

# Women in combat research paper examples

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At present, women are normally seen in jobs formerly dominated by men. From CEOs to welders, women have already invaded these jobs and are seen as more efficient than the typical men workers. However, there are still fields which are not predominantly conquered by women such as the military. Although there are women who wish to serve the core, there is a limitation as to how their involvement can be in the front lines. This limitation is argued by feminists and cadets as they can also fight alongside men in the front lines. For the Constitution and for the experts that think; otherwise, women should not fight in the front lines, and may only serve as support and first-aid teams to ensure their safety. Even if women can fight in the same aspect as men in the front lines, they should not be directly involved in combat considering their capacity to nurture life and help heal wounded soldiers far better than men. If women would be allowed to join in combat, they should be given support duties to help casualties regain their strength and assistance.

The exclusion of women in combat is constantly being debated even at the present time, especially the sections in the constitution that specifically exclude women from the front lines. However, as of the present, the policies have already been revised to fit the current context that women can also fight like men. In Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, almost 14, 000 women have fought in the front lines, some fought bravely like their women counterparts. Although they are still restricted in taking assignments that are primarily engaging in direct combat, many have served support positions, which are also in the same risk as those in the front lines. Supporters of repealing the restriction to women soldiers have always pointed out that the restriction is

not clear especially in the nature of conflicts the army has to undertake.

Women soldiers are also raking awards like Silver Star for bravery and leadership. Studies like the Rand Corporation noted that even the military is laying low from the restriction as the conflicts now require more troops and combat assignments regardless of gender . Women are also impossible to be denied to join the core, due to the reasons that makes them choose to fight. Economic situation is normally one of the main reasons why middle-class to lower-class women enters the military since a strong economy decreases job openings for women. With men not interested to be enlisted due to the jobs they receive due to the strong economy, women use this opportunity to be enlisted and earn some money for their families. There is also the dream of having a successful career in the military, which constitutes to benefits such as technological and technical training. Some women also see military service as a means to escape poverty and a chance to see the world .

The position of the US Government pertaining to the position of women in the military strictly abides to the prohibition of all full combat duties for women. This restriction is still enforced in the Navy and in the Air Force and are statutory. The US Constitution has also depicted its refusal and restriction in allowing women enter combat. Two sections of the constitution have identified the policy that reflects the government’s stance over women soldiers. Under Title 10 of the US Constitution, Section 6015, “ women may not be assigned to duty on vessels or in aircraft that are engaged in combat missions”. This is also seen in Title 10 Section 8549 which states that female Air Force members “ may not be assigned to duty in aircraft engaged in combat missions”. These two sections of the Constitution reinforce current

Army, Marine Corps and Air Force statutes under the issue. The two legislative houses also support and endorse the exemption of women from army combat. In one Senate Report dated in 1980, the Senate in behalf of the entire country believes that women should not be allowed to intentionally or be required to engage in combat. The Committees reaffirms the sections of the Constitution pertaining to the matter and such amendment to allow women in combat would meet constitute to various reactions from the public as women could play supporting roles in combat that would also be detrimental for ensuring victory .

Assignment policies have strengthened the exclusion of women in military throughout the years. The Department of Defence have pointed out “ Service members are eligible to be assigned to all positions for which they are qualified, except that women shall be excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level, whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground. “ The Army also sees direct combat means an engagement with the enemy while being directly exposed to enemy fire, causing risks that may lead to death or injury. An additional rule known as a “ risk rule” is also applied to limit women’s involvement in military operations. The risk rule states that “ risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture are proper criteria from closing non-combat positions or units to women, providing that the type, degree, and duration of such risks are equal to or greater than experienced by combat units in the same theatre of operations”. A military quota is also enforced for those who wish to enlist and take the Reservist applications .

