

A STUDY OF THE MILITARY EXCLUSION POLICY FOR WOMEN:
ITS ETHICAL DIMENSIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPACT

By

EILEEN RUSSELL

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Mara Sidney

And approved by

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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by EILEEN RUSSELL
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Thesis Director:
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Although American women have had a long, distinguished history working for the armed forces of the United States, the American military has been struggling with the integration of women into official combat positions from the colonial era until present day. Gender stereotypes regarding women's ability to perform combat duty permeate the debate surrounding their inclusion into combat roles. Opponents of women in combat roles point to women's overall physical fitness, female strength, pregnancy, motherhood, sexual activity and psychological stress as reasons to bar women from combat duty. They also question women's ability to cope with the military's existing male-dominated martial culture where sexual harassment continues to be a problem. Opponents of women in combat have questioned the effect that female integration will have on unit cohesion. Furthermore, they have argued, without evidence, that women cannot or should not kill, that the presence of women in combat will make the entire unit appear weak to the enemy and that servicemen will simply never get used to the idea of fighting alongside females since many of them were raised to believe they are the protectors of women.

Research shows that not only are these assumptions about women and their integration into combat roles wrong but they are also damaging women's careers inside the military and hindering progress towards equal citizenship for women in the broader society. By vigorously challenging these gender stereotypes and examining the successes of women's integration into combat positions in other countries, the American military can find ways to improve the inclusion of servicewomen into combat roles. Evidence suggests that such a change would mark advancement toward equal citizenship rights *and* responsibilities for women both inside and outside the military as well as progress toward gender justice.

This study utilizes a combination of qualitative and quantitative data gathered from books, articles, websites, research centers, congressional reports, research institute reports and scholarly journals to show how the American military's combat exclusion guidelines for women began, challenge the gender stereotypes employed to justify it, explore the fairness of the policy toward women both inside and outside the armed forces, study the efficacy of the policy within the military as an institution and explore ways the American military can improve the integration of women into combat roles by adopting some of the successful strategies of combat inclusive countries such as Israel and Norway.

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Introduction

The American military has been struggling with the integration of women into the armed forces since before the country's founding. During the colonial era, women were used by the military as a matter of necessity to cook, clean, nurse and to perform other menial jobs to free a male soldier for combat. Some of these women were employed by the military and had to face the rigors of battlefield operations even though they did not have the same military standing as servicemen. For decades after the colonial period, deeply-rooted social and cultural assumptions about the physical and emotional strength of women prohibited females from openly participating in a wide range of military operations. The only way women could join the military was if they disguised themselves as men. By the twentieth century, however, routine physicals denied women the chance to join the military secretly.

By the twentieth century, warfare was not only more technologically and strategically complex but also exacted more casualties than the wars fought in prior centuries. Thus, the sophistication of modern warfare helped create a demand for specific non-combat military roles which were designed to act as support systems for traditional combat. To fill this growing demand for people to fill non-combat jobs without sacrificing the number of male soldiers engaged in direct combat on the battlefield, the American military officially began recruiting women into its ranks as nurses starting in World War I. Later, in World War II, the military recruited women in other crucial non-combat roles.

However, military and social uneasiness about women participating in World War II laid the groundwork for the combat-exclusion policy for females in the armed forces that

existed for over seven decades. It also helped to foster the continued resistance to women serving in combat roles today. Furthermore, the female combat exclusion policy would have consequences for American women *outside* the military. It would redefine American female citizenship in a way that absolved women from shouldering the same burdens of citizenship men have regarding defense during national emergencies instituted by the Selective Service System.

The fairness and efficacy of the combat-exclusion policy generated intense debate on the many sides of this issue. Some debate the effect of the policy on military women. Others deliberate over the effect the policy has had over military operations in general. Still others ponder how the combat exclusion policy is *still* having an impact on American women outside the military.

This study seeks to understand both the fairness and efficacy of the combat exclusion policy for women both inside and outside the American military. This research is significant for four reasons. First, the exclusion of women from combat in the American military has had a negative impact on women serving in the armed forces. Women's careers in the armed forces have been stifled mainly because combat experience is a key requirement for military advancement. This lack of combat roles for women has resulted in limited representation of women in the armed forces, especially in the upper echelons and in key leadership positions. It has also left women out of the decision-making process concerning policies that directly impact women in the military (i.e. sexual harassment, violence against women). Second, the combat-exclusion policy may have had a negative impact on the American military itself. Since women are barred from most combat positions (particularly in the U.S Army, Navy and Marines) female

candidates swell the lower ranks while male candidates quickly rise to positions because of their combat experience. It can be argued that by limiting the number of equally qualified candidates (both male and female) available for higher positions in the armed forces the military has deprived itself from a larger talent pool from which to select and promote generals, admirals and commandants. Third, this research will explore how lessening disparities between both genders by the military may lead to greater gender parity between the sexes. Consequently, fairer treatment by the military would serve as a means of achieving equal citizenship for women. For example, the equalization of military treatment between the sexes may lead to a fairer, more gender-neutral Selective Service System which would utilize the talents of women and accept females as protectors of the nation as well as their male counterparts. Finally, this research will demonstrate that gender justice¹ through gender parity² is possible even in male-dominated fields such as the U.S. military. It will explore how gender justice by means of gender parity can be achieved by recognizing the ability of women to participate in

¹Oxfam defines gender justice thusly: “Gender justice is a human right; every woman and girl is entitled to live in dignity and in freedom, without any fear. Gender Justice is indispensable for development, poverty reduction, and is crucial to achieving human progress. Realizing it includes sharing of power and responsibility between women and men at home, in the workplace, and in the wider national and international communities.”

“Gender Justice,” Oxfam, accessed December 21, 2019, <https://policy-practice.oxfamamerica.org/work/gender-justice/>

²Insee defines gender parity as: “[...] is an instrument in the service of equality, which consists in ensuring the access of women and men to the same opportunities, rights, opportunities to choose, material conditions while respecting their specificities. The notion of parity constitutes the foundation of policies to combat the disparities between men and women [...] genuine equality between women and men aims at combating inequalities between women and men in the private, professional and public spheres.

“Parity and Equality Between Women and Men,” Insee (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies – Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques), last modified May 21, 2019, <https://www.insee.fr/en/metadonnees/definition/c1296>

issues regarding national defense and combat during times of national emergencies instead of disregarding women in such matters.

Researching the impact of the combat-exclusion policy for women in the American military may yield new strategies that could improve military readiness and operations while expanding roles for servicewomen. It may also force the military and the larger society to explore how this policy has affected the way in which we appraise the national defense responsibilities for adult American women during times of national emergency and how this appraisal may undervalue female American citizenship.

Five questions have guided my research:

- 1) How has the American military defined combat in ways that undervalue servicewomen's participation?
- 2) How has the combat-exclusion policy affected women in the armed forces?
- 3) What are the compelling arguments for and against the combat-exclusion policy?
- 4) How has the American military combat exclusion policy for women affected the overall readiness and effectiveness of the armed forces?
- 5) How did the female combat exclusion policy deviate from the concept of gender justice and gender parity and how closely does it adhere to both concepts now?

I answer Question 1 in Chapter 1 with information from books, articles and websites about American women in military history. I also use data from the Department of Defense, the U.S. Census Bureau and research centers. I address Question 2 in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 by utilizing research institute reports, congressional reports and legal, military,

health and public administration journals. I tackle Question 3 in Chapter 2 by making use of congressional reports, institute reports and military, legal and science journals. I attend to Question 4 in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 by using military history data, congressional reports and journals. Finally, I will answer Question 5 in Subchapters 2.6-2.7, 3.1-3.4, 4.4 and at the conclusion of the thesis.

In the first part of my thesis, I will review the establishment and evolution of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and the Women's Army Corps. Next, I will provide an overview of the Women's Army Integration Act of 1948. The creation of these women's corps and the passage of the aforementioned 1948 Act formed the legal and military basis for what would become the U.S. military combat exclusion policy for women. Next, I will provide a thorough historical overview of the evolution of American women's military participation from World War II until the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to demonstrate how the U.S military combat exclusion policy and its eventual repeal has impacted women. Then, my research will explore the arguments for and against the U.S. military combat exclusion policy for women including the physical, sexual, psychological, martial and social foundations for female combat-exclusion in the military. Next, my research will end with an exhaustive comparison of the American military policy for women's combat with Israel's and Norway's in order to examine ways to improve the integration of American servicewomen into military combat roles. Finally, the thesis will evaluate how the military's combat exclusion policy for women compares to the concepts of gender parity and gender justice.

With this research, I hope to explore ways to improve the U.S. military's relationship with American women. When it comes to national defense, we need military policies

that do not careen between using women as second-class soldiers only when they are desperately needed on one hand and putting women on a pedestal as recipients of male chivalry in an attempt to protect them from martial affairs on the other. This research will show how the combat exclusion policy began, why it persisted, what effect it had on women and how it can be changed by adopting policies from other countries. This research will show that equal citizenship, even in matters of national defense, is important not just to women but to the military and the broader society.

There are two main goals of my research. By providing the data listed above on the combat exclusion policy: 1) I seek to vigorously challenge the gender stereotypes that opponents of women in military combat often employ to resist efforts at increasing opportunities for female combat duty and 2) I want to demonstrate that the combat exclusion policy has helped maintain an unequal citizenship status for American women that has to be challenged in order to equalize the benefits and responsibilities between the sexes when it comes to issues surrounding national defense during national emergencies.

Chapter 1: The Legislation that Officially Began the Exclusion of Women from Military Combat Roles

The official start of the combat exclusion policy for American women started with the establishment of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, the creation of all-female military assist units during World War II and the passage of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act. However, American women have had a long history with the military that preceded the Second World War. The following Chapter will first briefly explore the first five major military conflicts in which American women played a role and how the combat exclusion policy evolved during each conflict. Next, I will examine the laws that created each part of the combat exclusion policy as well as key lawmakers and military leaders who supported and opposed it. Chapter 1 will fully examine each step in the legislative journey that created the combat exclusion policy so that the reader can fully appreciate how it began and who sustained or challenged it over its seven decades long history. It will start with a brief discussion of the historical context of what would eventually become the combat exclusion policy before the Second World War.

Subchapter 1.1: Historical Context of the Combat Exclusion Policy Prior to World War II

Women in America have had a long history with the U.S. military even though they were not officially allowed to join for decades. In fact, women have been assisting the American armed forces since before the founding of the country. The first major military conflict with documented female participation was the French and Indian War (1754-1763). During this time, women worked as camp followers performing essential domestic duties as nurses, cooks, seamstresses and sanitation workers. Other colonial women participated in the French and Indian War as paid contract laborers who toiled in

military hospitals as nurses, laundresses or doing a wide variety of manual labor. Because these jobs put women in the middle of battles and often exposed them to disease, some women died while performing their duties for the military. See Appendix 1 on pages 125-130 for further data on the estimated number of women who participated during the French and Indian War as camp followers and contract workers as well as deaths and prisoner of war statistics.

Necessity rapidly forced the inclusion of women in the budding American military during the next major military conflict; the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). During this war, women continued their roles as camp followers and contract workers. However, some women disguised themselves as male soldiers and joined General George Washington's army to liberate the colonies from the British. See Appendix 1 on pages 125-130 for more information about the number of women who contributed to the success of the Revolutionary War as well as their status and the estimated number of deaths from the conflict.

Despite Hollywood depictions of American women during the Civil War (1861-1865), such as scenes from *Gone with the Wind*, many women found ways to buck their society's gender norms to actively participate in the next major war effort, in both the Union and Confederate Armies. Through out this war, American women carried on as nurses and camp followers, albeit in a more limited capacity than in other wars. However, one role for women was completely eliminated by the military prior to the Civil War. It was during this period that the U.S. military stopped paying women as contract workers to assist the war effort. See Appendix 2 on pages 132-138 for a timeline of American women's involvement in the military and more on the evolution of the

combat exclusion policy. Despite the limited opportunities for women to officially serve American women still found ways to participate in the Civil War on both sides of the conflict. Nearly 600 nuns from over 20 Catholic orders were military nurses during the Civil War.³ Other women disguised themselves as men and fought for the Union or Confederate armies. See Appendix 1 on pages 125-130 for more information on the total number of women who joined in the war and their status when they died.

By the Spanish-American War of 1898, women faced more obstacles to block their participation in the military than the Civil War. The U.S. army no longer allowed women as camp followers or battlefield aides. In addition, draft physicals were conducted meticulously, making disguise impossible. However, the military during this period still reflected society's long-held view of women as caretakers. Therefore, Congress allowed the army to contract with certified female nurses. During the Spanish-American War hundreds of these nurses died of diseases like typhoid fever while caring from sick soldiers. See Appendix 1 on pages 125-130 for more on the total number of American nurses who died during the war.

Finally, World War I (1917-1918) marked a wide expansion in the number of non-combat military jobs for women. Nursing continued as an essential job during the war effort. The women of the Army Nurse Corps and the Navy Nurse Corps played important roles on the battlefield during the First World War. However, during this period women were also employed by the army for communications jobs such as telephone operators. The Navy also created a new military position for women. Yeoman (F) was the title granted by the Navy for female recruits who worked in naval communications positions, munitions makers, vehicle operators, mechanics, electricians

³James J. Kenneally, *The History of American Catholic Women* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 84.

or maintenance workers. Even though these jobs were supposed to be non-combat positions, many women in the military died in the service of their duties. See Appendix 1 on pages 125-130 for the total number of military women who died during World War I.

World War II, however, provided even more opportunities for American women to serve in an even wider array of specialized areas such as communications, clerical work, cryptology, data analysts, weather forecasting, machine construction, reconnaissance, management of vehicles, preservation of artillery and weapons testing. But first, a new military framework with legal sanction was needed to allow women in the United States to participate. This new military structure was needed because prior to World War II there had been no long-standing martial tradition of women openly joining the armed services in large numbers. Nursing jobs were the exception but even those roles were deemed separate from the military branches. In addition, a relatively small number of women were directly employed by the armed services to provide specific work.

World War II would demand a larger number of women to fill non-combat jobs in a more complex, specialized military structure. In order to meet the strong demand for women to fill non-combat roles while satisfying military and social demands to keep women's roles separate from men, the military would have to create gender-specific units for women. The introduction of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps bill by Representative Edith Nourse Rogers in Congress was the first step to accomplish this goal.

Subchapter 1.2: The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps

With the clouds of war on the horizon, U.S. Representative Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts introduced legislation for the creation of the Women's Army Auxiliary

Corps in May 1941. She was a witness to how women who participated in World War I were treated and swore that if American women ever had an opportunity to support the army again, they would do so with the same rights and benefits soldiers had.⁴ One author describes Rogers's experiences with the military during World War I. She states:

Rogers remembered the female civilians who had worked overseas with the Army under contract and as volunteers during World War I [...]. Because these women had served the Army without benefit of official status, they had to obtain their own food and quarters, and they received no legal protection or medical care. Upon their return home, they were not entitled to the disability benefits or pensions available to U.S. military veterans.⁵

Rogers was determined that if women ever served with the military on the frontlines during war again, they would be entitled to the same legal protection and benefits as servicemen.⁶ Rogers's bill lingered in Congress until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Prompted by this act of war, Congress finally approved the creation of the Women's Auxiliary Army; nearly a year after Rogers proposed it, on May 14, 1942 and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the bill into law on May 15, 1942. Oveta Culp Hobby was sworn in as the WAAC's first Director.⁷ Key parts of the law that created the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps also legally sanctioned the combat exclusion policy for women. The law states:

⁴"Women in the Army – Creation of the Women's Army Corps: Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)," U.S. Army, accessed July 11, 2019, <https://www.army.mil/women/history/wac.html>

⁵Judith A. Bellafaire, "The Women's Army Corps: A Commemoration of World War II Service," United States Army Center of Military History, CMH Publication 72-15, last modified February 17, 2005, <https://history.army.mil/brochures/WAC/WAC.HTM>

⁶Ibid.

⁷"Women in the Army – Creation of the Women's Army Corps."

[Section 1.] Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. That the President is hereby authorized to establish and organize in such units as he may from time to time determine to be necessary a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps for noncombatant service with the Army of the United States for the purpose of making available to the national defense when needed the knowledge, skill, and special training of the women of this nation. The total number of women enrolled or appointed in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps shall not exceed the number authorized from time to time by the President, and in no event shall exceed one hundred fifty thousand.⁸ [...]

[Section 12.] The corps shall not be a part of the Army, but it shall be the only women's organization authorized to serve with the Army, exclusive of the Army Nurse Corps. Nurses may be enrolled in the corps but nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect or change the Army Nurse Corps as now established by law.⁹

There are two noteworthy aspects of this law. Section 1 limits the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps to non-combat roles. Section 12 specifies that it is not part of the official armed forces but rather a single-gender supplementary unit for women. The question begs itself, why was this legislation written this way? Ambivalent public sentiment and military attitudes regarding the proper relationship between women and the military was a major factor. On one hand the military and the public did not feel that women should be able to join the military in the same way men did and if they did provide some services, it should be limited. For example, if a woman were to provide the military with services, it should be on a voluntary basis. It should also include (but not be limited to) work that would generally fall within a woman's traditional sphere of duties, such as nursing, cleaning and cooking.

On the other hand, the public and the military did realize women could provide crucial aid to the armed services to help it achieve its objectives. As non-combatants women

⁸*An Act to Establish a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps for Service with the Army of the United States, May 14, 1942, Public Law 554, U.S. Statutes at Large 56 (1942): 278-282, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/77th-congress/session-2/c77s2ch312.pdf>*

⁹Ibid.

could perform a variety of miscellaneous jobs that could free a male soldier to fight on the front lines. Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers had to take these mixed cultural attitudes into account when she drafted legislation for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. One author explained the challenge in creating this law. She states:

As public sentiment increasingly favored the creation of some form of a women's corps, Army leaders decided to work with Rogers to devise and sponsor an organization that would constitute the least threat to the Army's existing culture. Although Rogers believed the women's corps should be a part of the Army so that women would receive equal pay, pension, and disability benefits, the Army did not want to accept women directly into its ranks.¹⁰

Another factor that may have led to the creation of America's Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was the formation of the British Women's Auxiliary Army Corps decades earlier. Britain, one of America's longest and strongest allies, was already utilizing a women's auxiliary force for its military since World War I. In 1917, the British Army Women's Auxiliary Army Corps¹¹ was established with British female volunteers to assist servicemen in France.¹² The professionalism and achievements of the British WAAC proved to a skeptical American public and to Congresswoman Rogers that a women's auxiliary military unit was possible. It also showed how women could be utilized to help the war effort without crossing gender norms that both the general public and the military would find unacceptable.

¹⁰Bellafaire, "The Women's Army Corps: A Commemoration of World War II Service."

¹¹The British Army Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was later renamed Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps on April 9, 1918 when Queen Mary became the corps Commandant-in Chief.

¹²History.com Editors, "This Date in History: July 7 – British Women's Auxiliary Army Corps is Officially Established," History.com, last modified July 17, 2019, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/british-womens-auxiliary-army-corps-is-officially-established>

The final draft legislation was a compromise between the opposing forces. The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was designed to work *with* the Army 'for the purpose of making available to the national defense the knowledge, skill, and special training of the women of the nation.'¹³ The Army would supply up to 150,000 auxiliaries with food, uniforms, living quarters, pay and medical care. However, women would not be allowed to command men.¹⁴ Women who joined this new auxiliary would not receive equal pay or rank as their male counterparts. Bellafaire states:

The Director of the WAAC was assigned the rank of major. WAAC first, second, and third officers served as the equivalents of captains and lieutenants in the Regular Army, but received less pay than their male counterparts of similar rank. [...] For example, although the duties of a WAAC first officer were comparable to those of a male captain, she received pay equivalent to that of a male first lieutenant. Enlisted women, referred to as "auxiliaries," were ranked in descending order from chief leader, a position comparable to master sergeant in the Regular Army, through junior leader, comparable to corporal, and down to auxiliary, comparable to private.¹⁵

There were other ways in which women were discriminated against in the legislation. Even though the compromise bill did not bar auxiliaries from serving overseas, it did not grant them overseas pay, government life insurance, veterans' medical coverage, and death benefits provided to regular army soldiers. In addition, if WAAC members were captured, they had no international protections as prisoners of war.¹⁶ Congresswoman Rogers originally wanted women working with the military to have equal pay, benefits

¹³Bellafaire, "The Women's Army Corps: A Commemoration of World War II Service."

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

and protections. She achieved some of her objectives; however, Rogers had to accept the compromises to get the bill onto the floor.¹⁷

After long, heated debates which filled ninety-eight columns of the *Congressional Record* the bill finally passed the House of Representatives 249 to 86. It passed the Senate 38 to 27. On May 15, 1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the bill into law and set a recruitment goal of 25,000 for the first year. When the WAAC topped that goal in November of that year the Secretary of War, Henry I. Stimson authorized WAAC enrollment at 150,000. This figure became the original ceiling set by Congress.¹⁸

Subchapter 1.3: Achievements and Sacrifice of American Servicewomen Under the Combat Exclusion Policy During World War II, 1941-1945

Shortly after the creation of the WAAC, Congresswoman Rogers introduced legislation to give servicewomen more military benefits. Her efforts passed both Houses of Congress. On July 1, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the legislation which converted the WAAC into the WAC (Women's Army Corps) thus making it a part of the regular army of the United States. This change would give women the same rank, privileges and benefits as servicemen.¹⁹

The Women's Army Corps provided crucial support during the Second World War. When male fighters were in short supply, military planners understood that women could fill non-combat roles as clerks, intelligence officials, weather forecasters, PT [physical training] leaders, dental assistants and more to "free a man to fight".²⁰ Thus, with the

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹"Women in the Army – Creation of the Women's Army Corps."

