NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
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WOMEN IN COMBAT: WHAT NEXT?

by

Diana W. Smith
Major, United States Army

and

Debra L. Mowery
Lieutenant Commander
United States Navy

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect our own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College, Department of the Navy or Department of the Army.

Signatures: Diana W. Smith

Debra L Mowery

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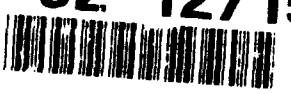

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The future for women in the military will very likely include serving in combat units. It appears that the combat exclusion laws which currently bar women from these positions will be eliminated. This should cause the combat commander to ask himself a number of questions. What impact will women have on operational planning? Can integration of women into combat units be achieved without impairing unit effectiveness? What kinds of changes must be made to make this transition? It is clear that integrating women into combat units will require prior planning by combat commanders. Among other things, they must consider deployment issues, coalition partners, pregnancy, unit cohesion, strength issues, sexual harassment and fraternization policies, socialization issues and political and career pressures to make it work. Dealing with these changes requires strong leadership imperatives, the efficient placement of the right person into the right job, implementation of clear, enforceable policies and an awareness that success depends on innovative, unemotional thinking and realistic planning. Commanders need to start preparing now for the future.

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Abstract of
WOMEN IN COMBAT: WHAT NEXT?

The future for women in the military will very likely include serving in combat units. It appears that the combat exclusion laws which currently bar women from these positions will be eliminated. This should cause the combat commander to ask a number of questions. What impact will women have on operational planning? Can integration of women into combat units be achieved without impairing unit effectiveness? What kinds of changes must be made to make this transition? It is clear that integrating women into combat units will require insightful planning by combat commanders. Among other things, they must consider deployment issues, coalition partners, pregnancy, unit cohesion, strength issues, sexual harassment and fraternization policies, socialization issues and political and career pressures to make it work. Dealing with these changes requires strong leadership imperatives, the efficient placement of the right person in the right job, implementation of clear, enforceable policies and an awareness that success depends on innovative, unemotional thinking and realistic planning. The integration of women into combat units will not be without problems, but commanders can identify those problems now in order to prepare for the future.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Proponents of the combat restriction law barring women from serving in combat claim it protects and benefits women. It does neither."

- Linda Grant DePauw, Editor, MINERVA

Following the Gulf war, it is evident to many that the combat exclusion law barring women from combat is an idea whose time has gone. Title 10 of the US Code bars Air Force and Navy women from combat. The Army derives its personnel policy from this law, restricting women by regulation to noncombatant positions. Title 10 is based on a World War II image of war, with a static front and a clear demarcation between combat and support areas. Today women are assigned to support roles within combat zones -- within range of enemy fire and vulnerable to attack.

One reason it is likely that the laws will be changed is that the deployment of military women in Desert Shield/Desert Storm demonstrated that the combat exclusion laws do not make sense. They did not protect or even limit the exposure of women to the hazards of combat which was the original intent of the law. Also, the Gulf War underscored misunderstandings and inconsistencies in application of the combat exclusion policies which disrupted military operations and led to confusion.

Part of the problem is that the definition of combat itself is hazy. The Navy and Marine Corps bar women from "offensive combat," that which provokes hostile forces into action. As a result of uncertainty about their role in the Gulf, the Marine Corps delayed deployment of support units containing women, despite the clear need for those support units.[1]

Furthermore, the laws cause problems because some commanders interpret the policy to mean that women must be evacuated once fighting starts. In the Grenada operation in 1983 and in the Libyan air strike, this resulted in some women being replaced at the last minute, which interfered with mission accomplishment, unit cohesion and training readiness.

Another problem is that the current policy allows women in the military to serve in support areas and command centers which are subject to being fired upon and returning fire. Current technologies and strategies indicate it is these very areas which will be major targets. This was certainly the US strategy in the Gulf War.

A further problem is that application of the law disrupts operations. For example, when the USS Stark was attacked in 1987 in the Gulf, the tender, USS Acadia, moved in for repair support. Because the crew was mixed gender, some Pentagon officials wanted the women evacuated. The commander of the Acadia was able to successfully argue that he would be unable to accomplish his mission if 25 percent of his crew was evacuated.[2]

Congress has mandated a committee to look at women in combat and to make recommendations concerning the law within the next year. If the law is eliminated, military commanders in male-only units will be faced with the need to integrate females into those units. This will impact operational planning in a variety of ways, to include deployability issues, unit cohesion issues, facilities/logistics, fraternization and socialization policies, qualification standards, political pressures, cultural resistance and combat effectiveness. Leaders need to start now to prepare for the future, by anticipating problems and developing solutions that will ensure a combat ready military force.

