

WOMEN IN THE ARMY – REVIEW OF THE COMBAT EXCLUSION POLICY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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Recent military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have renewed the debate about the assignment policies of women to combat positions in the United States Armed Forces. A strategic manpower issue for DOD concerns how the services, especially the Army employs women in its operational formations. As a result, the assignment policies for women in the Army are under increased scrutiny. The current policy is unclear and confusing. This vagueness and ambiguity has placed unnecessary stress and burdens of the combat commanders in the field. Additionally, Army transformation efforts and operations in Iraq and Afghanistan enabled the Army to reevaluate its war fighting doctrine as well as its organizational structures. These changes in war fighting doctrine have further highlighted the need to reconsider the policies that govern how women are employed in combat. It is time for the Department of Defense and the United States Congress to change the current combat-exclusion policy and law.

WOMEN IN THE ARMY – REVIEW OF THE COMBAT EXCLUSION POLICY

Recent military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have renewed the debate about the assignment policies of women to combat positions in the United States Armed Forces. A strategic manpower issue for the Department of Defense concerns how the services, especially the Army employs women in its operational formations. As a result, the assignment policies for women in the Army are under increased scrutiny. However, the debate suggests policies addressing the role of women in combat are ~~—~~ague, ill defined, and based on an outmoded concept of wars with clear front lines that rarely exist in today's counterinsurgencies."¹ Additionally, Army transformation efforts and operations in Iraq and Afghanistan enabled the Army to reevaluate its warfighting doctrine as well as its organizational structures. These wars also highlighted the need to reconsider the policies that govern how women are employed in combat. Indications are it is time for the Department of Defense and the United States Congress to change the current combat-exclusion policy and law.

Recently, the Army's Chief of Staff, Gen George Casey testified to Congress that combat-exclusion policies needed review ~~—~~in light of how women have served in the two wars."² As demonstrated in the current conflicts, women played a vital role in the success of the Armed Forces. Women are extremely competent, professional, and patriotic. They have routinely engaged in combat and have performed magnificently. Due to their performance, the American public has recognized that women can and should have an expanded role in our armed forces. Retaining the current policies that overly restrict how and where women are allowed to serve and fight for their country based solely on gender is wrong and should be considered discrimination.

The current combat exclusion law and the Army's regulation providing guidance to commanders about assigning women to units are not consistent with current asymmetric³ military operations. Current policy impacts Army readiness and unit effectiveness by impacting commanders' ability to fully employ their assigned Soldiers in military operations and creating ethical dilemmas for commanders who have women in their operational units. Given the requirements for the U.S. military outlined in the National Military Strategy and the U.S. Army's changing roles and mission described in the Army Campaign Plan, the U.S. Congress should eliminate the Combat Exclusion law. This would enable the Army to revise its regulation regarding the assignment of women to reflect how women Soldiers are serving and what women Soldiers are contributing to military operations today. In addition, elimination of the combat exclusion law will enable the Army to assign Soldiers as needed and eliminate discrimination between male and female Soldiers as well as eliminate Commanders' ethical dilemmas who must overlook policy in order to accomplish their missions.

The Army must explore whether current U.S. laws and policies excluding women from combat remain valid or require amending. The necessity for this change is caused by the changing nature of the modern battlefield where there is little differentiation between the combat areas and noncombat areas. The advent of and transition to the modular brigade combat teams has exasperated the challenges of the vague policy. Additionally, the current policy is unclear and confusing. This vagueness and ambiguity has placed unnecessary stress and burdens on the combat commanders in the field executing our Nation's wars. Also, the effect of limiting half of the American population from certain jobs in the Army has a considerable effect on the readiness of the United

States Armed Forces. Finally, America's changing views toward women's roles in society and in the work place must be considered.

