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THE COMBAT EXCLUSION POLICY: MYTH OR REALITY
FOR WOMEN IN TODAY'S ARMY?

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS M. ROY
United States Army

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**THE COMBAT EXCLUSION POLICY: MYTH OR REALITY
FOR WOMEN IN TODAY'S ARMY?**

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

**Lieutenant Colonel Thomas M. Roy
United States Army**

**Colonel D.L. Crawford
Project Adviser**

**U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013**

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ABSTRACT

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Presently, women are restricted from direct combat roles in the Air Force, Marines, and Navy by U.S. Statute. U.S. Army policy prohibits women from serving in most combat arms units. This policy regulates the assignment of women in the Army through the use of the Direct Combat Probability Coding system (DCPC). This study focuses on the issue of whether the DCPC will be effective or necessary in future combat operations conducted by a contingency oriented Army. Several alternative solutions are presented involving changes to this coding system followed by a recommendation that may be long overdue.



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INTRODUCTION

Recent changes in the international environment and budget problems facing the American public are having a dramatic effect on the size and shape of the Army of the 1990's. Focusing primarily on the Soviet threat is no longer a valid military strategy in a multi-polar world. One of the most serious challenges facing the leadership of our country, and in particular the Army's leadership, is fielding a smaller Army that is capable of responding globally to a variety of contingency scenarios. Inherent in a smaller, more capable and lethal Army is the unanswered question of what role women will play in future combat.

Federal law prohibits women from serving in positions in the Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force that involve a high risk of direct combat with the enemy.¹ Department of Defense policy precludes women from serving in positions in the Army that involve direct combat roles.² The Department of the Army developed the Direct Combat Probability Coding (DCPC) System designed to preclude large numbers of women from becoming involved in direct combat. It restricts women from being assigned to positions involving direct combat because of their duties, battlefield location and current tactical doctrine.³

What the DCPC will not prevent in future conflicts is a growing number of inadvertent women casualties or prisoners of war due to their proximity to combat. Consider the following: (1) Contingency operations involving CONUS based forces will be the predominant form of combat over the next ten to fifteen years. (2) New tactical doctrine as proposed in AirLand Battle-Future focuses

on a non-linear battlefield.⁴ (3) Women represent 11.4 percent of the active Army's end strength.⁵ (4) Over 90% of the Army career fields are open to women. Therefore, in light of these considerations, the location of women on the battlefield as a discriminator in the DCPC is argumentative at best.⁶

Either the DCPC System will have to be modified to reflect the possibility of direct combat by women serving in brigade and battalion headquarters, assault helicopter battalions, signal companies, transportation companies, etc., or be eliminated completely. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Colin Powell described his views of women and combat duty in the September/October issue of Defense 90 when he stated,

When I was a corps commander in Germany at the Fulda Gap and people would come to visit me and we'd talk about this issue, I would make it clear to them that on Hour 1 of Day 1, women would be in combat, and they would be taking casualties right along with the men.⁷

This study focuses on the issue of women in combat in today's Army and the possibility that the Army's DCPC system may not be effective or even necessary. There are apparent contradictions between the Army's Direct Combat Probability Coding System, the intent of Congress and the will of the American public. Current Federal Statutes, Department of Defense policy and the Army's coding system may face a significant challenge with over half a million American service men and women engaged in combat in the Middle East. If the number of women casualties is determined to be excessive to Congress and the American public, the Army may be forced to rethink its present combat exclusion policy.

DEFINITIONS

The legal requirement for the combat exclusion of women comes from two separate statutes, one applies to the Navy and Marine Corps, and the other applies to the Air Force. Title 10, U.S.C. 6015 states that, "Women may not be assigned duty on vessels or in aircraft that are engaged in combat missions nor may they be assigned to other than temporary duty on vessels of the Navy except hospital ships, transports, and vessels of similar classification not expected to be assigned to combat missions."⁸ Title 10, U.S.C. 8549 states, "Female members of the Air Force, may not be assigned to duty in aircraft engaged in combat missions."⁹ There is no statutory provision that applies specifically to the Army.