²⁰Stephanie Gutmann, *The Kinder, Gentler Military: Can America's Gender-Neutral Fighting Force Still Win Wars?* (New York: Scribner, 2000), 137.

goal of fully utilizing the WAC's in as many areas of the U.S. Army as possible, the military deployed these women to three main parts of the Army. Forty percent were assigned to the Army Air Forces in jobs as weather observers and forecasters, radio operators and repairwomen, control tower operators, and aerial photograph analysts. An additional 40 percent of WACs went into the Army Service Forces²¹, working as cryptologists, photographers, telephone operators, mechanics, medical lab technicians, and clerical jobs. Twenty percent became part of the Army Ground Forces²², an area of the Army most reluctant to deploy women. The WACs assigned to the ground forces mostly worked in secretarial jobs and motor pools.²³

By the end of the war, WACs had served in every theater of operation. Sixteen WACs were awarded Purple Hearts.²⁴ In total, 160 WACs died from a variety of non-combat causes. In addition, the WACs received over 639 awards and medals from their service during World War II, including the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Soldier's Medal, the Bronze Star, the Air Medal and the Purple Heart. Three WAC units received the Presidential Unit Citation for meritorious service in Europe.²⁵

²¹The Army Service Forces, originally named the Army Services of Supply, was responsible for supply services and administrative services for most Army posts in the United States including the ports of embarkation through which troops and supplies flowed to forces overseas.

²²During World War II, the Army Ground Forces, which was made up of two divisions, the Army General Headquarters and the Ground Combat Arms, was responsible for training field forces and combat weaponry.

²³Emily Yellin. *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II*. (Simon and Schuster, Inc. – Free Press), 116.

²⁴Ibid, 133.

²⁵“Supporting the Nation: The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps & Women's Army Corps,” The Army Heritage Center Foundation. accessed July 25, 2019.
<https://www.armyheritage.org/75-information/soldier-stories/326-wacwwii>

Like the Army, The U.S Navy also established an all-female unit, but it took some effort from the First Family. The navy created the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) after First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt encouraged the Navy to acknowledge the need for women in its ranks.²⁶ Congress was slow to understand the need for women in the Navy but President Roosevelt recognized their value during wartime and signed the corps into law on July 30, 1942.²⁷

The women of the WAVES served in a much larger range of military occupations than had been available to women who worked with the Navy during World War I. The WAVES performed jobs in a variety of fields such as aviation, clerical work, medicine, communication, law, intelligence, science and technology.²⁸ Demand for the WAVES swelled as the Allies struggled to defeat the Axis powers in Europe and Asia. By the War's end there were over 8,000 officer WAVES and ten times as many enlisted WAVES in the service (about 2.5 percent of the Navy's total strength at the time).²⁹ In some places, they made up a majority of the Navy's personnel, and many stayed in service to help the Navy before, during and after World War II.³⁰ In total, 88,000

²⁶“WAVES – United States History,” United States History, accessed July, 25, 2019. <https://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1708.html>

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸“The First WAVES,” U.S. Navy History – Navy History and Heritage Command – Communication and Outreach Division. accessed July 25, 2019. <https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/2016/07/29/the-first-waves/>

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

WAVES participated in World War II.³¹ Some WAVES gave their lives during World War II and others received military recognition for their efforts. One author notes:

Although WAVES could not serve in combat zones or in combatant ships and aircraft, they nevertheless suffered casualties. Seven officers and sixty-two enlisted women died during World War II. Many received awards and decorations for their contributions to the war effort. In 1944 Cdr. Elizabeth Reynard received a letter of commendation from the secretary of the Navy for her work in developing the WAVES training program. The Navy awarded the Distinguished Service Medal to Capt. Mildred McAfee in November 1945 for her efforts as director of the Women's Reserve. Two WAVES received the Legion of Merit; three, the Bronze Star; eighteen, the secretary of the Navy's commendation with ribbons, and one, the Army Commendation Ribbon.³²

The Coast Guard formed its own non-auxiliary, all-female operation called SPAR (Semper Paratus, Always Ready). SPAR was established on November 23, 1942, and 13,000 women eventually joined the Coast Guard.³³ Author Olga Gruhzt-Hoyt describes the kinds of jobs SPARS held and their importance to the overall war effort. She states:

[...] They became yeoman, storekeepers, clerks, parachute riggers, chaplain's assistants, air traffic controllers, boatswain's mates, coxswains, radio operators, ship's cooks, vehicle drivers, pharmacist's mates, and even manned the new long-range navigation station). Many of the Coast Guard women were trained in communications, especially coding and decoding, which was important to the Coast Guard's mission [...].³⁴

³¹"World War II: 70 Years On," U.S. Census Bureau. Data Sources: Department of Defense, U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2003, American Community Survey, 2010 and 2013, University of Minnesota, Online Data Analysis System. accessed July 25, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/ww2infographic.pdf>

³²Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly: A History of Women in the U.S. Navy*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 128-129.

³³Paula Nassen-Poulos, *A Woman's War Too: U.S. Women in the Military in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1996), 49.

³⁴Olga Gruhzt-Hoyt, *They Also Served: American Women in World War II* (New York: Birch Lane Press Book – Carol Publishing Group, 1995), 140.

Some SPARs served in Florida, helping the U.S. submarines from the Groton, Connecticut base as they passed on their way to the Pacific via the Panama Canal. The Coast Guard women maintained radio contact with these subs, and with minesweepers and patrol planes on sea-rescue duty.³⁵

In a short period, the SPARs dominated most of the shore jobs at Coast Guard stations. They carried out many duties, from cooking to serving as personnel officers. By the war's close, the SPARs were kept active re-routing overseas mail to the guardsmen coming home from Alaska and the Pacific.³⁶ There are no records of SPAR deaths or military commendations.

The Air Force was the next military branch to create a female unit to assist servicemen during World War II. The Air Force created the WASP [Women's Air Force Service Pilots] in August of 1943. It was formed when the WAFS (Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron) and the WFTD (Women's Flying Training Detachment) merged.³⁷

WASP offered women the opportunity, for once, to have non-menial jobs. Molly Merryman asserts, "Although women have been active participants in all wars in which the United States has been involved, and although all branches of the U.S. military had women's auxiliaries in World War II, the WASP program remained unique because all of the women who served were pilots; thus they all served in positions desired and admired

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Yellin, *Our Mothers' War*, 115.

by men.”³⁸ Some men became jealous of women military flyers for this reason and even sought to terminate the program. Merryman explains:

Unlike the majority of women serving in the other military branches, the WASPs were not taking on jobs that men did not want to perform. Instead, they were flying the newest and best planes the U.S. military had developed, the fastest fighter planes and the heaviest bombers. They test-piloted experimental models and worked in the development of the weapons systems. Yet, although the missions performed by the WASPs were often dangerous, they were still safer than the combat missions that men, released from domestic duties by the WASPs, were sent overseas to perform. Many male pilot trainees came to resent the female pilots for this reason, and in the face of being sent overseas, created a significant media and public opinion campaign against the WASP program.³⁹

WASPs flew all plane models in the Army Air Forces’ (AAF)⁴⁰ cache which included multi-engine bombers, pursuit (fighter) planes, cargo planes, and even the earliest American military jets. WASPs flew an array of missions, including ferrying aircraft from factories to bases; towing targets for gunnery practice; test-piloting new and refurbished planes; flying military personnel; training male pilots; and piloting bombers to train navigators, gunners, and bombardiers.⁴¹ WASPs also flew a total of 60 million miles in training and missions during the two years that they were operational. They delivered 12,652 planes on domestic ferrying missions and conducted many different operational missions in nine air forces and commands.

³⁸Molly Merryman. *Clipped Wings: The Rise and Fall of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) of World War II*. (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 2.

³⁹Ibid, 4.

⁴⁰The Army Air Force (AAF) was an all-female auxiliary unit for a U.S. Army division during World War II known as the Ferrying Division of the Air Transport Command (ATC). The AAF mission was to deliver aircraft for the U.S. Army. The AAF only flew domestic missions.

⁴¹Merryman. *Clipped Wings*, 6.

These female pilots served as civilians and therefore received no insurance, military benefits or veterans' benefits. Thirty-eight WASPs died in service, twenty-seven in active service and eleven while training. Families of the thirty-eight female pilots could not place military service stars in their windows, nor did these WASPs receive military funerals.⁴² This unequal treatment of deceased WASP members was the direct result of the way WASP was formed. Unlike the other female-only reserves, corps and auxiliaries, the WASP was never authorized by Congress; therefore they were not entitled to military honors, including death benefits. The WASPs worked together to provide funds for the 38 women who died while serving as Air Force service pilots during World War II.”⁴³

The WASP was demobilized in December 1944, eight months before the end of World War II. It was the only women's service branch to disband before the end of the war.⁴⁴ The Director of the WASP, Jacqueline Cochran pushed for the full militarization of the WASP during World War II, but the legislation was defeated despite support. One of the main factors for deactivating the WASP was opposition from male pilots who were worried that they might lose their jobs to women after returning from military duty.⁴⁵

The battle to give WASP members military recognition continued for decades after World War II. They faced powerful opposition from many quarters including President Jimmy Carter, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Veterans Administration. The latter specifically asserted that if the WASPs were given veteran

⁴²Ibid, 8.

⁴³Sara Collini, “Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) of WWII.” National Women's History Museum. last modified April 23, 2019. [Slide 13 of 21 after “Start”]
<https://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/women-airforce-service-pilots-wasps-wwii>

⁴⁴Ibid, [Slide 14 of 21 after “Start”]

⁴⁵Ibid.

benefits, other civilian units could lobby as well.⁴⁶ However, the fight to give the WASP military honors persisted and they finally got them through legislative effort. Sara Collini states:

The WASPs continued to advocate for official military status. In the 1970s, they pushed legislation into Congress, calling for the full militarization of the Women Airforce Service Pilots. On November 23, 1977, more than 30 years after the WASP program started, President Jimmy Carter signed Public Law 95-202 giving the women who served as civilian Airforce pilots during WWII veteran status. In 2009, President Barack Obama signed a bill to award the WASPs Congressional Gold Medals, one of the highest civilian honors awarded by the United States Congress.⁴⁷

The last branch of the armed services to create an all-female division was the Marines, which did so in February 1943. This unit had no memorable acronym. Femarines and Glamarines were two of the cloying suggestions to call these new professional servicewomen. However, Marine Corps Commandant General Thomas Holcomb, who was originally against the idea of a Marines reserve unit for women, rejected the need for any nicknames. He decided if they were going to be trained as Marines, they should simply be called just that.⁴⁸

Like the WAVES, this unit was a part of the Marines and not an auxiliary-assist unit. Women Marines totaled 18,000 by 1943 and 23,000 by the end of World War II.⁴⁹ On June 12, 1948, Congress passed an act establishing the women Marines as a permanent

⁴⁶“Militarization of the WASPS,” PBS: American Experience, Fly Girls, accessed July 1, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/flygirls-militarization-wasps/>

⁴⁷Sara Collini, “Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) of WWII.” [Slide 17 of 21 after “Start”]

⁴⁸“70th Anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps Women’s Reserve,” The National World War II Museum,

⁴⁹C. K. Larson. *‘Til I Come Marching Home: A Brief History of American Women in World War II*, (New York: Minerva Center, 1995), 29.

part of the Regular Marine Corps.⁵⁰ Some women Marines held clerical jobs. They were basic typists, while others wrote publicity releases about the Marines in action. Some would check the bases' bulletin boards for news or put up world maps pinpointing war engagements.⁵¹

Not all female Marines held clerical jobs. After basic training in boot camp, many women went on to specific fields such as auto mechanics and servicing trucks and jeeps. They learned to drive military vehicles of all sizes. They provided transport and participated in war games.⁵² Some women were trained in airplane maintenance; some were in charge of supplies and payrolls. Still others were keypunch operators. Author Emily Yellin notes that, "women in the Marines eventually were allowed to fill more than 200 job categories. And some Marine women were trained in a few combat skills, although they were never allowed to use those skills outside of training."⁵³

Between the formation of the Marine Corps Women's Reserve on February 13, 1943 to December 7, 1945, eighteen women of that unit were killed according to an official report issued by Colonel Ruth Cheney Streeter on that date. Most of the deaths were the result of off-duty automobile accidents.⁵⁴ According to Streeter's 1945 report only three of those Marine Women Reservists were killed in the performance of their duties, meaning "that they were on a Marine base (or an official assignment) during work hours

⁵⁰Gruhzit-Hoyt, *They Also Served*, 127.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³Yellin, *Our Mothers' War*, 146.

⁵⁴Peter A. Soderbergh, *Women Marines: The World War II Era*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 88.

when the end came.”⁵⁵ There are no records of military commendations for the women of the Marine Corps Women’s Reserve.

In addition to the various auxiliaries, corps and women’s reserve units, military nurses continued to play key roles in World War II as they had done in prior wars. In the Army, they pioneered the flight nurse⁵⁶ role. Military nurses provided medical services in hazardous conditions. Casualties of World War II military nurses from all branches can be found in Appendix 1.

Despite the extraordinary work of women serving with the military during World War II, they did not receive equal treatment compared to their male counterparts. The combat exclusion policy for women ensured that their service and sacrifice would be treated as separate and unequal to a male soldiers’. Women could *only* serve in limited numbers in the auxiliaries, reserves or corps units specifically designated by the military for women’s non-combat duty. This had a profound impact on the way their wartime efforts would be acknowledged by the military. Unlike the men who served, women in the World War II era auxiliaries would not receive government life insurance, overseas pay, veterans’ medical coverage, soldiers’ death benefits or international POW protections. In addition, women who served in the auxiliaries would not receive the same military rank or pay as servicemen.

This separation of women’s non-combat work in the military led to profoundly unequal treatment. As a result, congressional reformers like Congresswoman Rogers and some progressive military leaders tried to remedy the status of women in the armed

⁵⁵Ibid, 89.

⁵⁶These flight nurses were attached to the USAAF, the United States Army Air Force. The USAAF was a component of the U.S. Army and was the predecessor of today’s United States Air Force.

forces after World War II. Their efforts resulted in the passage of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948, but even this law had a very limited impact on the improvement of women in the military because it still did not allow women equal access to combat duty.

Subchapter 1.4: The Women's Armed Services Integration Act

The Women's Armed Services Integration Act was signed into law by President Harry Truman on June 12, 1948.⁵⁷ It granted women permanent status in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. Under this law, the U.S. military would no longer be permitted to create special women's-only components to be used during military emergencies only. Instead, women would be treated as members of the regular armed forces and reserves. In addition, they would be subject to military authority, military regulations and be entitled to veteran's benefits.⁵⁸ However, the law still restricted the number of women who could serve in the military and the rank women could achieve. The law also limited women's duty to non-combat roles on aircraft and ships. Judith Bellafaire explains:

The act placed a two percent ceiling on the number of women in each of the services, restricted promotions to one full colonel or Navy captain as Chief of the Nurse Corps and/or Service Director, and limited the number of female officers who could serve as lieutenant colonels or Navy commanders. The law also granted the service Secretaries authority to discharge women without specified cause and restricted women from flying aircraft engaged in combat and from being assigned to ships engaged in combat.⁵⁹

While the law does not specifically bar women from combat duty in the U.S. Army or Marines, it does place women servicemembers under the authority of their superiors in

⁵⁷Judith Bellafaire, "America's Military Women – The Journey Continues," The Women's Memorial, Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. last modified 2017, <https://www.womensmemorial.org/americas-military-women>

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

both branches thus restricting their activities to whatever such commanders deem fit. Combined with the specified bans on women servicemembers performing on Naval and Air Force ships during combat, the Women's Armed Services Integration Act codified an effective ban on women engaging in any combat duty. This combat exclusion policy would continue to have a profound impact on women's military service in the Korean War and beyond.

Chapter 2: Impact of the Military's Combat Exclusion Policy on American Women from the Korean War to the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

The U.S. military's combat exclusion policy for women had a deep impact on women in the armed forces from its inception with the Women's Army Corps and later the Women's Army Integration Act. While these laws gave female members of the military benefits they had not had before, they also restricted their rank and their numbers while limiting them to non-combat duty. Women's careers in the armed forces would be limited by these laws since combat duty has typically been a major factor in military advancement. The next Subchapters will detail how women struggled under this separate but equal military combat policy during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, the War in Afghanistan and the War in Iraq and how the policy evolved with each major military conflict.

Subchapter 2.1: The American Combat Exclusion Policy During and After the Korean War, 1950-1959

By the Korean War, American women had been serving officially in the armed forces for over three decades and a reassessment of military policy towards women was in order. One major change regarding female servicemembers was the way in which they would be mobilized during national crises. For the first time in American history, women already in the service were called involuntarily to military duty along with the men. Mobilization of reserves, including women veterans, was announced in June 1950.⁶⁰ Further policy changes dealing with pregnancy and marriage caused many women to leave the military. Women were automatically discharged for pregnancy and women

⁶⁰Peter A. Soderbergh. *Women Marines In the Korean War Era*. (Westport: Praeger, 1994), 45.

under the age of 18 were barred from voluntary military service.⁶¹ In addition, the military first allowed women to be discharged upon marriage. Later they rescinded the practice, only to reverse the policy when women became pregnant in order to resign.⁶²

Perhaps the biggest change in military policy toward service women during the Korean War era was its re-evaluation of women's exposure to direct combat. The intense fighting in Korea caused some military leaders to question the wisdom of placing women in positions where they could be overexposed to combat. However, this sentimental focus on women as people who need protection could be overcome, especially when extra security for woman soldiers might cost the military. Authors Linda Witt, Judith Bellafaire, Britta Granrud and Mary Jo Binker illustrate:

The assignment of servicewomen to geographically isolated bases anywhere, not just overseas, or to bases where there were few other women was a recurring issue during the Korean War era. The armed forces, at the urging of the women's service directors, were reluctant to assign servicewomen singly or in small groups out of concern for their personal safety and morale, although at times this concern seemed out of step with local perception. [...] It also appears that the military could overlook concerns about isolated women or geographically isolated areas when it was difficult to hire civilian women in the area.⁶³

Despite the challenges they faced, women in the armed forces during the Korean War served as honorably as the female servicemembers who went before them. The authors ask us to consider the following statistics:

Although no servicewomen died in Korea, thirteen nurses died en route to assignments in the battle theater and three Air Force flight nurses died on medical evacuation

⁶¹"1950's: The Decade," The Women's Memorial. last modified 2017, <https://www.womensmemorial.org/history/detail/?s=1950sthe-decade>

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Linda Witt, Judith Bellafaire, Britta Granrud and Mary Jo Binker, *A Defence Weapon Known to be of Value: Servicewomen of the Korean War Era*, (New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2005), 228.

flights into or out of the theater. [...] The Navy Nurse Corps lost eleven nurses [...] when their plane crashed on takeoff after refueling [...] Another fifteen nurses were aboard the USS Benevolence [...] when [...] [it] sunk [...] off San Francisco. [...] One of the fifteen nurses [...] later died from shock and exposure. [...] The sole Army nurse casualty, died [...]when [her transport] crashed into the sea. [...] The last servicewomen to die, two [Air Force] flight nurses [...] were killed while on a December 1952 evacuation flight [...].⁶⁴

Although these women did not die from combat, they sacrificed for the military and their country just as their male counterparts did. Their service should not be overlooked just because of the military's non-combat definition of women's roles in the armed forces. Authors, Witt, Bellafaire, Granrud and Binker sum up this sentiment with the following:

Too often the debate about women and war is colored by lurid Hollywood images of women blazing away in ground combat or hand-to-hand fighting. The reality is that by simply being there and doing whatever jobs they [were] assigned, women, too, [lost] their lives.⁶⁵

Subchapter 2.2: The American Combat Exclusion Policy During and After the Vietnam War 1959-1975

Despite its public unpopularity, the Vietnam War shepherded in new gains for women in the military. While the country grappled with social change and debated the role of the U.S. military, nurses in the American armed forces were quietly preparing to be sent to war in 1964. Nursing schools virtually isolated nursing students from much of the public rancor over the war. This proved to be beneficial to the military's effort to increase the number of nurses to serve in Vietnam. Elizabeth Norman explains:

The antiwar movement, so prevalent on college campuses during the war, was missing from the hospital schools of nursing. During the 1960s, diploma schools-the term used to define hospital schools where the nurses received diplomas at the completion of three years of school-were the primary institutions for training nurses. [...] It was

⁶⁴Ibid, 218-219.

⁶⁵Ibid, 219.

a cloistered, carefully monitored world. There was little time for or interest in questioning government policy.⁶⁶

Until President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1965 deployment of combat troops, in-country [in Vietnam] nurses were few, but as the war escalated, the number of hospitals and nurses increased markedly. By June 1966, 390 army nurses were in-country; a figure that rose to 620 in June 1967, and to a peak of 906 in June 1968.⁶⁷ Despite this increase, the military failed women significantly by not providing proper combat training. According to Karen Dixon Vuic, "most of the nurses' training consisted of learning military protocol that often seemed irrelevant to new Army nurses who were unfamiliar with Army culture"⁶⁸ In addition, some nurses openly complained about their poor training for the frontlines. They considered "their experiences in basic training to be less than ideal in preparing them for what they would face in the war."⁶⁹

Even with their unequal combat training, American women in the Vietnam War served with distinction. Eight servicewomen died in the Vietnam War. Their names are listed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington D.C.⁷⁰ All of the women who died were military nurses. Seven were from the Army and one from the Air Force.⁷¹

⁶⁶Elizabeth M. Norman. *Woman at War: The Story of Fifty Military Nurses Who Served in Vietnam*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 9.