CHAPTER II

PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN IN COMBAT

> "The women also joined in the fighting with great daring, hurling down tiles from the roof-tops and standing up to the din of battle with a courage beyond their sex."
>
> Thucydides, 400 BC

US HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

The introduction of laws barring women from combat is a relatively new idea. Women have probably participated in combat since the beginning of time, but few of their contributions in defending their homes, causes and countries have been documented. There is information available through letters, reports, eyewitness accounts, myths, legends and poems to document that women have been fighting alongside men for as long as men have been waging war.[1] America's history is comparatively young, yet there has not been a war where US troops have been involved in which women have not also participated.

The participation of American women in an organized armed force is first documented in the Revolutionary War.

> "Women did perform the traditional duties of cooking, sewing, nursing, fixing weapons - mostly logistical support that the men knew was critical to the war effort. Some worked as spies and hid fugitives. They shot the British to protect their homes and families. Some women served as soldiers, along with the men."[2]

Others served as messengers delivering dispatches through enemy lines or acted as scouts. Some fought beside their

husbands or disguised themselves and led others into battle. Deborah Sampson enlisted under her brother's name, Robert, and served three years with the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment. Her identity was discovered after she was wounded, whereupon she received a discharge, as well as a pension and lands after the war.[3]

Similarly, the War of 1812 and the Mexican War had American women participating in battle. Lucy Brewer served on the US Constitution as a sniper and was at sea for three years, participating in many naval engagements. She wrote a book about her experiences, The Female Marine, which became a best seller at the time. In the Civil War, a number of women served in combat, both enlisted and commissioned. Dr. Mary Elizabeth Walker, a contract surgeon with the Union Army, was captured by the Confederates and was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Beginning with World War I, women no longer had to hide their gender in order to serve. Women's support services as an auxiliary part of the military started to take shape during this time, particularly in the Navy and Marine Corps.[4]

In World War II, over 350,000 women served in all the services combined.[5] Approximately 8,000 members of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) served in Europe with another 5,500 serving in Southwest Pacific. Over 2,000 women were decorated for bravery and meritorious service. Seventy of these were the nurses on

Bataan and Corregidor, who experienced harsh treatment as prisoners of war for 2-1/2 years.

Many more women served in other theaters, mainly in communications and administrative fields.[6]

> "One experimental unit of 60 women was assigned to the Fifth Army during the Italian Campaign. They were closer to the front lines than American women had ever been, enduring the same hardships as the men, with the exception of actual combat."[7]

Nurses were in Korea within days of the US troops landing. Military women served during the Lebanon crisis in 1958, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and throughout the Vietnam conflict.[8]

In more recent American conflicts, women were sent to Grenada in 1983 as part of air crews and military police. They served as aircraft commanders, co-pilots, navigators, and fuel-boom operators on refueling tankers in the 1986 Libyan strike. After the Stark missile attack in 1987, women served on board the destroyer tender Acadia to repair the damaged ship.[9]

Over 600 women participated in the invasion of Panama and capture of General Manuel Noriega during Operation Just Cause in December 1989. The exchange of fire between the 988th MP Company, led by CPT Linda Bray, and a Panamanian force, received much publicity.[10]

Women also played an important role in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990/91. As of February 1991, more than 35,000 military women deployed to the Persian gulf, making

up 6.6 percent of US forces. They were fully integrated into the theater of operations, enduring many of the same hardships and conditions as male soldiers.[11] Army women participated in the invasions of Kuwait and Iraq, assigned in support roles, but "attached" to combat units. Twelve service women were killed, five as a result of direct combat. Two women were captured by Iraq.[12]

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE.

The role of women in the armed forces is changing throughout the world. In NATO countries, women serve in 12 of the 14 nations with a standing military. Women in France's military forces are excluded from front-line combat, but since early 1983, some women have been assigned to surface warships. Women are currently allowed by law to serve in combat positions in the armed forces of five countries: Canada, Britain, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.[13] The Netherlands opened all military jobs to women in 1983, excluding submarine duty and service in the Marine Corps.

Canada.

