WOMEN IN COMBAT COMPENDIUM

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Editors

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PREFACE

The U.S. Army War College provides an excellent environment for selected military officers and government civilians to reflect on and use their career experience to explore a wide range of strategic issues. To assure that the research conducted by Army War College students is available to Army and Department of Defense leaders, the Strategic Studies Institute publishes selected papers in its "Carlisle Papers in Security Strategy" Series.

ANTULIO J. ECHEVARRIA II
Director of Research
Strategic Studies Institute

INTRODUCTION

This compendium resulted from a request by Colonel Michele Putko for sponsorship of a "Women in Combat Study" as a multistudent elective alternative. Dr. Douglas Johnson agreed to sponsor the project on the condition that the perspectives of male officers who had commanded units with women in them be specifically included, as their views might provide a different evaluation of performance. As the editing of the original papers extended into the following student year, Colonel Mark Lindon's paper filled an obvious gap, that of documenting the progressive change in public opinion. It has, therefore, been included.

The topic of Women in Combat has been one of great emotion, but uncertain factual content until recently. The rules created to deal with the fact that women want to serve in the armed forces have ranged from silly to serious, but the factual bases have changed and the plea of all the contributors is to review the entire issue with objectivity and attention to the facts as they exist. These facts are: Women comprise approximately 15 percent of the U.S. Army today; as of this writing (September 2007), 70 Army women (including three Department of the Army Civilian women) have been killed and a significantly larger number wounded; [*icasualties.org/oif/Female.aspx*] the American public is vaguely aware of this state of affairs and has raised no outcry. The nature of the current battlefield makes it impossible to apply strictly the existing rules for excluding women from combat without serious reduction in combat capabilities, degrading the professional development and thus status of women, and producing a potentially serious reduction in overall readiness. The sections that follow are edited extracts of U.S. Army War College (USAWC) Class of 2006 (except as noted) Personal Experience Monographs, Strategy Research Papers, or Directed Study: Writing Option papers. These papers are available in full through the USAWC Library Reference or Interlibrary Loan Section. The editors included major portions of several papers in order to emphasize the context within which these observations were made. The reader should take away two major points--the nature of combat for the U.S. Army has changed, and the existing rules governing the employment of women do not fit this new situation; and there is not the slightest doubt that women can perform their assigned duties in the combat zone, including engaging in combat actions essential to their personal and unit's self-defense, with skill and valor equal to their male comrades. From the Survey, the reader should note continuing ambivalence about assignment to direct combat units, but strong support for revising the existing employment rules. No attempt has been made to examine Post-Traumatic Stress in women combat veterans, pregnancy rates, or any of the host of other gender-related issues. These officers asked simply, "Did the women do their jobs?"

There is some redundancy in the material covered, but each version adds a slightly different perspective or picks up additional information. Were this a formal study, the material would be rationalized, but since we have chosen the compendium format, we have accepted this duplication for coherence of the individual papers. Likewise, what are offered here are "observations" rather than defensible conclusions that would have resulted from a formal study, and we would like to make that clear to the reader at the outset.

Observations from this compendium and the material gathered by the contributors may be summarized as follows:

- The Combat Exclusion Policy with its attendant "collocation" restriction is incompatible with the nature of the war in which the U.S. Army is currently engaged and the forms of conflict it is likely to be engaged in for the foreseeable future;
- The Combat Exclusion Policy and the associated "collocation" restriction is likewise incompatible with the Army's transformation to a modularized force;
- The U.S. Army today cannot be manned adequately without the broad participation of women;
- While serious ambivalence remains toward the integration of women into infantry, special operations, and armor/cavalry units, obstacles to career development through other branches should be removed--ability should be the measure of merit--period.
- Perhaps the most important conclusion this effort brings to light is the almost complete reversal of attitude by the American public toward women in military service--the American public accepts female casualties as part of the price of war.

The Compendium begins with the results of the survey of the USAWC Class of 2006. The extracts that follow were written specifically to support this effort, although other student papers have addressed the topic.

I.

USAWC WOMEN IN COMBAT SURVEY INTERPRETATION

Chrisopher Putko

Editors' Note: Colonel Christopher Putko worked with Dr. Anna Waggner, U.S. Army War College (USAWC) Director for Institutional Assessment, to design and administer the attached Survey to the USAWC Class of 2006. His briefing to the USAWC Students was partially responsible for the unusually high response rate. His interpretation of the resulting data follows.

Objective.

To determine the perceptions of USAWC students regarding the U.S. Army policy of ground combat exclusion policy of female soldiers.

Design and Setting.

A total of 300 USAWC students from the Class of 2006 were afforded the opportunity to take an anonymous, voluntary 17-question survey (Appendix I) during the academic year; 236 students took the survey (78.67 percent of the class). The composition of students that took the survey is outlined in Question 16. The preponderance of volunteers were in the Army (76 percent), followed by the Air Force (8 percent), Marine Corps (6 percent), Navy (5 percent), Department of the Army Civilian (3 percent), Coast Guard (1 percent) and Department of State (1 percent). Of the participants, 210 (89 percent) were male and 26 (11 percent) were female.

Main Outcome Measures.

Students are familiar with the ground combat exclusion policy for female soldiers, but their perception is that, because of the asymmetric nature of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army does not follow the policy and female soldiers are engaged in direct ground combat.

Results From 17 Questions.

Of the students:

1. 68 percent strongly agree or agree that they are knowledgeable about the ground combat restrictions for female soldiers.
2. 54 percent strongly agree or agree that they are aware of the May 2005 House Armed Services Committee legislation to further codify Department of Defense (DoD) regulations pertaining to women in combat.
3. 75 percent perceive the term "collocation" used in the legislation to mean the "location of actual combat operations."
4. 53 percent perceive the regulation that prohibits females from collocating with direct combat units is rarely enforced or not enforced at all.

5. 70 percent strongly agree or agree the regulation prohibiting collocation of female soldiers with direct combat units should be revised.

6. 59 percent strongly agree or agree the regulation prohibiting female soldiers from serving in battalion sized or smaller units assigned a mission to direct combat units should be revised.

7. 56 percent strongly agree or agree the attachment of female "searchers" to direct combat units represents a violation of Army policy.

8. 60 percent strongly agree or agree the augmentation of support teams including female soldiers represents a violation of Army policy.

9. 63 percent disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units due to lack of physical strength.

10. 59 disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to combat units due to a lack of co-ed life support facilities.

11. 57 percent disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units due to a perceived lack of public support.

12. 59 percent disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units due to potential problems in assimilation/unit bonding.

13. 78 percent disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units to preclude exposure to trauma associated with combat.

14. 74 percent strongly agree or agree all soldiers regardless of gender should be assigned to positions for which they are qualified.

15. 89 percent of survey participants were male; 11 percent were female.

16. service composition: Army (76 percent), Air Force (8 percent), Marine Corps (6 percent), Navy (5 percent), DA Civilian (3 percent), Coast Guard (1 percent) and Department of State (1 percent).

Written Response Analysis.

For question (17), 126 out of 236 students provided written comments. Their comments reflect common themes:

a. Roles should be assigned based on capability, not gender.

b. DoD needs to stop justifying its gender discrimination policies and recognize the contributions of female soldiers.

c. Women are in combat, like it or not. Protests did not occur when female soldiers began returning home in body bags.

d. The current regulation needs to be reconsidered, clarified, or changed. It is ambiguous and places commanders in awkward situations.

e. Current policy is based on a Cold War linear battlefield.

f. DoD policy does not reflect the asymmetric nature of today's battlefield.

g. It appears that Congress is interpreting what the Army says, and the Army is not forthcoming with a clear policy.

h. Women should not serve in the infantry or armor.

Conclusions.

Using the survey data collected from 236 volunteer students at the USAWC, DoD should consider a revision of the female combat exclusion policy to reflect a more realistic view of the current asymmetric nature of warfare and the combat roles female soldiers are currently engaged in.

The current battlefield makes application of the existing rules regarding women and combat unhelpful at least, irrelevant for the most part, and a compromising issue at worst. Women have demonstrated their ability to perform their duties under combat conditions at least as well as male soldiers. The fact that over 60 women have been killed in combat without raising a huge hue and cry from the American public clearly demonstrates that the old sensitivities are a relic of the past. Public opinion has shifted demonstrably in favor of allowing women to serve in combat. Assigning women to direct combat units remains a more contentious issue. The issue of drafting women was not part of this study, and it is not clear whether that would produce different responses from the American public—the editors' gut feel is that it would. Manning the force without the participation of women would be difficult, but the modularization of the force makes it nearly impossible to apply the collocation rule without relegating women soldiers to continental United States (CONUS) or a very few theater rear areas. This inevitably will result in limited development and promotion opportunities.

Recommendations.

The entire issue of women's service to the nation needs to be reexamined with an eye toward replacing out-of-date rules and laws that were applicable to a completely different type of combat and responded to a very different public opinion toward combat service. These should be replaced by service-specific regulations that allow the recruitment and development of women's full potential in the organization during wartime and specifically accommodating the services' combat zone requirements. The examining body, however constituted, should be tasked to examine potential attitudinal differences that might be occasioned by implementation of a draft that included women.

APPENDIX I

USAWC STUDENT ATTITUDE SURVEY: WOMEN IN COMBAT

I am reviewing the U.S. Army's assignment policy for female soldiers and appreciate your candid responses to the questions below. Even if you are not familiar with the current Army policies, I am interested in your perceptions concerning the issue of "women in combat." The survey consists of 12 questions and should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

All responses are confidential. The web survey method guarantees that I cannot connect any completed survey to a computer or respondent. At no time will I attempt to connect any particular student with a survey response.

Policy Awareness:

1. To what extent are you knowledgeable of the ground combat restrictions as they pertain to female soldiers in the U.S. Army?

- Very good understanding
- Good understanding
- Vague understanding
- No knowledge of current restrictions

2. In May 2005, the House Armed services Committee approved legislation to further codify DoD regulations pertaining to women in combat. To what extent are you aware of the legislation?

- Very aware of the legislation
- Vaguely familiar with the legislation
- No knowledge of the legislation

Collocation Policy:

3. Current Army regulation states that female soldiers will not be assigned to units which "collocate" with units assigned a direct combat mission. In this context, "collocate" likely refers to:

- Location of a unit base camp or life support area
- Location of unit TOC or HQ
- Location of actual combat operations
- No basis to answer this question

4. Given the U.S. Army's current operating environment, to the best of your knowledge the collocation prohibition is:

- Always enforced for female soldiers are never assigned to units which collocate with direct combat units

- Sometimes violated for on occasion a unit containing females will collocate with direct combat units
- Routinely violated for all types of units regularly collocate in the noncontiguous battlefield
- I have no basis to answer this question

5. Given the current noncontiguous, asymmetric nature of the operating environment, the policy prohibiting collocation is:

- An effective policy which precludes women for engaging in direct combat
- A confusing policy since collocation is not doctrinally defined
- An irrelevant policy since physical location on the battlefield is not directly correlated with likelihood of engaging in combat
- I have no basis to respond

Unit of Assignment Policy:

6. Current Army regulation states that female soldiers will not "serve" in battalion sized or smaller units which are assigned a routine mission to engage in direct combat. In your opinion, the primary reason for this policy is that

- Camaraderie in these units is such that female soldiers would not integrate well
- There is not public support for assigning female solider to combat units (even in the capacity of support roles such as medic or mechanic)
- It is not convenient to establish co-ed life support facilities
- There are enough male soldiers to fill these units and accordingly no reason to open combat units to women
- Female soldiers should not be exposed to the trauma of direct combat
- I have no basis to answer this question

7. In the current operating environment, female soldiers are frequently attached to combat units as "searchers" to assist in searching the indigenous female population. The attachment of female "searchers" to combat units is:

- A violation of Army policy since such attachments represents females "serving" in direct combat units
- Not a violation of the Army policy, since the female soldiers are not permanently assigned to the combat units
- Not a violation of the Army policy, since the female searchers mission is not to engage in direct combat
- I have no basis to answer this question

8. Frequently combat units are augmented by nonorganic support teams. Any support provided to combat units at the battalion level or below:

- Must be comprised of only male soldiers since female soldiers may not serve with direct combat units
- Should be comprised of male soldiers, but exceptions should be made to allow female soldiers as mission requirements necessitate

- May be comprised of either male or female soldiers without violating Army policy
- I have no basis to answer this question

9. Current Army policy precludes females from (1) serving in direct combat units at the battalion level or below, and (2) collocating with direct combat units. This policy is:

- appropriate and should not change
- obscure and receives little attention in the field army
- irrelevant for it is not applicable to a non-contiguous battlefield
- vague and should be more explicit
- I have no basis to answer

10. Which of the following statements best represents your position on the assignment of female soldiers?

- Should be able to serve in any military occupational specialty (MOS) or unit provided they have the physical strength to perform the required duties
- Should be able to serve in any military unit as long as they do not serve in direct combat military occupations specialties (e.g., a female soldier would be able to serve in an infantry company as a medic or supply clerk).
- Should NOT be allowed to serve in combat units at the battalion level or below in any capacity
- Should NOT be allowed to serve within a Brigade Combat Team (BCT)
- Should not be allowed to serve in any area designated as a combat zone

Demographics.

11. What is your gender?

12. Please choose the service/category which best describes you:

- International Fellow
- Civilian
- Navy
- Marine
- Air Force
- Army, Combat Arms
- Army, Combat Support
- Army, Combat Service Support

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Survey Results (Included Responses)

Women in Combat

Report created on: Thursday, June 01, 2006 12:15:00 PM

The results of your survey are displayed below. If your survey includes text responses, click the "View" button to read individual results. To exclude a particular response, click the Included Responses button. You can then view the set of individual responses that are currently included and select those you wish to exclude. Results below contain only Included responses

EXCLUDE BLANK RESPONSES

Launch Date	05/08/2006 - 8:07 AM
Modified Date	
Close Date	05/23/2006 - 12:42 PM
Email Invites	0
Visits	265
Partials	5
Completes	236

Go to Individual Complete Responses:

Show respondent's emails.

INCLUDED RESPONSES

EXCLUDED RESPONSES

Included Respondents: 236

Excluded Respondents: 0

Cross Tabulate
Cross reference multiple questions

Download Results
Receive results in spreadsheet format

Responses: Completes only Partials only Completes & Partials

1. I am knowledgeable of the ground combat restrictions as they pertain to female soldiers in the US Army.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree	50	21%
Agree	135	57%
Neutral	26	11%
Disagree	19	8%
Strongly Disagree	6	3%
Total	236	100%

2. I am aware of the House Armed Services Committee (May 2005)	Number of Responses	Response Ratio

	legislation to further codify DoD regulations pertaining to women in combat.		
Strongly Agree		22	9%
Agree		107	45%
Neutral		41	17%
Disagree		54	23%
Strongly Disagree		12	5%
	Total	236	100%

3.	US Army regulation states that female soldiers will NOT be assigned to units which "collocate routinely" with units assigned a direct combat mission. In this context, the term "collocate" likely refers to:	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Location of a unit base camp or life support area		40	17%
Location of unit TOC or HQ		19	8%
Location of actual combat operations		177	75%
	Total	236	100%

4.	Given the US Army's current operating environment, the regulation which prohibits females from collocating with direct combat units is:	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Always enforced		4	2%
Usually enforced		57	24%
Rarely enforced		93	40%
Not enforced at all		30	13%
No basis to answer this question		51	22%
	Total	235	100%

5.	The regulation prohibiting collocation of female soldiers with direct combat units should be revised.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio

Strongly Agree		80	34%
Agree		85	36%
Neutral		36	15%
Disagree		19	8%
Strongly Disagree		16	7%
	Total	236	100%

6.	Army regulation prohibits female soldiers from serving in battalion sized or smaller units assigned a mission to engage in direct combat. The regulation prohibiting female assignment to direct combat units should be revised.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
	Strongly Agree	66	28%
	Agree	73	31%
	Neutral	33	14%
	Disagree	31	13%
	Strongly Disagree	32	14%
	Total	235	100%

7.	Female soldiers are frequently attached to direct combat units as “searchers” to assist in searching the indigenous female population. The attachment of female “searchers” to direct combat units represents a violation of Army policy.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
	Strongly Agree	24	10%
	Agree	108	46%
	Neutral	44	19%
	Disagree	46	20%
	Strongly Disagree	13	6%
	Total	235	100%

8.	Direct combat units are often augmented by support teams which	Number of Responses	Response Ratio

	include female soldiers. The augmentation of direct combat units with female soldiers represents a violation of Army policy.		
Strongly Agree		25	11%
Agree		115	49%
Neutral		38	16%
Disagree		46	19%
Strongly Disagree		12	5%
	Total	236	100%

9.	Female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units due to lack of physical strength.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		20	9%
Agree		40	17%
Neutral		28	12%
Disagree		94	40%
Strongly Disagree		53	23%
	Total	235	100%

10.	Female soldiers should NOT be assigned to combat units due to a lack of co-ed life support facilities.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		14	6%
Agree		50	21%
Neutral		34	14%
Disagree		91	39%
Strongly Disagree		46	20%
	Total	235	100%

11.	Female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units due to a perceived lack of public support for such a role.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio

Strongly Agree	9	4%
Agree	49	21%
Neutral	44	19%
Disagree	89	38%
Strongly Disagree	44	19%
Total	235	100%

12. Female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units due to potential problems in assimilation/unit bonding.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree	20	8%
Agree	43	18%
Neutral	29	12%
Disagree	99	42%
Strongly Disagree	45	19%
Total	236	100%

13. Female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units to preclude exposure to trauma associated with combat.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree	13	6%
Agree	13	6%
Neutral	27	11%
Disagree	118	50%
Strongly Disagree	65	28%
Total	236	100%

14. All soldiers, regardless of gender should be assigned to positions for which they are qualified.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio

Strongly Agree	100	42%
Agree	75	32%
Neutral	16	7%
Disagree	35	15%
Strongly Disagree	10	4%
Total	236	100%

15. What is you gender?	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Male	206	89%
Female	26	11%
Total	232	100%

16. Which category best describes you?	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Army USA	141	60%
AR	17	7%
ARNG	21	9%
USAF	15	6%
ANG	3	1%
ASAFR	2	1%
USN	12	5%
USNR	0	0%
USMC	11	5%
USMCR	2	1%
USCG	1	0%
DA Civilian	6	3%
DLAMP	1	0%
DOS	2	1%
NSA	0	0%

DHS		0	0%
International Fellow		0	0%
	Total	234	100%

17. Please consider sharing your opinion or recommendation concerning "women in combat" in the space provided.

VIEW 126 Responses

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Please consider sharing your opinion or recommendation concerning "women in combat" in the space provided.

#	Response
1	Good job on the survey Chris! You will be a GO.
2	As a battalion commander in combat arms battalion, 29 of the 630 soldiers were female (mechanics, cooks, medics, personnel, supply specialists, and three officers). They all did their job exceptionally well - same as the men did. Gender was not an issue.
3	Roles should be assigned based on capability, not gender. That said, some positions, such as infantry or special forces, would require physical fitness levels that should preclude participation by most women.
4	The ongoing discussion of roles and equality is good, but the extremist position that discounts physical and emotional differences is stupid. The sexes are not the same and it seems reasonable to give that reality the consideration it deserves when crafting our nation's combat forces.
5	I think we need to qualify our remarks about assigning women to combat units. While I don't agree with assigning women to small ground combat units like infantry, armor and engineer platoons, squads or crews, I do not see a problem with assigning them to larger combat units such as the HQ CO of a heavy BCT or combined arms battalion. Modular units now have support units that are organic to their organization. Therefore, it becomes necessary to, therefore, assign females to these larger combat units so they can perform their assigned support duties.
6	DOD needs to quit trying to justify its gender discrimination policies and recognize the rights, contributions and dignity of the female gender.
7	Some women can do it, but culturally we are not ready for it.
8	Unlike the racial segregation issue where supposed differences between blacks and whites was debunked, there are undeniable differences between men and women (thank God). Physical strength is not necessarily a relevant basis for argument, but reproductive capability is. Women have used pregnancy as a reason to be removed from undesirable jobs/locations. The greater issue is what happens to women who are captured by the enemy. One thing that can happen to women that can't happen to men is they can be raped AND become pregnant. The moral issues that stem from this possibility are staggering.
9	Qualification is the key. Two of my best HMMVW gunners in Iraq were women and yet I would not assign them the same mission as my infantry or expect them to go hand to hand with the enemy. They were however excellent from the support by fire position.
10	definitely need to relook the policy through the lenses of the current strategic environment (non-continguous nature of modern war) and the contributions women have made to this point.
11	I've commanded combat arms units that are men only, and had women introduced as "support" personnel. It caused un-necessary difficulties, was a distraction, increased support requirements, and was generally just a hassle for the chain of command in an already difficult situation.
12	Current regulations/policy should be clarified to ensure there is no misunderstanding about the exclusion of women in combat.
13	DOD and Congress need to reexamine the policy and update it to reflect the 360 degree battlefield.
14	It's a tough call whether the current policy needs a serious review and a much better explanation given to all, or whether it's better to continue trying to "stay under the radar" and allow life to be gray.