In order to better understand this policy, it is helpful to explore the history of women serving in the Army and to note the historical context in which this policy was written. Women volunteered to serve in the Army since its inception. Throughout U.S. history, women served with distinction either as volunteers, citizens or service members from the Revolutionary War to the streets of Baghdad. In the earliest times, women primarily served as volunteers by performing such duties as laundry, supply, and clerical workers. Also, during these early periods, a large number of women served in the medical field. Ultimately, in 1898, the Surgeon General of the Army established a Nurses Corps Division and in 1901, the Nurse Corps became a permanent corps of the Army Medical Department.⁴

During World War II, the Army sought ways to bring women into active military service. As the Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall directed a review about how to best incorporate women in the Army which resulted in the establishment of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) on May 14, 1942. Later the term —~~a~~uxiliary" was eliminated and Congress established the Women's Army Corps (WAC). The law establishing the WAC gave women military status, benefits and pay, and the same disciplinary code as men. Despite what appeared to a major step toward equality for women in service, Army regulations still excluded women from —~~co~~mbat training that involved weapons or tactical exercises and from duty assignments that required weapons."⁵

Throughout the 1970s, multiple changes occurred in the Army that impacted the status of women serving in uniform. For example, implementation of the All Volunteer Force significantly increased the number of female Soldiers serving in the Army.⁶ Additionally, the Women in the Army Policy Review Group was formed in 1982. This group reviewed the Army's policies and programs relating to women in the Service in order to —determine the effect these policies had on providing an environment conducive to the continual growth and meaningful service of all Soldiers while improving combat readiness of the Army.”⁷ As the number of women serving in uniform increased, debate ensued about safeguarding female Soldiers by limiting their proximity to danger on the battlefield. In 1988, the Department of Defense initiated the —risk rule.” policy.⁸ The risk rule policy states the Department of Defense would not assign women to positions where they would be at risk to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture.

In addition, the National Defense Act of 1994 addressed guidelines for the policy governing women in the military. The authorization act dictates that the Secretary of Defense has the authority to decide where women should best serve but that he must inform Congress before changing existing policy. Because of the establishment of female assignment policies, the National Defense Act of 1994 has become known as the —combat exclusion law.” The law requires the Secretary of Defense to notify Congress at least thirty days in advance of proposed changes in the combat assignments of women in the armed forces. The law requires ninety days' notice with respect to proposed changes in the ground combat exclusion policy for such women. Additionally, it directs the Secretary of Defense to use gender neutral occupational

performance standards in the case of any career field that is open to both male and female military personnel.⁹

The most significant policy governing how women serve in the Army was codified with the publication of Army Regulation (AR) 600-13, Policy for the Assignment of Female Soldiers, on 27 March 1992. To date, this is the authoritative regulation governing the Army's personnel assignment policy for female Soldiers. It stipulates that females are allowed to serve in any specialty or position "except in those specialties, positions, or units (battalion size or smaller) which are assigned a routine mission to engage in direct combat, or which collocate routinely with units assigned a direct combat mission."¹⁰ AR 600-13 also defines direct ground combat as

Engaging an enemy with individual or crew served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy's personnel and a substantial risk of capture. Direct combat takes place while closing with the enemy by fire, maneuver, and shock effect in order to destroy or capture the enemy, or while repelling the enemy's assault by fire, close combat, or counterattack.¹¹

Furthermore, the policy defines collocation as occurring when,

The position or unit routinely physically locates and remains with a military unit assigned a doctrinal mission to routinely engage in direct combat. Positions in units or sub-units which routinely collocate with units assigned a direct combat mission are closed to women. An entire unit will not be closed because a sub-unit routinely collocates with a unit assigned a direct combat mission. The sub-unit will be closed to women.¹²

Today, the requirement to reassess the Army's combat exclusion policy and the DOD law has never been more urgent due to dramatic changes on the battlefield the Army is fighting on. The need to reexamine the policy stems from four factors. First, today's battlefield, especially in the Global War on Terrorist (GWOT) environment, is less defined as enemies are conducting asymmetrical warfare techniques as a way to counter our overwhelming military force. In the traditional linear battlefield, the

battlefield was segmented into the rear area, the close area and the deep area. This linear compartmentalization of the battlefield made it easy to conceptualize areas of the battlefield where direct combat operations were most likely and those area where it was unlikely. However, on the nonlinear battlefields of today with the asymmetric way the enemy conducts warfare this view has changed.