⁶⁷Karen Dixon Vuic. *Officer, Nurse, Woman: The Army Nurse Corps in the Vietnam War*. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010), 1-2.

⁶⁸Ibid, 44.

⁶⁹Ibid, 45.

⁷⁰Barbara Will, "American Women Died in Vietnam Too," *The Conversation*, accessed August 24, 2019, <https://theconversation.com/american-women-died-in-vietnam-too-84405>

⁷¹"The Eight Women on the Wall: Nurses Who Made the Ultimate Sacrifice," Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, March 31, 2016, accessed August 24, 2019, <https://vvmf.wordpress.com/2016/03/31/the-eight-women-on-the-wall/>

According to Barbara Will, they ultimately perished from, “shrapnel wounds, in helicopter crashes or of illness while ministering to the wounded. Because the war had no clear front, these women were often caught in the midst of combat zones, saving lives while risking their own.”⁷²

Even though military women faced many challenges in the armed forces during this time, the Vietnam Era and post-war period continued to usher in improvements to the military’s female combat exclusion policy. Military analyst, Kristy N. Kamarck explains:

The limit on the percentage of women in the military was eventually repealed in 1967 and the number of women serving continued to grow through the next three decades. [...] In 1977, Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress a definition of the term ‘combat’ and recommendations for expanding job classifications for female members of the Armed Forces. By 1978, women were permitted to be assigned permanent duty on noncombatant Navy ships, and up to six months of temporary duty on other ships.⁷³

Exactly why some of these changes occurred is unclear. However, by 1973 the U.S. military had abolished the draft to become an all-volunteer force.⁷⁴ During this transition period, it was difficult to maintain high military recruitment especially with increased anti-war public sentiment. The military may have relaxed some of its earlier restrictions on servicewomen in order to meet high recruitment levels.

⁷²Barbara Will, “American Women Died in Vietnam Too,” *The Conversation*.

⁷³Kristy N. Karmarck, “Women in Combat: Issues for Congress,” *Congressional Research Service*. December 13, 2016, accessed July 1, 2019, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42075.pdf>, 3

⁷⁴Bernard D. Rostker, “The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force,” *The RAND Corporation*, 2006, accessed August 24, 2019, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9195.html, 2.

Subchapter 2.3: The American Combat Exclusion Policy Before, During and After the Persian Gulf War, 1990-1991

Increased confusion over the military's female combat exclusion policy resulted in policy changes. In February 1988, the Department of Defense adopted the Risk Rule which set a single, department-wide standard for assessing positions and units from which servicewomen could be excluded. The Risk Rule barred women from non-combat units or missions if their risk of exposure to direct combat, enemy fire or capture were equal to or greater than their risk in the combat units they supported.⁷⁵ Each branch of the military were authorized to use their own mission requirements and the new Risk Rule to determine whether a non-combat position should be open or closed to female servicemembers.⁷⁶

This new policy regarding the female combat exclusion policy was in place at the start of the Persian Gulf War in 1990. However, the theory and execution of the Risk Rule was mightily tested on the battlefields of the first Iraq War. In fact, some women soldiers found themselves on the frontlines of the war despite the continued existence of the combat exclusion policy.

Women found themselves engaged in combat even when they were not assigned to combat units.⁷⁷ The needs of the military sometimes required servicewomen to perform

⁷⁵*Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate*, "Gender Issues: Information on Department of Defense's Assignment Policy and Direct Ground Combat Definition, last modified October 1998, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/230/226446.pdf>, 2.

⁷⁶*Ibid.* 2

⁷⁷"Women in the U.S. Navy: Historic Documents, Women in U. S. Military During Desert Shield/Desert Storm: Role of Women in the Theater of Operations," Naval History and Heritage Command, last modified, November 30, 2017, <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/diversity/women-in-the-navy/during-desert-shield-desert-storm.html>

in areas or on missions they otherwise would not have participated. In such cases, the military used the soldiers best qualified to carry out the mission, including women. Thus, there was a difference between implementing the written law for women in combat situations and using them because they were the best persons to maximize a successful outcome of the mission.⁷⁸

Just as with previous wars, American servicewomen endured the rigors of the battlefield and suffered fatalities just doing their jobs. One source describes their sacrifice:

Although women did not serve in units whose mission involved direct combat with the enemy, some women were subjected to combat. Five Army women were killed in action and 21 wounded in action. Two [Army] women were taken as Prisoners of War (POW). All casualties were the result of indirect causes, i.e., Scud attack, helicopter crash, or mines. One woman Marine driving a truck struck a mine in Kuwait, receiving no injuries. Four Marine women qualified for, and received, the Combat Action Ribbon having been engaged by, and returned fire against, bypassed Iraqi troops.⁷⁹

Partly due to the success of women soldiers during the Persian Gulf War as well as growing public and political pressure against the Risk Rule, Congress and progressive military leaders sought to alter parts of the combat exclusion policy for women. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1992 and 1993 repealed restrictions on the assignment of women to combat aircraft in the Air Force, Navy and Marines.⁸⁰ The act also established the 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. The purpose of this research roundtable was to fully examine the legal,

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰*Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, "Gender Issues,"* 2.

military and societal implications of changing the existing combat exclusion policy for women. In November 1992, the Presidential Commission recommended that servicewomen be prohibited from direct ground combat.⁸¹ In 1993, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin directed the services to open more specialties and assignments to women, both on combat and non-combat aircraft [in the Navy and Air Force] as possible under law. The Army and Marines were instructed to study more opportunities for women but direct combat positions were to remain closed.⁸² Les Aspin continued efforts to change the combat exclusion policy and expand roles for women:

The Secretary of Defense also established the Implementation Committee, with representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the military services, and the Joint Chiefs, to review the appropriateness of the Risk Rule. In November 1993, Congress repealed the naval combat ship exclusions and required DOD to notify Congress prior to opening additional combat positions to women. In January 1994, the Secretary of Defense, in response to advice from the Implementation Committee, rescinded the Risk Rule. In DOD's view, the rule was no longer appropriate based on experiences during Operation Desert Storm, where everyone in the theater of operation was at risk.⁸³

Secretary Aspin also created a new direct ground combat assignment rule that allowed all servicemembers to be assigned to any position for which they qualified. However this new directive still allowed for the exclusion of women from brigade level units whose primary mission is direct ground combat.⁸⁴ Under Secretary Aspin's policy changes, each military branch would now have to provide justifications for excluding women from some positions and assignments, however, it also gave the services generally broad discretion in defining which units and missions would remain closed to women because

⁸¹Ibid, 2.

⁸²Ibid, 2.

⁸³Ibid, 2.

⁸⁴Ibid, 2-3.

of strength requirements or prohibitive costs for providing living arrangements for women. The new directive would also allow the services to bar women from special-forces operations and long-range reconnaissance.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, for the rest of the Persian Gulf War and in the years afterwards, debates surrounding the issue of women serving in military combat roles persisted. The issue would again come to a head nearly a decade later, in another fierce ground war.

Subchapter 2.4: The American Combat Exclusion Policy During and After the Wars in Afghanistan, 2001-Present and Iraq, 2003-2010

Two main issues surrounded the involvement of women in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The first was the continued limitation of women soldiers to non-combat roles. Many have called for the end of this policy since the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have blurred what used to be clear enemy lines. U.S. soldiers, both men and women, can be attacked at any time and anywhere. Therefore, women are just as vulnerable to enemy attack as the men. The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America website describes the dangerous conditions in which females in the U.S. armed forces must operate.

Although excluded from official “combat roles”, there is no clear front line in the current conflicts. Many female troops in Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed to direct fire while serving support roles, such as military police, helicopter pilots, and truck drivers. Even those who don’t travel outside the security perimeter of a military base are constantly threatened by mortars and rockets. As one female veteran put it, “Life in Iraq and Afghanistan is combat.” Over 100 women have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan, and more than 600 have been wounded in action. And like their male counterparts, many are also returning home with invisible wounds, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, as a result of combat experiences.⁸⁶

⁸⁵Ibid, 3.

⁸⁶“Women Serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and Beyond.” Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, accessed February 2, 2011, <http://iava.org/content/women-military>.

From 2003 until November 2018 more than 165 American military women have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan and more than 1,000 have been wounded. Over 9,000 servicewomen have been awarded the Combat Action Badge.⁸⁷

Today, military women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan face the same dangerous missions as men. They are the target of IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices). Women often guard convoys to supply bases with vital equipment. These convoys are often the target of enemy forces and military women are hurt and killed just like their male counterparts. Women are returning back from missions in Iraq and Afghanistan with severe physical injuries, just as the men are.

However, even with all their hard work and sacrifice women still face discrimination. The questions beg themselves. Why can't military women who serve under the same conditions as their male counterparts receive the same career benefits that men do, and why does the military continue its non-combat policy for women in the military? Will the military ever reverse this policy? How will the military and society itself respond to a policy reversal? How has the current policy affected the armed forces with regards to effectiveness and unit cohesion? What do women both in and outside the military feel about a policy reversal? The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have reinvigorated these debates about combat roles for women. As we will see below the answers to these questions are complex; however finding solutions to them may define progress for women not only in the military but in the larger society.

⁸⁷Kasey Cordell, "On the Front Line: Embedded with American Female Combat Soldiers in Afghanistan," 5280: Denver's Mile High Magazine, November 2018, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.5280.com/2018/10/embedded-with-american-female-combat-soldiers-in-afghanistan/>

Subchapter 2.5: Eventual Repeal of the Policy

Outgoing Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta announced a lifting of the ban on female servicemembers in combat roles on January 24, 2013.⁸⁸ The change in policy was due, in part to the courage and sacrifice female soldiers showed on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. According to senior defense officials, Secretary Panetta made the decision with the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁸⁹ Panetta directed all military departments to examine their occupational standards and assignment rules and make recommendations for opening all combat roles to servicewomen no later than January 1, 2016.⁹⁰

On December 3, 2015, incoming Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter directed the military to open all combat positions to women with no exceptions. This policy change was made following exhaustive studies completed by all military departments and by the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) which examined issues such as unit cohesion, women's health, equipment, facilities modifications, propensity to serve and international experiences of women in combat.⁹¹ These studies included an assessment of the gender-neutral occupational standards for combat roles where such standards existed. On March 10, 2016, Secretary Carter announced that the services' and SOCOM's execution plans for the integration of servicewomen into direct ground combat roles was approved.⁹² The

⁸⁸Ernesto Londono, "Pentagon Removes Ban on Women in Combat," Washington Post, last modified January 24, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/pentagon-to-remove-ban-on-women-in-combat/2013/01/23/6cba86f6-659e-11e2-85f5-a8a9228e55e7_story.html

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Kristy N. Karmarek, "Women in Combat: Issues for Congress," Summary.

⁹¹Ibid, Summary.

⁹²Ibid, Summary.

study of the effects of this policy change is ongoing and is being reviewed by both military leaders and Congress members. Kristy Karmarck explains:

Some concerns about the implementation of the new policy remain, including the recruitment, assignment, and career management of women into the new roles, and the impact of integration on unit readiness. Congress has oversight authority in these matters, and may also consider issues such as equal opportunity, equal responsibility (such as selective service registration), and the overall manpower needs of the military.⁹³

Subchapter 2.6: Impact of the Combat Exclusion Policy on the Careers of American Women in the Military

Despite the repeal, the military's combat exclusion policy for women has had a profoundly negative effect on servicewomen's careers. Even though servicewomen have had access to a large majority of jobs offered in the military, the remaining fraction of positions from which they were barred had a negative effect on their chances of career advancement. In most of the services, women have access to 90% of military occupations. However, this number is deceptive. The remaining 10% of jobs that women in the military are barred from are the very ones they need to advance. Each branch of the military that engaged in combat had its own set of female combat exclusion rules allowed women limited access to military specialty fields. Authors Kelty, Kleykamp and Segal note:

Women have access to more than 90 percent of the *occupations* in the Army, but are excluded from a number of occupational fields (for example, infantry, armor, Special Forces), which amount to a third of all Army jobs. [...] As with the Army, more than 90 percent of Navy positions are open to women. [...] In the Marine Corps, more than 90 percent of occupations are open to women—again with exclusions for direct combat-related occupations. However, because the Marines are highly combat-focused, the exclusion of females in these occupations means women are ineligible to serve in 38 percent of all Marine Corps jobs. The Air Force is the least restrictive,

⁹³Ibid, Summary.

with 99 percent of occupational specialties and positions open to women.⁹⁴

The combat restriction policy continued to have a negative impact on military women's careers. Many experts and notable institutions who study the issue have acknowledged this fact. Lucinda J. Peach listed a few of them below. She states:

As Senator John Glenn has stated: "One of the ways you advance in a military career is either performance in combat or prospective performance in combat." Air Force Chief of Staff General Merrill A. McPeak and Marine Corps Commandant General Carl Mundy, Jr. have acknowledged that women's careers are handicapped by their exclusion from combat assignments. A General Accounting Office (GAO) study completed in 1989 concluded that "people serving in combat specialty career fields are generally promoted more rapidly than people in non-combat specialties, and are generally promoted to higher levels."⁹⁵

By prohibiting servicewomen from combat roles, they have been denied some of the most prized and influential positions. The combat restriction policy also limited military women's admission to a variety of non-combat jobs which were routinely set aside for men who rotated through combat and non-combat positions throughout their military careers. Consequently, this further limited the number of women who were able to join the military. The combat restrictions therefore strictly limited women's opportunities to take advantage of the many benefits it made available to servicemen such as job-training services and education grants.⁹⁶ As David R. Segal, et al state, these limitations "affect service entry and both the rate and height of [servicewomen's] ascent in the organization should they choose to remain for a [military] career."⁹⁷

⁹⁴David Segal, et al., eds., "The Military and the Transition to Adulthood." *The Future of Children* 20,no. 1 (Spring 2010), 185 Published by Princeton University: Project Muse

⁹⁵Lucinda J. Peach. "Women at War: The Ethics of Women in Combat," (Online Copy). *Minerva: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military* 12, no.4 (Winter 1994), page 13 of 33.

⁹⁶Ibid. page 13 of 33.

⁹⁷David Segal, et al., eds., "The Military and the Transition to Adulthood." *The Future of Children*, 185.

One should also consider the fact that there are subtle ways in which a person's rank affects their experiences in the military and hinders their ability to command respect.

The authors state:

Gender as social capital within the military is expressed in assumptions about and direct challenges to women. For example, having particular qualifications (badges and tabs) readily visible on one's uniform is limiting for women, who have fewer opportunities for earning such awards or distinctions. Women have to resort to "pulling rank" more than men to gain compliance from subordinates. Women endure numerous kinds of "tests" (for example, sabotage, constant scrutiny, and indirect threats) that men do not necessarily experience to prove they are capable of serving in the military.⁹⁸

An exhaustive study completed in 1994 further revealed the extent to which the combat exclusion policy affected women. The focus of the study was on what were called the middle ranks of the military in three of the largest branches (Army, Navy and Air Force). As J. Norman Baldwin noted when describing the parameters of the study, "the middle ranks are above the ranks in which promotions are automatic and below the ranks in which there is a paucity of data on female promotions."⁹⁹ The study found that, "women are underrepresented in military promotions and the degree of underrepresentation increases dramatically with rank."¹⁰⁰ About promotion rates in specific branches, Baldwin notes the following:

In sum, the findings indicate the promotion record of female military officers varies by service. The impressive promotion rates of female Air Force officers most likely reflect the latitude of the Air Force's combat exclusion policy, the plethora of Air Force jobs open to women (97%), and the relative progressiveness of the youngest of

⁹⁸Ibid, 186.

⁹⁹J. Norman Baldwin. "Female Promotions in Male-Dominant Organizations: The Case of the United States Military." *The Journal of Politics* 58, no. 4 (November 1996), by the University of Texas Press, 1186.

¹⁰⁰Ibid, 1193.

the three services. [...] The records of the Army and Navy, in turn, are most likely affected by entrenched male traditions and inclusive, narrowly interpreted combat exclusion policies that prevent access to common career paths to the highest ranks. Female Naval officers also do not have the experience necessary for promotions to the top of the Navy's hierarchy because, until recently, they have been denied the opportunity to command at sea.¹⁰¹

One of findings of the study was that the, “the small numbers of women promoted as percentages of total officers promoted cannot be overlooked. Shrinking with rank, these percentages signal the presence of glass ceilings in the military.”¹⁰²

Clearly, the effects of the combat exclusion policy have been negative for military women's careers. As we have seen above, women hit the glass ceiling of the armed forces through under-representation at the higher echelons of leadership where servicemembers typically earn more money, enjoy greater status and are a part of the decision-making process of the institution. Perhaps the military could begin to end the disparity between servicemen's and servicewomen's military careers by more closely adhering to the principles of gender justice through gender parity. By recognizing women's abilities, strengths and talents the military could use gender-norming to test women for job appropriate tasks instead of judging them by male standards that are not necessarily job specific. By ending combat exclusion for women and allowing them a path towards career mobility within the armed forces, the military could greatly improve career opportunities for servicewomen. One way the armed forces could do this is by applying the principles of gender parity. Such a strategy would allow equal access to combat job opportunities (while recognizing women's unique skills and talents). Furthermore a new policy that supports the principles of gender justice would promote

¹⁰¹Ibid, 1193.

¹⁰²Ibid, 1195.

power-sharing by servicemen and servicewomen in which both genders have access to all leadership positions, including combat positions. In this way, the military would recognize women's responsibilities as citizens to national defense and greatly improve women's prospects within the armed forces.

Subchapter 2.7: Impact of the Combat Exclusion Policy on Women Outside the Military

One argument used against women in combat is that allowing this change will make women subject to the draft. Another argument for women in combat that opponents have not been able to successfully counter is the idea that denying women the right to combat duty also denies them the full benefits *and* responsibilities of citizenship. The following subchapter will first examine the challenges and opportunities that may arise from changing the Selective Service system to a gender-equal registration format. Finally, this subchapter will explore how the exclusion of women from combat roles negatively affects the way society regards their citizenship and ways to promote equal citizenship for women by employing gender justice and gender parity standards.

Selective Service

Opponents of women in combat argue that if women are allowed combat roles, the rationale for excluding them from Selective Service registration would be nullified. Subsequently, they could be involuntarily pressed into military service during a national emergency. Opponents of women in combat see this as a negative because they do not believe women should be concerned with issues of national defense. However, such a change could be counted as a positive step because the Selective Service system would be treating men and women equally in its application. This change would also boost the number of qualified registrants for military service since both genders would be required

to register and not just one. That would be a good thing for the U.S. military and the nation in the event of an emergency. Our national readiness would be greatly improved.

Whether opponents of women having to register for Selective Service approve or not, recent court developments may change the way this system deals with women. In February 2019, a federal judge ruled “[...] that the law requiring men -- but not women -- to register for a U.S. military draft is unconstitutional [...]”¹⁰³ Judge Miller’s justification for his ruling was further explained:

Judge Gray Miller of the U.S. Southern District of Texas ruled Friday that the Military Selective Service Act discriminates on the basis of gender. He said the U.S. Selective Service System’s arguments in defense smacked of “archaic and overbroad generalization about women’s preferences.”¹⁰⁴

Despite this ruling, only Congress can change the Selective Service system. However, this court decision could be counted as yet another argument against barring women from military combat since the federal judge in the case repudiated sexist generalizations often used about women’s physical capabilities and personal preferences when it comes to issues of national defense.

Citizenship

All too often during national political discussions, the American people talk about their inalienable rights as citizens. What are less frequently debated are the *responsibilities* of citizenship. Without fulfilling these responsibilities, can one truly be considered a full citizen? Lorry Fenner suggests that women are less than full citizens until they are considered for the draft, just as men are. She states:

¹⁰³Patricia Kime. “After Court Ruling, Here’s What’s Next for Women and the Draft,” Military.com. February 26, 2019. accessed May 8, 2019.
<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/02/26/no-women-dont-have-sign-draft-yet-heres-whats-next.html>

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

When we finally and explicitly define the basic qualifications for citizenship, since we posit that all humans have inalienable rights, the question of citizens' responsibilities and obligations is crucial. If these are considered "qualifications," citizenship should not be granted to any who do not uphold the obligation.¹⁰⁵

Fenner recognizes that America has not formally required military service as a necessary part of citizenship but states that we as a nation "act as if military service (at least for men) confers some added status or earned privilege in or society."¹⁰⁶ Evidence of the deference we bestow on military service is shown by the fact that political candidates from both major parties tout their military backgrounds as qualifications for running for office. Once in office they continue to advertise their military service as reasons to continue serving as political leaders. Women are at a great disadvantage when it comes to using military service as a benefit in society. First, women are not considered for the draft. Second, even if women do serve, they are denied combat roles. As a result, their military service is not considered as important as men's. In sum the result of having different citizenship standards based solely on sex are greater benefits in society for one group (men) and lesser benefits for women.