15	Women are in combat now with the current conflict in Iraq/Afghanistan and GWOT...if they meet the physical and psychological requirements, then they should be allowed to serve as a part of a combat unit...that being said, there should be no separate standards for women, it should be the same standards the male soldiers have to meet.
16	Assign roles based on ability.
17	There are roles for women to play in combat environments such as a search role; however, at this time I don't believe it is appropriate to mandate mandatory combat service for all women in the military service.
18	If a person can do the job, then the Army/military must assign the person to the job regardless of gender. Anything less is a violation of civil rights.
19	In the U.S. Navy, we have integrated women into operational units and encouraged command at sea opportunities for women.
20	I started off my Army career as a Field Artillery Officer, spent almost 9 years in the branch and I loved it. Commanding a battery as a captain was the highlight of my combat arms experience. But the reality is, until the American public accepts women in combat it is never going to happen. Question #14 is the solution, assign soldiers based on qualification.
21	I am a combat arms officer that has served in Desert Storm and OIF. Considering the current state of affairs female soldiers should be allowed to volunteer to be attached to combat units in order to perform their assigned duties in CS/CSS roles. I do not feel the Army or the country is ready for females to serve in infantry or armor MOS's yet.
22	In asymmetric warfare it is difficult to determine where combat operations are actually going to occur. Also, females are in harm's way now based on the support roles they provide and often find themselves in combat situations. To think a policy is going to change that is naive. Instead, I think we should allow soldiers to perform the duties they are capable of and desire.
23	I commanded a combat engineer battalion in OIF I within 3ID. I had female medics and a female warrant officer that had to move forward into the combat areas frequently to accomplish our mission. Based on the army policy to assign females to my unit in positions "thought" to not be a combat role, quickly changed during OIF I. Regardless, we now have women in these roles and if held to standards, they are as capable as males and any distinction between combat and non-combat just muddies the battlefield - we have to be able to rely on all soldiers to be infantryman when needed.
24	In my last position, I had to deal with AR 600-13, para 1-12 on an almost daily basis, and I recognized that several of your questions were difficult for me to answer because they were too narrowly casted for me to provide the "real" answer. I wrote the policy that is now in use at least one large formation, and I found the list of potential answers to be misleading in regard to collocation. The fact is that the regulation is interpreted to mean that we can assign women below the bde level to units that routinely engage in direct ground combat. We do this using a number of legal fictions, but this is the reality - I know because I helped draft that reality. We should push through a clean replacement to para 1-12, so we can be honest about what we are doing.
25	Answering the questions above, I tried to look at how I think the policy was intended. I place no moral judgment on the Army for violating policy. As an infantry officer, a realist and a 14-month veteran of OIF, I realize that currently in Iraq, there really is no front line - unless we initiate another offense like Faluja II. It is the reality we are left with. With that said, it is an entirely different thing to assign females to infantry units - for example - just because we justify females are getting killed and wounded in their current roles. It is a human societal norm - physically & psychologically - that would be put off kilter. I have no doubt that women are very capable, but I have always been against females in combat arms and seeing any American soldier die is sad, but seeing females die is viscerally devastating.
26	Revise Army policy and regulations concerning women in combat so that they reflect reality in places such as OEF, OIF and South Korea.
27	My personal thoughts regarding women in combat is I would never want my wife or daughter to be in a combat environment because I would not them in harms way. I do believe that if women want to serve in combat units, they should be allowed. However, it should be a voluntary assignment v. mandatory.
28	Women should be allowed in combat units provided they do not detract from the unit's ability to accomplish its assigned missions. Detractors could be as simple as increased life support requirements, disparity in physical strength compared to male counterparts or ability of the unit to function in combat with mixed genders. Not the time or place for the boyfriend - girlfriend relationships to occur.
29	The current debate surrounding this issue by members of Congress who have never served a day in uniform is disingenuous to the women who currently serve in the Iraqi and Afghani AORs. The current regulation is from a bygone era written when warfare was linear. We are in an asymmetrical fight and there are no front or rear areas. The debate to preclude women from serving in direct combat denigrates the efforts women have placed in combat. I've deployed twice to OIF and value the contributions of all service members in a very difficult fight. Congress needs to fix other problems and let the services decide what is best in order to prosecute the Long War.
30	I have personally served with females in combat and had them at my side during direct fire engagements ... several females in my unit received "valor" awards for actions in combat.
31	Women should be afforded every opportunity that men have in serving in the US military.
32	Women should not be assigned as infantry, artillery, or tankers. There is nothing wrong with having units (i.e. FSB, MP platoon)assigned with women as part of a BCT. We've been training that way for years.
33	Mkake the requirements know and justified, if you meet them, then you can serve, period.
34	I have commanded all male units and gender integrated units at both company and battalion level. Sexual misconduct and unit physical fitness was a much greater problem in gender integrated units. Infantry units must operate under conditions that lack any form of human privacy. These type of units are very physically demanding and are not conditions that are conducive to mixing genders. Furthermore, I have seen unit physical standards continually drop to accommodate female

	soldiers (compare physical training in all male units to gender integrated units). Before removing all "women in combat" restrictions, the army should adopt one standard for the APFT. If there are so little differences between men and women that all restrictions should be removed, then start with the APFT.
35	Best qualified soldier should get the mission/MOS regardless of gender or any other bias. Physical strength and endurance are my only real areas of concern in integrating female soldiers in direct combat aka infantry, armor, and artillery units.
36	As a CSS officer our females were exposed as much or more than combat soldiers while conducting support/convoy operations. They all performed well and showed that they are capable of serving in any area with any type of unit.
37	I have served with several competent women who demonstrated the ability to handle the stresses of combat.
38	I commanded a unit with females during two tours in Iraq. The nature of the mission required me to assign teams which included females to support combat units during OIF II. These teams usually operated from life support bases/facilities but occasionally ventured "off post". During my deployments I say males and females serve side-by-side with equal amounts of success and failure. I am convinced that females within the intelligence career field are capable of performing as well as males in a combat environment. I would have no problem assigning females to teams charged with supporting combat units unless there was a lack of adequate life support. I know this is a fuzzy construct but feel that I could address this issue with a fair and balanced conscience.
39	Believe that the opinions against women assigned to combat units have not been in combat with women. I have. My driver in Iraq was a woman and she performed superbly. Two of my company commanders were also women. Although only one performed to a very high standard it had nothing to do with their gender.
40	Current policy fails to recognize the exigencies of the operating environments in Afghanistan and Iraq.
41	In general, women lack physical strength to perform many tasks associated with military service. I would be willing to concede the point and allow women into additional billets IF they were held to the same physical standards as men - without lowering those standards. If women can meet the men's PT standards and carry the load/perform the tasks, then I would open additional fields to women. I have observed, however, that the Army does a piss poor job regarding gender integration; there should ALWAYS be separate billeting for men/women except when physically impossible. The debauchery I've seen in Army camps with men and women sharing tents (in Kuwait)is unacceptable, counterproductive, and a breach of military discipline.
42	My personal opinion is that as long as women are serving in the armed forces, they should be allowed to perform any duty, including combat positions, in which they are physically capable of performing.
43	Your question 14 sums my feelings. If they can do the work, they should hold the job.
44	All positions should have a physical requirement and those who meet it, should be assigned to them - regardless of gender.
45	Qualification for the job according to established - but REALISTIC standards - should be the sole criterion
46	As a company commander during the 1st Gulf War I had several women assigned to my unit. I found that the women fell within the same percentage categories as the men: some were great, most were good, some were poor. However, they were soldiers. My greatest issue at the time dealt w/ logistical support: tentage, latrines, and showers, etc. The females received a greater share of those commodities to the detriment of the men based on the "numbers" breakout. Not the fault of the women, just an issue of limited resources. I did send 2 females home (one was my XO) because of pregnancy. The males were obviously engaging in the same activities, they just didn't get to go home.
47	Women are performing well in combat environments in all services. Recommend that DOD take a holistic new view to implement a new policy. Women will continue to serve along side direct combat units in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and they perform very well. Certainly, units have to take some precautions and modify old "all male" behavior, but that is the current cost of doing business and is not necessarily bad.
48	More and more women are joining the Army at the same time there is a shortage of recruits. To limit these women in their choice of assignments hurts the force more than the individual soldier/woman. Shortage Branches/MOS must be given the flexibility to assign women as required.
49	The all volunteer Army can not afford to needlessly constrain itself by coding support units as male only because they are on the same base camp or are habitually in support of a combat unit. In fact, women should be allowed to be assigned to combat units either in non-combat jobs or even in combat jobs as long as they can meet the minimum physical requirements (that both males and females should have to pass). Combat units will have to deal with the same improper relationship and pregnancy readiness issues the CS and CSS units deal with now. On this point, the Army needs to recognize women get pregnant before and during deployment (65 in my unit) and it is a readiness issue. Non-deployable females need to be replaced (just like acknowledging 4% of airborne troopers are going to get hurt on jumps so we overfill these units.) In summary, the Army and Congress need to allow women collocated with combat units, assigned to combat units, and compensate for pregnancy non-deployables.
50	Equality is not a two edge sword. It should cut just one way.
51	I like the present policy that limits women from direct combat operations.
52	I had women assigned to my combat engineer battalion in Iraq. All served well in their primary missions as well as in direct fire combat. My battalion was converted to infantry for its last 10 months in combat. One company commander and four engineer platoon leaders were female and routinely conducted infantry style combat operations. My best machine gunner was a female soldier. My best company commander was a female officer. Most of my medics, mechanics and heavy equipment operators were female. I could not have successfully accomplished my combat missions without my female soldiers. It would have required nearly 50 replacements to switch females for males.
53	Women currently serve in combat; however, the general public is not prepared to accept that fact. In time the law will change to allow women to serve in combat units, otherwise, too much of our force will continue to be under utilized.

54	Define the standard, allow all to compete on basis of that standard, regardless of gender. Period.
55	Qualified women should be allowed to participate in the same combat situations as men.
56	Believe there should not be any limitations as long as they are capable of performing that mission.
57	Women should not be placed directly in combat. The issue has nothing to do with abilities. It has much to do with the dignity of a society and the high respect with which women should be held, and the type of character we want to develop within women. I do not feel the "warrior ethos" is consistent with the type of women I would hope my daughters would become. Women should be able to bond a society, not destroy it. In practical terms, it is difficult to assure the privacy that women should be afforded. A truly thoughtful approach to the discussion would make it clear that societies should never purposefully turn their women into warriors.
58	Women in the armed service have elected to put their life on the line... they should be allowed to serve to the fullest extent to the limits of their physical capability regardless of the employment of the unit.
59	Every day in command of an MSB, I was faced with the difficult choices of who to send out on what mission. I always sent the most qualified personnel. Women in combat is a reality. The battlefield dictates it. We have only two options: NO females or FULLY INTEGRATED females. Anything else is simply an exercise in semantics. All Soldiers should be assigned based upon their proven potential and capabilities. Anything short of that leaves the important policy decision to individual commanders.
60	Is our society prepared to watch videos of captured women being tortured, killed, and dragged through the streets . . . ?
61	Women are soldiers too. I had 10 women in my battalion as part of my maintenance support team in a Field Artillery (MLRS) Battalion. They executed every mission and task that was asked of them and performed just as well as their male counterparts. Our political leaders need to come into the 21st century. Women should be allowed to serve in any MOS and position they are qualified for. If they don't meet the standard, they don't perform that task and are not allowed in that unit or to serve in the Army. What a novel idea.
62	The current regulation should be revised so it is clear and direct. Bottom line based on the current policy it should basically say that women can not be in the specific branches/MOS (Infantry, etc). It should not try to define location on the battlefield as in the asymetric battlefield that is problematic at best. As to the larger question should women be allowed to serve in any branch/MOS that should probably be studied further. The time may have come for such a change as long as the certain required physical capabilites are outlined and met. (By bothe males and females). Not sure if the U.S. public (majority - not special interests groups) is ready for this though.
63	Prefer to be it in "volunteer" status. If they want it, great, but I don't want my daughter to be in combat if she doesn't want to be.
64	I think you need to look at what the mission of the unit is before deciding whether or not to assign women. If the intent of the unit is to actively search out the enemy then close with and destroy then women should not be assigned. If however the unit's mission is not close with the enemy, but may encounter the enemy, then potentially women should be assigned.
65	While not engaging a 'social' experiment, woman have a long history of operating under combat conditions. We are all soldiers- first.
66	If a women is qualified (meets the standards, established to meet the function required), and has a desire to perform that function, then she should be allowed. We are in a world where the adversary is not just male and therefore we should not give up our potential over rules that no longer exist even in our our society.
67	The Army should look to its sister services (i.e. Air Force) for guidance. The AF has very few restrictions for females. If you research the current operational combat environment, there is little evidence to support the arguments that questions 9-13 suggest.
68	Female soldiers should be assigned positions they are physically and mentally qualified to do. Commanders must meet the needs of its soldiers to include hygiene and life support needs of female soldiers.
69	Women should be assigned to units based on MOS, not gender. Direct combat units - infantry and artillery, most reconnaissance, should not allow women. I think there is some value in keeping our direct combat units all-male. They need to stay focused, hard, macho, and strong, and should not be distracted by mixed sex issues. Women, however, should be assigned to all other combat support MOS's and should then be allowed to deploy wherever that MOS requires that they go.
70	I believe we should establish criteria for combat positions and then allow anyone to compete for those positions based on that criteria.
71	There should be a clear policy that is followed vice the vague enforcement of a questionable policy.
72	It works now so leave it alone.
73	Very complex issue, but it is clear in current operations that women are needed in combat units and can hold their own. A revisit of the policy should be a no brainer.
74	Be clear about the policy and consistent with how we apply it. The fact is that women are in combat now. SGT Hester proved that conclusively - and they will do well when they are well trained and assigned roles which are not strength dependent. What we have not done is prepare the country for the inevitable consequences of having women exposed to combat. The country accepts, with regret, death, maiming, trauma and torture of its male service members as a result of its combat operations. I am not convinced the public has given its consent to like treatment in the case of female service members. Have we on a policy level thought through the implications of a targeted campaign against women to capture and mistreat them? I do not think we have, and I believe this to be a huge operational risk.
75	Very political topic with significant second and third order effects. A "hot potato."

76	Equal time for equal pay and service!
77	Ground combat exclusion and definition are adequate, only the collocation requirement should be revised or the Army must adhere to a zero tolerance policy. Without the collocation policy revision commanders and leaders will compromise the policy and regulation.
78	Capability not gender should be the standard. The last time I checked it was 2006, not 1906.
79	Soldiers, regardless of gender, race, etc., should be assigned based on standards of qualification based on ability.
80	Army should be more clear... It appears that Congress is interpreting what the Army says, and the Army isn't being fully forthcoming in the information provided regarding where women are serving.
81	I support women in the military. I think the current restrictions probably damage our ability to effectively implement Army modernization and essentially force the Army to lie by assigning CS units to a higher HQ even though they are supporting a direct combat unit. Having said that, I am uncomfortable with women serving being placed in combat arms MOSs such as IN and AR because of strength differences. Socialization and bonding also play a roles. I believe the Army should be more honest in its dealings with Congress and should state their needs outright like President Truman did when he integrated the military in the 1950s. Constitutionally, the American people, via the Congress and the Executive branches have a right to prohibit the Army from fully integrating women in combat whether we like it or not.
82	A soldier is a soldier, regardless if they are male or female. Let's get over it.
83	NO women in tanks or infantry, otherwise no restriction
84	If they can serve effectively, why not? I say let them.
85	In today's asymmetric battlefield, the Army needs to get realistic. Women are serving areas where they may engage the enemy in direct combat. We need to stop pretending it is otherwise. Congress and the public need to know the truth, whether they are prepared for it or not. Give credit where credit is due.
86	Within the MI Corps, women serve in a variety of "frontline" intel activities along with Infantry/ combat arms formations.
87	Women should serve in all positions for which they are qualified...competence should be the only deciding factor.
88	The Army regulation governing women in combat needs to be revised. It is based upon a linear battlefield and is very confusing reference to "collocating" women to units (battalion and below) whose mission is direct combat operations. Some commanders perceive having women on the same FOB (i.e. the FSCs) with a maneuver or artillery bn violates the policy...does it?
89	Question 9: Women are already doing work in some jobs within the F.A. However, I don't many who would be able to load a 100 lb. projo into a breech or carry a 100 lb. pack. How to screen for those that can will be the challenge.
90	There is no longer a distinction between "front line" and units in the "rear" on the contemporary battlefield. Policies regarding women in combat must reflect this fact. All armed forces personnel, regardless of gender, should be assigned to positions for which they are qualified.
91	Women should not be assigned to combat units until our societal views on the subject change. It's not currently supportable.
92	I have served with women in combat and many serve very well; however much depends upon the small unit leaders which the survey can not cover completely. Additionally, the public does not seem to support a greater combat role for women; therefore, our national psyche will not allow all to serve even when qualified. That is probably neither good nor bad but just the nation as it is.
93	If women are placed in direct combat roles the existing standards for physical capabilities should be maintained. In other words, let them in--but don't drop the standard.
94	We're all soldiers who signed up for the same cause and should be afforded all of the same opportunities. Proven ability should be rewarded commensurate with desires.
95	The policy should be eliminated. Army soldiers that are women have not and do not get credited with the hazardous duty they have performed in war, and continue to do on a daily basis in theater. If Congress persists on foisting this policy on the Army, it must be written in the context of today's 360 degree battlefield reality, the likelihood that any unit can get engaged in a lethal engagement. Any policy should be clearly understandable, unambiguous, and enforceable by tactical commanders in combat.
96	Women in the service make great contributions however, there is no overriding requirement for placing women in combat units. The presence of women on the battlefield is distracting and only in some cases such as "searchers" have they provided real value added. It is time for the army to start pulling back its female soldiers to roles based on combat efficiency vice attempts at gender norming.
97	Service members - regardless of gender - should be assigned to all positions for which they are FULLY qualified. Unfortunately this issue is so emotionally charged and highly politicized that we'll never achieve this ideal. Standards (qualifications) have been dumbed down and sub-standard performance tolerated because of political correctness and fear of the militant feminist and their supporters. I've been in formations at all levels under a variety of conditions and have frequently witnessed the vast majority of females fail under less than robust physical requirements. However those who won't tolerate the facts and will point to the few males and the ONE female that succeeded as "evidence" that females can do everything / anything males can.
98	Women are valued members of the combined arms team the present restrictions unfairly limit their potential contributions to the direct combat mission.
99	I commanded an Infantry BN in IRAQ for 13 months. I often had women medics and signal soldiers attached. While they did

	not fight in our major contacts, they were often exposed to the same daily threats we all faced. Our BN made several intra-theatre moves for specific missions. There were a couple of Combat Support attachements led by women that we routinely requested because of thier abilities.
100	Capability is key--not everyone can be a SEAL, but if a woman can pass the test she has as much right, and as much responsibility, as any male on the team.
101	In general, I support the exclusion of females from units that routinely seek or find close combat with the enemy. There are always exceptions so provisions for these exceptions i.e. searchers are appropriate. It's OK for females to be in units that occasionally end up in close combat - that's war. The basis for my reluctance is the lack of privacy and the propensity in our culture for men to put more interest in their female foxhole buddy than with a male colleague. This can create instability in the squad etc... This smells of sexism I know, but I'm reluctant for us to conduct social engineering at a place where people's lives are at stake. Lets get our greater culture closer first.
102	Assignment should be based on required individual abilities--universally applied.
103	Qualification, not sex should be the only factor considered. Everything else is an excuse.
104	Existing laws and regulations should be eliminated. Only restrictions should be based on routine fitness/strength requirements that apply to males. In other words, gender doesn't matter.
105	Once women are allowed in combat, next women will be required to register for the selective service at age 18 as do their male counterparts. Once women are allowed in combat, a male or males will sue the government for discrimination for not making females register for the selective service. Once women are allowed to enter combat duty, then women in the U.S. will have to face being drafted as well as men. If women being in combat is made "voluntary" for females, ...then a male or males will sue that it is discriminatory because males are not given the choice to either enter combat or not to enter combat. Eventually, there will be no choice for females to go to combat, ...it will be mandatory like males. Do we as a nation really want this?
106	Women are good soldiers but their physical differences (not necessarily strength) and requirements make it tough to integrate into combat units.
107	Our laws and policies need to be updated so that they are reflective of today's combat environment.
108	No restrictions.
109	It's only a matter of time before we "officialize" women in combat. Over time women will be allowed into the combat arms branches. Is the time right now? Operations in Iraq & Afghanistan are showing the barrier is somewhere between flimsy and artificial. Yes, the policy should be reviewed. Is it too early to make a change? No. Is it too early to make a wholesale "allow women in the infantry" change. Yes. The next step should be taken: 'allow' support units to "collocate" and allow cross attachments of support folks (medics, commo, etc.) for women who are willing and able.
110	If a person is ready, willing, able (physically and mentally) to serve in combat then "make a hole" regardless of gender. This argument has taken too much of our nation's time as it is. We are at war and there are no lines between who is or may be in engaged in direct combat operations. GWOT made it all moot.
111	All but direct combat assignments.
112	Women serve an essential role in combat units. We should recognize that role and fully integrate women.
113	The assimilation of women into battalion-sized organizations, such as Infantry and Armor, is possible. However, the stress and potential morale problems would far outweigh the benefit of inclusion (e.g., sexual relations, division of labor, separate facilites [males normally do not have a problem with this one], altercations between the sexes, etc.) Although some CAs and the CS and CSS have been somewhat successful with inclusion, I have my doubts as to the success with Infantry and Armor.
114	Women are fully capable of serving in combat operations. They get the same pay they should assume the same risk. The resistance to females in combat is backward thinking by individuals who are not experienced in combat or females in the Army. Futhermore, they should be integrated into combat units in all armed forces.
115	The regulation is not enforced by the army leadership. Inadequate troop strength in the Iraqi AOR forced commanders to violate this directive to ensure mission success. Many branches including Chemical Corp, Medical Corp do not have sufficient number of male officers to fill key TO&E slots at the battalion level. Therefore, females are the only recourse. In combat, a wounded female carries a much more adverse psychological impact on a unit than a male soldier.
116	If a woman can meet the physical requirements (set by the Branch School), she should be able to serve where she wants.
117	Women have served honorably and courageously in CS units, specifically MI and MP, in direct combat - legislation to keep women out of combat units will degrade the readiness of the Army as a whole. Infantry and SF should remain male only, but all other MOSs should/must/can be filled with qualified male or female soldiers - the idea that women should be shielded from combat is outdated/antiquated and insulting to the soldiers of today's Army
118	Women make up a large share of the uniform population and it just makes sense to use all available resources. Considering the challenges that women face every day in this country, there is no good reason they would be less successful in dealing with combat. They should be allowed to serve based on capability.
119	I believe the issue that is hardest to capture is the male/female relationship...Men are raised to be protectors of women and in some combat situations this thought process could have a negative effect
120	The attachment is a workaround. Congress will do nothing as long as the Army says nothing and is happy with the workaround.
121	Women should have the opportunity to serve in positions for which they are qualified whether or not they are combat

	positions. Effective teams are formed with both genders in numerous organizations and it should not be any different in the Army.
122	Women are in combat, like it or not. I haven't seen the mass protests of women coming home in body bags, nor have the male soldiers all lost their ability to fight because they are so concerned about the females they "instinctively" want to protect.
123	Whatever policy is decided should be debated openly with senior leaders, commanders and civilian officials. War planners need to identify any potential negative impacts or effects of limiting support with females. The policy should be clear with clarification to the gray areas enumerated above. The policy should then be communicated to all soldiers and incorporated into the deployment training.
124	Given the current operational environment, the policy needs to be reviewed and changed to fit what the currents operations required.
125	If you can do the job to standard and there is flexibility to deviate T.O based on the operational environment-primarily cultural factors, then gender is not an issue.
126	In a COIN environment women should be allowed to perform required tasks based on mission requirements - searching other women etc. I do not advocate women being assigned to infantry squads and platoons in a combat role but CS and CSS support in the non-contiguous battlefield requires a re-look at the restrictions currently in place.