Opponents in allowing women enter direct combat argue that women are incapable of working alongside men especially with their physical capacity and capability. With conflicts requiring the use of heavy arms, fast movement, and arm-to-arm combat; women may not be able to become agile and keep up with their enemies. Most conflicts take toll in long durations, which may affect soldiers with weak bodies and health complications. To opponents of allowing women enter conflict, they believe that women are not capable of running long distances while carrying weaponry, carrying weapon loads, or competing physical tasks with men. A testimony was raised by the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces that a 1988 study noted that women recruits were noted to be more vulnerable to exercise-caused injuries than men. Women are also 2.13 times more in risk for lower extremity injuries, and at least 4.71 times in risk for stress fractures. These injuries are the major risks soldiers have to face in combat, rendering some at risk for permanent paralysis and handicap. The testimony also noted that men have sustained 99 days of limited duty due to their injuries while women take a long time to recover and spend 481 days of limited duty. The testimony has also noted that other countries where women are part of combat shows that out of all the female soldiers placed in combat training, only one or two women recruits have met the requirements needed to complete the entire regime. In Canada's case, for example, only one woman managed to reach the standards of the military after the government repealed its 1989 combat ruling over women training. Under the Army's Physical Fitness Test Requirements, soldiers must successfully finish a variety of push-ups, sit-ups,

runs, and additional training such as swimming and martial arts combat .

Concerns over the capacity of women to protect themselves is also raised by Congressmen and Senators as there have been cases in other countries like Russia and Israel that soldiers left their post to protect the women in their ranks. If this happens, there is a possibility that openings would render the troops powerless in resisting possible ambush strikes, and infiltration.

Women may also find themselves vulnerable once facing hand-to-hand combat with opponents far powerful and faster than them. In some wars and ambushes, weapons in hand-to-hand combat range from knives, bayonets, wires, and close combat weapons that are used to mutilate and kill the victims. Should women be allowed to go in frontal combat, the government is subjecting them to violence that would cause a trauma unbearable to recover from .

The emotional capacity of women is also considered as one of the major arguments raised by opponents in allowing women in combat. Aside from the strenuous physical activity and nature of conflict in the battlefield, men are more inclined to keep their emotions in check as compared to women. Although there are men who cannot stand dead bodies, decay and the concept of killing, they are still generally capable of stopping their emotions while in combat. Women are known to be in touch of their emotions and would express it immediately. Opponents on women in combat have cited that this may affect combat efficiency and become a weakness that can be exploited by enemies. There is also the moral aspect of conflict as there is no guarantee that each mission would be free from killing, and once troops are tasked to kill their opponents, women may turn their backs from these

decisions and let the terrorists escape out of pure conscience. There is also a risk that they may not take killing positively and may question the legality of the conflict .

The effects of the war on women are also a key factor for some studies in relation to women in combat, especially those who have managed to be assigned in the frontlines either as a support unit or direct combat. As of today, there are 1. 8 million female veteran soldiers living and fighting for the United States. Since both men and women veterans suffer the same conditions in conflict, as well as the difficulties returning home after the war; the consequences of their position in the conflict may pose risks for the female soldier. Aside from combat injuries, handicaps, and mental trauma; women are mostly reported to be victims of sexual assault while on the field or while in training. The reports of sexual assault in women both on the field and on training have increased from 30% to 70%. The Pentagon admits that the percentage of women sexually abused in the military is not entirely accurate as there are unreported cases of such crime to superiors. It is estimated that only 10% of sexual assault crimes reach the administration due to the possibilities that victims are threatened by their superiors, or the sexual abuse is a form of initiation to be accepted in the cause.

Studies have also shown that with women being barred from combat, those who have managed to get a glimpse of the actual combat may suffer severe posttraumatic stress disorders or behavioural disorders that may cause recovery problems for the veteran or soldier. The organization Swords to Plowshares recorded that many of Iraq War's female veterans have become homeless and suffered intense trauma, causing several behavioural

disorders. There have been cases that female soldiers who came home from the warzone have either committed suicide or committed crimes before killing themselves. The country also has varying laws over female soldiers, especially those returning from war. Female soldiers returning from the field often find it difficult to get services from Veteran or Military hospitals as most of the facilities of these hospitals are organized for male veterans and soldiers .

The time of recovery for female soldiers and the chances for pregnancy while in combat are also raised by critics of women in combat. When a female soldier gets pregnant, two options are allowed – immediate resignation from her current duty or enlistment period, or limited duty with full benefits from medical pay, maternity leave, and immediate deployment once fully recovered. Critics believe that if these pregnant female soldiers hold positions in certain exercises and deployment, such as aircraft piloting, retraining a cadet to replace the female soldier on the duration of their maternity leave or limited duty. Although not all female pilots would get pregnant, there is a possibility that some would despite their promise to refrain from committing to sexual activity while being enlisted in the program. When the US launched Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, female soldiers requesting for discharge due to pregnancy has multiplied four times as compared to the normal rate. Another example is the battleships Acadia and Yellowstone, which were reported to have crew members that are pregnant. According to the reports, Navy or Army doctors would often get frequent visits from women asking for pregnancy test kits because it would be a ticket home.



