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Women in Combat MOS's

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Abstract:

The ethical question that I will present is not that if women are fully qualified to fight in combat, but rather if women need to be in Combat Arms MOS's. A question that was presented on a totally different subject but has a similar basis is **“because they can, or because they should.”** Many women have fought and died for this country and so without a doubt they are fully qualified to do the job. The US Military needs this gender in the service but do we need them to be placed (constantly) in harms way?

When we start to talk about women on the fact of just being in combat, we can trace the history back to 1429. During that time, Joan of Arc successfully led French troops into battle against the English. She was only 17 years old. It is the logic of most, that women are needed to win this present war on terror. I will present a question of “because they can or because they should.” This question is derived from a question that a senior NCO of the special operation forces presented to his soldiers on the relaxed grooming standards. I will use it as an analogy.

The question of should we put women in combat comes from law, biology, and psychology, but seldom from historical events as proved with Molly Pitcher and Mary Walker. The restrictions primarily come from political decisions made in response to public opinion of the day and the mood of Congress. Being in combat and being in a combat zone play a big part of the decision. It is the particular use of words.

Some have argued that if we open the Combat Arms jobs up to females, then we should also open up the draft to women also. The male only draft comes from the 1981 case of *Rockster vs Goldberg* that viewed the draft as a way to fill combat slots. In 1994, the Department of Defense, issued a re-look of the “risk rule” policy. This policy gauged the occupations that women could be used in. It also expressed that no job would be closed to women just because it was considered to be dangerous. (*Army, March 1994*)

Career fields below brigade level in the infantry and armor have been designated under the direct combat probability coding (DCPC) system to be “P1”. This coding is designated as being “all male”. MOS’s coded “P2” remains open to both sexes.

On January 13, 1994, the Department of Defense Secretary, Les Aspin established the so-called “Aspin Rules”. These rules exempted female soldiers from assignments in **smaller direct ground combat (DGC) units** that engage in deliberate offensive actions against the enemy.

Combat pilots and military police (both manned with females) patrol the streets and air of Baghdad. These units regularly come in direct contact with the enemy.

Do we have the fear of *Sexual Misconduct*? It may be too dangerous to put women in positions of combat where they could become prisoners of war. In these situations, there is a greater possibility that acts of sexual misconduct and possibility rape could happen. It is understood that these acts still take place even in regular units, but we are talking about POW's. Placing females in combat units will place unneeded sexual stress between units. What happens in the foxhole? This also places unneeded strains on the martial fidelity of male soldiers separated from their wives and placing male soldiers in extremely close proximity with females other than their wives. It has been said that a warrior often only thinks of two things: fighting and sex. In times of peace, what do you think will happen? We are all professionals and ultimately will conduct ourselves as professionals.

Will it be a disruption of unit *esprit de corps*? Every member of a unit must be completely trusted and respected by every member of that unit, effectiveness of the military hinges on this cohesion. Romantic relationships and pregnancies concern many people that research this topic. It is also an area that leadership would have to deal with on a daily basis. Pregnancies would definitely hurt unit readiness but can be considered only a small matter. Are we protecting our fellow Soldiers or are we protecting the female of our unit.

Do women possess the *Physical capabilities* to accomplish the missions of combat arms units? Many can argue that men would not be able to trust women to be capable of accomplishing the physical demands of combat, they would have a combat liability of having to carry a woman's load along with their own. Some females feel they as "tough as nails" and bad as the boys" but again, do we want our women in combat situations on a daily situation. The

pentagon has said it maintains the ban of women in combat units because of the need for upper body strength and because polls show that most females do not desire to serve in these units anyway. Women suffer higher rates of bone fractures, and other factors such as menstruation and pregnancy. The 20 something female has about the same lungpower of the 50 something man. This is the average vs. the average. We all know that they are great athletics out there in both sexes but remember that our service is made up of averages.

In a *Washington Times* report (May 2003) “the Army told Pentagon officials that if it was forced to keep the vital Forward Support Company all male, it would simply not have enough soldiers to accomplish its mission.” It went on to say that without women, they could not do what needs to be done. Acts of searching Iraqi women need to and have to be done by females in these forward units and in special cases, attached out to combat units. No matter how we try to rename units (FSC, STB) women are going to be in units close to combats.

In a briefing by Col Robert H. Woods Jr., “patriotic women of excellence contribute to our force.” This statement sums up the way I feel. Women are a vital part of our military, we need women in our military, we would not be able to accomplish our mission without females, but women are not needed in combat arms units. Women should be used in active combat roles in a matter of national survival. If we need more men, we will recruit them.

Conclusion

Women are very important and contribute greatly to the success of our mission. They help make us the most powerful Army in the world. Women have their part of soldiering but men also have their part. Yes, women *can* perform the duties that combat arm soldiers do, but *should* they have to perform the duties? This is and will continue to be a very controversial question with in our ranks. Oneday things will change, hopefully not in the near future. This answer is not because I don't believe women can or cannot do the job, it is because I would never want to see my sister, daughter or niece in an infantry/armor unit.

Reference

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