In order to meet the spirit and intent of Congress on the combat exclusion of women, the Secretary of Defense approved the policy known as the "DOD Risk Rule" in February 1988.¹⁰ The Risk Rule states:

The risk of direct combat, exposure to hostile fire or capture are proper criteria for closing positions to women. If the type, degree, and, to a lesser extent, duration of risk are equal to or greater than direct combat units (infantry/ armor), then units or positions may be closed to women.¹¹

This policy provides a framework for conducting "risk analysis" and was designed to provide broad guidance to all Military Services.

The Secretary of the Army derives his authority to assign, detail, and prescribe soldiers' duties from Title 10, U.S.C 3013.¹²

Current Army policy authorizes women in all skills and positions on an exception basis. Exceptions include positions which involve the highest probability of routine engagement in direct combat or which co-locate routinely with direct combat units.¹³ Army policy is implemented through the Direct Combat Probability Coding System which incorporates the DOD Risk Rule. Remember that the DOD Risk Rule is general in nature and qualifies "Risk" in terms of direct combat, exposure to hostile fire, or capture without attempting to define direct combat.

In an attempt to clarify the term "direct combat", the Secretary of the Army included the following definition in the Direct Combat Exclusion Policy he approved in October 1983:

...engaging an enemy with individual or crew-served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy, and a substantial risk of capture. Direct combat takes place while closing with the enemy by fire, maneuver, or shock effect in order to destroy or capture, or while repelling assault by fire, close combat, or counterattack.¹⁴

Under the present DCPC system contained in AR 71-31, women are assigned to duty positions based on three criteria derived from the Combat Exclusion Policy. Determination of whether a position is closed or open to women depends on duties of an individual, battlefield location at battalion level or lower units, and Army tactical doctrine.¹⁵ Those positions that fall within the framework of the definition of direct combat with the highest degree of risk are coded P1 and closed to women. Positions that are coded P2 through P7 are open to women. Coding positions P2

through P7 varies as the degree of risk involving direct combat decreases.¹⁶

With the implementation of AR 600-XX (Draft), Direct Combat Probability Coding (DCPC) System in the summer of 1991, the number of criteria used to determine positions closed to women will increase from three to four.¹⁷ The present criteria are: duties of the job, position on the battlefield and tactical doctrine. The proposed change would expand the criteria to include: duties of the job, unit mission, battlefield location as a function of risk analysis and Army doctrine.¹⁸ In addition to a change in criteria, the number of codes used to classify positions will be reduced to two. P1 coded positions will be closed to women because they have the highest probability of routine exposure to direct combat. P2 through P7 codes will be consolidated into a single P2 code. This P2 code will be used for all positions open to women and merely indicates a diminished probability of routine exposure to direct combat.¹⁹ This last change appears to be administrative in nature; however, the change in criteria is significant and will be explained later in this study.

PERSPECTIVES

The history of women involved in armed conflict can be traced as far back as mythology and biblical times. Much has been written on the subject of why women have taken up arms over the centuries. Up until the beginning of WWI, women participated in conflicts as individual combatants. This was due predominantly to the social

conditions of the times and the severity of the threat to a nation's survival. It wasn't until the First World War that women joined the armed forces of the warring countries in organized units and wore distinctive uniforms.²⁰ Their role was one of non-combatants except in Russia where they were openly recruited and fought alongside their men for Russia's very existence.

During World War II a serious shortage of manpower influenced many countries to fill their ranks with women in order to release their male population for actual combat roles. Once again the predominant use of women was in the more benign roles as clerks, nurses, and ferry pilots. Manpower shortages became so acute in the Soviet Union that at one point 40 percent of the medical and nursing staff at the front were female.²¹ As in the previous world war, Soviet women were once again used as actual combatants during the German advance into Russia. Their service as tank drivers, infantry, and combat pilots is well documented.²² It is important to note that women casualties resulting from combat were minimal in those countries that allowed women to serve only in non-combatant roles in contrast to those countries where women served as actual combatants.