Canada has integrated women into all military jobs except submarine duty. A 1990 ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal made it a violation of Canadian law to bar women from combat occupations or to place restrictions on their numbers.[14] Integration, particularly in the Army combat roles, has been

slow. Physical standards are such that only one in sixty women successfully completes the infantry training program. Observers believe lack of physical ability and stamina are the reasons for the low success rate. The Canadian Armed Forces are considering better selection and screening methods of recruits, in order to select women who are more likely to complete the program.[15] Of the Canadians deployed to the Persian Gulf, three percent (150) were women.[16]

United Kingdom.

In 1990, members of the Women's Royal Navy Service (WRENS) began serving aboard Britain's Royal Navy combatant ships for the first time. This was the result of a critical shortage of male recruits.[17] Women also began combat flight training in 1991 and will are being trained as pilots and crew members on Sea King and Lynx anti-submarine helicopters.[18] Approximately 800 British women deployed to the Persian Gulf, (1.5 percent of Britain's force.) Fifty two women served on Royal Navy combat ships.[19] Although there are still some restrictions on women serving in direct combat, training of recruits is identical for both genders in all services.

Denmark.

Denmark is another country whose declining birth rate posed a threat to recruitment, encouraging the non-discriminatory use of women in their military.[20] Denmark conducted a four-year

study (from September 1981 through April 1985) of 99 women serving aboard combatant vessels. They determined the performance of the women was "fully equal to those of their male colleagues."[21] As a result of the study, the Danish Ministry of Defense eliminated all restrictions on the employment of women in the armed forces in 1988. However, in actual practice, women do not serve aboard submarines or as fighter pilots in high performance fighters.[22]

> "Denmark appears firmly committed to equality in its military and points to its comprehensive equal rights law of 1978 and the United Nations "Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, New York 1979," which it ratified without reservations."[23]

Norway and Sweden.

In both Norway and Sweden, women are integrated into all assignments, including direct offensive combat function. In Norway, women have served in combat jobs, including submarines since 1984. Sweden has successfully integrated women into all Army combat positions. Swedish women are still restricted from serving on submarines and as naval commandos[24]

The experience of these countries has been valuable in showing that women can be integrated successfully into previously all-male units without significant problems. The number of women actually serving in infantry units in these countries remains small due to the stringent physical standards. In Norway, although women are allowed in the infantry, there are currently none who can meet the standards. However, in other types of

combat units, the integration has worked to the benefit of the military and alleviated population demographic shortages.

CHAPTER III

COMBAT EXCLUSION POLICY: PLANNING FOR CHANGE

> [Speaking before the House Armed Services Committee,] "the Air Force chief said his own preference would be to take a less qualified male than a fully qualified woman. And that was the best of [what the service chiefs had to say.] "
>
> Carolyn Becraft, 8 July 1991, speaking before a group of Navy personnel

> "McPeak got away with saying he would take a less qualified male fighter pilot than a qualified woman. I couldn't believe McPeak said he would rather have a lesser qualified surgeon, if he were male, [to] take care of him. I thought, 'that's bizarre.'"
>
> Army Major Rhonda Cornum, MD, former POW, 8 Jul 1991, speaking in Wash, DC

Given the likelihood of elimination or modification of the current combat exclusion policy despite the stances taken by the individual services, commanders need to prepare for the operational impact of introducing women into the combat equation.

Some of the foreseeable problems which have been speculated about and which may arise in the future concern women's deployment rates, unit cohesion and bonding, harassment and fraternization, facility and logistical issues, strength issues and unit effectiveness. Some solutions to these issues can be resolved in the operational planning process if commanders are aware of them ahead of time. These issues and some recommendations to resolve them are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Deployment Issues - Pregnancy/Absenteeism.

Commanders who may be receiving female troops into their units for the first time need to consider the operational effects of pregnancy on unit effectiveness and deployability. Pregnancy or debilitation due to menstruation is not a major cause of absenteeism and attrition. According to Antonia Handler Chayes, former under secretary of the Air Force for Manpower, men in the military lose about 67 percent more time than women while on the job, even with pregnancy rates factored in.[1] Overall, men's sports injuries were the biggest casualty producer in the Gulf, according to COL Robert Poole, a triage physician.[2]

However, 1,200 women out of 36,200 were evacuated from the Gulf due to pregnancy during the war.[3] On the Acadia, 36 women, or 10 percent of those assigned, became pregnant. The significant aspect of this is that 22 of those women became pregnant after deployment to the Gulf.[4] Surveys of pregnant women on active duty show that only one in five received the required pregnancy counseling by commanders.[5] This indicates the need to emphasize adequate counseling of both sexes, to include prevention of pregnancy, published and clearly understood policies for behavior and enforcement of socialization and fraternization policies.

