

**WOMEN IN COMBAT:
A PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE REPEAL
OF COMBAT EXCLUSION POLICIES**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹

I. POLICY QUESTION

How should the Department of Defense (DoD) implement the elimination of combat exclusion policies for women?

II. RECOMMENDATION (see p. 23)

I recommend that DoD create trial gender-integrated combat units.

III. PROBLEM (see p. 1)

“Women in combat” is a controversial issue among members of the military, politicians, and the public. However, on March 7, 2011, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) released a report recommending that DoD eliminate combat exclusion policies for women. The present exclusion policies stem from a 1994 memorandum by then-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin. The memo states, “women shall be excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground.” It also bars women where privacy costs are prohibitive, units physically collocate with direct ground combat units, units are engaged in long range reconnaissance or Special Forces missions, and physical requirements would exclude most women service members. The Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994 requires that the Secretary of Defense notify Congress at least 30 days prior to the implementation of any changes to these policies.

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) concurred with the MLDC’s recommendation in its annual report. In addition, On February 9, 2012, in partial-response to the MLDC report, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta gave notice of the intent to eliminate the co-location portion of the policy and to permit women to serve at the battalion level in military occupational specialties (MOS) already open to them. Yet, neither the MLDC report nor the DACOWITS annual report explains how DoD should implement the elimination of combat exclusion policies for women. Similarly, the February 9th report to Congress outlines few details and indicates

¹ *This student paper was prepared in 2012 in partial completion of the requirements for PPS 308, a course in the Masters of Public Policy Program at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University. The research, analysis, and policy alternatives and recommendations contained in this paper are the work of the student who authored the document, and do not represent the official or unofficial views of the Sanford School of Public Policy or of Duke University. Without the specific permission of its author, this paper may not be used or cited for any purpose other than to inform the client organization about the subject matter. The author relied in many instances on data provided by the client or related organizations and makes no independent representations as to the accuracy of the data.*

that significant research, resources, time and effort are needed. The report concludes, “changes to DoD’s policies will require time to implement fully. There are serious practical barriers, which if not approached in a deliberate manner, could adversely impact the health of our Service members and degrade mission accomplishment.”

There are concerns regarding cohesion, good order and discipline, privacy, physical differences between men and women, pregnancy and menstruation, effects on military families, and cultural norms.

IV. CRITERIA (see p. 12)

- Minimize the impact on military readiness and effectiveness.
- Maintain overall safety and survivability.
- Preserve servicemembers’ dignity.
- Maximize political feasibility.

V. ALTERNATIVES (see p. 13)

1. DoD immediately allows women who meet the male physical standards to select combat arms occupations.
2. DoD gradually opens military occupational specialties to all women who meet job-specific physical standards.
3. DoD creates trial gender-integrated combat units.

I. POLICY QUESTION

How should the Department of Defense (DoD) implement the elimination of combat exclusion policies for women?

II. PROBLEM

“Women in combat” is a controversial issue among members of the military, politicians, and the public. However, on March 7, 2011, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) released a report recommending that DoD eliminate combat exclusion policies for women. The present exclusion policies stem from a 1994 memorandum by then-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin. The memo states, “women shall be excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground.”² It also bars women where privacy costs are prohibitive, units physically collocate with direct ground combat units, units are engaged in long range reconnaissance or Special Forces missions, and physical requirements would exclude most women service members.³ The Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994 requires that the Secretary of Defense notify Congress at least 30 days prior to the implementation of any changes to these policies.⁴ For a further discussion of the legal history of women in the military, see Appendix 1.

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) concurred with the MLDC’s recommendation in its annual report. In addition, On February 9, 2012, in partial-response to the MLDC report, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta gave notice of the intent to eliminate the co-location portion of the policy and to permit women to serve at the battalion level in military occupational specialties (MOS) already open to them.⁵ Yet, neither the MLDC report nor the DACOWITS annual report explains how DoD should implement the elimination of combat exclusion policies for women. Similarly, the February 9th report to Congress outlines few details and indicates that significant research, resources, time and effort are needed.⁶ The report concludes, “changes to DoD’s policies will require time to implement fully. There are serious practical barriers, which if not approached in a deliberate manner, could adversely impact the health of our Service members and degrade mission accomplishment.”⁷

² Les Aspin, “Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule,” Memorandum, January 13, 1994.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Public Law 103-160.

⁵ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Personnel and Readiness, “Report to Congress on the Review of Laws, Policies and Regulations Restricting the Service of Female Members in the U.S. Armed Force,” February 2012, http://www.defense.gov/news/WISR_Report_to_Congress.pdf

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

A. Cohesion

A review of the literature reveals a general consensus that military readiness and effectiveness are the most important considerations when instituting policy changes. Some believe unit cohesion to be particularly important to both. For example, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994 described unit cohesion as, “the bonds of trust among individual service members that make the...military unit greater than the sum of...the individual members.”⁸ The act also conveys a fear that the further inclusion of women would undermine such trust too much in a military culture that is, by necessity, more homogenous and socially conservative than society in general.⁹

Of the 21 current and former members of the military which I interviewed, only two used the word “cohesion.” See Appendix 2 for a complete discussion of research and methodology. Neither indicated cohesion as a serious concern regarding women serving in combat. According to one, “Post 9/11 has largely debunked the theory that women can’t hang. Unit cohesion has been debunked.” However, five interviewees noted that there still is an “old boys” club. Furthermore, a former Army Ranger noted that the combat units where women have not been allowed to serve are different. He described them as, “the most chauvinistic, depraved environment on Earth. Part of this is building camaraderie.” See Appendix 4 for selective interview summaries. Nevertheless, a number of soldiers alluded to a cultural shift. One noted a difference among younger soldiers, “having dealt with the co-ed population their entire life.” These interview findings are consistent with surveys that show a military still divided on this issue, but with growing support for women in combat.¹⁰

However, researchers make a distinction between social cohesion, feelings of friendship, and task cohesion, commitment to a common goal.¹¹ Some studies suggest that task cohesion can allow for a team to be effective, even when social cohesion is lacking, and that an excess of social cohesion can undermine team effectiveness.¹² Those I interviewed did not make a clear distinction between the two types of cohesion.

B. Good Order and Discipline

Related to unit cohesion is the issue of good order and discipline. Some individuals argue that the presence of women, particularly in the close quarters of combat units, would lead to inappropriate romantic involvement or harassment; the outcome of such breakdowns in good order and discipline would weaken cohesion.¹³

⁸ Public Law 103-160

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ U.S. Army Research Institute, “Women in the U.S. Army: An Annotated Bibliography,” Special Report 48, May 2002.

¹¹ Laura L. Miller and John Allen Williams, “Do Military Policies on Gender and Sexuality Undermine Combat Effectiveness,” in *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001, p. 389

¹² Ibid., p. 392

¹³ Elaine Donnelly, “Constructing the Co-Ed Military,” *Duke Journal of Gender Law and Policy*, 14, 2007.

Indeed, there has been high profile media coverage of several such incidences. The 1991 Tailhook Convention, where male officers sexually assaulted their female counterparts, created a particularly notorious scandal.¹⁴ In 1996, reports surfaced that drill sergeants at the Aberdeen Proving Ground were sexually assaulting young women trainees, resulting in the Army's largest sexual misconduct scandal.¹⁵ DACOWITS also recognized harassment as an area for continued research in its 2010 annual report.

Two-thirds of those I interviewed referenced discipline, harassment, assault, or inappropriate sexual relationships. In terms of harassment and assault, the sense from my interviewees was that women serving alone, particularly new recruits, would be most vulnerable. One interviewee stated, "There will be resistance at first and issues of harassment or assault. You can't have one woman in an infantry battalion." Another noted that an 18-year-old former high school athlete may be physically fit for combat arms occupations but unprepared to rebut sexual harassment. As for fraternization, a female soldier stated, "The women were worse than the men. They weren't focused. They wanted to hook up with the guys." She did not think full integration of women would work. For the most part, however, the interviewees were optimistic that issues of good order and discipline could be worked around.

A potential breakdown in good order and discipline was an argument for the continuation of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy. However, when asked whether the repeal of DADT had implications for women in combat, almost none of the interviewees readily acknowledged a connection between the two. See Appendix 3 for selective interview questions. One however, did note the logical disconnect saying, "with the whole DADT repeal, we're worrying about guys checking out girls, but have no problem with guys checking out guys?" Other's noted that the revelation or suspicion of homosexuality generally did not lead to harassment if the individual had already proven himself capable or was perceived as physically capable. Several noted that, in contrast, women would have to "start from scratch."

