

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL Monterey, California



## THESIS

**WOMEN IN COMBAT: ATTITUDES AND  
EXPERIENCES OF U.S. MILITARY OFFICERS  
AND ENLISTED PERSONNEL**

by

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December 2001

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OFFICERS AND ENLISTED PERSONNEL**

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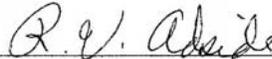
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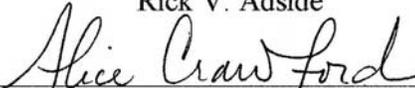


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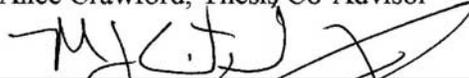


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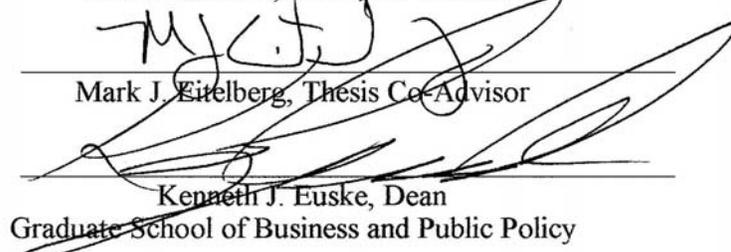
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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the attitudes and experiences of a selected group of U.S. military members regarding the service of women in combat. A survey was administered in October 2001 to enlisted personnel at the Defense Language Institute and to officers at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. A total of 276 enlisted personnel and 550 officers participated in the survey, with response rates of 69 percent and 55 percent, respectively. Focus groups were also convened. Respondents represented all military services, but were concentrated in certain pay grades and occupational areas (especially for enlisted personnel). Generally, four out of five respondents felt that women should serve in some capacity in military combat. Further, one-third of all respondents believed that qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for combat units, while one-third said they were satisfied with the policy in effect at the time of the survey (allowing women in all units except infantry, armor, submarines, and special forces). Differences in attitudes and experiences were found between men and women, officers and enlisted personnel, and members of the different branches of service. It is recommended that further research explore the use of gender-neutral standards in assigning military personnel to combat units.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. BACKGROUND

Nothing has been more certain through history than conflict and change. Conflict between individuals may grow until it becomes conflict between families, regions, nations, or religions, and conflict may eventually lead to combat. The issue of women in combat involves both of these basic concepts: conflict and change.

The role of women in society has changed over the past century. Similarly, the role of women in combat has expanded in the past few decades. Most significant were the changes in 1992-1994 that allowed women on combat ships and into combat aviation (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. xv). However, some military units remained closed to women, such as infantry, armor, submarines, and special forces.

Some people argue that women should be allowed into these units as well. Others argue that women should not be in combat at all. The question remains: where do military members presently stand on this issue?

## B. PURPOSE

### 1. Objective

This study looks at the attitudes and experiences of United States military personnel regarding women in combat. The study focuses specifically on U.S. military officers at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and U.S. military enlisted personnel at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California. The objective is to determine whether U.S. military personnel are supportive of women in combat, and if so, whether this is true in general or only for certain Military Occupational Specialities (MOSs) or designators. The U.S. military officers at NPS and the U.S. military enlisted personnel at DLI are appropriate samples for such a study for several reasons.

#### *a. Officers at NPS*

In 1993, combat ships and combat aircraft were opened to women, but several occupational areas, such as infantry, armor, submarines, and special forces, remain closed to women. A number of years have elapsed since the policy changed, and

it is quite likely that many of the officers who are students at NPS (primarily in the O-3 and O-4 pay grades) were on active duty when the first women were stationed on combatant ships and in combat aircraft. Generally, assignment to NPS is a strong indication of career potential. Thus, these officers are likely to remain in the service and be responsible for implementing policy on women in combat—whether it remains as is or changes in the future.

Officers' opinions are important when evaluating the effectiveness of a program, and when considering or implementing change. As Field and Nagl (2001) write:

While different studies of military change disagree whether military organizations can reform themselves or whether they require external leadership, most concur that officer leadership is essential for successful change. Where the officer corps goes, so goes the culture of the military. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in a recent examination of American military culture, “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.” (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 79)

***b. Enlisted Personnel at DLI***

Enlisted personnel may have a different perspective than the officers. Unlike the officers at NPS, enlisted students at DLI are relatively junior in age and career, and because of their generation, they may have a different view of interaction between genders. Enlisted personnel generally have received less formal education than officers, which may also affect their perspective on gender roles and on gender integration. Additionally, the number of enlisted personnel in the U.S. military far exceeds that of officers, emphasizing the important role of enlistees in effecting change.

**2. Timeliness**

As noted, a number of officers at NPS were likely among the first women on combat ships or in combat aviation, or the men in the units when the first women arrived. Furthermore, the topic is extremely timely based on current world events. On September 11, 2001, terrorists flew commercial aircraft into New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives and billions of dollars in related damage. The U.S. believes that Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network are

responsible for these acts, and believes that the network is headquartered in Afghanistan. When Afghanistan refused to join the U.S.'s "war on terrorism," the U.S., with the support of many countries, began bombing Afghanistan.

For many years, combat was something for which the military trained, and something that the American people discussed. Going into combat is always recognized by U.S. military personnel as a *possibility*, but it is seldom expected. It seems that military members are now more likely than ever since Desert Storm to experience combat. It is one thing to discuss in peacetime the theoretical implications of women in combat. It is yet another when the conclusions reached will send women into combat, not as a possibility in the distant future, but as an inevitability in the present. Given the current situation in the world, including U.S. military involvement in what may be a long, continuing war, the topic of women in combat is especially timely and relevant.

### **3. Research Questions**

(1) What are the attitudes of military officers at the Naval Postgraduate School and enlisted personnel at the Defense Language Institute regarding women in combat?

- a. Should women be allowed in combat? If so, should it be optional or "required" (similar to the policy for American men in the military)?
- b. If so, in what types of combat should women be allowed or required to participate?
- c. If current regulations regarding women in combat were modified, would this affect retention?

(2) Do attitudes regarding women in combat vary by:

- a. Gender?
- b. Race/ethnicity?
- c. Branch of service?
- d. Military occupation?
- e. Pay grade/years of service?

- f. Marital status?
- g. Having a spouse in the military?
- h. Gender of children?
- i. For officers:
  - i. Source of commission?
  - ii. Prior enlisted service?
- j. For enlisted personnel:
  - i. Broken military service?
  - ii. Highest level of education?
- k. For men:
  - i. Previous service in combat?
  - ii. Previous service in combat with women?
  - iii. Previous service in direct ground combat?
  - iv. Previous service in direct ground combat with women?
- l. For women:
  - i. Previous service in combat?
  - ii. Previous service in direct ground combat?

(3) How do these results compare with the findings from a RAND survey in 1997 of American military members regarding women in combat<sup>1</sup>?

(4) How receptive would military officers and enlisted personnel be to changes in the current policy?

## **C. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1. Scope and Limitations**

This thesis consists of two structured surveys, one at NPS and one at DLI, and two sets of focus groups, one set at each organization. Response to the survey was entirely voluntary, as was participation in the focus groups. The target population at NPS consisted of 1,007 U.S. military officers attending school in October of 2001. The target population at DLI consisted of 2,151 enlisted personnel.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1997, RAND conducted a survey, which was directed by Congress, to evaluate the performance of the military service in integrating women into occupations previously closed to them. The study findings were written by Harrell and Miller (1997), and will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapter.

One limitation for the survey was that it was short and consisted almost entirely of closed-ended questions. This was done to increase the response rate, but it also requires personnel to choose an answer that may not be entirely accurate (Edwards, Thomas, Rosenfled, & Booth-Kewley, 1997, p. 25). For example, one question asks respondents to choose one of four statements that most accurately reflects their view. A potential limitation is that a respondent's true view may lie somewhere in between two of the four choices.

Similarly, due to the busy schedule of the students at NPS, focus groups were limited to an hour. This was done to increase participation. However, one hour is extremely short for a focus group of six to ten people, with two hours being the norm (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 64), but especially to discuss a topic that is as controversial and complex as women in combat. It is possible that no individual had enough time to express all of his or her views on the subject. However, it is believed that the more important issues emerged.

## **2. Organization**

The rest of this thesis is organized primarily into four chapters. Chapter II presents a review of relevant literature and offers hypotheses on the findings of the surveys and focus groups, based on the literature. Chapter III explains the methodology used for the study. Chapter IV presents the results and discussion of the findings. Chapter V, the final chapter, provides the conclusions from the study and recommendations.

Eight appendices are also included. Appendix A is the survey used at NPS, and Appendix B is the survey from DLI. Appendix C is the e-mail note sent to all U.S. military students at NPS, informing them of the survey. Appendix D shows the directions that accompanied the survey at DLI. Appendix E is the protocol that was used for conducting the focus groups. Samples of the responses to the open-ended survey question from students at NPS and DLI are then provided as Appendix F and G, respectively. Appendix H is a sample of the comments made during the focus groups.

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## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to study women in combat without an exact definition of combat. Combat can be defined in many different ways—and has been defined slightly differently in U.S. policy over the past few decades. Furthermore, the U.S. military has subdivided combat into different types, distinguishing among a “combat mission,” “close combat,” “direct combat,” “combat support,” and “combat service support” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 182).

From 1988 to 1993, the “risk rule” was used to determine what was considered combat. As Stiehm (1996) writes:

The Department of Defense determined what was a combat position on the basis of a “risk rule,” specifying that “risks of direct combat, exposure to hostile fire, or capture are proper criteria for closing positions or units to women.” This definition stated that direct combat “takes place while closing with the enemy by fire, maneuver, or shock effect to destroy or capture or while repelling assault by fire, close combat, or counterattack.” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 158)

In 1992, the definition of combat varied by service. However, at the time, the Department of Defense defined a “combat mission” as:

A task, together with the purpose, which clearly requires an individual unit, naval vessel or aircraft to individually or collectively seek out, reconnoiter and engage the enemy with the intent to suppress, neutralize, destroy or repel that enemy. (Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, 1992, p. C-33)

In 1993, the risk rule was replaced with a new definition of ground combat that “bars women from units that engage the enemy with weapons on the ground while exposed to hostile fire and that involve substantial probability of direct physical contact with hostile forces” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 158). In January 1994, the Secretary of Defense defined direct ground combat as:

Engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force’s personnel. Direct ground combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect. (Harrell & Miller, 1997, pp. 3-4)

These various definitions of women in combat and associated policies were developed to run parallel to the prevailing social and military attitudes of that time. These attitudes were shaped by historical roles that women have played in support of and as a part of combat. Previous studies addressing these attitudes presented strong arguments both for and against assigning women to combat. The U.S. military's policy and attitude regarding women in combat have evolved significantly over the past six decades. In order to gain perspective on why and how it changed, a review of historical background is necessary.

## **B. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF WOMEN IN COMBAT**

The role of women in the military and in combat over the years has been fairly extensive, more than some might initially suspect. Stiehm (1989) writes:

Women have always fought and died in war. However, they have usually been called to difficult and dangerous tasks only to replace men who have assumed even more difficult and dangerous tasks—or to replace those whose tasks have led to death. (Stiehm, 1989, p. 224)

Furthermore, Holm (1982) discusses that current roles of women are somewhat different from the past:

Women's participation in the military is not, as many believe, of recent origin—it goes back to our nation's beginnings. The extent of their involvement and the degree to which they have been "militarized" and integrated into the services are, however, significant departures from the past and have become major subjects of controversy in recent years. (Holm, 1982, p. xv)

Women have fought in combat since at least the third century A.D., and discussion of their participation in the military can even be found in the thoughts and works of the ancient Greek philosophers.

### **1. Plato and Aristotle**

In the fourth century B.C., Plato believed that women should take on their full share of civic responsibilities, including fighting in war (Eitelberg, 1990, pp. 5-6, referencing Plato's *Republic*). Aristotle's concept of "citizenship" included the duty of "carrying arms on behalf of the political community" (Addis, Russo, & Sebesta, 1994, p. 31). Both Aristotle and Plato believed that part of full citizenship was membership in the "guardian class" (Skaine, 1999, p. 46).

## **2. Amazons**

The Amazons were legendary warriors. The term, “Amazon,” comes from the Greek word “Mazos,” meaning breast, and “a,” meaning to cut off. Some believe that the Amazon women cut off their right breasts so they could use their bow and arrows more easily. Whether they truly existed is still a topic for debate (Kirk, 1988, p. 7).

## **3. Zenobia**

Around 266 A.D., Zenobia was the Queen of Palmyra, an Arabian desert kingdom. Assuming the throne after her husband’s death, she claimed the title “Queen of the East,” and tried to unite Syria, Western Asia, and Egypt under her rule. She reportedly “wore military garb and accompanied her troops” (Kirk, 1988, p. 7), but was defeated by the Romans.

## **4. Joan of Arc (1412-1431)**

At 13 years old, Joan of Arc heard the voices of the patron saints of France, urging her to avenge the French against the English. Wearing men’s clothing, she managed to see Dauphin, and persuaded him to let her lead a French army into battle against the English at Orleans. She motivated the army to victory. Eventually, Joan was captured by the Duke of Burgundy, and the English requested she be turned over to them for trial. She was burned at the stake, and was later canonized a saint. Nonetheless, she led many battles to victory and was considered a great military tactician (Kirk, 1988, pp. 10-11; Culler, 2000, p. 7).

## **5. Kit Welsh (1667-1739)**

Kit Welsh disguised herself as a man, apparently looking for her husband, and fought in the British army from 1693-1704. During this time, she was wounded twice and even held as a prisoner of war (POW) by the French. After she found her husband in 1704, they both stayed with the army, though she returned to wearing women’s attire and cooked more than fought. Her life was saved by the stays of her gown once when she was hit by a bullet while searching a battlefield for her husband’s body (Kirk, 1988, pp. 10-11).

## **6. American Revolution**

As Holm (1982) writes, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

Women were routinely present with the armies in battle.... The army authorized a certain number of women—usually three to six per company—to draw rations for themselves and their children in return for their services, which generally included cooking, sewing, and laundry. (Holm, 1982, p. 4)

One woman who actually participated in combat at that time was Molly Pitcher. Mary Hayes, wife of artilleryman John Hayes, brought water to the troops during the American Revolution. She became known as Molly Pitcher when she put down her pitcher of water and began to fight alongside the men, taking over a gun station when its crewmen were all seriously injured. Even after reinforcements initially arrived, she held her station until relieved by an artilleryman (Culler, 2000, p. 11; Holm, 1982, p. 3).

## **7. War of 1812**

Lucy Brewer disguised herself as a man and fought as a United States Marine in the War of 1812 (Carlborg, 2001). She served for three years on the *USS Constitution* under the alias of George Baker (Holm, 1982, p. 5).

## **8. Civil War**

Women played a larger role during the Civil War. In addition to fulfilling the usual support roles, they served as “saboteurs, scouts, and couriers. They blew up bridges, cut telegraph wires, burned arsenals and warehouses, and helped prisoners and slaves escape” (Holm, 1982, p. 6). Additionally, women spied for both Confederate and Union armies (Culler, 2000, p. 11; Holm, 1982, p. 6). An estimated 400 women disguised themselves as men to fight in the war. Particularly famous among these women was Sarah Edwards, who was a nurse, spy, courier, and soldier in the Union Army (Holm, 1982, p. 6).

## **9. Female Warriors Opposing the French in 1892**

According to Grossman (1995), in 1892:

hardened French foreign legionnaires faced a bizarre army of female warriors, and ...many of these tough veterans “experienced a few seconds” hesitation about shooting or bayoneting a half-naked Amazon [and] their delay had fatal results. (Grossman, 1995, p. 175)

## **10. World War I (WWI)**

The numbers vary somewhat in different sources, but between 33,000 and 49,500 women were involved in WWI. According to one source, about 33,000 women served in the war—20,000 of them in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps, which were separate from the regular Army and Navy (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. 1). According to another source, 49,500 American women volunteered to serve in uniform in WWI (Breuer, 1997, p. 11).

## **11. World War II (WWII)**

In WWII, due to manpower shortages and favorable reports from other countries with women in their militaries, the United States established the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES). Approximately 350,000 American women served in WWII (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. 1). Furthermore, in WWII, 88 American women were taken prisoners of war (POWs), all nurses (and officers) (Skaine, 1999, p. 66).

Russia used women in combat during WWII. The Red Air Force had two bomber regiments and one fighter regiment that were entirely female. As Myles (1981) observes, "these young women had fought in the fiercest battles and had received their country's highest decorations for bravery," such as the Hero of the Soviet Union Award (Myles, 1981, pp. vii, 84-A, 84-F; Culler, 2000, p. 8). The women reportedly flew in sickness and in health, sometimes with heavy colds and flu. Some of them managed to conceal even more serious conditions from the regimental doctor, such as a navigator who had rheumatic fever. She did not know exactly what she had, but knew it was serious. She refused to report being sick, knowing that the doctor would take her off flying duties, possibly even permanently (Myles, 1981, pp. 137-138). One woman, Nadya Popova, a Russian bomber pilot, stated:

We flew combat missions each night. With up to three hundred kilos of bombs strapped to our wings we took off an average of fifteen times a night, bombing railways, bridges, supply depots and troop positions that were heavily fortified with anti-aircraft guns...I could see burning planes crashing with my girlfriends in them. (Culler, 2000, p. 9, referencing Saywell, 1985, p. 144)

## **12. Korean Conflict**

Women played a limited role in the Korean conflict. As Culler (2000) writes: “Women comprised less than one percent of the military forces in the Korean conflict and were used primarily as nurses” (Culler, 2000, p. 13).

## **13. Vietnam War**

Women were also among the U.S. military personnel who were sent to Vietnam, many in medical service positions. It has been estimated that “approximately three-quarters of the women who served in the military in Vietnam were subjected to combat conditions. Yet none of these women was formally in a combat position” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 156).

Marjorie Nelson, an American doctor, was held as a POW by the North Vietnamese Army for two months. She and one other woman were taken from a house that the Vietnamese wanted to use as an observation point during the Tet Offensive, and were placed in a POW camp. The experience seemed to be more of a cultural exchange, with the Vietnamese asking them many questions about how Americans lived. The women were not mistreated; no doubt working in their favor were the facts that Nelson was a Quaker and explained the Quaker belief of pacifism to them, she spoke their language, and she was there practicing medicine. When the women were released, the Vietnamese stated that they hoped the women considered themselves “guests” as opposed to “prisoners” (Marshall, 1987, pp. 147-157).

Additionally, Vietnamese women fought during the Vietnam War (Turner, 1998). This may have even worked to the advantage of the Vietnamese, as many American military men expressed their shock and horror at fighting and killing female Viet Cong soldiers (Grossman, 1995, p. 175).

## **14. Grenada in 1983, Libya in 1986, and Panama in 1989**

Skaine (1999) describes the role of women in American military operations in Grenada and Libya:

Over one hundred women deployed in Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada in 1983. In the attack on Libya in 1986, Air Force women served as pilots, copilots, and boom operators of the KC-135 and KC-10 tankers that refueled the FB-111s. (Skaine, 1999, p. 63)

Women were also a part of the American military actions in Panama, including two women who commanded companies in the invasion (Stiehm, 1996, p. 69). Skaine (1999) provides the following specifics:

Over 770 women deployed in Operation Just Cause. In Panama the lines of combat became even more indistinct. Three female Army helicopter pilots came under heavy enemy fire. Army CPT Linda Bray, commander of the 988<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company, led her soldiers in a firefight against Panamanian Defense Forces. (Skaine, 1999, pp. 63-64)

Two contrasting stories exist about two female truck drivers in Panama, who were directed to “drive a company of Rangers to the site of the fiercest fighting” (Mitchell, 1998, p. 197). According to one account, the two women tearfully refused. Another account indicated that the women had been driving for nine hours, and simply asked to be relieved for fear of endangering their passengers (Mitchell, 1998, p. 197).

Even when the combat exclusion law was in effect, the definition of combat continued to narrow. As Landers (1989), a journalist for Congressional Quarterly’s *Editorial Research Reports*, observed:

Although the laws and regulations excluding women from combat are still in force, the definition of “combat” has been narrowed in recent years. Military women now serve in support positions that all but guarantee they will be exposed to combat in the event of war. (quoted in Eitelberg, 1990, p. 8)

## **15. Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (1990-1991)**

The role of women in these two operations was fairly large, involving between 35,000 and 41,000 women (some inconsistencies in the numbers exist; Stiehm, 1996, p. 69; Skaine, 1999, p. 64; Mitchell, 1998, p. 199). These numbers may seem small compared to the 350,000 women involved in WWII, but WWII was much longer than the Gulf War. As Skaine (1999) writes:

The largest single deployment of women in history, 35,000, occurred. Military women made up seven percent of the forces. They served as aircraft pilots and in logistical support, in supply units, in repair units, and on hospital ships. Although women were not “officially” in combat, the lines were blurred because of long-range artillery and surface-to-surface missiles. (Skaine, 1999, p. 64)

Of the 375 American fatalities (Binkin, 1993, p. 20), between five and thirteen were women (inconsistencies exist with these figures, too; Stiehm, 1996, p. 69; Skaine, 1999, p. 65; Binkin, 1993, p. 20).

Of the 25 Americans taken as POWs during the Gulf War, two were women (Binkin, 1993, p. 20; Stiehm, 1996, p. 69). Major Rhonda Cornum, an Army flight surgeon, was taken POW after a Black Hawk helicopter on a medical evacuation was shot down. Army Specialist Melissa Rathbun-Nealy, a heavy equipment transport driver, was captured near the Saudi town of Khafji (Skaine, 1999, p. 66; Binkin, 1993, p. 20). Major Cornum was sexually assaulted, having been “violated manually, vaginally and rectally by an Iraqi soldier” (Binkin, 1993, p. 21), while being transported in a pick-up truck to a small prison, and a fellow male prisoner watched helplessly (Presidential Commission, 1992, p. 111). Nonetheless, Major Cornum dismissed it as “an occupational hazard of going to war” (Binkin, 1993, p. 21). When asked about her opinion on women in combat, Major Cornum answered:

A soldier needs physical and moral courage, ingenuity and integrity, determination and loyalty, a sense of humor, and of course luck, to be successful in combat. I do not believe and did not see any evidence that these qualities are distributed on the basis of gender or race. (Presidential Commission, 1992, p. 111)

Major Cornum recounted an incident during captivity. She was whispering with a fellow captor, Sergeant Troy Dunlap, comparing notes. Then he looked at her, and said:

“Ma’am, you’re really brave.” I looked back at him and said, “What’d you think I was going to do, cry or something?” He said, “Yeah, I guess I thought you were.” I replied, “Well, that’s okay. I thought you were, too.” It is interesting what our expectations were. His were based on gender; mine were perhaps based on age, or, perhaps, just on experience, who knows. (Stiehm, 1996, p. 18)

## **16. Countries Other than the United States**

In addition to the examples of Russia and Vietnam mentioned above, a number of countries other than the United States have used women in combat. For example, since 1990, Canada, Denmark, and the Netherlands have used women in combat positions, though all three reportedly had difficulty recruiting and retaining women in ground

combat specialties (Presidential Commission, 1992, pp. C-21 - C-27). Greece also had women fight alongside men (Simons, 2001, p. 97). Previous use of women in combat was often only out of extreme necessity:

Historically, those nations that have experienced or placed women in close combat situations (Soviet Union, Germany and Israel) have done so due to grave threats to their national survival. After the crisis passed, each nation adopted policies which excluded the employment of women in combat. (Presidential Commission, 1992, p. C-53)

The reasons for not having women in combat are sometimes not what might be expected. For example, the Israelis have refused to put women in combat since 1950 (Culler, 2000, p. 9). This was apparently due to their experiences in 1948 when,

They experienced recurring incidences of uncontrolled violence among male Israeli soldiers who had had their female combatants killed or injured in combat, and because the Arabs were extremely reluctant to surrender to women. (Grossman, 1995, p. 175)

The British and Germans are also expanding the role of women in the military to include combat. As an article in the *Army Times* (July 30, 2000, p. 4), reports:

The British military will take the first step toward opening ground combat units to women when it begins tests early next year to gauge how women perform in grueling battlefield conditions. The study, certain to be closely watched at the Pentagon, will compare the performance of mixed-sex units with all-male and all-female units. (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 88)

Similarly, “the German army is also allowing women to volunteer for combat roles, largely as a result of a recent European Court ruling against gender discrimination but also because of its difficulty in manning units with male soldiers.” (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 88, referencing *Army Times*, July 17, 2000, p. 6)

## **17. Summary of Women in Combat through History**

Many women have been in combat throughout history. “That men and women have been dying alongside each other in wars for thousands of years is nothing new” (Skaine, 1999, p. 223). Furthermore, even more women may have been involved in combat (in wars besides the Civil War) than is documented. Women had to disguise themselves as men to join the military. Primarily those who were not successful—and whose true gender was discovered (often when receiving medical care after being injured)—may have been the ones who made the history books.

