to them.

To illustrate this point, during the Vietnam conflict the crew of an Air Force C-130 was ferrying personnel, who had completed their tour of duty, from operating locations within the theater to the aerial port for transport back to the states. Due to the distances to be covered and ground threats, it was common practice to shuttle personnel, both male and female, around

the theater via aircraft. These aircraft missions could also have been required to deliver supplies to remote operating sites during the shuttle missions. In this case, as the aircraft was landing at a Special Forces camp they encountered hostile ground fire, which blew out one of the tires. A repair team could not get into the area until the next day so the four man crew and twenty-two passengers, including four women, had to remain in the Special Forces camp for the evening. As each person entered the camp they were given an M-16, flack vest, helmet and a spot on the wall to defend if they were attacked during the night. Because the aircraft presented such a high visibility target, the camp was in fact attacked that night. Every person manned his or her appointed spot on the wall to assist in defending the camp.[45]

This only serves to highlight the fact that the military services must train all personnel in combat skills so that they are qualified to meet those challenges before disaster strikes. Louis Caldera, the Secretary of the Army in 1998 stated this same position when he said, "Our country's not going to have the luxury of trying to (quickly) draft and train forces in the future. We're either going to be prepared to fight and suffer low casualties, or we're going to be unprepared and suffer great casualties."[46]

"The reality of modern warfare posits a fluid, nonlinear battlefield and exposes all participants to hazardous duty. Direct combat is no longer restricted to prescribed areas; there is no safety zone to "protect the women folks."[47] Because women are prohibited from serving in direct combat roles they are also prevented from gaining higher-level capabilities through training and experience. This more than any other factor places military women in danger and could ultimately deter the force from ensuring the best interests of the nation are carried out in pursuing its military objectives.[48] Without the proper training for all personnel, unintentional though it may be, everyone is placed in peril and could cause greater casualties to occur.

UNIT COHESION

The issue of male bonding continues to be a consistent theme raised as an argument against women being assigned to direct combat units. Many men and women today are concerned about the amount of negative press women in the military are getting due to numerous well publicized sexual harassment cases that have surfaced in the media within the past decade. This kind of spotlight only serves to make the adjustment more difficult and diverts attention from the progress that has been made in the passed 20 years.[49] It also continues to fuel the fire of emotion against women in the military and in particular, women in combat. Those that are violently opposed to women being fully integrated into the military are having a field day with these incidents and cite them as evidence for their cause. They believe fervently that

women's "very presence could be construed as prejudicial to good order and discipline in the armed services, and therefore, they should not be allowed to serve, particularly in combat roles."[50] This argument provides the easy way out. Instead of fixing the problem, critics would like to eliminate that which makes them uncomfortable. We cannot prevent the media from airing these stories when they occur, but we can work together as a military community to prevent them from occuring.

Even if we were to consider the sexual harassment issue as valid, there is no clear evidence that shows a male-female mixed unit is less effective then an all male unit. "On the contrary, DESERT STORM showed that mixed gender units did not have a problem with cohesion or esprit."[51]

An independent study by the Rand Corporation in 1997 assessed the extent and effect of the integration of women into the military. "The study's findings that leadership, training and mission determine how well units perform--not the presence or absence of women--is significant."[52] This then would appear to lead to the conclusion that women in the military are not a major distraction and their presence is perceived to have relatively small effect on readiness, cohesion, and morale. This also gives credence to the theory that the longer people work together the less their differences are an issue?