A recent RAND study of the Army's assignment of women to combat roles found current policy —~~not~~ "actionable" since it was —~~crafted~~ "crafted for a linear battlefield" that depended on notions of —~~forward~~ and well forward [that] were generally acknowledged to be almost meaningless in the [current] Iraqi theater."¹³ On today's battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. female troops are involved in combat situations every day. There is no forward or rear area protected from potential harm. An improvised explosive device (IED) blast or insurgent attack can happen anywhere, and often does. Female Soldiers are exposed to life threatening situations despite being assigned in combat support units such as transportation, maintenance and military police. Every unit and Soldier is essentially on the front line because a transportation company and a supply company are as susceptible to enemy contact as a maneuver unit.

The current operating environment of the United States Army on the non-linear battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan created a sense of urgency to correct the outdated Combat Exclusion Policy. The window of opportunity to affect this change is now. At a recent visit to an Air Force Diversity Senior Working Group, Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed an urgent need for the armed forces to diversify by both race and gender. He emphasized that diversity is about opportunity and that the drive for diversity in the military is talent-driven. While he acknowledged

the difficulties and challenges associated with changing the institution, he further emphasized the urgent need to expedite the institutional changes necessary to bring about transformation for a more diverse force. "Bolstering diversity across the military requires fast, direct action," Mullen told the group. The armed services — ~~ca~~'t go fast enough" to increase diversity, he added.¹⁴

From recent operations such as Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, there are numerous examples of female Soldiers successfully serving in military operations that were equally susceptible to enemy contact. For example, Private First Class Teresa Broadwell Grace, a Military Police Soldier, was involved in a firefight in the city of Karbala, Iraq on 16 October 2003.¹⁵ She and her team successfully repelled an attack and killed twenty Iraqi combatants in the fight. Three U.S. Soldiers died and seven were wounded in the fight but her actions saved many lives. As a result, she was awarded a Bronze Star with V' for Valor and the Purple Heart.¹⁶ Likewise, CPT Kellie McCoy who also received a Bronze Star with V' ~~device~~ for her service in Iraq acknowledges that women are definitely in combat. "There are women who drive the same roads men do. Roadside bombs aren't discriminatory. There are no safe areas in Iraq to drive. There [are] really no front lines in Iraq."¹⁷

The experiences of Army SPC Monica Lin Brown are another illustration of heroic actions by female Soldiers on today's battlefield. In the remote eastern Paktia province of Afghanistan, a four-vehicle convoy of Humvees from the 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division was attacked in April 2007, wounding five Soldiers. The medic assigned to the convoy rushed to protect the

victims from insurgent gunfire as mortars fell less than 100 yards away.”¹⁸ The medic was SPC Monica Brown. After the convoy held off the attackers, SPC Brown told the Associated Press she “did not really think about anything except for getting the guys to a safer location and getting them taken care of and getting them out of there.”¹⁹ SPC Brown moved wounded Soldiers to a safer location, to receive treatment on site before being evacuated by helicopter and received a Silver Star in March 2008 for her actions.²⁰

