

# Should females in the military be excluded from combat

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Should females in the military be excluded from combat and other hazardous duties? Should females in the military be excluded from combat and other hazardous duties? Women are gentle, they are caring and creators of life not destroyers of life.

Women have been thought of as possessing nothing in common with war. Women today have the opportunity to enlist in the military, they are not allowed to participate in combat units and fight. Who would trust a gun in the hands of a woman who is tender and vulnerable? Females should be excluded because they distract male soldiers could be captured and tortured, and physically or mentally aren't capable of survival. Arguments favor women being excluded from front-line combat. The first argument is that females in combat roles are a distraction for male soldiers. The presence of females on the battlefield has an effect on the male soldiers. It can cause the male soldiers to be distracted causing them not to focus.

Many soldiers believe that they cannot have the same trust in women on the battlefield to perform their duties in combat fighting when it is at a critical time, as they do with fellow male comrades. Women and men involved in romantic relationships in combat units can disrupt the focus and capability to fight. Large percentages of women may become pregnant to escape combat duties. Females placed in combat units will affect the combat unit cohesion and the men who do not want to work with them. Many think that pregnant soldiers definitely affects them as combat ready. During the Gulf War pregnant soldiers could not serve. Many women after learning of their

pregnancies after deployment to Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm were sent home.

Several points of argument are by those who support women serving on the battlefield in combat units. Another argument is by those who are against women serving as well as the existence of the women in combat units and how it affects the male soldiers and vice versa. The next argument is females do not have the physical upper body strength or mental capacity needed to perform and cope with combat roles. There are physical differences that men and women have and also their differences in mentalities. Women have a less dense skeletal frame and more likely to have fractures. Women are at a higher risk for injuries related to exercises than men are. Women are twice as likely then men to sustain lower extremity injuries and five times as likely to havestressfractures.

On average women are smaller and shorter than men with 40 to 50% less strength in the upper body and 20 to 30% maximum oxygen consumption less aerobic capacity, essential for endurance. Women's aerobic capacity is significantly lower than men, and it causes them not to have the stamina necessary to carry heavy equipment for long distances and as quickly as men. Women are more susceptible to becoming extremely tired. Women basically lack the physical strength and stamina essential to perform in direct combat. Women combatant can not carry the backpacks, equipment, weapons, andfoodthe long distances to the combat lines. Because of this, it will be difficult to handle the extremely heavy military equipment used on the field; it would take them longer to manipulate guns, which would give

the enemy the opportunity to shoot first. There would be problems whenever the need arises to carry the body of a wounded soldier off the battlefield.

Women are weaker than men and it causes women certain disadvantages in combat situations. It has been proven that when women are properly trained, they are as tough as the men. Women should be given the same rights as men to be in combat and fight for their country, provided that they pass the same standards of fitness evaluations as men. Women do not have the necessary mental strength to cope with the emotional and mental stress involved. Women will have problems handling the atmosphere of hostility and fear on the battlefield. Women, who are allowed to serve in combat roles can reduce the combat units' effectiveness. When women are brought to combat units men stop relating to each other and start trying to receive the attention of the women.

The very high rate of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) called combat fatigue, or shell-shock) among the male soldiers would exemplify this. Thus in light of these arguments, it may seem to be a logical conclusion that women should not be allowed to fight in the front-line. The above arguments are what people traditionally think of women and are not facts but generalizations. In fact, it is not true for every woman. Most women do not possess the necessary physical strength, there are some strong enough to fight in combat and may even be able to pass the same fitness requirements as men. Combat is an extremely difficult time for every human being, whether woman, or man. The ability to cope with stressful situations is a characteristic that will vary from person to person whether man or woman.

I believe it is not right to exclude women from fighting in combat duties based on their characteristics. Characteristics are possessed by women and men just to a different extent. Women are excluded out of combat duties because of generalizations. Women should be judged according to their personal characteristics and abilities. The most important reason females should be excluded from combat roles is that in combat units the females are at risk of capture. Female POWs are tortured, and possibly sexually assaulted. Female POWs will be subjected to the enemy's techniques of threats of rape, rape, or other forms of sexual misconduct.

