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Combat Roles for Women: A Modest Proposal

KIM FIELD and JOHN NAGL

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Recent changes in the international system and resulting shifts in US military engagement abroad have opened the door for a new examination of military opportunities for women, an issue which has for too long been clouded by extreme positions on both sides.[1] The view that a fatal feminization of the US Army is occurring at the present time is incorrect, but so is the claim that equal rights are immediately in order. A little moderation in the debate over the issue of combat roles for women in the US military is needed. It is our belief that moderation will result from a simple cost-benefit analysis rooted in the American democratic tradition. The timing for this is made even more appropriate by the Army's current embrace of transformation.

We will first examine the current policy on women in combat units, then look at changes in the international system and in the current and future missions of the military which allow a reconsideration of the issue. After arguing that the functional imperative of military forces in the post-Cold War world has changed fundamentally while Department of Defense policy on women in combat has changed only incrementally, we will recommend an experiment to determine whether there should be changes to current Department of Defense policy.[2] We will then present what we consider to be the very real problems the military would face with a mixed-gender force in combat roles before concluding that the benefits of conducting an experiment are worth the costs. While our discussion of the topic is relevant to all branches of the military, we primarily focus on the Army because of our personal experience, in combat and peacetime, in that organization.

Unfortunately, much of the current debate surrounding the presence of women in the positions in which they now serve is extremist and destructive. Women currently serve in division military police companies, fly combat aircraft, and attend the US Military Academy; it is highly unlikely that there will be a rollback, despite the wishes of many who oppose the presence of women in uniform. Brian Mitchell's recently published *Women in the Military: Flirting with Disaster* concludes that "women are no longer needed in the military [and] their expanding presence is destroying the military's body and soul." [3] Even if, as Mitchell argues, political correctness put women in the military in the first place, it is unlikely that they will be removed, as there are no indications that society's sensitivity toward issues such as this is diminishing. In addition, at least since the inception of the all-volunteer Army, the United States has never filled the Army exclusively with male recruits. When the dialogue surrounding the debate on women's roles is not forward-looking but rather looking to find a scapegoat for the troubles plaguing the military today, problems attributed to the presence of women are exacerbated. This article attempts to tone down the rhetoric while examining the facts.

Current Policy on Women in Combat Units

In times of national emergency, traditional restrictions on gender roles tend to be eased. Some 33,000 women served in the US armed forces during World War I, most in the Nurse Corps; more than ten times that number served during World War II. In the wake of those national emergencies, traditional restrictions were again applied; the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 permitted no more than two percent of the enlisted ranks in the Army to be filled by women, a limit which was not lifted until another national emergency in 1967.[4]

Women became an increasingly important part of the military after the creation of the all-volunteer force in 1973, and they demonstrated that they had become essential to the successful employment of the military during the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91, in which some 40,000 women served, representing seven percent of the total deployed forces.[5] The combat exclusion rule was revealed as dubious during that conflict, as women served in logistics bases forward of all-male infantry and armor units, but not on aircraft carriers hundreds of miles to the rear of the front lines. After that conflict, opportunities for women were expanded, and women were given the opportunity to serve in combat planes

and on combat ships. The November 1993 law that repealed the Naval Combatant Exclusion Law also required the Secretary of Defense to:

Ensure that qualification for and continuance in occupational career fields is evaluated on the basis of a common, relevant performance standard and not on the basis of gender; Refrain from the use of gender quotas, goals, or ceilings, except as specifically authorized by Congress; and Refrain from changing occupational standards simply to increase or decrease the number of women in an occupational career field.[6]

To comply with that law, in January 1994 the Secretary of Defense lifted the "risk rule" which had prevented women from serving in units which had a high probability of engaging in combat, partly in recognition of the fact that given the changing nature of warfare there were no longer any "safe" places on the battlefield. Instead, women were prohibited from serving in units that were designed and intended to engage in direct ground combat, defined 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 [normally] takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect." [7]

These laws opened many more positions to women; in the Army, only five military occupational career fields remain closed to women, either because these positions are clearly ground combat positions or because the units and positions are doctrinally required to collocate and remain with direct combat units.[8] The officer career fields that remain closed to women are infantry, armor, cannon field artillery, short-range air defense artillery, and special forces.[9] These specialties comprise about a third of the assignments in the Army and are traditionally among the most critical routes to high command positions. In addition, they are culturally and functionally considered to be the positions of greatest significance to the defense mission.[10]

A Historic Opportunity for Change

The end of the Cold War dramatically changed the international environment and altered the role the US military can expect to play in the world.[11] These changes provide an opportunity to rethink the current balance between the functional imperatives of military service and the individual rights of female service members.