Pregnancy does account for the largest difference in deployability, with nondeployability rates being somewhat higher for females than for males as demonstrated in the Gulf war.[6] Approximately 10-15 percent of active duty women become pregnant

each year. One Army commander at Ft Bragg left 13 pregnant soldiers behind out of a unit of 100 when deploying to Saudi Arabia. Because of this fact, pregnancy rates are something a commander needs to consider when determining what resources will be available upon deployment.[7]

By keeping track of soldiers who may be nondeployable due to pregnancy, commanders should have sufficient lead time to ensure that someone is cross-trained and available for replacement of those personnel who may prove to be nondeployable. Pregnancy rates, which can be compensated for by good personnel management, should cause less turmoil in a unit than unexpected injuries due to sports and recreation.

Likewise, single parenthood is a cause for concern. Although there are approximately 34,800 single male parents, the rate for single female parents, who number approximately 17,000, is much higher. Commanders need to ensure adequate child care plans are developed by unit members to keep down the incidence of nondeployability or delayed deployment.

Along with the pregnancy issue, menstruation may become a factor in planning considerations. Women living in close quarters develop synchronized menstrual cycles.[8] This needs to be considered in the procurement of hygiene supplies. It may also produce physical or even psychological effects on units with a high proportion of women. The more manageable impact will be on privacy and sanitation needs.

Unit Cohesion and Bonding.

> "On this 'men will protect women' issue: General Mundy said that he didn't want his wife, or his daughters, or his granddaughters serving in combat. That sounds like a family issue to me. We should not make policy based on what he wants his family to do."
>
> Army Major Rhonda Cornum, MD, former POW, 8 Jul 1991, speaking in Wash, DC

> "Then there's the argument that men will be overprotective of women. When men are overprotective of *men*, we give them awards for valor."
>
> Army Captain Carol Barkalow, West Point graduate and author of In the Men's House

Commanders who are receiving female troops for the first time will want to consider the effects on unit cohesion. The issue of male-bonding, considered a critical ingredient of combat unit integrity, has been raised as an argument against allowing women in combat. The same type of argument was used in protesting the integration of blacks into previously all-white units.

Male-bonding is a self-limiting issue.[9] If the unit is all males, obviously male-bonding will develop, which can provide strong unit cohesion. There is no evidence to show that male-bonding is any better for unit effectiveness than male-female, or mixed-bonding. On the contrary, Desert Storm showed that mixed gender units did not have a problem with cohesion or esprit. Some observations showed that the bonds formed between men and women working together were similar to those formed in all-male units.[10]

The bigger issue facing commanders is how to successfully integrate females into their units and maintain unit cohesion through mixed-bonding. Some observations indicate that men can react negatively to sexual integration by becoming inhibited, by rebuffing the women because they don't know how to relate to them or by competing with each other for attention.[11] Commanders can decrease these effects by preparing their units psychologically for the integration of women.

The Coast Guard anticipated these problems by briefing both groups of persons, separately and jointly. The point of the briefings was to make it clear to all what sort of behavior was acceptable and expected. They encountered no major problems with sexual integration.[12] Leadership is the key factor to successful integration of women into combat units and maintenance of group cohesiveness.[13]

Sexual Harassment/Fraternization.

> "I did not prosecute for the sake of my career. But I will never stop being angry about the injustice."
>
> - Unnamed female officer, Army Times

Another issue commanders must be concerned about is the possibility of increased incidence of sexual harassment and the problems which arise from fraternization. These are not a "woman's problem." These incidents significantly impact unit effectiveness, undermining morale, lowering productivity and hurting all members of the unit.

Problems with sexual harassment continue even in units which have been mixed gender for many years. Units which are receiving female members for the first time will be particularly susceptible to morale problems caused by sexual harassment.

In many instances, female troops develop their own techniques of combatting day-to-day, low-keyed harassment. Most of this type of harassment can be minimized by training and experience. Commanders who are receiving females for the first time need to ensure that unit members do receive training to understand what constitutes sexual harassment, why it is harmful to the entire unit and how to prevent it.