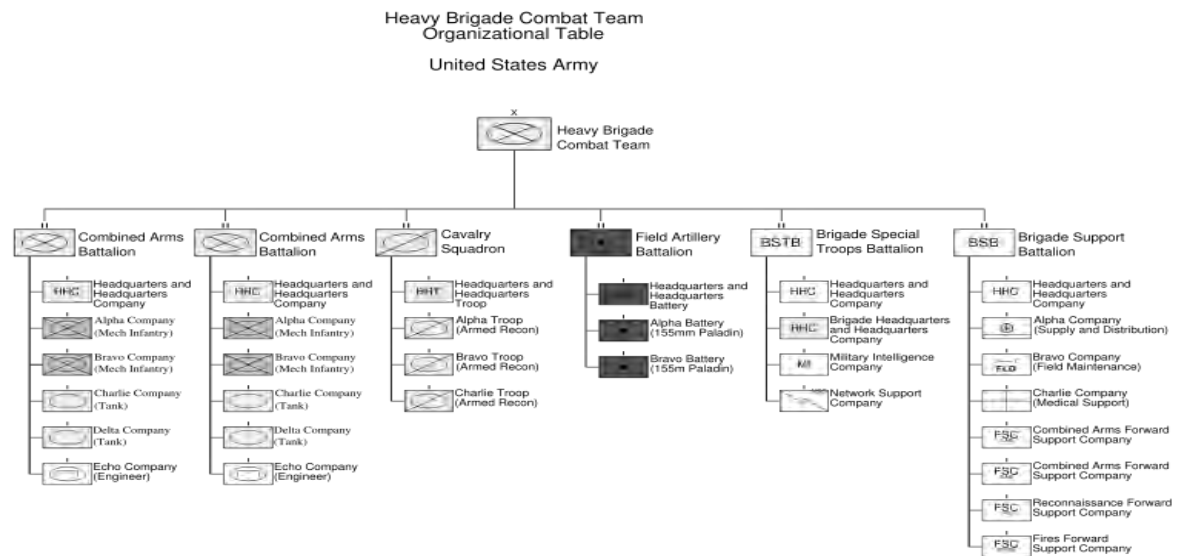
Ironically, Army regulations prohibit SPC Brown from serving in units that routinely engage in direct combat, or in units that routinely collocate with units assigned a direct combat mission. These restrictions remain in place despite the Army’s recognition that Specialist Brown’s “brave, unselfish action and medical aid rendered under fire saved the lives of her comrades and represents the finest traditions of heroism in combat.”²¹

In addition to dramatic changes to the battlefield environment the Army has undertaken a major transformation effort that began in 2004. This transformation is called the Modularity Initiative. It created smaller, interchangeable, and independent brigade combat teams (BCTs) of 3,400 to 4,000 soldiers.²² The impetus for this transformation was the shift from a Division-centric Army to an Army built around Brigade Combat Teams (BCT). BCT formations are designed to be flexible, easily deployed, and most importantly, capable of conducting sustained combat operations with minimal augmentation from higher headquarters or units usually not assigned to combat brigades. With this transformation, each BCT would

Include some engineers, some artillerymen, medics, quartermasters, scouts, and other support personnel formerly assigned to the division. In

that way, Army leaders contend, each modular brigade combat team would be better able to support itself without additional division assets.²³

Under the new modular brigade design (see diagram below), elements that were previously assigned to different higher headquarters (for example: Division Support Commands, Division Artillery Commands, Engineer Brigades, and Military Intelligence Battalions) would now be organic to the BCT.



Modular Design of the Heavy Brigade Combat Team

Since current Army regulations bar women from being assigned to units (battalion size or smaller) which are assigned a routine mission to engage in direct combat, or which collocate routinely with units assigned a direct combat mission, the design of the BCTs created challenges. The Army's combat exclusion policy has proven to be extremely challenging to adhere to in the new modular Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs). In the BCTs, women may only serve in the brigade headquarters, the Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB), and the Brigade Support Battalion (BSB). In the BSBs, the conflict between assigning women in the new modular designed units and

the Army's combat exclusion policy impacts the commanders' ability to manage and assign their Soldiers to missions. It creates an ethical and leadership challenge for BSB and BCT commanders. In fact, the Combat Exclusion Policy with its collocation restriction is incompatible with the current modular design of the BCTs as well as with the nature of the war in which the United States is currently engaged and is likely to be engaged in for the foreseeable future.