## C. ARGUMENTS FOR WOMEN IN COMBAT

Although women have been in combat throughout history, the issue of whether women should be assigned to combat is still being debated. The arguments for women in combat generally consist of current technology making women more equal with men in combat, equal rights meaning equal responsibility, allowing women who meet gender-neutral standards into combat, support for women in combat based on women's success in combat throughout history, denying women combat experience unfairly disqualifies them for promotions, and a disbelief that women disrupt unit cohesion or teamwork. These arguments are discussed briefly below.

### 1. Current Technology Requires Brains, Not Physical Strength.

One of the primary arguments today for placing women in combat is that current technology has changed the basic nature of war-fighting. The ability to use technology is key, not physical strength. Additionally, due to long-range weaponry, no clear distinction exists between front-line personnel and support personnel. Stiehm (1990) writes:

Modern weapons technology has blurred the lines between support and combat positions as well as between the "front line" and the "rear." Thus, although women were not permitted to fly fighter aircraft until 1993, they had been permitted to fly the tankers that refuel the fighters, making them a prime target for enemy fire. Similarly, although women were banned from Navy destroyers until 1994, they were allowed to serve on supply ships that are located in battle zones. (Stiehm, 1996, p. 163)

Field and Nagl (2001) continue on the same theme:

There no longer exists a forward edge of the battlefield; in these operations anyone, anywhere, can be a combatant at any time. In fact, given the nature of the missions that the military is likely to be called upon to perform in the post-Cold War world, women may be at least as well suited as men to serve in all positions. Practically speaking, women are now being placed in situations remarkably similar to the ones in which men serving in the combat arms find themselves.... It remains to be determined whether mission accomplishment is assisted or hindered by the presence of women in units on the front lines, but it is undeniable that they are serving now in the same areas of operations as their male counterparts. (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 78)

Captain Terry VandenHolder, an Air Force Captain, told a reporter, "For women, there's no longer a protective barrier, some easy-to-use frontline. A woman can get hit

by a Scud missile. There's no more hiding behind rocks—or social mores" (Breuer, 1997, p. 157).

**2. Equal Rights Means Equal Responsibility—Including Serving One's Country.**

The basis for this argument is at least as old as the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. If women receive the full benefits of citizenship, then they, too, must share the burden in the nation's defense against enemies. Gender equality and justice were primary issues of female voters in the early 1990s (Culler, 2000, p. 24). Equality and its applicability to women in combat is further described by Skaine (1999):

Women and men carrying one another off the battlefield is not new. What is new is the legal right to share most military assignments and therefore be acknowledged as an equal member of the combatant team. Responding to rank is gender neutral. Equality and what equality brings, that is, more opportunity to observe women as colleagues, will improve understanding and treatment of one another. Old acculturation must give way to new ideas, leading to positive change for women and men alike and a better life for our children and grandchildren. (Skaine, 1999, p. 223)

**3. There Should Be One Standard for Both Men and Women; Those Women Who Can Meet the Standards—and There Are Some—Should Be Allowed in Combat.**

It is often suggested that the military determine legitimate physical standards for its different job specialties, and then allow all qualified persons, regardless of gender, to hold these jobs. One such suggestion came from Field and Nagl (2001), who suggested that the Army allow a small number of women to be assigned to combat:

As part of this proposal, the Army would be required to establish and to publish physical requirements for all of its occupational specialties currently closed to women. Only those individuals who meet the standards required to accomplish the tasks inherent in that military specialty—male or female—would be allowed to serve in that specialty. (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 79)

They compared this requirement to that of police and fire departments. Although relatively few women are able to pass the physically demanding tests, the standards cannot be relaxed without jeopardizing public safety. The point remains that some women are able to meet these very demanding standards. Field and Nagl, both Army Majors, point out that they have each known male soldiers who could not qualify for the

“physical, mental, and emotional demands of combat. Standards-based requirements would solve both problems, and the increasing physical ability of women makes this policy change more likely to be successful” (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 80).

The current physical fitness (or readiness) test in each of the services has different minimum requirements for men than women. This is perceived as a double-standard and is a source of resentment (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 88).

One recommendation from the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces in 1992 pertained to different standards for different occupational specialties. Specifically:

The services should adopt specific occupational, muscular strength/endurance, and cardiovascular capacity requirements for those specialties for which muscular strength/endurance and cardiovascular capacity are relevant (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 88).

Further support comes from Greg Fontenot, a retired Colonel in the United States Army, in his review of Stephanie Gutmann’s *The Kindler, Gentler Military: Can America’s Gender-Neutral Fighting Force Still Win Wars?* Previously a commander of a tank battalion in Desert Storm and in Bosnia, he writes,

Female soldiers have proven themselves despite anecdotal evidence to the contrary. Patriots of whatever race, creed, color, or sex should have the opportunity to serve if they are able... Objective standards, with all jobs open to all who are able to meet those standards, may be the way to bridge the gap between feminist political agendas and what individual young women may wish to attempt. (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 88, referencing Fontenot in *Armor*, 2000, p. 58).

An interesting addition to the argument of physical size and strength pertains to the differences in stature of people of different countries or ethnicities. For example, the average American woman is physically larger than the average man in some other countries (Eitelberg, 1990, p. 18).

#### **4. Women Have Been in Combat through History; Women Can Handle—and even Excel in—Combat.**

This argument is based on the successful participation of women in combat throughout history, as mentioned in the previous section. Cases that are usually

mentioned in this position are Soviet aviators in WWII and the large number of American women who participated in Desert Storm.

Sometimes it is argued that women are naturally less aggressive, and thus, will be inferior to men in times of war. Anthropologist Margaret Mead studied a New Guinea tribe in which women were reared as the aggressive sex whereas the men were docile. It may be that a person's aggressive tendencies are based on what his or her particular society deems as acceptable. In 1869, John Stuart Mills stated, "Women are what we have required them to be" (Kirk, 1988, p. 2).

Women are not inherently weak. Part of the argument against women in combat is that women's approach to ethics is based on caring, responsibility, and relationality, whereas men's approach is based on justice, rights, and autonomy. However, a care ethic is not necessarily the same as pacifism. As Stiehm (1996) observes, "Maternal practices, for example, demonstrate the violence that many mothers are willing to use to protect their children from harm" (Stiehm, 1996, p. 179).

#### **5. Women Need Combat Experience for Promotions.**

This argument holds that it is basically unfair to allow women into the military, but then prohibit them from serving in combat, which is often key to promotions. For example, "no woman will be chief of staff without combat unit command experience" (Stiehm, 1996, p. 37). Even attaining the top ranks is difficult: "these [positions that were closed to women as of 1995] include most of the positions that are traditionally paths to advancement into the military's top ranks. This drastically constrains women's opportunities for top leadership" (Stiehm, 1996, p. 160). Furthermore, "equal rights activists claimed that a lack of opportunities for promotion in combat billets leads to perceptions of women as second-class citizens; in her experience, Major General Holm relates that women were, in fact, treated as such" (Culler, 2000, p. 24, referencing Holm, 1991).

#### **6. Women Do Not Denigrate Teamwork.**

One of the popular arguments against women in combat is that they would denigrate the cohesion and teamwork so essential to military success. Studies have

shown that “the operational capabilities of a unit are not weakened by the presence of women” (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 82). A RAND study in 1997 found that,

gender differences alone did not appear to erode cohesion. Cohesion was reported high in units where people believed the command emphasized unity and the importance and necessity of all members and divisions in accomplishing the mission. (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. 54)

Interesting support for this statement that gender differences alone do not erode cohesion comes from Joe Collins, a retired Colonel in the United States Army. Collins studied American military culture for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and found that “the Coast Guard, which was the first service to integrate women and has women serving in all mission areas, is the only service which has no disparities between male and female perceptions of female effectiveness” (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 82).

Sexual relationships may also complicate unit cohesion. It has been said that men and women who work together in stressful situations often get involved in a sexual relationship. However, “the limited studies that have been conducted under simulated combat conditions show that gender-integrated combat units are as effective as all-male units and that members of such units develop brother-sister bonds rather than sexual ones” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 167). Naturally, one has to ask what exactly “simulated combat conditions” are, since it would certainly be difficult to simulate the realistic expectation of death as would be found in actual combat. Nonetheless, the studies cited above suggest that male-female teamwork can work effectively in combat.

It is also possible that having women around may make men better soldiers. According to Rogan (1981), “One homesick male trainee...at Fort McClellan had said, ‘I like having the women around. It gives you someone to *talk* to’” (Rogan, 1981, p. 283).

One study conducted in the 1940s supports men and women working together. As Stiehm (1996) writes, “The results of a ‘secret’ experiment integrating women into male anti-aircraft artillery combat units in 1942 indicated that mixed units of men and women performed even better than all-male units” (Stiehm, 1996, 184).

If women cause problems with teamwork in a male organization, it is possible that the problem lies with the men. Perhaps some of attitudes toward women in the military are the true causes of any breakdown in cohesion. These include attitudes based on

stereotypes (even with personal experiences to the contrary), traditions at the Naval Academy, attitudes of senior officers, and even the use of language.

**a. *Attitudes Based on Stereotypes, not Personal Experiences***

Some men may base their beliefs that women should not be in combat on something other than their personal experiences with individual women. For example, one woman relayed her experiences at West Point:

Eventually, the male cadets would come around as they got to know us as individuals. They would say, “You’re O.K., but I don’t like the rest of the women.” They thought they were paying us a compliment. We saw it as a very slow process of overcoming their ignorance one woman at a time. (Major Jane McKeon, quoted in Skaine, 1999, p. 75)

Sergeant Dunlap, a male soldier who was captured with Major Rhonda Cornum in the Gulf War, offered a similar observation. Major Cornum recounted Dunlap’s comments:

During an interview we did together, he was asked, “What do you think about women in combat?” And he said, “I don’t think they should be there.” Then he was asked about me specifically: “Would you go to war with Dr. Cornum again?” He said, “Of course. I’d go anywhere with Major Cornum.” What does that mean? It means that all his experiences did affect his thinking but not enough to generalize to all women. And I don’t blame him. That’s why I think it’s so important to have women who are competitive and have the ability and will to be successful—and to take those women and allow them to compete for and in everything. Then the rest of the military can base their opinions on successful women instead of relying on memories of their mothers, their wives, their girlfriends, and their sisters. (Stiehm, 1996, p. 22)

It is certainly possible that Sergeant Dunlap was only being polite by excluding Major Cornum from his generalization about all women. However, it is also possible, and seems more likely, that her analysis is correct; he simply did not change his opinion of all women based on his one experience with Major Cornum.

**b. *Traditions at the Naval Academy***

Some of the songs and marching chants at the U.S. Naval Academy may contribute to sexist beliefs, stereotyping women as mothers, unfaithful lovers, or “loose” women. Such “catchy” and perhaps amusing jingles may influence men’s perceptions of women. Carol Burke worked at the Naval Academy and collected over 200 marching

chants while there. In her chapter in Stiehm's (1996) book, *It's Our Military, Too! Women and the U. S. Military*, she quoted the following chant, banned around 1990:

Rich girl uses Vaseline, poor girl uses lard  
But Lulu uses axle grease and bangs them twice as hard.  
*Chorus:* Bang Bang Lulu. Bang away all day.  
Bang Bang Lulu. Who ya gonna bang today?  
Rich girl uses tampons, poor girl uses rags  
But Lulu's c----'s so goddamn big she uses burlap bags. (Stiehm, 1996, p. 208)

Burke quoted the following song, which was sung by the male glee club at the Naval Academy on their bus trips home to the tune of "The Candy Man," as recently as 1991:

Who can take a chainsaw/ Cut the b--ch in two  
F--- the bottom half/ And give the upper half to you....  
*Chorus:* The S&M Man, the S&Man,  
The S&M Man cause he mixes it with love  
And makes the hurt feel good!  
Who can take an ice pick/ Ram it through her ear  
Ride her like a Harley/ As you f--- her from the rear.... (Stiehm, 1996, p. 209)

It may be surprising that such songs were coming from individuals in training to become "officers and gentlemen." It is also hard to believe that such individuals can sing such songs, and then truly consider women as their peers in the military.

### *c. An Admiral's Comments*

Unfortunately, attitudes against women in the military are not limited only to teenagers at the Naval Academy. One male Navy admiral, who was key in the direction of the initial investigation of the Tailhook incidents, commented that "a lot of female Navy pilots are go-go dancers, topless dancers or hookers" (Addis, Russo, & Sebesta, 1994, p. 93). Additionally, when he was told by a female Naval Investigative Service agent that a female officer, assaulted at the convention, had remembered saying, "What the f--- do you think you're doing?," the admiral replied: "Any woman that would use the "F" word on a regular basis would welcome this type of activity" (Addis, Russo, & Sebesta, 1994, p. 93).

*d. Language*

Even use of language can play an important part in conditioning men to look down upon women. For example, “in basic training, new recruits are often characterized as feminine and effeminate and are called ‘ladies’ or ‘girls’ until they are able to prove their masculinity by exhibiting aggression and other ‘macho’ characteristics” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 161). This is somewhat equivalent to the adult version of “You throw like a girl.”

“Bonding” and “cohesion” are somewhat abstract concepts subject to many different definitions. As such, defining factors that promote or denigrate these states are difficult to isolate in research. Claims are made on both sides of the argument such as, “It is likely that unit bonding depends more on shared experiences, including risks and hardships, than on gender distinctions” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 167). Major Cornum, the flight surgeon who was an Iraqi POW, stated:

Given the opportunity and rational leadership, men and women work together and bond just fine, particularly during conflict and adversity. It’s pretty simple: we must all judge others on what they do, not what they are. (Stiehm, 1996, p. 23)

Opposing claims are addressed in the next section.

**D. ARGUMENTS AGAINST WOMEN IN COMBAT**

Just as there are many arguments for assigning women to combat, there are numerous arguments to the contrary. These include views that men are the natural protectors of women, the possibility of pregnancy should preclude women’s assignment to combat, women’s inferior physical capabilities will decrease military effectiveness, American women may become POWs, removing barriers against women in combat may force women to serve in combat (such as through a draft), sending women into combat could make the U.S. look weak to its enemies, modifying spaces and equipment to accommodate women leads to excessive and unnecessary costs, and the presence of women disrupts (male) unit cohesion.

**1. War is Manly and Men Are the Natural Protectors of Women.**

This argument is mentioned in Stiehm (1996, p. 161). These two ideas seem to go hand in hand, and feelings on this run strong:

The perception that the virtues of “manliness” are necessary for effective combat soldiering, virtues that women are considered intrinsically to lack, has contributed to the maintenance of women’s exclusion from most combat assignments. Given these stereotypic images, it is not difficult to understand how opponents can “equate women’s participation in combat with the destruction of womanhood, manhood, and American society.” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 162, referencing Kornblum, 1984, p. 385).

General Robert H. Barrows, former Marine Corps Commandant, testified at congressional hearings in 1991 that women in combat positions “would destroy the Marine Corps, something no enemy has been able to do in over two hundred years” (Stiehm, 1996, p.183; Mitchell, 1998, p. 213). While Commandant in 1980, Barrows said:

War is man’s work. Biological convergence on the battlefield would not only be dissatisfying in terms of what women could do, but it would be an enormous psychological distraction for the male who wants to think that he’s fighting for that woman somewhere behind, not up there in the same fox hole with him. It tramples the male ego. When you come right down to it, you’ve got to protect the manliness of war. (Turner, 1998, p. 117)

War is also considered something in which only men participate. Indeed, combat is often cited as a rite of passage for young men. For example,

In *The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane wrote about the camaraderie, the rage, the fear, and the bloodlust of the heat of battle. When Henry and his fellow soldiers gained a small victory, “they gazed about them with looks of uplifted pride, feeling new trust in the grim, always confident weapons in their hands. And they *were* men.” (Rogan, 1981, p. 277)

Religion and morality are also cited as reasons why women should not be assigned to combat. Rear Admiral Jeremiah Denton, retired from the U.S. Navy, called it “moral and social insanity to subject women to war” (Holm, 1982, p. 342; also referenced in Culler, 2000, p. 25). One may even find support for the religious argument in the Bible, where it is written that “every male, head by head from twenty years old and upward, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies” (Numbers 1:2-3, as referenced in Culler, 2000, p. 25).

Stephanie Gutmann, in her controversial book, *The Kinder, Gentler Military: Can America’s Gender-Neutral Fighting Force Still Win Wars?*, concluded that gender

integration of the military was largely responsible for the personnel retention problems in the military. She quoted an Army captain, Jeff Church, who wrote:

It's not just about the money. The U.S. military has never made anybody but flag officers wealthy. People used to stay in because they felt like they were warriors, making a difference, with commanders they respected, in units they were proud of. Those feelings don't exist today. (Gutmann, 2000, p. 276)

## **2. The Possibility of Pregnancy Makes Women Unsuitable for Combat.**

Women are physically different from men. This is not news. But women do get pregnant, and breast-feed, and have their menstrual cycles, and go through menopause, and so on. The argument is that women, due simply to their physiology, do not belong in combat, that “women are physically and psychologically unfit for combat, and their capacity for pregnancy and motherhood makes them unfit for combat roles” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 165)

Pregnancy is harder to resolve than other physical issues that women must deal with by “sucking it up” (Simons, 2001, p. 92). Annual service pregnancy rates are fairly high, and cannot be ignored when addressing military readiness. In 1990, annual service pregnancy rates were

11.9 percent of officers and enlisted women in the Army; 13.4 percent for Navy enlisted women; 4.8 percent of Air Force officers and 8.1 percent of enlisted Air Force women; and 3.0 percent of U.S. Marine Corps officers and 8.7 percent of Marine enlisted women. Interestingly, when pregnancy and postpartum convalescent leave are excluded, women have a lower rate of time when they are physically incapable of performing their duties than do men; when these factors are included, however, women have approximately four times as much lost time as men. (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 88, referencing the Report to the President, 1992, pp. 19-20)

However, this is somewhat contradictory to the following:

Research has shown that the belief that female military personnel lose more duty time than men because of pregnancy-related reasons is unfounded, since males lose even more time for being AWOL and for desertion, drug and alcohol abuse, and confinement. (Stiehm, 1996, p. 170, referencing Holm, 1992, p. 303).

At any given point in time, however, “approximately 13.9 percent of the Army force is temporarily non-deployable. Only 0.79 percent of the Army's force is pregnant

at any given time” (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 81). Regardless of how many women are pregnant at one time, pregnancy clearly affects military readiness.

### **3. Women Are Physically Weaker Than Men; Placing Women in Combat Will Decrease Military Effectiveness.**

These two arguments are common and tie together closely. The argument is that “military effectiveness and efficiency are compromised by women’s lack of physical strength and stamina relative to men’s” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 167, referencing Mitchell, 1989, pp. 156-162). Additionally, “military personnel have testified before Congress that few women would meet the physical standards for combat duty” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 167).

One military woman against having women in combat is Catherine Aspy. After graduating from Harvard in 1992, she served two years in the Army. At the end of basic training, she concluded, “with rare exceptions, the women in my unit could not physically compete with the men” (Aspy, 1999, p. 140). Additionally, she wrote:

Combat is about war-fighting capacity and the morale of the unit. Here physical strength can be a life-and-death issue. And that is why the physical disparities between men and women cannot be ignored. (Aspy, 1999, pp. 140-141)

Despite the argument that modern technology minimizes the need for physical strength, it is still needed for many of the tasks in modern warfare. Marine Corps Staff Sergeant Barry Bell, who served as a combat engineer during Desert Storm, states:

My rucksack when I went in weighed seventy-five pounds. And I walked twelve miles from the border to the mine field.... The weight was way too heavy for us, let alone a female Marine or Soldier.... Physically, women are just unable to do it” (Breuer, 1997, p. 172).

The argument extends from ground forces to air combat:

Air Force Lieutenant General Buster Glosson, who had been responsible for much of the air campaign strategy and its daily execution in the Gulf conflict, told the [Presidential] commission that “those who say technology has removed the personal demands and horrors of combat are misinformed. The air combat arena comes down to stamina and cohesion.” (Breuer, 1997, p. 173)

Even as recent as in 1994, “senior generals criticized civilian leaders who wanted to open up more combat roles for women, arguing that they ‘let their idealistic goals

interfere with military effectiveness” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 165, referencing a quote in Schmitt, 1944, p. A1).

#### **4. The Thought of American Women as POWs is Too Much to Bear.**

The American public may not be ready to accept the idea of its female service members being held as prisoners of war by the enemy. Additionally, a pilot who was a POW in Vietnam warns:

the presence of women captives would increase men’s vulnerability should the enemy torture these females to coerce males into giving valuable military information. Air Force Colonel Fred Cherry, who was held by the North Vietnamese for over seven years, said: “I am certain had the cries and screams and being next door to my fellow prisoners being tortured by the rope treatment and the bamboo beatings—I’m sure it would have affected [me] more severely had that been a woman, rather than a man.” (Breuer, 1997, p. 171)

#### **5. Most Women Do Not Want To Be in Combat. Allowing Women into Combat Will Require Unwilling Women to Go into Combat—including through the Possibility of a Draft.**

When asked about Congress expanding the role of women in combat, Charles Moskos, a professor of sociology at Northwestern University and chairman of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, replied:

A lot of agitation for changing the exclusion law comes from some women [officers] who can’t reach the top unless they have combat experience. I don’t know if everyone will rush to expose enlisted women to combat so female officers can advance their own careers. Enlisted women are certainly not clamoring to fight. (Breuer, 1997, p. 160)

Furthermore, it is not only the enlisted personnel who have expressed concern over being sent to combat. For example, Captain Kathy Whitcraft, a West Point tactical officer whose “life was ruined by running,” observes:

NOW [National Organization for Women], for instance, is lobbying for women in combat. I’m a member of NOW, I have no quarrel with NOW, but I wish to hell they’d quit lobbying to get me into combat. Don’t lobby to send me: if you want to go, lobby for yourself (Rogan, 1981, p. 287).

It is strange to be fighting for the right to do something that no one wants to do. Some people believe that a citizen’s rights and responsibilities go hand-in-hand. Thus, to have full rights as a citizen, one must also accept full responsibilities as a citizen—

including participating in all aspects of national defense. It is probably true that few women would want to be in combat—just as few men would want to be in combat, and yet, this seems to be an argument that is applied primarily with respect to women rather than to both sexes.

