

Example of women in the frontlines argumentative essay

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



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Qualified women are entitled to be in the frontlines too. In January 2013, the United States military lifted its ban on women in ground combat positions, a policy that has been in effect since 1994 (FoxNews. com). The 1994 policy defined ground combat as “ engaging the enemy on the ground with individual or crew-served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire” (Skaine, 7). This paper therefore takes the definition of ground combat as the meaning of the word “ frontlines” which was earlier mentioned. The 2013 decision generated many opposing opinions about the issue. Different factors such as physical strength, emotional complications, and cultural perspectives have been cited as reasons for either supporting or opposing women in the frontlines. Through this paper, the author argues that women who possessed the required skills and capabilities and have reached the standards of any combat position should be in the frontlines too. The succeeding sections will rebut the arguments against women in combat

positions with a focus on the three factors mentioned above. Explanations from published sources shall be used to support this author's statements.

Physical strength

Waller and Rycenga in *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War and Resistance* describe war as a man's domain which women are not permitted to enter unless they are given permission to do so. The most common argument against women being in the frontlines is that they are not as physically strong as men are and would not be able to measure up to the extreme demands of the infantry. According to D. B. Grady, this difference in strength is blatantly clear even at the very start of the applications when men and women undergo a rigorous physical test. Here, he claims that the perfect score for the ladies is just the passing score for their male counterparts which may be interpreted as women not possessing enough physical strength required of those at the frontlines. The argument using the physical strength is not a solid one.

For centuries women have undertaken jobs that require great physical strength including the military. Researchers have documented the peacemaker role women of in their nation's wars. Franks describes the battle for independence in East Timor and women's participation in the struggle against their oppressor in the article *Women and Resistance in East Timor: The Centre as they Say Knows Itself by the Margins*. Here, the women contributed to the movement in their efforts to remove their enemy as peacefully as possible. In Sierra Leone, non-western women are forced to fight in conflicts whether they wish to or not. This was concluded by

Mazurana & Carlson in *From Combat to Community: Women and Girls of Sierra Leone*. Their study showed that women are considered to be peace makers and they are encouraged to join the Civil Defence Forces to work towards a calm solution to local or international problems as well as restore peace when the conflict is over.

Further along in this essay, this author enumerates many more countries that have women in their ground troops. Women are capable of going through the same physically intense training that go through. In terms of the physical aspect, there are studies that show that the physical make-up of men and women do not vary much. When men and women undergo the same physical training, their response to the stimulus may be differ due to their anatomical makeup. However, they both have the “ same capacity to build strength when related to the total muscle mass” (Meth, 3). Thus, the female body is capable of building the necessary strength as the male counterpart does given that they undergo the same rigorous physical training. Before such training, it is but natural that there would be a difference in strength since prior to the physical test, males and females have different ways of lifting boxes, throwing objects, or carrying loads.

Emotional and other complications

The presence of women in the military is regarded as a distraction. D. B. Grady says putting women in close quarters with men is opening opportunities for romances and relationships, things that members of the infantry are prone to engage in especially during the downtimes. Hartley in his book *Just Another Soldier: A Year on the Ground in Iraq* explained that

women should not be allowed in ground combat because “ the average grunt is fairly in touch with his primal self” and is therefore interested only in two things, and these are sex and warfare (93). The presence of woman, he says, becomes a challenge to the self-control of the soldier.

Such an argument is extremely sexist. It is not fair to limit qualified personnel to occupy positions that allow them to contribute greatly to the defense of the country or of innocent lives just because the opposite sex cannot keep his self-control. And besides, the presence of women in the military has already been established. Men and women have already managed to co-exist in extreme conditions side by side. Their trainings would certainly ensure that both men and women are fully equipped to handle various challenges, both primal and environmental.

Cultural perspectives

Those who opposed sending women to the frontlines come from both genders. In *Women in the British Army: War and the Gentle Sex, 1907-1948*, Lucy Noakes describe how British women have failed to convince male military staff that they are capable of fighting in combat zones. Letters, diaries, poetry, newspaper articles as well as other documents contributed to the myth of male supremacy and the need to remain dominant in the future. Men are against women joining the frontlines because there is the perception that doing so would lower the standards as women are perceived as less capable and not strong enough. Incidents of rape, pregnancy, extramarital relationships, sexual harassment have also been documented. In the US society, the notions of chivalry, male supremacy, and sexism are still

prevalent. Those who oppose the entrance of women into what is traditionally considered a male domain may firmly believe that the frontlines are too hazardous for women. The prevailing perspective about the role of women in society is that of being nurturers and caregivers. The image of them carrying high caliber weapons, going to war, hunting the enemy, all go against that picture of warmth from an affectionate mother, a cheerful sister, or a caring aunt. Thus, most often these perspectives of what should be the roles of men and women are behind the strong opposition against women entering into the male-dominated ground combat domain.

US situation

In other countries, women have served in the frontlines for decades. Canada, in 1989 has made all positions in the military open to women including combat. Australia, Belgium , South Africa, and South Korea also allow their female soldiers to serve in ground combat. (Skaine, 95). In the US, women have participated in wars since the World War I. Over the centuries and through the different wars that the US have entered into, the women's contribution is not negligible. In the report of Tom Vanden Brook, Pentagon records show that there were already close to 300, 000 women serving the war zones at the beginning of the wars launched in Iraq and also in Afghanistan. At this point, women have flown warplanes, and that is already a combat position. For Venice Armour, the long history of women in the military is enough proof that " we can handle ourselves in the front lines." She was a helicopter pilot in Iraq who was actively engaged in combat. Armour believes that having more women in the military would improve the

institution in the aspect of realizing its mission. She emphasizes that opening women's entry into the front lines is just formalizing what was already taking place for a long time. It does not matter whether you are male or female as long as you get the job done.

The book of Skaine traced the history and development of women's participation in combat. She provided biographies of women who have actually participated in ground combat from the US military. The women who have served in combat positions include Specialist (Spc.) Veronica Alfaro of the US Army and Private First Class Monica L. Brown. Alfaro served in Iraq and Brown was a combat medic. Both officers show that women are capable of being in the frontlines and they were able to do so with honor and excellence. Alfaro received the Bronze Star Medal for Valor in 2008. This award was the US military's fourth-highest combat award. Brown was likewise awarded for assisting comrades despite being within the line of fire. She received the Silver Star, making her the second woman to receive such an award. The last time it was given was in World War II (Preface).

Conclusions

The preceding sections have identified the common arguments against women going into ground combat. This author rebutted these common arguments and has shown that women are capable of achieving same level of physical strength required of those in the infantry because women soldiers go through the same training that their male counterparts receive. As regards complications, the complexities of male and female relations are present in all occupations. It has already been proven that male and female

soldiers can coexist and still do their jobs well, therefore allowing qualified females into the infantry would not present too many challenges that trained men and women cannot handle. Finally, the opposition to women getting into ground combat is driven mainly by traditional perceptions about the roles men and women should maintain in society. These perspectives are already changing.

As Vernice Armour says “ if you can do the job, you should be out there doing it.” Women have the capacity to handle the front lines. History have shown that women have always been important part of a nation’s military. Countries like Israel, Canada, South Africa, South Korea, Australia and Belgium have women in their military, holding even combat positions. The US too had capable women in its military. They have served for a long time. It is but fitting to allow them access to more military positions, even ground combat. Military women are capable and they certainly possess the strength to carry on a mission whether by the air, in the seas, and even on the ground. Even on the frontlines.

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