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Survey Abstract

OBJECTIVE – To determine the perceptions of U.S. Army War College students regarding the ground combat exclusion policy of female soldiers in the U.S. Army.

DESIGN AND SETTING – A total of 300 U.S. Army War College students from the Class of 2006 were afforded the opportunity to take an anonymous, voluntary 17 question survey (attached) during the academic year. 236 students took the survey (78.67% of the class). The composition of students that took the survey is outlined in Question 16. The preponderance of volunteers were in the Army (76%), followed by the Air Force (8%), Marine Corps (6%), Navy (5%), DA Civilian (3%), Coast Guard (1%) and Department of State (1%). 210 (89%) were male participants and 26 (11%) were female.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES – Students are familiar with the ground combat exclusion policy for female soldiers, however, their perception is the Army does not follow the policy and that female soldiers are engaged in direct ground combat given the asymmetric nature of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

RESULTS – (1) 68% of the students strongly agree or agree that they are knowledgeable of the ground combat restrictions for female soldiers. (2) 54% strongly agree or agree they are aware of the House Armed Services Committee (May 2005) legislation to further codify DoD regulations pertaining to women in combat. (3) 75% of the students perceive the term “collocation” used in the legislation to mean the “location of actual combat operations.” (4) 53% of the students perceive the regulation which prohibits females from collocating with direct combat units is rarely enforced or not enforced at all. (5) 70% of the students strongly agree or agree the regulation prohibiting collocation of female soldiers with direct combat units should be revised. (6) 59% strongly agree or agree the regulation prohibiting female soldiers from serving in battalion sized or smaller units assigned a mission to direct combat units should be revised. (7) 56% of the students strongly agree or agree the attachment of female “searchers” to direct combat units represents a violation of Army policy. (8) 60% of students strongly agree or agree the augmentation of support teams including female soldiers represents a violation of Army

policy. (9) 63% disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units due to lack of physical strength. (10) 59% of students disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to combat units due to a lack of co-ed life support facilities. (11) 57% disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units due to a perceived lack of public support. (12) 59% disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units due to potential problems in assimilation/unit bonding. (13) 78% of the students disagree or strongly disagree female soldiers should NOT be assigned to direct combat units to preclude exposure to trauma associated with combat. (14) 74% strongly agree or agree all soldiers regardless of gender should be assigned to positions for which they are qualified.

CONCLUSIONS – Using the survey data collected at the U.S. Army War College, DoD should consider a revision of the female combat exclusion policy to reflect a more realistic view of the current asymmetric nature of warfare and the combat roles female soldiers are currently engaged in.

II.

THE DoD COMBAT EXCLUSION POLICY: TIME FOR A CHANGE?

Jimmie O. Keenan

Editors' note: Colonel Jimmie Keenan is an Army Nurse Corps officer who previously served as a fellow in the Office of Congressional Legislative Liaison. Her article highlights congressional interest in the Combat Exclusion Policy at a time when the military is transforming to face future threats as well as fighting an unconventional war against terrorism. She illustrates the broad interest in the issue and the military's apparent unwillingness to openly debate the issue. After a brief analysis of the combat exclusion policy in the context of the military's ongoing operations, Colonel Keenan recommends Department of Defense (DoD) reconsider the policy and its relevancy to the modern asymmetric battlefield. Note that she and Colonel Lindon identify different events in their chronologies.

The recurring debate in Congress over women's roles in combat was raised again in May 2005. The House Armed Services Committee Chairman, Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA), introduced a bill that would have prohibited women from serving in many units that provide direct support to combat units.[1] This bill would have banned the assignment of women to many positions previously open to them. Although the bill never became a law, it served to resurrect an issue that had been dormant for over a decade, the Combat Exclusion Policy.

This paper examines the current state of the DoD Combat Exclusion Policy. It reviews how the policy evolved and examines DoD's and the media's recent interest in the issue. The author recommends the policy be revised to become more relevant to the modern battlefield.

History of the Combat Exclusion Policy.

Throughout U.S. history, women have served with distinction in war from the Revolutionary War to the streets of Baghdad. The early women soldiers were primarily volunteer nurses and were only occasionally in the direct line of fire. In World War II, four nurses received Silver Star medals for valor due to their actions evacuating 42 patients while the Germans bombed their field hospital at Anzio beach.[2] Although these early women soldiers demonstrated great courage, their roles were very specific: to care for the wounded. Gradually the role of women in the military evolved to allow women into many military occupational specialties in addition to nursing.

In 1948, the Women's Armed Services Integration Act permitted no more than 2 percent of the enlisted ranks in the Army to be filled by women. The 2 percent cap severely limited the number of women who could serve and also limited available positions. The cap was not lifted until 1967 with the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.[3]

In 1973, with the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and the beginning of the All-Volunteer Force, legislation allowed more women to volunteer to join the ranks; however, women were prohibited from serving in direct combat units or in units that collocated with direct combat units. This prohibition became commonly known as the "Combat Exclusion

Policy." The policy affirmed the belief that women should be allowed to join the military, but their service should be limited to positions which would not place them at risk.

In February 1988, DoD codified the Combat Exclusion Policy by adopting the "Risk Rule." This rule set the standard for evaluating positions and units from which women could be excluded.[4] The Risk Rule "excluded women from noncombat units or missions if the risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture were equal to or greater than the risk in the combat units they supported."[5] The Risk Rule sought to keep women soldiers away from combat; however, the Persian Gulf War caused Congress to again consider this complex, emotional issue.

In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, Congress realized it had to change the 1988 Combat Exclusion law, since all service members were deemed to be "at risk" during that war. With the 1992 and the 1993 National Defense Authorization Acts, Congress revoked the prohibition of women's assignments to combat aircraft in the Navy, Air Force, and the Marines. The 1992 Defense Authorization Act also established the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces to study the legal, military, and societal implications of amending the exclusionary laws."[6] In 1993, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin directed the services to open several specialties to women to include those on combat aircraft and on noncombatant ships. He also directed the Army and the Marine Corps to study other possible positions that could be opened. The Secretary established a committee called the Implementation Committee that was to review the appropriateness of the "Risk Rule."

In January 1994, in response to advice from the Implementation Committee, the "Risk Rule" was rescinded. "In DoD's view, the rule no longer applied since, based on experiences during [Operation] DESERT STORM, everyone in the theater of operation was at risk. The Secretary established a new DoD-wide direct ground combat assignment rule in 1994 that allowed all service members to be assigned to all positions for which they qualify, but excluded women from assignments to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is direct ground combat."[7]

In doing this, Secretary Aspin dramatically transformed the landscape for women's service in the military. Under his direction, an unprecedented number of positions in the military were opened to women. There has been no significant change to the assignment policy for women since Secretary Aspin's tenure as Secretary of Defense. In 2002, approximately 60 percent of Army positions were open to women.

Currently, the Army is reorganizing into a modular, more agile, expeditionary force, comprised of Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs). The BCT is primarily a direct combat formation, and these modular units will comprise the majority of the Army's combat power. The assignment of women within the BCT, however, continues to be a point of discussion among senior military leaders and law makers. Congressman Hunter's 2005 draft bill specifically aimed to keep women out of the maneuver formations within the BCTs. He recognized that the Combat Exclusion Policy specifically forbade women from being assigned to or collocating with combat forces; however, with the Army's reorganization, support soldiers, many of whom are women, would be assigned to and collocate with the combat forces they support. This reorganization set the stage for a new debate on this issue of combat exclusion.

Recent Legislation Concerning the Combat Exclusion Policy.

On May 12, 2005, *The Washington Post* reported that a bill had been introduced by Chairman Hunter requiring the Army to prohibit women from serving in any company-size unit that provided support to combat battalions or their subordinate companies.[8] Had this measure been enacted, it would have blocked the assignment of women to thousands of positions previously open to them, and in which they were already serving. Hunter believed, "The American people have never wanted to have women in combat, and this reaffirms that policy."[9] When this legislation was introduced, General Richard A. Cody, the Army's Vice Chief of Staff stated, "The proposed amendment will cause confusion in the ranks, and will send the wrong signal to the brave young men and women fighting the Global War on Terrorism."[10] The military simply could not live with the provisions of the proposed bill.

Congressman Hunter was attempting to represent the American people whom he thought did not want women assigned to combat formations, but military leaders were declaring that it was a necessity to have women supporting combat formations. In the midst of an unconventional war where the lines delineating "combat" were blurring and at a time when an unprecedented number of women soldiers were being killed and wounded on the borderless battlefield, it became apparent that the issue required further investigation.

In December 2005, Congress passed legislation requiring DoD to notify Congress within 30 days if women were going to be assigned to or collocated with ground combat units. Congress also directed that DoD conduct a review on how the Army is deploying women as it goes through transformation and populates the new Brigade Combat Teams. This legislation has led to a firestorm of articles that either support the Combat Exclusion Policy or attack it and its relevancy to today's battlefield.

Media Coverage of the Issue.

Do Americans really care if women go into combat? Since the United States entered Iraq in 2003, there have been over 100 articles and news reports on the role of women in combat zones. Several of the articles point out the confusion that lies in the current Combat Exclusion Policy. Some articles state that top DoD officials claim the military is not violating the Combat Exclusion Policy; that women are not assigned to units that are collocated in support of combat units. The articles also attest that women soldiers are located throughout the combat zones and are in some cases attached directly to combat units, thus suggesting inconsistency between the policy and its implementation.

Over the last year, several newspapers such as *The Washington Post*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and *The New York Times* have reported on the issue of women in combat. They all interviewed women who were attached or assigned to units that collocated with combat units in Iraq. They discussed how women's roles had evolved and the blur that now exists between the front line and the rear area. The articles also questioned whether the policy is relevant as the military fights an asymmetric war where driving in a convoy can be more dangerous than kicking in a door on a combat raid.

The Army and DoD's Position.

The Army and DoD have responded to questions concerning the ground Combat Exclusion Policy as follows: "The Army will continue to transform and win in combat while maintaining compliance with public law and DoD policy."[11] A recent message from the Army Public Affairs Office (PAO) states, "Army policy prohibits the assignment of women Soldiers to positions or units that routinely collocate with units conducting an assigned direct ground combat mission. Both Army and DoD policies prohibit the assignment of women soldiers below the level of brigades to units whose primary mission is direct ground combat. These are not new policies, and the Army's review concludes the Army Transformation initiatives, including those associated with the Brigade Combat Team—which are important to the current combat environment and will remain relevant in the future—do not require a change to these policies. For the Army, the issue is resolved."[12] The Army and DoD do not appear to want to engage in an open discussion concerning apparent inconsistencies between current policy and actual assignments of women soldiers.

The Army's message, ". . . the issue is resolved" is actually confusing. As female soldiers earn awards for valor in combat, lose limbs, and even their lives, policy and performance seem to be at odds. The Army recognizes the actions of the female soldiers, awarding Combat Action Badges, Purple Hearts, and one Silver Star so far for their actions in Iraq. These awards properly acknowledge service in combat so one must ask, "What is the Combat Exclusion Policy excluding women from?" It does not appear that women are being excluded from combat, but instead are being recognized and honored for their valor in combat. The American people appear to understand that women are and will continue to be an integral part of the military and will be in direct combat. [See Lindon contribution.] The military, the media, and Congress need to acknowledge this and bring policy and performance into harmony. The ground combat exclusion policy must accord with how we fight in the 21st century.

Recommendation.

DoD should revise the Combat Exclusion Policy to bring it into alignment with the conditions inherent in the modern asymmetric battlefield. A joint DoD-congressional commission should examine the roles of women in the 21st century military in an era that recognizes no "front lines."

ENDNOTES

1. Definition: *Direct ground combat is engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with hostile forces personnel. Direct ground combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver or shock effect*. U.S. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Direct Combat Definition and Assignment Rule," Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments, Washington DC, January 13, 1994.

2. Mandy Wechsler Segal, "Women in the Armed Forces," Ruth H. Howes and Michael R. Stevenson, eds., *Women and the Use of Military Force*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993, pp. 81-93; and Jake Willens, "Women in the Military: Combat Roles Reconsidered," available from *www.cdi.org/issues/women/combat.html*, accessed November 21, 2006.

3. Margaret C. Harrell and Laura L. Miller, *New Opportunities for Military Women: Effects Upon Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1997, pp. 1-2.

4. U.S. General Accounting Office, *Information on DoD's Assignment Policy and Direct Ground Combat Definition*, Washington, DC: U.S. General Accounting Office, October 1998, p. 2.

5. *Ibid*.

6. *Ibid*.

7. U.S. General Accounting Office, p. 3.

8. House Amendment 210, Section 574, 2006 Defense Authorization Bill (H.R. 1815).

9. Ann Scott Tyson, "Panel Votes to Ban Women From Combat," *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2005, p. A8.

10. *Ibid*.

11. "Women Soldiers in Combat" memorandum for Army Leaders to respond to media queries, Washington, DC: U.S. Army Public Affairs Office, September 30, 2005.

12. *Ibid*.

III.

THE COMBAT EXCLUSION POLICY IN THE MODERN SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Michele M. Putko

Editors' Note: COL Putko commanded a battalion in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM I, during which time she became the base commander of the largest logistical base in Iraq, Logistics Support Area (LSA) Anaconda. LSA Anaconda was located in the heart of the Sunni Triangle and attacks on the base and convoys running in and out of the log base became an almost daily occurrence. While her base was home to both combat and noncombat units, they all faced the same enemy. Colonel Putko's personal experiences in combat lead her to conclude that the combat exclusion policy does not effectively preclude units or female soldiers from engaging in combat, but rather it serves to preserve the all-male identity of units that are designated for ground combat. She suggests the policy as currently implemented creates a "culture of exclusion" in the military, and that the policy should be revised to be more relevant to the modern security environment. While repeating some material on Congressman Hunter's challenges, she addresses the Personnel Assignment coding issue and takes note of the Army-Wide "Warrior Ethos" with its attendant training requirements.

As the Army transforms into a force capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century, it must confront the restrictions of the Combat Exclusion Policy.[1] The congressionally mandated retention of the 1994 Combat Exclusion Policy precludes female service members from serving in direct combat roles. Given the difficulty of predicting and isolating "direct combat" in the Global War on Terror (GWOT), there are claims that the Department of Defense (DoD) is currently violating the Combat Exclusion Policy, with the Army the principal culprit.[2]

With the Army's current force approximately 15 percent female, an unprecedented number of female soldiers are deployed to combat zones. Unlike the combat of the last century, the modern battle is asymmetric and noncontiguous: there are no front and rear areas. Thus, female soldiers are being exposed to combat, and in some cases direct combat, on a routine basis. These circumstances suggest that the Combat Exclusion Policy is becoming less effective in achieving its intended result: allowing females to serve in the military without exposing them to direct combat.

This paper presents an analysis of the Combat Exclusion Policy in relation to the modern security environment. It provides background on the policy and the Army's current system of implementation, as well as challenges. It then relates the policy to the current training environment and provides examples of contradiction and confusion. Finally, the paper describes the climate created as the Army attempts to adhere to the policy as written in 1994 in the modern security environment.

Combat Exclusion Policy Background.

Women have been excluded from combat roles in the military predominantly due to societal expectations. A large segment of the American population historically shared the views that women should be protected from harm and that women should not kill.[3] As recently as 1998, a U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) Report concluded that "the idea of women in direct combat roles continues to lack congressional and public support."[4]

That was 1998. A more recent (2005) CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll[5] indicated that 72 percent of Americans support women serving in Iraq, while 44 percent support them serving in Iraq as "ground troops who are doing most of the fighting." [See Linton paper following for more detail.] Clearly societal expectations of women's roles in combat are shifting.

While the military services developed the rules and regulations regarding the assignment of female service members, societal expectations were paramount. At no time was "capability to perform" a factor in determining which positions should be open to women. Rather, the metric used to determine the suitability of the assignment was the likelihood of engaging in, or being in close proximity to, direct combat.

This sentiment regarding women in combat was not codified until 1988. At that time, DoD attempted to standardize assignment rules for female soldiers using the "Risk Rule." The purpose of the rule was to make it possible for women to volunteer for military service without being allowed or forced to serve in units operating in or near the front lines. The rule reflected the predominant view that female soldiers should not be exposed to risk of capture or serve in close proximity to combat units.

During Operation DESERT STORM, women soldiers were exposed to significant risk, and in 1994, the risk rule was deemed inappropriate.[6] A revised DoD female assignment policy included the definition of "direct combat." This rule and definition, currently in effect, are together referred to as the "DoD Combat Exclusion Policy."

> Rule: service members are eligible to be assigned to all positions for which they are qualified, except that women shall be excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground, as defined below.
>
> Definition: Direct ground combat is engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with hostile forces personnel. Direct ground combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver or shock effect.[7]

DoD policy also allows restricting the assignment of women "where units and positions are doctrinally required to collocate and remain with direct combat units that are closed to women."[8] This restriction forbidding the collocation of female service members with direct combat units is commonly referred to as the "collocation rule." The collocation rule is specifically designed to keep females out of harm's way, away from the area of the battlefield where direct combat is likely to occur.

Army Regulation 600-13, *Army Policy for the Assignment of Female soldiers*, is in full compliance with the 1994 DoD Combat Exclusion *Policy*. The regulation succinctly states:

> The Army's assignment policy for female soldiers allows women to serve in any officer or enlisted specialty or position except in those specialties, positions, or units (battalion size or smaller) which are assigned a routine mission to engage in direct combat, or which collocate routinely with units assigned a direct combat mission.[9]

Both DoD and Army policies function to exclude women from units based on the mission of the unit (combat or noncombat) and its *doctrinal* location on the battlefield (collocated with combat units or not.)

Implementation of the Combat Exclusion Policy.