C. Privacy

Privacy concerns are another rationale for exclusionary policies towards women. Advocates of such policies argue that soldiers have a right to privacy from those who could be sexually attracted to them.¹⁶ According to the DoD's February 9th report, "The military has held personal privacy as well as dignity and respect in high regard."

However, privacy can be costly and difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994 stated, "combat routinely makes it necessary for members of the armed forces involuntarily to accept living

¹⁴ Jean Zimmerman, *Tailspin: Women at War in the Wake of Tailhook*, New York, NY: Doubleday, 1995, pp. xiii-xvi.

¹⁵ Regina F. Titunik, "The First Wave: Gender Integration and Military Culture," *Armed Forces and Society*, 26, (2), Winter 2000, p. 229.

¹⁶ Donnelly, "Constructing the Co-Ed Military."

conditions and working conditions that are often spartan, primitive, and characterized by forced intimacy with little or no privacy.”¹⁷ The February 9th report reasserts this notion.

Half of the interviewees mentioned issues of privacy or facilities. However, few saw privacy concerns as a major barrier. Many agreed that in most cases adequate privacy could be achieved. Some argued this could be done without additional cost. For example, one officer stated, “Do we really need separate facilities? No, we need separate times to use those facilities.” Only one interviewee came even remotely close to connecting a reevaluation of privacy with the repeal of DADT. She said, “Having repealed DADT, we need to move to a non-sex force, an asexual force.” At least one interviewee had already had the experience of having to use the bathroom in front of her male colleague.

D. Physical Differences

According to the literature, the physical difference between men and women are one of the most important drivers of combat exclusion policies. On average, men are larger, stronger, and faster than women.¹⁸ Men also tend to have larger hearts and more red blood cells, which contribute to greater endurance.¹⁹ Although, a couple of studies found that women surpass men in their ability to run extreme distances and tolerate hot, humid conditions.²⁰ Nevertheless, opponents to women in combat argue that most women are incapable of performing the duties combat may require, such as carrying heavy equipment or pulling an injured fellow soldier to safety.²¹ Women have been more susceptible to injuries such as stress fractures during basic training, and there are accounts of women who have broken bones trying to keep up with men in gender-integrated exercises.²² The inability of a female soldier to keep up with her male counterparts is thought to needlessly endanger her life and the lives of the men with whom she serves.²³

By far, my interviewees found physical differences to be the most important concern regarding women in combat. Excluding words such as “I” and “do,” “physical” and “standards” were the two most common words after “women,” “female,” “men,” and “combat.” The word “physical” came up in the interviews 43 times. “Standards” came up 47 times. Every interviewee spoke about physical differences. One stated, “I think probably the biggest concern is best boiled down to the physical issue.” Another said, “The physical limitation [of women] is a real hindrance to being truly equal on the

¹⁷ Public Law 103-160.

¹⁸ Kingsley Browne, *Co-Ed Combat: The New Evidence that Women Shouldn't Fight the Nation's Wars*, New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2007, pp. 19-27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Jane Blair, “Five myths about women in combat,” *Washington Post*, May 5, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-women-in-combat/2011/05/25/AGAsavCH_story.html

²¹ Donnelly, “Constructing the Co-Ed Military.”

²² Donnelly, “Constructing the Co-Ed Military.”

²³ Donnelly, “Constructing the Co-Ed Military.”

battlefield. We can't say to the enemy, 'Can you not shoot us? We are really trying to make advances with women's rights.'" See Appendix 5 for a word frequency list including the 75 most common words in the interviews.

However, there was consensus that requiring women to meet a uniform physical standard across the sexes for combat roles would help solve this problem. Even those who said they disagreed with a change in policy generally believed that if a woman could meet the standard, she should not be excluded. Yet, the general sense was that few women would qualify. Perhaps for this reason, my interviews revealed that individuals on both sides of the debate fear that change might bring gender-specific or lowered standards. An Army captain, who described herself in "top-notch physical shape," and who "would love to" have the opportunity to serve in a combat arms military occupational specialty (MOS), worried about "the push from people who aren't in the military, like members of Congress, who might say we should lower the standards." She noted, "That would decrease the survivability of soldiers. But I'm afraid it might happen." In addition, several interviewees mentioned that current standards are not always evenly enforced. Thus, according to a number of interviewees, women would still have to prove themselves in the field.

E. Pregnancy and Menstruation

Women's reproductive processes are another rationale for their exclusion from ground combat. A great deal of training and resources goes into preparing a unit. Proponents of exclusionary policies for women argue a loss of female members due to pregnancy could undermine readiness and mission safety; reduced capacity due to menstrual cycle needs or symptoms could have the same effect.²⁴ Issues with military women becoming pregnant were in the headlines in 2009 when Major General Anthony Cucolo temporarily made pregnancy a punishable offense.²⁵ However, both pregnancy and menstruation take a backseat to other issues in the literature.

Neither pregnancy nor menstruation featured prominently in my interviews. Six of those I interviewed mentioned pregnancy and seven mentioned menstruation. Only two found pregnancy to be a "big issue." One indicated that many of the women in the support roles became pregnant before deployment. He noted, "It was the young unmarried, 18- and 19-year-olds that signed up before 9/11. All the female officers went." The other also indicated that the issue of pregnancy took place before deployment and with the younger cohort.

The men who mentioned menstruation did so only briefly. However, this could be due to a lack of comfort in discussing the topic with a female interviewer. Yet, the women I spoke with were somewhat more forthcoming. Several noted that they were able to address their menses without much difficulty, even in difficult environments. A

²⁴ Donnelly, "Constructing the Co-Ed Military."

²⁵ "General: No Court-Martial for Pregnant Soldiers," accessed November 18, 2011, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/34524436/ns/us_news-military/t/general-no-court-martial-pregnant-soldiers/

few noted the availability of products to suppress menses. Overall, the impression was that pregnancy and menstruation would not be significant issues for women who would be interested in and qualify for combat roles.

F. Military Families

The literature does portray a concern that the integration of women into the close quarters of combat units would negatively affect military families. Spouses may not be comfortable with their husbands or wives bunking in tents with members of the opposite sex; this could lead to marital stress, which could affect a soldier's abilities, or a decline in the number of married individuals who serve.²⁶ Either scenario could potentially lead to large scale problems, as more than half of all soldiers are married.²⁷ However, there do not appear to be any studies which support this assertion.

None of the interviewees mentioned this as a concern without my asking. Only a few of those I interviewed volunteered that they were married. I also found that it was the most difficult topic to broach. Therefore, I ended up discussing this issue with only three soldiers who were also married to soldiers. Two indicated that neither they nor their spouse would have a problem for this reason, but noted that the current level of integration has already given rise to problems for some families. Yet, one of them said, "If people are going to commit adultery, they are going to do it regardless of whether women are in combat or not. It is about their personal morals." The third interviewee did say that her husband would not want her to serve in a combat arms MOS, but not because of a lack of trust. Furthermore, she "doesn't have an issue with [women serving in his unit]."

G. Cultural norms

The literature indicates that certain aspects of societal culture are also a barrier to women serving in combat roles. The manner in which many men and women are raised, and their resulting expectations of one another, are different. Chivalry, for example, is a concept which includes norms of how men should conduct themselves respectfully towards women.²⁸ Generally, chivalry places men in protective roles over women.²⁹ Some researchers believe that chivalry arose amidst high maternal mortality rates in previous centuries; men fighting in battle while women bore children created a more equitable division of risk and sacrifice.³⁰ Thus, some worry that chivalry will impact the reactions of male soldiers in combat situations if a woman is present; male soldiers may try to protect a woman in the unit to the detriment of themselves, others,

²⁶ "Female Troops: Combat Ban Out Of Step With Reality," NPR, March 1, 2011, <http://www.npr.org/2011/03/01/134168091/Female-Troops-Combat-Ban-Out-Of-Step-With-Reality>

²⁷ Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Installations and Environment, "Overview: Military Housing," accessed April 25, 2011, <http://www.acq.osd.mil/housing/housing101.htm>

²⁸ Margaret Schaus, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: an Encyclopedia*, New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group, 2006, pp. 128-129.

²⁹ Donnelly, "Constructing the Co-Ed Military."