The amount of information available from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries provides valuable perspectives on this issue of women in combat. There are many parallels that can be drawn between the U.S. Army's combat exclusion policy and the success or failure of integrating women into combat units in several NATO countries.

NATO presently has a female military population of just over five percent of its total active military manpower.²³ The percent of male to female active military personnel in NATO will probably remain constant until regional stability is achieved in Europe and the Middle East. Fourteen of the sixteen member nations of NATO allow women in their armed forces. The two notable exceptions are Iceland, which has no armed forces, and Italy, which prohibits women from serving in their military.²⁴ All sixteen member nations have some type of legislation that prohibits discrimination between men and women. This does not imply that simply prohibiting discrimination in any one country affords women equal rights with respect to their roles as members of their armed forces. In fact, quite the contrary is true. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway are the only countries that allow women in all branches of service including combat units.²⁵ For example, the Netherlands has the highest percentage of the three countries mentioned, with women serving in infantry, cavalry, and engineer units. However, this amounts to only one percent of the total personnel assigned to these combat units.²⁶

Suffice to say that each nation in NATO has unique social, political, economic and cultural forces acting within it. Laws, policies, views on citizenship obligations and the actual day to day administration of their armed forces determine the extent to which women participate in military service and in some cases in combat units.²⁷

Canada, as an example, attempted to fully integrate women into their armed forces in 1987.²⁰ The Canadians spent over \$500,000 in an attempt to recruit 249 women for combat units of their Army.²¹ This much talked about test program has experienced several significant problems. Recruiting and training were to be genderless. No quotas were given to recruiters and training was conducted with the male and female population mixed. Standards in place prior to the test program were maintained, placing the burden of proof of fitness and ability squarely on the women trainees. Attempts to train the women in groups rather than as individuals became too hard to manage and was dropped.³⁰

After two years, the Canadian delegate to the NATO Committee on Women reported the following:

Over the past two years, over 80 women have been enrolled (read recruited) in the infantry. Of the 48 women who progressed to the stage of infantry specific training, two are currently under training, and one woman has graduated. ...Despite her ability to perform all tasks, she does not plan to re-enlist after her three years are completed.³¹

Women officers have fared about the same. Of the twelve women who enrolled for combat arms, only five completed officer training and of these five, only one completed the first phase of infantry training and then voluntarily asked to be transferred to another branch.³²

The Canadian Navy has had much better results in their attempts to integrate women into their Maritime Surface Force. The success rate for enlisted women from the time they are recruited until they are actually serving on board ship is well over 60

percent. Five of 49 women officers have completed initial training and are now serving at sea.³³

What the Canadians have learned from this experience is that body size and muscle development were major contributing factors to the failure of the women to complete the training. Motivation was not a problem, but fatigue was.³⁴ Even though the Canadians have not changed or modified their standards, they are exploring the idea of better preparing women trainees prior to exposing them to infantry training. They have already acknowledged the fact that their screening process for women recruits will have to be modified to include acceptance of women who are at least five foot six inches or taller.³⁵

The numbers of women involved in this test program are too small to draw any specific conclusions, but Canada's experience with recruiting women can provide enough information to draw some general conclusions. They have spent \$500,000 trying to recruit 249 women for the test and were only able to attract 26 women initially.³⁶ It would appear that most Canadian women are not interested in enlisting for combat units. In addition, the extremely high attrition rate would seem to indicate that it is fiscally imprudent to continue to finance a recruiting effort focused on women if the investment return for \$500,000 has been less than one tenth of one percent of the women recruited. Two questions that beg to be asked of those responsible for the Canadian test are: how many adjustments will be necessary in their recruiting program to ensure equality for women, and how much are

they willing to spend to recruit women into their combat units?