The Army's Direct Combat Probability Coding (DCPC) system implements the combat exclusion policy. As outlined in Army Regulation 600-13, the system assigns every position listed in the Army's personnel authorization documents a code: P1 representing closed to female soldiers; P2 representing open to female soldiers. It is due to this coding system that a female soldier will not be assigned as a medic, cook, supply clerk, or any occupational specialty in the "coded" combat units. To be consistent with the Army Regulation, the coding system requires that an entire battalion be closed to women when the primary mission of the unit is to engage in direct combat.

In order to determine the proper coding of a unit or position within the unit, Army Regulation requires that four questions be considered:

1. Does the specialty/position require routine engagement in direct combat?
2. Is the position in a unit with a mission of routine engagement in direct combat?
3. Is the position in a unit that routinely collocates with a unit whose mission is to engage in direct combat?
4. Is the position in part of a unit that routinely collocates with a unit whose mission is to engage in direct combat?[10]

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," the position is coded P1, closed to females, defining the position is simply "too dangerous" for female service members. This coding system, which has been in effect since 1992, is the Army's current system for assigning female soldiers. When it was first adopted, it allowed females to serve in 67.2 percent of the authorized positions.[11]

As the Army began combat operations in Iraq, the Army's DCPC codes in place for each position went largely unnoticed and unchallenged. Most legislators and senior Army leaders were either unaware of or did not often think about the DCPC system. While several journalists attempted to bring attention to the historic involvement of female soldiers during the earliest days of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, few seemed to question the implementation of the combat exclusion policy.

In March 2003, female soldiers were among those to cross into Iraq during the initial minutes of the attack. With the ground war less than 3 days old, the 507th Maintenance Company was attacked, resulting in both female casualties and female prisoners of war. Strangely, there was no congressional or public outrage over the loss of female soldiers. By the time Operation IRAQI FREEDOM began, it appeared "a soldier was a soldier." Could it be that societal expectations of females in the military changed? The Combat Exclusion Policy was seemingly becoming less relevant.

Challenging the Exclusion Combat Policy.

Interestingly, neither the U.S. involvement in Iraq nor Afghanistan would reopen the debate on women in direct combat. In both of these regions, women were present throughout the combat zones, in harm's way and performing equally to their male counterparts. The "coding system" was in place, and it was being followed. There seemed

to be no issues to debate or discuss regarding the utilization of female soldiers. The "open" and "closed" DCPC system seemed to take the ambiguity out of the question, "Should a female soldier serve in this position?"

In early 2005, House Armed services Committee (HASC) Chairman Duncan Hunter and Personnel Subcommittee Chairman John McHugh submitted legislation to further clarify DoD Regulations on women in combat. The proposal came in the wake of the Army's force modularization initiative, an aggressive plan to restructure the Army to form more, smaller, more flexible and interchangable units. The Hunter/Hugh amendment sought to specifically prohibit females from serving in forward support companies, the multifunctional combat service support units that provide transportation, field maintenance, and all types of supplies to the Army's combat battalions within the Brigade Combat Teams (BCT). The legislation would have required the Army to code BCTs, P1 (closed to women). Such combat service support units are usually 20 percent female.

At a time when the Army was struggling to fill its ranks with qualified soldiers, the amendment was troubling for senior Army leaders. The Army did not have enough male soldiers qualified in the necessary skills to fill the approximately 22,000 soldier positions in the forward support companies. Army leadership accordingly spoke out in opposition to the proposal. General Richard Cody, Vice Chief of Staff for the Army, wrote, "The proposed amendment will cause confusion in the ranks, and will send the wrong signal to the brave young men and women fighting the global war on terrorism."[12] The Army could not support the amendment on the basis of available "manpower." Army leadership also acknowledged that the legislation would confuse the force. The proposed legislation was the first indication in over a decade that members of Congress were in disagreement with the Army's implementation of the DCPC system.

Congressman Hunter explained that, "The forward support companies under the new Army modularization will be called on to go forward into battle . . . Rocket-propelled grenades, machine gun fire, and all the other deadly aspects of war will make no distinction between women and men on the front lines." He was explaining what actually did happen in Iraq, not what could happen in the future. He further contended, "The American people have never wanted to have women in combat, and this [amendment] reaffirms that policy."[13]

The apparent disconnect between Congress, the American public, and the Army could not have been more apparent. Chairman Hunter argued that the American public did not want female soldiers serving in combat, even though there appeared to be strong support for them serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Congressman Hunter noted that in the future the forward support companies would be called forward into battle.[14] These companies went into Iraq on the initial day of the ground war; there was nothing futuristic about the support concept. The Army needed to fill the 22,000 positions in the forward support companies with soldiers, male or female, in order to maintain its readiness. Army leadership argued that taking females out of the forward support companies after they had served in and even commanded the units during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM was unacceptable.

Before the House of Representatives had the chance to fully debate and vote on the proposal, it was withdrawn. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld met with Chairman

Hunter, and assured him that DoD would review the assignments of women and provide a report to Congress. At the request of Secretary Rumsfeld and with an understanding that DoD would have a full report on the issue by March 2006, Chairman Hunter withdrew his proposed legislation and substituted the language finally approved in the Defense Authorization Bill which forbids DoD from implementing any changes contrary to the 1994 Combat Exclusion Policy without providing notice to Congress.[15] The debate over women in combat would be postponed to a later date.

Training for Combat.

Representative Hunter's proposal heightened the awareness of the employment of women in the Army at a time when the Army was focused on its changing culture. The Army's top leadership deemed that "The soldier" was a focus area, and transforming each soldier into a "warrior" was a vital component of the Army's transformation. Army leadership wanted to ensure all soldiers, without regard to unit, gender, or military occupation specialty were properly trained and equipped for the challenges of the modern battlefield.

In November 2003, Army Chief of Staff Peter Schoomaker demonstrated his commitment with the comment:

> No longer is a soldier's value measured by how close he or she is to the front line—there are no front lines on today's battlefield. Every soldier is a warrior; every soldier has to embody not only the Army Values every day but take to heart the soldier's Creed and, most specifically right now, the Warrior Ethos that will be around that soldier's neck and lived by soldiers every day.[16]

The Warrior Ethos contained within the Soldier's Creed—"I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade"—is considered a key element in the proper development of each soldier. Brigadier General Benjamin C. Freakley, Chief of Infantry, stated the inculcation of the Warrior Ethos "is about shifting the mindset of soldiers from identifying what they do as a soldier—'I'm a cook, I'm an infantryman, I'm a postal clerk'—toward 'I am a Warrior' when people ask what they do for a living."[17]

Support for the "warrior mindset" was more than mere words as the Army began to devote significant resources to ensure every soldier was equipped and trained as a warrior. The Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), responsible for all Army training programs, established 39 Warrior Tasks and nine battle drills to better prepare soldiers for combat. The Warrior Tasks included qualifying with numerous weapons, reacting to indirect fire, reacting to direct fire, man-to-man contact (combatives), engaging targets during an urban operation, and entering a building during an urban operation. The battle drills included reacting to contact (visual, improved explosive devices (IED), direct fire, and rocket propelled grenades), reacting to an ambush on blocked and unblocked roadways, reacting to indirect fire, and evacuating injured personnel from a vehicle. This training is currently incorporated into basic combat training for all new recruits, male and female.

These Warrior Tasks and battle drills are focused on preparing soldiers for "direct combat," i.e., combat of the sort that female soldiers should not experience, according

to DoD and Army policy. With the Army's current focus on the "warrior mindset" and preparing for combat, it is difficult to explain continuation of the Combat Exclusion Policy. On one hand, the Army is preparing female soldiers for survival in direct combat; while on the other, policymakers are stating that females should not engage in direct combat. For most female soldiers, especially those deployed, the apparent contradiction is immaterial for they are simply doing their job largely unaware that a "Combat Exclusion Policy" even exists.

Confusion and Contradictions.

As Army leaders dutifully prepare every soldier for combat, new recruits learn the Soldier's Creed. Within the Creed are the words, "I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat."[18] These words obviously challenge the Combat Exclusion Policy. If Army leadership fully expects female soldiers to deploy and engage in "close combat," then what is the policy excluding females from? How can the Army support the exclusion policy and prepare over 50,000 female soldiers for combat? What is the relevance of the Combat Exclusion Policy in the modern security environment? The Army officially acknowledges through awards and decorations that female soldiers are capable of engaging in direct combat. Some seem to fear that this will lead to a disruption of the combat arms fraternities.[19] How does one rationalize the more than 50 combat deaths [mid-2006] of female soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan and maintain the validity of the Combat Exclusion Policy?

For most senior Army leaders who "grew-up" in the combat arms career fields, the Combat Exclusion Policy has been a peripheral issue, something that has had little effect on all-male combat formations and consequently has had little effect on their careers. Several military leaders have distanced themselves from the perplexing questions posed by the apparent contractions between reality and the policy by claiming that human resource experts managing the DCPC system are responsible for implementing the policy, not battlefield commanders.

Regardless of how the Combat Exclusion Policy is viewed, it is now a source of confusion for both leaders and soldiers. It is perplexing that with the combat roles female soldiers perform while deployed, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Secretary of the Army, and the Sergeant Major of the Army insist, "The policy does not need to change." This simply aggravates the evident contradiction. Army leadership is preparing female soldiers for direct combat, employing them in direct combat situations (although officially not coded as such), and stating the exclusion policy does not need to change. Policy and practice are out of synch.

The Army's military police (MP) companies represent a classic example of contradiction concerning the Combat Exclusion Policy. [See Cook's and Twitchell's papers.] MPs are considered a combat support specialty, and, as such, MP companies are coded as P2, open to women. In an MP unit, a female may conduct route security, cordon and search operations, raids, etc. The combat arms units often execute many of the same tasks; however, such units are closed to females. It is difficult to explain why a female can conduct security operations in an MP unit, while she is excluded from a combat arms unit because it conducts those same missions. Of course, this irony is a result of the coding system.

To further illustrate the irony, one may consider the recent heroic actions of MP Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester. Her actions during a 25-minute fire fight in Salman Pak, Iraq, earned her a Silver Star.[20] This petite MP woman does not know how many insurgents she killed with her assault rifle, but she is sure that she and her squad mates killed a total of 27 while engaging in direct combat.

How can a policy, intended to keep women out of combat, be relevant when female soldiers like Sergeant Hester routinely lead combat patrols into the most dangerous areas of the battlefield? How can the Army claim it is following the Combat Exclusion Policy as it awards a female soldier a Silver Star for her heroic actions in direct combat?

A Culture of Exclusion.

Even though the Combat Exclusion Policy may not be 100 percent effective in precluding women from engaging in direct combat, it is very effective in establishing a culture of exclusion. This term is commonly used to reflect a group which has its own culture maintained through the establishment of barriers that impede access. In the Army, a female cannot serve in any capacity in a combat arms battalion, not because she is not capable, but because of her gender. Thus, the combat arms units may be perceived as cultures of exclusion. The combat exclusion policy, originally intended to protect females, has in many ways alienated them by the establishment of these exclusive all-male groups.

In the officer ranks, there exists a pervasive combat arms supremacy attitude in many institutions, most notably at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.[21] At West Point, female cadets are often advised by mentors to join the Military Police Corps as it is the closest branch to Infantry that is open to women. Some female cadets state they are encouraged to choose artillery specialties where they can serve in combat arms units, even though their service is limited to long-range weapons systems. A female West Point cadet recently confided in the author, "I want to serve in the Adjutant Generals Corps (the branch responsible for personnel management), but I will be laughed at by my classmates, therefore I will become an aviator."[22]

At West Point, there is overt pressure on males to choose a combat arms career field, (it is mandatory that at least 80 percent of male graduates enter combat arms), and there is both explicit and subliminal mentorship of female cadets guiding them toward the more "hooah" or combat-like branches. It is well-known by the Corps of Cadets, the "elite" or most sought after career fields are Infantry and Armor.[23] Those career fields remain completely closed to females. Sadly, the Combat Exclusion Policy has a tremendous psychological effect on young female cadets before they are commissioned in the Army. They learn early that they will not be allowed into the exclusive combat arms group.

At the more senior end of the officer corps, one cannot claim that there is an overt culture of exclusion, rather there are simply very few women. Since most general officers are promoted from combat arms career fields, it is a natural consequence that there are very few female general officers. Seeing few females "at the top" has a dramatic effect on the entire female officer population. Why should female officers desire to serve in the Army where there seem to be reduced opportunities for advancement and where they cannot be part of the mainstream? This is not to say that most females want to serve in

the Infantry, rather they merely want to be a part of an organization which values their capabilities and does not relegate them to the sidelines or limit opportunities based on gender.

The Future of the Combat Exclusion Policy.

In January 2006, the 1994 Combat Exclusion Policy was codified as law. DoD and the Army lost the opportunity to revise the policy into an assignment strategy that could be readily understood and implemented in the context of GWOT. Now that Congress is exercising oversight on all revisions to the policy, a very public and emotional debate will likely ensue. Nearly 5 years into the GWOT, it will be interesting to see how attitudes and expectations have changed.

As the Army continues to fight a transnational, dispersed enemy that employs irregular tactics and asymmetric warfare, more female soldiers are engaging in direct combat despite the 1994 policy's attempt to preclude this from happening. Leaders of female soldiers in direct combat situations are attesting to their mettle, and the Army is forging ahead and training new female recruits to become "Warriors."

Even though members of Congress and policy advisors may mull over the extent to which women should be employed in combat roles, the truth surrounding the issue is being played out every day in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Combat Exclusion Policy must be reviewed to fit the reality of the Army's organizational transformation and the war in which we are engaged.

ENDNOTES

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14. Elaine Donnelly, "Hunter Admonishes Army on Women in Combat," available from *www.humanevents.com/article.php?id-7587&c=1&tb=1&pb=1&gd=05272005*.

15. Section 541, *Ground Combat and Other Exclusion Policies*, House Report 109-360-National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, available from *thomas.loc.gov*.

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17. Joe Burlas, "Army Chief of Staff Stresses Warrior Ethos for All soldiers," March 4, 2004, available from *www.dcmilitary.com/army/standard/9_05/national_news/*.

18. The Soldiers Creed, available from *www.army.mil/soldiersCreed/flash_version/index.htmlCreed*.

19. Author's impression gained from a tour of duty at West Point and interactions with women cadets.

20. Steve Fainaru, "Silver Stars Affirm One Unit's Mettle," *The Washington Post*, June 26, 2005 [newspaper on-line], available from *www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/06/25/AR2005062501263.html*.

21. The author recently completed a 2-year assignment on the faculty at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, NY, where she formed this opinion.

22. Anonymous Cadet in conversation with author.

23. Author's impressions gained from tour of duty at the U.S. Military Academy.

IV.

IMPACT OF REVISING THE ARMY'S FEMALE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Mark R. Lindon

Editors' Note: Colonel Lindon is a member of the USAWC Class of 2006. His Strategy Research Paper (SRP) serves to address in more detail than the previous paper the issue of public opinion toward female combat service. In addition, his complete paper performs a careful analysis of the business of determining the utility of existing assignment criteria, an issue beyond the immediate focus of this study. Should the reader want to delve into this subject, the full SRP is available through the U.S. Army War College library; extracts from his paper follow.

The Policy Review Group's findings . . . will improve Army readiness to perform its combat mission by: Providing a gender-free capability to match people to Army Military Occupational Specialties; providing a clearer understanding of where women will serve on the battlefield; and providing increased opportunity for both male and female soldiers to succeed.

Women in the Army Policy Review
Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff
for Personnel, Department of the Army
November 1982.[1]

Given the prospects of a long war on terrorism fought primarily by ground forces, the U.S. Army must continue to recruit, retain, and promote quality soldiers. In order to do that, it must develop personnel policies that are fair and allow soldiers to develop to their full potential. The current policy on the assignment of female soldiers is neither fair nor does it offer female soldiers the same opportunities as male soldiers.

From a strategic leader's perspective, changing the female soldier assignment policy will allow the Army to recruit from a larger population, and not just 18-24-year-old males. It will facilitate combat operations by incorporating the logistical assets within the combat units they support. It will offer female soldiers, both enlisted and officer, greater opportunity for promotion to higher rank. Finally, it will send a message to the American public that the Army is truly an equal opportunity employer.

History.

Women have been serving in the U.S. Army since its formation in 1775. During the first 125 years of its existence, women served in laundry, supply, and courier duties—combat support and combat service support in today's vernacular.[2] However, the vast majority of women served in the medical field and once the specific conflict or need for service ended, the women returned to civilian life. In 1898, the Surgeon General of the Army established a Nurses Corps Division, and in 1901, the Nurse Corps became a permanent corps of the Medical Department. This represented the first permanent nurse corps organization. Despite this advancement, there was still reluctance by many senior officials to have women permanently serve in the Army. During World War I, despite an increasing need for personnel with administrative skills, the Secretary of War (who was opposed to women being assigned to these types of jobs) disapproved the request to open these positions to women. Both the Navy and Marine Corps enrolled females in the reserves, but they were transferred to inactive status and discharged at the end of the war.[3]

After the declaration of war in December 1941, the Army sought ways to bring women into the service. The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was established by Public Law 77-554 on May 14, 1942. Public law 78-110, (which eliminated the term "auxiliary" and formally established the Women's Army Corps [WAC]) was passed that summer. While the WAAC law specifically excluded women from combatant roles, the WAC law did not. The WAC law also gave women military status, equal benefits and pay, and the same disciplinary code as men. However, Army regulations established after the WAC law was passed excluded women from "combat training that involved weapons or tactical exercises and from duty assignments that required weapons."[4] By the end of World War II, more than 100,000 women had served as WACs.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, despite the Korean War, the Cold War, and the Vietnam conflict, the status of women in the Army did not change much. The most significant accomplishment was the establishment of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the service (DACOWITS) in 1951 by then Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall. DACOWITS was instrumental in opening more specialties to women and removing promotion restrictions that had been in place since the late 1940s.[5]

From 1968 to 1981, a period that saw the implementation of the All-Volunteer Force, a six-fold increase in enlisted female strength occurred in the Army.[6] As a result of this growth, the Women in the Army Policy Review Group was formed to review all policies and programs relating to women in the Army. The intent was to "determine the effect these policies had on providing an environment conducive to the continual growth and meaningful service of all soldiers while improving combat readiness of the Army."[7] This group was guided by two principles. First, whatever personnel policy decisions were made must support the primary mission of the Army to be ready to fight and win the nation's wars. The second was that these policies should maximize the potential of every soldier to contribute to the Army and its mission.[8] The results of this review, titled *Women in the Army Policy Review*, were published in November 1982 under the auspices of the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (G-1).

As the nation transitioned from a draft to an all-volunteer force, public opinion on women serving in the military was mixed. When asked by the Gallup Organization in 1979 whether women should be required to participate if a draft were reinstated to assist the Armed Forces in meeting recruitment objectives, 43 percent of the total population was in favor of women participating, and 50 percent of the total population was not in favor. Both sexes and virtually all age groups were about evenly split. When those who favored (43 percent) women participating in the draft were asked if women should be eligible for combat roles, 19 percent were in favor and 22 percent were opposed to women serving in combat roles.[9]

When the same questions were asked less than a year later, 51 percent of the total population was in favor of women participating, and 45 percent of the total population was not. The greatest increase in those in favor of women participating occurred in the female population (38 percent in 1979 versus 45 percent in 1980). When those who favored women participating in the draft (51 percent) were asked if women should be eligible for combat roles, 21 percent were in favor, and 28 percent were opposed to women serving in combat roles.[10]

Policy and Regulations.

In 1977, then Secretary of the Army Clifford L. Alexander, Jr., issued his Combat Exclusion Policy which prohibited women from serving in Infantry, Armor, Cannon Field Artillery, Combat Engineer, and Low Altitude Air Defense Artillery units of Battalion/Squadron or smaller size.[11] This Combat Exclusion Policy, coupled with the 1982 *Women in the Army Policy Review*, formed the basis for publication of Army Regulation (AR) 600-13, *Policy for the Assignment of Female soldiers*, on March 27, 1992. This regulation specifically established the personnel assignment policy for female soldiers. (For details, see Keenan's and Putko's papers.)

Following Operations DESERT STORM/DESERT SHIELD, where approximately 26,000 females (representing 8 percent of the total force) deployed, public opinion on women serving in combat jobs changed dramatically. When asked by the Gallup Organization in 1992 whether women should serve in combat jobs, 55 percent were in favor of women serving in these types of jobs and 42 percent were opposed. The percentage of those in favor of women serving in combat roles more than doubled in just 12 years.[12]

While polices and procedures have been changing, the number of women who have deployed during the nation's conflicts has continued to climb. In Operation URGENT FURY, the 1983 invasion of Grenada, 179 females, representing approximately 2 percent of the total force, deployed in support of combat operations. In Operation JUST CAUSE, the 1989 invasion of Panama, the percentage of females deploying increased to 4 percent. Today, more than 13,000 females are currently deployed in support of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM/ENDURING FREEDOM (OIF/OEF). In 2005, women made up more than 14 percent of the Active Duty force, an increase from 10 percent in 1985.[18] However, the assignment of female soldiers today is still restricted by the policy first established in 1982. As the recent saga of Private First Class Jessica Lynch showed us, the lines between direct and indirect combat have been blurred. Female soldiers are involved in increasingly dangerous operations that may inadvertently place them in a direct ground combat situation.