Mitchell (1998) writes of one military woman who states:

“Those feminists back home who say we have a right to fight are not here sitting in the heat, carrying an M16 and a gas mask, spending sixteen hours on the road every day and sleeping in fear you’re gonna get gassed.” Their male comrades were understandably resentful. “It took us this long to get used to the idea of women in the Army, and now they say they don’t want to be here,” said one. “What are we supposed to think?” (Mitchell, 1998, pp. 203-204)

The argument is that by removing current prohibitions on women entering combat, women might be assigned to combat arms fields in the same manner as are the men. Women might even be drafted into combat. Presently, men must volunteer to be assigned to special forces and to submarines, but some men are involuntarily assigned to infantry and armor (their service commitment may be chosen voluntarily, but the choice of occupational fields is not always guaranteed). An unidentified woman said:

If combat is truly open, it will not be on a voluntary basis, and then the *unqualified* women will be in there, as well as the qualified, and until the Army trains them more equally, every unqualified woman will be a rubber stamp of the I-told-you-they-couldn’t-do-it. Women should be drafted *only* for combat support jobs, and volunteer for the front line. (Rogan, 1981, p. 288)

## **6. Having Women in Combat Makes Us Look Weak to Our Enemies.**

This argument is based on the psychological perspective of the enemy. As Stiehm (1996) writes, “According to this rationale, women’s participation in combat would be interpreted by hostile forces as indicating that U.S. forces were weak and ineffectual, thus diminishing the symbolic effectiveness of U.S. troops as icons of power and strength” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 169). Having women in combat is also said to make their male counterparts feel weak; as General Westmoreland observes, “No man with gumption wants a woman to fight his battles” (Rogan, 1981, p. 27).

A similar idea is that of using pictures of women going to war to “shame the reluctant *men* into the war. The message, then, would be that ‘*even* women...’” (Stiehm, 1989, p. 225). Sally Quinn, writing an article in the *Washington Post* around the time of the Gulf War, adds: “If we can’t win a war without our mothers, what kind of a sorry fighting force are we? Even the evil Saddam Hussein doesn’t send mothers to fight his war” (Mitchell, 1998, pp. 199-200).

#### **7. Modifying Spaces and Equipment Would Have Enormous, Unnecessary Costs.**

Combat frequently involves close quarters that are not conducive to gender integration. Modifying ships, submarines, or barracks to accommodate women and to allow both genders their privacy could be done only at a huge cost (Culler, 2000, p. 29). Although the cost of modifying berthing spaces is common, finding exact costs of such modifications is difficult. Even in an article that used a cost-benefit analysis for its findings (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 74), no specific monetary costs were presented.

An additional consideration is weapon design, such as ensuring the size of the cockpit in an aircraft will accommodate women; the pilot must be able to reach the pedals easily, for example (Stiehm, 1996, pp. 136-155). This issue means that those who design weapons, including aircraft, must take women’s physical dimensions into consideration, rather than basing the design solely on men’s.

This argument against having women in combat is that the additional costs of modifying buildings, ships, and aircraft are not justified when the tangible benefits are so hard to determine. However, as Richman-Loo and Weber state:

Imagine a society in which General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler built cars that could be operated only by men and a few women—or one in which automobiles were designed only for women and a few small men. (Stiehm, 1996, p. 154)

#### **8. Women Will Denigrate Teamwork.**

According to many opponents of allowing women in combat, the presence of women will interfere with the male bonding process and create sexual distractions (Stiehm, 1996, p. 165). The basic fear is that “men will be preoccupied with winning the

sexual favors of women rather than with concentrating on their mission” (Stiehm, 1996, p. 167, referencing Mitchell, 1989, pp. 176-178, and others). Opponents of women in combat argue that bonding will not occur if male soldiers are required to share their duties with women (Stiehm, 1996, p. 166).

Lionel Tiger, author of *Men in Groups*, observes that

the male bond was one way in which men retained power, by resisting women, and added, “The reason men resist women is likely to be something deeply rooted in our biology...something very useful to us in the hunting-gathering phase of evolution” (which in turn is so useful to anthropologists examining the reasons why twentieth-century [and now twenty-first century] Americans behave as they do). (Rogan, 1981, p. 25)

At the same time, Simons (1997) finds that teamwork is one of the key factors in the success of special forces units. The soldiers in special forces:

must be self-confident just short of stubborn, self-possessed but not egotistical, able to focus and compartmentalize, to adapt and conform. Teamwork itself requires males who can bond. Indeed, if teams are to remain effective, bonding is the one convention that must be upheld. For better, not worse, all team members have to be men who think enough alike that, without thinking, they inherently recognize those arenas in which they can and cannot compete with each other. And as counterintuitive as it may seem, some amount of posturing *is* integral to bonding, while bonding ensures cohesion. (Simons, 1997, p. 225)

Simons (2001) further explains, in an article on why women should not be placed in combat, that there is “only one real keeper of order” under such close conditions of combat, and “intimacy can’t be a prelude to sex.... Ultimately, this is the basic, undeniable, unresolvable problem: heterosexual men like women in ways they don’t like other men.” (Simons, 2001, p. 95). Furthermore, it is the talk about women that helps men to bond:

In fact, a graphic fascination with women may be the only thing all heterosexual men share, which is one reason females are talked about the way they sometimes are.... [talking about sex] allows men who already know everything there is to know about one another’s physical capabilities to engage in one-upsmanship without anyone present being able to prove them wrong. Given that some amount of posturing is critical to bonding—to prove who belongs, who doesn’t, and why—the trick for combat units is to have something over which soldiers can compete without this jeopardizing unit integrity. Ergo the inexhaustible usefulness of real and imagined relationships with women.

Make those women real, though, and what had been benign posturing turns into serious competition. Worse, the fact that women pay special attention right back only further strains relations among even the closest friends.

Without meaning to, women automatically alter the chemistry in all-male groups. As soon as the first soldier acts protective, defensive, flirtatious, or resentful, he initiates a dynamic which causes others to do the same, to do the opposite, or to do something else all in the name of setting themselves apart. (Simons, 2001, p. 95).

This brings up the issue of sharing being essential to mutual trust, and whether sex is included in the sharing. Simons (2001) feels that this mutual trust depends on

first, an all-for-one, one-for-all ethos. Second, responsibilities, dangers, and rewards must be shared. Third, what there is to be shared must literally be shared. If for instance, there is food to be had, everyone eats. The same goes for sex. If there is sex to be had, then anyone who wants it should be able to get it. If not, tension mounts. (Simons, 2001, p. 96).

Another point brought up by Simons (2001) is the need for men to feel they are fighting for something worthwhile, and women are key to that ideal. She refers to the character played by Tom Hanks in *Saving Private Ryan*:

Being able to picture his wife at home in her rose garden not only kept Captain Miller sane, but noble.

Combat soldiers' mental health may well depend on having such a contrast to draw. On the one hand, there is the horrific world in which they're mired. On the other, there is the far more ideal world which places women above the fray... Women as succor (and sanity) to return to provides something for soldiers to live for beyond honor, duty, and the filthy, smelly, foul-mouthed males beside them. With women right there, women as an ideal would never work. (Simons, 2001, p. 96).

Some opponents of having women in combat also fear "men in war, with their animal lusts released, would rape their female comrades" (Rogan, 1981, p. 27). It is further suggested in Beatrice Faust's book, *Women, Sex, and Pornography*, that

rape in war has a distinct biological function, as well as the sociological one described by Glenn Gray. Supposedly it allays fear before battle; it increases testosterone in the rapist and decreases it in the vanquished... Opponents of women in the Army have often stated that the women's presence would bring out the male chivalric impulse, and cause the men to fight over them. Would the women then be raped or overprotected or fought over or seduced? (Rogan, 1981, pp. 282-283)

Regardless of the answer to these questions, the argument is that women would adversely affect the unit cohesion and teamwork so essential to successful military operations.

Arguments are strong on both sides of the women-in-combat issue. Policy on women in combat has changed over the years, parallel to the response of women's changing role in society.

## **E. UNITED STATES POLICY REGARDING WOMEN IN COMBAT**

### **1. History of Policies Concerning Women in Combat**

The policies regarding women-in-combat have been a topic of controversy in recent decades. The degree of U.S. involvement in conflicts over the past century has served as an approximate measure of the extent to which policy has allowed women to participate in combat related missions. As discussed in the previous section, history is well documented with women's participation in war. A chronological list of events and policies that have developed and shaped the current state of women's role in the military branches is outlined below.

1948 - Combat exclusion legislation was introduced by Congressman Carl Vinson as part of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act (Culler, 2000, p. 16).

- The Women's Armed Services Integration Act was passed by Congress to establish a separate women's corps. It limited enlisted women to 2 percent of enlisted strength, and women officers to 10 percent of officer strength, and the pay grade of female officers to O-5 (Culler, 2000, p. 16).

- Military women were denied benefits for their husbands unless they could prove that the husbands were dependent on them for over 50 percent of their support. (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 4)

- Women were prohibited from having command over men (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 4).

1951 - The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services

- (DACOWITS) was established by Congress to advise the Secretary of Defense on matters pertaining to women's recruiting, retention, and skill integration in the armed services (Culler, 2000, p. 16).
- 1956 - The Combat Exclusion laws, of the Armed Forces Integration Act of 1948, became part of Title 10, U.S. Code (Culler, 2000, p. 6).
- 1964 - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act established anti-discrimination rules by employers. The applicability of Title VII to the military was left in question (Culler, 2000, p. 16).
- 1967 - Public Law 90-130 removed the stipulation that limited women to 2 percent of the total military force and the female officer O-5 grade limitation (Culler, 2000, p. 16).
- 1969 - The Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) began to admit women (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 5).
- 1972 - The Army and Navy ROTCs began to admit women (Culler, 2000, p.17).
- The Navy allowed women to have command at shore (Culler, 2000, p. 17).
  - The Navy allowed for the limited entry of women into all enlisted ratings (Culler, 2000, p. 17).
- 1973 - The draft ended and the All-Volunteer Force started (Culler, 2000, p.17).
- The Army and the Navy opened flight training to women (Culler, 2000, p.17).
  - The Supreme Court (*Frontiero v. Richardson*) found that military women's dependents are eligible to receive the same benefits as those of male members (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 5).
- 1974 - DoD rescinded the involuntary separation policy of pregnant women first mandated in 1951 by President Truman in Executive Order 10240 (Culler, 2000, p. 17).

- The age requirement for women to enlist without parental consent was decreased from 21 to 18 in all four services (Culler, 2000, p. 17).
- 1975 - The Stratton Amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill directed the Service academies to accept women applicants (Culler, 2000, p. 17).
- 1976 - Service academies accepted women into the class of 1980 (Culler, 2000, p. 17).
  - Flight training was opened to women in the Air Force (Culler, 2000, p. 17).
- 1977 - The Secretary of the Army issued a combat exclusion policy prohibiting women from being assigned to combat arms units, since the Armed Forces Integration Act of 1948 did not contain statutes restricting Army women (Culler, 2000, p. 18).
  - The Army began co-educational basic training (Culler, 2000, p. 18).
- 1978 - Public Law 95-485 abolished the Women's Army Corps and allowed full integration of women into the Regular Army (Culler, 2000, p. 18).
- 1981 - The Supreme Court upheld male-only registration for the draft in *Rostker v. Goldberg* (Culler, 2000, p. 18).
- 1985 - The Air Force assigned women to the Minutemen and Peacekeeper ballistic missile silos (Culler, 2000, p. 18).
- 1988 - The "Risk Rule" was defined as "non-combat units should be open to women unless the risk of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture is equal to or greater than that experienced by associated combat units in the same theater of operations" (Hooker, 1991, p. 87, as referenced in Culler, 2000, p. 19).
- 1989 - Female service members participated in operation "Just Cause" in Panama (Culler, 2000, p. 18).
- 1990 - Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm involved over 35,000 female service members (Skaine, 1999, p. 64; Mitchell, 1998, p. 199).

- 1991 - Senators William Roth, Jr. (R-DE) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) introduced Amendment No. 948 to Congress to repeal laws excluding women from combat (Culler, 2000, p. 19).
- Senators John Glenn (D-OH), John McCain (R-AZ), Sam Nunn (D-GA), and John Warner (R-VA) introduced Amendment No. 949 to Congress to repeal aviation combat exclusion laws temporarily to study the issues regarding women in combat (Culler, 2000, p. 18)
  - The Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 102-190) was passed by Congress to repeal the laws that excluded women from combat aviation (Culler, 2000, p. 19).
  - The Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women was created by Armed Forces Public Law 102-190 to study the issue of integrating women into combat units (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 7).
  - The Tailhook scandal took place at the Las Vegas Hilton (Culler, 2000, p. 19).
- 1992 - The Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces recommended that aviation and ground combat jobs remain closed to women (Culler, 2000, p. 19).
- 1993 - Public Law 103-60 repealed laws prohibiting women from serving on combat ships (Culler, 2000, p. 19).
- Combat ships and aircraft were opened to women by order of the Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin (Culler, 2000, p. 19). (Later, in 1994, the Secretary of Defense directed the opening of an additional 260,000 more positions to women.)
- 1993 - A new definition of ground combat replaced the “Risk Rule” by barring women from “units that engage the enemy with weapons on the ground while exposed to hostile fire and that involve substantial probability of direct physical contact with hostile forces” (Culler, 2000, p. 20).

- The combat ship exclusion, Title 10 USD 6015, was repealed by Congress. Only submarines and a few small craft remained closed to women (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 8).
- 1995 - Over 1,200 women were assigned to Haiti for peacekeeping duties.
  - The first Marine Corps women were designated as aviators (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 8).
- 1996 - The Bosnia peacekeeping operation started (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 8). (As of the year 2000, more than 13,000 women had been assigned to Bosnia.)
- 1998 - Women flew the first combat missions during Operation Desert Fox in Iraq (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 8).
- 1999 - Coastal mine hunters and mine countermeasure ships were opened to women by the Navy (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 9).
  - Female aviators and troops were assigned to peacekeeping operations and air warfare in Kosovo (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 9).
- 2000 - Two women were killed and several wounded during the terrorist attack on the *USS Cole* (Manning & Wight, 2000, p. 9).

These events have been instrumental in shaping the current policy. However, two issues still separate women's roles in the military from that of men; that is, whether women should serve in ground combat (infantry, special forces, and armor) and on submarines.

## **2. Current Policy**

There were numerous attempts at removing all barriers to women during the 1990s. A recent NPS thesis, "The Decision to Allow Military Women into Combat Positions: A Study in Policy and Politics" (Culler, 2000, pp. 45-52), explained the key events in detail. The most significant events occurring during the 1990s were in response to the performance of women during operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. In late 1993, President Clinton and Secretary of Defense Aspin ordered the assignment of women into combat aircraft and Congress rescinded the laws barring women from

assignment aboard combat vessels. These actions opened over 260,000 new positions to women in the military.

The change in law, however, did not allow women to fully occupy these positions. For example, in the Navy, these openings made 91.2 percent of all positions available to women, but due to shipboard berthing configuration limitations, only 13 percent of racks on all Navy ships could accommodate women in 1997 (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. 11). Additionally, the percentages of women assigned to these newly available positions remained relatively low for a number of reasons, including the low number of women in the services, their interest in the newly opened positions, the training and retraining times, the time needed for facilities to be redesigned and configured, and the rate and cycles of job assignment. The highest percentage of integration in the newly opened positions was in the Army, with 5.7 percent. The lowest percentage of integration was in the Air Force, with 0.3 percent.

***a. Current Army Policy and Women Assignments***

Ninety-one percent of the Army's Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) are open to women. The only MOSs closed to women are infantry, armor, cannon field artillery, and short-range air-defense artillery. All told, 70 percent of the Army's positions are open to women. Most of the units closed to women are below the brigade level and, not surprisingly, include infantry, armor, special forces, field artillery battalions, combat engineer companies, ground surveillance radar platoons, and air-defense artillery battalions (Manning and Wight, 2000, pp. 21-22).

***b. Current Navy Policy and Women Assignments***

A smaller percentage of women serve in the Navy than in the Army. In the Navy, women comprised 13.5 percent of all personnel in 2000. (Manning and Wight, 2000, pp. 23-24). However, the Navy has a higher percentage of occupations open to women. The only occupations in which women cannot serve in the Navy are submarine units and the (Sea Air Land) SEALs. The Navy has 91 percent of its positions open to women, which is higher than the percentage of positions open to women in the Army. This is partially explained because the Army has a large number of positions in direct ground combat, to which women are not assigned. The limiting factor for assigning

women to more positions on ships is berthing availability. The Navy's fleet of ships includes many aging vessels that were not configured to accommodate mixed-gender berthing (Manning and Wight, 2000, pp. 23-24).

*c. Current Air Force Policy and Women Assignments*

The Air Force has the highest percentage of women among all of the services. As of 2000, women account for 18.6 percent of Air Force personnel. The only occupations closed to women in the Air Force are combat control, tactical air command and control, and para-rescue (Manning and Wight, 2000, p. 25).

*d. Current Marine Corps Policy and Women Assignments*

Women make up only 6 percent of Marine Corps personnel even though 93 percent of Marine occupations are open to women. Nevertheless, only 62 percent of actual positions are open to women in the Marine Corps. The positions that are closed are infantry regiments and below, artillery battalions and below, all armored units, combat engineer battalions, reconnaissance units, riverine assault craft units, low-altitude air defense units, and fleet anti-terrorism security teams (Manning and Wight, 2000, p. 24).

In the past several decades, substantial changes have occurred in policies regarding women in combat. Over the years, the role of women in the military has gradually increased, eventually opening some areas of combat to them. Policy is one thing; attitudes may be another. Several recent studies were conducted to determine the attitudes of service members and the American public toward allowing women in combat.

**F. RECENT STUDIES ON ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN IN COMBAT**

**1. Kirk's 1988 Study/Survey**

In 1988, as part of her coursework at San Diego State University, Kathleen Kirk, then a lieutenant in the Navy, conducted a survey of active-duty Navy personnel and Navy and Marine Corps veterans regarding women in combat. Of the 175 questionnaires, 155 were completed and returned. The response rate for the active-duty portion was 100 percent, and for veterans, it was 91 percent. There were 27 female respondents (all active duty) in the sample.

In the survey, one question was, “Would you have volunteered for military service if your participation in a conflict/war had been required soon after your induction? Please answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ only” (Kirk, 1988, p. 74). A higher percentage of men (30 percent) answered yes than did the women (15 percent). However, 15 percent was higher than the 10 percent of women who had answered yes to the question in a national study of civilian women in 1978 done by the Navy Personnel Research and Development Center (Kirk, 1988, p. 45).

Overall, men and women both had high opinions of female military coworkers, using the following terms to describe them: “dedicated,” “professional,” “takes pride in work,” “very positive,” and “efficient” (Kirk, 1988, p. 49). Men who had deployed with women had favorable things to say (Kirk, 1988, p. 52). Interestingly, though, military men had higher opinions of female military subordinates and female military supervisors than did military women (Kirk, 1988, pp. 49-51).

In terms of combat, more specifically, four questions on the survey are relevant. All four were statements that used the Likert scale (strongly agreed, agreed, neutral, disagreed, strongly disagreed) for the responses. Forty-four percent agreed or strongly agreed that women were too emotional for combat, and 33 percent were neutral. On the statement that men are physically superior to women, 63 percent agreed or strongly agreed. Seventy percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with “If women want to be assigned to combat units, those units should be ‘all female.’” Only 55 percent of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they themselves (men and women) had been adequately trained for combat situations (Kirk, 1988, pp. 57, 76-77).

The veterans who participated had served in either Korea or Vietnam. When they were asked about the probability of sexual activity with American women who might be assigned to combat units, the veterans responded (unanimously) that sexual activity would be highly probable (Kirk, 1988, p. 62).

When asked, “How would you resolve the women in combat issue?” “53% of the veterans recommended training and assignment of women to combat units” (Kirk, 1988, p. 64). Of those who recommended women in combat, comments included, “Let them

fight,” and “Women are just as capable of withstanding the rigors of war as men” (Kirk, 1988, p. 64). One unusual comment was:

If I were back on active duty, I would chose to command an all female unit made up of women from low economic backgrounds and/or who had been in prison. I believe these women are the most resourceful, have learned to survive, are vicious, have learned to deal with fear, and are highly adaptable. (a veteran quoted in Kirk, 1988, p. 64)

Veterans whose comments opposed having women in combat included references to women being a distraction to the men, religious and ethical reasons, the need for women to be protected by men, and women eroding unit cohesion. Three specific comments were, “No women in combat. A soldier’s mind needs to be on the battle at all times;” “No women in combat. Our cultural mores, Judeo-Christian socialization and ethics, preclude intentional risk of life of women and children;” and “While women are tenacious, their tendency toward turning that tenacity to vindictiveness could erode unit cohesion and detract from bonding a ‘combat-team’” (Kirk, 1988, pp. 64-65).

Veterans were also asked in which categories women were capable of fighting. Air combat was chosen most frequently, with special forces chosen least frequently. The areas selected are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Vietnam and Korea Veterans’ Responses to “Given your combat experience, in which category do you feel women most capable of fighting?”**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Air	43
Surface ship	20
Submarine	15
Hand-to-hand	12
Special forces	10

From: Kirk, Women in combat?, 1988, pp. 62, 80.

Although Kirk’s study was done in 1988, it is relevant to this study for comparison purposes. In 1988, women were not assigned to combat, including combatant ships. A lot has changed since then, and it will be interesting to compare the findings of the NPS and DLI study to these findings. Furthermore, it is also interesting to see the comments from veterans of combat. It is likely that the military members on

active duty today, and who are participating in this study, may have combat experience. Their comments can be compared to the comments from the veterans in the Kirk study.

## **2. RAND's 1997 Study/Survey**

RAND conducted a study in 1997 of active-duty military personnel to determine the effect of integrating women on the military. The study consisted of surveys, interviews, and focus groups, and was in response to the House Report for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997, which directed the Secretary of Defense

to obtain an independent study by an FFRDC [Federally Funded Research and Development Corporation] evaluating the performance of each military service in integrating women into military occupations previously closed. As part of this study, the FFRDC shall evaluate the effect on defense readiness and morale of integrating women into newly-opened occupations and positions as well as factors affecting the pace at which military services are integrating women. (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. 4)

The study at NPS and DLI closely parallels the RAND study in several aspects, and the NPS and DLI data were compared to the RAND findings. For these reasons, the RAND study will be discussed in detail in this section, as applicable to the NPS/DLI study.

The study found that integration of women apparently did not have a major effect on readiness. Further, both men and women felt that women performed about as well as men (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. xvii). In terms of cohesion, the findings were as follows:

Perceptions about cohesion tend to vary by rank more than anything else. Higher-ranking men and women reported more cohesion than junior personnel. Any divisions caused by gender were minimal or invisible in units with high cohesion.... Gender integration was also mentioned as having a positive effect, raising the level of professional standards. (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. xviii)

Double standards were a problem brought up repeatedly. Creating one standard for people to be assigned to a certain job was suggested often: "...another consistent message we heard was the call for a screening policy that would help the military to assign qualified personnel to heavy-labor occupations and remove the need for a double standard" (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. xx).

In terms of combat, overall, differences were found by rank, gender, and service:

Over half of surveyed men in the enlisted ranks favor some relaxation of the ground combat exclusion policy; only one-third of male officers agree, and Army and Marine Corps men of all grades are more likely to prefer the current policy. A change in the policy is supported by over 80 percent of the women surveyed. Those who support change differ on allowing women to serve voluntarily in ground combat positions or requiring them to do so, as men are. (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. xviii)

Two questions on the survey specifically addressed women in combat (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. 137). One question asked the respondents how they felt about the possibility of women serving in infantry, armor, submarines, and special forces units. Response choices were, “These units should remain closed to women,” “Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units,” and “Qualified women should be assigned to these units in the same way as men are.”

The second question asked, “Which one of these three options comes closest to your own opinion?” Response choices were “I am satisfied with the present military regulations that exclude women from certain direct combat roles,” “I think that women who want to volunteer for the combat arms should be allowed to do so,” and “I think that women should be treated exactly like men and serve in the combat arms just like men.”

In response to the first question, the Navy was more receptive to changes in policy (i.e., allowing women into combat areas presently closed to them). Navy attitudes toward combat career opportunities for women were favorable, with most people in favor of allowing qualified women to volunteer for units in infantry, armor, submarines, and special forces. In the Marine Corps and Army, respondents were more likely to prefer to leave these units closed, especially for infantry and special forces, than were Navy personnel. Women were generally more in favor of opening these units to women than were men. Tables 2 through 4 below show the data by gender and service. Rank was mentioned as significant in all three tables, but no additional information on these data was provided.