³⁰ Erin Solaro, *Women in the Line of Fire: What You Should Know about Women in the Military*, Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2006, pp. 129-140.

and the mission. They also worry that male soldiers might have a more difficult time recovering emotionally from the death of a female soldier.³¹

However, there are signs of a cultural shift in regards to chivalry. While there was a time when Americans, generally, may not have been ready to see its wives, mothers, and daughters in combat, surveys show that as much as 73% of the public believes women should be permitted to serve in ground combat roles.³² As previously mentioned, surveys show a growing belief within the military that women should be permitted to serve in any roles for which they qualify.³³

According to the interviews, cultural norms are an important consideration. Nineteen of the individuals I interviewed mentioned issues of culture. Most of the nineteen focused on men and chivalry. One of the men I interviewed said, "You still have the chivalrous notion. I was taught to talk to a lady a certain way. I might act a different way...I would never put a woman in front as the door-kicker." However, one of the other men I interviewed stated, "There is a long tradition in this country that women are supposed to be the weaker sex. I don't subscribe to the notion that women should be protected any more than me." Many of the interviews indicated that chivalry would be a more common issue among older generations, but both of those noted above were in their 20's.

Another cultural issue that I did not find referenced in the literature relates to women's interaction with male chivalry. Four of the interviewees mentioned a problem with military women attempting to exploit male chivalry. One woman said, "Some females would tell the guys they can't carry something because 'it's heavy.' It's disgusting." However, several of the women noted that they have tactfully corrected their colleagues who tried to treat them in a special manner. A woman serving on a naval boarding team had a friend and member of her team tell her to stay behind him. She explained, "I told him that we had had the same training and that he was perpetuating the problem, the stereotype."

It is important to note that there is a robust debate regarding psychological differences between the sexes and culture. Research has found that the "emotional wiring" between men and women is different. A study involving MRI's revealed, "a cluster of neurons that processes experiences such as fear and aggression hooks up to contrasting brain functions in men and women."³⁴ While not making a causal claim, one of the author's noted, "Throughout evolution, women have had to deal with a number of internal stressors, such as childbirth, that men haven't had to experience... the brain seems to have evolved to be in tune with those different stressors." However, other

³¹ Donnelly, "Constructing the Co-Ed Military."

³² Ed O'Keefe and Jon Cohen, "Most Americans Back Women in Combat Roles, Poll Says," *Washington Post*, March 16, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/politics/most-americans-back-women-in-combat-roles-poll-says/2011/03/16/ABTereg_story.html

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Robin Lloyd, "Emotional Wiring Different in Men and Women," April 16, 2006, <http://www.livescience.com/4085-emotional-wiring-men-women.html>

researchers argue that both nature and nurture are likely at work.³⁵ Furthermore, there does not appear to be much evidence that either sex is better prepared psychologically for combat. A recent report found that the overall rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are the same for men and women across a variety of stressors; although, women report higher levels of harassment and sexual assault.³⁶

Many of the interviewees briefly referenced women being generally more emotional. However, the majority believed that there are women whom are both physically and emotionally fit for combat. Furthermore, one interviewee said, “Women cry to relieve stress. Men go beat the crap out of something. What’s the difference?”

³⁵ Wendy Wood and Alice Eagly, “A cross-cultural analysis of the behavior of women and men: Implications for the origins of sex differences,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 128, (5), September 2002.

³⁶ “U.S. Military Women Exposed to More Combat Than Ever Before,” *U.S. News & World Report*, January 19, 2012, <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/family-health/brain-and-behavior/articles/2012/01/19/us-military-women-exposed-to-more-combat-than-ever-before>

III. CASE STUDIES

A. Canada

In the 1980's, Canada conducted several trials to test the integration of women into restricted occupations. The Servicewomen in Nontraditional Environments and Roles (SWINTER) trials began in 1980 and lasted 5 years. Women were integrated into several formerly male-only land, air, and sea squadrons. In 1987, the Combat Related Employment of Women (CREW) trials began. These trials were meant to test mixed-gender units in combat arms occupations, including field artillery and infantry.³⁷ Drawing inferences from the literature, it appears that the male standard was used during the trials. The trials indicated that social integration posed the largest problem. However, during the SWINTER trials, at least, commanders did not see a change in overall effectiveness.³⁸

In 1989, amidst the CREW trials, the Canadian Human Rights Commission Tribunal (CHRC) ruled that the CDNC must eliminate exclusion policies for female soldiers, with the exception of those pertaining to submarines or religious chaplaincy.³⁹ While full integration was to "take place with all due speed," and restrictions were eliminated immediately, the tribunal expected it would take 10 years to achieve complete integration.⁴⁰ The CHRC also determined that a gender-neutral standard must replace the male standard and that continuation and expansion of CREW trials (although no longer to be considered trials) were to be the basis of implementation.⁴¹ There was mixed support within the CF to the CHRC ruling. Some male soldiers continued to perceive the integration of women as a trial that could be reversed if proven unsuccessful.⁴² Nevertheless, while many soldiers did not agree with the decision, overall, orders were carried out.⁴³

However, the CF appears to have lowered standards initially to attain a critical mass of females in mixed-gender units. Perhaps for this reason, of the 20 women who selected a combat arms occupation between 1989 and 1991, nearly half failed or withdrew from training. In addition, a 1998 study, which examined the experience of 31 women who served in and subsequently left combat arms occupations, found that women struggled with discrimination and harassment.⁴⁴ The researchers also found that "when women meet the standards, the standards are questioned."⁴⁵ To address

³⁷ Donna Winslow and Jason Dunn, "Women in the Canadian Forces: Between Legal and Social Integration," *Current Sociology*, 50, (5), September 2002.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Barbara Dundas, *A History of Women in the Canadian Military*, Montreal, QC: Art Global, 2000, p.128.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p. 132

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ K.D. Davis and Virginia Thomas, "Chief Land Staff Integration Study: The Experience of Women Who Have Served in Combat Arms," Sponsor Research Report 98-1, January 1998.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

these issues, the CF created various training programs in the 1990's which received mixed receptions; the commitment from senior leadership was also reaffirmed.⁴⁶

In 1989 Women held 1% of combat positions. In 1999 they held 3%. As of 2006, women made up 15% of the CF. As of 2006, only 1.9% of women are part of the regular combat force (225) and 6.7% (925) are part of the reserve combat force.⁴⁷ According to the person I interviewed, the CF has goals (not quotas) for increasing the number of women.

Also according to the interviewee, Canada now uses a gender-normed test which predicts the ability of a soldier to perform certain tasks. In addition, based on occupation, soldiers may have to pass additional gender-neutral tests. For example, soldiers may be tested in weight load march, casualty evacuation, and trench dig drills.⁴⁸

B. New Zealand

In New Zealand, women have been permitted to serve in combat roles since 2001. According to the person I interviewed, "the first few transitions were in the officer corps; this made it much easier as they had some rank [and] tended to be competent performers."⁴⁹ However, he was uncertain whether this was intentional. When asked what resources the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) relied upon to figure out an implementation policy, the interviewee responded, "As far as I am aware, very little. We didn't run any trials."⁵⁰ There have been, however, reports regarding gender integration. In 1998, Dr. Clare Burton conducted a groundbreaking study, "The Gender Integration Audit of the New Zealand Defence Force" that focused on issues attitudes and harassment. A similar study was conducted in 2005. According to that report, NZDF has moved beyond the debate of whether women should serve in combat arms, yet a greater effort needs to be made to attract women to such roles.⁵¹ The report suggests that careful monitoring and leadership are necessary. The person I interviewed also indicated that implementation was aided by the matriarchal nature of the indigenous population, the Maori, which make up a significant portion of the NZDF.⁵²

According to the person I interviewed, housing is generally segregated, but units are mixed. New Zealand has gender-normed physical standards. Standards also very

⁴⁶ Dundas, *A History of Women in the Canadian Military*.

⁴⁷ "Women in the Canadian Military," *CBC News*, May 30, 2006, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/cdnmilitary/women-cdnmilitary.html>

⁴⁸ Phone and e-mail correspondence with a representative from the Canadian Department of National Defence, October 2011.

⁴⁹ Phone and e-mail correspondence with a representative from the New Zealand Ministry of Defence, January-February 2012.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Paul Cawkill et al., "Women in Ground Close Combat Roles: The Experiences of other Nations and a Review of the Academic Literature," United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, September 29, 2009.