Recent Trends.

Recent public opinion polls continue to show support for expanding the role of females in the military. In a December 2003 Gallup poll, when asked if women should receive combat assignments, "more than 8 in 10 Americans think women should either have the opportunity, or be required, to serve the same combat assignments as men do."[19] More women than men favored women serving in combat assignments. The age group that would make up the forces (18-29 year-olds) was less opposed (8 percent) to women serving than older (age 50 or higher) Americans (22 percent)

In May 2005, The Gallup Organization conducted a follow-up poll for CNN/*USA Today*. In the survey, respondents were again asked what their views were on women serving in combat zones and specifically, serving in Iraq. Approximately 72 percent favored women serving anywhere in Iraq. More than two-thirds (67 percent) support women serving in combat zones as support for ground troops. Not surprisingly, the biggest support for women serving is in the population group that would have to serve (18-29 year olds) where 60 percent are in favor of women serving. This contrasts with 33 percent of those aged 65 and older.[20] Clearly public opinion has changed over the last few decades and now supports women serving in combat zones.

Significance.

What is the strategic significance of changing the DCPC to open more positions to females? There are two areas that changing the assignment of female soldiers affects. First is recruiting. Quite simply, the Army is facing a challenge in recruiting. The U.S. Army Accessions Command (USAAC) estimates that there are 15.4 million males aged 17-24 in the United States. Of these, approximately 2.2 million (12 percent) are fully qualified (USAAC defines fully qualified as having a high school diploma [or equivalent] and qualifying scores on the military entrance exams). While that might seem to be a significant population to recruit from, other factors work to reduce the target population even further. Approximately 67 percent of high school graduates go on to college after graduation. Only 15 percent of youths surveyed indicated they would definitely or probably serve in the military in the next few years. Finally, relative to the other services, the

Army is still most likely to be considered ordinary, and is considered the service of last resort by more than 50 percent of those surveyed who indicated a predisposition to serve.[21] Each one of these factors further diminishes the pool that Army recruiters can draw from. By opening more positions to females, the Army's recruiters can target more of the female 17-24-year-old population.

Recommendations.

First, the Army should change its policy on the assignment of females to reflect the way that units are actually deploying into combat. Forward Support Companies (FSC), along with artillery and other type units deploy and colocate with their supported battalions, regardless of where on the battlefield they are located. Because of this collocation, according to current Army policy, the FSCs should be closed to females. However, they are not. Lessons learned from OIF and OEF have shown that females are in positions in units that colocate with units directly engaged in direct combat. In a February 2006 report, the Center for Military Readiness (CMR) states that within the 3d Brigade 1st Cavalry Division, the FSCs are:

> op-conned (authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish missions assigned to the command."[22]) to combat maneuver battalions.[23]

The report goes on to state that:

> on paper these op-conned FSCs are part of the brigade level BSB [base support battalion] and are manned by it. But in actual operation, they collocate or are embed with the combat maneuver battalions at all times. In the field, they do not, at any time, go back to actual control by the brigade-level BSB.[24]

CMR reports that this practice is also being done in the 3d and the 4th Infantry Division and the 101st Airborne Division.[25] All FSCs should be removed from the modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) of the logistical support element that they are currently assigned to and become an organic unit of the maneuver and field artillery battalions that they support. [Second point omitted]

Third, opening more positions to females seems to have the support of the American public, despite the risks. As recently as May 2005, public opinion polls suggest that more and more Americans support females in serving in combat zones.[26] As more females are indirectly involved in direct ground combat operations, there is the potential that more females will become casualties. Through December 2006, approximately 2 percent of all casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan have been female. Of the women from all service branches in Iraq, 62 died, and as of March 2007, about two-thirds of them in hostile fire. By comparison, in all of World War II, historians say, 16 women were killed in action. In Vietnam, one woman's life was claimed by enemy fire; in the Persian Gulf War, five.[27] "It is a scenario that experts once predicted would lead to a public outcry against "women in body bags." Instead, the casualties appear to have melded into the nation's experience of war."[28] There are a number of reasons why this may be true. First, Americans appear to tolerate more violence and are not shocked by women being killed in combat. Second, due to DoD limiting access to the return of casualties to the United States, most Americans are not even aware of the female casualties. "Photographs of body bags and coffins are rarely seen. And nobody wants to kick up a fuss and risk insulting grieving families. The

public doesn't seem concerned they are dying," said Charles Moskos, a military sociologist at Northwestern University who has closely studied national service.[29] While the absence of public outcry does not translate into overt support, it may indicate tacit support.

Conclusion.

The Army must change its female assignment policy in order to allow it to better compete for quality recruits. As the Army competes with the other services and the private sector for the coveted 17-24-year-old population, the more opportunities it can provide for female soldiers, the more likely it is to recruit a greater number of soldiers. Changing these policies will also facilitate the retention of quality soldiers. It will improve the combat effectiveness of the combat units within the BCTs by incorporating all assets under one commander. Finally, it can do this and not have an adverse affect on readiness.

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V.

WOMEN LEADERS IN COMBAT: ONE COMMANDER'S PERSPECTIVE

Paul L. Grosskruger

Editors' Note: This monograph by Colonel Paul Grosskruger is a reflective essay concerning the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of women, particularly women leaders in combat. In the monograph, Colonel Grosskruger, who recently commanded a battalion in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, dispels myths regarding employment of women in combat situations and realistically addresses issues that arise from women's service in such operations. His observations are specifically intended to assist strategic decision-makers in developing appropriate personnel management policies regarding employment of women in combat.

As the Army executes the Global War on Terror (GWOT), it is undergoing change on many fronts. One significant issue is the increase in the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of women to include their increasing participation in combat. The crux of the issue is that current circumstances are increasing the roles of women in direct combat despite attempts to delineate and limit their roles in such a capacity. The marked changes in the strategic environment, the contributions of women in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the increased congressional interest in this issue warrant an in-depth review of the current policy of the Department of Defense (DoD) regarding the assignment of women in the military.

Women soldiers, comprising approximately 15 percent of the Army, are caught between the policies rooted in the Cold War and the realities of the 21st century battlefield. Without careful review, healthy debate, and comprehensive policy revisions that address current realities, servicewomen will likely remain in this conundrum.

Fresh experiences and input by leaders from the field could provide a wealth of insight to support the development of a more relevant and sensible policy. The most valuable source of information is likely from recent women combat veterans and their male counterparts. They are the experts—they need to be asked what they think.

I fit into the last category—a former engineer battalion commander whose battalion supported a wide array of combat elements during the first year of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). My story, like hundreds of other battalion commanders, is far from unique. For me, writing about women in combat as part of an official Army War College study, comes at an opportune time. My interaction with fellow veterans of OIF, coupled with time for personal reflection provides an objective view of this important issue. I find that my insights are not particularly new; indeed they are supported by scores of writings on the subject over the past 20 years. What is most important is that it is a view from a battalion commander on the ground, not from a policymaker.

The paper begins with discussion of the gradual, yet significant, changes in our strategic environment and the contributions of women who served in my battalion, the 94th Engineer Battalion, over the past 20 years. The paper then transitions to eyewitness observations of women combat leaders, who, in concert with their male counterparts, accomplished incredible feats in complex and dangerous circumstances over a year-

long deployment. The observations, based upon articles and journal entries, describe contributions of women leaders during the first year of OIF—spanning the time frame from the rapid attack to Baghdad to stability and support operations in the central part of Iraq.[1] The paper concludes with recommendations to senior leaders and policymakers in areas of training, leader development, organization, and doctrine in order to better posture the Army for future operations.

A Changing Environment and Culture.

Women's contributions in several units such as the 94th Engineer Battalion began in the 1990s, a time of drastic change in the strategic environment that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall and Operation DESERT STORM. During these times, women gained valuable experiences and were increasingly integrated into combat support units. In the 1980s, my battalion, called the "Wolverines," was a Cold War-based outfit whose missions included construction of live-fire ranges and other facilities throughout Germany. In the event of war with the Warsaw Pact, the 94th planned to repair rear area airfields and other lines of communication that were critical to forward units.[2] Doctrinally, the 94th worked behind the lines in the divisional and corps rear areas, equipped with soft skinned vehicles, minimal weapons systems, and limited tactical communication assets. The battalion at that time was nearly all male.

Women were few in numbers and normally assigned within the administration and support organizations of the battalion and not as heavy equipment operators, carpenters, plumbers, or mechanics. In the 1980s, the battalion operated under the umbrella of a combat arms unit's "security zone." This Cold War doctrine contributed to the mindset that the unit would operate in "safe areas" within a combat zone—areas considered not subject to direct combat. The Cold War belief that units like the 94th were not direct combat forces drove the manner in which it was employed in battle simulation exercises, how it would receive personnel and resources, and how it participated in, or missed out on other maneuver training opportunities for the next 20 years.

The 1990s brought drastic changes to the 94th—both externally and internally. Its World War II-coined motto, "Aid to any Division," was about to become reality. In 1991, it deployed outside of Europe for the first of many times to support humanitarian operations in northern Iraq during Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. Many deployments followed—to Macedonia, Bosnia, Kosovo and other eastern European countries—for stability support and humanitarian missions. These operations revealed the changing nature of war from a clearly defined, linear, and static engagement, to operating in a complex and noncontiguous environment while confronting an all-encompassing threat. By the close of the 1990s, the battalion had become one of U.S. European Command and U.S. Army Europe's most deployed and versatile units.

As the strategic environment and missions transformed, so did the 94th's formations. The 1990s also brought significant increases in the numbers of female leaders—namely lieutenants and captains. This pipeline of female leaders directly to the 94th was a result of the Combat Exclusion Policy that allowed for only certain engineer units to receive women. Based upon the issue of collocation, nearly all leader and soldier positions within combat engineer battalions were coded as male only. Under the exclusion policy,

the combat engineer battalion line companies were considered as units which would "collocate" with infantry and armor formations and therefore were off-limits to female officers and soldiers. Divisional and corps combat engineer battalions had few positions for female leaders. They could serve in the headquarters company but not the line units. Construction, bridging, and topographic engineer battalions were the only units fully open to both males and females. This had significant second-order effects. Of the seven engineer battalions in U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR), only two were considered eligible for receiving the majority of inbound female officers. The assignment policy resulted in a disproportionate level of female officers within the 94th and 565th Engineer Battalions. *At any given time during my command, over 50 percent of the junior officers in my battalion were women*.

On one hand, the Combat Exclusion Policy allowed combat support units like the 94th to fully integrate female leaders and benefit from their talents and professionalism. On the other hand, the policy prevented combat engineer line companies from benefiting from their expertise and addressing issues associated with the integration. *Further, the exclusion policy limited leadership opportunities for women*. In effect, the policy indirectly inhibited the professional development of female leaders at combat training centers (CTCs). Female leaders, unable to gain valuable experience in the line companies in combat engineer battalions, faced inherent challenges in gaining valuable training experiences.

Additional issues inevitably surfaced. Female leaders, not gaining CTC experiences, were not readily recruited or accepted into key professional development billets. Female leader development opportunities confined primarily to engineer combat support units limited women's exposure to other Army combat units formed barriers to full professional development.

The Combat Exclusion Policy influenced leadership and mentorship. While male engineer officers could move from direct combat support assignments to construction, topographic, and bridging units, women stayed primarily in the combat support track. Prior to OIF and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), male senior leaders gained limited experience in leading females in combat situations. This created unwritten notions and resulted in a limited pool of mentors available to women. Theoretically, prior to OIF, a male engineer leader could advance up the ladder to general officer without any substantial experience in leading female soldiers. While some units in the Army were integrating females and benefiting from their abilities, others continued their all male composition.

The Lead up to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

At the time of the September 11, 2001 (9/11), terrorist attacks in the United States, nearly every soldier in the 94th realized that a deployment was inevitable. Its core missions focused on opening airfields and ports, building roads and lodgment areas, and enhancing force protection in an undeveloped theater. The word came in late December 2002 that the 94th would be the first ground force to deploy to Kuwait from USAREUR in January 2003.[3] Its mission was to provide theater-opening capabilities to V Corps and to prepare to support to 3d Infantry Division in follow-on operations.

Deployment and Initial Missions.

The battalion's junior leadership was key to the successful planning and deployment to Kuwait in January 2003. Female officers occupied critical positions: the battalion logistics officer, construction officer, maintenance officer, and deployment officer to name a few. Each of these positions required extensive knowledge in the systems external to and within the battalion. Each contributed significantly toward the successful deployment of 735 troops and over 500 pieces of equipment to Kuwait. The incredible stress and enormous responsibilities weighed heavily upon them. But they were up to the task. As the battalion shipped its equipment by rail in Europe, two female officers—First Lieutenant Stephanie Chase, Construction/Plans Officer, and Captain Shannon Boyle, Logistics Officer—deployed as part of the advance party to theater. Both officers were experienced in previous 94th deployments; Chase had just returned from a deployment in Bulgaria a few months prior to deployment to Kuwait.[4] Both officers executed a host of key actions in an undeveloped theater that set the stage for an effective reception, staging and onward integration (RSOI) of the battalion. As engineer forces completed RSOI, they were assigned theater opening missions. The battalion's first mission in theater, a corps chemical decontamination site, was planned and executed by First Lieutenant Therese Kelly, B Company, 94th Engineer Battalion, in mid-February, 2003. Hundreds of missions like this would follow.

The Attack to Baghdad.

The V Corps Commanding General (CG) and his planners knew from the onset that DoD mandated a smaller, tailored force to do the job of defeating Iraq's armed forces and removing Saddam Hussein's regime. The U.S. Army committed one mechanized division, one light division, plus corps enablers of command and control, logistics, and aviation to carry out the first phase of the operation. The plan called for the 94th to be 100 percent mobile in support of the brigade combat teams of the 3d Infantry Division (ID). To meet this requirement, First Lieutenant Stephanie Chase, by now a planner within 3d ID's Engineer Brigade, developed the concept of tactically mobile and mission-tailored modules to provide simultaneous support maneuver across the division. Mission sets included breaching the international border, constructing a four-lane "super highway" across the obstacle complex, airfield clearance, survivability, river bank preparation, Main Supply Route (MSR) construction/repair, MSR marking, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) and C130 airstrip construction—all to occur simultaneously over hundreds of kilometers of battlespace. This airstrip, located in the vicinity of An Najaf, extended well forward in the 3d ID and V Corps' battlespace. It would first serve as a UAV strip and then convert to a C17-capable strip to bring in supplies and evacuate the wounded. Chase's work demonstrated not only her mastery of engineering and operations, but also paved the way for the intellectual development of concepts for Army modularity. The concept of construction mission sets imbedded with the combat engineer formations of 3d ID was sound in concept, yet untried in training. While leaders such as Chase solidified the plan, other leaders such as CPT Boyle acquired critical supplies and coordinated with V Corps and 3d ID to support the 300 kilometer attack.

When the attack was launched, the 94th's leaders and soldiers overcame incredible challenges to ensure mission success. Both male and female leaders exhibited technical and tactical competence and courage. Captain Kristen Dahle, the battalion's assistant operations officer assigned to the battalion's tactical command post (TAC), distinguished herself on a number of occasions through her composure and awareness during the firefights in and around Objective RAMS on the evening of March 23, 2003. Dahle maintained situational awareness and remained in close contact with Task Force Rouge, 4-64 Armor, and other units then in contact. Her actions saved lives and postured the unit for critical follow-on operations. Major Lindstrom, the 94th Engineer Battalion S3, wrote,

> Captain Dahle's "clearance of fires" coordination with the EN Co Cdr [Engineer Company Commander] while they 'cleared' what they considered to be a trench line along the road, but what we found the next day to actually be the berm that ran along the gas line kept us from being fired on by the sapper squads with their .50 cals [50 caliber machine guns]. Looking back, she probably kept them from putting a few rounds into that gas line too.[5]

Platoon leaders such as Second Lieutenant Barbara Antis displayed exceptional leadership, technical and tactical competence, and courage during the attack to Objective RAMS. A platoon leader in the 535th Engineer Company, Antis led her unit on a continuous 36-hour trek along the 3d ID's southern axis of attack route toward Objective RAMS. Antis' platoon was far forward in the attack. Constantly vigilant, she kept her exhausted soldiers on task through her personal example and strong leadership. With little or no rest, she quickly transitioned her platoon from the road march to the construction of a 3,000 foot airstrip—critical for bringing in V Corps supplies, flying out the wounded, and the first dirt airstrip built in combat since the Vietnam War.[6] Other platoon leaders like First Lieutenant Adrian Sykes, who just completed a deployment to Poland prior to OIF,[7] supported 3d ID's northern attack toward the Euphrates River crossings, and seizure and clearance of the Tahlil airfield. Sykes emplaced bridge abutments that were instrumental in facilitating the rapid crossing of the Euphrates River and the passage of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. Lieutenant Colonel Mark Holt, the 130th Engineer Brigade's deputy commander, summarized, "Those guys went right behind the gunslingers . . . they caught the Iraqis off guard, secured the base, and then pushed a platoon up to the bridge crossing of the Euphrates . . . swiftly repaired the bridge to allow a major passage of troops and the execution of the northern prong of the attack toward Baghdad . . . having combat heavies that far forward and integrated that deeply . . . is unheard of."[8]

While other female leaders supported combat formations on the attack, First Lieutenant Sarah Sinclair, a quiet, hands-dirty kind of leader and expert equipment operator in her own right, planned and executed the battalion's lifeline—the supply convoys running back and forth from forward units to Camp Virginia in Kuwait. She single-handedly led her support platoon through hundreds of kilometers of dangerous terrain and ensured that the critical classes of supply got through. In the final attack on Baghdad in early April, the 3d ID directed the 94th to link up with one of its forward elements, 1st Brigade Combat Team, to support it in the seizure and clearance of Baghdad International Airport. On April 5, 2003, after the roller coaster ride supporting 3d ID during their attack north, the 94th Engineer Battalion arrived at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP). First Lieutenant

Therese Kelly became the first platoon leader to lead the battalion into the still unsecured airport. She and others quickly cleared the airstrip to allow for C17 and C130 traffic in less than 24 hours.

Missions in the Baghdad Area.

Within days after seizing BIAP, it was apparent that destroying the Iraqi regime was only a small step on the long, arduous journey to bring peace, stability, and prosperity to Iraq. At BIAP, the 94th Engineers transitioned from high intensity combat operations to stability and support operations during a critical juncture in OIF. For the next 9 months, the battalion operated out of this base and projected engineer combat power across the Baghdad area.

During the attack, female leaders and their male counterparts acted effectively in supporting combat formations by enhancing tactical mobility. But now they had to transition quickly to stability and support missions in the dangerous and uncertain environment in and around Baghdad. First Lieutenant Stephanie Chase, instrumental in planning the engineer support in the attack, transitioned to the battalion's civil engineer and public works planner for the Baghdad International Airport. Chase coordinated support to scores of Army, Air Force, and Special Forces units throughout the Baghdad area. Other female leaders led sanitation, force protection, roads, airfield repairs, and surveying teams; carpentry, plumbing, and electrical teams; and general services such as fire department, asphalt/concrete, electrical power plant, and infrastructure assessment teams. The range and complexity of these engineering missions spanned the whole gamut, from hasty construction to extensive repair of existing facilities.

Acquisition of construction supplies and establishing contracts are critical initial steps in reconstruction operations. As S4, Captain Shannon Boyle's work in this area contributed greatly to mission accomplishment—she established relationships with Iraqi contractors and conducted dangerous local purchase operations to obtain materials needed to feed the 11 construction platoons and numerous teams within the unit.

Providing essential humanitarian support to the Iraqi people in the first weeks and months of OIF was another great challenge. Coalition forces in April 2003 encountered a huge humanitarian disaster. Iraqis in Shiite and Sunni Muslim neighborhoods and farm hamlets were struggling with open running sewers, trash-filled streets, limited running water, and unreliable electricity. The Iraqi police and military forces either fled, surrendered, or blended into the population—leaving literal chaos in the streets. All public services—including utilities and transit systems—were looted and ransacked. Wires were actually ripped from the walls of buildings for the resale value of the copper. Across Baghdad, hundreds of tons of Iraqi military munitions, weapons, and equipment lay about—ready for sale in open weapons markets or stashed away for enemy exploitation. To meet this challenge, the leadership and expertise of all leaders would be tested to the extreme.

To address the dire situation in the Iraqi neighborhoods, the unit developed the concept of Task Force Neighborhood. Under the leadership of V Corps and 3d ID, the battalion planned and executed 34 missions throughout Baghdad from May to August 2003. Female soldiers, platoon leaders, equipment operators, medics, and mechanics

conducted humanitarian operations in tough, dangerous circumstances. Preparing for and executing a humanitarian mission was much like a combat patrol in Iraq, consisting of precombat inspections, reconnaissance of the area, intelligence acquisition, coordination with the maneuver commander in the sector, and reacting to sniper fire and improvised explosive devices.