**Table 2. Army Attitudes Regarding Combat Arms Career Opportunities for Women (in percent)**

	<b>These units should remain closed to women.</b>		<b>Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.</b>		<b>Qualified women should be assigned to these units in the same way as men are</b>	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Infantry	62	48	20	31	18	21
Armor	42	26	37	54	21	20
Submarines	40	31	34	50	26	19
Spec Forces	54	32	28	42	19	27

From: Harrell & Miller, *New Opportunities for Military Women: Effects upon Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale*, 1997, p. 91.

**Table 3. Navy Attitudes Regarding Combat Arms Career Opportunities for Women (in percent)**

	<b>These units should remain closed to women.</b>		<b>Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.</b>		<b>Qualified women should be assigned to these units in the same way as men are</b>	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Infantry	22	9	37	53	42	38
Armor	17	7	38	53	45	40
Submarines	34	27	32	46	35	28
Spec Forces	32	11	34	57	34	32

From: Harrell & Miller, *New Opportunities for Military Women: Effects upon Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale*, 1997, p. 92.

**Table 4. Marine Corps Attitudes Regarding Combat Arms Career Opportunities for Women (in percent)**

	<b>These units should remain closed to women.</b>		<b>Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.</b>		<b>Qualified women should be assigned to these units in the same way as men are</b>	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Infantry	71	53	16	29	13	18
Armor	46	24	31	46	23	30
Submarines	52	32	25	35	23	32
Spec Forces	63	38	23	41	14	21

From: Harrell & Miller, *New Opportunities for Military Women: Effects upon Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale*, 1997, p. 92.

For the second question, “Which one of these three options comes closest to your own opinion?” the Army and Marine Corps men, especially officers, tended to be satisfied with the present military regulations excluding women from certain combat roles. Navy enlisted men tended to favor assigning women to the combat units the same as men are. For male Navy officers, 48 percent were satisfied with the current regulations, and 36 percent thought women should be assigned the same as men. For women, officers were divided between allowing women to volunteer for combat arms and having women assigned the same as men, with 41 percent responding in each category. Tables 5 and 6 provide the percent of responses to this question by service, gender, and pay grade.

**Table 5. Men’s Attitudes Regarding the Combat-Exclusion Policy by Service and Grade (in percent)**

<b>Army and Marine Corps</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>E7-E9</b>	<b>E5-E6</b>	<b>E1-E4</b>
I am satisfied with the present military regulations that exclude women from certain combat roles.	79	64	60	57
I think that women who want to volunteer for the combat arms should be allowed to do so.	12	12	27	22
I think that women should be treated exactly like men and serve in the combat arms just like men.	10	24	13	21
<b>Navy</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>E7-E9</b>	<b>E5-E6</b>	<b>E1-E4</b>
I am satisfied with the present military regulations that exclude women from certain combat roles.	48	17	26	36
I think that women who want to volunteer for the combat arms should be allowed to do so.	17	28	30	29
I think that women should be treated exactly like men and serve in the combat arms just like men.	36	54	44	36

(Source: Harrell & Miller, *New Opportunities for Military Women: Effects upon Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale*, 1997, p. 90)

**Table 6. Women’s Attitudes Regarding the Combat-Exclusion Policy by Service and Grade (in percent)**

	Officers	E7-E9	E5-E6	E1-E4
I am satisfied with the present military regulations that exclude women from certain combat roles.	79	64	60	57
I think that women who want to volunteer for the combat arms should be allowed to do so.	12	12	27	22
I think that women should be treated exactly like men and serve in the combat arms just like men.	10	24	13	21

From: Harrell & Miller, *New Opportunities for Military Women: Effects upon Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale*, 1997, p. 90.

During the focus groups and interviews, the reasons given in favor of excluding women from certain units were similar to the arguments found elsewhere in the literature. Specifically:

The primary concern with submarines was the long deployment times and the lack of privacy that accompanied the small enclosed space. When people resisted opening the infantry and armor units to women, they generally argued against women participating in direct ground combat. (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. 93)

The RAND survey was conducted in 1997, so the data are fairly recent. The data are excellent for comparison purposes to the data collected for the present study.

### **3. Survey of West Point Female Cadets**

A survey was conducted of 112 West Point female cadets (no exact year was given for when the survey occurred, but presumably in 2000 or 2001), and 30 percent said that given the opportunity, they would choose a combat arms branch that is presently closed to women (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 80). Only 4 percent said they would choose infantry, with the rest (26 percent) choosing armor and field artillery. The primary reason cited for preferring non-combat arms branches was “no interest in combat arms,” with 65 percent of the respondents choosing this answer. Twelve percent of the respondents cited a “lack of faith in physical capabilities,” 9 percent responded that it was “too hard to succeed in male environment.” Eight percent chose “not best for the Army,” and 5 percent chose “family considerations” (Field & Nagl, 2001, p. 81).

#### **4. Surveys of the American Public on Women in Combat**

In a *Time* magazine poll conducted in 1997, 67 percent of Americans who were polled supported the statement that women should be allowed to serve in all combat roles (Field & Nagl, 2001, p.77). At the same time, a poll of Texas citizens, who tend to be relatively conservative, showed that 57 percent believed women should be allowed to serve in combat positions (Field & Nagl, 2001, p.77).

#### **G. SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

Many women have served in combat roles throughout history. Those who served in “support” roles were often much closer to the dangers of combat than perhaps was intended. One of the arguments against women in combat is the fear that they will be taken as POWs. Interestingly, women in support roles have been taken as POWs.

Persuasive arguments can be found both for and against women being in combat. Military policy currently allows women in combat aviation and to serve on combatant ships, but prohibits women from serving in the infantry, armor, special forces, and on submarines.

Several surveys have been conducted examining attitudes toward women in combat. Generally, previous studies have found that Navy members and the general public are in favor of allowing women in combat, but Marine Corps and Army members are less likely to support having women in combat.

#### **H. HYPOTHESES**

The first three hypotheses are based on the findings in the RAND study, and five additional hypotheses are based on various considerations.

##### **1. Service**

Marine Corps and Army personnel will be less in favor of women in combat than will Navy personnel.

##### **2. Gender**

Women will be generally more supportive of having women in combat than will be men.

### **3. Officers and Enlisted Personnel**

Enlisted personnel will be more favorable toward allowing women in combat than will be officers.

### **4. Age/Rank/Years of Service**

More junior service members will be in favor of women in combat than will more senior service members. This is predicted primarily based on age and additional years in the military. The role of women in both the military and in society has changed a lot over the past few decades, and is continuing to change. Having grown up even a decade earlier may have substantial impact on how one views gender differences and the role of women.

### **5. Education**

Enlisted personnel will be increasingly more open to the idea of women in combat as their education increases.

### **6. Military Members with Daughters**

Military personnel with daughters will be less in favor of women in combat than will those without daughters. Even men who may have initially been in favor of women in combat may have changed their minds after their daughters were born—the thought of their daughters going into combat being too difficult for them to accept.

### **7. Race/Ethnicity**

Minorities will be more in favor of combat than will whites. This prediction is based on the reasoning that minorities may have experienced discrimination due to their race/ethnicity, and thus might not want women to be prohibited from going into combat if they wish to do so, which might be interpreted as a form of sexual discrimination.

### **8. Men with Combat Experience**

A final hypothesis involves men who were in combat. It is anticipated that men who have been in combat—*without women*—will be less in favor of women going into combat. Conversely, those men who have been in combat—*with women*—are expected to be more in favor of women going into combat.

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### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Surveys and focus groups were conducted with U.S. military students at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California during October 2001. The samples used in the study were not necessarily representative of the U.S. military population overall. Potential sources of bias include selection bias, nonresponse bias and self-selection bias, response bias, and survivor bias. The effects of possible bias, however, were expected to be fairly minor, and are discussed later in this chapter. Basic statistical analysis was conducted on the quantitative data, and all other data were examined for trends, insightful remarks, and unusual comments.

#### **B. POPULATION AND SAMPLES**

The population of interest in this study was U.S. military active duty members. Two samples of the population were used. One was the U.S. military officers who were students at NPS in October 2001. The second was the U.S. military enlisted personnel who were students at DLI in October 2001.

These samples are not necessarily representative of the entire military. However, they were chosen for four primary reasons. The first is that they served as a convenient sample. Both populations were easily accessible to the researchers due to physical location. The second reason is that the NPS students tend to have strong career potential. As mentioned briefly in the introduction, an officer's selection to attend NPS is generally a favorable sign of his or her past military success and potential for continuing success. If future changes are made to the women-in-combat policy, these officers are likely to be among those who implement the new policy. The officers at NPS have had approximately ten years of service on average, so many were present when the combat restriction laws were modified in 1994. The third reason that the NPS sample was selected was that these officers were among those who experienced firsthand the changes, and this experience is likely to have affected their opinions of women in combat, in addition to providing crucial background in implementing future changes. The fourth and final reason for selecting these samples pertains to the students at DLI who are there

for instruction in foreign languages. Many of them transfer to overseas tours after completing their course of instruction. Given their language skills and intelligence-related occupations, they are likely to be stationed near combat areas.

### 1. Demographics of the Military Population

The demographics for the entire military are shown in Table 7. The demographics of the entire military are useful to determine whether the samples from NPS and DLI are representative of the overall military.

For both officers and enlisted, and across the four branches of service, women are 14.5 percent of the military. The number and percent of women in the Marine Corps is the smallest, representing only 5 to 6 percent of the Marine Corps.

**Table 7. Active Duty Military Personnel by Branch of Service, Officers/Enlisted, and Gender**

	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women*</u>		<u>Total**</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Officers</b>						
Army	65,795	85.1	10,664	14.9	76,459	5.6
Navy	46,515	85.7	7,763	14.3	54,278	4.0
Marine Corps	17,264	94.8	948	5.2	18,212	1.3
Air Force	57,020	83.0	11,669	17.0	68,689	5.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>186,594</b>	<b>85.7</b>	<b>31,044</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>217,638</b>	<b>15.8</b>
<b>Enlisted</b>						
Army	340,265	84.7	61,569	15.3	401,834	29.3
Navy	276,241	86.5	43,089	13.5	319,330	23.2
Marine Corps	145,305	93.9	9,429	6.1	154,734	11.3
Air Force	225,488	81.6	54,519	19.4	280,007	20.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>987,299</b>	<b>85.4</b>	<b>168,606</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>1,155,905</b>	<b>84.2</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,173,893</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>199,650</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>1,373,543</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Derived from data provided by the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

\* Women statistics based on April 30, 2001, from  
<http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/almanac/osd.html>

\*\* Total statistics based on August, 2001, from  
<http://web1.whs.osd.mil/mmid/military/miltop.htm>

Table 8 shows the racial demographics of all active duty military. Minorities represent 17.5 percent of the officers, and 37.5 of the enlisted force.

**Table 8. Active Duty Military Personnel by Race/Ethnicity, September 2000**

<b>Officer/ Enlisted Status and Service</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Officers or Enlisted by Service*</b>			
	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other/ Unknown</b>	<b>Minority Total</b>
<b><u>Officers</u></b>				
Army	12.0	4.1	5.3	21.4
Navy	6.7	5.2	5.0	16.9
Marine Corps	7.5	5.1	3.3	15.9
Air Force	6.3	2.2	5.6	14.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>17.5</b>
<b><u>Enlisted</u></b>				
Army	29.2	8.7	6.7	44.6
Navy	20.3	9.5	8.9	38.7
Marine Corps	16.4	13.2	4.7	34.4
Air Force	18.2	5.4	4.5	28.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>34.4</b>

Derived from data provided by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, as of September 5, 2000, found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/pus/almanac/almanac/people/minorities.htm>.

\* For example, 12 percent of all officers in the Army are Black.

## **2. Demographics of the NPS Sample**

The demographics of the U.S. military students at NPS are shown below in Tables 9 and 10. Table 9 shows the race/ethnicity and gender of these students; Table 10 shows their rank and service. It is noted that the numbers do not match. This is because they came from two different sources; the service and rank statistics are from the Registrar's Office, and the race/ethnicity and gender statistics are from the Command Deputy Equal Opportunity Officer. The exact reason for the discrepancy is unknown.

**Table 9. Gender and Race/Ethnicity of U.S. Military Students at NPS, October 2001**

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
American Indian	3	0	0	0	3	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	33	3	7	1	40	4
Black/African American	87	8	12	1	99	9
Hispanic	35	3	1	0	36	3
Minority Total	158	15	20	2	178	16*
White	833	77	72	7	905	84
<b>Total</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1,083</b>	<b>100</b>

Derived from data provided by the NPS Command Deputy Equal Opportunity Officer.

\* Each percentage is based on the number to its left, and may not equal the column or row total due to rounding.

**Table 10. Service and Pay Grade of U.S. Military Students at NPS, October 2000**

<u>Pay Grade</u>						<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>Marines</u>	<u>Air Force</u>	<u>Coast Guard</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>O-1</b>	0	35	0	0	3	<b>38</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>O-2</b>	0	36	3	2	6	<b>47</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>O-3</b>	56	435	109	32	6	<b>638</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>O-4</b>	3	124	92	5	1	<b>225</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>O-5</b>	41	14	3	0	0	<b>58</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>O-6</b>	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>100</b>

Derived from data provided by the NPS Registrar's Office.

\* Each percentage is based on the number to its left, and may not equal the column or row total due to rounding.

\*\* Excludes 12 NPS students in the Air National Guard, U.S. Army National Guard, and the Naval Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

As mentioned, the NPS population is not necessarily representative of the military overall. Comparatively, women at NPS are slightly underrepresented, accounting for only 10 percent of the student population at NPS (as shown in Table 7), in contrast to 14.3 percent of the officers in the rest of the military. However, the percentage of minority officers at NPS (16 percent) is closer to the percentage in the overall military (17.5 percent) than the percentage of women.

### **3. Demographics at DLI**

The service and pay grade statistics for DLI are provided as Table 11. Gender statistics for DLI are provided as Table 11. DLI does not maintain data on race/ethnicity for the students from all four branches of services.

**Table 11. Service and Pay Grade of U.S. Military Students at DLI, November 2001**

<u>Pay Grade</u>	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>Marine Corps</u>	<u>Air Force</u>	<u>Total</u>	
					<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>E-1</b>	192	18	38	188	<b>436</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>E-2</b>	214	127	101	57	<b>499</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>E-3</b>	219	127	18	286	<b>650</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>E-4</b>	276	39	6	42	<b>363</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>E-5</b>	103	51	29	37	<b>220</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>E-6</b>	51	24	2	10	<b>87</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>E-7</b>	13	10	0	3	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>E-8</b>	1	2	0	1	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>E-9</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,069</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>2,285</b>	<b>100</b>

Derived from data provided by the Director of Institutional Research at DLI.

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 12. Gender of U.S. Military Students at DLI, October 2001**

<u>Service</u>	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Army	707	31	362	16	1,069	47
Navy	229	10	169	7	398	17
Marine Corps	160	7	34	1	194	8
Air Force	391	17	233	10	624	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,487</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>2,285</b>	<b>100</b>

Derived from data provided by the Director of Institutional Research at DLI.

\* Each percentage is based on the number to its left, and may not equal the column or row total due to rounding.

Although women were underrepresented at NPS, women are overrepresented at DLI. Of the students there, women account for 35 percent of all DLI students, compared with a service average for enlisted personnel of 14.6 percent.

Furthermore, the sample from DLI was not representative of the services overall in terms of occupational specialty. All students at DLI are in the intelligence/cryptology category, or in the process of converting to the intelligence/cryptology category. However, only a small proportion of the overall military is in the intelligence/cryptology specialty.

#### **4. Sample Size and Response Rate**

The target population of NPS students was between 1,007 and 1,040, depending on which source is used. For all further analysis, 1,007 will be used as the target population for NPS U.S. military students.

Surveys were conducted differently at DLI, as will be explained in the following sections. Over 400 students were attending DLI in October 2001, and 400 surveys were distributed to DLI for completion.

At NPS, 550 students completed and returned the survey, resulting in a response rate of 54.6 percent. Of the 400 DLI students who received surveys, 276 students completed and returned the surveys, resulting in a response rate of 69 percent. In combining the NPS and DLI numbers, 826 of 1407 students returned the surveys, which gives an overall response rate of 58.7 percent.

#### **5. Demographics of the Survey Respondents**

Demographics of the survey respondents are shown in Tables 13 and 14. Not all respondents answered all questions, including demographic ones.<sup>2</sup> The numbers in the tables reflect the numbers of those who responded to the questions. Branch of service, whether officer or enlisted, and gender of respondents are shown in Table 13. Table 14 shows race/ethnicity of respondents and whether they were officer or enlisted.

When the respondents are divided into these categories, it becomes apparent that several categories have samples that are particularly small. Extreme caution is necessary for trying to generalize such small samples to larger groups. Specifically, the sample size of female officers—with the exception of Navy female officers—was extremely small (five or fewer). Very few Air Force officers responded, only 16 total. Additionally, there were few (16 or fewer) minority respondents, especially Asians, multi-racial, and “other,” both for enlisted and officers.

The respondents are not particularly representative of the overall military in terms of rank, race, and gender. For example, in the military overall, 16 percent are

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<sup>2</sup> Fourteen surveys from the Navy personnel at DLI were returned with every other page missing (their surveys were single-sided, whereas all other surveys were double-sided. All surveys given to DLI for distribution were double-sided). The exact cause for the 14 single-sided surveys is unknown. However, these surveys were still included in the data analysis.

officers and 84 percent are enlisted. However, both the sample that received surveys and the number of respondents showed a much higher percentage of officers. There were 1,007 officers who received the survey and 400 enlisted who received the survey, resulting in officers receiving 72 percent of the surveys. For the respondents, 68 percent were officers and 32 percent were enlisted.

**Table 13. Survey Respondents by Branch of Service, Officers/Enlisted, and Gender (by percent of total respondents)**

<b>Officer/ Enlisted Status and Service</b>	<b>Men</b>		<b>Women</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Officers</b>						
Army	51	6	5	0	56	7
Navy	299	37	47	6	346	43
Marine Corps	120	15	3	0	123	15
Air Force	13	2	3	0	16	2
Coast Guard	5	0	0	0	5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Enlisted</b>						
Army	32	4	20	2	52	6
Navy	20	2	20	2	40	5
Marine Corps	72	9	13	2	85	11
Air Force	49	6	32	4	81	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Each percentage is based on the number to its left, and may not equal the column or row total due to rounding.

\*\* Percentages are based on the percent of the total number of survey respondents (805) who provided their branch of service and gender.

Minority representation is closer to the overall military, but more minority officers and fewer minority enlisted personnel responded than are represented in the overall military. In the overall military, 17.5 percent of officers and 37.5 percent of enlisted personnel are minorities. However, of the respondents, 21 percent of the officers and 24 percent of the enlisted were minorities. At NPS, 16 percent of the students are minorities (race/ethnicity demographics were not available for DLI), which is close to the 17.5 percent of the overall military. However, for the survey, a higher percentage of minority officers at NPS responded than are at NPS, or who are in the military overall.

**Table 14. Survey Respondents by Race/Ethnicity and Officer/Enlisted**

<b><u>Officer/Enlisted Status and Race/Ethnicity</u></b>		
<b><u>Officers</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Total Officers</u></b>
Black	47	9
Hispanic	27	5
Asian	11	2
Multi-Racial	16	3
Other	14	3
<b>Minority Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>21</b>
White	428	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><u>Enlisted</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Total Enlisted</u></b>
Black	15	6
Hispanic	22	8
Asian	7	3
Multi-Racial	8	3
Other	10	4
<b>Minority Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>24</b>
White	197	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>--</b>

The respondents are more representative in gender of the overall military than in rank or race/ethnicity. Of the overall military, 14.5 percent are women. Of the respondents, 18 percent were women. Women were slightly over-represented in the respondents. However, considering that only 8 percent of NPS students are women, and women represented 35 percent of DLI students, the 18 percent of respondents came surprisingly close to the 14.5 percent of the military overall represented by women.

**C. VARIABLES AND MEASURES USED**

To assess the attitudes and experiences of the U.S. military members about women in combat, two measuring techniques were used. One technique was a structured survey and another involved the use of focus groups.

**1. Surveys**

The surveys used at NPS and DLI were almost identical. Each consisted of 30 multiple-choice questions (counting “nested” questions individually, such as “Do you

have children?” and “If yes, what gender?”) and one open-ended question. The surveys were created using guidance largely from Edwards, Thomas, Rosenfeld, and Booth-Kewley (1997), and included slightly modified questions from the RAND survey conducted in 1997 (Harrell & Miller, 1997). The NPS survey and the DLI surveys are provided as Appendices A and B, respectively. Three questions on the NPS survey were changed for the DLI survey due to the different sample group. The question on pay grade was modified from officer pay grades to enlisted pay grades. The question, “Do you have prior enlisted service?” was changed to “Do you have broken military service?” Finally, the question, “What was the source of your commission?” was changed to “What is your highest level of education?”

Four of the questions on the surveys were very similar to those mentioned previously in the survey done by RAND in 1997 (Harrell & Miller, 1997), but were modified slightly. The *format* for the questions on the possibility of women serving in units presently closed to them was changed. In the RAND study, this question was set up in a matrix format, with the heading/question at the top, “How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in the following units?” and the three choices (“These units should remain closed to women,” “Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units,” and “Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are”) were listed horizontally across the top, and the four types of units (infantry, armor, submarines, and special forces) were listed vertically on the left. However, for the NPS survey, the web-based format would not allow this format, so the question was modified into four separate multiple-choice questions. The format was then kept that way for the DLI survey, though on paper, so that it would be the same as the survey at NPS for comparison purposes.

The second question that was changed slightly from the RAND survey was the one that asked, “Which one of these three options comes closest to your own opinion?” The RAND survey offered only three choices, which were “I am satisfied with the present military regulations that exclude women from certain direct combat roles,” “I think that women who want to volunteer for the combat arms should be allowed to do so,” and “I think that women should be treated exactly like men and serve in the combat

arms just like men.” However, the NPS/DLI survey had one additional alternative: “I think women should not serve in combat in any role.”

The data collection was done differently at NPS than at DLI. At NPS, the survey was web-based. All students at NPS have e-mail accounts and access to computers and the internet. Upon approval from the Deputy Superintendent, an e-mail note was sent to all U.S. military officers who were students at NPS on October 2, 2001, soliciting their participation in the survey, and providing the web site address of the survey. The date was chosen carefully in hopes of a higher response rate, in that the first few weeks of the academic quarter are typically the lightest in workload, and the quarter began on October 1. The text of the e-mail note is provided as Appendix C. Three weeks after the e-mail note was sent, the web site was closed from further responses so that data analysis could begin.

For data collection at DLI, the survey administration was done slightly differently. Students there do not have easy access to e-mail and computers, as was the case at NPS. Paper surveys were used instead of web-based surveys. All students fall under a chain-of-command, for administrative purposes, based on their branch of service. Upon approval from the Executive Officer of DLI, one hundred surveys were distributed to each of the four services: Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. In addition, a cover sheet with instructions for taking the survey was included with each set of the surveys, and is provided as Appendix D. The surveys were distributed to DLI the last week of October in 2001 and were collected from DLI the first two weeks of November.

On the NPS survey, a note at the end informed the participants that the researchers were planning to conduct focus groups for additional information, and asked them to e-mail the researcher if they were interested in participating. To help to reduce possible response bias, those with opinions more in the middle or who were somewhat undecided were specifically asked to participate, in addition to those with strong opinions. For the DLI surveys, the last page provided information about focus groups, as did the NPS survey, and directed the students to detach the last page to ensure anonymity. The last page asked them if they were interested in participating in focus groups, and if so, to provide contact information.

## **2. Focus Groups**

Focus groups were conducted primarily using the guidance found in Krueger and Casey (2000). Focus groups were done at both NPS and DLI to allow for additional information from participants beyond what could be provided in a survey.