⁵² Phone and e-mail correspondence with a representative from the New Zealand Ministry of Defence, January-February 2012.

based upon age. However, there is only one standard, the male-standard, for the Special Forces. Very few women serve in combat arms occupations.⁵³ One report indicated that there were nine female gunners, three riflemen and one field engineer as of 2004.⁵⁴

C. Australia

In 2011, the Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard ordered the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to eliminate combat exclusion policies for women. According to my interview with someone at the ADF, an implementation plan is still being finalized. However, she indicated that “the Army’s intent is to conduct a slow and deliberate approach to integrating women. There will be an initial 3 year period when only in-service transfers (for females with at least 12 months service) can occur.”⁵⁵ However, these first entries are not to be considered trials or tests. After three years, all physically and intellectually capable women will be able to apply for these roles.⁵⁶

The interviewee explained that units will be mixed-gender. While the military already regularly conducts diversity training, “It is expected that combat arms units will conduct specific equity and diversity training prior to the arrival of females.”⁵⁷ In terms of physical standards, the ADF has been working on gender-neutral fitness tests based on “bona fide job requirements.”⁵⁸ The new standards will be implemented in 2013, when the combat restriction policies are effectively removed.⁵⁹

⁵³ Phone and e-mail correspondence with a representative from the New Zealand Ministry of Defence, January-February 2012.

⁵⁴ Cawkill et al., “Women in Ground Close Combat Roles.”

⁵⁵ Phone and e-mail correspondence with a representative from the Australian Department of Defence, October-November 2011.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

IV. CRITERIA

- **Minimize the impact on military readiness and effectiveness:** Military readiness and effectiveness are vital to national security. Many factors contribute to readiness and effectiveness. Cohesion, good order and discipline, and physical and emotional capability are particularly important. However, transitions increase the organizational load and some fallout is to be expected. This criterion will gauge how well alternatives deal with the overall balance of factors that go into readiness and effectiveness.
- **Maintain overall safety and survivability:** Combat roles entail greater risk of physical harm. However, risk should stem from the nature of the position, not one's gender or the gender of one's fellow soldiers. There are men and women willing to give up everything, including their lives, for their country. Yet, their willingness should not be accepted lightly. There are limits to what society can reasonably ask of its soldiers. Furthermore, a plan that undermined safety and survivability would be unlikely to meet the other criteria.
- **Preserve servicemembers' dignity:** Soldiers, especially those in combat units, are often required to serve in close quarters with little privacy. Nevertheless, soldiers should be ensured sufficient privacy for changing, bathing, and other personal needs, particularly from the opposite sex. Privacy is something that American society values. Treating soldiers with dignity by ensuring adequate privacy is a major theme in the legislation and rules surrounding women in combat.
- **Maximize political feasibility:** Any policy change is likely to generate some pushback from within and outside of the military. However, the manner of implementation can also meet resistance. An alternative that fails to achieve sufficient support could spur Congressional or Administration action, potentially weakening confidence and limiting flexibility. A loss in confidence or flexibility could also undermine the other criteria.

V. ALTERNATIVES

1. DoD immediately allows women who meet the male physical standards to select combat arms occupations.

Under this alternative, all women could pursue any occupation at any level now closed to them if they met the same physical standards currently used to assess men. Physical tests and standards vary across branch and some occupations have their own additional assessments. Regardless, however men are currently deemed fit for combat roles would also immediately apply to women. This is not to say that DoD and the branches should not assess the appropriateness of the standards and make alterations over time.

In addition, women would be able to serve in what are presently all-male units. They would not have to serve in all-female units, nor would they have to wait for other females or a critical mass of females to join those units. Thus, although the services already conduct training sessions on subjects such as sexual harassment, this alternative involves additional policy and gender-issues training, particularly for men and women in affected units and their command structures.

2. DoD gradually opens military occupational specialties to all women who meet job-specific physical standards.

This alternative involves gradually opening MOS's at all levels beginning with the least labor intensive and those in which it would be least difficult to ensure adequate privacy. DoD would direct the services to create a single, job-specific physical standard for each MOS prior to opening them to women. All women who met the standard could pursue that MOS.

With each newly opened MOS, women would be able to serve in what until then were all-male units. They would not have to serve in all-female units, nor would they have to wait for other females/a critical mass of females to join those units. Thus, this alternative would incorporate policy and gender-issues training for affected MOS's and their command structures.

3. DoD creates trial gender-integrated combat units.

Similar to the Canadian process, this alternative entails the creation of several gender-integrated, trial combat units. DoD would direct the services to identify leaders and units most open to the integration of women and to determine a single, job specific physical standard for those units. The services would seek women to volunteer for the trial units. Only the best and brightest would be selected among those who met the physical standards. Women from all ranks could apply, and the services would be sure to include women with some seniority. However, only those who have been in the military at least one year would be eligible. In addition, the services would ensure a critical mass of women to participate in these trial combat units, rather than including,

for example, only one or two women in a unit. Furthermore, these trials would not begin with the least labor intensive roles, but should include infantry and other, more physically demanding occupations.

Military leaders would closely monitor the trial units and make adjustments as issues arose. The overall purpose of these trials would be more to inform expanded implementation in the future than to put a microscope on the women themselves, a point that would be made clear in policy and gender-issues training for affected units and their command structures.

VI. ANALYSIS

Alternative 1: DoD immediately allows all women who meet the male physical standards to select combat arms occupations.

Readiness and Effectiveness	Safety and Survivability	Dignity	Political Feasibility
1	1	0	0
<i>0 = does not meet; 1 = might satisfy; 2 = satisfies; 3 = best satisfies</i>			

Minimize the impact on military readiness and effectiveness

This alternative would be unlikely to minimize the impact on military readiness and effectiveness. On the one hand, it is unclear how many women would be both interested and qualify for combat arms occupations under this plan. Although several of the women I interviewed expressed interest in combat arms occupations, soldiers of both sexes believed few women could meet the same standards as men. One interviewee noted, “I never felt a huge push that women want to integrate.” She also thought that at least 1% of women were physically up to the challenge. A few others mentioned the presence of some “G.I. Jane” or “Rambo” females. Even countries such as Canada and New Zealand, which employ a mix of gender-specific and uniform standards, have very few women in combat arms occupations.

However, assuming that there are at least a small percentage of women who would be interested and could meet the male standards, this alternative would be more likely than the others to negatively impact military readiness and effectiveness. As individual women could pursue more occupations based on their interests and military need, they would likely be spread rather thinly across the combat arms occupations. Therefore, more areas of the military would simultaneously feel the strain of the transition and resources to address that strain would be more diffuse.

In addition, having women spread out across units, potentially isolated from each other, might invite more alienation, harassment, and/or chivalry, even with gender-issues training. Thus, this alternative could undermine good order and discipline, cohesion, and other ingredients important to military readiness and effectiveness. Five of those I interviewed emphasized the need for a critical mass of women, at least initially, as women make the tough uphill climb to prove themselves. An interviewee stated, “What you don’t want to have happen is to have one female in a mass of guys, to have a single token.”

Although, preserving the current physical standards could mean no change in readiness and effectiveness in terms of soldiers’ physical capability, it is possible that the current male standards may not capture important, physical, job-relevant differences between men and women. For example, several interviewees noted that the Army’s

current PT test is not a very good measure. For this reason, the Army has been working on a new PT test that could be implemented as soon as this October.⁶⁰

Maintain overall safety and survivability

This alternative is also less likely than the other alternatives to maintain overall safety and survivability. Again, if the current male standards are insufficient predictors of ability, in a way that differs between men and women, it would be possible for women who are physically less capable to enter combat arms occupations. This could jeopardize safety and survivability for the soldiers in those units.

As mentioned, having women spread out across units, potentially isolated from each other, might invite more alienation, harassment, and/or chivalry. In addition to impacting military readiness and effectiveness, these issues could also undermine safety and survivability on missions. One interviewee, the only female in her unit, recalled that both she and a male soldier were injured. According to her, “No one paid attention to him. The commander freaked out about me.” She expressed worry about the ramifications of such psychological destruction in a combat situation.

Under this alternative, besides safety and survivability on missions, women would also be more vulnerable to sexual assault. An interviewee said, “you are putting women at risk if you have a bunch of guys, ages 18 to 21, who don’t necessarily come from great backgrounds, that vastly outnumber the women.” Sexual assault is something the military has struggled with, as the Tailhook Convention and Aberdeen Proving Ground scandals have shown. As the Aberdeen Proving Ground scandal has also illustrated, women are more vulnerable when they lack seniority. A couple of interviewees also touched on the issue of seniority. However, under this alternative, with women more spread out across the military, it is even more likely that women without seniority will serve alone and/or separate from women with seniority.

Preserve servicemembers’ dignity

This alternative would be the least effective in terms of preserving servicemembers’ dignity. This alternative would integrate women into combat arms comparatively quickly without much attention to the situations that are “spartan, primitive, and characterized by forced intimacy with little or no privacy.”⁶¹ While few of the interviewees saw privacy as a major issue and the repeal of DADT calls into question some assumptions regarding privacy, privacy as a means of offering dignity is not something which the military or society has come close to abandoning.