Leaders like Second Lieutenant Jessica Durbin planned and executed the rebuilding of a burned-out police station west of Sadr City, Baghdad. The mission, like many others, consisted of leading her unit through dangerous areas, coordinating with local maneuver commanders and Iraqi police. Durbin, executing her first platoon leadership mission—in a combat zone, did an exceptional job.[9]

Captain Amy Huggler, previously a company executive officer and now the battalion assistant S3, was instrumental in planning and coordinating hundreds of missions in the months after the seizure of Baghdad. Huggler was also instrumental in planning and executing construction missions in support in the dangerous area of Abu Ghraib. Her unit often experienced nightly rocket and mortar attacks while executing construction missions at Abu Ghraib prison. She maintained an impeccable reputation, both within and outside the battalion.

Other missions included planning and construction of facilities in the center of Baghdad's Green Zone for the Coalition Provincial Authority (CPA) and facilities in and around Abu Ghraib prison. Missions like these—and the others mentioned earlier—were critical to the Coalition forces' operations and required technical and tactical skill, determination, and combat savvy in the complex and dangerous conditions of Baghdad. Over the 12-month deployment, the battalion assigned missions to companies, platoons, and teams with no regard to the gender of the leadership—it simply did not matter. It could not matter. Females had proven themselves within the battalion well before OIF; now, like their male counterparts, they were just doing their job.

In late January, 2004, 1 year after departing to Kuwait, the 94th redeployed to Germany to refit and prepare for future operations. Female and male platoon leaders, seasoned in OIF, now found themselves dealing with challenges of reintegration, soldier conduct, maintenance, and preparing their formations for redeployment to Iraq in less than a year. I departed the battalion in July 2004. At that time, it had already received its marching orders to return to Iraq in late 2004 for OIF III. These junior leaders, now with more years in Iraq than in any other place in their careers, distinguished themselves—this time in the Mosul area.

Observations.

I certainly gained a deep respect for our junior officers as I observed their actions during OIF. My experiences confirmed that effective leadership is based upon a number of factors—not one of them being gender. From first-hand observations of my unit and many others, I found essentially no difference in the performance in combat situations between male and female junior officers. I found that male and female soldiers performed essentially the same; some were especially strong, while a few were weak performers. What I also saw were the desired leader attributes in female leaders that were indistinguishable from those of their male counterparts—their patriotism, technical and tactical expertise, leadership, and professionalism.

As mentioned earlier, most junior officers, without regard to gender, performed exceptionally well. In rare instances, I encountered issues of psychological instability, poor levels of professionalism, and technical and tactical incompetence. Again, I saw these instances in both genders, but perceived no trend. These observations indicate to me that both genders have strong and, in a few cases, weak performers. This problem also reinforces the necessity of strong coaching and mentorship for junior leaders to achieve their highest potential.

With regard to professional development, most female officers, like their male counterparts, sought challenging developmental leadership assignments within the battalion. Often in our unit, this included one or two platoon-level leadership positions, followed by staff or company executive officer positions. I found that most of the unit's female officers were first-class athletes—competing in a host of athletic events ranging from the All-Army Soccer Team and USAREUR 10-Miler Team, to local running and mountain biking competitions. I found that nearly all scored high on their Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and displayed a professional appearance. This professional appearance remained consistent, whether in garrison or in combat.

My observations of female officers' technical and tactical competence were also similar to those gained by observing the male junior officers. Each gender brought essentially an equal amount of expertise to the unit after the basic leader courses. Again, the dividing line between the outstanding and average performers was drawn more with regard to intellect, initiative, agility, drive, and desire; it had nothing to do with gender. As mentioned earlier, the 94th Engineer Battalion's leadership included female maintenance officers, logistics officers, company commanders and company executive officers, platoon leaders, operational planners, construction/project engineering officers, and even a female property book officer.

The final consideration is courage and poise in dangerous and stressful circumstances. Unlike the news networks' sound bites, a deployment in a combat theater is not one continuous firefight. Rather, a contingency operation is conducted in a continuously stressful, challenging, uncertain, and dangerous environment in which soldiers can be killed just as easily by an accident as by direct enemy action. It is the alertness, professionalism, staying power, poise, and personal courage of a leader that is most desired in the marathon called OIF. Here again, I found that male and female junior officers were indistinguishable in these critical leader attributes. Among both genders, I found leaders who earned and maintained the respect of their subordinates by constantly remaining vigilant and keeping high standards. These female and male leaders kept morale, discipline, and performance high in their units throughout the year-long deployment. I saw the same traits in leadership during the precombat phase in Kuwait, along the 300-kilometer attack to Baghdad, and throughout the remaining year in the dangerous streets and neighborhoods of the city.

Clearly other leaders who have served or are currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan have insights on the accomplishments of female leaders in combat situations. In general, I found that gender was less of a factor in the overall potential for success in combat-related situations. I found that many pre-OIF beliefs regarding female performance under stress will wane in combat, such as the notion that female leaders do not have the stamina, that there is a difference between male and female leadership on combat engineering

competence, or that males and females act differently under the stress of combat. These are all false. Females possessed all the abilities required for conducting operations in the complex, volatile, dangerous, and uncertain environment of the 21st century.

Recommendations.

The Army would be best served if it reexamined its assignment policies with respect to combat-coded units. As I mentioned earlier, the preponderance of junior female engineer officers went to two of seven engineer battalions, creating an overly high percentage in units like the 94th, with much lower percentages in the other engineer battalions. Significantly, these engineer battalions shared more in common with the 94th than in differences with respect to missions and types of units supported. Due to the inability to distinguish combat from combat support missions for engineers in future operations, I recommend that women leaders be allowed opportunities to lead all types of engineer modules. Expansion of assignments for female officers would provide more opportunities for experience and advancement, while spreading their valuable contributions more evenly. Assignments in combat engineer units can also allow female officers to gain essential experiences in providing maneuver commanders with engineering support. Such assignments could be evenly distributed from platoon leader all the way up to battalion commander-level assignments.

Second, combat should not be the first occasion for maneuver commanders to see and work with female leaders and with the combat service support units under female leadership. Combat training centers such as the National Training Center (NTC), the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) and the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) should incorporate more scenarios that utilize combat service support units. Additionally, other training events such as Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) should closely replicate the integration of combat and combat support units and leaders. These exercises provide valuable training experiences for both the tactical maneuver unit and their support units while fostering integration and building trust and respect between leaders of different genders.

Conclusion.

It is clear that over the past 20 years, our security environment has changed from a static, linear Cold War construct to a noncontiguous, unclear environment. It is also clear that our military has adapted to operate effectively in this changing environment. While these changes occurred, another more subtle change was occurring: the steady increase in female contributions to the Army's mission. Experiences in OIF demonstrated that women's contributions were critical to the success of many aspects of the operation and will remain so for the future. The deployment was filled with examples of leading by example and effective support to a number of combat units in the Baghdad area. When called upon, women displayed courage in combat situations and earned the respect of their male peers. The time is right to reflect, to share our views, and to develop a comprehensive personnel policy that recognizes the contributions of female leaders and thus postures the military for future success.

ENDNOTES

1. My personal observations were captured in a series of journal entries and articles, including "A Calculated Risk: Combat Heavy Engineers in Support of 3ID's Attack to Baghdad," *Army Engineer Magazine*; and in draft articles including "A Baghdad Story: The Beginning of Major Stability and Support Operations in the Strategic Capital City from April to December 2003" and "Task Force Neighborhood, The Background, Challenges, Accomplishments, and Lessons Learned of V Corps' Initial Humanitarian Assistance Operations in Baghdad, Iraq," May-August 2003. Additionally, I based my observations on written submissions from the officers of the battalion. Each provided their most significant experience in writing prior to completion of the deployment.

2. The history discussed in this paper is taken from the 94th Engineer Battalion's official history available from *www.130thengineers.army.mil/94/BnHistory.html*, accessed May 8, 2006.

3. This article was one of a series published on the unit as it readied for deployment in early 2003, available from *cndyorks.gn.apc.org/caab/articles/troopstodeploy.htm*, accessed May 8, 2006.

4. Natalie Card, "Building Bridges, Cornerstone '02'," 130th Engineer Brigade Official Website, September 2002, available from *www.130thengineers.army.mil/publications/Professionalarticles/Cornerstone02NCard.htm*, accessed May 8, 2006.

5. This information is based upon an interview with Major Bernard Lindstrom, Executive Officer, 18th Engineer Brigade, who was formerly the S3 of the 94th Engineer Battalion. Lindstrom goes on to share his recent combat experiences in Afghanistan,

> From my recent experience in OEF, we had a female lieutenant that was lost to an IED (improvised explosive device), and we had infantry and Marine officers demand that male engineer officers be sent to replace the female platoon leader that was conducting contract construction. Prior to OEF, I sometimes wondered if the "morale" of the unit would be more negatively affected because the loss of a female soldier versus a male soldier in combat. I learned that this was not a concern. The professionalism and dignity of all was highly displayed. As for the demand for a replacement, once we inquired further, we found that the infantry and marine officers were mostly concerned with the "possible" inexperience of the engineer second lieutenant to be able to supervise a contract to construct a road within an area that directly supported a direct engagement. This was a valid concern that displaced the myth of demanding a male to replace a female.

6. Tom Sawyer, "Engineers Build Airstrip, Clear Baghdad Airport," *Engineer News Record*, April 2003, available from *www.construction.com/NewsCenter/Headlines/ENR/20030407d.asp*, accessed May 8, 2006.

7. Vincent Picard, "V Corps Engineers Build Structures, Skills, Memories During Poland Exercise," September 23, 2002, available from *www.eucom.mil/english/FullStory.asp?art=258*, accessed May 8 2006.

8. Tom Sawyer, "Engineer Skills Gave Iraq Campaign's Chief Engineer Ability to Achieve the Mission," *Engineer News Record*, April 2004, available from *www.enr.construction.com/features/international/archives/040405.asp*, accessed May 10, 2006.

9. Jeremy Lee, "Germany-Based soldiers, Iraqi Contractors Renovate Baghdad Police Station," July 2003, available from *www4.army.mil/ocpa/read.php?story_id_key=5090*, accessed May 8, 2006.

VI.

LEADING SOLDIERS ON TODAY'S BATTLEFIELD: CONSIDERATIONS ON CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE INTEGRATION AND ROLE OF SOLDIERS WHO ARE WOMEN

Katherine M. Cook

Editors' Note: Colonel Cook commanded the 203rd Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) during the preparations for and execution of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM I. We have elected to include a larger portion of her U.S. Army War College Personal Experience Monograph in this compendium in order to illustrate some of the precombat issues with which she deals and to provide a good inside look at what was going on hour by hour, day by day, in a unit that happened to have an unusually high percentage of women assigned. We would ask the reader to keep that latter fact in view while working through this portion of the compendium.

In order to put the issue of women soldiers in context, this paper covers from when I first took command of the 203d Forward Support Battalion, 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), at Fort Benning, Georgia, in the spring of 2001, through Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in late Spring, 2003.

Before the Battle.

The 203d Forward Support Battalion (FSB) was the support unit for what was then the 3d Brigade Combat Team (3d BCT) at Kelly Hill, Fort Benning, Georgia. On my arrival in April 2001, I could see the unit's uniqueness immediately. The sign on Kelly Hill proclaimed this area to be home of the 3d Brigade Combat Team. It had not only the armor and two infantry battalions on its sign, but the field artillery, engineer, the support battalion, and smaller components. The 3d BCT is part of the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), the preponderance of which is located at Fort Stewart, Georgia, about 4 hours away by road.

This unique positioning of the BCT had some effect on the assignment of personnel. I was astonished at the numbers of women soldiers in the 203d. Of a battalion of roughly 450 soldiers, there were areas that were almost entirely or heavily staffed with women soldiers: medics, cooks, supply specialists, and drivers of fuel tankers and other transportation assets were almost all women. The reason was the 3d BCT was a Forces Command (FORSCOM) unit located on a Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) installation. At that time Fort Benning was a training site principally for infantry soldiers. Most of the units on Fort Benning were training units. For soldiers designated to go to a FORSCOM unit, the options were the 3d BCT, the Engineer Group, and the Ranger regiment (all male). Women soldiers could only be assigned to the first two major units. Although soldiers were assigned to the units at large without regard to their gender, when they arrived at Kelly Hill, it was obvious that women soldiers could not be placed in the armor, infantry, field artillery, or most of the engineer units. So the male soldiers in the medical, supply, maintenance, and transportation areas went to the rest of the BCT; the women soldiers were mostly placed in the 203d FSB, with a few others in the brigade (BDE) headquarters and the engineer battalion.

We were preparing for an imminent training rotation at the National Training Center (NTC) in Fort Irwin, California, when I took command. As most of these soldiers were young and of child-bearing age, deployment readiness issues due to pregnancy presented a challenge in certain mission areas. Simply being on Kelly Hill exacerbated our challenge to keep the unit at high levels of deployability. Kelly Hill is a comparatively isolated location. There was little in the way of entertainment; the movie theater no longer showed films; there was a bowling alley, and that was the extent of things to do on the Hill for soldiers with free time. As many of the BCT soldiers living in the barracks were young, had limited income, and there was not a lot to do on post or in a reasonable radius off post, the barracks climate could get fairly rowdy. The young women in the 203d barracks often became, in the words of my senior noncommissioned officers (NCOs), "prey" for a lot of the male soldiers in the BCT. I do not have data to compare pregnancy rates between women soldiers living in the barracks with those living off post, but I recall the fallout from this situation was more pregnancies in soldiers living in the barracks. The challenge here is that any soldier deemed nondeployable still holds the personnel slot; the unit cannot obtain another soldier to fill that slot. Since some 203d sections were almost all women, pregnancy did have an impact on the deployability status of some of these sections. It was primarily a personnel management issue that needed attention at higher levels.

We executed the NTC rotation and did well; soldiers regardless of gender will do whatever it takes to make the mission happen when short of people. On our return to Fort Benning in early July 2001, we resolved to find a way to get a fix on this personnel assignment issue, investigated ways to improve life for soldiers on Kelly Hill, and began to incorporate sex education in the 203d companies.

We discovered some lessons at NTC that would prove to be significant in the next 2 years. We had to change the way we moved on the battlefield and the way we established perimeter defense. Moving by company exposed vulnerabilities to the FSB operational capacity. The FSB was comprised of headquarters, supply, maintenance, and medical companies. A convoy ambush or an attack on a position could effectively cripple one of the companies if commodities were not mixed and dispersed within the formation. At NTC, visibility was generally very good for long distances, and I do not recall the convoys ever being ambushed. But this had always been a big fear of mine as a commander in Operation DESERT STORM (ODS) as we pushed through Iraq in 1990, and I could see we had to change this to minimize our vulnerabilities. The problem of protecting the perimeter was large, both literally and figuratively.

Obviously much changed for the 3d BCT after September 11, 2001 (9/11). We had several new missions to keep the post and other facilities secure. On one occasion, another unit was executing a classified force protection mission and requested fuel be brought to their location. My fuel transport section was comprised of almost all women (at the time there was one male soldier in the section). This was not something that we paid attention to at the time. However, later that afternoon I received a call from a very upset infantry battalion commander saying that the unit did not get the requested fuel. The Army has an old saying that the first report is always wrong, and this was no exception. What had transpired was one of the infantry soldiers in charge turned the fuel tankers away. On the way to the mission, one of the tankers had a flat tire. The soldiers changed the tire,

but the person in charge at the time decided that because they were women, they could not be accommodated at the same facility as the infantrymen. In a heated conversation, I informed the infantry commander that his own people turned the tanker away over "lack of billeting." The commander quickly rectified the situation, and there was not another mission hiccup involving gender—to include training or support during combat operations.

The pace of operations picked up mightily after 9/11. The 3d BCT, as well as leadership across the Division, had to attend an XVIII Warfighter training exercise at Fort Stewart from train-up in October onward to execution in January. This was largely a virtual exercise, but required key staff and senior leader participation. During this same time, the 203d also had to carve out a support contingent for the infantry battalion task force deploying to Kosovo for 6 months. It was a challenging 4 months, during which I commanded the unit mostly from Fort Stewart.

During this time, I had even more quality time with my new Support Operations Officer (SPO), who had no prior experience in a division before coming to the 3d BCT. We spent a lot of time at Fort Benning going over the maintenance posture of the BCT, as this was all new to her. Understanding her role as a logistics planner for the BCT was also new, and it was essential she do well in this environment. It would be one of the few times she would have the DISCOM commander and other key leaders see her performance first-hand. It was also very important to ensure we understood, as a team, all the factors that must be considered in analyzing, preparing, and executing wartime planning for the BCT and other units. My SPO was responsible for keeping minutely up-to-date on the maintenance and support posture and associated issues of the BCT back at Fort Benning, learning the way the division operated in war, learning via the school of hard knocks how to be a logistics planner in a BCT, briefing the concept of support for the BCT to the division leadership, and planning for the Kosovo and Kuwait missions that were on simmer.

In November, we received word that the 3d BCT (-) was going to deploy to Kuwait on Operation DESERT SPRING. Operation DESERT SPRING was an annual exercise that had traditionally been designed for an infantry or battalion task force (TF) with a very small support contingent. This deployment exercise had been ongoing since the conclusion of ODS. After 9/11, 1st Cavalry Division sent approximately a BCT(-) to Kuwait in place of a battalion TF to dissuade Saddam Hussein from taking advantage of any perceived vulnerability in Kuwait.

Since I had commanded during ODS, the training requirement was never out of my thoughts. We were lucky during ODS, having 60 5,000 gallon tankers barreling through Iraq with lead elements of the 101st—dark green tankers with big inverted V marks on the center of the tankers and driver doors. We kept all of them going back and forth between Saudi Arabia to the northernmost logistics position in Iraq for 30 days with no force protection except for the aviation elements that sometimes flew overhead—and very few radios to talk to anyone if we had an emergency. I was determined that the 203rd would be prepared to go to war and not just depend on sheer luck for survival. The challenge was to get all of these elements on the same sheet of training music regardless of where the elements were. The biggest challenge was doing all this with a staff that was very junior and inexperienced across the board.

As soon as the BCT returned from Ft Stewart in January, key planners, to include the SPO and myself, flew to Kuwait for 10 days to plan the deployment. There we learned that we were to receive another battalion TF from Fort Riley, Kansas, with a support slice, but that support package, like the unit, had to be able to detach immediately in the event of another mission. After 10 days of information gathering, visits to the future living sites, picture taking, briefings, and much planning, we were on our way back to Fort Benning. The next day the SPO and I were on a plane to Ft Riley to talk to the support unit there, only to find on arrival that no planning had been done for the required package. After a day coordinating information flow with that unit and its supporting deploying element, we returned to Fort Benning to get a briefing on the mandatory battalion Combat Service Support (CSS) live fire exercise. During the time we were at Fort Stewart, each of the 203d's units qualified 100 percent of its soldiers with their individual weapons.

The CSS live fire exercise was planned, briefed, and rehearsed during our trips back and forth to Fort Stewart. It was the first time the soldiers had fired their weapons with live ammunition away from a controlled firing range setting. We created a scenario that had soldiers drawn into an ambiguous setting—would violence erupt? How should they handle civilians harassing them? Next, an event triggered firing.

Two weeks after the CSS live fire exercise, the SPO and a contingent of approximately 90 other soldiers were sent to Kuwait to set the stage for a quick handover with the 1st Cavalry Division FSB for unit property and living quarters. Our talented SPO did her usual stellar groundwork. She was very perceptive and proactive in solving problems and did not hesitate to take action. She quietly worked issues behind the scenes and anticipated and disarmed many potentially disastrous situations during her time in the 203d. She is one of the most dedicated officers I know.

One of the deployment issues was determining who is deployable. Conducting pregnancy testing prior to deployment will only help marginally; the big problem for the soldier and the unit is discovering pregnancy after deployed in theater. The soldier has to be redeployed to home station, and the unit has a personnel shortfall. The key is to conduct 100 percent pregnancy testing 3 to 4 weeks after arrival in theater. Pregnancy can occur prior to deployment, and the soldier and the unit not find out until several weeks later. *I strongly urge 100 percent pregnancy testing during deployment—this should be an Army-wide policy*. During our time in Kuwait, the 203d had two soldiers who did not know they were pregnant. One experienced an ectopic pregnancy, and the other soldier had a spontaneous miscarriage. In both cases, their lives could have been lost—all due to not having a mandatory pregnancy testing policy a month after arrival in theater. The Department of Defense (DoD) Director for Manpower and Reserve Affairs worked to have this changed, but the Air Force and Navy objected. This is a health and welfare, as well as a manpower strength issue.

Kuwait.

The battalion spent the first month in Kuwait acclimating to the heat, establishing life in the Kabal (camp), and shaking out support timing, methods, and relationships. We shared Virginia Kabal, later named Camp Virginia, with the BCT's Field Artillery Battalion.

The key focus areas for the 203d were training and excellent support to the BCT. We felt very confident of our ability to provide logistics support in Kuwait once we had the situational awareness of how to get things done. Our principal preoccupation was training. We did not know that we would be going to war, but my training experience in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and my wartime experience as a company commander taught me that all soldiers should expect to go to war with no notice—and it was incumbent upon the leadership of the unit to make certain that soldiers had the skill and confidence to execute those tasks.