Prior to converting to the new BCT organizational design, an operational or maneuver unit had organic logistical support and could sustain itself. With the modular redesign, the support assets formerly organic to the maneuver units became consolidated in the Forward Support Companies (FSCs) of the BSB.²⁴ Since FSCs are part of the BSB, the Combat Exclusion Policy allows females to be part of this organization. (The BSB does not routinely engage in direct combat.) However, the mission of an FSC is to provide direct logistical support to a maneuver unit. But as stated earlier, FSCs are not an organic part of the maneuver unit; therefore one can argue this arrangement is not in violation of the first criteria of the Combat Exclusion Policy because FSCs are exempt from units that engage in direct combat. However, in reality, FSCs normally must collocate with a maneuver battalion to provide necessary logistical support. It is this aspect of an FSC containing female Soldiers which is in violation of the second criteria of the Army's Combat Exclusion Policy.

The new organizational structure of the BCT and the policy prohibiting women from collocating with combat units they support places commanders in an ethical dilemma to perform their missions. FSC commanders and Soldiers have conflicting loyalties to both the BSB and to the supported maneuver unit. Commanders in the field

are forced to create adhoc policies and procedures to make the command and support relationships work in spite of the policy. As a result, these solutions skirt the intent of the policy and place an unnecessary burden on commanders. The Army could remove this burden by changing the Combat Exclusion Policy to allow females to collocate with the maneuver units they support. The policy could also be changed to exclude women from serving in company sized formations and smaller. This would allow the FSCs with women authorized to be assigned to the maneuver battalions. The alternative is for the Army to exclude women from the BSBs altogether.

However, eliminating the opportunity for women to serve in the BSBs is infeasible and impractical. Women have performed very well in these same or very similar jobs before the conversion to the modular BCT as part of the old brigade structure. Also, the American public and Congress would not allow a change in the policy that would reduce opportunities for women to serve. The U.S. Senate became involved on May 26, 2005 when Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D, NY) introduced Senate Bill 1134 along with five other senators, which stated:

(1) Women play a critical role in the accomplishment of the mission of the Armed Forces; and (2) There should be no change to existing statutes, regulations, or policy that would have the effect of decreasing the roles or positions available to women in the Armed Forces.²⁵

Therefore, women should be allowed to be assigned to the BSBs and its subordinate FSCs. To facilitate women's assignment to BSBs, the Combat Exclusion Policy must be changed to allow women to serve in organizations that collocate routinely with units assigned a direct combat mission. Without this change to the policy, women technically should not be allowed to serve in the FSCs that support the maneuver battalions of a BCT.

Due to the changing conditions of today's non-linear battlefield and the transformation of the Army to modular formations, field commanders are often faced with an ethical conundrum regarding how they assign their female Soldiers. Because the current policies on women in combat are vague and confusing, this ambiguity has caused unnecessary confusion about the assignment and employment of women in the current operational theater. In today's modular formations on the non-linear battlefield, women performed direct combat roles even though they were not formally assigned to combat units per the assignment policy. This situation creates a moral conundrum when commanders are forced to either devise work-a-rounds to Army and DOD assignment of women policies or totally ignore the policy in order to accomplish their assigned missions.

In 2006, a survey of three hundred Army War College students was conducted concerning the issue of women in combat.²⁶ The survey questioned the respondents to determine their familiarity with the Army's Combat Exclusion Policy and how it was being applied in the field. The survey determined that many respondents were familiar with the ground combat exclusion policy for female Soldiers, but their perception is that, because of the asymmetric nature of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army does not follow the policy and female Soldiers are engaged in direct ground combat".²⁷ Fifty-three percent of the respondents indicated "the regulation that prohibits females from collocating with direct combat units is rarely enforced or not enforced at all." Seventy percent agreed that the policy should be revised.²⁸

The current operational environment also created another dilemma for the Army's BCT and BSB commanders. In addition to the non-linear nature of today's battlefield

and the design of the BCTs, the tactical situation often forces commanders to ignore the combat exclusion policies in order to effectively operate within the cultural norms of the environment. In both Afghanistan and Iraq the presence of female Soldiers is necessary. They —are often tasked to work in all-male combat units—not only for their skills but also for the culturally sensitive role of providing medical treatment for local women, as well as searching them and otherwise interacting with them.”²⁹