The significance of the Canadian test program is especially interesting when contrasted with the case of Norway, which has had much greater success in recruiting women for combat positions. Norway opened combat jobs to women in 1984 and is the only country which permits women crew members on submarines.³⁷ Although the overall percentage of women in the Norwegian military is still very small (about two percent), the recruiting effort seems to be quite successful. This is due to an aggressive advertising campaign which specifically targets women. "We are targeting women very strongly in cinemas, on television and in women's magazines," said Cmdr. Elisabeth Westang of the Norwegian armed forces.³⁸ Sixteen percent of all voluntary recruits are women, giving Norway one of the highest female recruiting rates in the world for the past two years.³⁹

In summary, the Canadian and Norwegian programs provide some valuable insights into the issue of whether women will enlist for combat units. The test program in Canada should be considered successful for the Navy, considering its success in recruiting and training women for duty at sea.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the Army is attempting to massage its recruiting and training program for combat arms units, due to the high attrition rate of women.⁴¹ The Norwegians have shown that opening combat positions to women does not seem to be an obstacle to an effective recruiting program, provided it is coupled with an appropriate marketing strategy.

The fact remains that no test program or training involving women will ever replicate actual combat. Whether women can withstand the rigors of combat while serving as members of a combat unit would appear to be precisely the issue at hand. This leads directly to the subject of what effect "Just Cause" and "Desert Shield" (now "Desert Storm") have had on the issue of women in combat in the United States military.

There are several well publicized incidents that occurred during the invasion of Panama that caused the issue of women in combat to resurface. Captain Linda Bray, serving as a Military Police company commander, led one of her platoons to a Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) dog kennel to secure it.⁴² What she found when her platoon arrived at the kennel was unexpected. A 3 January 1990 article in the Washington Post summarized the incident.

In a three-hour battle, Bray's troops captured the target after killing three PDF soldiers and seizing a number of weapons...⁴³

This wasn't the only incident involving women who were subjected to direct combat with Noriega's PDF. Several other women in Captain Bray's company in another platoon were attached to an infantry unit during the attack on the Commandancia. Their specific mission was to close several key intersections a block away from the Commandancia.⁴⁴ In the heat of battle about all that could be determined was that shots were fired by PDF soldiers in their direction with no resulting injuries. One other incident of note occurred during an airlift of 7th Infantry Division (Light) soldiers by UH-60 Black Hawks in the vicinity of the PDF barracks

at Panama Viejo.⁴⁵ Two of the pilots were women and the aircraft received ground fire which hit one of the Black Hawk helicopters.

These three isolated, but highly publicized, incidents evoked strong opinions from the American public and intensified the debate as to whether or not combat positions should be closed or open to women. It is certainly significant to remember that all of the women involved in these incidents were assigned to positions and units classified by the Army as open to women.

Those in favor of opening all positions to women consider Operation "Just Cause" a prime example of an old paradigm being broken. Representative Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo), the most outspoken member of Congress in favor of women's equality in the military, proposed legislation for a test program in January 1990.⁴⁶ H.R. 3868's stated purpose was:

To direct the Secretary of the Army to carry out a four-year test program to examine the implications of the removal of limitations on the assignment of female members of the Army to combat and combat-support positions.⁴⁷

This test was to be designed and administered by the Army Research Institute (ARI), for a projected cost of \$3.6 million. An additional \$34 million would have been required to train the 1,200 women recruited to fill four test battalions. These four battalions would consist of light infantry, armor, mechanized, and field artillery for the test period. These units would be rated non-deployable until the test was completed.⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that the ARI anticipated an attrition rate of 33 percent for the women during training.⁴⁹ This is a significant difference

from the attrition rate of approximately 98 percent experienced by the Canadian Army program. This proposal is very similar to the Canadian test and was opposed from the outset by the U.S. Army. In an April 1990 Washington Post article titled "Army Rejects Combat Role For Women" an Army spokesman was quoted:

The Army does not feel that a test is warranted. We feel our current policy reflects the intent of Congress by excluding women from the highest risk of direct combat.⁹⁰

Additional reasons were contained in an information paper dated 23 February 1990, which was provided to the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff in preparation for testimony before the House Armed Services Committee. A constrained defense budget and anticipated personnel reductions were cited as two of the reasons for not initiating a test of this magnitude. Two additional points were made in this paper. One, that women soldiers perform duties involving all major weapon systems in the Army's inventory and the second, that organizational effectiveness of mixed gender units was not in question.⁹¹