Training.

Prior to deployment, the BCT was briefed on the training support packages that would be provided by contract with the MPRI Corporation. However, this contract did not extend to the FSB. FSB was told, "Sorry, maybe next year. Come up with your own training"—which we did. Although part of a mechanized force, the unit was equipped with weaponry about equivalent to that of an FSB in a light unit. The lack of arrayed communications; flexible organic combat power or lethality (basically, no ring mounted weapons); and vulnerability of some of the essential cargo such as fuel, well-marked medical support, or ammunition made us lucrative targets for any "bypassed, incidental" enemy elements. We knew that our Mission Essential Task Lists (METL) that we briefed diligently every training quarter needed serious review; we needed to turn Power Point graphics into training reality. Kuwait was a prized, golden opportunity for the FSB: we had the ammunition, training space, and time to train collectively and individually to go-to-war standard. We started our planning almost immediately.

The training experience for the first 2 months in Kuwait I would title "The Battleship Turns Slowly." We took some time to dissect the METL and the multilayers of supporting collective and individual tasks, and see if it was really what we should be focusing on as "go to war" training. An in-depth look showed incomplete work from the schoolhouses. We knew we needed to get back to the very basics on an individual soldier level. The best way to get this done was to move the unit ("jump") off the Kabal and get it practiced in moving and establishing a perimeter defense collectively. We jumped successfully. We made the next move bringing everything we owned. This proved to be quite difficult, as the commanders complained that the FSB's Supply Support Activity (SSA) would be down for a day or two as we moved back and forth to the Kabal. We had to be cognizant of the schedules of the other units in training as certain maintenance teams would be more in demand. The good news was, the BCT commander recognized that we had to have time to train collectively, and supported us.

Moving out to the new site went OK; the real challenge was establishing, assessing, and fixing perimeter defense. As the Command Sergeant Major (CSM) said, the first attempt was a "patchwork quilt." You could clearly see where one section ended and another began. We took the company commanders, first sergeants, and section leaders at all levels around the perimeter to look at the differences in how soldiers established defensive positions, both individual and crew served sites, then to think about how we could defend such a shapeless perimeter. From this experience we were able to inculcate, down to the soldier level, infantry standards in establishing the individual fighting

position as part of a perimeter defense. The BCT commander's concern was that in the event of war, we would be moving fast—would the FSB be able to keep up? My reply was that the FSB has to set at some point to fix broken people and make equipment repairs, and the soldiers needed to know how to properly defend the BSA. I was highly confident the FSB could keep up; I had first-hand knowledge of how to do that acquired during ODS. Privately, my thoughts were that speed was not the issue; resupply would be. The FSB can barrel through the desert and plan a superlative defense, but it cannot control the speed with which other elements can support it.

This training was grueling. In the intense heat of the Kuwaiti late spring and summer—with temperatures exceeding 130° and always well over 110°—and constantly blowing sand, soldiers in full uniform and field gear, the soldiers continued to acclimate, understanding in the event of war this is how we would have to operate. I recall weapons ranges that had green pop-up targets. As I observed the soldiers lying there waiting to fire in an intensely hot morning, fully combat dressed, the pop-up targets were raised—and then like a comic scene, slowly fell forward like limp spaghetti. The targets had melted due to the heat!

The other go-to-war concerns were that soldiers, sections, and companies needed to truly have confidence in executing several tasks in a wartime desert environment: individual and collective land navigation; radio operations; emergency medical procedures; basic marksmanship; convoy operations; and nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) measures were just some of the areas covered. We ended our training with a series of live-fire exercise to give soldiers, platoons, and their leaders the experience of firing all the weapons at our disposal at day and night. Convoy procedures were practiced constantly by day and most importantly at night with drivers dependent on night vision devices (NVDs). Different configurations of convoys were practiced to maximize the ability to move swiftly in a three-column abreast formation vice one long line, terrain permitting. Communications exercises and land navigation were part of that training as well. Mixing of battalion assets within traveling formations was almost always practiced whenever battalion training took place. Night-time training was particularly important, as it challenged the soldiers on the use of NVDs and gave better visual fire and blast effects. Convoy live-fire training included an ambush/explosive road block scenario and incorporated "call for fire" with the field artillery mortar sections, the use of soldier hand and arm signals, and the selective "wounding" of leaders or random soldiers. This taxed soldiers' knowledge of how to properly dismount from vehicles with live ammunition and sometimes hot barrels on weapons (safety), use nonradio communication (as radios were scarce and would not be available once dismounted), perform immediate action on injury, and perform medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) while under attack. This training also challenged the medics' ability to conduct safe and swift treatment and evacuation. We emerged from the desert the best trained unit of its type in the Army. I knew this to be the case, as no other unit had 4 months of constant training in intense desert hot weather conditions. The resourcing for our training was unprecedented in my experience in the Army.

Living Conditions.

Billiting arrangements in Virginia Kabal included both separate-gender or mixed tents within the company, depending on the company's internal organization and the number of men and women soldiers within the company or section. I left this up to the commanders and the first sergeants as long as it did not give disproportionate space to one gender or section. As mentioned, my sergeant major and I shared a tent, and, as usual in such arrangements, we had a partition between our areas for privacy. During off-Kabal training, we had mixed gender tents with privacy screens fashioned from poncho liners or similar make-shift screens in the company areas. I recall no issues with this, as this is how the logistics community normally trains and lives in the field due to operational imperatives. You do not have time to chase soldiers down in various tents; you want the sections intact as much as possible, to be quickly directed and accounted for. The observation from our NCOs was that mixed gender tents usually had better behaved occupants and upkeep, soldiers being mindful of the judgment of the "other side." We all shared and took our turns in the showers and latrines; there was no need for separately designated shower stalls as the construction of most showers were individual compartments. There was, and is, no reason to have separately designated latrine areas for men and women. There was a disagreement with the armor battalion commander and CSM over the living accommodations of the two women soldiers who were mechanics assigned to their Maintenance Support Team (MSTs). All the MST soldiers belong to the FSB. This particular team in support of the Armor battalion was led by a SFC, who happened to be female. I wanted the leader of every MST to be in the same tent as their team. When I visited the armor battalion area, I found they had put the team leader and the one other female soldier, a private, in one entire tent. Crammed into one tent next to them was the rest of the team. There was not enough tentage to allow for a third tent, the way the "pads" were constructed on the Kabals. I objected to this living situation with the armor battalion senior leadership; I was told it would be changed to the way I requested with shared tent space, only to find as soon as I was out of the area, it was changed back. Culturally, this commander and CSM purported to think it "not right" to have a mixed gender tent and thought it OK to crowd the males into the other tent. The soldiers saw the situation for what it was, adapted the best they could, and went on with the mission. The only other note on gender was that we found our medical sets lacking adequate treatment equipment for women. My medical company commander brought this to my attention, and we did our best to get the problem addressed and rectified what we could.

The only other gender-related issue during this deployment was the unsuccessful initiative to conduct 100 percent pregnancy tests on all women soldiers in the BCT. This was not a gender issue; this was a health and welfare issue. I recall that part of General Order #1 was no sexual relations when deployed. Obviously, soldiers discovering pregnancy in the middle of the rotation could not protest innocence that the pregnancy occurred prior to deployment. This issue seemed too hot for handling in the BCT. As the leader of the preponderance of women soldiers, I wanted this initiative to go through. At no time did a mixed gender incident become an issue in the unit, but we recognized that women soldiers needed to have some frank discussion on this topic, so we gathered up as many as possible from the BCT and had discussion about sexual relations and the

effect on unit cohesion, pregnancy testing, and affairs of the heart; whether appropriate or inappropriately legal, young women especially seemed vulnerable. We took this step after discussions with the FSB Chaplain, who provided a good no-name sensing to different behavioral and morale trends in the unit. More senior soldiers advised the crowd not to let emotions get the best of them; and reminded soldiers that their loved ones back home, and the loved ones of the men in the BCT, would be waiting for them when they got home. I asked for pregnancy testing on a volunteer basis for all those who wanted to confirm whether or not they were pregnant, and made my case for preferred 100 percent testing, explaining this was vitally important for their health, first and foremost, but also reiterating the General Order #1 aspect. Overall, feedback from the soldiers and NCOs was that this discussion was necessary and important. They felt gender relations and the reality of the possibility of pregnancy were areas that needed to be recognized and discussed openly.

As previously mentioned, late in our time in the desert, we had a visit from the DoD Undersecretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. I brought the pregnancy and testing issue to him and explained that the primary reason this was needed was the health and welfare of our soldiers, as well as a way to help us understand our readiness posture in case we were to go to war. The undersecretary did what he could, but in the end we could not overcome the objections of the other services. This was the only time I have experienced "jointness" as an obstacle to progress in taking care of service members.

At the time of our equipment turn-in, Fox News and CNN were blaring about possible war in the region. Meanwhile, I had my small coterie of planners work with me daily as the soldiers worked on the turn-in of equipment. Logistically, we went through what we knew and did not know, drew up all the questions we could possibly ask, and sent off the most generic and obvious questions back to Fort Stewart. These questions largely went unanswered.

Back at Fort Benning.

When we returned to Fort Benning, we quickly put all the soldiers who had deployed on Operation DESERT SPRING on leave. I told the soldiers to be mindful of what was in the news and to maximize their time on leave with their families and friends, telling them they could be rightfully proud of their achievements in training. I also asked them to be safe and to get ready to come back and help train those that did not get the benefit of our experience in Kuwait.

After roughly 2 weeks of well-deserved leave, we started October with a quick examination of our unit strength and what we had to train with. October and November moved quickly. We saw many of the personnel issues get rectified but did not get a fix on the assignment situation, as we continued to receive a disproportionate number of young women soldiers. The performance of the soldiers was not the issue. The disproportionate assignment of young women of child-bearing age was. That some sections in the FSB were comprised almost solely of women soldiers presented readiness challenges. These were smoothed out, and the unit concentrated on training, especially focusing on soldiers who had not deployed. Around the end November, we received word we would be going back to Kuwait during the first week in January.

Back to Kuwait.

Right after the New Year, we boarded a plane to Kuwait. As soon as we arrived, we found that the units were not getting issued all or even some of the required Class III oils and lubricants that are vital to keep the M1 tanks and M2 *Bradleys* running. As this was an issue before deployment, we were astonished to find the Class III lubricants stockage levels were at roughly 60 percent fill levels. There were no automated adjustments made to sustain the increased flow of forces. This was stunning, as it was quickly evident it would take approximately 30-45 days for stocks to get to the right levels to support the incoming units. The adjustments were made immediately, but it did take over 30 days for the stock situation to get to levels that could support going to war.

Hammer Base was just a spot in the desert. Living was rudimentary, back to latrines with buckets for waste that we burned, and bathing out of a plastic personal bucket. As we had trained to live that way in our previous 6 months in Kuwait, the adjustment was fairly smooth. We continued to train in every conceivable area, most especially medical, as we integrated our new medical equipment and tentage designed to allow us to operate in the event of an NBC attack. We incorporated the division chemical unit first in training, then later as a tenant. We received a forward surgical team to augment our medical company in anticipation of going to war. At first, quartering the soldiers was a challenge, since we could not ship our unit-organic tentage from Fort Benning.

The equally crucial work was readying the BCT logistically to go to war. The FSB needed to attain a working authorized stockage list (ASL), which was originally found as a jumble of parts, some thrown in and some encased in drawers in some vans. We found the prime mover trucks to haul the vans and fixed what was needed, transported the thousands of parts out to Hammer Base, and proceeded to build our ASL. We formed informal boards from our support operations section and the maintenance warrant officers across the BCT and established what we would take to war. Many of the board participants had ODS/Operation DESERT STORM experience, and we made additional plans and prepared orders accordingly. The big push, once parts and supplies finally started to flow in country, was to get the materiel from the point of arrival to our location. The transportation section we had at Fort Benning was now returned to its original owning unit, the Main Support Battalion (MSB). We used all the trucks we could to line-haul parts to Hammer Base, calling on BCT assets whenever needed to keep the transport function rolling. We trained any soldiers who were not working otherwise in supply operations. We maximized multifunctionality whenever and wherever possible. Soldiers trained on-the-job on forklifts, and we expanded licenses for the Army prepositioned stock (APS) 5-ton trucks, some of which had older manual transmissions.

In February-March, we began to receive elements that were to accompany 3d BCT into Iraq. The division chemical company joined the 203d; we also received an embedded reporter from *Le Monde*, the French equivalent of the *New York Times*. We set up briefings to ensure every soldier understood the basic plan as we knew it. We were doing everything possible to ensure 3d BCT was fully ready to engage with and defeat the enemy.

Our needs, and the needs of the BCT (especially the engineer battalion), required more transport. In order to save time and manpower, we knew a bulldozer would greatly speed

defense of the brigade support area (BSA) and survivability of assets such as the fuel tanks and ammo. The engineers could not get transport for their dozers, and in frustration, the engineer battalion commander turned to me and said, "I can't get lift for this; it's yours if you can find a way to carry it." I was delighted! We already had problems moving our forklifts since we had no flatbeds available to move them and were required to force march the largest 10K forklift. We had to have these 10K forklifts to swiftly download some of the large repair end items and stocks. Additionally, they broke down less than our other forklifts, although keeping these critical items functioning was a daily battle. We managed to get a few prime movers, a lowboy for the dozers, and movers for most of the forklifts, except the 10K, right before we moved to our assembly areas. This turned out to be a very important achievement that had combat consequences in Iraq.

On March 17, 2003, St Patrick's Day, we received word that we would shortly be crossing into Iraq. The 203d continued the intense maintenance effort on every system in the BCT until hours before the unit moved to the staging positions on March 19. The BCT had within each unit as much ammunition as could possibly be carried and 5 days of food and water. The main challenge would be keeping the fuel line of supply going, as the fuel tanker augmentation was to last only for a short time.

In the morning of March 21, 2003, the 3d BCT moved across the berm into Iraq, one of the first Army maneuver units to do so. Soldiers were dressed in chemical overgarments with our physical training (PT) clothing on underneath to minimize heat casualties. The pace into Iraq was steady and uneventful at first. The 203d and attached units moved in three convoy march units, spread out so we could make better time and have better command and control of the convoy. We found the terrain we were moving on was not very stable. I made a decision to gather the fuel and medical assets in the convoy elements that were mired in "sand," and push them up the hardball (hard surfaced) road that was approximately a mile and a half away parallel to us, under the control of the medical (Charlie Company) company commander. I apportioned the military police (MP) support for force protection. I was reluctant to split the MPs, but every element had to have some invaluable firepower maneuverability. The FSB had no capability like that of the MPs, who were able to provide swiftly moving fire on anything that might endanger us, with *good* communications for command and control. Although the initial plan stressed we were to stay off the road to ensure its freedom of movement, the fuel and medical support had to get to where the BCT main elements were or there would be real difficulty. We moved on to Barrows.

As we approached Barrows, we could see aircraft circling overhead, a MEDEVAC bird or two, but some that looked like major command and control aircraft, which turned out to be the case. Charlie Company had arrived 15 minutes before the first casualty was delivered, and it was gratifying to see how well all our hard training was paying off. In addition to the casualty flow, we had some Enemy Prisoners of War (EPWs) that we had to sequester temporarily. I was surprised that the BCT had not called for the fuel to move forward for resupply, and ensured those soldiers were getting sleep as we waited to hear how activity was progressing. We had a plan for refueling that was still holding. We were to push the fuel tankers and now concentrated on finding where our support was so we could reach out and get refueling. We were augmented with 26 fuel tankers, all from a National Guard (NG) unit, which had a great leadership team and great soldiers;

however, they did not have much training time with us, almost no communications, and as I recall, had few handheld navigation devices.

When the refueling missions began, there was a close call providing fuel to the field artillery elements. The lieutenant who was sent to escort that segment of fuel tankers had incoming enemy artillery rounds impact within several meters of her vehicle. All turned out fine, but she had a good story to tell later. My point here is that, as a commander in these conditions who happens to be a female soldier, I never gave a thought for what gender was sent on what missions. The FSB had almost all women driving the fuel tankers and doing other crucial jobs. This was not news to our leadership as we discussed the personnel manning challenges before deployment. We dealt in soldiers getting missions done. In recalling the performance of these soldiers, I am not overstating it to say that they were magnificent in their professional execution of their duties throughout our time in Iraq despite the weather, the unknown battlefield, and operating with little sleep. The hard training and attention to safety paid off time and again. Gender made no difference in any of the situations we encountered. Americans can be rightly proud of this Army.

Trying to get a picture of the battlefield was hard at Barrows. We were in a very busy "wait" mode, with Charlie Med receiving and treating incoming enemy and friendly casualties. If soldiers were not on mission or guard duty, we urged sleep whenever possible, but that was hard. There was a corps level refuel point established near Logistics Support Area (LSA) Adder, very close by. We refueled and waited.

From Barrows, we were redirected to Tallil airbase. Within about an hour, I heard the report that we were now "black" on fuel; the units that were not part of the BCT and the engineers consumed almost all that we had. Of the 11 fuel tankers we had, 10 could be used for refueling vehicles; of these, nine were now empty or about to be empty. We did not know where the log assets were in that battlespace, only what was planned. I let the MP CSM know I had to turn my fuelers around to get about 50 miles back to the last known refueling point. I needed him to give my tankers swift passage back and forth on that road. I needed to get at least seven more fuel tankers in the event we had another situation like the one in Tallil. I had no way of knowing what was going on with the fuel posture of the BCT and these other "attached" units, but I knew we did not know what was ahead of us for refueling. If we went forward and could not find fuel, we could be in a very bad situation. I called my supply company (Alpha Company) commander over and told him I needed him personally to go back with all the fuel tankers and with some MPs and get refueled—and come back with seven additional fuel tankers.

Near sunset, we received a call telling us to expect a fixed wing aircraft with 50 U.S. casualties. Fifty casualties to an FSB medical site is definitely a mass casualty situation; the manpower for litters is four soldiers, and the feed line from the aircraft to the triage line to Charlie Operations required a lot of people. The fuel mission was on hold as we would need all available soldiers. The senior NCOs of Charlie Company snapped into action, marshalling soldiers to the exact places and set-ups to quickly care for the casualties. It was an inspiring sight to see the training pay off for this emergency. Finally, we received the call to stand down from the mission. Then we had to turn attention to getting the fuelers on the road. This was around 2200 hours. We knew we would probably move every day, and "jump at first light" became the normal way of living. Off went the refueling mission, and we hoped for the best.

At first light, just as we were about to start movement, in came the fuel tankers—with the seven additional tankers. I was ecstatic. We had a few other challenges: we had received a seriously wounded soldier early that morning, had had to operate on him, and could not move him until he stabilized. One of the exhausted pilots that had transported him in a very shot up MEDEVAC aircraft said he had a cut on his neck from the glass and asked if we could take a look at it. Minutes later I received a message from Charlie Company that the pilot did not have a cut; he had shrapnel embedded in his neck just a centimeter or so from his carotid artery.

We had planned refueling operations with two armor and infantry task force units and needed to keep our time schedule. I left some MPs and a few other battalion assets with Charlie Company as they took down what they could in preparation for movement. As we traveled towards our next destination, we started to execute the refueling missions along the way. We had good force protection enroute as the BCT scouts and combat arms elements were visibly protecting our flanks. As we were refueling the BCT, I received a radio call from the BCT commander. He needed seven fuel tankers now, since someone was in a fight and black on fuel. We needed to marshal these up and send them forward up the road to where the BCT S4 would meet them and guide them where they needed to go. I flagged about 10 tankers over; fortunately seven had fuel. Not all the tankers were ours, and there was no knowing if the other drivers understood—they just needed to do the rudimentary "follow that truck" and move forward when the guy in front moved. I was very thankful we got those seven tankers.

Our next significant move was in the vicinity of Karbala and the Karbala Gap. The original 3d BCT mission was to form a ring around Karbala, allowing for the safe passage of the rest of the 3d Infantry Division through the gap. Intelligence assessments pointed to this area as the most probable for an NBC attack.

Travel conditions were Spartan. Some modesty was going to be lost as we moved through Iraq; soldiers of both genders were in vehicles that often did not stop for several hours. Emergency bodily relief during movement was usually remedied by cutting off the top off a water bottle and throwing on a poncho or poncho liner over the head, and throwing the waste out the window.