It would be logical to assume then that units exhibiting the most resistance to the full integration of women into the military would be those combat units that historically have not had women in them. Taking that logic one step further would lead to a major cause for the tension, in units just starting to integrate women, being the leadership of those units. The officers leading these units have historically spent their career in an all male environment. "The most powerful and direct influence on organizational culture comes from within the officer corps of the armed forces. Officers turn values into action, bring coherence out of confusion, set the example, and articulate the viewpoint of the military institution."[53] The success or failure of fully integrating women into a unit lies on the shoulders of unit leadership. If the leadership doesn't embrace change then it is highly unlikely that rest of the unit will. To those that believe this way, acceptance of women into their male unit will continue to meet with resistance. Therefore, women will continue to face challenges, having to build and project an image of confidence and competence to their superiors, peers and subordinates.[54]

One factor highlighted in the Rand study presented a valid argument against full integration of women: the need to eliminate double standards. "We heard repeatedly how double standards undermine women's credibility and generate hostility--new policies should

avoid establishing double standards for men and women in the same positions and, where possible, eliminate double standards that exist now.[55]

In order to facilitate a more accepting population, the services need to eliminate double standards to the greatest degree possible. During basic training everyone receives the same training but once on the job there are no continuing requirements except for the periodic physical fitness requirements. Physical strength standards should be required for each specialty and all military personnel in those specialties should be held to that standard. "Commanders should have realistic, valid standards for position requirements and ensure that members assigned those tasks are qualified to perform them, regardless of gender."[56] A policy imposing these standards could assist male personnel in gaining trust and confidence in women's ability to handle the physical and mental aspects of combat. "As more and more military men work side by side with women, the more accepting they become ... They judge women by the same professional standards they apply to them selves."[57] Once this becomes the norm there will be no more need for combat exclusions or the debates that have ensued for years.

PHYSICAL ASPECT

Instead of focusing on the debate surrounding whether or not women should be in combat, the services should concentrate on enhanced physical fitness conditioning and training. Although the Army does focus on this, other services are lacking in their efforts to train the entire force for more enhanced physical fitness conditioning. Lack of this conditioning could affect an individual's performance should they find themselves in a combat environment. Critics might say that with today's operations tempo we do not have the time to establish and conduct a physical fitness program for all service members. However, if we don't prepare everyone before disaster strikes will we be prepared to live with the cost in lives lost?

In order to carry out the day-to-day mission, to fight their nations wars or perform peacekeeping when called upon, both men and women must maintain high levels of fitness. This is one area where we must start investigating the need for double standards. A 1998 GAO report found that, "...there are significant differences between the standards and tests the services use to measure physical fitness, that adjustments made to these standards for age and gender were not always based in science, and that DoD oversight of the service's programs has not always been adequate."[58] It may be necessary to change or reduce requirements as personnel age, but is it necessary for men and women at each age group to have different standards? "What we spend in fitness, sports and recreation programs that lead to physical

fitness is an investment, it's the human side of force modernization."[59] Instead of changing the standards when personnel can't meet them (due in many cases to a lack of an active exercise program) why not implement a program that will raise the physical fitness levels to meet the standards?

According to one set of statistics, "between 30 to 50 percent of airmen failed to the meet the new Air Force physical fitness standards in test this year."[60] Personnel have been aware of the new standards since late 2000 but it appears they may not have taken the necessary steps to ensure compliance. As a consequence, the new standards that were to be implemented in January 2002 were postponed. If the Air Force is truly serious about physical fitness they need to implement a more organized program for personnel to stay fit. A once per year bicycle ergometry test with a few sit-ups and push-ups is not a serious program. Realizing that the Air Force has a different mission does not negate the need for its members to remain fit. On the contrary, it is well documented that physically fit people miss less work and incur lower medical costs. This equates to higher readiness levels.

As an example, in 1994 the Army Chief of Staff ordered that the Army's Basic Combat Training (BCT) be gender-integrated for soldiers entering the Combat Support and Combat Service Support career fields. At the same time, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command set up a steering committee to examine the conduct of this training and make recommendations on whether or not it needed to be altered to assure long-term success of the gender-integration. A key finding of this steering committee was that the gender-integrated training environment improved the physical training performance of female soldiers in all three of the training events, sit-ups, push-ups and run. To make this even better news for the program is the fact that male soldiers also improved in two of the three events.[61] If the Air Force were to adopt a program in line with the Army's, with consistent standards for males and females, they could experience many of the same results. Having uniform physical fitness requirements across the board will improve readiness and help reduce the frustrations over double standards.