The first point, that women perform duties involving all major weapons systems does not address the issue raised by the proposed "test". The criteria contained in the Army's DCPC system expressly prohibits women from performing any duties, other than maintenance, on the M-1 tank and the Bradley fighting vehicle. Representative Schroeder's proposed test would have included operation and employment of these vehicles by women in armor and mechanized units. With regards to the second point, the effectiveness of

mixed gender units may not be in question, but the effectiveness of combat units with women assigned to them is precisely why the test was proposed.³²

Representative Schroeder conceded that the chances of the legislation passing in view of the Army's strong opposition were slim. Regardless of the rationale and reasonable approach taken by Representative Schroeder to at least run a test program, public opinion, Congress and the Bush Administration sided with the Army and the legislation died.³³

For six months the issue of women in combat lay dormant and out of the newspapers. Iraq invaded Kuwait, President Bush deployed forces to the Persian Gulf and the issue again became a hot topic for parties on both sides. Not a week went by without some catchy news article highlighting the women in combat issue appearing in a major weekly magazine. "Our Women in the Desert" or "Women Warriors, Sharing the Danger" were representative of these emotion filled articles.³⁴

The significance of deploying over 500,000 troops consisting of Active, Reserve and National Guard combat, combat support and combat service support units to the Middle East caused concern in Congress and with the American public.³⁵ An estimate of the number of women deployed to the Persian Gulf was made in a 12 September 1990 article in the Washington Post and fell in the range of 12 to 15 percent.³⁶ The actual number of women deployed to the Middle East turned out to be 32,340, or six percent.³⁷ Where were these 32,340 women? They were assigned to a wide variety of combat

support and combat service support units to include: truck companies, signal companies, Patriot batteries and assault helicopter battalions. What was more disconcerting to members of Congress was that some of the combat service support units stationed in Saudi Arabia had an assigned strength of 50 percent women.'*

From August 1990 until 1 February 1991, these forces were deployed but not engaged in hostilities. With the outbreak of the air war and the relatively short land battle that followed, the question of whether women should serve in combat units remains unresolved. If a large number of women had become casualties, were killed or taken prisoner while serving in positions open to them under the Army's DCPC criteria, the proposal to open all positions to women or close many more would have been readdressed immediately. If, as was the case, few women became casualties of the war, those who support the present Combat Exclusion Policy may have gained the moral high ground.

MIXED SIGNALS

The Army is in a period of transition. The focus of our national strategy has changed for many reasons. Mixed in with these changes is the possibility that the Army's Combat Exclusion Policy may be sending mixed signals to women.

Sweeping changes have taken place in the balance of power previously attributed to the two super powers of the Cold War. The Soviet Union has collapsed in on itself economically and to a

lesser extent, politically. A flurry of demands for democratic reforms by many of the Soviet Union's border republics have complicated all attempts by President Mikhail Gorbachev to control the progress of "Perestroika".³ While the threat of war with the Soviet Union has diminished in NATO, the present instability within the Soviet Union has and will continue to cause serious concern in western capitals. With these conditions as a backdrop President Bush, in his March 1990 National Security Strategy, changed the focus of our national strategy from forward defense to forward presence.

... as we look to the future, we see our active forces being smaller , more global in their orientation, and having a degree of agility, readiness and sustainability appropriate to the demands of likely conflict.⁴

This shift in strategy clearly calls for a smaller CONUS based Army that can be tailored prior to a deployment to respond to a wide variety of contingencies. Out of necessity, women assigned to these contingency forces must deploy with their units. During operation "Urgent Fury" in Grenada, women were prevented from boarding aircraft destined for the combat zone. Commanders felt that the DOD Risk Rule was sufficient justification to stop women from deploying with their units.⁵ This situation did not occur during the deployment to Panama on operation "Just Cause". The Air Force solved this problem just four days prior to the invasion order, by deciding in favor of sending women with their units.⁶ "Desert Shield" found all three services holding firm to their stated positions. If units were deployed to the Middle East, women

assigned to these units would deploy with them.⁴³ Vacillation by the Marines on the issue of deploying women to the Middle East during the second week in August prompted an angry tirade from Congress.⁴⁴