With a rather swift service-wide integration, it would be more difficult to anticipate where issues of privacy might arise. Furthermore, having women more spread out across the units reduces the available tactics for achieving privacy from the opposite

⁶⁰ Lance Bacon, “New PT test ready, Could be in place by October,” March 18, 2012, <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2012/03/army-new-pt-test-could-be-in-place-by-october-031812/>

⁶¹ Public Law 103-160

sex. An interviewee noted, “The women generally default to one tent.” However, this may not be a viable option when only one woman or even a few women are present in a unit.

Maximize political feasibility

This alternative is least likely to maximize political feasibility. There is evidence of slowly emerging bipartisan support for the elimination of combat exclusion policies. For example, Republican Senator Scott Brown recently stated, “We have an obligation to expand the professional opportunities available to women [in the service].”⁶² However, such statements do not imply support for an immediate and wholesale change of policy such as this alternative. The history of women’s integration in the military shows a bias towards gradual changes.

In addition, although military leaders such as General Raymond Odierno have come out in favor of a repeal of the combat exclusion policies, the February 9th “Report to Congress on the Review of Laws, Policies and Regulations Restricting the Service of Female Members in the U.S. Armed Force” signals a preference among some military leaders for a slower, perhaps more gradual approach. As previously mentioned, the report indicates that “changes to DoD’s policies will require time to implement fully” and that that DoD intends to use the new policy exception to the new policy exception to, “assess the suitability and relevance of the direct ground combat unit assignment prohibition to inform future policy decisions.”⁶³

Furthermore, while those I interviewed overwhelmingly suggested the need for women to meet the same standard as men, only one suggested that this alone would be sufficient to implement the repeal of combat exclusion policies. Some also suggested that the current male standard may be inadequate. Thus, it is unlikely this policy would have sufficient buy in and support to keep Congress or the Administration from intervening prior to implementation. Also, given that this alternative does not satisfy the other criteria well, if implemented, it may quickly lead to problems that incite Congressional or Administration action.

⁶² Bryan Bender, “Brown Supports Women in Combat,” *Boston Globe*, February 23, 2012.

⁶³ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Personnel and Readiness, “Report to Congress”

Alternative 2: DoD gradually opens military occupational specialties to those who meet job-specific standards.

Readiness and Effectiveness	Safety and Survivability	Dignity	Political Feasibility
2	2	2	1
<i>0 = does not meet; 1 = might satisfy; 2 = satisfies; 3 = best satisfies</i>			

Minimize the impact on military readiness and effectiveness

This alternative is more likely than Alternative 1 to minimize the impact on military readiness and effectiveness, as it is not an immediate, military-wide repeal of the combat exclusion policies. Fewer areas of the military will be undergoing integration at the same time, limiting the scope of the strain. Resources to address issues that arise can be more concentrated on the MOS's undergoing integration. Furthermore, the services can learn from each new MOS integration and apply it to later MOS integrations. Three interviewees specifically noted the military's success as a learning organization.

Also, utilizing meaningful, job-specific standards, rather than the current male standards, better ensures that soldiers, both male and female, are physically ready for their occupations. Again, several interviewees noted that the Army's current PT test, for example, is not a very good measure. In a similar vein, the Australian Department of Defence began reviewing the physical requirements for all military positions prior to the announced elimination of combat exclusion policies.

As with Alternative 1, it is also unclear how many women would be interested in and qualify for combat arms MOS's under this alternative. For some MOS's a single, job-specific standard may mean more women will qualify than under a male standard. For other MOS's, it may mean fewer will qualify. However, evidence from some of the literature and my interviews suggests that more women might qualify. One author noted that physical requirements are not always related to job requirements, but rather, "serve as a proxy for mental determination."⁶⁴ Several interviewees also conveyed this notion. A interviewee who served in the Navy said, "Why should we run a mile and a half? What ship in the Navy is that long?"

While more women may qualify for expanded opportunities under this alternative, the gradual opening of MOS's means that the women will likely be more concentrated than under alternative 1, at least at first. As mentioned, having women spread out across units, potentially isolated from each other, might invite more alienation, harassment, and/or chivalry, undermining good order and discipline, cohesion, and other ingredients important to military readiness and effectiveness. This alternative, therefore, makes it less likely that such incidence, which can undermine readiness and effectiveness, will occur. Nevertheless, this alternative lacks a mechanism to ensure a

⁶⁴ Solaro, *Women in the Line of Fire*, p. 258

critical mass of women, which my interviewees indicated to be so important in the early stages of implementation.

Maintain overall safety and survivability

This alternative is also more likely than Alternative 1 to maintain overall safety and survivability. Having well thought out physical standards relevant to each particular MOS would seem to contribute to safety and survivability, possibly improving the current rates. As mentioned, the current male standards may not be good predictors for women or, for that matter, men.

Furthermore, this alternative begins integration of MOS's with those which are least physically demanding. Therefore, the services will be able to draw on plenty of lessons learned as it gradually opens the most difficult occupations, which could prevent some oversights that would undermine safety and survivability.

This alternative also increases the likelihood that women will be less thinly spread across units, at least at first. Having greater concentrations of women in units would invite less of the things that directly and/or indirectly undermine safety and survivability such as alienation, harassment, chivalry, and sexual assault. However, this alternative does not guarantee women will not serve alone or in sufficient numbers to abate many of the problems these problems that can arise.

Preserve servicemembers' dignity

This alternative would also be more effective than alternative one in terms of preserving service members' dignity for two reasons. First, this alternative begins integration with MOS's where privacy is more easily attained. As the services will gradually open MOS's that tend to result in more cramped, spartan conditions, it will have a larger arsenal of lessons learned to draw from as well as more time to develop creative solutions. The potential for a greater concentration of women in units initially, could also mean greater opportunities for achieving privacy early on.

Maximize political feasibility

This alternative would likely have more political feasibility than Alternative 1, but it is difficult to evaluate. Several interviewees indicated a preference for this approach, and the history of the integration of women in the military certainly supports a gradual approach such as this. For example, the gradual expansion of opportunities is also in line with the February 9th decision which peels back some of the current restrictions.

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that the job-specific standards would satisfy the various interests. Those I interviewed were overwhelmingly in favor of a single standard for men and women, with several suggesting the standards be relevant to the position. However, many interviewees did indicate concern regarding a lowering of standards to enable more women to qualify. As the case of Canada highlights, any

perceived or actual lowering of standards, even if the current standards are not good predictors of performance, can create distrust.

In addition, while this approach is certainly more measured than Alternative 1 and would seem to broaden the base of the support, the opposite could also occur. Those on the extreme ends of the issue could both be dissatisfied, with one group feeling the policy moves too slowly, and the other feeling it moves too fast. Also, while the policy may be more likely to achieve some early victories due to the opening of the least physically demanding MOS's first, it may be difficult to argue that these victories are relevant to or predictive of what will occur in the more physically demanding environments. Therefore, even those who assent to the early MOS openings may still mount opposition later on. For example, those I interviewed who opposed the elimination of combat exclusion policies acknowledged women's success in their expanded roles in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, they did not necessarily view these successes as evidence that women should be in combat arms occupations. An interviewee noted, "I always thought women would be fine in a firefight. It is that prolonged situation that would be more challenging."

Alternative 3: DoD creates trial gender-integrated combat units.

Readiness and Effectiveness	Safety and Survivability	Dignity	Political Feasibility
3	3	3	2
<i>0 = does not meet; 1 = might satisfy; 2 = satisfies; 3 = best satisfies</i>			

Minimize the impact on military readiness and effectiveness

This alternative would be most likely to minimize the impact on military readiness and effectiveness. Initially, only a handful of units will be affected, rather than the whole service or an entire occupational specialty. While the units may experience some strain, the services can concentrate their attention and resources on them. The military can also use lessons learned from these early cases to inform expanded integration.

Furthermore, the composition of the trial combat units should help mitigate issues of alienation, harassment, and/or chivalry which could undermine military readiness and effectiveness. The trial units and their leadership will include men who are more receptive to the idea of women serving in combat roles. My interviewees suggested that issues of cohesion, good order and discipline, and cultural norms may have diminished, but are still worthy of consideration. Under alternatives 1 and 2, women may or may not find themselves in such accepting company.

These trial units will also include a critical mass of elite women. Therefore, women will not only be serving with a more open group of men but will also share their integration experience with other, similarly situated women. Again, those I interviewed and the Canada case emphasized the importance of establishing a critical mass of women. In addition, several of my interviewees, as well as the Australia and New

Zealand cases, suggested that integration should begin with experienced women who have proven themselves highly capable in the areas in which they have served. One said that these women would “be able to take all the name calling.” Another explained that with age and experience in the service, women become more adept at figuring out how to tread the line between being overly sensitive to comments and allowing “words become actions.”