The Army and Marine Corps have much stricter fitness requirements than do the Navy and Air Force. But even with their programs, are those in the non-combat related jobs physically trained well enough to react to being front line troops should the need arise? Although basic training gives generalized skills to military members, even this training is not standardized between training centers. For example the graduation requirements for the Army's Fort Jackson and Fort Benning are significantly different in the types and intensity of each measured event.[62] However, even if training events were standardized across all centers, if

interesting to note that the graduation requirements for the Army's basic training at Fort Jackson and its basic infantry training at Fort Benning are significantly different in the types and intensity of measured events.[62] The lack of advanced or follow-on training afforded to non-combat related career fields could ultimately put individuals at risk if they were exposed to a combat environment. Since women are excluded from assignment to combat units, advanced combat training opportunities are not available to them. However, many men assigned to non-combat jobs would likely experience the same issues if exposed to frontline conditions.

Not all service members need to meet the minimum requirements for a basic infantry soldier to accomplish their assigned duties or specialties. However, developing a recurring training program for all service members that would provide at least some generalized combat skills would go a long way in preparing the force for any contingency. This should entail more than the current recurring training which, using the Air Force as an example, includes self-aid buddy care, proper wear and care of the chemical ensemble and small arms qualification. Again, the object is to train all personnel in the same general skills, with no double standards, in an effort to gain trust and confidence in each other's skills and abilities. Ultimately the goal is to have set standards for those individuals not assigned to direct combat units that will afford them the greatest potential to succeed and survive in a combat environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The future will bring new challenges and priorities, calling for the transformation of the U.S. military to occur at a much increased pace. Given the chance, both male and female members working together can forge a new military ethos that will provide great benefits for U.S. national security. We must continue to attract intelligent, technologically skilled men and women who will bring new and innovative ideas to improve the military's capabilities in spite of continuing budget and personnel reductions. "Our military culture must reward new thinking, innovation, and experimentation."[63] Women in ever increasing numbers are stepping up to accept those challenges, risks and responsibilities of military service.

Today's women are taking the gains and successes, of the dedicated and courageous women who served during WWII and building them into new capabilities to help ensure national security.[64] There is a need to explore the many contributions women can make in the global war on terrorism. As an example, what impact or psychological effect would women fighting against organizations, that have no respect for women, like the Taliban have? Would a psychological operations campaign, showing female pilots bombing the Taliban, have caused the women of Afghanistan to take a greater part in finding and turning over Osama bin Laden?

In a world of asymmetrical warfare, the services need to examine all of the options available and choose to employ them whether or not it is the politically correct thing to do.

In accordance with the most current National Military Strategy of the United States, the armed forces advance national security by applying military power as directed to help *shape* the international environment and *respond* to the full spectrum of crises, while we *prepare* now for an uncertain future.[65] The past ten years have highlighted that uncertain future. Consequently, the emphasis of the military today and in the future is increasingly focusing on humanitarian emergency response, training personnel in other countries so they can fight their own fights, and in preventing conflicts instead of fighting conventional wars. This is recognized in the Quadrennial Defense Review Report that outlines the Department of Defense's new strategic framework to defend the nation and secure a viable peace. The four defense policy goals of this new framework are:

- Assuring allies and friends;
- Dissuading future military competition;
- Deterring threats and coercion against U.S. interests; and
- If deterrence fails, decisively defeating any adversary.[66]

Statistics show that fewer men are willing to serve voluntarily in the less then traditional combat roles associated with the first three goals. This will make it more important for women to fill a larger role in the military of the future in these operations.[67] The nature of these missions referred, to as Operations Other Than War, Stability and Support Operations, and Peace Operations just to name a few, are very different from the perceived military roll of combat operations. However, in many of these situations, hostile combatants can challenge our military forces at any time during the operation.[68] Anyone can find themselves on the frontlines; the services need to ensure that every soldier, sailor, airmen or marine, whether male or female, is ready for that possibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the issues that confront women in the military today can be overcome when intelligent and open minded individuals recognize that women can and do play a role in the defense of the United States. Half of the population is being omitted from the available pool of individuals that could be called to serve if a draft were necessary. Identifying additional eligible candidates by registering women with the Selective Service Administration is in the best interest of national defense, particularly in this time of uncertainty and unrest caused by terrorism around the world.