Not deploying assigned female soldiers could destroy a unit's cohesion and seriously degrade its readiness. For example, during the Falkland Islands crisis the British Navy decided that no female nurses would be used in their field hospitals and substituted male nurses for them.⁴⁵ In the final analysis, many of the male doctors held very strong convictions stating that:

The smooth operation of the field hospital was compromised by not having the teams of doctors and nurses that had worked together before the crisis.⁴⁶

Substituting male soldiers during the deployment phase of an operation does not make sense. The only alternative would be to change the DCPC system and restrict women from an assignment to a contingency force. This does not appear to be a sensible or plausible course of action. If the Army's DCPC system is valid, the assumption must be made that women will always deploy with their units.

Once the war in the Persian Gulf is resolved, the active Army will be required to draw down to a congressionally mandated ceiling of 520,000 by the end of FY 1995.⁴⁷ Our current tactical doctrine, AirLand Battle (ALB), orients on a Soviet threat in Europe and attempts to control the flow of echelons into the close fight.⁴⁸ The evolution of doctrine to AirLand Battle-Future (ALB-F), will require a movement towards non-linear warfare.⁴⁹ This concept of

fighting on a non-linear battlefield with a smaller force is ideal for a contingency oriented army under ALB-F doctrine. This change in tactical doctrine and the strategy of fielding a contingency army will only serve to blur the distinction between combat and non-combat missions. Future contingency operations in a theater with no clear definition of the front lines could conceivably negate the validity of the Army's Combat Exclusion Policy and the DCPC.

Some enlisted Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) and officer branches have an exceptionally high female content. If the Army expands the number of career fields open to women (presently 90 percent), it appears a larger proportion of women would be at risk within the context of ALB-F doctrine. The ninety percent figure described above translates into 285 of 331 enlisted MOS open to women.⁷⁰ Women are authorized in 205 of the 214 available officer specialties. While some officer Career Management Fields (CMF) are completely closed to women (Infantry, Combat Engineer, Special Forces and Armor), other CMF's (Administration, Intelligence, Signal and Medical) contain a female content as high as 39 percent.⁷¹ The combination of emerging tactical doctrine, the high female content of certain Army career fields, and the purpose of the DCPC can, and should be, construed as sending mixed signals to women soldiers.

Another problem with the DCPC system involves women serving in positions that are not considered high risk under current doctrine. With a shift in emphasis toward a non-linear battlefield

in ALB-F, these positions are just as prone to direct combat as the all male units. Examples that come to mind are women pilots who flew UH-60 Black Hawks for the 82nd Airborne and 101st Air Assault Divisions or women truck drivers who ran resupply missions to the combat trains of an infantry battalion in "Desert Storm". In both cases the location of women on the battlefield at any given moment was a function of tactical doctrine. If tactical doctrine in future contingency operations does shift towards a non-linear battlefield then women will in fact share many of the same risks as men.

Under the current Army coding system there is an implication that duties, position on the battlefield and tactical doctrine share an equal part (one third) of the probability equation. It would appear to be the logic applied in AR 71-31 when deciding which positions are closed or open to women.⁷² The four new criteria listed in AR 600-XX (Draft) suggest an equal application of the discriminator of "high probability of risk", in classifying a position as P1. However, the dynamics of a changing international environment, evolving doctrine and the sheer number of women in certain MOS's and Branches suggest a different ratio is being applied. The importance of duties and tactical doctrine as a DCPC criteria does not appear to have the same significance as a unit's mission or battlefield location.⁷³ The real problem with the Army's Combat Exclusion Policy is the coding system says one thing but does another. It was designed to limit the high casualty risk for women, but it does not preclude women from

exposure to combat, nor does it preclude them from becoming casualties or prisoners of war.