Although they are being held captive some are forced to work for the enemy. Female POW's also may face unwanted pregnancies from rape and consensual sex while in captivity. Eighty seven women have been captured held as prisoners of war (POWs) in World War II, two women in Operation Desert Storm, and two women during Operation Iraqi Freedom (Valdosta.edu). Researchers have found over the last 40 years more females are in active duty than previous years, yet not in the front-lines. The statistics show the women on active duty and reserve and guard. The statistics also show women in military conflicts and prisoners of war.

The following statistics illustrates this point. Statistics on Women in the Military | Women Serving Today | | Information courtesy of the Department of Defense and the US Coast Guard. | | Data as of Sept. 30, 2009. | Active Duty | Reserve and Guard | | Women | Total | %Women | | | USANG | 20, 168 | 109, 196 | 18. 5% | |(More than 90% of all career fields in the armed forces | Guard | 71, 190 | 472, 317 | 15. 1% | | are open to women) | Total | | | [pic]

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Women in Military Conflicts | Women Prisoners of War | | Spanish American War | 1, 500 | Civil War| one\* | | World War I | 35, 000 | World War II | 90\*\* | | World War II (era) | 400, 000 | Desert Storm | two | | Korea (in theater) | 1, 000 | Operation Iraqi Freedom | three | | Vietnam (in theater) | 7, 500 | \*known | | | \*\*includes one American Red Cross and three Army Civilians | | | | | Revised 02/09/10 | | Grenada (deployed) | 170 | | | Panama (deployed) | 770 | | | Desert Storm (in theater) | 41, 000 | | <http://www.womensmemorial.org>

No doubt there is much greater probability of acts of torture, sexual molestation, threats of rape, and rape with the existence of women on the front-line. Is it possible for men to be sexually molested or raped also? Even though it is possible, rape of a male is less likely (Bork, 2005). The thought of women tortured, sexually molested, and raped in captivity is a reason for excluding women from direct combat roles. Statistics show how women in the military sexually assaulted developed Post Traumatic-Stress Disorder. The following statistics illustrates this point. Combat PTSD Lifetime occurrence (prevalence) in combat veterans 10-30%.

In the past year alone the number of diagnosed cases in the military jumped 50%- and that's just diagnosed cases. Studies estimate that one in every five military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan has Post Traumatic-Stress Disorder (PTSD). 20 % of the soldiers who have been deployed in the past 6 years have PTSD. That's over 300, 000. 17% of combat troops are women; 71% of female military personnel develop PTSD due to sexual assault. <http://www.healmyptsd.com>

S. soldiers polled by researchers in Iraq decided by reasoning 31% females and 41% male soldiers stated that women should not be allowed in combat roles Charles Moskos. The stated consensus in the United States states women should not be in the front-line units and it does not appear that any changes to that policy are likely to happen. Women do not have the upper body strength or the maximum oxygen consumption, she has to take in necessary for heavy lifting, capable to sustain prolonged stressful effort and survival of being in a combat role (Bowman, 2005). The current version of the "ground combat exclusion policy," by The Defense Department that was established in 1994, states: "Military personnel are able to be put in every position that they meet the qualifications for, with exception to women who will not be included to be assigned to combat units." Women are allowed below brigade level where combat is to take place, just not in combat arms battalions. The "ground combat exclusion policy" states that "direct combat" is fighting the enemy in a combat unit with fellow soldiers with weapons.

The enemy is shooting at the combat unit and fellow soldiers are trying to protect themselves from the enemy in self defense, whether it is from using physical force or firing back (Broadwell, 2009). Considering all the arguments, females should not be allowed to enter combat units even if they desire. Females risk the safety of their fellow comrades in combat units' that can lead to poor judgment at a critical time. The presence of females in combat units' can lead to fraternization, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. Females do not have the same physical strength as their male

counterparts essential for endurance. Women are physically weaker than men and therefore standards would be lowered and the units' effectiveness jeopardized. Females do not possess the necessary mental strength and therefore they aren't able to cope with the mental and emotional stressors involved on the battlefield.

Women captured are raped repeatedly, tortured, and even become pregnant by their captors. Females in the military should be excluded from combat and all hazardous duties.