The current policy set by the Department of Defence allows pregnant soldiers the choice to either stay on their duties or be released from duty. The current policy also does not discourage pregnancy while assigned into operations. However, studies have pointed out that poorly-timed pregnancy may prove to be a problem for the military since it can affect the military's efficiency. The military is also an organization that must enforce strict laws that teach ensigns and soldiers to practice a culture that would teach them how time their actions while on assignment. For female soldiers, they must develop a culture and understanding that getting pregnant must be timed as it would affect the military entirely. Female soldiers must take measures to prevent pregnancies or schedule them once they reach their break or they are in a unemployable period.

After the pregnancy period, parenthood is another concern for many critics, which may also cause problems for the military as this would mean a shrink of their open troops for deployment. Single parents or couples are requested and required to create a child care plan especially once they are deployed for duty. While some are noted to be capable of juggling both deployment and parenthood, there are others that would resign to become full parents to the child. The position left by the parent would then take some time before it can be filled as another soldier would be trained to fill the open slot. Critics also believe that pregnancy and parenthood are not compatible with military service, which is why having women in combat should not be allowed in any form. Recovery from pregnancy is not as easy as recovering from sickness. Women may find complications if they are immediately sent off to combat after a few days of labor, which may prove to be fatal once in combat. The

current military policies also contradict and forego the common sense as to when female soldiers should be sent off back to war after their pregnancy. Female soldiers with six-week old babies or younger will not easily be ready in combat as they would need to take care of the baby's needs that a father could not provide. It is not safe to say that these women would also want to go back into combat soon, especially if they cannot give alternative arrangements for their children .

The final argument that is normally used by officials and some members of the public is the notion that women just does not fit in the military. Many are still unaware as to the extent of women soldiers in the conflicts in the Middle East, and seeing women wearing full battle gear and carrying high-end weaponry is normally seen as out of place in newspapers or in photos. For some experts, women can perform their duties for the army without going into actual combat, so there is no need for them to go into combat like what other groups are pushing for. The army does not teach their troops how to win the conflict by touching the hearts and minds of their enemies, troops learn through their experience. Women are capable of winning the hearts and minds of the people and their enemies and they do not need to have combat skills to win over their opponents. It is also absurd for many cultures to accept women soldiers especially in combat. For Muslims, they believe that women should not take part in the military in any form as they believe that their roles should only be in the home or something related to it, like hospital jobs or health care . In addition to this, America also follows a sense of abiding to the Christian culture and heritage. Allowing women to fight in the frontlines contradicts Christianity's teaching that women should be

protected like children as they represent the light of the house, the one who provides care. Although men and women are created equally, responsibilities of both man and women differ to cater to the differences they have.

Critics against women in combat often concentrate in proving that allowing women to fight alongside men in the side would contradict the roles of men and women which society and religion has dictated since the early times.

Women are the protectors and care givers in the family, not the ones that take the life out of another. Taking a life out of another is a man's role since he must protect his family and himself. Women should be the ones being protected by men, not the other way around. In one statement from the Presidential Commission's Alternative Views department, they stated " Good men respect and defend women. Women should not be required, as the price of equality, to sacrifice this fundamental principle that governs a civilized order". For the Presbyterian Church of America, they stated that it is man's duty to protect women, the weaker gender, and with this fact, women should not be allowed to go in the field and protect the men .

Despite the arguments and sentiments that women can handle the heavy burden of weaponry, killing, and dying for the country; it is still undeniable that women should maintain at the very least, support duties considering their capacity to fight even without directly going in front of the lines. On the one hand, women nowadays can indeed compete to hit their targets, blend well in any situation, and they can sacrifice their life for the country just as how men do. They have advantages men could not replicate accurately especially in war efforts, and are capable of doing both support and front combat strategies. On the other hand, the severity of the front lines and

combat may be detrimental to women and their vulnerability to physical and emotional torture would be crucial for forces to win once they are used as hostages. Their capacity to provide love, care, and support far from the front lines would not only support teams in deployment, but revive life back to the wounded and cripple. Whether or not they are a soldier or not, women are still known to be care-givers to their love ones and to the people they see. The military is not just for anyone, whether male and women. However, the realities that women still have deficiencies that may cause as a weakness in the troops must be understood especially now that women are slowly having their say in the military field.

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