As with Alternative 2, the women will have to meet job-specific standards for their units, rather than the current male standards which may or may not be good predictors of performance. The job-specific standards, coupled with the fact that the women will be selected from the best and the brightest, should ensure that the units are physically ready. Similar to the other alternatives, it is unclear how many women may be simultaneously interested in, and qualify for, these opportunities. However, my interviews and the experiences of other countries with much smaller forces suggest that there should be enough women for a handful of trial units.

Maintain overall safety and survivability

This alternative is better than alternatives 1 and 2 in terms of its ability to maintain overall safety and survivability. Similar to Alternative 2, having job-relevant standards, rather than male standards, could actually improve upon safety and survivability if the current standards are poor predictors of performance. It is also reasonable to expect that the trial units provide meaningful lessons learned for future expansion.

However, a danger to safety and survivability with Alternative 2 is that there are no mechanisms to ensure a critical mass of women or that at least some of the women in each affected unit have seniority. In the case of Alternative 3, such mechanisms exist, and the units are comprised of men who are more accepting of the further integration of women. Thus, women are even less vulnerable to the things that directly and/or indirectly undermine safety and survivability such as alienation, harassment, chivalry, and sexual assault.

Nevertheless, under Alternative 3, implementation begins with trials in more physically demanding positions. Thus, although fewer units are impacted in Alternative 3, there is a chance that things in the trial units could go more severely wrong. This increase in danger is likely counterbalanced by the fact that the best and the brightest women are selected under Alternative 3.

Preserve servicemembers' dignity

This alternative would be more effective than alternatives 1 or 2 in preserving service members' dignity. Although, the trial units will involve positions that are initially more spartan, than under Alternative 2, the guaranteed critical mass of women will offer a wider range of solutions to attain privacy from the opposite sex. For example, with a larger group of women, it becomes feasible to have separate tents, etc.

Maximize political feasibility

This alternative is likely as politically feasible as Alternative 2. Similar to Alternative 2, Alternative 3 is a gradual approach which reflects the history of women's integration into the military. Alternative 3 also employs job-specific standards. Again, those I interviewed were overwhelmingly in favor of a single standard for men and women, with several suggesting the standards be relevant to the position.

Neither the leadership nor politicians have vocalized strong opinions on trials. However, one third of the interviewees suggested trials as a possible option. Although, one cautioned strongly against trials. He said, "The Army would use all its political capital to do a pilot. What if it fails? You would have to be ready to deal with the second and third order effects." Nevertheless, these trial units will be created in a manner that should optimize chances for success, providing "women in combat" an early victory. Canada, New Zealand, and Australia have employed elements of these trial units. Canada began with trials, and ensured a critical mass of women. New Zealand began integration among the officers, women with superior training and some seniority. Likewise, Australia will only allow women with at least a year of experience in the military to serve in combat roles during the initial phase.

However, while some may question whether Alternative 2's early victories in the less physically demanding MOS's provide evidence of women's suitability for further integration, a similar argument might be made for Alternative 3. One might argue that Alternative 3's ideal conditions cannot be scaled up.

Furthermore, similar to Alternative 2, this measured relatively measured approach could either broaden the base of support or leave those on the extreme ends of the issue very dissatisfied. On the one hand, this alternative would put a small group of women in infantry roles rather quickly. However, it could also exclude many women who might be interested in and physically qualified for combat arms roles, such as new recruits.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend Alternative 3, to create trial gender-integrated units, because it best meets all of the criteria. Alternative 3 combines the suggestions from current and former members of the military and the methods of other countries to provide a framework for implementation with the greatest chances for success. However, under this alternative or any other, it is unclear what the composition of the military and its various units might be upon the full repeal of combat exclusion policies. The length of time needed for a full repeal and integration is also unclear, as factors ranging from women's interest and training time to international conflict and budgetary shortfalls can have an effect. My interviews and case studies suggest a minimum of several years.

Decision Matrix

	Readiness and Effectiveness	Safety and Survivability	Dignity	Political Feasibility	TOTAL
Alt 1: Immediately allow all women	1	1	0	0	2
Alt 2: Gradually open MOS's	2	2	2	1	7
Alt 3: Trial combat units	3	3	3	2	11

0 = does not meet; 1 = might satisfy; 2 = satisfies; 3 = best satisfies

APPENDIX 1: LEGAL HISTORY OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

The Women's Armed Services Integration Act became law on June 12, 1948. The act permanently established women's ability to serve in regular and reserve components of the U.S. military.⁶⁵ Women had served in the military prior to that time but only as nurses or as part of a temporary stopgap measure during World War II.⁶⁶ However, the Women's Armed Services Integration Act did limit the number of and promotional opportunities for women. The law also restricted women in the Air Force and Navy from serving aboard combat craft and vessels.⁶⁷ While congressional hearings on the bill included discussion of women in ground combat, legislators and military leaders largely assumed that women would not serve in such capacities or that the nuclear nature of future wars would make the issue moot.⁶⁸

In the more than six decades that have followed passage of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, changes to the law and policy have expanded the roles of women in the military. In 1967, the Women Officers Act removed restrictions on women's numbers and promotional opportunities.⁶⁹ In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed a bill into law which directed the service academies to admit women.⁷⁰ National defense authorization acts passed in 1991⁷¹ and 1993⁷² allowed women to serve on combat aircraft and ships, respectively. In 2010, the DoD began permitting women to serve onboard submarines. The present policy with regards to women in combat stems from a 1994 memorandum by then-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin.

The courts have also upheld the Congressional and Executive decisions regarding women and selective service registration. In *Rostker v. Goldberg* (1981), Justice Rehnquist, delivering the opinion of the court, wrote, "This is not a case of Congress arbitrarily choosing to burden one of two similarly situated groups...Men and women...are simply not similarly situated for purposes of a draft or registration for a draft."⁷³ However, Justice Rehnquist indicated that men and women were not similarly situated "because of the combat restrictions on women."⁷⁴ It is unclear whether the Court would rule the same without combat restrictions in place. Perhaps, it would find that women, as a group, are not similarly situated for other reasons. Furthermore,

⁶⁵ Public Law 80-625

⁶⁶ "Women's Armed Services integration Act," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, accessed April 25, 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/647096/Womens-Armed-Services-Integration-Act>

⁶⁷ Public Law 80-625

⁶⁸ Marilyn Gordon and Mary Ludvigson, "A Constitutional Analysis of the Combat Exclusion for Air Force Women," *Minerva IX*, (2), 1991

⁶⁹ Public Law 90-130

⁷⁰ "Historical Information on the Admission of Women to the U.S. Military Academy," accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.usma.edu/dcomm/presskit/FactSheets/WomenAdmission.htm>

⁷¹ Public Law 102-190

⁷² Public Law 103-160

⁷³ *Rostker v. Goldberg*, 453 U.S. 57 (1981).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Rehnquist noted, “This Court has consistently recognized Congress’ ‘broad constitutional power’ to raise and regulate armies and navies.”⁷⁵

The Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 established the MLDC and tasked it with examining diversity within the military.⁷⁶ According to the MLDC, promoting and leveraging diversity in the military are critical to national security; to leverage diversity, the military must have individuals who, as a result of their backgrounds and experiences, possess different knowledge and skills. The Commission found that, “the blanket restriction for women limits the ability of commanders in theater to pick the most capable person for the job.”⁷⁷

To leverage diversity, the MLDC also indicated that the military must have a leadership that reflects the society it serves and the forces it leads.⁷⁸ The MLDC believes that diverse leadership will help close the civil-military gap, foster trust among the troops, and inspire interest in military careers among underrepresented groups.⁷⁹ In 2008, women comprised 51% of the population, 14% of the active forces, and 7% of general officers in the active forces.⁸⁰ The MLDC found that serving in the combat arms seems to provide greater opportunities for soldiers to prove themselves and earn promotion. For example, a RAND study noted that, in 2006, 80% of general officers in the Army came from combat arms branches.⁸¹ Therefore, the Commission suggests that eliminating combat exclusion policies for women is one step towards increasing the number of women in senior military leadership positions. However, the MLDC did note that it was unclear how eliminating combat exclusion policies would affect overall recruitment and retention.⁸²

The MLDC also indicated that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan signal a change in the nature of warfare; frontlines are virtually non-existent and the enemy, more difficult to distinguish. Thus, the Commission found that, in some instances, “female servicemembers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have already been engaged in activities that would be considered combat related...the combat exclusion policies do not reflect the current operational environment.”⁸³ The MLDC indicates that this inconsistency could lead to a mismatch between training, assignment, and actual roles.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ *Rostker v. Goldberg*, 453 U.S. 57 (1981).