This training should include leaders as well. According to Representative Beverly B. Byron, commenting in a story concerning a Navy lieutenant commander who pleaded guilty to 28 charges of sexual harassment of female subordinates, "The very people who should be exercising leadership are the ones committing the harassment." Commanders should be aware, too, that as the numbers of women increase in the services, the number of harassment complaints from men against women also increases.

Experience in Desert Storm shows that operational necessity itself (and perhaps the lack of alcohol) resolves some problems which arise. The incidence of rape and prostitution during the Gulf War was much lower than the peacetime military rate.[14]

Despite formal processes and agencies being in place to report sexual harassment, commanders should not rely on the number of formal complaints as an indicator of the command

climate. These systems are rarely used by women for a variety of reasons, including fear of reprisal, damage to careers and lack of confidence in the system.[15] The best indicator for the commander is to ask female service members if they are being harassed and not to assume there is no problem because there are no formal complaints.

Because sexual harassment destroys morale, lowers productivity and cohesiveness and increases attrition and lost time, commanders need to plan for ways to reduce harassment at the lowest level. Some suggestions include deemphasizing the preoccupation with sex in the workplace by prohibiting sexist posters and pictures, degrading humor and coarse language, by conducting human relations training which clearly identifies improper behavior and explains the consequences and by encouraging and being aware of the quality of bonding activities which build unit cohesion.

Fraternization, or more specifically, the development of romantic relations among unit members is another problem for which commanders need to prepare. Clear, understandable and well-publicized policies need to be established. Depending on the type of unit, different standards are applicable. The skipper of the repair ship USS Vulcan barred dating among crew members in order to maintain professional relationships. "I'm not running the Love Boat," stated Captain R. Fred Smith in an interview in The Washington Post. Other countries who have mixed crews on ships have found it effective to forbid physical

contact, however, each commander should determine the most effective policy based on his or her experience.

Facilities/Logistics.

> "The arguments against women in combat boils down to these things: sex, toilets and foxholes."
>
> Carolyn Becraft, former Army officer, speaking before a group of Navy personnel in Wash., DC.

A further operational concern that a commander must consider and which has been a traditional argument against allowing women in combat is the necessity to provide adequate facilities for hygiene, sleeping, and personal accommodation. Many leaders feel women would not be able to perform in a hostile environment without certain accommodations being made. It is also believed that these accommodations would be cost-prohibitive and time-consuming. Because this may impact operations, a commander needs to consider what changes are needed to cope with the addition of women in combat units.

Clearly, when a unit contains both men and women, a greater need for privacy exists. Commanders need to implement and enforce clear policies regarding behavior of both sexes. In 1977, the Coast Guard selected two ships for mixed-gender crews. They ensured all members were briefed, separately and jointly, on the expectations of the leadership. The Coast Guard found that not only were the mixed crews effective, but "despite all the discussion about berthing and head facilities and the lack of

privacy, no major structural modifications were required to allow the women onboard."[16] As a result of this experiment, all positions in the Coast Guard are open to women.

The Air Force allowed mixed gender teams at its missile sites for the first time in 1988. Two-member teams work 24-hour shifts, sharing a cot and toilet squeezed between computers. Despite expectations of problems, none occurred. "Once you got the curtain up by the toilet, it was okay," said Captain Joe Dunwoody, whose team partner was a woman.[17]

In a field environment, commanders need to consider innovative and expedient ways to provide a measure of privacy for both sexes. Experience in Desert Storm, as well as in mixed combat support and service support units demonstrates that these measures do not have to be extensive or complex.

Male and female soldiers have for many years been sheltered in the same tents in the Army without loss of unit efficiency or morale problems. Instances have been observed where a tarp or shelter half was used to screen off one end of the tent to allow privacy for dressing but in many cases, personnel preferred to get dressed and undressed while remaining in their sleeping bags. For many, this was due to cold weather rather than a need for privacy.[18] This experience was borne out in Panama as well as during Desert Storm without creating undue problems. When temporary sleeping accommodations were required, soldiers can make their own arrangements. One female soldier describes her experience in Saudi Arabia, where she set up a lean-to on one

side of a vehicle while her two male team members did the same on the other side.[19]

In addition to sleeping arrangements, toilets are a privacy concern. Army Specialist Sandy Hearn, described the use of "impromptu latrines" used in the desert which were made by parking two vehicles alongside and opening their doors to make a screen.[20] While operational planning must consider the problems involved in men and women eating, sleeping and working closely under hazardous conditions, experience demonstrates that these problems are not insurmountable and are minimized by time and experience. According to Hearn, "They will never be able to say that they don't have female facilities after what we had to deal with...it's proven, women adapted."[21] While these may not be absolute solutions to the problems created by mixed gender facilities, they demonstrate the type of simple, expedient planning that can be done to resolve them.