We had another U.S. addition to our BSA during this time. We had heard about the 507th Maintenance element's ambush early in the war. We were puzzled at all the media focus on Private First Class Jessica Lynch, and, like most Americans, wondered what had happened to these soldiers. Shortly after arriving in the Karbala area, we received word that the survivors of the ambush were going to be delivered to us. We were to keep them with us until they could be rejoined with their unit. We made a plan for Charlie Med to receive them, check them over with the doctors, medical stress team, the chaplain, and the S2 all standing by. On my way over to Charlie Company to see that all was ready, I came across a few beat-up vehicles, an expandable van, and a high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV). As we often picked up "strays" that had broken down and were stranded needing help, I did not expect this group to be the several 507th soldiers. As I approached the group, I saw and heard someone briefing them; suddenly the scene turned into people crying out in anguish, some throwing themselves to the ground, almost all weeping aloud. It was the 507th company commander giving word to his soldiers on the fate of their comrades. Up to that time, the survivors of the ambush

did not know what had happened to their colleagues. The capture of PFC Lynch was international news, but it appears we knew more than these soldiers had been told. The BCT S1 must have furnished the company commander with the news update of who had been discovered to be captured and who was dead. I stepped in, explained who I was and where they were. I told them we understood they had received some powerfully bad news, but they had all the power America could bring concentrated on getting their fellow soldiers back and to try to lift that worry and grief off their hearts as much as they could. We needed them to be prepared to concentrate on whatever challenges we had ahead of us, and I had a team of people ready to help them through this. At that time, the Charlie Company commander and team came on us at a run and took over care of these soldiers. We knew these soldiers were still pretty upset, especially after receiving fresh bad news of their confirmed dead and captured friends and colleagues. We took down any issues they had, and I personally ensured this information was given to the division support command (DISCOM) commander at the first opportunity. The team of the Charlie Med, the chaplain, the stress management team, and the retelling of the incident by each soldier on paper helped get them better settled down. I had them put in a separate tent in the Charlie Company area. When I visited them that night to see how they were doing, I found the soldiers intensively cleaning their weapons. Most of the weapons had jammed when firing; this could happen to the cleanest weapon out in the desert with all the blowing dirt, but you could see they felt a grim determination to never let that happen again. This incessant weapon cleaning went on for days. We had the surgical team, who, like the 507th, came from Fort Bliss, visit the soldiers and talk about home to help get them a bit more grounded and perhaps take their minds off the ambush. Everybody did what they could; when the soldiers in the BSA heard that these soldiers had no care packages and few sundry items, there was an outpouring of generosity with shared items from home or from rucksacks.

The S2 gathered up all the 507th soldier's written accounts of what happened and tried to come up with a picture of what happened. As for the accounts of the ambush and actions before, during, and after the firing started, it was clear that each soldier had his or her own account that was different from others. We think it stemmed mostly from the fact that there were very few radios in the vehicles, so most of the soldiers were just following the vehicle in front of them. There was no coherent understanding that they were lost or what they were doing. Although I have since read the official report of the 507th ambush, the wrong turn and ambush engagement could have happened to any unit without redundant information, land navigation devices, and adequate radio communications capability. This unit was an echelon-above-corps logistics unit, I knew they did not have the training or equipment resources that my unit had.

After the rest of the Division passed through the Karbala Gap, the 3d BCT was instructed to hand off the area to the 101st Airborne Division. When we were about to execute the jump, the executive officer approached and told me we had some maintenance issues with part of the unit. We could not move all of the BSA at one time, so we left her with some force protection—probably an MP team—and went on to our next location. My instructions to the unit throughout our moves were to drive as fast as possible but to be as safe as you can, since an accident would create a lot of problems and opportunity for the enemy. To us, speed saves. During the very early days and until we had been in

Baghdad for a while, Ireaqis, mostly men, would emerge from cover, always keeping a white handkerchief waving about their heads. I remembered the days before we went into Iraq; I used to have informal meetings with my majors, and we would talk about how planning was going and share something to eat from home. One of the majors asked me what I thought the principal threat would be. I unhesitatingly answered, "Angry young Muslim men." After the laughter subsided, they asked me why I thought that. I explained that they had been humiliated militarily once, and now a second time. I asked, if it was you, would't you want to pay that back some way? How will we know who is the enemy? We will be the invaders of their country, probably killing some of their friends and family. They will want retribution.

We reached our "new home," which was located in the vicinity of LSA Dogwood, just a few miles from the DISCOM headquarters. The next move would be into Baghdad. We were short on every commodity except fuel, which we kept proactively at as high a level as we could. The only commodity we had delivered to us was some medical resupply, usually arranged to be brought when the MEDEVAC birds came in to pick up stabilized casualties.

Baghdad.

We marshaled our soldiers and prepared to move the next morning. We were old hands at this; we could have done a jump in our sleep. We settled in at the new location in western Baghdad before mid-April. The FSB soldiers walked the streets of Baghdad, talking to Iraqis, ascertaining how the local transport network was set up, how it was running (if there was petrol), checking on the hospitals, generally asking what their issues were, and got the medical supplies flowing again. We canvassed our part of Baghdad to see what other government agencies or offices were out there that had not been paid and sent the information to the BCT. We made resupply runs to and from the airport and sometimes out to the other BCT locations, as well as to places in Baghdad, where we did some volunteer work with orphanages and a hospital. We spent a lot of time negotiating a bottled water contract with the local water bottling vendor before it was scotched by higher levels. This was a difficult situation as the temperatures were rising. Though not nearly as hot as Kuwait and with less blowing dirt, we were rationed to roughly one bottle of water a day. We recycled the plastic bottles and drew water from the water buffaloes (water tankers), but I knew from talking to the water team that units rarely cleaned out the water buffaloes. It took a really long time for the logistics chain to catch up with "the last tactical mile." This was not a success story from that standpoint.

The 203d had guards at Iraqi schools to get them operational—and as requested, we sent women soldiers to guard duty at girls' schools. My driver, our required vehicle full of force protection soldiers, and I went to central Baghdad twice a day to keep abreast of the big picture. We lost the outstanding MPs once we reached Baghdad, and the great air defense artillery (ADA) team before that. Almost every day, we drove in and around the outskirts of Baghdad, often taking small arms fire. The fire was always ineffective, but we drove like demons. Even in Baghdad, speed saves. The disbanding of the Iraqi Army was a surprise. We wondered where these men would get the money to feed their families, and even if paid, how their pride would respond to this move. Would we see

the difference? The removal of a lot of the Baathists was taken with mixed emotions from the Iraqis in the street. By that, I mean to say that each Iraqi definitely had an opinion, but not all were pro-Baathist. Once we were walking in the neighborhood a week or two, the Iraqis would speak very frankly on a number of subjects. Most also spoke good English, far better than we spoke their language. Some felt that we should not let the "real" Baathists, the ones who were in charge of things, stay in office, otherwise why did we bother defeating Saddam? We had other angry Iraqis ask, "Why do not you hurry up and tell us what to do?" It appeared that democracy would be a slow-growing concept.

In May we finally left for Kuwait, the first BCT to be credited with a deployed year. We all made it back to Kuwait safely. Less than 3 weeks after my change of command, all were home, no casualties.

Time to Go.

As a woman in command of these fine soldiers and in view of our experiences, I hope there are two policy changes. Currently there is no DoD or Army policy on pregnancy testing of women soldiers on deployments. The time for greatest concern with regard to mixed gender units is 3 weeks to 1 month after deployment. It is for the good of the soldier and the operational capability of the unit that leaders should be able to ascertain if there are any pregnant soldiers. I strongly recommend this policy change be made in all the services, particularly in light of the increased responsibilities of the services in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa.

At no time during the execution of any missions with the 3d BCT did I or any other commander ever take gender as a consideration for what missions these soldiers would or would not do, with the exception of the request for women soldiers to guard the Muslim girls' school. Was there an expectation of direct combat? Every day we had that expectation. We did not know what the enemy might put together to attack us. FSB soldiers were supporting forward with the artillery, the infantry and armor elements when needed. There is no time or need to sort out gender to accomplish these missions. The situation will always change on a battlefield; a hopefully uneventful mission can turn into conflict, whether that is delivering fuel under fire, escorting and recovering vehicles during sudden enemy contact, or providing medical support. These are some examples; that is the nature of war today.

What is the usefulness of the current law? How is "well forward of the battlefield" to be defined?[1] Do we need this to be redefined in light of the nature of conflict today? The current direct ground combat definition and assignment rule established in 1994 has recently been made into law as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006. Its intent is to force DoD compliance with excluding women from "being in units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in combat on the ground."[2]

Today, there is no "front" line for engaging the enemy. Although laying mines on roads has been a tactic for decades, technology has brought the likelihood of sudden, direct physical contact with the enemy to all soldiers through improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and car and suicide bombers. Technology has changed where, when, and with what effect our Army will have enemy engagements. All soldiers must be trained

to expect that they could suddenly be engaged in direct combat with the enemy. Women are an important part of our ability to provide support in an all-volunteer Army. The FSB (now known the Brigade Support Battalion, or BSB) is a critical component to the BCT. Soldiers of any gender have a much increased likelihood of direct physical contact with the enemy. There is no more grief over the death of a soldier that is a woman than over the death of a male soldier. The number of serious injuries to both genders resulting from engagement with the enemy is in the thousands. There is no public outcry that this should not be the fate of a woman soldier versus a man; culturally our nation has accepted this as a bitter but inevitable hard consequence of having soldiers in today's conflict.

With the nature of conflict changed, it is my hope that this law will be changed to respond to the conditions in which commanders and soldiers operate on today's battlefield.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule," Memorandum for the Secretaries of the Military Departments, Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, January 13, 1994.

2. *Ibid*.

VII.

THE 95TH MILITARY POLICE BATTALION DEPLOYMENT TO IRAQ – OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM II

Randall E. Twitchell

Editors' Note: Lieutenant Colonel Randall Twitchell recently received The Army War College Foundation Personal Experience Monograph Writing Award for his description of the 95th Military Police Battalion's deployment to Iraq. The excerpt of the monograph provided below specifically highlights the contributions of female Soldiers serving in the 95th. This excerpt illustrates how female Soldiers may be called upon to directly engage the enemy.

Female Soldiers may serve in all enlisted and officer positions within military police (MP) organizations. Within my command, female soldiers served at the squad and platoon levels, as well as on higher level staffs. Each of my subordinate combat support (MP) companies had female soldiers integrated throughout the company headquarters as well as the line platoons. In the MP branch, females are fully integrated; there are no positions or locations on the battlefield from which they are "excluded."

A typical MP platoon is comprised of 30 to 35 soldiers; a platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and three squads of 10 soldiers. Within each squad, there is a squad leader and three teams. Within each team, there are three soldiers and a vehicle with a gunner's platform. Each vehicle is heavily armed with crew-served weapons. In a team, one would typically find a MK-19 grenade machinegun, M-249 squad automatic weapons, and/or a .50 caliber machinegun. In addition to the crew-served weapon, each individual soldier carries an M-4 carbine and M-9 pistol. There are 10 platforms per platoon and approximately 45 platforms in a full strength company. Each company has 10 to 20 percent female soldiers.

With the considerable firepower found in an MP unit, MPs are a significant combat multiplier. [See Cook paper.] The 95th MP Battalion performed combat support operations in the major campaigns of Operation IRAQI FREEEDOM (OIF) II, to include those in and around Baghdad, Fallujah, Karbala, and Najaf. Female MPs served on teams in all of these operations. Although I know of numerous accounts of how the MPs in my command served as combat multipliers throughout OIF II, I will recount the actions of a particular group of MPs in western Baghdad in April 2004.

On Easter Sunday 2004, the personal "army" of Muqtada al-Sadr (a radical, religious cleric in Iraq) went on the offensive after the detention of his leading lieutenants. Simultaneously, his "army" and the insurgents struck at Baghdad, Karbala, Kut, Najaf, Fallujah, and other towns across the country of Iraq. Additionally, they attacked the main supply routes (MSRs) in an attempt to cut U.S. lines of communication. They blew some of the bridges along the main MSR into Baghdad to impede the flow of fuel, equipment, ammunition, and other critical supplies. Several convoys moving along the major highways were attacked.

During this time period, there was significant troop movement as U.S. forces were rotating in and out of the theater. Sadr and his followers seemed to have planned several attacks to coincide with the deployment and redeployment of U.S. forces.

As attacks increased, First Lieutenant Brittany Meeks, a female platoon leader in the 230th MP Company (an MP company under the 95th), was tasked to respond as part of a quick reaction force for a U.S. military transportation convoy that was attacked not far from Baghdad International Airport. The enemy attacked the convoy with rocket propelled grenades, mortars, and machinegun fire. Most of the fuel and support trucks in the convoy were on fire or destroyed. As plumes of dark smoke filled the air from the burning fuel trucks, and cries for help from soldiers who were wounded in the convoy filled the radios, several MPs in the area rushed to the site to lend support.

Lieutenant Meeks led her soldiers to the ambush site, and assisted other MP units in securing the area, laying down suppressive fires, and evacuating the wounded. While all of these actions were taking place, close air support was called in to suppress enemy fires in the kill zone. *Apache* gun ships soon arrived and began to attack enemy positions. The enemy fired machineguns and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) at the *Apaches*. One of the helicopters crashed in an open field near some homes not far from the ambush zone.

Lieutenant Meeks and other MPs from the 230th hurried to the site of the downed *Apache*, hoping to save the crew and secure the area from the enemy until recovery operations for the *Apache* could take place. The pilots in the helicopter were killed in the initial explosion, but Lieutenant Meeks and the other MPs secured the area until further help arrived. They kept the enemy from desecrating the bodies of the pilots or from taking sensitive items from the crash site. As the company commander of the 230th MPs arrived on site with more reinforcements, Lieutenant Meeks's platoon did a cordon and search operation of the homes in the area, surrounded the downed chopper, and looked for weapons and those responsible for the attacks. It was a thorough cordon and search operation that resulted in the discovery of several weapons.

This response to the ambush on the MSR is one of many examples that typify the combat experiences of MPs in the Iraqi theater. Lieutenant Meeks and her platoon consisting of several female soldiers distinguished themselves by quickly responding to suppress an enemy ambush and secure the downed *Apache*.

During OIF II, the 95th had several female platoon leaders like Meeks and several female soldiers who were extremely competent and able to successfully engage and defeat the enemy. They often took charge, organized patrols, escorted convoys, manned checkpoints, defended base camps, and worked with the Iraqi Highway Patrol or police. They performed their duties wherever needed. There was no "rear area" where they were safe from the enemy's tactics.

The female MPs in the 95th were no different from male MPs. All qualified with their assigned weapons, certified in all required training prior to and during deployment, met the Army standards for physical fitness, and were prepared to fight in combat conditions. They were all exposed to the same road hazards, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and ambushes. At times, they suffered along with their male counterparts the emotional and physical trials of losing comrades. They endured extreme heat and the prolonged stress of serving for an entire year in a combat zone. It must be this way; females are an integral part of all MP organizations. They have demonstrated on numerous occasions their ability to perform all MP missions to include engaging the enemy in direct combat situations. For all of the MP soldiers, male or female, there was no "combat exclusion."

VIII.

HOW THE ARMY CAN MEET THE INTENT OF POLICY AND STATUTE ON GROUND COMBAT EXCLUSION FOR WOMEN

Robert J. Botters

Editors' Note: Colonel Robert J. Botters, an Infantry officer and former Infantry Battalion Commander uses his company command experience from Operation DESERT STORM to illustrate the challenges associated with the "collocation rule," an element of the Combat Exclusion Policy that precludes females from being assigned to units that collocate with direct combat units. Colonel Botters illustrates how the collocation rule requires leaders to compromise the Combat Exclusion Policy as they strive to support the Combatant Commander's requirement on the modern battlefield.

As the Headquarters Company Commander for Task Force Stryker, I contemplated the events of the day. The third day of the ground war bought sustained combat for the company. The 3d Special Forces Battalion of the Republican Guard was in a prepared defense along Highway 8, and there were several casualties from both Iraqi and coalition forces. Task Force Stryker did not have enough fuel to continue its attack. Task Force medics in contact could not evacuate the wounded to an ambulance exchange point, and the combat and field trains, collocated for the attack, could not close with the task force due to an enormous water filled sabkha.[1] The only item of good news for the wounded was that an Advance Trauma Life Support (ATLS) team and ambulance evacuation platoon were attached to the Task Force. This attachment put skilled medical support close to the front lines and also placed female soldiers within small arms range of the fight.[2] Although I knew there was a prohibition against collocating female soldiers with front line units, no one questioned the presence of the females. They were collocated to perform medical support and the immediacy of this support undoubtedly saved lives.

In 1991, the decision to place the highly skilled ATLS and ambulance evacuation platoon (male and female) in close proximity to direct combat proved to be a life-saving decision. Throughout Operation DESERT STORM, females would serve in various capacities across the battlefield and accordingly challenge the notion of "combat exclusion." Vignettes such as the one described above, where female soldiers were serving within small arms range of the enemy, prompted the Department of Defense (DoD) to reassess and revise the "Combat Exclusion Policy," a policy originally intended to keep females away from the front lines of battle.

As the U.S. Army enters the fifth year of "ground combat" in the Global War on Terror, female soldiers again find themselves at the "front," exposed to and often engaging in direct combat. Such situations suggest either that DoD is not following the prohibitions outlined in the Combat Exclusion Policy concerning the assignment of females in the military, or that the policy is ineffective as it is applied to the modern battlefield.

This paper discusses the current statute pertaining to combat exclusion and identifies situations where the policy as currently written is untenable. The author suggests that the Army reassess the current Combat Exclusion Policy and either enforce it explicitly or request Congress modify the law to allow women to engage in combat. As it is now

written and applied, the policy places military leaders in potentially compromising situations.

The Combat Exclusion Policy and Statute.

Since 1994, DoD has used a "direct ground combat assignment rule that allows all service members to be assigned to all positions for which they qualify, but excludes women from assignments to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is directed ground combat"[3] Additionally, the policy authorizes services to close positions to women if units are required to *collocate* and remain with direct ground combat units.[4]

The collocation aspect of the policy is tremendously difficult to define and implement. The challenge for the Army is that it cannot sustain itself without assigning females to units that enable or support combat arms organizations. These support units often must collocate with the combat formations. Additionally, the term "collocation" may be employed to mean many different things. Most soldiers consider themselves collocated when they occupy the same battle space. Today in Iraq and Afghanistan, there are no geographic areas which are off-limits to female soldiers. The collocation aspect of the policy, designed to keep females away from the intense danger, has become irrelevant. It is an aspect of the combat exclusion policy that does not seem to apply to the modern security environment.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 (NDAA 2006) introduced statutory authority over the DoD policy. This Act directed the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) to notify Congress of any proposed changes in units and assignments to which females are assigned.[5] Congress is attempting to regain oversight on as issue in which interest has peaked given the unprecedented number of female soldiers serving in the combat zone. As at time when approximately 15 percent of the Army is female, approximately 20,000 female soldiers are serving in Iraq, and over 60,000 have served in the theater. Several have been wounded, and one, Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester of the 617th Military Police Company was awarded the Silver Star for her bravery in a direct ground combat encounter.

The combat exclusion policy became a statute in 2006, and the SECDEF must respond to Congress to describe how DoD is implementing the policy in the modern environment. Convincing Congress that the collocation prohibition contained in the policy is relevant and enforced may prove challenging.

The Combat Exclusion Policy on the Modern Battlefield.

The battlefield is wherever the enemy is found. The meeting engagements between friendly forces and insurgents are indiscriminate between combat arms, combat support, and combat service support units. The expectation now is that combat will occur anywhere. All units and service members have a reasonable expectation of contact with the enemy. Should the enemy elect to enter sustained combat; the service member, male or female, in contact will be in "in direct ground combat." The insurgency in Iraq and sustained pursuit of Taliban/al-Qaeda in Afghanistan demonstrates the battlefield does not discriminate between genders.

Today commanders confront an incompatible situation; application of the collocation rule, which precludes females from serving at the front, and providing the right skill sets in the right place on the battlefield. In effect, the current statute requires leaders to compromise the policy as they strive to support the combatant commander's battlefield requirements. If the collocation prohibition could be eliminated, DoD would enable commanders to accomplish their mission without violating policy and statute. Furthermore, this would not introduce female service members to assignments in units and training opportunities presently closed, such as Army combat arms career fields and Ranger and Special Forces qualification. In effect, the services could avoid the emotive debate on women in combat arms career fields. The Army is too integrated an organization to not collocate female and male soldiers on the battlefield.

Conclusion.

DoD is required by the NDAA 2006 to reply to Congress on compliance with the 1994 Combat Exclusion policy. DoD must address this issue to relieve the perceived violations or circumvention of an outdated and irrelevant policy. DoD must also seek to implement a straightforward policy which authorizes female soldiers to execute their duties in their assigned career fields and specialties at any location on the battlefield.

Until the services address the daily dilemma concerning collocation, there will be no resolution on the proper implementation of the Combat Exclusion Policy. If the services do not act soon, the initiative will remain at the Office of the Secretary of Defense level, and the services will be at risk of losing their "vote."

ENDNOTES

1. A sabkha is a small flat, often saline plain sometimes occupied after a rain by a shallow lake.

2. Operation DESERT STORM, Task Force Stryker 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, 197th Infantry Brigade Separate at the village of Tal Al Lahm, Iraq, on the bank of the Euphrates River.

3. U.S. General Accounting Office, *Gender Issues Information on DoD's Assignment Policy and Direct Ground Combat Definition*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998, pp. 2-3.

4. *Ibid*., p. 4.

5. *The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006*, Section 541, available from *www.dod.mil/dodge/olc/docs/p6109-163.pdf*.

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