⁷⁶ Military Leadership Diversity Commission, accessed November 18, 2011, <http://mldc.whs.mil/>

⁷⁷ Military Leadership Diversity Commission, “From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military,” March 7, 2011, http://mldc.whs.mil/download/documents/Final%20Report/MLDC_Final_Report.pdf

⁷⁸ Military Leadership Diversity Commission, “From Representation to Inclusion.”

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Military Leadership Diversity Commission, “Demographic Profile of the Active Duty Officer Corps: September 2008 Snapshot,” Issue Paper #13, accessed November 18, 2011, http://mldc.whs.mil/download/documents/Issue%20Papers/13_Profile_of_Active_Officers.pdf

⁸¹ Nelson Lim et al., “Officer Classification and the Future of Diversity Among Senior Military Leaders: A Case Study of the Army ROTC,” RAND, 2009.

⁸² Military Leadership Diversity Commission, “From Representation to Inclusion.”

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Recent events may indicate a swing in the debate toward greater inclusion. Many, particularly those in the media, have linked the 2011 repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” to possible changes for women. Furthermore, the February 9th “Report to Congress on the Review of Laws, Policies and Regulations Restricting the Service of Female Members in the U.S. Armed Force” stated, “The Department of Defense is committed to removing all barriers that would prevent Service members from rising to the highest level of responsibility that their talents and capabilities warrant.”⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Personnel and Readiness, “Report to Congress.”

APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

My approach involved understanding the “serious practical barriers” to women serving in combat roles and then analyzing implementation options that best address these and other concerns. There is a wealth of literature on impediments to women serving in combat. However, the recent repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” seemed to signal a need for reexamination. After all, there are strong parallels between the arguments against women in combat and homosexuals serving openly in the military; the erosion of unit cohesion, good order and discipline and privacy have been major rationalizations for restrictions on both groups. In addition, much of the literature was written prior to September 11, 2001. However, Iraq and Afghanistan have spelled changes in the nature of warfare with consequences for female soldiers. Thus, perceptions of impediments may have changed, as well.

There is a dearth of information on implementation of the elimination of combat exclusion policies for women. Others researching this topic have reached the same conclusion.⁸⁶ Most of the existing literature focuses on whether women should serve in combat roles with little regard to implementation. While some countries have eliminated combat exclusion policies for women, research and studies on their implementation processes, perhaps due to security concerns, have been difficult to obtain. For example, the Canadian Department of National Defence (CDND) has such documentation, but a representative told me that such a request must go through the Government of Canada's Access to Information process.⁸⁷

Therefore, to fill in the gaps in the literature, I conducted in-depth interviews with 21 current and former members of the U.S. armed forces. While there are certainly more stakeholders, members of the armed forces were the most accessible and highly able to provide informed insight. Initially, I conducted network outreach to find candidates to interview. Then, those I interviewed were very helpful in putting me in touch with others willing to be interviewed. However, the lack of a random sample limits the generalizability of my findings.

Nevertheless, the individuals I interviewed are diverse in terms of age and rank and fairly balanced between men and women. Two thirds are currently serving and most are either currently serving or recently exited. I interviewed individuals from various locations including North Carolina, New York, and Washington D.C. Thus, I feel confident that I have captured sufficient breadth in terms of informed opinions. Furthermore, while most of the interviewees are affiliated with the Army (only two are affiliated with other branches) and only one has been in the Special Forces, elimination of the combat exclusion policy would impact the Army the most. The Army is the largest branch and also has the lowest percentage of positions open to women. Approximately

⁸⁶ Sylvia Marie Rafels, “Women in Combat: Impediments to the Total Integration of Women in the Military,” Doctoral Dissertation, Western Michigan University, 2001, p. 5

⁸⁷ Phone and e-mail correspondence with a representative from the Canadian Department of National Defence, October 2011.

64% of the 252,179 service-wide, authorized, active component positions closed to women are in the Army.⁸⁸

Due to the sensitive and politicized nature of the topic, the interviews were anonymous. Most interviewees were willing to provide basic demographic information, but some specified what I could include in my paper. While most of the interviews were in person, I did not use recording devices to capture responses. Instead, I wrote down responses and later typed them. I then coded and analyzed the interview data using NVIVO 9 software. I also used NVIVO 9 to produce word frequency lists, which helped identify major themes in the interview data.

In addition to the interviews with current and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces, I also interviewed a representative from the Canadian, New Zealand, and Australian defence forces. I chose these countries because they are English-speaking, Western-style democracies that have opened or are in the process of opening all defence positions to women. Initially, I reached out to each country's attaché office in Washington D.C. to identify knowledgeable individuals, who will remain anonymous. Again, there are limitations to my findings. However, I largely relied on these representatives to provide factual information regarding their countries' implementation of women in combat.

⁸⁸ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Personnel and Readiness, "Report to Congress."

APPENDIX 3: SELECTIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What are some arguments for and against women serving in direct ground combat? What do you think the weight of each of these arguments is?
- What do you think are the greatest impediments to implementing the elimination of combat exclusion policies for women?
- If you were put in charge of implementing the elimination of combat exclusion policies for women, how might you go about it? What do you believe are the most important considerations in drafting any policy?
- Do you think the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” has impacted general perceptions within the military about impediments to implementing the elimination of combat exclusion policies for women? If so, how?
- Do you think women’s roles in Iraq and Afghanistan have impacted general perceptions within the military about impediments to implementing the elimination of combat exclusion policies for women? If so, how?

APPENDIX 4: SELECTIVE INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

Interview 1 – Former Army Ranger Commissioned Officer

If you have women who want to volunteer, who have the motivation, they deserve to serve in combat arms. However, the negatives would far outweigh the positives. You would have to figure out separate facilities in an austere environment, proper hygiene, basic things you didn't have to worry about with guys. Perhaps, have separate cat holes, men 100 yards in one direction, women in the other. Fraternization is an issue. Also, in our society, there is an inherent need for men to want to protect women. Men might take an unnecessary risk. Men and women would have to have the same physical standards for combat arms duty. Everyone needs to be treated equally. The standards are significantly lower for women, particularly for upper body strength. When we have combat orders, we've got 10 months before we're going somewhere. Between 30-40% of women in support became pregnant. It was the young unmarried, 18- and 19-year-olds that signed up before 9/11. All the female officers went. A guy shot himself right before deployment. Special Forces would be a whole other dynamic. Have the same physical standards. Have training. All officers are male. Every company commander is male. You need a significant amount of training for upper level leadership. It is the most chauvinistic, depraved environment on Earth. Part of this is building camaraderie. There would be no normalization or acceptance for years, until women move up the ranks and prove themselves. DADT is totally different. A male unit may be extremely homophobic, but when guys come out, you've already seen him do a good job. Women have to start from scratch, have to have a successful generation. The fact that women are engaged in direct fire combat has made the question more relevant. But there has been no prolonged ground combat where women have participated. I always thought women would be fine in a firefight. It is that prolonged situation that would be more challenging.

Interview 2 – Army Commissioned Officer

Arguments against [women in combat] tend to come from older individuals. Men have a protective instinct. It's probably not a problem with younger soldiers, having dealt with the co-ed population their entire life. Especially among the younger soldiers, in a co-ed environment, there are inappropriate relationships. Things get crazy and people seek comfort. Having repealed DADT, we need to move to a non-sex force, an asexual force. Males and females need to be graded equally, physically and mentally. The APFT is basic. There can be specialized training where the requirements are higher. In my opinion, change won't come within the Army. It will come from outside. Is society ready to see its mothers, daughters, etc., on the frontline? You want to ensure proper contraception. Consider studying hygiene issues, perhaps try to stop menses altogether. Education, education, education is important. You want to ask command for support. Find someone who will say, "I'll take women in my unit." Frankly, I think they would excel. There is still a small subset that still acts the traditional female role. You also have strong feminists. The Army is made up of different personalities, like

anywhere else. [The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan] have calmed some fears outside of the military. Females have proven themselves to society.