As a personal example, I experienced the challenges of trying to apply the current Army combat exclusion policy within a BCT formation. I commanded a brigade support battalion that recently converted from the older Forward Support Battalion (FSB) organizational structure. As stated previously, in the past an FSB was not organic to the BCT it supported since an FSB was part of a Division Support Command (DISCOM) under a division level headquarters. As such, the combat exclusion policy had little applicability to the FSB. However, by the time I assumed command, the unit had transformed into a BSB. The BSB consisted of eight companies, four of which were part of the base battalion and the remaining four were Forward Support Companies (FSCs). Based on the need to situate FSCs with their supported maneuver battalions and to establish unity of command for the companies, I attached the FSCs to the maneuver units. Given the nature of their support requirements, the FSCs collocated with those units every day, both in garrison and in the field.

I knew this arrangement could potentially violate the Army's Combat Exclusion Policy or at best it was against the intent of the policy. Regardless of the ambiguity of the policy and my discomfort as a commander, I decided to align the companies with their supported maneuver battalions because this arrangement provided necessary

support to the maneuver units. My fellow maneuver commanders acknowledged that they preferred having their FSCs collocated where they could include them in the maneuver battalion training events and mission requirements. They incorporated the FSCs in battalion operations and planning to include battalion training meetings and family support organizations. In fact, to encourage cohesion and team spirit, I informally referred to the FSCs not as D, E, F, and G Companies of the 64th BSB, but instead as the FSC of the respective maneuver battalion such as 2/9 Armored Reconnaissance Squadron FSC, 1-8 Combined Arms Battalion (CAB) FSC, 1-68 CAB FSC and the 3/29 Fires Battalion FSC, respectively. This ensured the FSCs were fully integrated into their supported battalions. Like many Army War College students mentioned in the 2006 survey, I knew of the Combat Exclusion Policy, but chose to work around it to ensure my Soldiers and units had the best chance for mission success.

Another reason DOD should change or remove the combat exclusion policy concerns readiness. Designating positions in the Army as male only and thereby prohibiting women from filling the positions limits the potential pool of candidates for recruitment. There are limited numbers of eligible and qualified men enlisting in the service to sustain Army end strength. A recent RAND study about the assignment of women during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan concluded that —~~there~~ simply were not enough personnel to do the job without women.”³⁰ An increase in the number of positions women are barred from filling would only worsen the challenges of recruiting and sustaining an all volunteer force. Conversely, reducing the number of positions in which women are barred from filling will have an opposite effect and will help improve the Army’s readiness situation. Removing restrictions for women could attract more

female volunteers and improve readiness capabilities. Eliminating the combat exclusion policy, or at least reducing the number of positions that women are prohibited from serving in would improve the career opportunities for female Soldiers. The current policies limit career opportunities for female service members, especially officers.

Removing laws and policies restricting women from opportunities to compete for more positions in unit formations has another direct effect on the readiness of the Army. Changing the current policies will not only improve readiness by increasing the pool of potential recruits, but it would also provide the combat commanders with unique capabilities needed for Army forces today. Today's battlefield is unique because it is comprised of a landscape of diverse cultures and norms, particularly with regard to women in the Muslim world. Having female Soldiers who can interact with indigenous women and children is invaluable to a commander's success. Additionally, local female populations are more apt to engage in dialogue with female Soldiers which can provide opportunities for intelligence collection and information exchanges. As a result, female Soldiers are force multipliers as they can support cultural laws and norms in Muslim regions around the world.

Despite the changes in the nature of today's battlefield and many examples of our female Soldiers performing valiantly in the Army's recent combat experiences, there are some who would still argue women should have no role in war. Many on this side of the argument claim the U.S. is not ready to see mothers and daughters deploy in a combat role. They use images of daughters returning in body bags to fuel support for a diminished role of women in the Armed Forces. Some claim that the American public would not tolerate the combat deaths of America female Soldiers. Unfortunately, the

American public has had to experience just such a situation. According to John Nagl, a retired Army lieutenant colonel and president of the Center for New American Security, more than 220,000 women fought in Iraq and Afghanistan and 120 have paid the ultimate price. As Nagl stated, we should —simply recognize a truth that's already been written in blood and sweat on the battlefield.”³¹ America's daughters have unfortunately died in combat. Although the loss of any American is tragic, in the eyes of the American public, the differentiation between a male and a female casualty does not seem to exist.