ALTERNATIVES

There are several alternatives available to the Army to solve the dilemma of the appropriate role for women in future combat. The first alternative is to do nothing. By not changing the Direct Combat Probability Coding system, women who are assigned to aviation, air defense and field artillery units will take their chances along with their male counterparts. One of the interesting side bars to this alternative is that during operation "Just Cause" Charles Moskos asked enlisted women and officers if they would volunteer to be an infantry rifleman and they all answered, "No!".⁷⁴ The simple fact is, with few exceptions, the majority of news articles written on women deployed to Saudi Arabia support this position.

Some female officers have expressed the opinion that women should be allowed to volunteer for combat arms units. Their concern, however, focuses on one theme. Career opportunities will not be the same as their male contemporaries if they cannot command in combat units. The problem with their argument for equality in combat units is that not one female officer wanted a quota established for the number of women that must be assigned to infantry units.⁷⁵ The old axiom, "you can't have it both ways" would seem to apply in this case.

A second alternative would be to restrict women from any

enlisted MOS or officer specialty that may cause them to come in contact with combat units on the battlefield. This would require a complete restructure of the Army's DCPC system. By not allowing women to serve in any combat support or service support unit below division level and closing all combat arms units to women, would preclude them from coming in contact with the high risk combat elements of the Army. Restricting women from contact with combat units would be far less hypocritical than the present Direct Combat Probability Coding system and certainly reflect current public sentiment and the intent of Congress. Unfortunately, this would clearly be a step backward for women's rights in the military and immediately raise the ire of those who support the Equal Rights Amendment.

A third alternative would be to open all positions to women with the important provision that standards would not be lowered to compensate for the physiological differences between men and women. The reluctance of women to volunteer for combat assignments and adherence to rigid physical fitness standards would serve to limit the number of women in combat units.⁷⁶ This would require a change in Army policy and, on a broader scale, a change in the laws affecting the women in the Air Force and the Navy. The expectation that the public's attitude would change after a change in the law is not that far fetched. Desegregation at the Federal level and mandatory seat belt laws at the state level caused widespread controversy initially. Opposition to these changes have tempered over time and the public's attitude appears to be more favorable.⁷⁷

RECOMMENDATION

The issue of women serving in combat roles in the Army of the future is complex and colored by emotions. A full spectrum of viewpoints ranging from traditional psychological arguments to performance-oriented physiological arguments exists with no apparent general consensus. The fact is our men and women in the military have just fought and won a mid-intensity war in the Middle East. No one can deny that women played an important role in the career fields of "Desert Storm" forces that were open to them. Significant changes are taking place in the international balance of power, the size and shape of our Army, and our tactical doctrine. The time has come for Congress, our military leadership and the American public to put emotions, outdated traditions and old prejudices aside. The full integration of women as citizens and members of the military can only be achieved if they are free to serve their country without restrictions.

Women, who are fully qualified and capable of meeting the standards of a combat unit deserve the same opportunities as their male contemporaries. The Army's Combat Exclusion Policy for women and its implementing tool, the Direct Combat Probability Coding system should be rescinded.

ENDNOTES

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2. Ibid., p. 9.
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5. "Women in Uniform," Defense Almanac, November/December 1990, p. 30.
6. Sherian G. Cadoria, B.G., Military Women Serving in Non-traditional Occupations, p. E6.
7. "SDI, Stealth, Women in Combat," Defense Almanac, September/October 1990, p. 17.
8. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., United States Code, 1988, Vol. 3, Title 10, sec. 6015, p. 974 (hereafter referred to as "U.S.C.").
9. Ibid., sec. 8549, p. 1161.
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17. Interview with Marcene Etchieson, Maj., Women in the Army Policy Action Officer, (DCSPER), Washington, D.C., 19 December 1990.
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35. Ibid.

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47. Molly Moore, "Army Rejects Combat Role for Women," Washington Post, 22 April 1990, p. A15 (hereafter referred to as "Army Rejects Combat Role").
48. Marcene Etchieson, Maj., "Women in Combat," Executive Summary, 5 May 1990, p. 3.
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51. "Proposed Legislation Regarding a Four-Year Test of Assignment of Women to Combat and Combat-Support Positions (H.R. 3868)," Information Paper, 23 February 1990, p. 1-2.
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