Other feminist voices concur. Judith Stiehm asks: "if women are not prepared to make a commitment to nonviolence as a way of life, and to advocate it for others (especially their 'protectors') as well, shouldn't they assume their share of responsibility for exercising legitimate violence?"¹⁰⁷ Jean Bethke Elshtain likewise concludes that it is 'civic bad faith' for women to be content having men fight and die for them.

¹⁰⁵Lorry M. Fenner. "Either You Need These Women or You Do Not:," 25-26.

¹⁰⁶Ibid, 26.

¹⁰⁷Lucinda J. Peach. "Women at War-The Ethics of Women in Combat." *Minerva*, page 17 of

Consequently, fairness to men requires that women take on proportionate risks and responsibilities for the legitimate exercises of national defense.¹⁰⁸

Fenner encapsulates the idea that women should be held to the same citizenship standards as men with the following:

Elshtain, and sociologist Judith Stiehm, also posit that increasing the number of members of marginalized groups in the military, and making everyone liable for service in the state's legitimate use of force in support of national interests, demands that everyone take responsibility for defining those interests and deciding when to use state-sponsored violence to achieve them. We could then better expect citizens to assist with or be committed to national or community goals. No citizen should be able to abdicate this responsibility. When a citizen disagrees with policy, or the use of force, he or she will no longer be able to silently acquiesce, tacitly condone, or cheerlead from the sidelines.¹⁰⁹

The continuing argument that women should not be considered for battle only reinforces the stereotypes that women are indeed the weaker sex, in need of protection and that masculinity should be aligned with war and domination. The debate surrounding citizenship standards therefore is intertwined with American society's outdated conceptions of gender roles for men and women.

The best way to begin a path toward equal treatment by the armed forces and thus equal citizenship for women is through gender justice and gender parity standards applied to military recruitment. Instead of leaving women out of national defense procedures because of long-held gender stereotypes, the military should instead draw from the talent pools of both genders in any newly-reformed Selective Service System. It would then be up to the Department of Defense and military leaders to determine which skills are needed in the event of a national emergency regardless of gender. Such an improved

¹⁰⁸Ibid, page 17 of 33.

¹⁰⁹Lorry M. Fenner. "Either You Need These Women or You Do Not." *Gender Issues*, 29.

system would give women the same responsibilities of men when it comes to registering for Selective Service and playing an active role as informed citizens about national security issues such as global conflicts. In this way, both men and women would have equal duties to stay educated about such issues and remain civically engaged (by voting and contacting their representatives) when it comes to national defense. Therefore, this improved Selective Service System would employ elements of gender justice and gender parity since it would equalize women's involvement in the Selective Service process while also demanding equal responsibilities for women's citizenship regarding national emergencies.

Chapter 3: Assessment of the Arguments Used for Preserving the Combat Exclusion Policy

Perhaps the most important obstacles to changing the combat exclusion policy were the many concerns over women's ability to undertake combat roles. The following chapter will assess the arguments regarding physiological, sexual and psychological issues about women serving in combat roles. It will also assess the U.S. military's existing martial masculine culture and explore the challenges it creates against women in combat roles. After each assessment, I will offer a brief discussion about how gender justice and gender parity goals could be used to improve military standards and challenge gender stereotypes.

Subchapter 3.1: Challenging the Arguments Used Against American Women in Military Combat Concerning Female Physiology

Women's physical ability has always been a question raised by those who oppose allowing women in military combat. They assume that women are not strong enough or physically fit enough to do the job. They also assume that female-related issues such as pregnancy and motherhood are factors that could distract a servicewoman from performing her duties. The following subchapter will carefully evaluate these gender-specific issues.

Physical Strength and Physical Fitness

One of the issues that frequently arise in the debates about whether or not women in the U.S. military should be allowed to have combat duties is the matter of women's basic physical ability to perform combat-related tasks. There are some objective sources that have been used to measure women's physical abilities and limitations, including the tests the U.S. Army conducted to gauge the relative strengths of men and women in the armed

forces. Authors Lorry M. Fenner and Marie E. deYoung summarized the tests which found disparities between male and female strength, aerobic activity and overall fitness in 1992. According to the authors, the Army's Physical Training Manual showed the following:

- The average 18-year-old man is 70.2 inches tall and weighs 144.8 pounds, whereas the average 18-year-old woman is 64.6 inches tall and weighs 126.6 pounds.
- Men have 50 percent greater total muscle mass, based on weight, than women.
- A woman who is the same size as her male counterpart generally is only 80 percent as strong. Therefore, men usually have advantage in strength, speed, and power over women.
- Women carry about 10 percent more body fat than men of the same age. Because the center of gravity is lower in women than in men, women must overcome more resistance in activities that require movement of the lower body.
- Women have less bone mass than men, but their pelvic structure is wider. This difference gives men an advantage in running efficiency.
- The average woman's heart is 25 percent smaller than the average man's. The man's heart can pump more blood with each beat, thus creating a slower resting heart rate (five to eight beats per minute slower) in males.
- Women become fatigued faster than men because their heart rates are five to eight beats faster per minute.
- The lung capacity of men is 25-30 percent greater than that of women.
- Women respond to heat stress differently from men. Women sweat less, lose less heat through evaporation, and reach higher body temperatures before sweating starts.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰Lorry M. Fenner and Marie E. deYoung. *Women in Combat: Civic Duty or Military Liability?* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2001), 132.

These physiological differences were the foundation upon which the Army began gender-norming--the process of holding women to lesser physical performance expectations than men. By 1998-1999 the Army publicized the new physical fitness standards for women. They were meant to lessen gender scoring disparities.¹¹¹ However, the process of gender-norming was not without controversy. First, it raised questions about whether or not the military should be changing its physical fitness criteria at all. It also fueled a backlash against women in the military especially from men in the armed forces. Mackubin Thomas Owens reflects some of the feelings of military men. He states:

The physical differences between men and women have generated a series of undeniable double standards in the military. In practice, the desire for equal opportunity usually becomes a demand for equal results, and brings about a watering down of standards in order to accommodate women's generally lower physical capabilities. [...] Unfortunately, this practice undermines morale by attacking the crux of the military ethos: fairness. Such double standards cause resentment in many military men, a resentment that leads to cynicism about military women in general—even those who have not benefited from a double-standard and are performing their duties with distinction.¹¹²

Mackubin Thomas Owens further argued that the disparity between men and women's relative strengths, aerobic activity and fitness could hypothetically jeopardize military missions. He states:

These differences have had an adverse effect on the U.S. military's effectiveness. They are also excellent reasons to keep women out of FSCs [Field Service Companies]. Women may be able to drive five-ton trucks, but need a man's help if they must change the tires. Women can be assigned to a field-artillery unit, but often can't handle the ammunition. These are exactly the sorts of physically demanding

¹¹¹Ibid, 133.

¹¹²Diane Andrews Henningfeld, ed., *Should Women be Allowed to Serve in Combat in the U.S. Armed Forces?* (Farmington Hills: Greenhaven Press, 2008), 41.

jobs a mechanic in an FSC would be expected to perform.¹¹³

The feelings described by Owens are common among men in the military, even today with all the strides women have made both in the armed forces and in the larger society. Military men argue, “[Women] say they want equal rights—well then, they should be held to the same fitness standards we are. [...] How can they expect equal rights, if they aren’t able to do the exact same things we can (run as fast, do as many push-ups, etc)?”¹¹⁴

Opponents of women in combat argue that the use of stringent physical fitness tests was a necessary part of determining combat roles during the Persian Gulf War. Several Congressional hearings during the Gulf War were attended by high-level members of the armed forces and they strongly reflected this idea. The Persian Gulf War reignited the debate about military physical strength requirements during combat and those arguments lingered after the war’s conclusion.

Following the first Persian Gulf War in 1990-91, Congress considered legislation that would authorize women in the military to serve in combat aircraft units. After a Senate hearing in July 1991, Congress repealed women’s exemptions from combat aviation, and established a \$4 million commission to conduct a study of what that would mean. President George H. W. Bush selected fifteen members to serve on the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. Its purpose was to examine every facet of the issue of women in combat.

The commission’s study period was from March to November 1992. A voluminous amount of information was gathered and published. Testimonies from many different

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Carol Cohn. “How Can She Claim Equal Rights When She Doesn’t Have to Do as Many Push-Ups as I Do?” *Men and Masculinities*. (October 2000), 136

concerned groups were taken into account. These included recommendations from: representatives of the Department of Defense, all service communities, officers and enlisted men and women, military family support professionals, combat veterans, religious figures, cultural leaders, training instructors, physiologists, military historians, and active duty men and women. The official report of the commission's findings was published on November 15, 1992. A majority of commissioners voted against the assignment of women to combatant aircraft, land combat and special-forces units, and most combatant ships.

Some people were shocked that President George H. W. Bush did not ask the Defense Advisory Council on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) to take on the task of evaluating issues facing women in the military since it had a long history of assisting the military with the mobilization of women.¹¹⁵ However, when President Bush named the members of the 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Services, it became clear why he did not choose the more progressive DACOWITS to advise him. The 1992 Presidential Commission was stacked with conservative leaning members who would undoubtedly argue against increasing combat positions to females.¹¹⁶ They were more likely to suggest taking steps backward to minimize military women's involvement even further.

After the Presidential Commission's two years of study which included thousands of hours of testimony, tours of bases, and interviews with a wide variety of people, the

¹¹⁵Lorry M. Fenner. "Either You Need These Women or You Do Not: Informing the Debate on Military Service and Citizenship." *Gender Issues*. (Summer 1998), 19.

¹¹⁶Ibid, 19.

Commission's findings yielded little rewards for women in the military.¹¹⁷ The very few liberal leaning members of the Commission backed the notion that assignments should be based on abilities and standards rather than on gender. The moderates on the Presidential Commission also did not approve of women in ground combat. They were worried about the possibility of women being captured. Instead, the moderates agreed to opening all shipboard positions to women except those on submarines (because of privacy issues). They admitted that their position was based less on the idea that military women lacked the ability to do those jobs than on how the public might perceive a policy shift regarding women in military combat due to cultural norms about proper spheres of activity for men and women.¹¹⁸

The conservative members of the Commission initially walked out rather than sign on to the moderate solution. Conservatives asserted that primarily women officers wanted combat inclusion only for monetary and selfish reasons, that they were unable to perform tasks under actual combat conditions and that they would disturb male bonding and unit cohesion.¹¹⁹ Also, as when women were sent to sea in the early 1970s and when missile jobs were opened to women in the 1980s, conservatives argued that servicemen's wives did not approve of the integration of women because of the possibility of illicit sexual activity. They not only argued that women should be excluded from all combat positions but even suggested that the military take a step back by removing women from other career fields and reducing the number of women in the military in general.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷Ibid, 19.

¹¹⁸Lorry M. Fenner. "Either You Need These Women or You Do Not," *Gender Issues*, 19.

¹¹⁹Ibid, 19.

¹²⁰Ibid, 19.

Finally, conservatives insisted that proponents of opening combat jobs should not only have to prove that women did not hurt military effectiveness but that they improved it. In general, the conservative members of the Commission did not believe in using historical evidence to back the argument that women were capable of combat duty and they argued against the validity of tests and experiments to prove otherwise. All they could present in support of their position were anecdotal evidence and traditional cultural attitudes towards women in combat. These conservatives blamed feminism for pushing changes for military women, which in their view, would cripple service effectiveness.¹²¹

Some of the arguments given in the 1992 Presidential Committee against women serving in combat roles¹²² due to their inability to match male levels of strength mimic earlier arguments against women in combat roles. They included the familiar arguments

¹²¹Ibid, 19-20.

¹²²Each branch of the military included their own definition of combat for the commission. As described by the following Center for Military Readiness website:

“The Definition of Direct Ground Combat,” Center for Military Readiness, accessed September 20, 2019,

<https://www.cmrlink.org/data/Sites/85/CMRDocuments/OfficialDefinitionsofDirectGroundCombat.pdf>

Official definitions of combat for all the services make it clear that direct combat is more than the experience of being shot at or being in danger. All of the definitions stress physical proximity to and violent conflict with the enemy, combined with an inherent risk of capture in contested territory, waters, or airspace.

- The Department of Defense currently defines "combat mission" as "A task, together with the purpose, which clearly requires an individual unit, naval vessel or aircraft to individually or collectively seek out, reconnoiter and engage the enemy with the intent to suppress, neutralize, destroy or repeal that enemy." (*CF 1.5*)
- The Army definition adds: "Direct combat takes place while closing with enemy by fire, maneuver, or shock effect in order to destroy or capture, or while repelling assault by fire, close combat, or counterattack. " (*CF 1.6*)
- The Navy definition adds: "The normal defensive posture of all operating units is not included in this definition." (*CF 1.7*)
- The Air Force definition of aerial combat adds: "Delivery of munitions or other destructive material against an enemy, or aerial activity over hostile territory where enemy fire is expected and where risk of capture is substantial." (*CF 1.8*)

about women not having the same muscle mass, weight, strength, aerobic endurance, and upper body strength to carry out ground combat roles. They also included the notion that because women could not carry their full load they would rely more on their male counterparts, thus weakening unit morale and cohesion. The 1992 Commission also found that women could not completely overcome their physical performance weaknesses to match that of men. Instead, it found that women must be treated differently from males, even though they can still achieve high levels of physical performance. Furthermore, although gender physical performance differences can be alleviated with training, they cannot be fully ignored during unit drills.¹²³

Are these arguments valid? Are the fitness tests equally fair to both men and women or should women be excluded from greater opportunities in the military including combat roles because of their perceived physical limitations in comparison to men? Some scholars do not believe so. Although military men's resentment about gender-normed physical training standards largely dominated the debate and captured the interest of some legislators and commentators, supporters of women in combat have proposed a variety of arguments in response.

Some supporters of women in combat explain that the debate about women's physical fitness training might seem sensible if there were a clear link between men's fitness standards and particular job requirements-but this is not the case. In fact, there are not clear relationships between specific military physical training standards and the real physical requirements of the tasks performed. In reality, physical standards are supposed

¹²³Lorry M. Fenner. "Either You Need These Women or You Do Not," *Gender Issues*. 19.

to measure general fitness and not the ability to accomplish specific jobs.¹²⁴

Some military women supporters also point out that technology has lessened the need to possess a great deal of physical strength. Rosemarie Skaine explains:

Division of labor may have been useful in earlier times, but it is less so now. Technology [...] has decreased the importance of physical strength and reproduction. How society deals with gender differences is very important. Women's roles in the military are a cultural interpretation of gender. Cultures can stress gender equality or gender differences, and stressing either will have an effect on the military women's role. [...] The greater the emphasis on ascription by gender (and thereby the less emphasis on individual differences), the more limited women's military role.¹²⁵

All branches of the military seem to reflect the sentiment that technical training trumps physical strength. The technical advances in each branch have changed the way every man and women fight in the modern American military. With this in mind, perhaps strength requirements for each branch of the armed forces should only be used rarely and for specific military positions, instead of being used to bar women from most combat roles or duties that require above average physical strength. Skaine describes these sentiments with the following.

Some specialties such as Special Forces still require uncommon physical strength, but their numbers are small and their requirements prohibit an overwhelming majority of men and women from becoming members. [...] There will always be a gender overlap [where] the strongest and largest women will be stronger and larger than the smallest men eligible for combat duty. [...] [Therefore] strength requirements should be decided by position [...] not by gender.¹²⁶

Supporters of women in combat cite the military's shift in its attitudes about women in combat roles as evidence that it should no longer be used to deny them these kinds of

¹²⁴ Lorry M. Fenner and Marie E. deYoung. *Women in Combat*, 136.

¹²⁵ Rosemarie Skaine. *Women at War: Gender Issues of Americans in Combat*. (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1999), 174.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 174.

military positions. Nearly 20 years after the 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, both the Congress and the military seem to have changed their minds about physical limitations as a factor in prohibiting women from serving in combat roles. In the Draft Final Report of the *Military Leadership Diversity Commission 2011* entitled “From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st-Century Military”, many of the prior physical justifications for excluding women were not even mentioned in the report. In fact, the report acknowledged that the old justifications were based on a different kind of warfare. The report also acknowledged that military women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are already serving in physically demanding combat roles. The report states:

Service policies that bar women from gaining entry to certain combat-related career fields, specialties, units, and assignments are based on standards of conventional warfare, with well defined, linear battlefields. However, the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have been anything but conventional. As a result, some of the military women deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have already been engaged in activities that would be considered combat-related, including being collocated with combat units and engaging in direct combat for self-defense [...] Thus, the combat exclusion policies do not reflect the current operational environment.¹²⁷

Thus, despite concerns about servicewomen’s physical strength, there seems to be an emerging consensus that since female soldiers have already proven they can perform their duties on the modern battlefield, women should not be automatically excluded from combat duty. Instead, a better way to utilize women’s strength in combat is to expand gender-norming standards for all military positions, including combat positions. Since the data above has shown that gender-norming can be an effective tool to increasing

¹²⁷Final Report of the Military Leadership Diversity Commission 2011: from Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st-Century Military. last modified March 15, 2011, https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Special%20Feature/MLDC_Final_Report.pdf, 72

female representation in combat duty positions, the military should continue to identify all areas in which it could be utilized to increase women's opportunities and increase the talent pool from which the armed forces can use to select physically fit candidates. In this way, gender parity standards could be employed to grant greater access to combat roles for all prospective female candidates, while gender justice standards would demand that women in the military have to shoulder the same responsibility of combat service during military engagements as servicemen.

Pregnancy

Another argument against women in combat roles in the U.S. military is pregnancy.¹²⁸ Many of the common complications that accompany pregnancy are cited as military hazards by some. Cecile S. Landrum describes these pregnancy-related challenges and their relation to military readiness with the following:

Pregnancy places extra stresses on women in nontraditional jobs. While most policymakers concerned with pregnant servicewomen have focused on the women's job capability, pregnancy also makes environmental health factors much more critical. As a woman's weight shifts, her balance and equilibrium are adversely affected. This shift also causes fatigue, insomnia, and breathing difficulties. These symptoms mean, of course, that pregnant women in nontraditional jobs cannot fully perform their duties for the duration of pregnancy, as they can for the most part in more traditional jobs.¹²⁹ Unintended pregnancy is a big concern for the military. A recent threat by the

commander of U.S. forces in northern Iraq to court-martial pregnant soldiers demonstrated uneasiness about the probable reduction of manpower due to pregnancies among active duty women. Pregnancy is the factor behind a large number of attrition

¹²⁸Until 1975, the U.S. military had a policy of automatic discharge for any pregnant female soldier. Following a series of lawsuits, military policy was revised to give pregnant female soldiers the choice of whether to exit or remain.

¹²⁹Cecile S. Landrum. "The Changing Military Family: Impacts on Readiness," *Parameters, Journal of the U.S. Army War College* 10, no. 3, 81-82

rates from all branches of the military. It costs the military a great deal to transport and replace servicewomen who are reassigned due to pregnancy.¹³⁰ Based on records from a field hospital serving 10,000 female soldiers in Operation Desert Storm, the number one reason for evacuating women out of the conflict theater was pregnancy. In 1998 the Department of Defense spent about \$35,000 to recruit and train each enlistee, and this figure is presumably higher today. These figures underscore the significant financial losses incurred when new recruits become pregnant and are subsequently non-deployable.¹³¹

Opponents of women in combat assert, without concrete proof, that military women become pregnant on purpose to avoid deployment with their units. While data shows a decrease in contraception use by military women, this may have to do with deployment status and not a scheme to avoid their military service. Ponder and Nothnagle note that, “Sexual activity and contraceptive use in the military may be affected by deployment status. In a study of female soldiers (n=251), 56.2% of responders used contraception before deployment, while only 39% reported contraceptive use during deployment.”¹³²

Supporters of women in the military assert that pregnancy does not hurt military effectiveness. Women, they argue, are pregnant for only a relatively short period of their lives. Furthermore, some women do not become pregnant at all. Besides, the military can well accommodate the 5-10 percent of military women who are pregnant at any given time. Both men and women have parental responsibilities and should be expected to

¹³⁰Kathryn L. Ponder and Melissa Nothnagle. “Damage Control: Unintended Pregnancy in the United States Military,” *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*. (Summer 2010), 386-387.

¹³¹*Ibid.*

¹³²*Ibid*, 387.

make appropriate accommodations for their children in the event of a military mobilization.¹³³

In addition, there is another underlying problem with the military's health care delivery system that may be a factor in women having unplanned pregnancies. Some people assume that servicewomen and their dependents get better prescription medication and medical care than civilians but, in reality, they may have less access to reproductive health services.¹³⁴ Ponder and Nothnagle note:

Servicewomen and their dependents receive health insurance through the Tricare health care program and should therefore have better access to prescription medication and medical care than the civilian population, which includes many uninsured women; however, servicewomen may actually have less access to reproductive health services. Although contraception and other medical benefits are provided free or at low cost to servicewomen, these women may not have access to the full range of contraceptive options.¹³⁵

A number of commonly used hormonal contraceptives are not required to be stocked by military pharmacies. These include Depo-Provera [sometimes called the birth-control shot which is injected into a major muscle] the vaginal contraceptive ring, contraceptive pads and emergency contraception.¹³⁶ In addition, military pharmacies are not required to carry condoms.¹³⁷

Recent studies have shown that the unavailability of basic reproductive services has had an adverse effect on women in the military. In a survey of 251 female servicewomen

¹³³Judith Wagner Decew. "The Combat Exclusion and the Role of Women in the Military," *Hypatia* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1995), 65.