Members of the armed forces surrender a number of their individual rights as citizens when they take the oath to "protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." [12] For instance, they lose the right to decide where they will live and work, what they will wear, even how they will wear their hair. The more restrictive regulations under which they labor are essential to military discipline, to the smooth functioning of an organization under the most difficult situations imaginable. The *functional imperative* of military service requires that they surrender these rights in order for the military to perform its assigned function of protecting the rest of society--and giving society the freedom to enjoy many of the same privileges which members of the military have forfeited.[13]

One of the most interesting parts of this balancing act between individual liberty and the functional imperative of military service is that the American democratic society values individual rights above all else, while the military culture is founded on the subordination of the individual to the group. Military units, not individual soldiers, win wars, and the military must diminish the rights of the individuals who serve in it in order to create effective units.

However, the functional imperative has its limits. It can be used to justify infringements upon the liberty of military service members only when its demands are essential for military effectiveness. The military has no just reason to limit the rights of service members in ways that go beyond the functional imperatives of military effectiveness. When it does so, it risks losing the support of society--an essential factor for any military, but particularly for an all-volunteer military in a democracy. And this democracy supports the idea of expanded opportunities for women in the US military. According to a 1997 poll conducted by *Time* magazine, 67 percent of Americans polled supported the statement that women should be allowed to serve in all combat roles.[14] Even a poll of Texas citizens, arguably among the most conservative in the nation, found that 57 percent of those surveyed believed women should be allowed to serve in combat positions.[15]

The fact that the military is based on a meritocracy partially softens emphasis on the group as opposed to the individual, however. Indeed, one of the greatest strengths of the US military forces is that they are meritocratic; that is, promotion and other rewards of service are based on demonstrated performance rather than on favoritism and prejudice.[16] On one hand, it is impossible to create a truly cohesive force without remedying the codified inequity between genders in the current system. On the other hand, all soldiers, male and female, must be held to the same standard. This is not always the case today.

Changes in the international system and in the role of the American military in the 21st century make this argument even more pressing. According to the National Military Strategy of the United States, "The primary purpose of US armed forces is to deter threats of organized violence against the United States and its interests, and to defeat such threats should deterrence fail. . . . The armed forces' core competence is the ability to apply decisive military power to deter or defeat aggression and achieve our national security objectives." [17] Those objectives are to "promote peace and stability and, when necessary, to defeat adversaries. US armed forces advance national security by applying military power as directed to help *shape* the international environment and *respond* to the full spectrum of crises, while we also *prepare* now for an uncertain future." [18]

This National Military Strategy is dramatically changed from that which prevailed during the Cold War. While international relations theorists debate whether the end of the Cold War implies the end of history [19] or whether we are simply returning to the world which existed before World War II and the Cold War, [20] most agree that the current world order is likely to continue into the foreseeable future. [21] Although the focus of our armed forces must remain on high-intensity conflict, the likelihood of the United States fighting a conventional great-power conflict is much lower than it was throughout the last century. Instead, military forces will increasingly focus on responding to humanitarian emergencies, encouraging the enlargement of the circle of the world's democracies, and preventing conflicts rather than fighting conventional wars. It appears that men are less willing to serve in these roles than they were to serve in traditional combat roles during the Cold War, making it even more important that women fill a larger role in the post-Cold War military. [22] In addition, although men and women agreed in the same numbers that "the fundamental role of the Army is to fight and win the nation's wars," only 33 percent of women surveyed (versus 57 percent of men surveyed) felt that the "main focus of the Army should be warfighting." [23] Women appear to be more willing to accept a changing role for the military.