The next step is to better prepare all personnel to meet the challenges they are likely to encounter in today's asymmetrical environment. Although the current combat exclusion law differentiates between direct combat and risk it did not anticipate the asymmetrical warfare the military would face today nor did it consider the risks inherent in combat support operations. The SCUD missile that landed on an army barracks, during Desert Storm, killing 28 people was 200 miles from the front line. The marines killed, including one woman, in a helicopter crash while conducting operations in Afghanistan were not direct combat personnel. All appearances lead to the possibility that in the future, the U.S. military will continue to operate in an environment with no clear cut front lines. If this is the case, then women must be equally trained, to include equal physical fitness and combat standards, along with their male counterparts to handle situations as they arise and be prepared for the combat environment.

The possibility of women actually being assigned to direct combat units is a sensitive issue that will continue to be debated for some time. However, with the increasing numbers of women in the military we must ensure that the "war of the sexes" does not impact the ability of the overall force to carry out its assigned missions. Mature members of the military force of the future must be able to recognize societal limitations and the changes occurring within traditional gender roles. By doing so they can help to shape the military into an integrated fighting force that recognizes and utilizes the strengths of all its personnel. The longer men and women work together in this effort the better able they will be to accomplish the mission while taking advantages of the total force's capabilities. Achieving maximum military readiness by assuring every member is trained and assigning the most qualified individuals to all positions is and should continue to be an objective of the U.S. armed forces. To better meet this objective, there indeed needs to be a reinvigorated focus, on the part of military leaders at all levels, to identify and correct those barriers that might prevent this from happening.

Effective military innovation is an evolutionary process that depends on an organization's focus over time rather than guidance by one individual for a short period. By promoting a continuous mission focused work environment, that fosters cooperation between all members, military leadership can affect the process of fully integrating women into the military through long-term cultural change rather than short-term decisions of one or two people based on biases. Units will take on the attitudes of their leaders. If the leader accepts each member, male or female, as a valuable asset so will the rest of the unit.

In order to get the maximum performance from all military personnel, the services should eliminate as many double standards as possible. By setting consistent standards for everyone, they can use these standards to determine the best-qualified personnel, or those with the

greatest potential to succeed, to accomplish the mission at hand. They may find, in many cases, that the person with the greatest aptitude and physical capacity for a particular combat task may ultimately be a woman.

WORD COUNT = 7,417

ENDNOTES

[1] Barbara Macnick, Military Women: Their Future Role in Combat,, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks : U.S. Army War College, 7 April 1999), 14.

[2] General Accounting Office, Gender Issues: Improved Guidance and Oversight Are Needed to Ensure Validity and Equity of Fitness Standards (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, November 1998, p. 12. This report found that there are significant differences between the standards and tests the services use to measure physical fitness, that adjustments were made to these standards for age and gender were not always based in science, and that DoD oversight of the service's programs has not always been adequate.

[3] Air Force Policy Letter,"Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS)," Air Force Policy Letter Digest, June/July 1998. P.1. Linked from the U.S. Air Force Home Page. Available from <http://www.af.mil/lib/policy/letters/P198-07.html>. Internet. Accessed 28 October 2001. Quoting Acting Secretary of the Air Force Whitten F. Peters speaking to the members of DACOWITS about significant milestones made by women in the military over the years.

[4] Ibid, 1-2.