¹³⁴Kathryn L. Ponder and Melissa Nothnagle. "Damage Control," 388.

¹³⁵*Ibid*, 388.

¹³⁶*Ibid*, 388.

¹³⁷*Ibid*, 388.

in Iraq and Kuwait, during the Gulf War, 25 of 107 using hormonal contraception reported changing methods due to unavailability. The majority (40/62) of female Army recruits asking for a prescription for oral contraceptive pills in one study reported that they were not able to attain one.¹³⁸ Reasons included requiring additional appointments for Pap smears before giving out contraceptive pills or doctors' advice that contraception would not be needed during basic training due to the prohibition of sexual activity during Basic Combat Training or Advanced Individual Training. This policy disregards the possible benefit of contraception for menstrual cycle regulation during training. It also fails to explain the lack of evidence for requiring Pap smears before providing contraception.¹³⁹

The recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have also revealed further barriers to women having proper access to reproductive care services. Ponder and Nothnagle note:

Even when servicewomen can obtain contraception, side effects and limited access to ongoing care may result in high discontinuation rates. Female recruits may not have the opportunity for gynecological follow-up until one year after their initial visit, thus side effects and adherence issues may not be addressed. In a survey of 251 female soldiers deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, 23 of 52 reporting gynecologic problems said they could not access gynecologic care. [...] Women using oral contraceptives, patches, or rings may have difficulty obtaining an adequate supply for their tours of duty, which may last up to seven months in the Navy or Marines or up to 15 months in the Army.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸Ibid, 388.

¹³⁹Ibid, 388.

¹⁴⁰Ibid, 388-389.

There are further restrictions to emergency contraception for servicewomen that their civilian counterparts do not face. For example, emergency contraception¹⁴¹ is accessible to civilians as an over the counter drug to both men and women age 17 and over. It is also available to those under 17 years of age with a prescription.¹⁴² However, military servicewomen were only recently allowed broad access to this reproductive health service, largely due to constant politically-driven policy changes in Congress on the issue. In February 2010, the U.S. Department of Defense announced that it would add emergency contraception (also known as the morning-after pill or Plan B) to the list of prescriptions allowed at military health facilities, clinics, and pharmacies. In effect this policy shift would ensure that emergency contraception would be accessible to American military women around the world. Adding this to the existing panoply of women's reproductive health care options gives over 200,000 military women another means to prevent unplanned pregnancies.¹⁴³ This expanded access to contraceptives is important because military women's lives are always changing. This reality of military life has had a significant impact on their ability to use contraceptives on a consistent basis. Military training and deployments make it difficult for servicewomen to use contraceptives often, therefore access to emergency contraceptives is vital to prevent unplanned

¹⁴¹Emergency contraception contains the same hormones that are found in ordinary birth control pills and will not in any way disrupt an established pregnancy. It should not be confused with mifepristone, sometimes called RU-486, a drug used to terminate a pregnancy that is only available and administered at clinics or doctor's offices. While emergency contraception can help prevent unintended pregnancy when taken up to 120 hours (five days) after unprotected sex, it is more effective the sooner it is taken.

¹⁴²Kathryn L. Ponder and Melissa Nothnagle. "Damage Control," 389.

¹⁴³"Back Up Your Birth Control Day: U.S. Military Expands Access." *The Guttmacher Institute*. last modified March 22, 2010 <http://www.guttmacher.org/media/inthenews/2010/03/22/index.html>

pregnancies.¹⁴⁴ The Department of Defense even sponsored a “Back Up Your Birth Control Day” campaign to increase education and awareness of emergency contraception.¹⁴⁵

Another factor that contributes to unplanned pregnancies for servicewomen is the unavailability of abortions at military bases. Servicewomen actually had more access to abortions than civilian women prior to *Roe v. Wade*. However, this changed in 1979 with the defense appropriations bill passed by Congress which “specifically prohibited use of federal funds to perform abortions on military bases except in cases of rape, incest, or danger to the pregnant woman.”¹⁴⁶ During this time, women could still get abortions at military bases overseas if they paid for them themselves. However, in 1988 President Reagan changed this policy by banning any abortion services on military bases. President Clinton initially reversed this decision but in 1996 it was restored by Congress. As a result, American military women cannot receive elective abortions today.¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, administrative procedures in the military make it much more difficult for a woman to electively terminate a pregnancy. A woman on active duty who has an abortion does not get the medical leave and free transportation she would receive with other medical conditions. In addition, she is required to obtain permission to leave her base from her commanding officer, which negatively impacts her privacy and may cause unnecessary and dangerous delays.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶Kathryn L. Ponder and Melissa Nothnagle. “Damage Control” p. 390.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 390.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 390.

Servicewomen seeking abortion services overseas will be subject to health care standards that are below those of the United States, which significantly increases the chance of serious abortion-related complications. The military does allow for abortions as a result of sexual assault but servicewomen must report the attack to receive them.¹⁴⁹ Not a great deal has changed on this military policy for women. On December 22, 2010 the U.S. Senate and House approved the final version of the National Defense Authorization Act, without the Burris Amendment which would have overturned the law that prevents military women and their dependents from using their own money for abortions at military hospitals.¹⁵⁰ Currently, under this federal law, no servicewoman is able to have access to abortion services in a military hospital-even when it is the only safe option and she uses her own money-except in cases of rape, incest, or when her life is in danger.¹⁵¹

In sum, military women face various kinds of political and administrative barriers to have access to comprehensive reproductive health care. Although opponents to women in combat could argue that neither the military nor the government is legally required to guarantee access to abortion, one could counter that servicewomen should not be solely held to blame for unplanned pregnancies in the military if the military itself does a poor job of providing various forms of contraception. Instead, gender parity standards would demand that servicewomen have the same access to birth control as servicemen. It would

¹⁴⁹Ibid, 390.

¹⁵⁰Maria Patrick and Andrea Maruniak. *CommonDreams.org National Women's Law Center*. "NWLC Deplores Congress' Failure to Repeal Military Abortion Ban." accessed December 22, 2010, <http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2010/12/22-16>

¹⁵¹Ibid.

also demand that servicewomen have the same access to a wide variety of high-quality, popular birth control as female civilians. In short, if women of the armed forces had access to quality birth control, it would go a long way towards gender justice because it would allow servicewomen to more easily handle their responsibilities to the military as well as to their personal needs.

Motherhood

Another related argument against women serving in combat positions is motherhood. Gender ideology is key to understanding this often-used argument. For opponents of women in combat, motherhood and women's responsibilities to their families are viewed as antithetical to elective combat service. The theory underlying this view is that women's proper role is to be the cornerstone of family life. According to this viewpoint, women not only bear the children, but are first and foremost responsible for their care, nurture and development. This view suggests that women need special protection because they are responsible for protecting the young.¹⁵²

The sway of this argument was evident in some Congressmen's opposition to President Jimmy Carter's plan to make women subject to the draft during the early 1980s. At that time, Congressional testimony included the statement that the "Administration has given insufficient attention to necessary changes in Selective Service rules, such as those governing the induction of young mothers, and to the strains on family life that would result from the registration and possible induction of women."¹⁵³ It was further evident in the opinion expressed by Alexander Webster, a chaplain for the Army National Guard,

¹⁵²Lucinda J. Peach. "Women at War: The Ethics of Women in Combat," (Online Copy). *Minerva*, Subheading: 4. Motherhood.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

who wondered about the “identity confusion that must confront any would-be women warrior who pauses for a moment to consider her potential for motherhood.”¹⁵⁴ Webster also deduced that the model of the citizen soldier may have been destroyed by the “social disruption and havoc among families wreaked by the mobilization and deployment of mothers of young children to the theater of operations in the Persian Gulf.”¹⁵⁵

Clearly missing from this estimation is the notion of fathers being ‘wrenched from their offspring.’ Thus, this continued the identification of women as mothers and the most significant parent. Such testimony presupposes that mothers are *more* responsible for family life than fathers. Therefore, it is women's military involvement that is questioned, not men's, whenever families are concerned.¹⁵⁶ Such ideological assumptions about gender and parenthood are pervasive in American society and culture. Surveys reveal that the public is more willing to send young fathers into combat than mothers. Even supporters of combat roles for women have assumed that mothers would be more disinclined to risk their lives in combat than men.¹⁵⁷

At the same time, one cannot minimize how motherhood impacts servicewomen. Attrition and reenlistment data for servicewomen reveal that motherhood is the main reason why women leave the military. Furthermore, surveys show that a large majority of service women do want to have children.¹⁵⁸ Former Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney asserted that barring all single parents and dual service-career couples from

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

deployment would weaken military preparedness. This dilemma impacts women more heavily than men since they make up a larger percent of single parents in the armed forces. Thus, servicewomen's family responsibilities may present a practical problem to their ability to perform combat assignments, especially single mothers.¹⁵⁹

However, many other factors need to be examined. First, many military women are not mothers and have no plans for motherhood. Also, most women entering the military are not mothers. The belief that women should always be intertwined with the concept of motherhood is an old-fashioned cultural assumption.¹⁶⁰ This idea leads to the irrational conclusion by opponents of women in combat that men who are fathers can be required to participate in combat roles whereas women who are not mothers cannot. The only compelling justification for excluding women from combat duty would be that women are intrinsically more valuable than men, a view that neither side of the debate advocates.¹⁶¹

Second, although most women traditionally have taken primary responsibility for raising their children, not all mothers are primary caretakers. Many families include arrangements for childcare that do not make the mother solely responsible.¹⁶² Finally, tradition should not be the sole justification of who should be responsible for national defense in wartime. Fathers have the same responsibility for raising their children and yet, since the Korean War, they have not been exempted from combat duty. Also, the legislation mandating women's exclusion from combat does not excuse them from

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²Ibid.

military service in times of war.¹⁶³ Children of military parents need protection during wartime, regardless of whether their mothers are assigned to combat duty or some other job. In the absence of proof showing that combat jobs are more incompatible with being a wife and mother than a husband and father, families should be empowered decide appropriate child care in the event that the mother is deployed to service.¹⁶⁴

To more effectively address this issue, gender parity standards would demand that servicewomen not automatically be barred from combat because they are mothers. Instead, they should have to handle their child care responsibilities just as their male counterparts would be expected to do. The military already prohibits all members (male and female) to join if they are single parents.¹⁶⁵ The military also demands that all parents have a Family Care Plan that provides short-term, long-term and child care (daycare) for their dependent children.¹⁶⁶ The tenets of gender parity would require both servicemen and servicewomen to have equal access to all available military benefits to care for their children during military deployments. The tenets of gender justice would demand that both men and women of the armed services be responsible for child care duty. Instead of insisting that women are solely responsible for child care the military should give both mothers and fathers the tools they need for proper child care.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

¹⁶⁵Rod Powers, "Children of Military Couples and Military Single Parents," The Balance Careers, last modified November 7, 2019, <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-about-the-children-3332640>

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

Subchapter 3.2: Challenging the Arguments Used Against American Women in Military Combat Concerning Consensual and Non-Consensual Sexual Activity

Sexual activity and sexual abuse have always been arguments used against women's integration into military combat roles. Opponents of women in combat assume that the mere presence of women in the military is what causes both actions. Supporters see both actions as challenges to be addressed, not reasons to bar qualified women for combat duty. The following subchapter will explore consensual and non-consensual sexual activity regarding women in the military. It will examine concerns about sexual activity and sexual assault expressed by supporters and opponents of women in combat roles. This subchapter will also discuss policy measures the U.S. military could utilize to reduce incidences of sexual violence and encourage professionalism and adherence to military policy regarding intimate relationships between the sexes so that the military can accomplish its mission. Each subsection will present ways in which the principles of gender justice and gender parity can be utilized to improve military procedures for handling issues regarding consensual and non-consensual sexual activity.

Consensual Sexual Activity

Opponents of women in combat cite female sexuality as a reason to exclude women from combat positions. They believe that the inclusion of women into military combat jobs could lead to sexual relationships that could erode military discipline.¹⁶⁷ During the Persian Gulf War, it was suggested by Raymond C. Smith, Jr., Naval Special Warfare Commander, that even if the women did not invite attention they could still inadvertently be the source of jealousies and sexual affairs with men that could be a distraction to the

¹⁶⁷Judith Wagner Decew. "The Combat Exclusion and the Role of Women," *Hypatia*, 65

team.¹⁶⁸ More than a decade earlier, Phyllis Schlafly, noted conservative critic of women in combat, argued that "to conscript our daughters to titillate their [men's] sexual fantasies is religiously, morally, culturally, and socially intolerable [...] [Some feminist] groups [are] more interested in social experimentation, and appeasing pressure [...] than in building a fighting force."¹⁶⁹

Supporters of women in combat could argue that there are currently policies in place that are designed to limit sexual activity among all members of the military, including women. Article 134 of the Manual for Courts-Martial, of the United States 2008 Edition prohibits sexual relationships between military members of differing ranks.¹⁷⁰ The punishment for such relationships is dismissal, forfeiture of military benefits and possible military confinement.¹⁷¹ Another rule that limits sexual activity of all service members, including women, is the policy against sexual activity during deployment. According to current military policy, "sexual intercourse during deployment is highly discouraged, though no longer banned or punishable."¹⁷² Other prohibited forms of sexual activity during deployment include the following:

Punishable acts vary by command, but often include cohabitation between an unmarried male and an unmarried female or the presence of a member of the opposite sex alone in a room with the door closed. Punishments for such offenses range from

¹⁶⁸Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, Report to the President, last modified November 15, 1992, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00277676f&view=1up&seq=1>, 77

¹⁶⁹"Phyllis Schlafly's Battle Against the ERA and Women in the Military (Part 2 of 4 Online Copy)" *Minerva: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military*, XVIII(2): 21+ , Summer 2000.

¹⁷⁰*Manual for Courts-Martial, of the United States 2008 Edition*, accessed July 1, 2019 <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/law/mcm.pdf> Section IV-127

¹⁷¹Ibid, Section A12-6

¹⁷²Kathryn L. Ponder and Melissa Nothnagle. "Damage Control: Unintended Pregnancy," 388.

[...] letters of reprimand to a field grade Article 15 - a non-judicial form of discipline that avoids court-martial but does appear on a servicemember's military record.¹⁷³

The only permissible forms of sexual relationships that the U.S. armed forces tolerate are between married, non-deployed, equally ranked members of the military. Nevertheless, despite the military's efforts to limit sexual relationships and thereby reduce reports of sexual harassment they both still go on.

One way to improve military procedures when it comes to consensual sexual relationships is to employ the tenets of gender parity and gender justice. Gender parity would demand that both servicemen and servicewomen have access to and be made aware of military codes of conduct when it comes to members in their respective chain of command. Gender justice standards would insist that both men and women be responsible for their conduct when it comes to the issue of consensual relationships. These improvements could help improve the experiences of men and women in the military by providing both genders with a greater understanding of what conduct is and is not allowed for the efficient functioning of all military units.

Sexual Assault/Harassment

Platonic unity is what the military needs, argue opponents of women in combat, and having males and females work together in combat-style conditions encourages natural sexual feelings between men and women and therefore hurts military efficiency. Mackubin Thomas Owen says that the group unity required for military combat is deeper than just teamwork. He says that military "cohesion arises from the bond among disparate individuals who face death and misery together. This bond is akin to what the

¹⁷³Ibid, 388.

Greeks called philia—friendship, comradeship, or brotherly love.”¹⁷⁴ Having males and females work and live together in combat will let loose eros on an organization that relies on philia for success. According to Mackubin, “unlike philia, eros is individual and exclusive.”¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, eros or passion results in sexual rivalries, male protectiveness and preferential treatment.¹⁷⁶ Mackubin describes:

[T]here is no greater or more natural bias than that of an individual toward a beloved. And few emotions are more powerful, or more distracting, than those surrounding the pursuit of, competition for, or the breaking off of amorous relationships [...] Only a feminist ideologue (or a P.C. military officer) would deny the destructive impact of such relationships on unit cohesion. Does a superior order his or her beloved into harm’s way? What happens to morale and unit cohesion when the superior demonstrates favoritism toward the beloved? What about when jealousy rears its head? And what about the possibility that favoritism will be perceived, even when it does not exist?¹⁷⁷

Perhaps, Mackubin Thomas Owens’s assessment regarding sexual attraction between servicemen and women is too simplistic. He assumes the worst-case scenarios between military men and women and disregards the professionalism demonstrated by the majority of military members on duty.

Sexual harassment, however, continues to be a major problem in the military. Measuring improvements in this area is difficult because both men and women may be reluctant to report sexual abuse. Nevertheless, data that has been gathered show significantly higher reports of sexual assault from servicewomen. In 2006, 30% of women and 6% of men in the military reported incidences of sexual harassment while

¹⁷⁴Diane Andrews Henningfeld, *Should Women be Allowed to Serve in Combat in the U.S. Armed Forces?*, 40

¹⁷⁵*Ibid*, 40.

¹⁷⁶*Ibid*, 41

¹⁷⁷*Ibid*, 41-42.

6.8% of servicewomen and 1.8% of their male counterparts reported being sexually assaulted.¹⁷⁸ Junior enlisted men and women reported military sexual trauma the most. Of all divisions of the U.S. military, servicemembers of the Army were most likely to report sexual trauma. Servicemembers of the Air Force were least likely to report such incidents. Sexual trauma in female veterans is estimated to be in the range of 20 to 30% while the same estimation for male veterans is between 2 and 4%.¹⁷⁹ In 2008, a subsequent study showed that, “Nearly one third of female veterans say they were sexually assaulted or raped while in the military and 71% to 90% say they were sexually harassed by the men with whom they served.”¹⁸⁰ Based on this data, opponents to women in combat could argue that putting women and men in close combat work conditions could produce additional instances of sexual harassment and weaken the military’s effectiveness.

However, supporters of women in combat could argue that proper sexual harassment training might limit unit cohesion problems due to sexual abuse. Certain training classes may even limit perceptions of sexual harassment by women. Heather Antecol and Deborah Cobb-Clark state:

Interestingly, women with at least 1 [hour] of sexual harassment training are less likely to report experiencing sexually harassing behavior [...], they are less likely to believe that they have in fact been sexually harassed. This raises the possibility that training itself may reduce the incidence of unwanted gender-related behavior while at the same time mitigating the negative consequences of that behavior by altering

¹⁷⁸David Segal, et al., eds., “The Military and the Transition to Adulthood.” *The Future of Children*, 197-198.

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

¹⁸⁰Mika Haritos-Fatouros¹, Philip Zimbardo, Nathan Stoltzfus, Maria Fotopoulou and Maria Dikaïou. “PTSD and Female Military Returnees from Iraq and Afghanistan: What Does the Evidence Tell Us?” *Journal of US-China Public Administration* 7, no. 8 (Aug. 2010), 81

women's perceptions. [...] Still, there is little direct evidence in the literature that preventative measures such as sexual harassment training serve to alter individuals' behavior. [...] While 65 percent report that the training made them more sensitive to the issue of sexual harassment, one in five indicated that it had no effect on their attitudes or beliefs at all [.....].¹⁸¹

In this way, educational forums and training could reduce perceptions of sexual harassment by recipients of such behavior. Supporters of women in combat could argue that if the military worked even more carefully with the harassers perhaps reports of sexual misconduct would go down even further.

Supporters of women in combat also argue that high levels of sexual harassment should not be used as an excuse to deny women military combat positions; rather it should be used as an argument for *greater* inclusion of women in all areas of the military, including combat units. Judith Wagner Decew argues:

Harassment and abuse are made worse by the [combat] exclusion. Wherever women are barred, their absence leads to a culture that breeds sexism and domination. It is arguable that integrating women and giving them equal opportunity can lead to gains in equal treatment and can decrease sexism more effectively than instruction for men about sexual harassment.¹⁸²

Given the evidence presented so far, opponents' arguments against women in combat due to sexual activity and sexual harassment are weak at best. First, there are rules that all members of the U.S. military, including women, must follow regarding sexual relationships and there has been no indication so far that proves women are any more likely to cavalierly disregard them. Even if a servicewoman did, she would face the same stiff penalties that her male counterpart would. Second, the research so far has shown

¹⁸¹Heather Antecol and Deborah Cobb-Clark. "The Sexual Harassment of Female Active-Duty Personnel: Effects on Job Satisfaction and Intentions to Remain in the Military." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* (2006), 61

¹⁸²Judith Wagner Decew. "The Combat Exclusion and the Role of Women," *Hypatia*, 65

that all members of the military could benefit from courses which emphasize the military's policy against sexual misconduct. They limit perceptions of and reports of sexual harassment.