Engaging in these operations--variously referred to as "Operations Other Than War," "Stability and Support Operations," and "Peace Operations," among other names--presents an environment very different from that of conventional combat. 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. [24] Practically speaking, women are now being placed in situations remarkably similar to the ones in which men serving in the combat arms find themselves. [25] Compare the Mission Essential Task List (METL) of a fully integrated military police unit with that of a mechanized infantry unit that is currently closed to women:

| Military Police | Mechanized Infantry |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Maneuver and Mobility Support Operations | Perform Reconnaissance |
| Area Security | Assault Mounted and Dismounted |
| | Defend |
| | Support by Fire |
| Law and Order | |
| Police Intelligence | Perform Reconnaissance |
| Internment and Resettlement | |

This list of tasks is rather different in conventional war, but in a peace operation such as Kosovo, the differences blur. Both infantry and military police units deployed to Bosnia and Kosovo today are conducting or are prepared to conduct very similar missions, given the current operating environment. Military police units and combat arms units are conducting maneuver and mobility support operations, security operations, resettlement operations, information collection, and, to a lesser extent, law enforcement.[26] Law enforcement is one of the most dangerous tasks in Kosovo and remains primarily a military police task. It is worth repeating that women are fully integrated into the three-person military police teams that constitute an MP company. There is a general consensus that military police units are performing extremely well in the most critical operations that the Army is conducting today; "nearly every incident [in a task force in Kosovo] required MP support or action." [27] 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.

Organizational Change in the Military

Tradition-bound and rigidly hierarchical in the popular imagination, military organizations are famous for their resistance to change. However, military organizations can change when conditions require them to do so; examples include the adoption of the aircraft carrier, the tank, and amphibious warfare during the interwar period of the 1930s.[28] Cultural change is more difficult to digest and often requires external political influence; the best example is probably the integration of the armed forces at President Truman's insistence, against the advice of all of the Joint Chiefs at the time.[29]

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." [30] A Triangle Institute for Security Studies project states, "Military officers are the custodians and shapers of this organizational culture and opinion on matters of policy and decisionmaking, and they rise to the most significant positions relevant for policy interactions with civilian society." [31]

If cultural change is to take place, and that is a significant portion of the gender equality debate, then officers will have to accept change. If women are to be successfully integrated into combat roles in the US Army that are currently closed to them, the officer corps of the Army will have to provide leadership and resources to move the institution in that direction.

A Modest Proposal

Because of these changes in the international system and in the role of armed forces in the post-Cold War world, it is time to try an experiment: a standards-based integration of female officers into the Army positions currently closed to them, initially on a small scale.[32] Given the international setting and the resultant changes in military missions, the reduced distinction between which types of units actually engage the "enemy" by direct ground fire, and the increased physical ability of women, there is a nearly risk-free opportunity to attempt integration on a small scale. Should the experiment fail, the costs would be minimal. Should it succeed, the benefits would be great; in addition to increasing opportunities for women in the military, this policy would actually increase the effectiveness of the Army--in peace operations, to a lesser extent in conventional war, and in the Army's dealings with its civilian masters.

We admit that this proposal may be perceived to be a bit disingenuous. How would success or failure be proven and results measured, and if failure was the outcome, would it be possible to remove women from these positions once the combat-roles Rubicon had been crossed? While these are valid concerns, it would be better for the Army to establish conditions for integration and run as fair a test as possible of its own volition rather than face the prospect of being forced to integrate women into combat roles at a time and in a manner not of its own choosing. As with the Transformation initiative, it is far better for the Army as an organization and for the officer corps as a profession to set the standards and evaluate the results without external pressure.[33]

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. Those who do not meet that requirement would not be allowed to serve in that specialty. Periodic testing would ensure that all of those serving in the specialty maintain themselves in fit condition to continue to meet the demands of that service specialty.[34]

This requirement is similar to that imposed by police and fire departments across the nation, which require both men and women to meet the same physical requirements to serve as police and firefighters. The standards are demanding, and there are relatively few women who meet the requirements; in a recent New York City test, only 11 of the 354 women (3 percent) who passed a written exam were able to pass a demanding physical test that mimics the tasks required of actual serving firefighters. (By comparison, 57 percent of the 1,016 men who took the physical test met the standards.) Nonetheless, according to Lieutenant Brenda Berkman, President of the United Women Firefighters, "It would be wrong to create the impression that the physical exam is an insurmountable barrier for women applicants." [35]