### ***a. Focus Groups at NPS***

Three focus groups were conducted at NPS, each composed of six to ten officers. All 32 students who expressed interest were invited to attend. Two (of the 32) students were not scheduled for any of the three focus groups due to class conflicts. All remaining students were scheduled for one of the three groups; however, last minute conflicts arose and not all students were able to attend. In addition to the scheduled students, two other students (who were invited by one of the scheduled participants that day) joined the second focus group. In total, six students participated in the first group, nine students in the second group, and ten in the third.

Participants were relatively representative of the school in terms of gender, branch of service, and pay grade. Of the focus group participants, four were women and 21 were men. All five branches of service were represented, though with only one participant each from the Air Force and the Coast Guard. Six participants were from the Army, eight were from the Marine Corps, and nine were from the Navy. One participant was an O-2, 12 were O-3s, and 12 were O-4s.

Student assignments were made in an attempt to create homogenous groups, as advised by Krueger and Casey (2000), and around class schedules and various personal conflicts. The only information available when assigning the students was gender (as speculated based on their first names) and any information they provided in their e-mail volunteering for the groups. Of the four women who attended, two were assigned to the first group and two to the third group. Several students voiced strong opinions on the issue of women in combat; these students were assigned so that members strongly for women in combat were together, as were those against it.

Focus groups were held in a classroom at NPS from 12:00-12:50 p.m. on Wednesdays and a Thursday, specifically on October 10, 17, and 18, 2001. The time was

chosen since most students have their lunch break (i.e., no classes) between noon and 1:00 p.m. Pizza and soda were provided, both for convenience since it was the lunch hour and as an incentive/reward for attending.

The sessions were audio-taped. A focus group protocol, which included a “questioning route” as suggested by Krueger and Casey (2000, p. 38-67), was used and is provided as Appendix E. The audiotapes were then later transcribed for further analysis.

***b. Focus Groups at DLI***

Focus groups were conducted in a similar fashion at DLI. Three focus groups were held. Thirty students at DLI expressed an interest in participating in the focus groups. All were scheduled for a group. The days and times were chosen based on the responses of the participants on the survey/focus groups forms. Focus groups were scheduled to last an hour, one beginning at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 17, 2001, another at 3:00 p.m. that same day, and one at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 18. Unfortunately, the number of students who actually attended the sessions was much smaller than those who initially expressed interest. Only two people attended the first session, three attended the second, and one attended the third. The questions still generally followed the same protocol used at NPS, though the technique was modified to somewhat of a combination between an interview and a focus group. Questions for the small group were usually directed at an individual, though other members of the group sometimes commented on the response. For the final session, since there was only one person in attendance, the session was an interview instead of a focus group. Sessions were also audio-taped. Pizza and soda were also provided for the DLI students.

Of the six participants in the focus groups at DLI, three were women and three were men. One participant was from the Air Force, two were from the Navy, and three were from the Marine Corps. Two were E2s, two were E3s, one was an E4, and one was an E6.

Students who attended were asked if they knew why so many other people were missing. Though the researchers e-mailed or called all who were scheduled to attend, the students mentioned that they are not supposed to use the government computers to check personal e-mail. Those who attended either had been phoned or had

their own personal computer. Participants indicated that those missing were probably not aware of the focus groups. If this were the case, though still disappointing, it is certainly preferable to people missing intentionally due to lack of interest in the subject or similar reasons.

#### **D. POTENTIAL BIAS**

Although care was taken to minimize bias as much as possible, several sources of potential bias remained, including selection bias, nonresponse bias and self-selection bias, response bias, and survivor bias. Some aspects of the study were done intentionally for improvements in one area, but they may have had minor, negative affects on other areas.

##### **1. Selection Bias**

Perhaps the primary limitation of this study was selection bias. Selection bias happens when “the selection of the sample systematically excludes or underrepresents certain groups. Selection bias often happens when we use a *convenience sample* consisting of data that are easily collected” (Studenmund, 2001, p. 543). As mentioned previously, the samples used were convenience samples, and are not necessarily representative of the military as a whole. Comparisons were made in the previous sections that indicated that though the respondents were fairly representative of the U.S. military student populations at NPS and DLI, they were not particularly representative of the military as a whole. Care should be taken in interpreting the findings because generalizations may not necessarily be accurate.

##### **2. Nonresponse Bias and Self-Selection Bias**

As with almost all other surveys and focus groups, nonresponse bias can be a problem. Nonresponse bias refers to the “systematic refusal of some groups to participate in an experiment or to respond to a poll” (Stuenmund, 2001, p. 544). Response rates for the surveys in this study were fairly high, as discussed earlier, but must still be considered in data analysis and interpretation.

In order to increase the response rate for the survey, the surveys were kept short. Completion time was estimated at five minutes. The disadvantage was that by keeping the survey so short, and having only a few answers from which to choose, people’s

attitudes may not have been represented as accurately as if there were more choices. A couple of students provided this feedback to the researchers after the survey had been sent out. For example, one question asks students to choose one of four statements that most accurately reflects their view. A potential limitation is that a respondent's true view may lie somewhere in between two of the four choices. However, keeping the survey short may have contributed to the high response rate (as feedback from other students indicated), and was probably worth the minor disadvantage of having fewer categories for responses.

Self-selection bias may result when a researcher uses "data for a group of people who have chosen to be in that group" (Studenmund, 2001, p. 544). For focus groups, a self-selection bias may manifest itself in the form of only those with strong opinions on the topic volunteering to participate. In order to help reduce the self-selection bias for the focus groups, the request for volunteers specifically asked for those who did not have strong opinions on the topic. It is unknown whether this reduced the self-selection bias for the focus groups. However, several participants were very clear that they had opinions "in the middle of the road" or were somewhat undecided on the topic.

A similar negative effect may have happened with the focus groups in terms of reducing the nonresponse rate. In order to encourage volunteers, focus groups were promised to last no more than one hour. This seemed to be effective in helping to get volunteers. However, the focus groups easily could have gone much longer in order to hear each person's attitude and experiences in more detail. Again, it was a trade-off between increasing participation and getting more detailed information from the respondents.

### **3. Response Bias**

Response bias refers to a respondent's "tendency to respond in certain ways regardless of a question's content" (Edwards et al., 1997, p. 47). Response bias includes response order effects, yea-saying or nay-saying, acquiescence, and socially desirable responding (Edwards et al., 1997, pp. 48-49). In order to try to reduce response order effects, the lists of alternative responses were short and the lists were presented in writing rather than orally, as advised by Edwards et al. (1997, p. 48). Yea-saying or nay-saying

was not expected to have any substantial effect on this survey. Anonymity was assured to help prevent acquiescence and socially desirable responding on the surveys. For the focus groups, the moderators/researchers withheld both verbal and nonverbal cues of approval or disapproval to the maximum extent possible.

#### **4. Survivor Bias**

Survivor bias refers to the exclusion of members of a past population that are no longer around (Studenmund, 2001, p. 544). There is the slight possibility of survivor bias in these samples. For example, some people may have been in the military in the early 1990s and had strong feelings against women in combat. Once combat aviation and combat ships were opened to women, they may have left the military. Conversely, people who believe that women should be assigned to all combat units may have left the military when policy did not change to reflect their beliefs. Neither of these groups is included in this study. However, considering the myriad of reasons why people leave (or remain in) the military, the survivor bias in both cases is expected to be extremely minor. This study is a “snapshot” of the opinions of U.S. military members on active duty in 2001.

#### **E. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES**

Data analysis included analyzing the quantitative data from the surveys and the qualitative data from the focus groups and the one open-ended question on the survey. For the quantitative data, basic statistical analysis was done, such as comparing frequency and percentages of responses, and cross-tabulation between and among groups. The qualitative data were content analyzed for trends, and certain quotes that stood out as being either particularly insightful, representative of other comments, or especially unusual were noted.

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## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. INTRODUCTION

The following results are based on the 826 survey respondents and 31 focus group participants at NPS and DLI. Not all survey respondents answered all survey questions, resulting in slight variances in the total number of respondents in some of the following tables. Additional demographics are provided as background on the participants, followed by analysis of quantitative data and content analysis of qualitative data.

### B. ADDITIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Several demographic descriptors of the survey respondents were determined in addition to those presented in Chapter III. Demographics variables for all respondents are shown in Tables 15 and 16. Demographics specific to officers only are shown in Table 17; demographics applicable to enlisted personnel only are shown in Table 18.

**Table 15. Number and Percentage Distribution of Survey Respondents by Occupational Field, and Officer/Enlisted Status**

<u>Occupational Field</u>	<u>Officers</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Aviation	86	16	2	1	88	11
Engineering/Maintenance	38	7	0	0	38	5
Health Care/Medical/Dental	6	1	1	0	7	1
Human Resources/Administration/ Hospital Administration	20	4	10	4	30	4
Infantry/Reconnaissance/Special Forces/Explosive Ordnance Disposal/Artillery/Armor	66	12	9	3	75	9
Information Technology/ Intelligence/Communications/ Cryptology	75	14	241	88	316	38
Specialized Support (Clergy, Legal, Oceanography, Public Affairs, Meteorology)	22	4	2	1	24	3
Submarines	18	3	0	0	18	2
Supply/Transportation/Logistics/ Finance	92	17	7	3	99	12
Surface Ships	125	23	1	0	126	15
All Fields	548	100	273	100	821	100

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

As mentioned previously, most of the personnel at DLI are in the intelligence or cryptology community. This is evident in Table 15. At NPS, all communities are represented, though very few respondents were from the medical community. It should be noted, however, that the distribution of personnel by occupational field is not necessarily similar to that in the military overall.

**Table 16. Family Status of Survey Respondents, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

	<u>Officers</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b><u>Marital Status</u></b>						
Single	83	15	180	66	263	33
Married (including military spouse)	435	80	67	25	502	62
Married to military spouse	23	4	13	5	36	4
Divorced/separated/widowed	29	5	11	4	40	5
Total	547	100	271	100	805	100
<b><u>With/without Children</u></b>						
With male child/children	94	17	13	5	107	13
With female child/children	98	18	18	7	116	14
With one child or more of each gender	148	27	17	7	165	20
Total with children	340	62	48**	19	805	48
Without children	207	39	210	81	417	52
Total	547	100	258	100	805	100

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

\*\* Only 44 respondents answered that they had children, but the sum of those who provided their children's gender is 48.

\*\*\* Not all respondents answered all questions, resulting in unequal totals for different questions.

As seen in Table 16, most NPS students who responded to the survey were married. In contrast, most of the DLI respondents were single. Similarly, most of the NPS respondents (62 percent) had children, whereas only 19 percent of the DLI respondents had children.

**Table 17. Additional Demographics of Survey Respondents, Officers Only**

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b><u>Pay Grade</u></b>		
O-1 – O-2	25	5
O-3	324	59
O-4	183	33
O-5 or above	15	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><u>Prior Enlisted Service</u></b>		
Yes	221	40
No	326	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><u>Source of Commission</u></b>		
Academy	133	24
ROTC	132	24
OCS/OTS/PLC/Aviation OCS	219	40
Other	64	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

\*\* Not all respondents answered all questions, resulting in unequal totals for different questions.

Almost all of the officers who responded to the survey were either in pay grade O-3 or pay grade O-4, with the majority in pay grade O-3. Quite a few of the respondents (40 percent) had prior enlisted service, perhaps even higher than might be expected. A plurality of the officers received their commission through some form of Officer Candidate School (OCS), with almost a quarter each receiving commissions through an academy and the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC).

**Table 18. Additional Demographics of Survey Respondents, Enlisted Personnel Only**

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b><u>Pay Grade</u></b>		
E1-E3	192	69
E4	29	10
E5	18	6
E6	21	8
E-7 or above	16	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><u>Broken military service</u></b>		
Yes	16	6
No	257	94
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><u>Level of Education</u></b>		
High School Non-Graduate	0	0
GED	2	1
High School Graduate	78	30
Some College Credit, No Degree	126	49
Associate's Degree	22	9
Bachelor's Degree	24	9
Advanced Degree	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Not all respondents answered all questions, resulting in unequal totals for different questions.

Most of the enlisted respondents were in pay grades E1-E3. Almost none had broken military service. About a third were high school graduates (with no additional formal education). Nearly half of the enlisted respondents had some college credits, and another 20 percent held a college degree.

#### **B. OPINIONS TOWARD WOMEN IN COMBAT—QUANTIFIABLE DATA**

The opinions toward women in combat are shown based on the responses to questions asking whether units presently closed to women should be opened to women, asking the overall opinion on women in combat, asking those with combat experience how women actually performed in combat, and asking whether changes in current policy on women in combat would have any effect on retention. Additionally, responses to the

open-ended question on the survey and comments made during focus groups are discussed in the subsequent section.

### 1. Combat Units Presently Closed to Women

Four types of combat units that were closed to women at the time of the survey were infantry, submarines, armor, and special forces. Survey questions asked whether each of these types of units should remain closed to women, or if opened to women, whether women should be assigned on a voluntary basis or in the same way as men. These questions were based largely on questions in the surveys done conducted by Harrell and Miller (1997). However, comments on the open-ended question of the survey at NPS and at the focus groups pointed out that men are assigned to submarines and special forces *only* on a voluntary basis. Survey results, by officers and enlisted, are shown in Tables 19 through 22, and will be discussed following Table 22.

**Table 19. Responses to Assigning Women to Infantry Units, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
These units should remain closed to women.	268	49	88	32	356	44
Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.	139	26	131	48	270	33
Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are.	138	25	52	19	190	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 20. Responses to Assigning Women to Armor Units, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
These units should remain closed to women.	242	44	72	26	314	38
Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.	154	28	139	51	293	36
Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are.	150	27	61	22	211	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 21. Responses to Assigning Women to Submarines, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
These units should remain closed to women.	289	53	88	32	377	46
Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.	134	25	131	48	265	32
Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are.	123	23	52	19	175	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 22. Responses to Assigning Women to Special Forces, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
These units should remain closed to women.	307	56	107	39	414	50
Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.	144	26	123	45	267	33
Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are.	95	17	44	16	139	17
Total	546	100	274	100	820	100

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

The most common response for the officers was to leave the units closed to women. However, when the two categories of allowing qualified women into the units are combined, resulting in a range of 43 to 55 percent, it was almost an even division between not allowing women into the units, and allowing them in the units, whether on a voluntary or mandatory basis<sup>3</sup>. This was true for all four types of units. For enlisted, the plurality of respondents recommended that women be assigned on a voluntary basis. When this category was combined with assigning women on a mandatory basis, between 61 and 73 percent of respondents favored opening these units to women. Enlisted women seemed more in favor of opening the units to women than did female officers.

Findings were fairly consistent across the four types of units. Generally, though, of the four types of units, respondents were most in favor of armor units opening to women, and least in favor of special forces opening to women.

When these findings are compared to the findings from Kirk's (1988) study (see Table 1 in Chapter II), a few interesting points emerge. In 1988, Vietnam and Korea veterans responded that they felt that women were most capable of fighting in the following units (in order): air units, surface ships, submarines, hand-to-hand combat, and

<sup>3</sup> Presently, men are assigned to submarines and special forces only by volunteering. In hindsight, the survey questions would be worded differently to account for this.

special forces. Military personnel at NPS and DLI both had the highest percentage of responses (of the four types of units addressed) to keep special forces closed to women, although enlisted personnel favored opening special forces by a margin of 3 to 2. This is similar to the veterans' responses; the lowest percentage of veterans' responses (10 percent) was for special forces. Hand-to-hand combat could be loosely interpreted as infantry. Of the NPS respondents, 49 percent responded that infantry should remain closed to women, whereas 53 percent responded that submarines should remain closed to women. It is interesting that the veterans favored women in submarines over hand-to-hand combat (15 to 12 percent), but NPS students held the opposite opinion. However, in both the case of the veterans and the NPS students, the differences were extremely small.

The responses to questions on the four types of combat units presently closed to women are divided by branch of service and gender, and shown in Tables 23 through 25. Due to the small sample size for the Air Force and Coast Guard, only Army, Navy, and Marine Corps data are shown.

**Table 23. Army Attitudes Regarding Combat Arms Career Opportunities for Women by Type of Unit and Gender (in percent)**

Type of unit	These units should remain closed to women.		Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.		Qualified women should be assigned to these units in the same way as men are	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
	Infantry	71	12	23	72	6
Armor	60	8	30	72	10	20
Submarines	50	12	33	68	17	20
Special Forces	65	8	27	88	9	4

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

The Army women in this study were more in favor of women being allowed to volunteer for combat units than were women in the 1997 RAND study (see Tables 2 through 4 in Chapter II for comparison with Harrell & Miller, 1997). Percentages in favor of allowing women to volunteer ranged from 68 to 88 in this study, but only 31 to 54 percent in the 1997 RAND study. The women in this study, however, were much less in favor of assigning women to special forces in the same way as men are (though

technically, that is on a voluntary basis, as mentioned previously). In 1997, 27 percent of the Army women thought that women should be assigned the same as men to special forces. In the present study, only 4 percent of Army women agreed.

The percentage of Army men in the present study who thought the units should remain closed to women was 9 to 18 percentage points higher than the percentage of Army men in 1997 who responded the same. The percentage of Army men in this study who thought women should be assigned the same as men was 9 to 12 percentage points lower than in the 1997 study.

**Table 24. Navy Attitudes Regarding Combat Arms Career Opportunities for Women by Type of Unit and Gender (in percent)**

Type of unit	These units should remain closed to women.		Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.		Qualified women should be assigned to these units in the same way as men are	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Infantry	34	16	32	45	34	39
Armor	29	13	35	45	36	42
Submarines	50	25	24	45	26	30
Spec Forces	48	25	29	49	23	25

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Similar to Army attitudes, Navy men in the present study were more likely to favor keeping the units closed to women, compared with Navy men in the 1997 study. There was also a slightly higher percentage of Navy women in this study who indicated that they thought that the units should remain closed to women compared to those in 1997. The difference was 2 to 14 percentage points, with the greatest difference in special forces and the smallest difference in submarines. The percentage of Navy women who thought women should be allowed to volunteer for the units was generally smaller than those in the 1997 study.

**Table 25. Marine Corps Attitudes Regarding Combat Arms Career Opportunities for Women By Type of Unit and Gender (in percent)**

Type of unit	These units should remain closed to women.		Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.		Qualified women should be assigned to these units in the same way as men are	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Infantry	78	31	15	69	7	0
Armor	72	32	19	69	8	0
Submarines	60	25	28	75	12	0
Spec Forces	78	31	16	69	6	0

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

The Marine Corps men also follow this trend toward higher percentages in favor of keeping the units closed to women. The percentages were between 7 and 26 percentage points higher than those in the 1997 study; the smallest difference was for infantry and the largest difference was for armor. Marine Corps women were a small sample (3 officers and 13 enlisted personnel), but those who did respond showed a different trend. The percentage of Marine Corps women who believed that the units should remain closed to women, and of those who believed that women should be assigned the same as the men, was smaller than the percentage of those in 1997. The percentage of Marine Corps women who believed that women should be allowed to volunteer was much higher, a difference of a range of 29 to 46 percent, compared to 69 to 75 percent.

The gender differences across the three branches of service, as shown in Tables 23 through 25, seem to suggest a more conservative approach of the men in the military. However, it is unknown whether this is true in the military overall, or may be due to the larger percentage of officers included in the sample than is representative of the military overall.

## **2. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat**

One question on the survey asked respondents for an overall opinion regarding women in combat: “Which one of these four options comes closest to your own opinion?” The choice of answers to this question was as follows:

- I think that women should not serve in combat in any role.
- I am satisfied with the present military regulations that exclude women from certain direct combat roles.
- I think that women who want to volunteer for the combat arms should be allowed to do so.
- I think that women should be treated exactly like men and serve in the combat arms just like men.

Responses to this question are shown in Tables 26 through 36, subdivided by different demographic data.

**Table 26. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat, by Gender and Officer/Enlisted Status**

	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b><u>Men</u></b>						
Women should not serve in combat.	102	21	28	16	130	20
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	185	38	50	29	235	36
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	105	22	62	36	167	35
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	94	19	30	18	124	19
Total	486	100	170	100	656	100
<b><u>Women</u></b>						
Women should not serve in combat.	1	2	2	2	3	2
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	14	24	15	17	29	20
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	23	40	61	71	84	58
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	20	34	8	9	28	19
Total	58	100	86	100	144	100
<b><u>Total (Men and Women)</u></b>						
Women should not serve in combat.	103	19	30	12	133	17
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	199	37	65	25	264	33
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	128	24	123	48	251	31
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	114	21	38	15	152	19
Total	544	100	256	100	800	100

A few notable differences were found between the responses of officers and enlisted personnel, as shown in Table 26. The only differences seem to be among the female respondents, as seen in the third and fourth response categories. The female officers have a higher percentage than the enlisted women did in favor of assigning women to the combat units the same as are the men. The enlisted women have a higher percentage than the female officers in favor of allowing women to volunteer for the combat units.

Women who responded to the survey were much more likely to favor allowing women into combat than were the men who responded to the survey. Men were generally divided between being satisfied with the current regulations and allowing women to volunteer, whereas a majority of women were in favor of allowing women to volunteer for combat.

**Table 27. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat, by Branch of Service (in percent)**

	<b>Army (N=107)</b>	<b>Navy (N=400)</b>	<b>Marine Corps (N=206)</b>	<b>Air Force (N=97)</b>
Women should not serve in combat.	10	11	36	4
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	49	30	38	18
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	36	33	17	54
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	6	27	8	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Overall opinions toward women in combat, by branch of service, were similar to findings in the 1997 RAND study (Harrell & Miller, 1997). Respondents in the Army and the Marine Corps were the least in favor of women in combat, with their counterparts in the Navy apparently more open to it. Respondents in the Air Force were the most open to expanding the role of women in combat.

**Table 28. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat by Pay Grade of Officers (in percent)**

	O1-O2 (N=25)	O-3 (N=324)	O-4 (N=183)	O-5 or above (N=15)
Women should not serve in combat.	12	16	25	0
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	36	36	39	23
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	36	26	18	23
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	16	22	18	54
Total	100	100	100	100

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

It was predicted that junior pay grades would be more open to the idea of women in combat (see Chapter II). As seen in Table 28, however, a slightly different pattern emerged for officers. Very junior officers (O-1 to O-2) were less likely than the O-3s and O-4s to believe that women should *not* be in combat at all, but none of the senior officers (O-5s or above) thought that women should not be in combat. Further, over half of the senior officers thought that women should be assigned to combat in the same way as are men. It should be noted that the sample size for senior officers was small (15 people).

**Table 29. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat by Pay Grade of Enlisted Personnel (in percent)**

	E1-E3 (N=192)	E4 (N=29)	E5 (N=18)	E6 (N=21)	E7-E9 (N=16)
Women should not serve in combat.	12	11	6	14	0
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	24	18	33	38	38
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	50	61	50	33	31
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	14	11	11	14	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

As seen in Table 29, for senior enlisted members (E7s or above), similar to senior officers, none believe that women should *not* serve in combat. Senior enlisted personnel were then almost equally divided across the three different choices for having women in combat. Half of the junior enlisted personnel (E1-E3) thought that women should be allowed to volunteer for combat, with another quarter in favor of the current rules, and 14 percent in favor of assigning women the same as men; only 12 percent were entirely against women in combat.

**Table 30. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat by Racial/Ethnic Group (in percent)**

	<b>Black (N=62)</b>	<b>Hispanic (N=49)</b>	<b>White (N=625)</b>	<b>All Other Groups (N=48)</b>
Women should not serve in combat.	13	10	19	13
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	47	23	34	21
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	21	42	29	46
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	19	25	18	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

The differences by racial/ethnic group are shown in Table 30. A smaller percentage of minority respondents were against women in combat. Perhaps surprisingly, Blacks had the highest percentage in favor of keeping the regulations as they are now. Hispanics and “all other groups” (Asians, multi-racial members, and “other”) had the highest percentages of being in favor of allowing women to volunteer for combat arms.