[5] Lisa Daniel, " Some Combat Jobs Open to Women," Army Times, 9 November 1998, p. 10. Ms. Daniel, covering a biannual conference of DACOWITS, discusses the Army's resistance to placing women in Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) units. She says that "some committee members said the Army's policy on MLRS units seems to be based on the so-called "risk rule" which excluded women from positions in which there was a high probability of action with the enemy." This rule was rescinded in 1991 when a new Assignment Policy for Women in the Military was released.

[6] Department of Defense, "Assignment Policy for Women in the Military." Linked from the Department of Defense Home Page. Available from <http://dticaw.dtic.mil/prhome/assignpo.html>. Internet. Accessed 28 October 2001.

[7] Ibid, 1.

[8] Ibid, 2.

[9] Ibid, 2.

[10] Jane McHugh, "Fewer Females are Joining the Reserves." Army Times, 8 February 1999, p.19.

[11] Air Force Policy Letter, 2. Quoting Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael E. Ryan speaking to DACOWITS members.

[12] Sheila Widnall, "Journey Toward an Institution of Fairness, Opportunity is Ongoing." 12 October 1995, 7; Linked from the U.S. Air Force Home Page. Available from <http://www.af.mil/news/speech/Journey_Toward_An_Instituti.html>. Internet. Accessed 28 October 2001. Remarks by the Secretary of the Air Force Sheila E. Widnall to DACOWITS Fall Conference, Luke Air Force Base, AZ.

[13] Ibid., 6.

[14] Air Force Policy Letter, 2

[15] Susan H. Greenberg, "Get Out of My Way." Newsweek, 29 October 2001: 34.

[16] Ibid., 34. Quoting Linda Grant DePaw of the Minerva Center, a military think tank.

[17] Jeanne Holm, Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1992), 364.

[18] Widnall, 5.

[19] Congress, House, Committee on Armed Forces. Special Subcommittee on Military Personnel., Registration of Women: Hearing on H.R. 6569, 96th Cong., 2d sess., 17, 1980. Available from <http://www2.law.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/foliocgi.exe/historic/query=board+of+education/doc>, Internet. Accesses 28 Oct 2001.

[20] Kathleen Parker, "War, Gender and Biology," The Sentinel, 14 November 2001, SEC B, p. B4

[21] Holm, 364.

[22] Selective Service Administration, "Women Aren't Required to Register." Linked from the Selective Service System web site. Available from, <http://www.sss.gov/Fswomen.htm>. Internet. Accesses 28 October 2001

[23] AOL.com, "Should Women also have to register for the Selective Service?," AOL.COM poll, Dec 2001. Available from <https:/polls.aol.com/ifs/poll/governmentguide/results2718.adp>. Internet. Accessed 15 December 2001.

[24] Widnall, 2.

[25] Parker, 4.

[26] General Accounting Office, Women in the Military: Deployment in the Persian Gulf, (Washington D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, July 1993), 3.

[27] Ibid, 52.

[28] Martin Binkin, Who Will Fight the Next War, (The Brookings Institution: Washington, D.C. 1993), 20. Mr Binkin is a manpower specialist and author of several studies on women in the military, for the Brookings Institute.

[29] Edwin Dorn and Howard Graves, American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C. 2000, 65.

[30] Yvonne Reed, "Beyond the Stars," Marines Online, May 1996: 3. Linked from the Marine Corps Home Page. Available from <http://www.hqmc.mil/marines.nsf/9eb11b0ca47d01f7852562d00078319f/57b481ef.html>. Accessed 28 Oct 2001. Comments were part of an interview with Major General Carol A. Mutter, who at the time had been nominated to become the first three-star general in the Defense Department.

[31] Ibid., 3.

[32] Time.CNN, "Polling the Nation," Time/CNN telephone poll conducted 6 June 1997, Available from <http://webspirs.silverplatter.com:8000/waldo>. Internet. Accessed 28 Oct 2001.