The New York City Fire Department is attempting to increase female membership, partly in response to a number of lawsuits alleging discrimination against women. However, the city is not willing to relax the standards, which would jeopardize public safety. Instead, said Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen, "I've got 11,000 firefighters and 10 million people I have to think about every day, so we have to have the most physically capable people. But I believe we must continue to reach out and find women who are capable and then prepare them for a difficult physical test." [36]

The authors of this article have similar concerns and suggest a similar standard. Reducing the standards required of armor, infantry, or special forces officers would jeopardize the safety of soldiers and perhaps ultimately of American society. However, the functional imperatives of military service cannot be used to justify the exclusion of women who can meet the physical demands of service in combat arms from those positions.[37] Both authors have had experiences with male soldiers who were unable to meet 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.[38]

There are both potential costs and potential benefits associated with standards-based requirements for service in the combat arms. Potential costs include the disruptions to unit effectiveness associated with pregnancy; the temporary organizational turmoil that may result from the policy change, including the cost of instituting physical standards for all military tasks; a belief in a "softening" of the military ethos; and diminished cohesion in combat units if women are included. The authors believe that these costs are short term and are outweighed by the longer-term benefits of the program, which include an expanded pool of military personnel from which to recruit soldiers, more clearly defined and closely adhered-to standards for *all* soldiers, and a lessening of the civil-military gap.

Potential Costs of the Policy Change

The experiment we advocate is intended to evaluate the potential costs and benefits we outline in the remainder of this article. Our findings do not indicate that a large number of women are interested in pursuing the positions commonly associated with intense fighting. We surveyed 112 female cadets at the Military Academy at West Point and found that 30 percent say that given the opportunity, they would choose a combat arms branch that is currently closed to women. Only 4 percent would select infantry, the other 26 percent favoring armor and field artillery, branches less associated with difficult field conditions, physically arduous tasks, and hand-to-hand fighting. The chart below reflects the reasons women gave for preferring non-combat arms branches.[39]

| | |
|---|------|
| No interest in combat arms | 65 % |
| Lack of faith in physical capabilities | 12 % |
| Too hard to succeed in male environment | 9 % |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Not best for the Army | 8 % |
| Family considerations | 5 % |

What is the significance of these findings? It appears that out of the approximately 400 new female officers that the Army acquires each year, only about 133 would choose a military occupational specialty that they could not choose now. Of that number, only five would choose infantry. These numbers are small; they allow an experiment to be run.

Having established the context for the policy proposal we suggest, let's look at the potential problems associated with full integration of women into all units. The issue of pregnancy is often raised as an insurmountable barrier to the increased presence of women in the military. The actual numbers belie this. At any given time 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; however, in certain specialties the pregnancy ratio can be as high as 10 percent of the unit.[40]

One of the authors has witnessed the disruption that pregnancy causes in a deployed unit and suggests that all women receive and adhere to a birth control regime as part of the "immunizations" required for a deployment. An examination of past practices reveals many other methods of preventing debilitating medical conditions during deployment. In Desert Storm, for example, all soldiers were required to stand in formation each day and ingest a pill whose unproven purpose was to dilute the effects of a chemical weapon attack. If women are aware of a birth control requirement before enlisting or commissioning there should be no problem; those with a last-minute wish not to comply would be removed from military service. As for male-female attraction in the units, leaders have the responsibility to handle this problem as they do all others when they impair mission effectiveness. Anecdotal evidence abounds of relationships among soldiers in highly successful combat support units.

Organizational turmoil is inherent in any policy change of importance. Perhaps the most likely cause of turmoil if this policy were to be adopted is an increased likelihood of claims of sexual harassment. More women working in close proximity to men could equal more claims--some warranted, some not. The problem of increased false claims could be solved with training.[41] Women must come to realize the circumstances and actions that would imply at least partial responsibility for an inappropriate encounter.