In addition, the view of society towards women in the workplace in general has changed. Data from the Pew Research Center indicates the percentage of women in the U.S. labor force increased from only 38% in 1970 to now almost 50%. Additionally, seventy-five percent of the people surveyed in 2008 stated they disagreed that women should return to a more traditional role in society, as opposed to 66% in 1987. Surveyed respondents who agreed women should return to traditional roles declined from 30% in 1987 to only 19% in 2008.³² This shows the public is changing its views on the roles of working women in general.

The societal view of women in the military has also changed significantly since 1973 when the male draft ended and the All Volunteer Force began. Recent polling suggests the American public supports the increased role of women serving in combat. In accordance with a New York Times/CBS news poll in January 1990, 72% of those surveyed supported women serving in combat units.³³ Additionally, in a May 2005 Gallup poll conducted for CNN/USA Today, when respondents were asked their views on women serving in combat zones and specifically, serving in Iraq, approximately 72% favored women serving anywhere in Iraq. More than two-thirds (67%) supported

women serving in combat zones as support for ground troops. Not surprisingly, the greatest support for women serving was from the group that would have to serve (18-29 year olds) where 60% were in favor of women serving.³⁴ Clearly public opinion changed over the last few decades and now supports women serving in greater combat roles.

In reality, women do serve in combat despite the attempts of some influential political leaders and social activists to restrict or completely deny them the opportunities to do so. The All Volunteer Force depends on the skills and professionalism of women, who make up nearly 15 percent of the force. Women are a critical component of the Armed Forces and their contributions were never more exemplary and critical. Even with policies supposedly excluding them from direct combat, women performed well in the current combat environment. Military leaders across the services recognize the crucial roles women play in the success of the Armed Forces in the current environment. Although women proved capable of handling the rigors of various combat roles and senior military leaders acknowledge the necessity of women serving, there remains strong political opposition to women serving in combat.

The Armed Services always accepted the possibility women may become involved in combat, yet due to external pressures willingly chose to deny women opportunities to serve officially in ground-combat positions. Paul Wolfowitz, former Deputy, Secretary of Defense from 2001 through 2005, recognized the need for women to serve in the environment the United States military operates in today. Addressing his concerns, he stated,

As we consider the issue of woman power in the service today it's not just a matter of women being entitled to serve this country. It is a simple fact that we could not operate our military services without women. And as skill levels essential to our missions continue to increase, it will be even more

essential that we draw from all our citizens that we draw from the largest pool of talent available.³⁵

As current campaigns in the Global War on Terror continue, undoubtedly female Soldiers will continue to risk their lives in military operations. It is likely they will continue to earn awards for valor in combat, lose limbs, and even their lives. Women will continue to serve the United States with distinction and the military will continue to recognize their accomplishments and sacrifices in combat operations with Combat Action Badges, Purple Hearts, and Silver Stars as already seen for heroic actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such heroism and accolades for female Soldiers prohibited from being assigned to or collocated with units that routinely conduct direct combat operations creates a dichotomy and supports changing the outdated combat exclusion policy. Because female Soldiers are recognized and honored for their valor in combat, the U.S. Congress should allow women to serve in any capacity they are capable of serving. It is apparent the American people support the contributions of female Soldiers and support their increased combat role as an integral part of the military.

As part of their responsibility to influence the culture and posture of the Army for future success, the Army's strategic leadership ought to pursue the change to the current Combat Exclusion Policy. Senior leaders should seize the opportunity to update the Combat Exclusion Policy while the topic is still relevant to national leaders. Of course the sources of resistance to changing this policy range from those who do not think women should serve in the military at all to those who think the current policy is appropriate.