[33] Ernest Istook, "Military Separation - Is it Equal?," A Report from Congressman Ernest Istook. Linked from the U.S. House of Representatives Home Page. 1998. Available from <http://www.house.gov/istook/col-meq.htm>. Accessed 28 October 2001.

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[35] Jeffery P. Whitman, "Women, Sex, and the Military," Linked from the U.S. Air Force Academy Home Page. Available from <http://www.usafa.af.mil//jscope/jscope98/whitman98.html>. Internet. Accessed 28 October 2001.

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[37] Harvey M. Sapolsky and Jeremy Shapiro, "Casualties, Technology, and America's Future Wars," *Parameters*, Summer 1996: 119.

[38] Holm, 459.

[39] Binkin, 166.

[40] Rowan Scarborough, "Females Kept Off the Ground For Special-Ops Missions." Washington Times, 24 October 2001, 1.

[41] Paul Bedard, "Pentagon Slows Clinton's Bid for Women in Combat," from Washington Whispers, U.S. News & World Report, 29 October 2001. Linked from the U.S. Army Home Page. Available from <http://ca.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/ebird.cgi>. Internet. Accessed 30 October 2001. This article discusses movement by the Pentagon to reconsider--and most likely kill-Clinton—era proposals to put women into battle zones and to minimize and marginalize the contributions of DACOWITS.

[42] Jim Garamone, "Bush Calls for Military Transformation," American Forces Press Service, 12 December 2001. Review of President Bush's speech at the Citadel in Charleston, S.C., on 11 Dec.ember 2001. In his remarks to students at the Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina, President George W. Bush is referring to the men and women of the armed forces when he revealed his plans to transform the armed forces to confront the threats of the 21st Century.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Widnall, 5.

[45] George W. Golding, Colonel, USAF retired, personnel interview with author, 15 January 2002. Colonel Golding is a former 320th Bomb Wing Commander, Strategic Air Command, and flew numerous C-130 and B-52 missions in and over Vietnam from 1968-1972.

[46] Paul Richter, "Louis Caldera: Tough Job of Keeping Soldiers Ready for War and in the Army," Los Angeles Times, 22 November 1998, 17.

[47] Macnick, 14.

[48] Ibid, 14.

[49] "Rand Report: New Opportunities for Military Women," 21 October 1997. Linked from Defense LINK, Department of Defense Home Page. Available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct1997/b10211997_bt556-97.html>. Internet. Accessed 28 October 2001.

[50] Dorn, 1.

[51] Diana W. Smith and Debra L. Mowery, "Women in Combat: What Next?" Research Paper (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, 13 February 1992). 14. Quoting an article by Donna Miles, Women of Just Cause, in a March 1990 edition of Soldiers. Although evidence from Desert Storm and Just Cause indicates no real problems with bonding in mixed units, there continues to be concerns expressed by military personnel. According to a 1992 survey conducted by the Roper Organization for the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces: Those serving in combat roles are more likely than those in other specialties to feel that assigning women to direct combat positions would block cohesion or bonding.

[52] "Rand Report: New Opportunities for Military Women," 1. Quoting secretary of Defense William S. Conen.

[53] Dorn, xvi.

[54] Widnall, 7.

[55] "Rand Report: New Opportunities for Military Women," 2.

[56] Smith and Mowery, 21.

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[61] "Update on Gender-Integrated Basic Combat Training Study." U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social SciencesLinked from the U.S. Army Home Page. Available from http"/www.ari.army.mil/110504.htm. Internet. Accessed 28 Oct. 2001. The study was conducted from April to September, 1995 at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Ten companies were included in the study.

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[63] Garamone, 1.

[64] Widnall, 7.

[65] John Shalikashvili, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington: GPO, 1997), 2.

[66] Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington: GPO, 2001), 11.

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[68] Don M. Snider, "America's Postmodern Military," World Policy Journal, 17 (Spring 2000).

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