What is the cost associated with minimum physical fitness standards for all soldiers in a given occupational specialty? There already exist physical fitness minimums for the Army as a whole, but codified, demonstrable standards do not exist for each skill. Possible costs include another testing requirement that would be unnecessary without the presence of women, and the possibility of emphasizing minimum standards instead of maximum standards. However, benefits exist as well. There are currently some men assigned to tanks, for example, who cannot load main gun rounds fast enough to meet combat standards. These men would be identified and the performance of the whole unit should improve when they are reclassified into less physically demanding jobs.[42]

Comparing men's and women's times in the one-mile race shows not only that women are increasing their performance in physical tasks--beyond the level men could achieve just a few years ago--but also that the gap between men and women is progressively decreasing. The men's record has dropped 16.8 percent from 4:12.6 set in 1915 to 3:43.13 in 1999, while the women's record has dropped 32.7 percent from 6:13.2 to 4:12.56 in 1996.[43] This performance increase for women is a function of many factors, including Title IX requirements that schools provide increased physical opportunities for women. Even stipulating that some percentage of the difference in results achieved by men and women is biologically determined, this evidence suggests that socialization accounts for more of the difference than has often been thought.

Some argue that there has been a softening of discipline and training in the military since women began to play a larger role in the armed forces.[44] The average woman is just plain different--less competitive and aggressive than the average man.[45] But, in reality, while war is destructive and chaotic, it also requires the highest degree of cooperation and organization. The violent blood-lusting individual is in fact detrimental to the effectiveness of an organized fighting force because such a person is uncontrollable and unreliable.[46]

The last problem is one of unit cohesion. While it has been shown that the operational capabilities of a unit are not weakened by the presence of women,[47] the argument is made by many social scientists that technical proficiency is

not the most important factor to be considered in the expansion of military roles for women. Some feel that male bonding forged by sleeping, bathing, and eating together--and just plain "letting boys be boys together"--is the key to unit cohesion and hence the ability to perform as a warrior in battle.[48] However, a 1997 RAND study for the Secretary of Defense 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." [49] Importantly, the study emphasized the differences between *social* and *task* cohesion: "High social cohesion, or bonding on a social level, can have deleterious effects on performance outcomes and task cohesion, because people start to prioritize friendship and social activities over performing their jobs." [50]

It is not necessary to like someone to work effectively with him or her. Survey research has indicated that 72 percent of Army officers, questioned whether "the proportion of women to men at work matters to you," said, "It doesn't matter." [51] The experience of women in the US Coast Guard supports this argument. Colonel Joe Collins, USA Ret., who has researched American military culture for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, notes 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." [52] Longitudinal studies of Army attitudes support this point; while a 1988 survey showed a "significant negative correlation between percentage of women in the workplace and horizontal cohesion among male junior enlisted soldiers," a more recent 1995 study demonstrated no significant relationship between women in the work group and unit cohesion. [53]

Yet we find that this last problem is the one most commonly considered insurmountable. The argument can be stated in this manner: "We don't know what the integration of women will do to the cohesion of our combat units, but we do know that the kind of cohesion we have works. It's risky and the cost in national security terms may not be worth the benefit for the few women who want this kind of a challenge." We agree that there is a risk. But given the current international setting and the small numbers of units that would be initially affected, we believe it is worth a genuine try.

Benefits of the Policy Change

We have acknowledged some short-term and potential longer-term costs of changing current policy to allow women to serve in combat units, and noted that some disadvantages are actually potential benefits of the policy change. Other benefits include more clearly defined and more closely enforced standards and a diminished civil-military gap.

One of the principal benefits of the policy change would be an increased focus on the physical standards required to perform the tasks of any military job--for both male and female soldiers. The Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) was designed to assess general fitness and wellness, not to determine suitability for specific jobs. [54] It remains necessary, however, to address the current inequity between the standards for men and women. One of the authors of this article, Major Field, does not have to train on a regular basis to achieve the maximum standard (two miles in 15 minutes, 54 seconds for women in her age group) on the running event of the APFT. However, in order to run the 13 minutes, 18 seconds needed to achieve the maximum standard for men in the age group of the other author, Major Nagl, almost every man has to train. [55] This is harmful in two ways: the lower requirements for women appear to constitute a double standard (which causes resentment), and it appears that women have less physical stamina than they really do.

The military should be clear about what physical strength is required in the performance of each duty and hold *all* soldiers in that specialty to that standard; doing so will increase the ability of the fighting force as a whole. Imposing and enforcing job-related standards on all service members would help to resolve these perceptual problems, reinforcing the idea of a meritocracy, increasing the combat readiness of the armed forces, and helping to resolve current recruiting and retention problems, which result in part from the growing civil-military gap.