Strength Issues.

> "What we found in the Navy about strength issues, while they may have been a problem in certain respects, was that the women worked smarter and the problems went away. When they were going to test postal clerks, they had a 40-lb sack of mail which had to be lifted up and put onto a scale that was on the counter top and the guys came in and did it. But the first woman came in and looked at the bags, [and] looked at the scales. She took the scales off the counter and put them on the floor and weighed the bags. That's what we found throughout our testing. You have to be careful about using a PT test."
>
> Navy Capt Georgia Sadler, 8 July 1991, speaking to Women Officers Professional Association, Washington DC

"The PT test measure does not measure physical strength for sure. It measures aerobic propensity. And the body fat thing measures how good you look in uniform. So right now I don't think we have any way of measuring strength."

Army Major Rhonda Cornum, MD, former POW, 8 Jul 1991, speaking in Wash, DC

Physical strength requirements are another area a commander must consider in operational planning. Some people feel that women's smaller stature and lack of upper body strength make them less useful combat soldiers than men.[22] However, not all combat tasks require physical strength and stamina. In some cases, technical skills and eye-hand coordination are more valuable. "The key to success is being able to read a computer screen in the control room and press the button to launch a missile," says a former US Navy submarine officer.[23]

Commanders should have realistic, valid standards for position requirements and ensure that members assigned those tasks are qualified to perform them, regardless of gender. By ensuring standards are met, commanders can put the right person in the right job and maintain unit effectiveness. Senator William Roth, prior to the Amendment to Repeal the Aviation Combat Exclusion Law, stated, "In removing the ban, we give women the opportunity to compete for these positions as DOD sees fit -- nothing more, nothing less. And, we give the military the opportunity to make the best use of its talent."[24]

Studies show that the potential physical performance of people entering the military is affected by their previous physical conditioning and athletic ability. The trend for female

participation in athletics has continued to increase, indicating that more women will be capable of performing a variety of physical jobs.[25] Currently, women cadets at West Point meet the same physical fitness standards as men in the active Army, according to Carolyn Becraft. Army women, in the same vein, are held to higher fitness standards than Navy men.[26] This shows that the physical requirements for performance in combat vary greatly, not only from service to service, but probably within units. What this means to combat commanders is that there should be fewer and fewer jobs in their units that women are unable to perform. Representative Schroeder describes the solution in this manner: "If people qualify and they pass all the tests, you can't say, 'No, you can't come because you've got the wrong genes'."[27] Development of nonsexual physical standards for each job is needed not only to ensure full integration of women in combat but also to ensure the most effective use of the military.[28] A good leader must understand what is required and use the various talents of all soldiers to develop a well-rounded combat unit.

Unit Effectiveness.

Unit effectiveness is a condition measured by how well the organization is able to do the missions assigned. This condition is created by the application of good leadership principles, realistic training that prepares the unit for combat, and quality personnel who are capable and motivated to perform. The

integration of women into combat units can increase or decrease unit effectiveness, depending on how the leadership responds.

There are several political issues which will accompany the integration of women into combat units once the exclusion laws are eliminated. Most significantly, there will be pressure to ensure it is done quickly and successfully. Both of these objectives could actually harm unit effectiveness. Commanders need to take sufficient time in advance to prepare their units for the changes that will be taking place, both logistically and psychologically, in order to maintain unit effectiveness.

There are cases where female officer and enlisted persons have been fully integrated into warfare commands without problems. When commanders take a progressive approach and ensure women are assigned to tasks for which they are qualified and that they are treated as equal partners with equal responsibility for unit effectiveness, the command's combat effectiveness and readiness can improve.[28]

Secondly, there will be external political pressures from other countries with which the US government may form coalitions or deploy to as part of a contingency operation. Some of these countries have strong religious or cultural beliefs concerning women. This could hinder combat effectiveness if we must pull women from positions in which they have been trained in order to appease an ally. Military leadership must look at this particular issue and decide ahead of time how it will be

approached, so that unit effectiveness is not impaired at the moment it is most critical.