However, substantively changing the military's culture regarding sexual assault has proven to be very difficult and servicewomen continue to suffer as a result. According to Monica Medina, a former Army captain, the Pentagon's own surveys showed that 80% of servicewomen have been victims of sexual harassment throughout their careers in the military.¹⁸³ In addition, women felt that if they did report, they would face retribution from both their colleagues and supervisors. According to Nicole Bowen-Crawford, an Army specialist who was sexually assaulted on her 2003 mission in Iraq and participated in a 2018 anti-sexual assault protest outside the Pentagon, "you have to report the sexual assault to the perpetrator or their friends."¹⁸⁴ As recently as 2016, the problem of sexual assault and violence continued to plague the American military with staggering frequency and impact on servicewomen's lives. According to one journalist from an independent military news source:

Despite efforts to stem military sexual assault in recent years, the Pentagon estimates more than 6,100 sexual assaults took place in fiscal year 2016, a figure similar to the two previous years and based only on data from those who've come forward to report. [...]. The same report found that only about 4 percent of cases resulted in conviction. In the meantime, six out of every 10 who reported sexual assault faced retaliation, often in the form of stigma, accusations of personality disorder and being discharged

¹⁸³Richard Sisk, "Vets Groups Bring 'MeToo' Movement to Pentagon," Military.com. last modified January 8, 2018, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/01/08/vets-groups-bring-me-too-movement-pentagon.html>

¹⁸⁴Ibid.

with bad paper that would end careers and strip them of their veterans' benefits and job prospects in the civilian world [...]¹⁸⁵

The data above shows that sexual assault cases against military women is still a problem that has not gotten significantly better. One is forced to wonder what changes can be made to reduce the number of sexual assault and sexual harassment cases against women in the military so that they can serve without fear, humiliation or reprisal. Indeed, military culture regarding sexual assaults and harassment has not significantly changed in women's favor. As we have seen above through anecdotal evidence, some military women are sexually assaulted while they are deployed. It is unclear how this issue can be addressed during combat situations if it is still not being appropriately addressed in non-combat situations. Clearly the problem of non-consensual sexual acts is antithetical to the principles of gender justice and gender parity. On this issue, the only way forward is to increase the education of and awareness of sexual harassment, improve report mechanisms and to enforce punishment of perpetrators of such activities inside the military justice system.

Subchapter 3.3: Challenging the Arguments Used Against American Women in Military Combat Concerning Psychological and Emotional Issues

All members of the military must be psychologically fit to perform their duties, but the issue of women's mental fitness continues to worry opponents of women in combat. They rely on the stereotype of women being too psychologically fragile to justify their argument against assigning servicewomen combat roles. The following Subchapter will demonstrate the weaknesses of their arguments by examining how women in the military fare with regard to psychological stress, PTSD and emotional aggressiveness. After a

¹⁸⁵Diana Cahn, "Where's Our Reckoning? Women Gather Outside Pentagon in #MeToo Protest," Stars and Stripes, last modified January 9, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/news/where-s-our-reckoning-military-women-gather-outside-pentagon-in-metoo-protest-1.505745>

Careful discussion of all three issues, the subchapter will conclude with gender justice and gender parity standards to address the views of opponents of women in military combat due to psychological/emotional issues.

Psychological Stress

One argument used against women serving in combat roles in the military is the notion that women are not able to handle the psychological demands of military combat as well as men. Supporters of women in combat assert that this argument is weak. They cite the many times that women have participated in combat roles during times of war in the past, particularly during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Operation Desert Storm and elsewhere, not only as frontline nurses but as military police, pilots and flight engineers, for example.¹⁸⁶ Supporters also refer to the sizable number of women who serve as policewomen and female firefighters who also operate under similar stress. There does not appear to be documented evidence to confirm the claim that females handle stress less well than men with combat pressure.¹⁸⁷

There *is* evidence that women do not suffer significantly higher levels of stress than their male counterparts during on-base assignments as well as deployments. A 1995 study by the U.S. Department of Defense examined the relationship between job functioning and stress for military men and women. More specifically, the study

¹⁸⁶Judith Wagner Decew. "The Combat Exclusion and the Role of Women in the Military" *Hypatia*, 65.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid*, 65.

examined job functioning at work among servicemen and women as it relates to “work stress, non-work stress, symptoms of depression, substance abuse and coping style.”¹⁸⁸

In this 1995 study, Bray, Camlin, Fairbank, Duntemant and Wheelless found the following results regarding military women and how they deal with stress compared to their male counterparts. They found that 22 percent to 40 percent of both military men and women experienced high levels of stress in their work or family and personal relationships. In general, both service men and women were nearly twice as likely to report feeling high levels of stress in their military work (39%) than in their family life (22%). For both men and women, just about 4 out of 10 perceived a great deal of or a quite large amount of work-related stress. Conversely, women recognized more family-related stress than did men.¹⁸⁹

In addition, about one-third of servicewomen reported that a great deal or at least a fairly large amount of stress that they felt came from simply being a woman in the military. Another third of servicewomen said they encountered at least some stress from being a woman in the military. Some of these stressors are the result of specific aspects of military life such as the challenges of competing in a largely male organization, problems of sexual harassment, the result of poor coping skills, or some combination of these or other factors.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸Robert M. Bray, Carol S. Camlin, John A Fairbank, George H. Dunteman, and Sara C. Wheelless. “The Effects of Stress on Job Functioning of Military Men and Women.” *Armed Forces and Society* 27, no. 3 (April 2001), 2.

¹⁸⁹*Ibid*, 6-7.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid*, 7.

The study revealed that in many instances, men and women suffered similar levels of stress and it affected them in the same way For example:

Exposure to work-related stress and health-related stress was associated with a lower level of job functioning for military women and men alike and confirms prior research linking exposure to stress with lower functioning on the job. Similarly, symptoms of depression also increased the odds of a lower level of job functioning for both women and men. Although rates of depressive symptoms generally tend to be higher among women than men, there appeared to be no gender-related differences in the effect of depressive symptoms on lower functioning on the job [...] These data suggest that [...] the performance of men and women in the military is equally likely to suffer following exposure to work-related and health-related stressors or as a function of depression.¹⁹¹

Additional research also supports these conclusions. A more recent study was conducted about the mental health morbidity among enlisted Navy and Marine Corps women in both non-combat and combat roles in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The collected data suggests that women in combat support jobs were appreciably less likely to be hospitalized for several mental health diseases, including a category for all mental health diseases combined, substance-abuse, adjustment disorders and personality disorders compared with women in non-combat support roles. This study was the first to examine mental health effects of working in combat support jobs among U.S. servicewomen. The persistence of mental health morbidity is a serious liability to American military readiness. It is a financial challenge because it is a major cause of attrition. It also harms job performance. Even though more work is necessary to determine the significance of the aforementioned results, this research implies that before the engagement of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, servicewomen in combat support

¹⁹¹Ibid., 7.

occupations were not at a greater risk for mental health problems than women in non-combat roles.¹⁹²

The aforementioned 1995 study on Persian Gulf War veterans also revealed that there were many areas in which women handled both deployment stress and non-deployment stress better than men. The authors note that, “among men only, family related stress, heavy drinking, illicit drug use, and a negative coping style increased the odds of lower job functioning.”¹⁹³ On the other hand:

The job functioning of military women appears less likely than that of men to be impaired by certain types of stress, negative coping, and substance abuse. The stress associated with such events as being away from one’s family, conflicts between military and family responsibilities, or significant changes, such as the birth of a child, divorce, or death, did not significantly affect the capacity to function at work for women, but did so for men. Apparently, military men were less able than military women to manage family-related stressors so that they did not negatively affect work. The finding that family-related stress does not significantly affect women’s job performance is not altogether surprising. Given women’s contemporary dual roles as family care-givers and as members of the labor force, women may be more likely than men to be adept at managing family-related stressors while also continuing to function on the job.¹⁹⁴

PTSD

Supporters of women in the military point to the studies that show that women are not significantly more likely to suffer from severe forms of psychological stress such as PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) than their male counterparts as further proof that

¹⁹²Krista E. Lindstrom, B.S., Tyler C. Smith, M.S., Timothy S. Wells, Ph.D., Linda Z. Wang, B.S., Besa Smith, M.P.H., Robert J. Reed, M.S., Wendy E. Goldfinger, M.S., and Margaret A.K. Ryan, M.D. “The Mental Health of U.S. Military Women in Combat Support Occupations.” *Journal of Women’s Health* 15, no. 2, 2006, 170-171.

¹⁹³Robert M. Bray, et al. “The Effects of Stress on Job Functioning of Military Men and Women.” *Armed Forces Society* 27, no. 3., April 1, 2001, 7.

¹⁹⁴*Ibid*, 7.

women should be allowed combat roles. A 1995 study¹⁹⁵ was conducted by the Department of Defense to examine the relationship between gender and the onset of PTSD two years after the Persian Gulf War.¹⁹⁶

Regarding PTSD, the study found “that there were no differences between men and women on the degree to which PTSD symptomatology predicted reported health problems.”¹⁹⁷ The only similarity between men and women when it comes to PTSD is that prior violent assault is a predictor of new PTSD onset. The authors of a similar study¹⁹⁸ about the connection between prior violent assault and PTSD state:

Nearly 30% of women reported a prior sexual or violent assault, with over half of those reporting sexual assault alone. In contrast, 10% of men in this subpopulation reported a prior assault, almost all due to violent (not sexual) assault. Despite these sex differences in prevalence and type of prior assault, the odds of new onset of PTSD symptoms after deployment and reported combat exposures were similar for men and women, with both having a more than 2-fold increase. This doubling of the odds

¹⁹⁵This 1995 project was part of the Ft. Devens Operation Desert Storm (ODS) Reunion Survey, an ongoing, longitudinal project involving approximately 3,000 Army personnel who were deployed to the Gulf from the New England area in 1991. The hypotheses tested in this investigation were the following: (1) PTSD symptomatology assessed at the point of returning from the Gulf War would predict health problems reported 2 years later, and (2) more health problems would be reported by women than by men 2 years after return. The moderating effect of gender on the association between PTSD symptoms and self-reported health problems was also examined; however, no specific predictions were made since little is known about the differential effects of war and combat experiences on men and women.

¹⁹⁶Amy W. Wagner, Jessica Wolfe, Andrea Rotnitsky, Susan P. Proctor and Darin J. Erickson. “An Investigation of the Impact of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder on Physical Health.” *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 13, no. 1 (2000), 51.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid*, 51.

¹⁹⁸For this study, data on exposures and health outcomes were collected in the Millennium Cohort, Naval Health Research Center study at enrollment (July 2001 to June 2003) and follow-up (June 2004 to February 2006) from over 55,000 participants. Of these, 5324 were deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, reported combat exposures, (continued from previous footnote) and were free of PTSD at baseline (881 women and 4443 men. New-onset PTSD symptoms or diagnosis among deployers reporting combat exposures occurred in 22% of women who reported prior assault and 10% not reporting prior assault. Among men reporting prior assault, rates were 12% and 6%, respectively. Adjusting for baseline factors, the odds of new-onset PTSD symptoms was more than 2-fold higher in both women and men who reported assault prior to deployment. Prior assault appears to confer increased vulnerability for, rather than resilience against, PTSD symptoms among military professionals deployed to recent combat operations.

persisted after adjusting for demographic, military, and behavioral characteristics, suggesting that having a history of assault is more important than either the sex of the respondent or the type of assault.¹⁹⁹

From the studies presented above one can conclude that not only do women and men have similar rates of PTSD but having prior violent assaults such as rape or non-sexual assaults may increase new onset of PTSD, regardless of gender. One can conclude that servicewomen are just as psychologically strong and fragile as their male counterparts when it comes to dealing with combat related PTSD and other stressors of military life. The argument that servicewomen are not as psychologically fit as men, therefore, holds no merit.

Aggressiveness

Another related psychological argument against women in combat is the assumption that men are naturally more aggressive than women, and that the "natural" aggressiveness of males would be softened by women's participation in battle. There is no plausible evidence to support this claim. In fact, women's participation in the Gulf War demonstrates women's ability to be aggressive on the battlefield.²⁰⁰ Even if one assumes that women are less aggressive than their male counterparts, there is still no evidence that this is the result of biological causes rather than cultural mores and socialization, which are not unalterable. The military has not offered empirical evidence to show that women cannot be trained to display the same degree of aggressiveness as men. Even so, the

¹⁹⁹Tyler C. Smith, Deborah L. Wingard, Margaret A. K. Ryan, Donna Kritz-Silverstein, Donald J. Slymen, and James F. Sallis, for the Millennium Cohort Study Team. "Prior Assault and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder After Combat Deployment." *Epidemiology* 19 no. 3 (May 2008), 510.

²⁰⁰Lucinda J. Peach. "Women at War-The Ethics of Women in Combat," *Minerva*, page 11 of 33.

myth of women's inferior aggression continues to strengthen the myth of combat as a masculine arena which only men are capable of participating in.²⁰¹

As evidenced by the data shown above about military women's ability to handle stress, PTSD and to be aggressive, servicewomen are just as capable of handling these issues as their male counterpart. In some cases, such as dealing with home and work stress, women have shown that they are better than their male counterparts at handling such pressures. In this instance, gender parity would require that both genders have access to effective stress-reducing mechanisms. Gender justice would demand that both genders be responsible for handling the stress and emotional issues during their military service. Furthermore gender stereotypes about women and stress should not be utilized to bar women from combat service. Rather, evidence-based data, like the data above on gender and stress/PTSD should be used to support women's inclusion in military combat.

Subchapter 3.4: Challenging the Arguments Used Against American Women in Military Combat Concerning the Masculine Martial Culture

The following Subchapter will attempt to examine some aspects of the American martial masculine culture. It will explore whether or not the presence of servicewomen affects unit cohesion. This Subchapter will also challenge the assumptions that women should not kill and that the presence of women makes the military appear weak. Finally, this Subchapter will discuss concerns regarding the gender segregation of military quarters and whether servicemen can go from protecting women to learning to fight alongside them. The military has its own culture and it is fair to question whether or not servicewomen can fit into it and serve effectively in combat roles. The following Subchapter will attempt to determine how servicewomen will fit into the military's

²⁰¹Ibid.

existing masculine martial culture. At the end of the discussion of the martial military culture, the thesis will present ways of dealing with the U.S. military's male-dominant culture with appropriate gender parity and gender justice based solutions.

Cohesion

Cohesion is an issue derived from the martial masculinity tradition that opponents of women in combat use to exclude them from combat roles. Lucinda J. Peach carefully remarks on military cohesion as described by one U.S. military commandant and reveals the weakness of the assertion that only male bonding is key to service effectiveness. She states:

Cohesion, [...] is a function of interpersonal relationships between military leaders and their troops, and the leader's ability to create and sustain "those interpersonal skills that allow him to build strong ties with his men." The argument that male soldiers will lose camaraderie and team-spirit if they are required to share their duties with women is frequently advanced as a corollary of the unit cohesion rationale. Commandant Barrows defends the notion of male bonding as a "real ...cohesiveness," a "mutual respect and admiration," and a "team work" that would be destroyed by the inclusion of women. "If you want to make a combat unit ineffective," he said, "assign some women to it."²⁰²

While the argument about the importance of cohesion to overall military effectiveness is credible, the notion that the presence of women will damage it is embellished by gender ideology and outdated stereotypes. Furthermore, the military has not studied the impact of women's integration into the military on male bonding in the armed forces. Additionally, it has not made efforts to encourage male-female or female-female bonding in its soldiers.²⁰³ Gender ideology helps to sustain the notion that women and anything identified as feminine must be segregated from the "masculine realm" to maintain male

²⁰²Ibid, page 7 of 33.

²⁰³Ibid, page 7 of 33.

bonding. The experiences of women in combat in past American wars, as well as the successful integration of women into traditionally male-only professions, indicate that the participation of American military women in combat would not hamper unit or troop cohesion.²⁰⁴

Women Should Not Kill

One of the most controversial arguments from the martial masculinity tradition is the notion that women should not kill. Surprisingly, some feminists have taken this position as Lucinda Peach states:

Many anti-war feminists are opposed to women's participation in combat on the grounds that women have a different moral voice, one based on caring, compassion, relationality, and responsibility for others. According to this "ethic of care," women's distinctive moral voice is linked to peace, not war, and to nurturing and caring for others, not to killing them.²⁰⁵

On the other hand, many people who could be described as anti-feminists have also accepted this view. During the ERA Amendment hearings, this position dominated the debate about women in military combat. Peach states:

[...] Senator Cellar testified during the congressional debates on ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment: "Women represent motherhood and creation. Wars are for destruction. Women, integrated with men in the carnage and slaughter of battle ... is unthinkable. Can you imagine women framed by a drill sergeant to charge the enemy with fixed bayonets and bombs? War is Death's feast. It is enough that men attend." Similarly, Marine Corps Commandant General Robert Barrows (Ret.) testified at congressional hearings that "[c]ombat is uncivilized and women cannot do it. Nor should they be even thought of as doing it [...] I think the very nature of women disqualifies them from doing it. Women give life, sustain life, nurture life, they do not take it."²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴Ibid, page 7 of 33.

²⁰⁵Ibid, page 2 of 33.

²⁰⁶Ibid, page 5 of 33.

By contrast, those who endorse combat roles for women in the military draw on moral principles such as individual rights, equal protection, justice, and fairness. Supporters of this ethic of justice argue that only by participating in such duties of citizenship as national defense through combat duty can women ever be considered full citizens and achieve full legal and social equality with their male counterparts.²⁰⁷

The Presence of Women Make the Military Appear Weak to the Enemy

Another related psychological argument against women in combat is framed from the hypothetical standpoint of the enemy. The key to understanding this rationale against women's participation in combat is that it could be interpreted by hostile forces as an indication that American forces are not icons of power and strength and that instead, they are weak.²⁰⁸ Such arguments can be rebutted by the position that it is just as possible that women could be ignored on both sides of the battlefield, thus the presence of women in such a situation would not prove to be an advantage or disadvantage for either side. Furthermore, it is just as conceivable that the presence of women in U.S. combat forces would be viewed as evidence of strong American resolve to succeed in a conflict, much as the presence of women guerilla fighters was during the Vietnam War.²⁰⁹

Segregation of Military Quarters

The issue of gender-segregated living quarters is cited as a barrier to women's integration into combat roles by opponents. They argue that living together in a space helps military team members interact and bond during deployments. If women are allowed combat duty but are segregated from the men, this may disrupt that crucial

²⁰⁷Ibid, page 2 of 33.

²⁰⁸Ibid, page 11 of 33.

²⁰⁹Ibid, page 11 of 33.

platonic bonding process. However, if coed barracks are utilized, the potential for adultery, unfaithfulness and sexual misconduct arises. Norway's experience with coed barracks may be the answer to America's problem in this area. One journalist notes:

A 2014 study showed that unisex dormitories helped combat sexual harassment thanks to a phenomenon of "de-genderisation". Sharing living quarters makes both the men and women pay more attention to their [behavior], and thus they're able to develop a camaraderie, an almost sibling-like relationship, the study's authors claimed.²¹⁰

It seems that one solution to the issue of women sharing military barracks is to allow such use just as Norway's does but to put in procedures to reinforce existing military policy on sexual misconduct and illegal fraternizing. This may not be a perfect solution but it is one that respects the rights of women while also upholding the mission of the military.

From Protecting Females to Fighting Alongside Them

Another controversial argument that stems from the martial masculinity rationale for excluding women from combat is the idea that allowing women to serve in combat roles will be distracting to men who have been taught that it is their duty to protect females. Following this argument, opponents of women in combat describe a scenario in which two soldiers (one male and one female) are on the battlefield and the woman is badly injured. Opponents argue that instead of completing his duty, the male soldier would be more likely to stop and help a female soldier (thus perhaps endangering the overall mission) than help a male soldier.

²¹⁰“Norway Introduces Compulsory Military Service for Women, Bunking them in Mixed Dorms with Men,” *The Straits Times*, last modified August, 25, 2016, <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/norway-introduces-compulsory-military-service-for-women-bunking-them-in-mixed-dorms>

Opponents also envision a male soldier engaging an enemy soldier on the battlefield and hesitating about attacking her because of her sex. Still another scenario that opponents to women in the military often bring up is the specter of women being taken as prisoners of war and being subjected to brutal treatment. In this situation, opponents argue that the military would face the wrath of the American public who would question why women were put in a position where they could be taken hostage in the first place. All three of these scenarios exemplify what Lucinda Peach calls the myth of protection. She describes the concept:

The myth of protection; accompanying and interrelated with the notion of war as manly is the myth that the purpose for which men fight is to protect women. The myth that women are the weaker sex who need to be protected by strong men represents women as victims dependent upon men rather than as autonomous agents capable of defending themselves.²¹¹

Indeed, women have proven that they can defend themselves in other physically demanding male-dominated fields such as firefighting and policing. It is a wonder that this myth of protection is still brought up as a reason to exclude women from combat. Nevertheless, this notion still permeates the debate.

One way to deal with the martial-masculine culture in the U.S. military is to increase the number of women in the service. At first glance, this may seem counter-intuitive. However, the increase in the number of women in the military may gradually change the male-dominant culture. Barring women from combat positions because of the armed force's existing martial-masculine culture would only serve to strengthen this oftentimes destructive force in the military. To fight this culture, the military should employ gender parity standards to increase servicewomen's access to combat roles. This would help to

²¹¹Ibid.

create a path towards a military that embraces gender justice for its female members since it would demand that they have equal access to combat roles as well as equal opportunity to help the military change the negative effects of the martial-masculine culture by reporting inappropriate behavior/comments and by showing their male counterparts with their presence that they are not gender stereotypes, rather professional servicemembers.

Chapter 4: Can America's Policy Toward Women in Military Combat be Improved by Studying Female Military Combat Achievements and Challenges in Other Countries?

The aforementioned findings in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 about the effect of America's combat exclusion policy for servicewomen are stunning. Not only do they show that the U.S. "military is the only major social institution in the nation that may legally discriminate in employment on the basis of gender"²¹² but they also show that the policy is having a negative effect on the trajectory of servicewomen's careers. One is forced to wonder if the experiences of servicewomen in other countries' militaries are similar. In the next chapter I will attempt to answer this question by examining the combat policy for women in two other countries. By examining these policies, I hope to find out how the U.S. policies might be changed to improve conditions for American servicewomen.