**Table 31. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat, by Whether Prior Enlisted for Officers or Broken Service for Enlisted (in percent)**

	<u>Officers—Prior Enlisted Service</u>		<u>Enlisted—Broken Military Service</u>	
	<u>Yes</u> (N=221)	<u>No</u> (N=324)	<u>Yes</u> (N=16)	<u>No</u> (N=257)
Women should not serve in combat.	17	20	13	11
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	35	38	31	26
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	25	22	44	49
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	23	20	13	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

No obvious differences were found between officers with and without prior enlisted service. Similarly, the differences between enlisted members with and without broken service were minor, although persons with broken service were more likely to be satisfied with the present regulations. Any corresponding difference (5 percentage points) of those with broken service was less likely to favor women volunteering for combat arms.

**Table 32. Overall Opinions of Officers toward Women in Combat by Source of Commission (in percent)**

	<u>Academy</u>	<u>ROTC</u>	<u>OCS/OTS/PLC/ Aviation OCS</u>	<u>Other</u>
	(N=133)	(N=219)	(N=132)	(N=64)
Women should not serve in combat.	16	18	23	19
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	39	39	33	30
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	21	26	21	25
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	24	17	23	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

No obvious trends emerge from Table 32, where the officer responses are shown by source of commission. Source of commission did not seem to affect officers' overall opinions toward women in combat.

**Table 33. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat by Marital Status (in percent)**

	<b>Married to:</b>			<b>Divorced/ Separated/Widowed (N=40)</b>
	<b>Single (N=260)</b>	<b>Civilian (N=439)</b>	<b>Military (N=36)</b>	
Women should not serve in combat.	12	21	17	3
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	27	36	25	35
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	45	23	36	35
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	17	19	22	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

As seen in Table 33, the highest percentage of survey respondents who were opposed to women serving in combat were those with civilian spouses, when compared with the other three categories. Similarly, those with civilian spouses had the lowest proportion of those in favor of assigning women to combat arms on a voluntary basis. The highest proportion of respondents who favored allowing women to volunteer for combat was 45 percent, among single personnel. Married personnel showed a difference between those with civilian spouses and those with military spouses; a higher percentage of those with military spouses were in favor of allowing women to volunteer, and a smaller percentage of those with military spouses were satisfied with the present regulations.

**Table 34. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat by Gender of Children (in percent)**

	<u>No children</u> (N=133)	<u>Boys Only</u> (N=219)	<u>Girls Only</u> (N=132)	<u>Boys and Girls</u> (N=64)
Women should not serve in combat.	13	25	21	17
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	29	34	28	44
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	39	26	30	16
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	18	15	20	23
Total	100	100	100	100

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

No apparent trend is seen in Table 34, where the responses are categorized by the gender of the respondents' children. Those with no children have the lowest proportion against women in combat, and the highest proportion of those in favor of women being allowed to volunteer for combat. One possible explanation is that those without children may be younger overall than those with children, and the difference in age is the primary factor affecting their opinion toward women in combat. Those with both boys and girls have the highest percentage of respondents who are satisfied with the current regulations.

**Table 35. Overall Opinions of Enlisted Personnel toward Women in Combat, by Highest Level of Education of Enlisted Personnel (in percent)**

	<u>GED/High School Graduate</u> (N=80)	<u>Some College; No Degree</u> (N=126)	<u>Associate's Degree</u> (N=22)	<u>Bachelor's Degree or above</u> (N=29)
Women should not serve in combat.	14	12	9	7
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	22	24	41	31
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	49	47	45	48
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	15	17	5	14
Total	100	100	100	100

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 35 shows the responses of enlisted personnel by their level of education. As seen here, differences can be found between the percentages of respondents who thought women should not be in combat and those who were satisfied with the current regulations. The percentage of high school graduates and those with a GED who are against women in combat is twice the percentage of those with a bachelor's or advanced degree (just five members had advanced degrees). For those who were satisfied with the current regulations, the proportion of those with a bachelor's degree or higher was 9 percentage points higher than those with a GED or who were high school graduates. However, there does not seem to be a consistent trend on opinions toward women in combat across all education levels.

In Table 36, the format is slightly different from the other tables. The occupational specialties are listed vertically and the opinions are listed across the top. There do seem to be some differences in the respondents' general opinions based on their occupational specialties. For example, the survey respondents in the infantry and reconnaissance group had the highest proportion (36 percent) against allowing women in combat at all. No one in the medical community indicated that he or she thought that women should be assigned to combat units the same way as men are, though this may have been partly due to the small sample size of medical personnel (N=7). The responses of those with backgrounds in surface ships showed almost the lowest percentage of being against women in combat (8 percent, second only to the administrative group with 7 percent in that category), and an almost even division across the other three categories. Survey respondents in specialized support fields and submarines had similar patterns in their responses; 50 percent of each category was in favor of allowing women to volunteer for combat arms. Among respondents in the supply and transportation categories, 16 percent were against women in combat and 44 percent were satisfied with the current regulations.

**Table 36. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat by Occupational Field (in percent)**

<b>Occupational Field**</b>	<b>Women should not serve in combat.</b>	<b>I am satisfied with the present regulations.</b>	<b>Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.</b>	<b>Women should be assigned to combat arms just like the men are.</b>	<b>Total</b>
Aviation (N=88)	24	39	16	22	100
Engineering/ Maintenance (N=39)	13	18	33	36	100
Health Care/ Medical/ Dental (N=7)	29	29	43	0	100
HR/Admin/ Hospital Admin (N=30)	7	40	33	20	100
Infantry/Recon/ Special Forces/ EOD/Artillery/ Armor (N=75)	36	43	16	5	100
IT/Intel/Comm/ Cryptology (N=316)	14	28	41	17	100
Specialized Support (Clergy, Legal, Oceanography, Public Affairs, Meteorology) (N= 24)	13	17	50	21	100
Submarines (N=18)	17	22	50	11	100
Supply/Transport/ Logistics/Finance (N=99)	16	44	26	14	100
Surface Ships (N=126)	8	35	27	30	100

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

\*\* See Appendices A or B for the full titles of these fields.

### 3. Attitudes and Experiences of Respondents Who Have Been in Combat with Women

Several survey questions asked about combat and direct combat experiences of respondents. Both of these terms were defined in the survey for clarification (see Appendices A and B). The responses are divided into categories by gender and by officer/enlisted status.

#### a. Male Respondents

Responses from men are shown in Tables 37 and 38. Table 37 reflects the responses to the questions about experience in combat, and Table 38 reflects the responses to the questions about experience in direct ground combat.

**Table 37. Responses of Men to Experience in Combat, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

<u>Combat Experience</u>	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b><u>Have you ever served in combat?</u></b>						
Yes	354	72	25	14	379	57
No	137	28	149	86	286	43
Total	491	100	174	100	665	100
<b><u>Have you ever served in combat with women?</u></b>						
Yes	237	48	17	10	254	38
No	254	52	155	90	409	62
Total	491	100	172	100	663	100
<b><u>If yes, what was your overall experience?</u></b>						
Women performed:						
As well as men.	167**	71	11	69	178	71
Better than men.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Less well than men.	69**	29	5	31	73	29
Total	235	100	16***	100	251	100

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

\*\* 173 officers indicated that women performed as well as men, but only 167 of those respondents indicated that they had served in combat with women. It is unknown whether the six respondents answered the previous question incorrectly. Their responses were not included in the table. Similarly, 69 officers indicated that women performed less well than men, but only 68 of them indicated that they had served in combat with women. The one response was also not included in the table.

\*\*\* Only 16 of the 17 enlisted men who said they had served in combat with women answered the question about the women's performance in combat.

**Table 38. Responses of Men to Experience in *Direct Ground Combat*, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

<b><u>Direct Combat Experience</u></b>	<b><u>Officer</u></b>		<b><u>Enlisted</u></b>		<b><u>Total</u></b>	
	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>
<b><u>Have you ever served in direct ground combat?</u></b>						
Yes	38	8	8	4	46	7
No	455	92	182	96	637	93
Total	493	100	190	100	683	100
<b><u>Have you ever served in direct ground combat with women?</u></b>						
Yes	5	1	1	1	6	1
No	475	99	183	99	658	99
Total	480	100	184	100	664	100
<b><u>If yes, what was your overall experience?</u></b>						
Women performed:						
As well as men.	0*	0	0	0	0	0
Better than men.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Less well than men.	5*	100	0**	100	5	100
Total	5*	100	0**	100	5	100

\* All five NPS men who indicated that they had been in direct ground combat with women responded that the women performed less well than the men. However, five other respondents answered that women performed as well as men. It is unknown whether they had answered the previous question incorrectly. If that were the case, it would change the findings for the question substantially. Their responses were *not* included in Table 38.

\*\* The one enlisted man who indicated that he had served with women in combat did not reply to the question about the overall experience. However, one other respondent indicated that women did not perform as well. It is possible that the previous question was marked in error, but to be consistent with not including the NPS responses discussed above, this response was also excluded.

The lower percent of combat experience of the enlisted personnel, as seen in Table 37, may be due to the occupational field, but it is most likely due primarily to the more junior pay grades of the enlisted personnel. (DLI is the first duty station after recruit training, or “boot camp,” for many of them.) Of those men who had served in combat with women, over two-thirds indicated that women had performed as well as men. Less than a third responded that women performed less well than men. *None* of these men indicated that women performed better than men. Only six men total had been in direct ground combat with women; however, this was expected to be an extremely

small number. The findings seem to indicate that among those who had been in direct ground combat with women, the perception is that women performed less well than the men. However, as mentioned in the notes below the tables, the responses to this question were probably flawed. Conclusions based on a sample size of five, however, are quite limited.

Responses were also examined to see if there was a difference in the overall opinion toward women in combat between those men who had served in combat with women, and those men who had served in combat, but without women. Table 39 shows these data.

**Table 39. Overall Opinions toward Women in Combat of Men who Served in Combat *with* Women and Those Who Served in Combat *without* Women**

	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b><u>Men Who Served in Combat <i>with</i> Women</u></b>						
Women should not serve in combat.	48	21	0	0	48	19
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	93	40	6	38	99	40
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	49	21	7	44	56	22
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	44	19	3	19	47	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><u>Men Who Served Combat <i>without</i> Women</u></b>						
Women should not serve in combat.	70	20	0	0	70	19
I am satisfied with the present regulations.	133	38	8	33	141	38
Women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms.	76	22	10	42	86	23
Women should be assigned to combat arms just like men are.	72	21	6	25	78	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

In comparing the men who were in combat with women and without women, no apparent differences in their overall opinion toward women in combat emerged. The responses between the two groups were almost identical.

**b. Female Respondents**

Responses from women who took the survey are shown in Tables 40 and 41. As expected, the proportion of female respondents who were in combat (23 percent) is much smaller than the proportion of male respondents who were in combat (57 percent). However, 39 women indicated that they had been in combat, which is still a reasonable number for the present study.

**Table 40. Responses of Women to Experience in Combat, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

<u>Combat Experience</u>	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b><u>Have you ever served in combat?</u></b>						
Yes	33	50	6	6	39	23
No	32	50	97	94	129	77
Total	65	100	103	100	168	100
<b><u>If yes, what was your overall experience?</u></b>						
Women performed:						
As well as men.	26	84	4	80	30	83
Better than men.	4	13	1	20	5	14
Less well than men.	1	3	0	0	1	3
Total	31	100	5	100	36	100

**Table 41. Responses of Women to Experience in *Direct Ground Combat*, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

<u>Direct Ground Combat Experience</u>	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Have you ever served in direct ground combat?</u>						
Yes	1	1	1	1	2	1
No	68	99	91	99	159	99
Total	69	100	92	100	161	100
<u>If yes, what was your overall experience?</u>						
Women performed:						
As well as men.	1	100	0	0	1	50
Better than men.	0	0	1	100	1	50
Less well than men.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	100	1	100	2	100

As seen in Table 40, half of the female respondents at NPS (female officers) had been in combat. This compares with just six women at DLI who had. Of those who had been in combat, a slightly larger proportion of women (83 percent) than men (71 percent) believed that women performed as well as men. Fourteen percent of female respondents believed that women performed better than men in combat, compared to no men selecting this response (see Table 37). Only 3 percent of the women who had been in combat believed that women performed less well than men. Table 40 shows that only two women had been in direct ground combat, one of whom (enlisted) felt that women performed better than men.

#### **4. Effects of Changes in the Women in Combat Policy on Retention**

Two questions on the survey asked military personnel whether a change in the current role of women in combat would affect their decisions to leave or stay in service. One question addressed the effect if the role were expanded, and another addressed the effect if the role were reduced. The choice of responses was as follows (which is abbreviated in Tables 42 and 43 below):

- I think that women should not serve in combat in any role.
- I am satisfied with the present military regulations that exclude women from certain direct combat roles.

- I think that women who want to volunteer for the combat arms should be allowed to do so.
- I think that women should be treated exactly like men and serve in the combat arms just like men.

Comments from an NPS student who responded to the survey indicate that there probably should have been an additional choice added to the responses. It is possible that students might be affected by the change, but might be more willing to remain in the service because of it. The researchers did not consider this choice on the surveys perhaps due to a common perception that all change is bad (and has corresponding negative effects). An additional choice could, and probably *should*, have been, “Yes, I would be more likely to remain in the service because of it.” Nonetheless, responses are summarized in Tables 42 and 43.

**Table 42. Stated Effect on Retention of Respondents if the Role of Women in Combat Were Expanded, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
I would leave as soon as possible.	17	3	21	8	38	5
I am too senior now, but I would have left if I was more junior.	58	11	9	3	67	8
It would not affect my decision.	467	86	240	89	707	87
Total	542	100	270	100	812	100

**Table 43. Stated Effect on Retention of Respondents, if the Role of Women in Combat Were Reduced, by Officer/Enlisted Status**

	<u>Officer</u>		<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
I would leave as soon as possible.	17	3	26	10	43	5
I am too senior now, but I would have left if I was more junior.	25	5	7	3	32	4
It would not affect my decision.	502	92	222	87	724	91
Total	544	100	255	100	799	100

The responses, as seen here, suggest that changes in the current policy would have little to no effect on the retention of either officers or enlisted personnel. The effect of changes on recruiting is unknown and outside the scope of this study.

### 5. Effects of Opening Additional Combat Units to Women on Community/MOS Redesignation

One survey question asked women whether they would apply to a combat unit if positions presently closed were opened to women. The next question asked those women who replied that they would transfer, or would have transferred if more junior, to what community they would apply for transfer. The responses are provided in Tables 44 and 45.

**Table 44. Likelihood of Transfer to Combat Arms, if Units Presently Closed to Women Were Opened, by Officer/Enlisted Status (women, in percent)**

<b>Likelihood of Transfer</b>	<b>Officer</b>		<b>Enlisted</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
I would apply for transfer now.	3	5	12	13	15	10
I would have applied, but am now too senior in my current field.	15	25	7	8	22	15
I am not personally interested in a combat arms field, but I would recommend it to other women.	28	47	54	60	82	55
I believe women should not be assigned to combat units that are presently closed to women.	13	22	17	19	30	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 45. Of Those Women Who Would Apply for Transfer to Combat Units Opened to Women, to Which Community They Would Request Transfer**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Officer</b>		<b>Enlisted</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Infantry	1	6	12	44	13	30
Armor	1	6	2	7	3	7
Submarines	6	38	2	7	8	19
Special Forces	8	50	11	41	19	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

As seen in Table 43, relatively few women (10 percent) who responded to the surveys would request a transfer to a combat unit if it were opened to women, with some greater interest among enlisted personnel than officers. An additional 15 percent would have applied for the units, but are now too senior in their current communities, again with a noticeable difference between officers and enlisted personnel. Part of the differences in the responses between officer and enlisted respondents is that many of the enlisted have only a few years of service, whereas most of the officers have around ten years of service. The sum of these two groups results in 25 percent of the women (21 percent of the enlisted women and 30 percent of the female officers) who would, or would have, applied for combat units that are presently closed to them. Female officers seem to have more interest in assignment to combat arms. The findings in this study were close to the study of West Point cadets (Field & Nagl, 2001), mentioned previously in Chapter II, in which 30 percent of women would choose a combat unit presently closed to them, given the opportunity.

The numbers were small for those women who would choose a combat field presently closed, but of those, most NPS students would choose special forces, with submarines a close second (see Table 44). DLI students favored infantry, with special forces a close second. In the West Point study (see chapter II), only four percent said they would choose infantry, with the rest (26 percent) choosing armor and field artillery.

### **C. GENERAL OPINIONS TOWARD WOMEN IN COMBAT**

Opinions toward women in combat were also expressed on an open-ended question at the end of the survey. As previously noted, opinions were also gathered after the survey through a series of focus groups with volunteers.

#### **1. Responses to the Open-ended Survey Question**

At NPS, over half (320 of 550) of the respondents provided comments to the open-ended question at the end of the survey. The most common response—by far—addressed having a single standard, not separate standards by gender. Concern was often expressed over the possibility of denigrating standards to allow women into combat units.

Arguments given for not allowing women in combat were similar to those discussed in the Chapter II. Most prevalent were the perceptions that women were physically weaker than men and the potential negative effects women would have on unit cohesion. Other reasons given for not allowing women in combat included hygiene/privacy/berthing issues, concern over whether women were emotionally capable of handling combat, the idea of female POWs being unbearable, and women getting pregnant to avoid combat and/or deployments.

Arguments in favor of allowing women in combat were also similar to those presented in Chapter II. Comments here included equity issues and the goal of having the best qualified personnel assigned to jobs, regardless of their gender.

A sample of the comments is provided in Appendix F. The gender, rank, and branch of service of the respondent are shown following each comment. The comments were chosen based on their content, not to be representative by gender, rank, or service.

At DLI, slightly fewer than half (117 of 277) of the respondents answered the open-ended question at the end of the survey. Comments were similar to those of respondents at NPS. The most common response was also that there should be one set of standards. A sample of the comments is provided in Appendix G.

## **2. Focus Groups**

Comments during the focus groups were very similar to those on the surveys. Again, the issue of having *one standard* was mentioned frequently.

The definition of combat was also discussed. One female Navy Supply Officer mentioned that she had technically been in combat, according to the definition of a combat zone, but her unit was still quite distant from the fighting, and in little to no danger. At the same time, a male Marine Corps pilot mentioned that he was involved in rescuing refugees in Albania, and his unit was “shot at a little bit there, but technically I don’t think it was a combat zone.”

The suggestion of having an all-female submarine crew came up during one discussion. One male officer, with prior enlisted submarine experience, offered insight into why that would be so difficult, at least initially. A commanding officer and

executive officer typically have experience on a submarine prior to assuming a senior position. Because female officers are presently not stationed on submarines, there would be no apparent way for them to get submarine experience prior to their initial tour without some form of gender integration. Each member of the first all-female crew would have absolutely no experience on submarines, including the senior officers and senior enlisted—hardly an ideal solution. This problem would resolve itself eventually, but would certainly present a unique challenge to the first all-female crew.

A sample of the comments from the focus groups held at NPS is provided in Appendix H. As mentioned in the previous chapter, only six enlisted personnel participated in the focus groups at DLI. Of those, one was in favor of women in combat, and the rest were opposed. The comments were similar to those on the surveys and at the NPS focus groups, with the exception of one unique comment from an enlisted woman: “Equal does not mean interchangeable—at least not all the time. Twenty-five pennies are of equal value to a quarter, but you can’t put pennies in a pop machine.”

#### **D. DISCUSSION OF HYPOTHESES**

Some of the hypotheses were supported by the data, but several were not. The first three hypotheses were based on the 1997 RAND study, and were supported by the data from this study. The hypothesis that the Army and Marine Corps would be less in favor of women in combat than Navy personnel was supported. The hypothesis that women would be more in favor of women in combat than men would be was supported. As predicted, enlisted personnel were generally more in favor of women in combat than were officers, though the difference was more pronounced between female enlisted personnel and female officers than between their male counterparts.

The hypothesis that junior service members would be more likely to favor women in combat than would mid-grade service members was supported. At the same time, the findings suggest that senior service members were also more favorable toward allowing women in combat than were mid-grade service members. This finding was not predicted.

Some difference was found in opinions toward women in combat based on the respondents’ education, but primarily between those at the extremes. For example, enlisted personnel with only a high school diploma or GED were less in favor of women

in combat than were enlisted personnel who had a bachelor's or advanced degree. Nevertheless, the trend was not consistent across groups to include personnel with some college and those with an associate's degree.

Having a daughter seemed to have no effect on a respondent's opinion regarding women in combat, based on the survey data. The topic was also discussed in the focus groups. Typically, persons with daughters said that they would support their daughters if they decided to join the military, but would try to dissuade them from infantry or special forces if those units were open to them.

The data supported the hypothesis that minorities would be more in favor of women in combat than would whites. However, the differences between racial/ethnic groups were fairly small.

The last hypothesis involved men who were in combat. The hypothesis was that men who had served in combat with women would be more in favor of women in combat than men who had served in combat without women. The data did not support this hypothesis; virtually no difference was detected between the two groups in their overall opinion toward women in combat. However, an interesting, related finding was that over two-thirds of the male respondents who were in combat with women felt that women performed as well as the men, with less than one-third who believed that women performed less well than the men.

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## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. SUMMARY

The military members who participated in this study have a range of opinions on the role of women in combat. Survey respondents were almost evenly divided as to whether units that are presently closed to women should be opened. Between 38 and 50 percent (varying by type of unit) recommended that these units remain closed to women. At the same time, roughly two-thirds of the remaining respondents favored allowing women to volunteer for these units, and the rest were in favor of women being assigned to the units in the same way as are men.

In terms of overall opinions toward women in combat, survey respondents were again divided. One-third of all respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the current regulations. Almost another third felt that women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms. The remaining third were divided almost evenly in believing that women should not serve in combat (17 percent), or that women should be assigned to combat arms just like the men are (19 percent).

Attitudes also differed across selected demographic groups, such as branch of service. Respondents from the Marine Corps were least in favor of allowing women in combat, followed by respondents from the Army. The Navy members were more open than those in the Marine Corps and Army to the idea of women in combat, and persons in the Air Force were the most open to it.

Differences by gender were likewise found. Generally, women were more in favor of allowing women in combat than were men.

Of the male survey respondents who had served with women in combat, over two-thirds (79 percent) indicated that women performed as well as men. Just less than a third (29 percent) indicated that women had performed less well than the men. Of the female survey respondents who had been in combat, the vast majority (83 percent) said that women performed as well as the men, with 14 percent responding that women performed better than men, and 3 percent indicating that women performed less well than men.

In the focus groups and in responses to the open-ended question on the survey, study participants were overwhelmingly in favor of a single, gender-neutral standard. Many said that standards must be based on the requirements of each occupational specialty, not simply a test of “manhood,” as one person put it. A few people thought the standards should be the same across occupational specialties, but could differ across branches of service. Nonetheless, the desire for “one standard,” consistently applied—including across genders—was made clear. The different physical readiness standards for men and women were mentioned frequently, and perceived as an unfair double standard.

## **B. CONCLUSIONS**

It is difficult to draw conclusions on such a complicated topic. Nevertheless, two general themes emerged. One is that survey respondents were almost evenly divided on whether combat units that are presently closed to women should be opened. This suggests that military members overall may be quite divided on this topic. A second general theme is that, if the role of women in combat were expanded, service members appear to favor having “one standard.” Having two standards was consistently perceived as unfair in the present study.

Another point that emerged, though perhaps too small to be a general theme, is that a number of men in the military, primarily the junior enlisted, would prefer to have a “male-only” force. Several survey respondents indicated that women had no place in the military, let alone in combat. Considering that approximately 14 percent of the current military is female, such attitudes may be destructive to overall unit cohesion and good order and discipline.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CURRENT POLICY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY POLICY CHANGES**

If current policy is changed to expand the role of women in combat, legitimate standards should be determined for the affected occupational specialties. These standards should not be “watered down” for women; they should be realistic requirements of those occupational specialties. For example, doing 20 pull-ups may be a sign of physical fitness, but it may not necessarily be indicative of one’s ability to meet infantry

requirements. At the same time, marching 10 miles with a 50-pound rucksack on one's back, for example, might be a legitimate requirement.