Desert Storm destroyed a number of "myths" about women in a combat zone. It demonstrated visually to the American public that there is no static front, with a safe rear area. It pointed out the fallacy in the exclusion laws that are meant to keep women out of harm's way. It showed that women would deploy with their units and not be substituted at the last minute. It gave evidence to the idea that the presence of women does not destroy unit cohesion and bonding.

Finally, Desert Storm demonstrated that the image of women prisoners of war or women coming home in body bags is no more or less acceptable to the American public than are men in body bags. "There hasn't been any national hue and cry over the deaths of women," says Rep. Beverly Byron. Indeed, "the idea that one life is more valuable than another insults both sexes: it diminishes all people."[30]

Even though many fears about women in combat were disproved, there is a portion of society that does not support the idea of women in combat. Although various surveys show that anywhere from 52-79 percent of Americans are in favor of women in combat units,[31] there are many emotionally charged issues involved in the idea. This indicates that commanders may find elements within their units who are reluctant or outright opposed to the introduction of women. This appears to be a generational issue,

felt less by younger generations, who are more used to dealing with both male and female competitors.

However, there will continue to be a measure of resistance to women in combat, not only as an external political pressure, but within the services themselves. This can impair combat effectiveness in a number of ways. It can show up as subtle discrimination in evaluating the performance of women. It can also show up as an attempt to patronize, protect or sabotage the efforts of women. Carolyn Becraft, in writing for The Bureaucrat, said,

> "Change in any bureaucratic organization is difficult. When the policy changes affect the fundamental values of the organization, the resistance to change is likely to be very intense and require constant monitoring over long periods of time in order to ensure implementation."[32]

Commanders need to plan for this resistance to overcome its detrimental effects on productivity and morale.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

> "The idea of the military is to make war. The fact that we are saving all these jobs for women means that [men] have a greater chance of going to war. We pay these guys for two things: one is the job they do, the other is the risk they take. And they are getting the same pay but taking more of the risk. If I were a man, I would really object to that."
>
> Army Major Rhonda Cornum, MD, former POW, 8 Jul 1991, speaking in Wash, DC

In conclusion, it appears that Congress will do away with the laws excluding women in the military from holding combat positions in the near future. This will affect the way combat commanders plan operations. It will affect logistical requirements, policies, unit cohesion, training and planning deployments and basic unit training. There will be increased political and cultural pressures on combat commanders, both from external and internal sources.

The effect of integrating women into combat units does not have to be a negative one. Leadership imperatives are the key to the successful integration of women without impairment to combat effectiveness.

Leaders who are able to plan ahead and prepare their units for the coming changes will be able to make a smoother transition. Leaders who develop clear policies regarding

socialization, harassment and discrimination and adhere to them, will be able to enhance morale and unit esprit.
Further, leaders need to ensure that people are assigned to jobs for which they are qualified. If a job has a high standard for physical strength which has the potential to limit the assignment of women, commanders should ensure these are realistic. If the standards are appropriate, then he or she must only assign qualified personnel to that job, regardless of political pressures.

Planning can help combat commanders in dealing with the predicted ten percent pregnancy rate and other deployment-related issues, such as sole parenthood. Policies for working with coalition partners or countries with differing norms about the role of women should be developed and publicized during peacetime, so there are no last minute questions on the way to the war.

As the recruitment pool of eligible males decreases, larger number of women must be recruited in order to maintain the same quality in our armed forces. Even with the drawdown of forces, it is likely that women will comprise 25 percent or more in some units. It is essential to have adequate planning and preparation to ensure we make the best use of all resources.

The experiences of Desert Storm as well as those of other countries who have integrated women in all military fields have defused a good deal of the emotion and controversy around this issue. Every change brings about its own set of unique problems

and solutions. The integration of women into combat jobs will have problems but they are not insurmountable. It is time to look beyond the controversy and prepare for the future.

> "No normal person wants to go into combat. Soldiers are the last people who want to. But we've volunteered. We understand our commitment. Everybody raises a hand, male and female, and swears to support and defend the same Constitution. Women are competent, capable and committed. We are an integral part of the best-trained military force in the world. The services should have the flexibility to assign the best-qualified person to the job, regardless of gender. That's the bottom line," states Army Captain Carol Barkalow.[1]

NOTES

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