By embracing this policy change, strategic leaders will lead the services into a future that accepts a broader role for Army women. Women's expanded roles will also

help to increase diversity within the service. By increasing diversity, the Army is —tuning diversity into an advantage by using it to enhance performance and social legitimacy” and therefore can —capitalize on diversity.”³⁶ Additionally, the Army would gain by increasing the pool of available manpower for recruitment. Finally, by increasing the number of opportunities for women to serve, especially in critical career enhancing positions, the Army should see an increase of women in the high officer and enlisted ranks.

Endnotes

¹ Ann Scott Tyson, “Soldier Earns Silver Star for Her Role in Defeating Ambush,” Washington Post, 17 June 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/06/16/AR2005061601551.html>.

² Dan De Luce, “Wars Force US Military to Review Ban on Women in Combat,” Agency France-Press, 27 February 2010, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gCawP28SAr_a-XX1k8Bpk8YpsIUQ

³ Warfare is asymmetric if forces, technologies, and weapons are different, or if a resort to terrorism and rejection of more conventional rules of engagement are the norm. (FM 3-0)

⁴ Gwen Gibson, *Breaking the Mold: Issue Redefinition and Policy Change Concerning Women in Combat* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Services, 2000), 61.

⁵ Bettie J. Morden, *The Women's Army Corp 1945-1978*, Army Historical Series (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990), 14.

⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *Women in the Army Policy Review* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 12 November 1982), 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸ U.S. General Accounting Office, *Gender Issues: Information on DOD's Assignment Policy and Direct Combat Definition: Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, October 1998), 2.

⁹ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994, Public Law 103-160, Subtitle D, 103rd Congress, 1st sess. (November 30, 1993).

¹⁰ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Policy for the Assignment of Female Soldiers*, Army Regulation 600-13 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 27 March 1992), 1.

¹¹ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, Army Regulation 600-13, Army Policy for the Assignment of Female Soldiers, March 27, 1992, 5.

¹² Ibid.,5.

¹³ Ann Scott Tyson, "Soldier Earns Silver Star for Her Role in Defeating Ambush," Washington Post, 17 June 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/06/16/AR2005061601551.html>.

¹⁴ Karen Parrish, "Mullen: U.S. Military Needs More Diversity," American Forces Press Service, October 18, 2010

¹⁵ James E. Wise Jr and Scott Barron, Women at War Iraq, Afghanistan and other Conflicts (Naval Institute Press Annapolis, MD, 2006), 20.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 35.

¹⁸ Associated Press, "Female Texas Teen to Receive Silver Star," CBS News, 9 March 2008, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/03/09/terror/main3920151.shtml>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *An Analysis of the Army's Transformation Programs and Possible Alternatives* (Washington DC: U.S. Congressional Budget Office, June 2009), 2.

²³ Ibid, 3.

²⁴ The forward support company is the cornerstone of the distribution-based logistics system. The FSC is essentially all of the logistical elements that were in the headquarters company maneuver battalion (except medical and communications repair) and are now organized as part of the forward support battalion.

²⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate, Sense of Congress on Women in Combat, 109th Congress, 1st sess., 26 May 2005, 2.

²⁶ Christopher Putko, "USAWC Women in Combat Survey Interpretation," in Women in Combat Compendium, ed. Michele M. Putko and Douglas V. Johnson II, (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), 1.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁹ Ann Scott Tyson, "Woman Gains Silver Star—and Removal from Combat: Case Shows Contradictions of Army Rules," Washington Post, 1 May 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/30/AR2008043003415.html>.

³⁰ Margaret C. Harrell et al., *Assessing the Assignment Policy for Army Women* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 54, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG590-1.pdf.

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³² Kim Parker, "The Harried Life of the Working Mother," October 1, 2009, linked from the Pew Research Center Poll Home Page at <http://pewsocialtrends.org/pubs/745/the-harried-life-of-the-working-mother>.

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