Subchapter 4.1: Identification of Countries With Inclusive Military Combat Policies for Women

Deciding the two countries with which I compared America's military policy towards female combat was challenging. My first goal was to identify all countries that allowed combat roles for women. Table 1 on pages 101-103 shows every country that allows women in military combat. All of these countries are democracies. Not including the United States, the average length of period that each country's combat inclusion policy has been in place is 18.5 years. Overall, European countries dominate the list. Asia is the only continent with no countries that have combat inclusive policies for women.

²¹²David Segal, et al., eds., "The Military and the Transition to Adulthood." *The Future of Children*, 185.

Subchapter 4.2: Categorization of Identified Countries by Military Recruitment Process, Length of Policy in Place, Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP and Type of Government

After identifying all countries that allow women in combat, my next goal was to categorize each military by their respective recruitment processes. Recruitment processes can broadly be classified by the following types: all volunteer force, mandatory for both sexes, mandatory for men but women volunteer---with civilian option available for either sex.

The major questions I considered in choosing these countries to compare with the U.S. included: 1. how long the policy has been in place? 2. what type of military recruitment process is utilized by the country? 3. how much did the country spend as a percentage of its GDP to its military and 4. is the country a first-world liberal democracy? I felt that the length of a country's policy on female combat inclusion would provide a more detailed picture of how well it had been received by its military. I also felt that the type of military recruitment was an important factor in comparing female combat policies. The closer a country's military recruitment process was to the United States' may indicate how easy or how difficult it would be to implement in America.

Next, I wanted to know how much a country spent on its military because that could indicate how often the military was utilized. Knowing this could provide a better picture of how often that country's policy toward women in combat is *actually* used. Lastly, if there are lessons to be learned from a country's policy toward women in combat, it is far more likely to be received if that country is also a liberal democracy, like the United States. With all these factors in mind, I chose two countries to compare America's female combat exclusion policy to: Israel and Norway. Both are liberal democracies

whose policies may provide best practices for improving the integration of women in combat roles.

Subchapter 4.3: Israel – Relevant Military Statistics, Government Information and History of Combat Inclusion Policy

Supporters of American women in combat often point to Israel's inclusive combat policy as one of the best systems to emulate. The following subchapter will examine how and when Israel's combat inclusion policy began. Next, it will discuss the basic configuration of Israel's military with regard to its recruitment process, military spending rank out of 155 countries, military expenditures as a percentage of GDP, governmental structure and relationship with the United States. Then, it will examine the challenges of implementing the policy such as concerns about physical standards for women, under representation of Israeli women in senior combat roles, and sexual harassment. This subchapter will also highlight some of the successes of Israel's combat inclusion policy such as the expansion of Israeli women in combat roles and the achievement of the Caracal – Israel's mixed-gender military unit.

Relevant Military Statistics and Government Information About Israel

With exception to the brief period during Israel's War of Independence in 1948, when Israeli women were allowed combat roles as a matter of military necessity, the country has only officially had combat roles open to women since 2000. Nevertheless, as a matter of policy, Israel requires compulsory military service for both sexes.

Military service in Israel is compulsory for men and women. Men serve in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) for three years and women for about two years. It applies to Israeli citizens at home and abroad. Exemptions are granted on medical grounds, for

new immigrants and some religious groups. In special circumstances, athletes may complete a shorter service.²¹³

Israel is a parliamentary democracy²¹⁴ with a long-standing relationship with the United States since its founding in 1948.²¹⁵ According to the CIA World Factbook, Israel ranks 8th in military spending out of 155 countries.²¹⁶ As a percentage of its GDP Israel spent 4.63%, 4.43% and 4.35% for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively.²¹⁷ This is higher than the United States which is ranked 19th out of 155 countries and which spent 3.21%, 3.11% and 3.60% of its GDP on military expenses for 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively.²¹⁸ See Table 2 on pages 104-105 for a more detailed comparison of Israel's and America's militaries regarding military spending, recruitment policies, military ranking and the number of years each country has had a combat inclusive policy in place.

History of Israel's Combat Inclusion Policy

Women have fought in combat positions in Israel's Defense Force since the country's War of Independence. However, following Israel's War of Independence in 1948, women were excluded from combat roles until the late 1990s aside from a brief attempt

²¹³"Reality Check: Which Countries Have Military Service?" BBC.com, accessed May 11, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44646267>

²¹⁴CIA World Factbook – Israel, Government, accessed November 2, 2019. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html>

²¹⁵"U.S. Relationship With Israel," U.S. Department of State, accessed November 2, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-israel/>

²¹⁶CIA World Factbook – Country Comparison: Military Expenditures, accessed May 11, 2019. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/330rank.html>

²¹⁷CIA World Factbook – Middle East, Israel; Military Expenditures, accessed May 11, 2019. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html>

²¹⁸CIA World Factbook – North America, United States: Military Expenditures. accessed May 11, 2019. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>

in the 1950s to allow women to apply for flight school.²¹⁹ The Israeli combat exclusion policy started to change in 1994 when Israel's High Court of Justice ruled in favor of a female immigrant from South Africa that some combat roles should be open to women soldiers. Three years later in 1997, Alice Miller appealed to Israel's Supreme Court to be accepted into the IDF's elite Air Force school. After winning her lawsuit, the IDF began accepting female candidates.²²⁰ During the 2000s, Israeli women's expansion into combat jobs was aided by judicial decisions favorable to women seeking combat jobs in the military. The Jewish Virtual Library chronicled the legal victories to challenge Israel's combat exclusion policy for women with the following:

In 2000, the Equality amendment to the Defense Service Law stated that the right of women to serve in any role in the IDF is equal to the right of men. Soon after, women were allowed to serve in nearly all combat positions. Women recruited for combat units have to serve for 30 months instead of the normal mandatory period for women of 21 months. [,,] In early 2000, the IDF decided to also deploy women in the artillery corps, followed by infantry units, armored divisions and elite combat units. The Navy has also decided to place women in its diving repair unit. Altogether, at the beginning of 2004, about 450 women were in combat units.²²¹

Challenges and Achievements of Israel's Combat Inclusion Policy for Women

Today approximately 7% of women in the IDF serve in combat positions as opposed to 3% in 2012. Currently, 90% of combat roles are open to female soldiers and applicants. The numbers of Israeli women in combat roles has steadily increased since 2012, reaching 1,000 by 2017.²²² However, despite these impressive numbers, further

²¹⁹“Women of the Israel Defense Forces – History in Combat Units,” Jewish Virtual Library – A Project of AICE (American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprises). CHEN (Hel Nashim) Women's Corps. Accessed May 11, 2019. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-of-women-in-idf-combat-units>

²²⁰Ibid.

²²¹Ibid.

²²²Ibid.

evidence suggests that Israeli women's role in the military is still limited. The Washington Times notes that Israeli women are still barred from special operations and tend to be confined to two light battalions. Israeli servicewomen also do not face the same amount of direct combat exposure as special operations units like the Green Berets. Nor are they in front-line brigades for heavy combat. Nearly all female combat soldiers are deployed to light battalions. These battalions include the Caracal and the Lions of Jordan, which guard the borders of Egypt and Jordan – the only Arab countries which already have a peace treaty with Israel.²²³ The author goes on to note those Israeli women's assignments are far more limited compared to American combat roles. Units such as the Navy SEALs, Army Green Berets, Marine infantry or Army Brigade Combat Teams engage in difficult, close-range fighting for days.²²⁴

Moreover, Israeli military women face the same under-representation in the leadership ranks of the armed forces that American servicewomen do. According to the IDF, nearly half of Israel's lieutenants and captains are women. However, the higher military ranks are largely dominated by men. The highest ranking female officer is a major general in charge of personnel.²²⁵ The experience of Israeli women in the military demonstrates that opportunities for combat service do not necessarily lead to equal treatment or outcomes for female advancement in the military. However, it does show that being given these

²²³Rowan Scarborough, "Israeli Women's Combat Roles Exaggerated, Military Traditionalists Say," The Washington Times, last modified May 25, 2015, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/25/womens-combat-roles-in-israel-defense-forces-exagg/?page=all>

²²⁴Ibid.

²²⁵Larry Abramson, "Women in Combat: Some Lessons from Israel's Military," NPR, last modified May 16, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2013/05/16/180045066/Women-In-Combat-Lessons-From-The-Israel-Defense-Forces>

opportunities might boost the number of women in the U.S. military as it has done for Israeli women.

Unfortunately, Israeli women servicewomen also struggle with the physical demands of their military just like American female soldiers. The amount of stress fractures suffered by female Israeli soldiers is many percentage points higher among women than their male counterparts. As a result Israeli servicewomen are not required to carry as much weight as Israeli servicemen.²²⁶ The issue is controversial because military leaders as well as rank and file male servicemen worry that physical standards are being lowered just so that women can have combat roles. However, the reevaluation of these standards for women has also led the Israeli military to reevaluate overall standards for Israeli servicemen as well. One journalist explains:

The IDF is easing the requirements for basic training courses for female soldiers in mixed units by scrapping certain aspects of physical assessments following a decision taken by Combat Intelligence Collection Corps Brig. Gen. Mordechai Kahane. In an effort to ease the physical burden on women, Kahane said that the bar would be lowered during basic training by abolishing a requirement demanding that female soldiers jump over a wall—a component in the assessment that has proven to be, in many cases, an insurmountable obstacle for women. [...]

“In two wars in Lebanon and Gaza I never saw a need to clear this kind of wall,” Kahane said during discussions on the matter.²²⁷

Less than half of the soldiers from special combat units managed to clear the wall before the course. Brig. Gen. Mordechai Kahane therefore concluded that it was not a fair measurement for the physical fitness of male or female soldiers. Brig. Gen. Mordechai

²²⁶Rowan Scarborough, “Israeli Women’s Combat Roles Exaggerated, Military Traditionalists Say”

²²⁷Yossi Yehoshua, “Mixed IDF Units See Lighter Physical Standards for Female Soldiers,” Ynetnews.com, last modified September 18, 2017, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5018241,00.html>

Kahane also took measures to lessen the physical burden of women in the Israeli military. He had the number of full magazines to be carried by women reduced from six to four.²²⁸ Kahane reasoned that, “if four magazines are not enough for female soldiers, while other male and female soldiers are around them, the battle has already been decided.”²²⁹

The prevalence of sexual harassment is another serious problem in the Israeli military just as it is in the American military. According to a study conducted by the IDF, 1 in 6 Israeli servicewomen have been sexually harassed.²³⁰ The survey also found that a vast majority of female soldiers reported being sexually harassed during the course of their military service. Six percent said they had been harassed two or three times and another 3% reported being sexually harassed four times or more.²³¹ This data indicates that the American military may not be able to look to Israel for ways to improve the sexual harassment issue because it appears that Israel has its own problem with sexual misconduct.

On the other hand, one change in Israel’s policy toward female combat roles is worth noting for possible implementation in the American military: the establishment of Caracal in 2004. Its chief purpose was to give women an opportunity to truly serve in combat roles. Caracal is a mixed gender regiment which is named for a desert cat whose gender can be difficult to recognize. The Caracal division is 60% female and guards

²²⁸Ibid.

²²⁹Ibid.

²³⁰Anna Ahronheim. “1 in 6 Female Soldiers Report Sexual Harassment in the IDF,”The Jerusalem Post, last modified September 10, 2017, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/1-in-6-female-IDF-soldiers-report-being-sexually-harassed-during-service-504693>

²³¹Ibid.

Israel's border with Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. It is a desolate stretch of desert that has seen intense action in recent years. In 2011, eight Israelis died from attacks launched from this region.²³² Caracal's mission on the Sinai Peninsula is a difficult and dangerous one. Journalist Larry Abramson describes the harsh conditions that one female Israeli soldier, Leora Prince, originally from New Jersey, endured as a member of Caracal. He writes:

The area is dangerous enough that Israel has decided to build an expensive border fence through the harsh terrain. A big part of the Caracal's job is guarding the construction crews building that fence. Soldiers like Prince put up with clouds of dust, wicked heat and long shifts. [...] Prince says women don't have to carry quite as much gear as men. But otherwise they're treated the same [...]²³³

Israel points to Caracal as evidence that women can accomplish anything they put their minds to in the military. According to the Israel Defense Forces, nearly half of Israel's lieutenants and captains are servicewomen.²³⁴ There has also been high interest in and recruitment to Israel's mixed gender units. Drafting into these coed regiments reached all-time highs, particularly among men. In the March 2017 draft, more than 200 more men signed up for such units. Since then, the number of requests for entry has climbed to nearly 500, outpacing the number of requests to join traditional units.²³⁵

Perhaps the accomplishments of Caracal can act as a guide for American policy makers and military leaders. Women are capable of working in mixed gender battalions like Caracal under the same tough conditions as the men. Even with relatively lighter loads of equipment to carry, women can help regiments like Caracal achieve their

²³²Ibid.

²³³Ibid.

²³⁴Ibid.

²³⁵Yossi Yehoshua, "Mixed IDF Units See Lighter Physical Standards for Female Soldiers."

objectives. If military leaders and lawmakers are looking for an example of how American women could assimilate into some combat division Caracal may provide a way forward.

Subchapter 4.4: Norway – Relevant Military Statistics, Government Information, Combat Inclusion Policy and History of Social Equality

Norway is another country whose policy on female military combat roles is worth examination. The following chapter will first present the basic structure of the Norwegian military such as its recruitment process, military spending rank out of 155 countries, military expenditures as a percentage of GDP, governmental structure and relationship with the United States. Then, it will examine the challenges of implementing the policy such as concerns about physical standards for women, under representation of Norwegian women in senior combat roles, and sexual harassment. The chapter will also highlight some of the successes of Norway's combat inclusion policy such as the achievements of the Jergertroppen – Norway's all-female military unit.

Relevant Norwegian Military Statistics and Government Information

Military service is mandatory in Norway. According to the CIA World Factbook, citizens between the ages of 19-35, both male and female, must submit to compulsory military service. In times of war the age is 16 for submission. Seventeen is the age at which males can volunteer for service and 18 years for women. All applicants have a 19-month obligation. Norway is ranked 70th out of 155 countries for military spending. Norway's military expenditures as a percentage of GDP for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 was 1.62%, 1.62% and 1.61% respectively.²³⁶ Norway is a parliamentary

²³⁶CIA World Fact Book – Europe, Norway. Military Expenditures, accessed May 12, 2019. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/no.html>

constitutional monarchy. Like Israel, Norway is also a long-time ally of the United States. It has been a founding member of NATO (The North Atlantic Treaty Organization) since 1949.²³⁷ See Table 2 on pages 104-105 for a fuller comparison of the United States, Norway and Israel regarding military spending, military recruitment and military rank data as well as the number of years each country has had its inclusive combat policy in place.

Historic Social Equality as the Catalyst for Norway's Combat Inclusive Policy for Women

Norwegian military spending as a percentage of GDP is less than what America spends but there are other features of Norwegian society that may help American policy makers improve U.S. policy regarding women in combat. For example, according to results of the Global Gender Gap Report for 2018, Norway is the second most gender equal country in the world. Only another Nordic country, Iceland, scored higher for gender equality.²³⁸ Norway's existing societal gender equality may have filtered down to its military. Compared to America, Norway has been far more progressive in its attitude towards women in combat roles. It has had combat roles open to women for decades and it achieved this without lowering physical standards for the military. One journalist notes:

In 1985, Norway became the first country in NATO to allow women to serve in all combat capacities, including submarines. Norwegian women are also subject to the draft in the event of a national mobilization. "The few women that are attracted by

²³⁷"North Atlantic Treaty Organization – Member States," March 26, 2018. Accessed May 12, 2019. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm

²³⁸"The Global Gender Gap Report – 2018," World Economic Forum – Insight Report. p.g. 10. Accessed May 12, 2019. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

the infantry and cavalry do a great job in the Norwegian Army,” says Col. Ingrid Gjerde, an infantry officer in the Norwegian military for 25 years.²³⁹

Indeed, Norway has moved much faster than the United States to eliminate barriers to women’s military service. Norway’s parliament first introduced its ground-breaking legislation to open up all military combat roles in the 1980s. More recently in 2016, Norway became the first NATO country to introduce female conscription.²⁴⁰

Challenges and Achievements of Norway’s Combat Inclusion Policy for Women

The establishment of the Jergertroppen, Norway’s all-female special-forces regiment, is perhaps the greatest achievement for that country’s combat inclusion policy. This regiment greatly raised the profile of Norwegian servicewomen when it was introduced in 2014. Journalist Carlo Angerer describes why the Norwegian military created Jergertroppen and the talents these women bring to the battlefield. He notes:

The unit [Jergertroppen] was started after Norway’s Armed Forces’ Special Command saw an increased need for female special operations soldiers — particularly in places like Afghanistan where male troops were forbidden from communicating with women. The exclusion of half the population was having a detrimental impact on intelligence gathering and building community relations. ”When [Norway] deployed to Afghanistan we saw that we needed female soldiers. Both as female advisers for the Afghan special police unit that we mentored, but also when we did an arrest,” said Col. Frode Kristofferson, the commander of Norway’s Special Forces. ’We needed female soldiers to take care of the women and children in the buildings that we searched.’²⁴¹

²³⁹Anna Mulrine, “8 Other Nations That Send Women to Combat,” National Geographic News, last modified January 25, 2013, <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/13/130125-women-combat-world-australia-israel-canada-norway/>

²⁴⁰Carlo Angerer, “Inside the World’s First All-Female Forces Unit: Norway’s Jegertroppen,” NBC News, last modified April 17, 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/inside-world-s-first-all-female-special-forces-unit-norway-n746041>

²⁴¹Ibid.

One of Jergertroppen's members, 22-year-old Tonje, remarked that the unit proves that women can do the same job as men even in fields dominated by men, like the military.²⁴² "We're carrying the same weight in the backpack as the boys," said Tonje, who did not provide her full name due to the unit's rules. "We do the same tasks."²⁴³ According to the author, those tasks at Camp Termingmoen, about 100 miles north of Oslo, include parachuting out of military aircraft, skiing in the Arctic tundra, traversing wilderness terrain and fighting in urban environments.²⁴⁴ Standards for entry in Jergertroppen are high. The author notes:

To qualify for the Jergertroppen, applicants have to run about four miles carrying 60 pounds of military gear in under 52 minutes. That's just three minutes less than their male counterparts who have to do the same thing in under 49 minutes.²⁴⁵

In a relatively short period of time, Jergertroppen has shown women's ability to contribute to combat units. At a recent military exercise, one of the servicewomen shot better than some of the men in the Special Forces platoon, according to Captain Ole Vidar, the officer in charge of the training program. Captain Vidar also noted the stronger sense of solidarity among the female unit members. He also noted that despite some early uncertainty about the Jergertroppen, the program has been a huge success with over 300 applicants in the first year.²⁴⁶

Despite the gains of Jergertroppen, some concerns about female combat ability persist, even in the very gender-equal Norway. One Norwegian commander expanded on some

²⁴²Ibid.

²⁴³Ibid.

²⁴⁴Ibid.

²⁴⁵Ibid.

²⁴⁶Ibid.

valid concerns about the women of the Jergertroppen such as the ability of a female soldier to easily carry a wounded male soldier off the battlefield to safety. However, he also noted that he didn't believe women soldiers had to do the exact same thing as male soldiers such as hand to hand combat. On average, women soldiers were better at shooting guns than male soldiers, a far more common type of military engagement.²⁴⁷

In addition to physical concerns raised about Norwegian servicewomen, sexual harassment is also a concern. One member of Jergertroppen who transferred from another unit described what she experienced and how it was handled by her commanders.

Venderla says she has not experienced sexism in the Special Forces, but has in another battalion. She was told by some soldiers that she was weaker and less capable as a woman, and one man made sexual comments, she said. The problem stopped after she complained. "I think he was maybe a little insecure. I knew I was good enough passing the tests so it's his problem."²⁴⁸

Another problem that the Norwegian military faces is the relatively low number of women in its ranks compared to other countries such as the United States. The data on this issue explains it best:

Just 11% of personnel are women, reflecting halting progress in recruiting and retaining females. [...] This compares with 10.2% in the UK and more than 15% in the United States. [...] Conscription was extended to Norwegian women last year [2017] and they made up about 25% of the 8,000 youngsters recruited, meaning the share should increase over time.²⁴⁹

Norway's example shows that even though the same issues about women's physical strength and sexual harassment exist they can be addressed if standards are high but reasonable and if commanders reinforce the military's commitment to professionalism

²⁴⁷Ibid.

²⁴⁸Ibid.

²⁴⁹Ibid.

between men and women on the battlefield. Just like Israel's Caracal division, Norway's Jergertroppen shows that female service members are capable of helping the military achieve its objectives without weakening force strength.

Both Norway and Israel have military combat inclusion policies for women that embrace the concepts of gender parity and gender justice. Both countries recognize that women's strengths and talents should be utilized by their respective militaries and not prohibited as they have been in the United States for so long. Norway and Israel found ways to increase the number of women in combat roles through mixed-gender regiments like Israel's Caracal and all-female units such as Norway's Jergertroppen. Both units have had success in attracting candidates for high-demand, combat jobs. This increased access to highly-skilled combat jobs is consistent with military gender parity. By providing this access, both countries have shown a commitment to gender justice because they have shown that women deserve the opportunity to serve in combat and have demonstrated that they can do these kinds of jobs if given the chance. Now that America has reversed its combat exclusion policy perhaps American servicewomen can demonstrate their combat skills and military professionalism as well.