In that latter regard, recent authors have made much of what they perceive to be a growing gap between the military and the civilian spheres in the United States. It is essential that the military continue to have the support of the civilian leadership, and that any limitations on individual liberty be perceived to be fair and required by the military's functional imperative. It appears that there is large disparity between public and military sentiment on the issue of full gender equality in the armed forces. Only 35 percent of military officers support direct combat roles for women,

compared to 58 percent of civilian elites.[56] Should the military agree that the national security needs of the United States in the post-Cold War world have changed enough to allow the democratic ideals and principles of society to assert themselves within the distinctive mission and culture of the military, the gap would be lessened to some degree.

Liberty and Justice for All?

Changes in the international environment have moved the balance point between individual liberty and the military's functional imperative. The time has come to permit female officers to serve in the combat arms branches if they are able to meet the physical requirements of that branch. Anything less is a betrayal of the very democratic principles which members of the American military have sworn to support and defend.

The number of women entering combat arms would be small, at least initially, and therefore there would be ample opportunity to sort out some quantifiable problems. If these are solved and this experiment proves successful, we should then move without trepidation toward full integration of women. It is essential that the experiment be run; as the 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces pointed out, "There are no authoritative military studies of mixed-gender ground combat cohesion, since available cohesion research has been conducted among male-only ground combat units." [57] If the experiment proves successful, it could be expanded in an orderly fashion--and without damaging the combat readiness of the armed forces.

We need to distinguish between arriving at real solutions to real problems and waiting for some to overcome an emotional bias that is petty and destructive. Most of all, we should make an effort to de-radicalize the issue.[58] If we find that gender integration of the combat arms is fraught with insurmountable problems, that the costs were higher than we thought and the benefits less, then equity for women in the armed forces is not achievable. So be it. Military service at its best remains about selfless service to the country, and no one knows this better than the men and women who serve today.

NOTES

1. A version of this paper was presented to the American Political Science Association annual meeting in Washington, D.C., on 3 September 2000. The authors are grateful to the members of that panel, especially Dr. Jim Wirtz and Dr. David Sorensen, for their helpful comments and suggestions.
2. As a captain, General Barry McCaffrey, USA Ret., wrote on a similar topic in 1973 in a paper entitled, "We are Soldiers All: An Analysis of Possible Roles for Women in the Army." He argued, after a decade of combat and in the throes of a recruiting and professionalism crisis, that changes regarding opportunity for women in the Army should be innovative and not incremental. He wrote that three changes should be made: unrestricted recruiting of women, abolition of the Woman's Army Corps, and allowing women to serve in any military occupational specialty except for the ones still closed today.
3. Brian Mitchell, *Women in the Military: Flirting with Disaster* (New York: Regnery, 1998), p. 341.
4. Margaret C. Harrell and Laura L. Miller, *New Opportunities for Military Women: Effects Upon Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1997), pp. 1-2.
5. Regina F. Titunik, "The First Wave: Gender Integration and Military Culture," *Armed Forces and Society*, 26 (Winter 2000), 229. Both of this article's authors were among those deployed to Desert Storm.
6. Legislative History, House Report No. 103-200 Section 542--Gender Neutral Occupational Performance Standards, as quoted in Harrell and Miller, p. 3.
7. Ibid., pp. 3-4. See also the General Accounting Office Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, US Senate, *Gender Issues: Information on DOD's Assignment Policy and Direct Ground Combat Definition* (October 1998).