Interview 3 – Army Non-Commissioned Officer

I was the only female in my unit. I was just treated as one of the guys. At first, some weren't happy about having a female there. They felt females would come in and change the way they do business. Men say different things around each other. I was basically a guy to them. They would forget you're a female. Pregnancy is a big issue. The women were worse than the men. They weren't focused. They wanted to hook up with the guys. Men are born with an instinct to protect. I clipped part of my arm and another guy was bleeding. No one paid attention to him. The commander freaked out about me. What happens if you're out in combat and you get hurt? Psychologically, you have destroyed them. [The biggest impediment is] deprogramming the men. You also have women who say, "Oh, I'll break a nail." The logistics are hard, going 45 days without bathing. You have to deprogram each side. Teach women how to coexist with women. You have to have standards for [females] no different than the males'. Explain that they are not going to have any privacy. I don't think it will work. A soldier is a soldier, and they are going to execute orders. Is it worth it? I don't think so. I don't think DADT has an effect [on the issue of women in combat]. Gays have been serving for a long time. Maybe if you needed women to serve in specific roles, for specific missions. You could have a small, specialized, possibly classified team.

Interview 4 – Army Non-Commissioned Officer

In typical arms-type jobs you get soldiers who are homophobic, gender-biased. Why it is tough to do is a physical thing. You need to have a certain physical test. On the back side, you need to do the same thing for the males. There are female soldiers who are more capable than some of these males currently serving in combat arms. All-male MOS's are in some environments that are especially austere. This is easily overcome. Some say we need separate bathrooms, etc. Do we really need separate facilities? No, we need separate times to use those facilities. In tents, we can section off a corner for females. Everything is easily workable. Revamp the tests. Have psychological screening with the physical test. Not everyone gets to be an infantryman. There are not a lot of females that really want to do [combat arms]. What is the career after? Intel has more job marketability. I don't think there will be an overwhelming surge. With DADT, some people had a lot of hang-ups. I did not. If they were good soldiers in their unit, no one cared. You've got to adapt. This army is a professional organization. I've had soldiers that went over and found love in the war zone. With the whole DADT repeal, we're worrying about guys checking out girls, but have no problem with guys checking out guys? Good order and discipline is a product of that unit. There is chivalry, cultural stuff. A married guy's wife might be worried. If people are going to commit adultery, they are going to do it regardless of whether women are in combat or not. It is about their personal morals. It is the maturity level of the spouse.

Interview 5 – Former Army Commissioned Officer

Over the past 10 years, we've been engaged in what is called "asymmetric warfare." Women are already in positions where they experience combat. Women are excluded from combat MOS's, infantry. This method of taking women out of combat was ineffective over the past 10 years. Women are truck drivers. Driving a truck is not "in combat." In both Iraq and Afghanistan, the most lethal weapon is an IED. IED's affect supply convoys. Women are not effectively excluded from combat. They are excluded from combat MOS's. In our rucksack, we have our clothes, gear, MRE's, a lot of ammunition. The average woman can't carry the load of the average man. The physical limitation [of women] is a real hindrance to being truly equal on the battlefield. We can't say to the enemy, "Can you not shoot us? We are really trying to make advances with women's rights." Eliminating rules that are broken anyway is feasible – saying women can't serve below the brigade level when they do. I do think it would be unfeasible to change a lot with the Special Forces. It is no place for political correctness. I knew a girl in college who was big and strong. It would be tough to say she physically can't do it. Is she an outlier? Sure. Just create a physical standard, a new set of rules that doesn't hinder the commander, without decreasing standards. Separate facilities for women would be tough. Having said that, toilet facilities are usually Porta-Johns, which are unisex. MP's are very close to being infantry. There are a lot of assets to women in units. Culturally, you can't have a guy search Muslim women. The biggest impediment is you are putting women at risk if you have a bunch of guys, ages 18 to 21, who don't necessarily come from great backgrounds, that vastly outnumber the women. The military really changed into very professional, tolerant organization. It has the effect of bleeding into things, religion, DADT, women. There is a huge difference between branches. The Army is constantly doing professional development on sexual harassment, suicide prevention. It is a cultural thing to defend women. Some say guys will become too protective. There is a cultural change with the younger soldiers. I've never heard a woman soldier say she's mad that she can't be an infantrywoman. Some say that it sucks that they can't go to Ranger School. I wouldn't change a thing about how the Army is run. I wouldn't want to handcuff the commander on the ground.

Interview 6 – Army Commissioned Officer

The number one issue is the physical aspect. It is no problem with me. I'm in top notch physical shape. The biggest concern is lower standards for females. You should make an MOS-specific test. Women can't just pass the female PT test. They have to pass a ruck march. There is also the sexual harassment piece. Women take comments differently. Say a female isn't offended by what a guy says. But when do words become actions? If she does tolerate it, how much further will it go? You could have an 18-year-old who is fit, ran cross country, but didn't experience this before. I would love to [serve in combat arms], but the standards can't drop. Women can't cry foul when they don't make it, either. [The biggest impediment is] the push from people who aren't in the military, like members of Congress, who might say we should lower the standards. That would decrease the survivability of soldiers. But I'm afraid it might

happen. Another [impediment] is facilities and periods. You would have to think about what could and couldn't be done. I would pick women already in the military, not women just coming in. There are ugly issues, personal relationships. That stuff already happens but not a lot in theater. Shove the training down through. Think about implementing among officers first. Implementing among 18-year-olds first will be a disaster. The repeal of DADT has not [impacted the issue of women in combat] at all. Even before, people knew who was gay or lesbian. There are definitely plenty of women who have done a good job, and men are quick to tout them. There were some women who wouldn't carry tires, who were lazy. Maybe every woman could get an IUD. We belong to the Army, so our body belongs to the Army.

Interview 7 – Former Army Commissioned Officer

The strongest argument for [women in combat] is that it has happened. A female classmate in a support function was killed. She was a horizontal engineer, built roads and bridges, and was killed on a convoy by an IED. It was not a planned combat mission. That's the nature of asymmetrical warfare. The enemy is not stupid. They want to attack softer targets. Another reason, which is absolutely ridiculous, is that modern warfare will be fought all by computer. That doesn't win an insurgency. You need boots on the ground. Men and women are built differently. An argument against [women in combat], which is not a main concern, is notions of chivalry. Also not a main concern is that women will be treated differently. The two main arguments against [women in combat] are physiological and discipline/morale. You could rebut that [discipline/morale] is the same as with DADT. Why can't women go to Ranger School? You get two hours of sleep, one meal, carry 100 lbs. There might be one [woman] out there. If you open [combat arms] to all women, have a screening to make sure they can handle it. The girls at West Point are pretty gung ho, but I can't think of a single girl that could do it. In Afghanistan, it is a bunch of guys in little compounds, no showers, 120 degrees or freezing, rucking up with 80 lbs. In terms of morale/discipline, you have a bunch of guys and girls that haven't seen the opposite sex in a while, and they are 18/19-years-old. People are going to have sex. Then you have to deal with STD's, pregnancies. You also have female issues at certain times of the month. You still have the chivalrous notion. I was taught to talk to a lady a certain way. I might act a different way. I would never put a woman in front as the door-kicker. I think it is totally different than DADT. There is no physiological difference between a man that's gay. If DoD does away with the policy, they would have to figure out physical tests, eliminate any physical difference in PT tests, have one standard. You would have to spend money to update facilities. There needs to be a training mechanism. You need to get it through guys' heads to treat women the same. Have sex discrimination training. There are a lot of PowerPoints in the Army and series of lectures and trainings. The Army would use all its political capital to do a pilot. What if it fails? You would have to be ready to deal with the second and third order effects. In the end, it is up to the civilians. I think it will happen. Do I think it is a bad idea? Yes. You are not changing the way men and women are built. There are some who could probably do it. Morale and discipline issues will go away with time. The biggest thing is to quantify standards. War is physical.

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW WORD FREQUENCY LIST

Word	Count	Word	Count	Word	Count
women	194	people	35	same	22
Have	124	training	35	arms	21
Do	89	more	32	because	21
don't	85	you	32	first	21
combat	74	could	31	good	21
What	63	different	31	guy	21
can't	60	dadt	30	put	21
female	60	just	30	through	21
you	60	lot	29	about	20
would	54	guys	28	make	20
All	50	infantry	28	who	20
I	50	an	27	change	19
Out	50	say	27	how	19
Get	48	special	27	so	19
Men	48	females	26	support	19
standards	47	unit	26	units	19
Can	46	army	25	we	19
One	43	from	25	woman	19
physical	43	test	25	battalion	18
Think	43	had	24	company	18
Want	43	standard	24	has	18
Some	42	when	24	level	18
Go	41	job	23	most	18
Up	37	military	23	years	18
Male	35	certain	22	been	17
people	35	need	22	going	17

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