Table 1: Countries with Inclusive Military Combat* Policies for Women, by Year Adopted, Years in Place and Type of Government

Country	Year Policy Adopted	Years in Place	Type of Government
Australia	2011	8 years	Federal Parliamentary Democracy
Brazil	2017	2 years	Federal Presidential Republic
Canada	1989	30 years	Federal Parliamentary Democracy
Denmark	1978	41 years	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
Eritrea	1991	28 years	Presidential Republic
Finland	1995	24 years	Parliamentary Republic
France	1998	21 years	Semi-Presidential Republic
Germany	2000	19 years	Federal Parliamentary Republic
Israel	1995	24 years	Parliamentary Democracy
India	2019	< 1 year	Federal Parliamentary Republic
Italy	1999	20 years	Parliamentary Republic
Netherlands	1997	22 years	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
New Zealand	2000	19 years	Parliamentary Democracy
Norway	1985	34 years	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
Poland	2004	15 years	Parliamentary Republic
Romania	2002	17 years	Semi-Presidential Republic
South Africa	2013	6 years	Parliamentary Republic
South Korea	2017	2 years	Presidential Republic
Spain	1999	20 years	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
Sweden	1982	37 years	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
Switzerland	2003	16 years	Federal Republic
United Kingdom	2018	1 year	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
United States	2013	6 years	Constitutional Federal Republic

Source: CIA World Fact Book – Library; Type of Government,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/>

[Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden and Spain]

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Table 2: Comparison of United States, Norway and Israel's Military, Government and Combat Inclusion Policies

	<u>United States</u>	<u>Israel</u>	<u>Norway</u>
Military Spending Rank	19 th	8 th	70 th
Average Military Expenditures as a Percentage of GDP ^a	3.31	4.47	1.62
Military Recruitment Process	Voluntary	Compulsory	Compulsory
Female Recruitment Age	18 ^{b1}	18 ^{c1}	19-35 ^{d1}
Male Recruitment Age	18 ^{b2}	18 ^{c2}	19-35 ^{d2}
Compulsory Military Service Term for Male Recruits	N/A	32 months ^{c3}	19 months
Compulsory Military Service Term for Female Recruits	N/A	24 months ^{c4}	19 months
Year that Combat Inclusive Policy Began	2013	2000	1985
Years that Combat Inclusive Policy Has Been in Place	6	19	34

^aAverage calculated from military expenditures for 2016, 2017 and 2018 (United States, Israel and Norway)

^{b1}17 years of age for American females with parental consent

^{b2}17 years of age for American males with parental consent

^{c1}18 years is the recruitment age for female Jews, Druze. 17 years is the recruitment age for female Christians, Muslims and Circassians

^{c2}18 years is the recruitment age for male Jews, Druze. 17 years is the recruitment age for male Christians, Muslims and Circassians

^{c3}Varies based on military occupation for Israeli male recruits

^{c4}Varies based on military occupation for Israeli female recruits

^{d1}Female recruits may volunteer for military service at 18 years of age. During wartime female recruits can volunteer for military service at 16 years of age.

^{d2}Male recruits may volunteer for military service at 17 years of age. During wartime male recruits can volunteer for military service at 16 years of age.

Source: CIA World Fact Book – Country Comparisons – Military: United States, Israel, Norway

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/330rank.html#NO>

Ernesto Londono, "Pentagon Removes Ban on Women in Combat," Washington Post, January 24, 2013, Accessed August 25, 2019,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/pentagon-to-remove-ban-on-women-in-combat/2013/01/23/6cba86f6-659e-11e2-85f5-a8a9228e55e7_story.html

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<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/13/130125-women-combat-world-australia-israel-canada-norway/>

Conclusion

Where the differences lie between men and women in the military is not in their contributions but in benefits, promotions, pay and recognition.²⁵⁰

The comment above from the Equal Rights Amendment is about the combat exclusion policy. It succinctly encapsulates what the struggle to end the 70 year long discriminatory policy was all about. As we have seen from the historical data presented in this thesis, women have contributed to every major conflict from the colonial era to present-day military conflicts. See Appendix 1 for a detailed table of female military participation as well as casualties of military women and prisoner of war data from the colonial era until the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, their opportunities were limited and their contributions were not rewarded like their male counterparts were. Unfortunately, opponents of women in combat were able to successfully use negative physical, psychological and sexual gender stereotypes to justify barring women from combat duty.

In some ways, the decades long fight to increase opportunities for women in combat mirrors the centuries long fight for equal citizenship rights and responsibilities for women. In the workplace, the public sphere of government, law and politics and even in the private sphere of home and family; women's efforts are not equally rewarded by the market or by society in general. However, as women made strides advancing in the rest of society, the expansion of opportunities for female participation in the military, especially combat roles, lagged. This delay in the expansion of equal military opportunities also delayed the long-sought goal of equal citizenship for women. Until

²⁵⁰“If the ERA is Ratified, Will Women be Drafted?” The ERA Education Project: Equal Means Equal. Updated 2015, Accessed October 11, 2019, <https://eraeducationproject.com/if-the-e-r-a-is-ratified-will-women-be-drafted/>

women have the same rights and responsibilities when it comes to national defense and security opportunities, women will not truly achieve equal citizenship.

As we have seen in the above, equal does not mean that men and women will be able to do the exact same things as far as combat duty is concerned, rather as a society, we should be seeking equal access and equal opportunities to combat roles. This is consistent with the principles of gender parity in the military. Providing access to greater military combat positions, contrary to what opponents of women in combat assert, would improve the U.S. military's mission because it would add to the pool of talent of qualified servicemen and servicewomen. This would be consistent with the aforementioned principles of gender justice because it would demand that servicewomen be given the same rights and responsibilities when it comes to national defense and combat duty as their male counterparts.

By combining aspects of gender parity and gender justice to military recruitment and promotion standards, the armed forces could prove to be a key factor in advancing equal citizenship for women. No longer would women be excluded from combat duty or Selective Service registration simply because of non-evidence based gender stereotypes. Rather, they would have the same rights and responsibilities as men when it comes to national defense.

The military has provided a pathway to equal citizenship for minorities and other communities that have suffered historic discrimination. The same path could be provided to women. It can be done. Two of America's closest allies, Israel and Norway have done it by giving women equal access to military combat roles such as with mixed gender defense units like Israel's Caracal and all-female regiments like Norway's Jergertroppen.

In addition, perhaps military and congressional leaders should utilize the tenets of ethical public policy formation such as consequentialism and virtue ethics theory as they attempt to reform military recruitment and procedures following the repeal of the combat exclusion policy for women. By drawing on consequentialist principles they should attempt to find solutions to the challenges of incorporating women in military combat roles by devising policies that provide, “greatest possible increase of pleasure over pain of classic utilitarianism, and the greatest possible satisfaction of preferences of welfare economics.”²⁵¹ These new policies should also “[produce] the greatest balance of harm over good.”²⁵² In this case, a consequentialist approach toward the combat exclusion policy would seek to open even more combat roles to female candidates with stringent, gender-normed physical standards corresponding to the jobs to which they apply. In this way, servicewomen would be able to add to the military’s effectiveness. Similarly, under the principles of virtue ethics, policy makers and military leaders would craft policies that, “[assume] that there are certain ideals toward which we should strive because they provide for the full development of our humanity.”²⁵³ In this way, the reform of the combat exclusion policy for women should recognize that denying women the same opportunities as men in combat also denies servicewomen the exercise of their full potential as military professionals. Therefore, more combat opportunities should be open to women.

²⁵¹Frank Fischer, Gerald J Miller and Mara S. Sidney. *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods*. (Boca Raton: CRC Press, Taylor and Francis Group, 2007), 310.

²⁵²Manuel Velasquez, Dennis Moberg, Michael J. Meyer, Thomas Shanks, Margaret R. McLean, David DeCosse, Claire André, and Kirk O. Hanson Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University. “A Framework for Thinking Ethically,” accessed December 7, 2015, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/framework.html>

²⁵³Frank Fischer, et al. *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis*. 310.

Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers was unable to reach such an ambitious change to the combat exclusion policy seven decades ago. Her main goal was to improve opportunities for women as non-combat volunteers assisting the military. Strong social and military opposition to her relatively modest plan almost destroyed her achievement. However, perhaps today this approach can be used to strengthen America's new combat inclusion policy. If the goal of equal citizenship is to be reached, equal opportunities for military combat roles for women must be achieved. It is the only ethically sound path forward. If instead we rely merely on negative gender stereotypes just as opponents of the expansion of *any* rights for women have, women will not achieve equal citizenship. As a nation, we can start by challenging negative gender stereotypes and start looking for ways to expand positions for women in every facet of society, including the military, instead of making the same excuses that have halted women's military progress in the past.

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Appendix 1: Women's Participation in Major Military Campaigns and Casualties

	Time Period	Total Who Served	Casualties		
			<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>P.O.Ws</u>
French and Indian War	1754 – 1783	Unknown	70 ^{a1}	Unknown	11 ^{a2}
Revolutionary War	1775 – 1783	22,005 ^{b1}	1 ^{b2}	Unknown	Unknown
Civil War	1861 – 1865	5,400 - 11,000 ^{c1}	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Spanish-American War	1898	1,563 ^{d1}	156 ^{d2}	Unknown	Unknown
World War I	1917 – 1918	34,030 ^{e1}	>350 ^{e2}	Unknown	Unknown
World War II	1941 – 1945	343,160 ^{f1}	489 ^{f2}	Unknown	17 ^{f3}

French and Indian War:

^{a1}Of the 70 women killed during the French and Indian War 20 were camp followers and 50 were contract workers. ^{a2}During the French and Indian War 6 women were captured at Lake George by French-allied Native American forces. Five women were held as prisoners by the French at Montreal in 1760.

Revolutionary War:

^{b1}Of the approximately 22,006 women who provided services to the U.S. military during the Revolutionary War, 2,000 were camp followers 20,000 were contract workers, 3 women successfully disguised themselves and served in the military and 2 women assisted their husbands at cannon duty. ^{b2}One disguised woman was killed in battle during the Revolutionary War.

Civil War:

^{c1}5,000 to 10,000 women served the military as nurses during the Civil War. ^{c2}Of these nurses, nearly 600 were Catholic nuns. ^{c3}Separately, 400 to 1,000 civilian women disguised themselves as men to fight in the war.

Spanish-American War:

^{d1}All of the 1,563 women who worked for the U.S. military during the Spanish-American War were contract nurses. ^{d2}The 156 female nurses who perished while serving the military during the Spanish-American War died of typhoid fever as well as tropical diseases such as yellow fever and malarial dysentery.

World War I:

^{e1}Of the 34,030 women who served in the military during World War I, 21,480 were from the Army Nurse Corps, 1,550 were from the Navy Nurse Corps and 11,000 were Yeoman (F). Yeoman (F)'s were women who were recruited to serve in the Navy. ^{e2}Over 350 Army and Navy female nurses and Yeoman (F) combined died in service during World War I.

World War II:

^{f1}Of the 343,160 women who served in World War II, 150,000 were in the WAAC and WAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corp and later the Women's Army Corps), 88,000 were in the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services), 13,000 were in the Coast Guard SPAR (Semper Paratus, Always Ready), 1,074 were in the WASP (Women's Air Service Pilots), 23,000 were in the Marine Corps Women's Reserve, 57,000 were in the Army Nurse Corps and 11,086 were in the Navy Nurse Corps.

^{f2}Of the 489 women who died during World War II, 160 were in the WAAC and WAC, 69 were in the WAVES, 0 SPAR deaths, 38 were in the WASP, 18 were in the Marine Corps Women's Reserve, 201 were in the Army Nurse Corps and 3 were in the Navy Nurse Corps.

^{f3}Of the 17 female prisoners of war who served in the military during World War II, 16 were in the Navy Nurse Corps and 1 was in the Army Nurse Corps.

Appendix 1: Women's Participation in Major Military Campaigns and Casualties

	Time Period	Total Who Served	Deaths	Casualties Wounded	P.O.Ws
Korean War	1950 – 1959	50,000 ^{g1}	31 ^{g2}	Unknown	Unknown
Vietnam War	1959 – 1975	906 ^{h1}	8 ^{h2}	Unknown	Unknown
Persian Gulf War	1990 – 1991	37,000 to 40,000 ⁱ¹	15 ⁱ²	21 ⁱ³	2 ⁱ⁴
War in Afghanistan; + War in Iraq	2001 – Present 2003 – 2011	300,000 ^{j1}	165 ^{j2}	10,000 ^{j3}	Unknown

Korean War:

^{g1}50,000 American women served in the Korean War. ^{g2}Of the 31 women who died during the Korean War, 5 were Air Force flight nurses, 12 were Navy nurses, 1 was an Army nurse, and 13 nurses died while on route to assignments.

Vietnam War:

^{h1}906 female nurses served during the Vietnam War. ^{h2}Of the 8 female nurses who died during the Vietnam War, 7 were Army nurses and 1 was an Air Force nurse.

Persian Gulf War:

ⁱ¹37,000 to 40,000 women who served during the Persian Gulf War. Approximately 26,000 were from the Army, 3,700 were from the Navy and 22,000 were from the Air force.

ⁱ²The 15 women who were killed during the Persian Gulf War died from Skud missile attacks and miscellaneous accidents on the battlefield. 5 women were killed in action. ⁱ³21 women were wounded during the Persian Gulf War. ⁱ⁴2 women were taken as prisoners of war during the Persian Gulf War.

Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan:

^{j1}A combined 300,000 women served in the War in Iraq and the War in Afghanistan. ^{j2}165 female soldiers died in the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. ^{j3}10,000 female soldiers were wounded in the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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Appendix 2: Timeline of Women's Involvement in the Military and the Evolution of the Combat Exclusion Policy

Legislation/Organization/Action	Year/Date	Description
The French and Indian War	1754-1763	Colonial American women participate in their first major military conflict as camp followers and contract workers.
The Revolutionary War	1775-1783	American women participate in the Revolutionary War as camp followers, contract workers and disguised soldiers.
Army no longer allows paid positions for female contract workers.	1804	Contract jobs for women (referred to as army women) were eliminated
The Civil War	186	Women participate in the Civil War
Military requires draft physicals during the Spanish-American War.	1898	By the Spanish-American War of 1898, the military conducted regular draft physicals, which made it impossible for women to disguise themselves as men in order to join the military.
Spanish-American War	1898	Women participate in the Spanish-American War as paid and volunteer nurses. After the Spanish-American War women are no longer officially allowed as camp followers or battlefield aids
Army Nurse Corps is established.	February 2, 1901	The Army Nurse Corps is established by Congress.
Navy Nurse Corps is established.	May 13, 1908	The Navy Nurse Corps is established by Congress.
The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps Act	May 15, 1942	Authorized the creation of a non-combat, voluntary, military-assist unit for American women during World War II, (WAAC). The act limited the number of women who could participate. The act also did not guarantee women equal pay, rank, benefits, legal protection, medical care or veterans' entitlements.
The Women's Army Corps Act	July 1, 1943	Made the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps part of the regular army and it was renamed the WAC. The Women's Army Corps Act granted participating women official military status with equal pay, rank, benefits, legal protection and medical care.
The WAVES is established.	July 30, 1942	Women Accepted for Voluntary Service (WAVES) was formed as an all-female reserve military unit during World War II

Appendix 2: Timeline of Women's Involvement in the Military and the Evolution of the Combat Exclusion Policy

Legislation/Organization/Action	Year/Date	Description
The Coast Guard's, SPAR is established	November 23, 1942	The SPAR (Semper Paratus, Always Ready) is established to assist the Coast Guard during World War II.
The WASP is established	August 1943	The WASP (Women's Air Force Service Pilots) is created to assist the Air Force during World War II. It becomes the only women's military assist unit that was created without Congressional action.
The Marine Corps Women's Reserve	February 1943	The Marine Corps Women's Reserves is created to assist the Marines during World War II. It becomes the last women's military assist unit created for World War II.
The WASP is disbanded	December 20, 1944	The WASP was demobilized in December 1944, eight months before the end of World War II. It was the only women's service branch to disband before the end of the war. The Director of the WASP, Jacqueline Cochran pushed for the full militarization of the WASP during World War II. In the end, that legislation was defeated despite support. One of the main factors for deactivating the WASP was opposition from male pilots who were worried that they might lose their jobs to women after returning from military duty.
The SPAR is disbanded; The Marine Corps Women's Reserve is disbanded	1946	The SPAR and the Marine Corps Women's Reserve become next female auxiliary military units to disband after the WASP.
The Women's Armed Services Integration Act	June 12, 1948	Gave women serving in the military permanent status in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. Women would be treated as members of the regular armed forces and reserves, subject to military authority and entitled to veteran's benefits. It still limited the number of women who could join as well as the highest rank they could achieve.
The WAVES is disbanded	1948	Following the passage of the 1948 Women's Armed Services Integration Act, women soldiers become permanent part of the regular military. Subsequently, the WAVES is officially disbanded.

Appendix 2: Timeline of Women's Involvement in the Military and the Evolution of the Combat Exclusion Policy

Legislation/Organization/Action	Year/Date	Description
U.S. Military policy change	October 1949	Army regulation requires the discharge of female servicewomen with children under the age of 18.
The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS)	1951	DACOWITS was established in 1951 by Secretary of Defense, George C. Marshall. It is a special advisory committee appointed by the Secretary of Defense. Its purpose is to provide recommendations on issues regarding women's employment, integration and treatment in the military. Recommendations made by DACOWITS have been instrumental to changing laws and policies regarding women in the military.
The Korean War	1950 – 1959	Women are mobilized for the Korean War.
The Vietnam War	1959 - 1975	Women participate in the Vietnam War.
U.S. Military policy change	1967	The limit on the percentage of women in the military was repealed in 1967 and the number of women serving continued to grow through the next three decades
U.S. Military becomes an All-Volunteer Force. The draft is abolished.	1973	With the move to an all-volunteer force, the military struggled to meet previously high enlistment targets. Military leaders began recruiting more women partly to meet those high recruitment markers.
U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force	1973	In 1973, the Navy opened pilot training to women and in 1976, the Air Force followed suit
U.S. Military policy change	1974	In 1974, the age requirement for women enlisting without parental consent was made the same as for men
U.S. Congress military policy change	1975	In 1975, legislation was enacted that allowed women to be admitted to the three service academies, and the first women were admitted in the summer of 1976.
U.S. Military policy change	May 1975	The Department of Defense (DoD) ordered the armed forces to stop involuntary discharge for pregnancy. Women could choose to resign instead.

Appendix 2: Timeline of Women's Involvement in the Military and the Evolution of the Combat Exclusion Policy

Legislation/Organization/Action	Year/Date	Description
U.S. Congress military policy change	1977	In 1977, Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress a definition of the term "combat" and recommendations for expanding job classifications for female members of the Armed Forces
U.S. Military, U.S. Navy	1978	By 1978, women were permitted to be assigned permanent duty on noncombatant Navy ships, and up to six months of temporary duty on other ships
The WAC is disbanded	1978	In 1978 the WAC is disbanded.
Operation Urgent Fury: the Invasion of Grenada	1983	During Operation Urgent Fury on October 25, 1983, U.S. soldiers were sent to evacuate American citizens on Grenada. Four U.S. servicewomen arrived in Grenada after the invasion. They were quickly sent back to their home base by their commander. They were re-attached to the mission in nearby Barbados on November 2, 1983 to assist the Invasion Task Force while the rest of the unit was deployed to Grenada. The confusion over the role of servicewomen in military combat missions led to a re-evaluation of role of servicewomen who could be exposed to combat situations. Five years later, the U.S. military attempted to correct the policy with the Risk Rule (<i>See below</i>)
Creation of the Risk Rule	February 1988	Set a single, department-wide standard for determining positions and units from which servicewomen could be excluded. It allowed military branches to bar women from non-combat units or missions if their risk of exposure to direct combat, enemy fire or capture were equal to or greater than their risk in the combat units they supported.
The Persian Gulf War	1990 – 1991	Women participate in the Persian Gulf War

Appendix 2: Timeline of Women's Involvement in the Military and the Evolution of the Combat Exclusion Policy

Legislation/Organization/Action	Year/Date	Description
Abolishment of the Risk Rule	January 1994	Secretary Aspin abolished the Risk Rule. He then created a new direct ground combat assignment rule that allowed all servicemembers to be assigned to any position for which they qualified. It still allowed servicewomen to be excluded from units and missions if their primary purpose would put them at risk of combat. All military branches would have to provide justification for excluding women from such positions and missions.
1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces.	1992	Was established in 1992 by the Defense Authorization Bill for 1992. It was created to evaluate the laws and policies that restricted military assignments for servicewomen. It upheld combat exclusion for women.
The War in Iraq	2003 – 2011	Women participate in the second War in Iraq.
The War in Afghanistan	2001 – Present	Women participate in the War in Afghanistan. After 2013, their combat service is finally recognized.
Repeal of the Combat Exclusion Policy for Women	January 24, 2013	Panetta directed all military departments to examine their occupational standards and assignment rules and make recommendations for opening all combat roles to servicewomen no later than January 1, 2016. On December 3, 2015, incoming Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter directed the military to open all combat positions to women with no exceptions.

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