If the current physical readiness/fitness testing programs continue, better explanations should be provided as to why the standards are different for men and women. Perhaps a better solution would be implementing one minimum standard by each service, a standard that is gender-neutral and age-neutral. Then, each occupational specialty could have its own test of physical fitness, such as the minimums required to enter and remain in that specialty, and ranges of scores for outstanding, excellent, and so on; these ranges would again be gender-neutral and age-neutral. They would not be used as a basis for separating service members, but failure to meet that specialty's minimum standards could result in a transfer out of the community. Devising a better physical readiness/fitness test is far from easy, but dissatisfaction with the current program was very apparent during this study. Further study on gender-neutral standards is recommended.

#### **D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

The sample used in this study is clearly not representative of the military as a whole. For example, the proportion of officers was much higher than in the rest of the military. Additionally, the proportion of enlisted personnel in the intelligence and cryptology communities was also much higher than in the services overall. Many of the enlisted members were very junior, with very little military experience, stationed only at training commands; this may have affected the results, as well. A study that randomly sampled military members from all duty stations, services, and communities would indicate whether the findings in this study are representative of the military overall.

Another recommendation is based on the previous section regarding gender-neutral standards. Because this study used a limited sample, further research is recommended to determine the necessity of gender-neutral standards, and if such standards are deemed necessary, what those standards should be.

A third recommendation for further study is to do a similar study on military members from other countries. The international students at NPS might serve as such as a sample.

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## APPENDIX A: NPS SURVEY ON WOMEN IN COMBAT

(NPS logo) *SPEAR: Strategic Planning, Educational Assessment and Research*

This is an Official Survey of the Naval Postgraduate School  
Office of the Provost  
Monterey, CA 93943

### Women in Combat Survey

The purpose of this survey is to determine the attitudes and experiences of U.S. military students at NPS regarding women in combat. The results will be analyzed for thesis work. Demographic information is solely for data and trend analysis; there will be no attempt whatsoever to identify individual respondents. Please provide any clarification to responses or comments in the space at the end of the survey.

#### 1. What is your branch of service?

- Army
- Navy
- Marine Corps
- Air Force
- Coast Guard

#### 2. Which of the below areas best reflects your occupational field?

- Aviation
- Engineering/Maintenance
- Health Care/Medical/Dental
- Human Resources/Administration/Hospital Administration
- Infantry/Reconnaissance/Special Forces/Explosive Ordnance Disposal/Artillery/Armor
- Information Technology/Intelligence/Communications/Cryptology
- Specialized Support (Clergy, Legal, Oceanography, Public Affairs, Meteorology)
- Submarines
- Supply/Transportation/Logistics/Finance
- Surface Ships

#### 3. What is your pay grade?

- O-1 – O-2
- O-3
- O-4
- O-5 or above

**4. Do you have prior enlisted service?**

- Yes
- No

**5. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female

**6. What is your race?**

- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- Multi-racial
- Other

**7. What was the source of your commission?**

- Academy
- ROTC
- OCS/OTS/PLC/Aviation OCS
- Other

**8. What is your marital status?**

- Single
- Married
- Divorced/separated/widowed

**If married, is your spouse in the military?**

- Yes, on active duty
- Yes, in the reserve
- No

**9. Do you have any children?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, what gender?**

- Male
- Female
- One or more of each gender

**10. How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in infantry units?**

- These units should remain closed to women.
- Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.
- Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are.

**11. How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in armor units?**

- These units should remain closed to women.
- Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.
- Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are.

**12. How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in submarines?**

- These units should remain closed to women.
- Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.
- Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are.

**13. How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in special forces?**

- These units should remain closed to women.
- Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.
- Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are.

**14. Which one of these four options comes closest to your own opinion?**

- I think that women should not serve in combat in any role.
- I am satisfied with the present military regulations that exclude women from certain direct combat roles.
- I think that women who want to volunteer for the combat arms should be allowed to do so.
- I think that women should be treated exactly like men and serve in the combat arms just like men.

**15. If the role of women in combat were EXPANDED from what it is today, would it affect your decision to remain in the service?**

- Yes, I would leave the service as soon as possible because of it.
- No, I believe I am too senior to separate now, but I would have separated if I were more junior.
- No, it would not affect my decision.

**16. If the role of women in combat were REDUCED from what it is today, would it affect your decision to remain in the service (for example, women were again prohibited from serving on combat ships or in combat aviation)?**

- Yes, I would leave the service as soon as possible because of it.
- No, I believe I am too senior to separate now, but I would have separated if I were more junior.
- No, it would not affect my decision.

**QUESTIONS 17-20 ARE FOR MEN ONLY. WOMEN, PLEASE PROCEED TO QUESTION 21.**

**For the purpose of this survey, a person is considered to be “in combat” when he or she is in a geographical area designated as a combat/hostile fire zone by the Secretary of Defense. Using this definition, a person serving onboard a ship operating in areas of the Persian Gulf designated as a combat zone would be considered “in combat.”**

**17. Using the definition above, have you ever served in combat?**

- Yes
- No

**18. Using the same definition, have you ever served in combat with women?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, what was your overall experience?**

- Women performed as well as men.
- Women performed better than men.
- Women performed less well than men.

**For the purpose of this survey, “direct ground combat” is defined as engaging an enemy on the ground while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force’s personnel. Direct ground combat usually takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them. Although women are not normally assigned to direct ground combat, women sometimes find themselves in the situation described above during the course of military operations.**

**19. Using this definition, have you ever served in direct ground combat?**

- Yes
- No

**20. Using the same definition, have you ever served in direct ground combat with women?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, what was your overall experience?**

- Women performed as well as men.
- Women performed better than men.
- Women performed less well than men.

**QUESTIONS 21-23 ARE ADDRESSED TO WOMEN ONLY.**

**For the purpose of this survey, a person is considered to be “in combat” when he or she is in a geographical area designated as a combat/hostile fire zone by the Secretary of Defense. Using this definition, a person serving onboard a ship operating in areas of the Persian Gulf designated as a combat zone would be considered “in combat.”**

**21. Using the definition above, have you ever served in combat?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, what was your overall experience?**

- Women performed as well as men.
- Women performed better than men.
- Women performed less well than men.

**For the purpose of this survey, “direct ground combat” is defined as engaging an enemy on the ground while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force’s personnel. Direct ground combat usually takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them. Although women are not normally assigned to direct ground combat, women sometimes find themselves in the situation described above during the course of military operations.**

**22. Using this definition, have you ever served in direct ground combat?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, what was your overall experience?**

- Women performed as well as men.
- Women performed better than men.
- Women performed less well than men.

**23. If the combat units presently closed to women were opened to women, which of the following statements best reflects your actions/opinions?**

- I would apply for transfer to the community now.
- I would have applied to the community earlier in my career, but now am too senior in my current designator/MOS.
- I would personally not be interested in a combat arms field, but I would recommend it to other women.
- I believe women should not be assigned to combat units that are presently closed to women.

**If you answered “I would apply for transfer to the community now” OR “I would have applied to the community earlier in my career, but now am too senior in my current designator/MOS” to the previous question, to which community would you apply for transfer?**

- Infantry
- Armor
- Submarines
- Special Forces

**24. Do you have any additional comments on the issue of women in combat, or clarification to previous answers? If so, please provide comments/clarification in the space below.**

**Focus groups:** I would also like to convene focus groups in early/mid October to discuss the topic in more depth. Historically, only those who feel strongly on an issue tend to volunteer for focus groups. I am especially interested in hearing from officers who may hold opinions more in the middle or who are somewhat undecided on the topic, in addition to those with a strong opinion.

The focus groups would last for less than an hour. They are scheduled for the second and third weeks of October (the first few weeks of the academic quarter, which are typically the lightest for studies).

If interested, please e-mail me at [Importer@nps.navy.mil](mailto:Importer@nps.navy.mil).

Thank you for your time!

**[Click here to submit survey responses.](#)**

**Return to the [Home Page](#), without sending answers.**

Strategic Planning, Educational Assessment and Research Officer. [gdent@nps.navy.mil](mailto:gdent@nps.navy.mil)

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## APPENDIX B: DLI SURVEY ON WOMEN IN COMBAT

### Survey on Women in Combat

The purpose of this survey is to determine the attitudes and experiences of U.S. military students at the Defense Language Institute regarding women in combat. The results will be analyzed for thesis work at the Naval Postgraduate School. Demographic information is solely for data and trend analysis; there will be no attempt whatsoever to identify individual respondents. Please provide any clarification to responses or comments in the space at the end of the survey.

**There are 21 questions in this survey. Please circle your response.**

1. What is your branch of service?
  - a. Army
  - b. Navy
  - c. Marine Corps
  - d. Air Force
  - e. Coast Guard
  
2. Which of the below areas best reflects your occupational field?
  - a. Aviation
  - b. Engineering/Maintenance
  - c. Health Care/Medical/Dental
  - d. Human Resources/Administration/Hospital Administration
  - e. Infantry/Reconnaissance/Special Forces/Explosive Ordnance Disposal/Artillery/Armor
  - f. Information Technology/Intelligence/Communications/Cryptology
  - g. Specialized Support (Clergy, Legal, Oceanography, Public Affairs, Meteorology)
  - h. Submarines
  - i. Supply/Transportation/Logistics/Finance
  - j. Surface Ships
  
3. What is your pay grade?
  - a. E-1 to E-3
  - b. E-4
  - c. E-5
  - d. E-6
  - e. E-7 or above
  
4. Do you have broken military service?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

5. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female

6. What is your race?

- a. Asian
- b. Black
- c. Hispanic
- d. White
- e. Multi-racial
- f. Other

7. What is your highest level of education?

- a. High School Non-Graduate
- b. GED
- c. High School Graduate
- d. Some college credit, but no college degree
- e. Associate's Degree
- f. Bachelor's Degree
- g. Advanced Degree

8. What is your marital status?

- a. Single
- b. Married
- c. Divorced/separated/widowed

If married, is your spouse in the military?

- a. Yes, on active duty
- b. Yes, in the reserve
- c. No

9. Do you have any children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. One or more of each gender

10. How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in infantry units?
- These units should remain closed to women
  - Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.
  - Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are.
11. How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in armor units?
- These units should remain closed to women
  - Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.
  - Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are
12. How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in submarines?
- These units should remain closed to women
  - Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.
  - Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are
13. How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in special forces?
- These units should remain closed to women
  - Qualified women should be allowed to volunteer for these units.
  - Qualified women should be assigned to these units the same way as men are
14. Which one of these four options comes closest to your own opinion?
- I think that women should not serve in combat in any role.
  - I am satisfied with the present military regulations that exclude women from certain direct combat roles.
  - I think that women who want to volunteer for the combat arms should be allowed to do so.
  - I think that women should be treated exactly like men and serve in the combat arms just like men.
15. If the role of women in combat were **EXPANDED** from what it is today, would it affect your decision to remain in the service?
- Yes, I would leave the service as soon as possible because of it.
  - No, I believe I am too senior to separate now, but I would have separated if I were more junior.
  - No, it would not affect my decision.

16. If the role of women in combat were **REDUCED** from what it is today, would it affect your decision to remain in the service (for example, women were again prohibited from serving on combat ships or in combat aviation)?

- a. Yes, I would leave the service as soon as possible because of it.
- b. No, I believe I am too senior to separate now, but I would have separated if I were more junior.
- c. No, it would not affect my decision.

**The following questions are addressed to men only:**

**(Women, proceed to question 21.)**

17. For the purpose of this survey, a person is considered to be “**in combat**” when he or she is in a geographical area designated as a combat/hostile fire zone by the Secretary of Defense. Using this definition, a person serving onboard a ship operating in areas of the Persian Gulf designated as a combat zone would be considered “in combat.”

Using the definition above, have you ever served in combat?

- a. Yes
- b. No

18. Using the same definition, have you ever served in combat with women?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what was your overall experience?

- a. Women performed as well as men.
- b. Women performed better than men.
- c. Women performed less well than men.

For the purpose of this survey, “**direct ground combat**” is defined as engaging an enemy on the ground while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force’s personnel. Direct ground combat usually takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them. Although women are not normally assigned to direct ground combat, women sometimes find themselves in the situation described above during the course of military operations.

19. Using this definition, have you ever served in direct ground combat?

- a. Yes
- b. No

20. Using the same definition in question 18, have you ever served in direct ground combat with women?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what was your overall experience?

- a. Women performed as well as men.
- b. Women performed better than men.
- c. Women performed less well than men.

**(Men, please proceed to question 24)**

**The following questions are addressed to women only:**

For the purpose of this survey, a person is considered to be “**in combat**” when he or she is in a geographical area designated as a combat/hostile fire zone by the Secretary of Defense. Using this definition, a person serving onboard a ship operating in areas of the Persian Gulf designated as a combat zone would be considered “in combat.”

21. Using the definition above, have you ever served in combat?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what was your overall experience?

- a. Women performed as well as men.
- b. Women performed better than men.
- c. Women performed less well than men.

For the purpose of this survey, “**direct ground combat**” is defined as engaging an enemy on the ground while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force’s personnel. Direct ground combat usually takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them. Although women are not normally assigned to direct ground combat, women sometimes find themselves in the situation described above during the course of military operations.

22. Using this definition, have you ever served in direct ground combat?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what was your overall experience?

- a. Women performed as well as men.
- b. Women performed better than men.
- c. Women performed less well than men.

23. If the combat units presently closed to women were opened to women, which of the following statements best reflects your actions/opinions?

- a. I would apply for transfer to the following communities now.
- b. I would have applied to the community earlier in my career, but now am too senior in my current designator/MOS.
- c. I would personally not be interested in a combat arms field, but I would recommend it to other women.
- d. I believe women should not be assigned to combat units that are presently closed to women.

If you answered “I would apply for transfer to the community now” OR “I would have applied to the community earlier in my career, but now am too senior in my current designator/MOS” to the previous question, to which community would you apply for transfer?

- a. Infantry
- b. Armor
- c. Submarines
- d. Special Forces

24. Do you have any additional comments on the issue of women in combat, or clarification to previous answers? If so, please provide comments/clarification in the space below.

**Please detach this sheet from the Women in Combat Survey (to retain anonymity).**

I would also like to conduct three focus groups to convene in early November to discuss the topic in more depth. I am requesting approximately 18 volunteers to participate in one of three sessions (6 participants per session). The focus groups will last for one hour and pizza and soft drinks will be provided for participants.

Historically, only those who feel strongly on an issue tend to volunteer for focus groups. I am especially interested in hearing from those who may hold opinions more in the middle or who are somewhat undecided on the topic, in addition to those with a strong opinion.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes, I am interested in participating in the focus group.**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I can be reached:

by e-mail at \_\_\_\_\_

or

by phone at \_\_\_\_\_

I am available during the period(s) circled below:

(Exact dates and times will be announced depending on participants' availability.)

Weekdays at:

- a. 1600-1700
- b. 1700-1800

Weekends:

- a. 1200-1300
- b. 1300-1400
- c. 1400-1500
- d. 1500-1600

\_\_\_\_\_ **No, I am not interested in participating in the focus group.**

**Thank you for your time!**

A copy of the results of the research should be available in early December 2001.

## APPENDIX C: E-MAIL NOTE AT NPS

Subj: SHORT thesis survey—5 minutes!!—WOMEN IN COMBAT

Fellow Students:

I need your help!

I am gathering survey data for my thesis, tentatively titled "Women in Combat: Attitudes and Experiences of U.S Military Officers at the Naval Postgraduate School." I started my research a number of months ago, and have come to the next step which is the survey. As you can tell from the title, the thesis depends greatly on the availability and willingness of NPS students such as you to participate in the study.

We are a unique group here. Many of us have experienced significant changes in policy concerning women in military service. I am sincerely interested in your attitudes and experiences regarding one aspect of that service, women in combat.

My survey should take you about 5 MINUTES to complete. (It may take longer if you choose to write a lot on the ONE question that's not multiple choice.) The survey is totally ANONYMOUS, and can be found at <http://www.nps.navy.mil/spear/surveys/womencombat.htm>. (Click on the link.)

THANKS SO MUCH for sharing your views on this important topic--and best wishes with your thesis!

Sincerely,  
Laurie Porter

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## **APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS AT DLI**

### **WOMEN IN COMBAT SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS**

This survey is being conducted to collect data for a thesis, titled “Women in Combat: Attitudes and Experiences of U.S. Military Officers at the Naval Postgraduate School and Military Enlisted at the Defense Language Institute.” The thesis is a joint project, being written by LCDR Porter and LT Adside, students at the Naval Postgraduate School.

There are 23 multiple-choice questions and one essay question and it should take about five to six minutes to complete (a little longer depending on how much is written for question 24).

The survey is meant to be anonymous; do not put your name anywhere on the survey except for the last page.

The last page of the survey is for those who wish to volunteer for participation in a “women in combat” focus group to discuss the topic further.

There will be three focus groups with six to seven participants (max) per focus group. Complete the focus group sign-up page if you would like to participate. The time and date of the focus groups depends on the availability of participants.

If signing up for the focus group, detach the focus group sign-up sheet from the survey and turn it in separately to the survey administrator.

Return all surveys to the survey administrator.

Thanks for your participation.

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## APPENDIX E: PROTOCOL FOR FOCUS GROUPS

### Introductions and Opening

- Introduce self (name, rank, service, NPS curriculum)
- Thank attendees for participating
- Introduce thesis partner and explain about similar study at NPS/DLI
- Brief explanation of the study and the purpose of focus groups, and what the current policy is on women in combat in the U.S. military
- Discuss “rules” of discussion (opinions, so no right or wrong, etc.)
- Explain about using the tape recorder and get permission from all for its use

### Student Introductions

- First name
- Curriculum/language being studied
- Pay grade
- Branch of service
- MOS/Designator/Rate
- One to three short sentences on experience with combat, women in combat, gender-integrated units, and/or years of service

### Questions

- Could I hear just a little bit from each of you on why you’re interested in this topic?
- What is your general opinion of women in combat?
- Let me focus now on specific designators or MOSs. What is your opinion of women in \_\_\_\_\_ (as time permits, and tailored to that particular focus group)?  
Infantry? Special forces? Submarines? Combat aviation? Combat ships?
- For a closing question, let’s say you have one minute with the Secretary of Defense, and the Honorable Mr. Rumsfeld asks you your opinion on women in combat. You’ve heard he takes seriously what \_\_\_\_\_ (mid-grade officers, for example) tell him, and it affects how he makes policy and his discussions with other senior officials on policy. Your response will not affect your career. Take a moment to think. Now, what do you say?

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## **APPENDIX F: A SAMPLE OF THE NPS RESPONSES TO THE OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION**

### Male, O4, Navy:

I feel this is a minority issue that encompasses women, gays, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and every other minority. During WWII, Blacks and Filipinos were relegated to menial tasks (stewards, cooks) because it was believed they were mentally incapable of learning worthier tasks. The degradation of any minority degrades them all.

### Male, O3, Navy:

A woman in combat is fine so long as the woman is qualified. It has been my experience that women are generally much less qualified or competent as men in the same jobs. Women generally do not have the personality to effectively lead or make decisions in pressure situations. This is certainly not true of all women, but for the majority that I have worked with it is true. Only when the whole social fabric changes to allow women to be more assertive in everyday life will women be effective leaders in combat. There are also many men that are incompetent and should be excluded from leadership roles but the military does not reward competence, only longevity.

### Male, O3, Navy:

Women should ONLY be on the front lines if they can pass EXACTLY the same physical regimen as men. Strength and endurance is important and to give women a downgraded physical test could endanger lives on the battlefield.

### Male, O4, Army:

Being in the human resources field, the best soldiers and officers with whom I have served have almost invariably been women. My problem with women in combat has nothing to do with their ability as much as I could not stand for a female friend, peer or a woman under my command to be captured and suffer the torture that undoubtedly would come from most countries who do not follow Geneva Convention rules.

### Male, O4, Marine Corps

In general, I am not opposed to women being assigned to any role/job/duty simply because they are women. More specifically, however, I do not believe MOST women (and many men) are physically capable of serving in certain duties. In virtually any situation, someone who is not capable of performing becomes a liability, if you will, to the others within their "unit" and thereby increases the overall risk of a given situation. What is the solution??? This is a difficult question, but I believe the answer has its roots in defining standards for given jobs and holding people to those standards. Objective standards are difficult enough, but subjective measures (emotional stability, leadership capability, handling stress, etc.) would be even more so.

### Male, O5 or above, Marine Corps

I believe "qualified" women should be assigned to combat jobs if and only if they meet the minimum standards for the billet as do their male counterparts. In addition, I

was in Desert Shield/Storm and saw women getting preferential treatment, which was a morale buster. Everything needs to be equal: billeting, head facilities, etc.

Male, O5 or above, Navy:

My definition of "qualified" means one standard, not one for each sex. If your calculations accept dual standards, modify my marks to reflect combat arms (units) should be closed to women. However, I do support a complete examination of qualification standards to ensure they screen for the task (mental, physical), not just test for manhood.

Male, O3, Navy:

I do not think our society is prepared to have women as POWs. For some odd reason, we have a perceived difference between the horrors of a man being tortured as a POW versus a woman being repeatedly raped.

Male, O3, Marine Corps:

I think there might be some special forces roles women might qualify for. Women are CIA/FBI agents...I don't see why they could not perform similar roles in reconnaissance/intelligence gathering. Infantry units should remain male only.

Male, O3, Navy:

This survey seems to assume that the current policies concerning women serving in the military (i.e. on surface combatants) are correct. In my experience, women have great difficulties performing essential tasks such as fire fighting and damage control. Most women just lack the physical strength and endurance required to carry a charged fire hose or loaded stretcher in a hot and cramped engineering space while wearing an FFE. Shouldn't this ability be a requirement for shipboard service? Lives could depend on it.

Male, O1-O2, Coast Guard:

I believe that the highest quality personnel should fill billets...women or men. I further think that the armed forces should provide the infrastructure to allow for women who are as qualified as the men currently serving in combat roles to serve as well.

Male, O4, Navy:

I did not answer part 2 of Question 20 because I don't think that it addresses the true measure of what your thesis should emphasize—UNIT combat effectiveness. It is not enough to say that the performance of individuals in "combat" (men, women, minorities, or whatever) determines combat effectiveness. Just as important is how their performance/presence affects unit cohesion and mission effectiveness. It is therefore very difficult to make any kind of overall judgement on the basis of anecdotal experiences.

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

I have no doubt there are many women who are more than qualified mentally and physically for combat. However, I believe that the natural tensions and attractions between men and women are not easily ignored. These inclinations are what would

inhibit unit cohesion. Most men, drawn to combat arms are inclined to be “male chauvinists,” i.e., feel that a man's proper role is to protect women and children, that women and children need this protection. Whether or not this perception is accurate is not the point. The point is that the perception exists and has a large effect on the behavior of the members of a unit and can be very divisive, even in garrison far from the battlefield. A unit contending with these issues will not be focused on mission accomplishment.

Male, O4, Navy:

I feel that men and women are equal, but as a parent, I feel that sending women into combat is not the right thing to do. War is not glamorous. A necessary evil—certainly at times. The maternal strengths of most women are essential to our society. Men do not make as good of mothers as women do. If our society is to continue to produce solid, well-balanced citizens, the nurturing role of women (and I am not referring to cooking, cleaning, etc.) is critical to our children's development. Women who have no tie to children or no desire to become a mother (their loss) are no different than men and should be allowed to freely volunteer for combat units. But to assign women to units that can be filled with men is, in my opinion, wrong.

Female, O3, Navy:

Women who qualify to serve in combat should have the opportunity to do so. Serving in a combat zone, I have seen very talented women perform their job just as well as the men. During my experience at OCS, I was not treated any different than the men and I got through what I believed to very tough training. I am not saying that I was better than the men, but I was able to carry my weight.

