

ATSS-DAS

MEMORANDUM FOR Commandant, United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

SUBJECT: Access Agreement for release of Student writing assignment Ethics Paper.

1. I, WO1 KEVIN YORWARTH, submitted a Ethics Paper to the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy archives regarding events and experiences that may be of historical significance to the United States Army and the Noncommissioned Officer Corps.

2. I understand the manuscript and attached documents will be accessioned into the historical holdings of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy archives and will belong to the United States Government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Army as determined by the Chief of Military History or his representative. I also understand that I may retain a copy for my own use subject to classification restrictions.

3. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interest in the paper to the United States Army:

() NO: Initials

() YES: Initials

() YES: with the following caveat/exception: Initials

4. I understand that the information in this paper may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the United States Army will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on this material.


Date: 6 June 2011

Student Printed Name: KEVIN YORWARTH

Signature: 

Accepted on behalf of the United States Army by:

SGA Printed Name/Date: Duong Robinson 6-6-11

Signature: 

Gender Neutral Fitness Testing
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May 03, 2011

“Until our military is able to fully use all of its talent, our nation’s best readiness cannot be achieved.” (Finch, 1994)

Gender Neutral Fitness Testing

In 2006, the New Zealand Government began the first reading to formally rescind the policy within the New Zealand Human Rights “Women in Armed Forces” Amendment Bill (New Zealand Parliament, 2006) exempting females from serving in combat roles within the New Zealand Defence Force. This was required to alleviate discrimination against women and further reinforce one of the main principles of this Bill: equality. Although females and males do not have the same physiological make up, female soldiers should have the same physical fitness testing standards as their male counterparts, ultimately, physical expectations of female soldiers are the same in all workplace situations and this would demonstrate equality between the sexes.

Background

Allowing females into combat trades did not open the floodgates where females were running over each other to join combat trades. It did however mean the New Zealand Air Force opened the door for women being able to be included in combat aircrews. The New Zealand Navy having females, not just on support or logistic craft, but also combat vessels. The New Zealand Army allowing females to apply and gain entry into the Infantry, Artillery, Armor trades, and the New Zealand Special Air Service.

One of the primary issues of allowing females in combat positions is whether females should have the same physical fitness testing standards as their male counterparts, in particular within the combat trades of the New Zealand Army. A quick analysis shows consideration regarding both gender specific physical testing standards and age specific testing standards, before fully implementing any changes. This essay will focus on gender specific issues, where

New Zealand's drive to fulfill its obligations to the United Nations regarding discrimination against women is concerned.

Discrimination against Women

In July 2007, New Zealand Parliament voted and passed the Human Rights (Women in Armed Forces) Amendment Bill. This formally removed the last reservation to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with regard to the services of women in the Armed Forces (New Zealand Parliament, 2007). This ratified the amendment to the Act enabling New Zealand to fulfill its international obligation to the United Nations convention.

In part, this convention calls for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women especially concerning equal pay and equal opportunity in employment. Allowing females into Combat Trades fulfils these commitments on a world stage. As previously discussed, to enable the Army to achieve this, the Army needs to establish physical fitness testing standards regardless of gender for all trades. Once these requirements are determined then the Army must train all soldiers to meet those standards.

Physiological Make up

Although females and males do not have the same physiological make up, female soldiers should have the same physical fitness testing standards because ultimately, there needs to be same expectations in workplace situations and this would demonstrate equality between the sexes. It is a scientific fact that females and males do not have the same physiological make up. Many research studies around the world and in many different institutions have come up with much the same outcome.

Facts of this research indicate that the average female is smaller in size (height), has 50 percent less total muscle mass, 10 percentage points more body fat and less bone mass to illustrate the main differences. Other differences go on into heart size and rate, flexibility, lung capacity and physiology (U.S. Army Field Manual, 1994). This does acknowledge the fact that there are differences between the sexes. However, does that support that there should be different testing standards?

Fitness Testing

For the many roles within any Army, can one fitness test truly fit them all? It does. The only exception is for basic testing used during Recruit training in the case of the New Zealand Army, where the Required Fitness Level test is used to provide a gauge of basic minimum fitness. For women the test consists of a 2.4 km run in 12 minutes 20 seconds or less, complete 50 curl ups in one set, and complete 14 press-ups in one set. Men must be able to run 2.4 km in less than 10 minutes 30 seconds, complete 60 curl ups in one set, and complete 28 press-ups in one set (NZ Army Recruiting, 2010).

This test does not give any indication whether an individual soldier is fit to perform a specific role. This is where gender-neutral fitness tests (Willens, 1996) need to be designed for those specific roles whether Combat Trades or Non-Combat Trades. If testing is not designed appropriately, there is a risk that it would downgrade the general fitness of either gender. When designed effectively and specific to trade or a group of trades (Combat Trades/Non-Combat Trades) it would act as a stop-go sign.

If an individual soldier, female or male, is in any Combat Trade they pass the prescribed fitness test and maintain that level, then they are eligible to be in that trade. This does put great

importance on ensuring the design of Fitness Test is for each specific environment. This would support ultimately all are held to the same standards on the workplace.

Regardless of whether a female or male soldier is posted into any unit role, the expectation is that the individual soldier will do their job competently. This expectation would be “across the board” for their trade skills, soldier skills and physical fitness. Gender should not have a bearing on it. This supports the fact that if female soldiers, given the appropriate training, can and will be capable of performing the same duties in Combat Trades on operations.

Supporting Gender Neutral Concept

Further supporting that gender should not have a bearing on employment performance; the United States Department of Defense has a Military Standard entitled “*Design Criteria Standard. Human Engineering*” (DOD, 1999). Defense contractors who design and manufacture military equipment use this standard when they design equipment to ensure better ergonomics to enable up to 95 percentile of the population to operate the equipment.

To give an easy example is the modern automobile. Not long ago vehicles were equipped with manual transmissions and non-assisted steering and brakes, making it challenging to operate. Now of course this is not the case. All but a few vehicles have automatic transmissions, all have power assisted steering and brakes and the operator position is adjustable in a multitude of ways.

Examining modern combat equipment the same principles are used to improve ergonomics. Whether it is personal equipment or larger equipment like a Light Armored Vehicle or Main Battle Tank, the operation of these vehicles has become easier. With the appropriate training females are capable of performing the duties required as a vehicle crewmember in a Combat Arms environment. They would have sufficient strength and while smaller in stature

can have an advantage where greater freedom of movement in restrictive compartments is able (Stone, 2009).

Some will meet the standard, others will not no matter the gender. Without a doubt, being in the military is a physically demanding job that not everyone is fit to handle. Despite this, all experts agree there are women, although perhaps small in numbers, who do have the physical strength and endurance to be soldiers and soldiers in Combat Trades (Willens, 1996).

Conclusion

In conclusion, serving in the New Zealand Army and in particular Combat trades, is a physically demanding occupation. For females to be able to competently carry out the roles in Combat Trades it will be essential that analysis be carried out to set gender neutral physical testing standards specific to the working requirements of the Combat trades. Yes, there is clear and detailed research that support female and males have a very different physiological make up.

Most important facts are that females are smaller, have less muscle mass and less bone mass (U.S. Army Field Manual, 1994). That aside, with correctly designed training régimes and gender-neutral physical testing, females although in small numbers, could competently carry out the duties of a Combat Arms soldier. Last but certainly not least, New Zealand and the New Zealand Army on the world stage will be displaying that is it committed to satisfying its obligations to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with regard to the services of women in the Armed Forces.

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