8. Although 97 percent of Army officer career fields and 83 percent of enlisted occupations are open to women, women can serve in less than 70 percent of the job slots because the remaining slots are in combat units or in units that collocate with combat units. GAO Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, Committee on Armed Services, US Senate, *Gender Issues: Trends in the Occupational Distribution of Military Women* (September 1999), p. 30.
9. Harrell and Miller, Appendix B, pp. 113-17.
10. Morton Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1974), p. 55.
11. See John A. Nagl, "Defending Against New Dangers," *World Affairs*, 162 (Spring 2000).
12. Oath of office for officers of the US armed forces.
13. See Don M. Snider, John A. Nagl, and Tony Pfaff, *Army Professionalism, the Military Ethic, and Officership in the 21st Century* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1999), for more on the functional imperatives of military service.
14. Time/CNN telephone poll conducted 6 June 1997, internet, *Polling the Nation*, <http://webspirs.silverplatter.com:8000/waldo>.
15. Texas telephone poll conducted March 1997, internet, *Polling the Nation*, <http://webspirs.silverplatter.com:8000/waldo>.
16. See Officer Professional Management System-XXI (Washington: Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army for Personnel, 2000), internet, <http://www.perscom.army.mil/OPMSXXI/OPMS-Brief/sld001.pdf>.
17. John Shalikashvili, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington: GPO, 1997), p. 5.
18. Ibid., p. 2. Emphasis in original.
19. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).
20. Terry L. Deibel, "Strategies Before Containment: Patterns for the Future," *International Security*, 16 (Spring 1992).
21. G. John Ikenberry, "The Myth of Post-Cold War Chaos," *Foreign Affairs*, 75 (May/June 1996).
22. For one source documenting this sentiment, see Thomas E. Ricks, "Younger Officers Leaving Army at Fast Pace," *The Washington Post*, 17 April 2000.
23. Department of the Army, "The Secretary of the Army's Senior Review Panel Report on Sexual Harassment," Vol. 2 (Washington: GPO, 28 July 1997), p. A-31.
24. See Don M. Snider, "American's Postmodern Military," *World Policy Journal*, 17 (Spring 2000).
25. The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women is testing the hypothesis that the gender of peacekeepers is relevant to the success of the mission, and that women are more capable than men at many of these missions. Preliminary research supports this thesis. See Valerie Morgan, "Peacekeepers? Peacemakers? Women in Northern Ireland 1969-1995" (Ulster, Northern Ireland: University of Ulster, 25 October 1995), internet, <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/publications/occasional/morgan.pdf>.
26. Richard W. Swengros, "Military Police Functions in Kosovo," *Military Police*, May 2000, p. 10.
27. See Matthew Cox, "You Call this Soldiering?" *Army Times*, 27 March 2000, pp. 14-16.
28. See Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, eds., *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge, Eng.:

Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996).

29. A cultural change which was *not* enthusiastically adopted, largely because it conflicted with organizational culture and was not continuously supported by civilian political leadership, was counterinsurgency doctrine during the Vietnam War; see John A. Nagl, "Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: British and American Army Counterinsurgency Learning during the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War," *World Affairs*, 161 (Spring 1999).

30. Edwin Dorn and Howard D. Graves, *American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2000), p. xvi.

31. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, "Project on the Gap Between the Military and Civilian Society: Digest of Findings and Studies," first revision (Durham, N.C.: Triangle Institute for Security Studies, 2000), p. 13.

32. This article is in constant and increasing danger of being overcome by events. The *Army Times* reported on 31 July 2000:

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. The British field trials mean there will "certainly be more pressure" for the US military to conduct studies on women in combat roles, said John Patton, who directs physical fitness training research at the Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine in Natick, Massachusetts.

See "Women to Combat Units?" *Army Times*, 31 July 2000, p. 4. 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. See "German Military Combat Restriction Lifted for Women," *Army Times*, 17 July 2000, p. 6.

33. Then-Captain Kelly Ward wrote an article suggesting this in 1992. See Kelly Ward, "Leadership Challenge for the Future: Women in Armor and Cavalry," *Armor*, 101 (November-December 1992), 45-47.

34. This provision would meet the intent of Recommendation D of the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, which suggested, "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." Commissioners were influenced in their decision by the results of the Roper survey, which asked military personnel whether physical standards for each combat assignment should reflect the demands of that assignment on a gender-neutral basis; 70 percent of the military strongly agreed, and another 17 percent agreed. See Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, *Report to the President: November 15, 1992* (Washington: The Commission, 1992), pp. 7-8. (Hereinafter, *Report to the President*.)

35. Kevin Flynn, "Physical Test for Fire Dept. Bars Most New York Women," *The New York Times*, 3 February 2000.

36. *Ibid.*

37. These numbers would be relatively small. The 1992 Presidential Commission reported that only 21 women of 623 tested (3.4 percent) achieved a score equal to the male mean score on the Army Physical Fitness Test. Only seven percent of women could perform 60 push-ups, while 78 percent of men could achieve this score. *Report to the President*, p. 5.