Male, O3, Navy:

Let's be honest about it. The difficulty lies not nearly so much from differences in physical strength but from the increased amount of sex between soldiers and the potential for sex between captured women and their captors—that is what none of us want to see in a combat situation. It doesn't matter what the job performance is—the issue is sex...anything else is sticking your head in the sand to the true issues which affect our thinking on this subject.

Female, O3, Army:

My biggest concern is the qualification of women in combat roles. They need to be prepared and if they are then there is no reason why women should not have the opportunity to serve their country in combat.

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

The first definition of "combat" is unrealistic, particularly in today's environment. Theoretically with terrorism, we're all always in a combat zone. Bottom line: women don't meet the standards (for the most part) that are required to serve in direct ground combat units. There are so few that do, that making all the political adjustments for them is not worth it. Furthermore, discipline and morale are severely affected by having women and men work in close proximity, particularly in combat units. They serve a

great role in many support jobs, but lack certain tangibles and intangibles for combat. (So do some men, and we should have better screening programs.) Our standards have lowered enough.

Female, O3, Navy:

I think it is important to note that you used the adjective "qualified" in all of your questions. Women should pass the "same" qualifications as men, not "gender-normed." If they are then as qualified as the men, they should be allowed to serve anywhere.

Male, O3, Marine Corps:

The ability of women to perform in combat is not an issue. I am certain that there are women who outperform men in combat. The issue with women in combat is twofold and you didn't appear to address either in your survey. First, if women become prisoners of war there is a higher likelihood of sexual abuse than for men. If we are seeking equality we aren't going to get it like this, women are more at risk. Second, I think putting men and women together in such emotionally tense situations as combat leads to improper relationships. It is just not right to deliberately put ourselves and others into situations which lead to temptation.

Male, O3, Marine Corps:

I am an EA-6B Electronic Counter-Measures Officer and served with female aircrew flying missions over Serbia during OPERATION ALLIED FORCE. The female aircrew member with whom I flew, performed with better than average competence and professionalism when compared to the majority of Prowler aircrew during that campaign. It is worth noting that we were under fire or threat of fire from Serbian SAMs and AAA during at least some portion of most missions.

## **APPENDIX G: A SAMPLE OF THE DLI RESPONSES TO THE OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION**

### Male, E1-E3, Army:

I don't think America as a culture is ready to see women dying in combat arms. It's not that I don't think women are not able—I fully believe that women have the ability, but we as a nation just aren't ready to see female soldiers' bodies on TV dead.

### Male, E4, Army:

The good part of letting women in combat is that it would give job opportunities to women of lower intelligence.

### Male, E1-E3, Army:

On question #16, if the role of women in combat were reduced from what it is today, it would inspire me to reenlist because I would feel like someone in the White House could make a decision based on right & wrong and not public opinion.

### Male, E5, Army:

Women have no place in the army. The Army is politically correcting itself into a useless band of sissies. Since the Army's emphasis switched from being a capable, battle ready fighting force to a "feel good about yourself" troop of any scum off the street and girls, morale has dropped in a big way. The standards for promotion and advancement have been dropped so low for girls that it is impossible to respect them as leaders. They should not only be banned from anything resembling combat, but should not be allowed to serve in any capacity with males. Never should a girl be put in charge of anything, nor promoted. Will they head me to the airport sending me to battle, or to the battlefield before they kiss me goodbye? Or do they just stay knocked up and ride profiles their entire term of service. I shouldn't have to suffer in advancement and training qualities just to accommodate to girls' lower standards. Also, let's quit wasting money by sending girls to ranger and jump school, which they will never use for the benefit of the Army. Segregate now.

### Male, E1-E3, Army:

If a woman can volunteer to join the service willingly they should be able to partake in any occupation they qualify for.

### Female, E1-E3, Army:

As lacking of bravery as this sounds, I would have never joined the military if I knew I could be sent into direct battle. I don't exactly agree with sending women into battle for these reasons... However, I'm sure there are some women out there who want nothing more than to serve on such a level. Maybe these women, who have undergone extensive (very extensive) training, then should be allowed by volunteering.

### Female, E1-E3, Army:

"Women" are soldiers, too.

Male, E6, Navy:

I feel that women should be presented opportunities; however, we should never lower standards. We should also be realistic, i.e., a woman on a menstrual cycle will have an awful hard time concealing that in the middle of a jungle full of animals, i.e., monkeys/gorillas/tigers, that hunt her down with vigilance.

Male, E6, Navy:

If it is illegal to discriminate according to sex, race, or creed, why are women discriminated against in consideration for combat situation???

Female, E4, Navy:

I simply believe that qualified personnel, male or female (by qualified I mean physically capable and properly trained), should be allowed to fulfill any roles available. Submarine duty is one area in which I feel men & women can be easily integrated.

Male, E6, Navy:

I do not believe that the armed forces should serve as either a testing ground for social experiments, or as a mirror of current public political correctness. The purpose of the armed forces is to fight and to win wars, not to make sure that everybody is treated "equally." In order to serve in the military, we give up many civil rights...maybe not "civil rights" per se, but we cannot wear the styles of beards and mustaches of our choice unless they conform to military standards. I realize that example is an oversimplification, but the fact remains that many of what we perceive to be civil liberties must be given up in order to serve in the military.

There are certain situations when the integration of men and women has a disastrous effect on unit cohesion and morale, which in turn can affect combat readiness. There are also biological reasons why women are not particularly suitable for some jobs. It is very important that we return to a warrior mentality within the armed services and to get away from the idea that just because somebody wants to do a certain job, he or she should be allowed to do so. We are not of equal ability or talent. Common sense should prevail in that regard.

Female, E4, Marine Corps:

Regarding question #16 [reducing the role of women]: It will never happen due to the feminist lobby, but I would like to see a return to the days of the WACS and WAVES. I find too many women trying to "fit in" with "the guys" by cussing and dipping and returning to society less feminine. I have also seen many women come in to the military in good shape, but then hurt themselves trying to keep up with the men and ending up discharged. I also feel that even if a woman is capable of combat, her presence would cause difficulties, morally and otherwise, for the men serving with her.

Male, E1-E3, Marine Corps:

I think that women have no place in combat situations. They would serve as nothing but a hindrance on the unit as a whole. The purpose of combat is to obtain victory, not to be politically correct. They are physically inferior, and would be a liability if taken prisoner.

(continued) In my limited experience with females in the military, I have seen their standards for performance be significantly lower than that of males, let alone their actual performance. I often find myself wondering if they should be allowed in my beloved Marine Corps in the first place.

Male, E5, Air Force:

I strongly feel and believe that if we as a nation/country are putting women through the same training as men in the military branches of service, they should be utilized just as men. If not, I believe that it is or would be simply a total waste of time.

Male, E1-E3, Air Force:

I am only weary of the possibility of women being taken prisoners of war and what could happen thereafter. I think women could and would perform equally in combat.

Male, E1-E3, Air Force:

I feel all military personnel should be equal, all the way down to haircuts and jewelry regs [regulations]. I do feel though, that women in direct combat situations or submarine roles would create an awkward and unnecessarily difficult work environment.

Female, E1-E3, Air Force:

Women are the "softer" sex—meant to have children and so on. But if we choose to enlist then we should be treated exactly like men—however/whatever that is.

Male, E1-E3, Air Force:

Since I have yet to enter the operational Air Force, I'm not sure that I'm qualified to give a worthwhile opinion on this general issue.

Male, E1-E3, Air Force:

I feel that having women in combat roles, although not inherently wrong, would bring on a new psychological threat to soldiers (i.e., in a POW situation, for a normal man to see a woman tortured would be unbearable).

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## APPENDIX H: A SAMPLE OF THE COMMENTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS AT NPS

Female, O3, Navy:

[Women in combat is] more than a gender, race, or sex orientation issue, it is an honor, courage, commitment type of issue; that if we uphold the principles that that the services are supposed to espouse, I don't think there will be a problem across the board because there are countries across the world that have women integrated into their combat forces and they don't seem to have any problems. I think it's more of a societal thing than anything, and with the military, it's more of a cultural thing—what has been done over the ages.

Male, O3, Coast Guard:

[Regarding a female ADM who wanted women on subs, but at cost of hundreds of millions of dollars, separate heads/berthing.] But what extra capability are you achieving?

Male, O4, Navy:

The point is NOT that women can't do the functions of men. The best executive officer that I ever had was a woman. However, I do have difficulty with integration in close quarters.

Female, O3, Navy:

[In response to "letting women into combat."]: The idea of "letting" us do anything is so way in the past. We really need to get past that as a society, that we *allow* women to do anything.

Male, O3, Army:

When I say I don't think a woman could pass [special forces/ranger training], once again, these are tasks that are blind to gender, carrying a ruck sack that weighs on average about 90 to 100 pounds, jumping with that. We had a significant number of young men, probably 80 to 90 percent, who were having problems just getting out of the airplane because they were carrying so much stuff, they couldn't do it. And then once they got on the ground, they still had to carry that same load, plus M60, ammunition, water, food, etc., all the platoon equipment. And they had to do this day in and day out, with one or two hours sleep a night. And they had to do this for an extended period. For me, the gender blind tasks are a big stumbling point. I agree with [other focus group member], we shouldn't let problems keep us from trying to do something if it's the right thing to do. But we have to weigh the costs of what overcoming those problems gets us. And just do the cost benefit calculus. Do we get enough benefit out of combating all those problems to make it worthwhile?

Male, O3, Marine Corps:

I have enough confidence in my leaders to say that they are not going to lower the bar. If they are going to do it, they have to just do it, similar to racial integration. They

are going to have to say the heads are going to be the same, the barracks are going to be the same. If done any other way, you'll have a demoralizing effect, and take away from the capability of the force. It's like a bandage. Just rip it off all at once to get it done. Otherwise, half-assing it will just kill the service.

Female, O2, Navy:

If integration is inevitable, then the standards we have now for the men should not change because of women. In the past, when we have done that, all it did was breed hate and discontent. It created a negative bias against women.

Female, O3, Navy:

I agree with integration; I think that we should concentrate more on having a force that maintains the bar for morality and responsibility and maturity. If we can do that, we have far overstepped some of the other problems that we think are going to be encountered by fully integrating the services, if we maintain a moral, responsible, and mature force.

Male, O3, Army:

In my experience, the costs outweigh the benefits at this time for full integration of special operation forces. However, *if integration must come*, then I would urge that we establish standards that are blind to gender, and enforce those standards across the board, impartially, in order to minimize the costs and to gain effectiveness.

Male, O4, Navy:

I think it [women in combat] is a pretty simple problem that the military has made very complex. I'm a graduate of Norwich University, the small military school up in the North. We've had women there since August 8, 1973, and you find no difference and no problem with fraternization between the corps of cadets there that have less guidance there by officers in the military than the Citadel or any other military institution. The reason why it works so well, and I wanted to get my opinion out, maybe your thesis will affect this, single standards. I can't be a SEAL. I'm not physically fit enough; I can't do a SEAL's mission. Therefore, I'm not allowed to be a SEAL. I do have 20/20 vision, I do have good reflexes, good dexterity, I make a good helicopter pilot. Therefore, I'm a helicopter pilot. If you're color blind, you can't. The world's not fair. If you are physically capable of doing the mission, nothing else should matter. And if a man and a woman can't lie beside each other without getting it on, then we have a discipline problem and it should be handled that way, which is another issue with the military.

Male, O4, Army:

Even given that we can successfully implement one standard, which I have my doubts about. You can publish it, but it's extremely difficult to enforce a single standard. It's theoretically doable, but I have experience where it just doesn't quite work out that way. However, more importantly, it is clearly my opinion, that one of the telling critical bits of success for the military protective, especially in a protracted conflict, has to do with support of the civilian population. I think that we have clearly seen that, from one extreme, Vietnam, and Desert Storm being the other. And current operational status,

support of our population significantly increases the odds of success in a military operation. And I clearly do not believe that, and it might not be fair, but I do not believe that the average American citizen is prepared to deal with the horrors that will befall any military member engaging in direct military combat.

Male, O4, Army:

Then when I went to company command, taking a look at [things], I started realizing that though we have a lot of good standards in place for a lot of things, we don't necessarily have good enough standards to screen out unfit males in the infantry. Some of the problems I had were trying to get rid of soldiers that I didn't deem physically fit. [One would] get a 300 on a physical fitness test, but he still wasn't able to accomplish some of the physical tasks that I needed. I was carrying a tow missile as company commander, everybody carried, so I popped soldiers who couldn't hack it, and I put some guys out, and told them they need to move on. I almost put an E7 with 18 years out of the Army because he couldn't physically handle the job. I have a lot of questions for how we evaluate standards for putting our people into combat arms. Special forces has a very good way to do that with their screening selection course out there. With infantry, we don't.

Male, O4, Army:

[When training women] the part that really failed was the "one Army, one standard" piece. The one part that we didn't think was going to fail, failed. A lot of our tasks designed for men in combat arms to do combat arms tasks, ended up breaking a lot of the bodies of the females. Our first cycle we went through, by the time we went into the 7<sup>th</sup> week, approximately 45 percent of the women had either stress fractures in the pelvis, stress fractures in the leg, or stress fractures in the feet. They weren't used to carrying the weight, because we had road marches, confidence courses. I remember getting phone calls as an operations officer, getting drilled by the training committee, that I only sent one platoon out of my company out there. I drove out there, and there were 90 female soldiers on crutches and in tennis shoes, walking behind the rest of the company. We didn't anticipate that problem; it blind-sided us. There are physiological differences; I'm not talking about Olympic athletes. People who join the Army aren't Olympic athletes; I'm talking male or female. I'm talking the average guy or girl out of high school; they just couldn't handle the tasks physically.

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

[Regarding the sexual assault of Rhonda Cornum, a flight surgeon, when she was taken POW in Desert Storm], it's acknowledged in her book. When you read about her, she is one hard-core chick that didn't seem to have any profound lasting damage on her. It was acknowledged, but a big deal wasn't made about it. I think it'll be a bigger deal in Afghanistan, where they say they videotaped Afghans killing and torturing Russian prisoners. That's enough of an outrage when we see what happened to the rangers in Mogadishu, that spoiled that, with that, just seeing them defile the bodies of American men. If we ever have an opportunity to see them doing that to American women, I'm not sure whether that will change anything as well.

(continued) There are some real dirtbag fighter pilots out there who are guys who are just completely useless, and there are some real top-notch ones, too, and I think when the inevitable change comes, there'll be some top-notch females and some dirtbags. So it's going to be hard to do. I think they're capable in aviation. And even in Buford, the rumors I've got, is there are a couple of good ones, a couple of bad ones. I think it's ultimately more of a socialized question, again, the next big battle will sort it all out, whether it's a good idea or a bad idea. I don't think the special forces guys and the infantry will take the consequences, but if it turns out it wasn't a good idea, we're going to pay the price. I don't know if it is, or not. I'll leave it at that.

Male, O3, Army:

Unlike most of the other officers here, I've been in units that not only have my senior NCOs been females, but the staff sections I've led have been mostly females, like over 50 percent. I probably have different viewpoints on what they can do and can't do, just because I'm combat service support. I don't do all the ground pounding that infantry and special forces guys do. It has been my experience in the battalions in which I've served that female soldiers are probably some of the best ones there. They seem to know their business better, they're more professional, more mature, more mature than the younger soldiers in units in my staffs.

Male, O3, Army:

I definitely would not dissuade my daughter from going into the services, but if she said, hey, I'm going to be a ranger, or special forces guy, running around behind the lines and capture the hearts and minds, and be a snake-eater, it would kill me because I'd think that one day, she'd step into something that she had no control over, and all of a sudden, she's in someone else's hands. That's my baby.

Male, O4, Army:

Even short of capture, like what we talked about Mogadishu, I suppose you can argue that enough decades would harden us to that, too, but I think that visually, the American public watching men's bodies blown up is tragedy, but acceptable tragedy. I don't think we're prepared to deal with seeing that happen. And that's just a cultural thing, it may not be fair, but it's real. And it impacts the kind of support we're going to get, and I believe in a negative way.

Male, O3, Army:

[Regarding women in combat] I would put as my test question, does it make the unit better? Bottom line. Does it make it more effective? Does it make it more efficient? More able to accomplish its mission? If that question was answered yes, then whatever the parameter is, black, white, male, female, big guy, small guy....

[other male officer: "Homosexual?"]

Homosexual, it doesn't matter to me.

Male, O3, Army:

Focus in on the mission.... I'd stress to him [the Secretary of Defense] the intangibles of cohesion and unit morale. Which comes first, the mission or political correctness?

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

The bottom line is it's all about standards, and I don't believe we should sacrifice standards for social progress.

Male, O4, Army:

We've all had it hammered in our heads: the trilogy of decision making, the mission, the men, yourself. Does it [placing women in combat] not only maintain the status quo, but can we do it better? If not, the answer needs to be no.

Female, O4, Navy:

I think the changes I saw, especially going from enlisted to officer, I think it's a cultural issue, and the culture has actually started to change, the American culture and the opinions of what women can do as a whole. When I first came in, the thought of women in combat, well, there were no women in combat. There were no women on ships when I came in, so I got to see the transition from that to now. We can be on carriers, we can be helicopter pilots, we can shoot guns, we can do anything. I think there is still, because of the age and the generations, there is going to continue to linger, "Can women really do this?" for just a little longer, but that is going to shift with the next few generations. I don't think it'll be an issue in a couple of generations.

Female, O3, Navy:

In my experience, the younger the person is, the less issue they have with it. On a DDG (precom-ed), Sailors who worked for me who were 18 to 22, they just came out of high school and had sisters and classmates, or they had gone to a year or two of college (mostly coed college), so the idea of going to a coed ship didn't even phase them. The people I saw who had an issue with it were guys who'd be in 12-20 years, that the last time they dealt with women who weren't their wives or daughters was high school, eons before. The men who'd been dealing with women without any big gap in time acted like they were part of their life. Other men acted like, "I don't know if I can handle this."

Male, O4, Navy:

There's also been a change on the women's side of it, too, from my perspective. My last three bosses have been women officers. And they were all older, so when they came through the Navy, their options were very limited, what they could apply to and what-not. For the various women I've worked with as peers, and the women I've worked for as department heads, XO's, CAPT's, the younger ones seem more natural, more of a "no big deal," and they don't understand the big deal, and I've seen a lot of frustration from them, "What is the big deal?" Whereas the ones in the higher pay grades and the attitudes of even the women is still, "We don't really belong in that area. We belong, not to dog anyone, but in Fleet Support."

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

There are two sides to the issue: can they and should they? The facts are that some women can perform in combat, to the same extent that some men can and some men can't. The question is what are the percentages. On the radio, regarding women's role in the military, someone said that the military has to understand that one of its primary objectives is to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity and fair opportunity for career advancement. And my first thought was "What?" That is NOT the primary purpose for the military. That should not be the overarching focus of leadership and resources: We need to make sure that everyone, whether they are purple, green, square, or triangle shape can do any job in the military. That is NOT what the military is supposed to do. The military is supposed to make sure that the best people, to accomplish whatever jobs and whatever specific occupational fields, are there, so that when the military does its primary objective, which is combating the enemy, defending our country, that we do the best at it, just the same as sports teams or businesses get the best people to be the best. That's all on the "can" side.

On the "should" side of the issue is the culture side you talked about. Should is a decision that our culture has to make, and we don't make that by going to the polls and voting. That's something that happens gradually. And there has been change. The GI Jane movies, there was another one about a helicopter pilot in Iraq. But that's a question for our society. And it'll come out in the polls when decisions are made and people are elected or not reelected because of how they decide on different appropriations issues and stuff. What does America, what do Americans want, do they want to see a mother of four leading a recon unit against Afghani rebels and getting her head blown off? Would it be any different than if it was me, or [the man sitting next to me], or somebody else who did it...? Is that something that America is willing to accept? Is the image of women doing the same thing as men do, acceptable? Are we going to a completely gender-neutral society where it's okay to see a woman spitting tobacco and smacking guys on the butt and they're smacking her on the butt....

Male, O3, Marine Corps:

If you [women] can carry your weight, then fine. Not 10 out of 10 women are going to be able to do that. You may have 2 GI Janes out of that 10, who can hump that machine gun or 50 cal, or whatever we do in teams when we're humping 30 miles, with a pack and everything. If you can do that, then go for it. As long as it's on a volunteer basis. I don't think you should say, or we as a society should say, women, all of you, have to do this. If you can volunteer and do it, fine. I mean, change. Everybody is resistant to change. That's the problem in our society. We're so focused, and we get into the politician's views and everything like that, what somebody can't do. Well, I tell you right now, if you tell me I can't do something, this is just going to make me work that much harder to do it. You may have a woman who couldn't hump a 90-pound pack, but if you go and tell her, I know you can't do this, she's going to do everything within her power to do it.... We have to think outside the box for a change, not say somebody can't do it, or shouldn't, but give people an opportunity and I feel strongly about that.

Female, O3, Navy:

[Regarding self-selection to certain occupational fields] Chances are good that if a woman would want to be in the infantry, she would probably meet the vast majority of the requirements ahead of time, just to even choose to put herself in the running for it.

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

From the Marine Corps side, having had the opportunity to spend three and a half years training male and female lieutenants to be provisional, which will mean “somewhat able to survive” in a combat zone environment. In the hikes, we had five-mile endurance courses, in all the physical things we did, because that is what combat is from a Marine perspective, it is physical. I had females who were mentally tougher than some of the males, and they got out there, and it was raining and it was cold, and they sucked it up, and they hung in there and they did well. But I will tell you on the other side, there was a price to be paid. In the Marine Corps in the last few years, we’ve noticed that we’ve had more females coming from the OCS to TBS getting pelvic bone fractures, stress fractures. I had a company of 200 women; I had 13 of them that had some type of fracture in their pelvic bones. Where did that come from? That came from the weight that they were carrying, and albeit we didn’t make them carry the same weight that the guys carried. That spun off some issues within itself.

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

[Regarding unit cohesion] The pragmatics of patriotism is protecting the women and children of society, in order to have your species procreate and continue on. So if you get a woman in a combat zone, she is going to be more protected than maybe the men on your right or left. That’s very dangerous for small unit cohesion, when you’ve got the enemy coming up the hill, and they’re addressing her foxhole, fires are going to be concentrated in front of her foxhole rather than maybe sweeping the entire perimeter. It sounds weird, but that’s my fear. Call me old fashioned, but I have no problem with a woman sitting next to me in a helicopter, and I have no problem with a woman hitting a button to fire a missile downrange, but I have a problem with a woman on the frontline, with the potential for being shot directly at. You can shoot at her helicopter all day; it’s not going to change the tactics of the other helicopter around her, but if you have her in the foxhole, the potential for her to be overrun, captured, killed, raped, you are going to see a focus of protection on her, and it’s going to change the dynamic of the entire offense or defensive perimeter.

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

I don’t believe women should be in combat arms, even if they can do it, just because of all the things that come with that. If we want to do this right, we need to have a level playing field. Everybody needs to perform to the same standard, based off your age, or whatever you’re going to set. You can’t have two different standards and expect it to be okay, and to continue a serious debate about whether a woman can perform in combat.

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

I think the first thing has to be consistent standards, whatever they are, for the individual. But you can't overlook the team or small unit or the collective standards of having an integrated organization. That is something that has to be considered as well, and that's a toughie. But first you've got to have consistent standards for individuals.

Male, O4, Marine Corps:

I think something you've got to be careful of is thinking all countries are equal. Thinking of some of the documentation is based on, well, the Netherlands, they've successfully integrated.... They will never do the job we do. There is no other country in the world that comes close to what we do as Americans. No other country has people deploy all around the world, fighting, holding land, preserving land....

Male, O3, Air Force:

I see one of the greatest strengths that America has as a society in the history of the world is that we accept contributions from everybody in our society, whatever race or color or sex. And there are some areas where we need to keep working on this, but as a general rule, we let anyone contribute to their abilities, and we need to carry that through all aspects of the armed forces," that if there are cultural issues where there will be resistance because people are just used to having it all men, that those will go away as the generations change, as the culture begins to adopt and accept that, and so we need to not just wait for it to happen, but make it happen.

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