38. A recent review of Stephanie Gutmann's *The Kinder, Gentler Military: Can America's Gender-Neutral Fighting Force Still Win Wars* by an experienced former Army officer concurs with this suggestion. Colonel Greg Fontenot, USA Ret., commander of a tank battalion in Desert Storm and of the first heavy brigade in Bosnia, published a review of Gutmann's book in the July/August 2000 issue of *Armor* which concludes (p. 58): "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." That a highly respected senior officer would make such a suggestion in print is in itself evidence of a cultural change in the combat arms of the US Army.

39. It would be interesting to collect post-commissioning data along these same lines. Female officers are naturally more cognizant of the realities of serving in an organization with gender limitations than are cadets. But given that all cadets choose their branch based on limited knowledge of the "real Army," the survey results have merit in demonstrating relatively minimal interest among most women in selecting a combat arms branch--supporting our "a stream not a flood" analogy.

40. Non-Deployable Personnel Report, DCSPER, Distribution and Readiness Branch, September 1999. The 1992 Presidential Commission reported that the annual service pregnancy rates for 1990 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 US 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. *Report to the President*, pp. 19-20.

41. This issue is addressed in Dorn and Graves, p. 26. It is interesting that the panel immediately connects increased reports of sexual harassment with the effect of false accusations.

42. The subtitle of the General Accounting Office's Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, US Senate, *Gender Issues: Improved Guidance and Oversight are Needed to Ensure Validity and Equity of Fitness Standards* (November 1998) is instructive on this point.

43. *Runner's World*, internet, <http://www.runnersworld.com/stats/progkww.pdf>. The authors are grateful to Major Paul Yingling for this point and the data that support it.

44. The most recent publication making this argument is Stephanie Gutmann, *The Kinder, Gentler Military* (New York: Scribner, 2000). For an interesting review and rebuttal, see Steven Lee Myers, "The Armed Forces Soften Their Touch," *The New York Times*, 2 April 2000.

45. For an interesting review of current thinking on the role of testosterone in male behavior, see Andrew Sullivan, "Why Men Are Different: The Defining Power of Testosterone," *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 2 April 2000.

46. Regina F. Titunik, "The First Wave: Gender Integration and Military Culture," *Armed Forces and Society*, 26 (Winter 2000).

47. US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, "Women Content in Units Force Development Test" (Alexandria, Va.: US Army Research Institute, 1977); found in Leora N. Rosen, Paul D. Bliss, Kathleen A. Wright, and Robert K. Gifford, "Gender Composition and Group Cohesion in US Army Units: A Comparison Across Five Studies," *Armed Forces and Society*, 25 (Spring 1999).

48. In fact, surveys of military personnel serving in integrated units have demonstrated that most respondents "admitted that some now-abandoned types of social bonding between men were actually unprofessional and detracted from the work environment." Harrell and Miller, p. 59.

49. Harrell and Miller, p. 54.

50. Ibid. The original source of this study is Elizabeth Kier, "Homosexuals in the US Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness," *International Security*, 23 (Fall 1998).

51. Harrell and Miller, p. 67.

52. Colonel Joe Collins, USA Ret., interviewed by Major Nagl at West Point, N.Y., 20 April 2000.

53. Rosen et al., p. 2.

54. Major Field telephone interview with Dr. Mady Segal at West Point, N.Y., 14 April 2000.

55. This anecdotal and very small study is reinforced by a 1995 Army Fitness School study of 3,000 active-duty soldiers stratified by age, gender, and military occupational specialty in which "an apparent gender disparity in fitness was complicated by the result that in women, performances on the two-mile run and sit-ups reached or exceeded the maximum required for women more often than they did in men; conversely, the push-up event appeared to favor men." The report recommended that effort scales be reconfigured to be equal for both genders. See Committee on Body Composition, Nutrition, and Health of Military Women, *Assessing Readiness in Military Women* (Washington: National Academy Press, 1998), p. 65.

56. Feaver and Kohn, p. 5.

57. *Report to the President*, p. 25.

58. Diane H. Mazur, "A Call to Arms," *Harvard Women's Law Review*, 39 (Spring 1999), notes that the debate has not been helped by the use of non-representative extreme cases and joins us in a plea for a moderate and reasoned analysis.

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