

Women in combat rough draft

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Women fighting in combat is a topic that has stirred a lot of controversy in the last few months. This comes about from the uplifting of the ban that did not let women fight in combat. Though the Women's Armed Services Integration Act in 1948, created a corps for women in every branch of military, it was also the beginning of when women would not be included in combat. (Mackenzie 1,) Whenever the topic of war comes to mind, the one's usually pictured in war are men. People tend to forget that men are not the only ones involved in war or the military. In January 1994, a memorandum from then Secretary of Defense Les Aspin rescinded the " risk rule" barring women from any positions that could expose them to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture; the rule was replaced by the " direct ground combat assignment rule," which more narrowly tailored the restriction to frontline combat positions. " (Mackenzie, 1) This would completely change the way women in the military would be. Though not as big in number, women still do have a significant role in the military today. They can join the Military but they can have no part in combat.

This limits the kinds of jobs that women can have. Woman in the United States want to feel equal to the man and the stigma that war is a " man's thing " has created a lot of controversy, especially in the society that we live in now. Women in our society are breaking away from the boundaries set from the past generations. Women are now taking and seeking roles that were once considered only for men. Just like in our society, women are trying to advance in the military. Advancing in the military, not only has to be being able to fight in combat, but also reaching some of the highest military rankings.

The leap for women being able to fight in combat came this past January, when the United State's Department of Defense, uplifted the ban on women being able to fight in combat. A woman representing her country by joining the military is something that not only takes great sacrifice, but courage as well, and they deserve the utmost respect. If a woman is willing to risk her life for the sake of her country, just like the men, should be allowed to partake in combat. War is much physical as it is mental. Opponents argue that women are physically not capable to succeed out in the battlefield.

If a soldier is not physically capable to perform, they could possibly endanger themselves or their fellow soldiers. Soldiers out on the battle field carry various items like electronic equipment, weapons, ammunition, heavy body armor, and enough water, weighing anywhere between fifty to hundred pounds. There is no denying that women on average do have forty to fifty percent less upper-body strength compared to men, but it is not one hundred percent certain that certain women are not fully capable. The statistic that women are a lot weaker in their upperbody comes up a lot, but it is stretched from the truth. The physical fitness argument, which tends to focus on differences between average male and female bodies, is also undermined by the fact that women who join the military tend to be more fit than the average American. Additional training and conditioning further decrease the gap between female and male service members, and evidence indicates that women usually benefit substantially from fitness-training programs. " (Mackenzie, 1) To join the military there is this mental and physical toughness that one has to have or has to overcome by the time that they are about to be deployed.

Yes, there is some women that are not physically capable to perform in the military, but at the same time, there are many men as well. Needless to say, there is a certain kind of person that is needed when joining the military. This goes beyond male and female. Character has a lot more to do with the success of an individual than the sex does. Regardless of this, the opposition still argues that women are still not physically capable and this could seriously put people in jeopardy.

Here in the United States, opponents of allowing women fight in combat, strongly believe that women are not physically capable, but in other Countries this has been disproven. " In the 1970s, the Canadian military conducted trials that tested women's physical, psychological, and social capacity for combat roles. The results informed the final decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to remove Canada's female combat exclusion. After similar tests, Denmark also lifted its combat ban in the late 1980s. (Mackenzie, 1) If other countries have dismantled this theory that women are not physically capable, why has the United State's not followed? Qualifications for being able to fight on the battle field should be tested on whether or not the individual is physically and mentally fit, the sex of the individual should not be the determining factor for why they cannot be out in combat. The United States has had a rich history of patriotism. Citizens, for the most part, are proud of the nation that they live in. When one looks outside for the fourth of July, all one sees is red, white and blue.

A lot of Americans have a great sense of pride in the nation that they live in. Most Americans have a sense of recognition for the sacrifices that some people have made in order to make this a very prosperous country. Among

those that Americans feel that deserve the recognition are ones that serve in the military. There is the upmost respect and pride that comes along when an American sees a soldier that is fighting for their country. According to Pew Research Center for the People and Press, " Two-thirds (66%) support allowing women in the military to serve in ground units that engage in close combat, while just 26% are opposed. More than half of Americans are in support of the uplift of this ban. As an American, one has the god given right to choose if they want to defend their country. Upon deciding this, a lot of courage and pride has to come for one to say that they want to join the military. Though women only make up fifteen percent of the United State's military, or roughly two hundred and fifteen thousand women currently serving, they still deserve the same amount of respect given to the men. Women joining the military are aware of the disadvantages that they are going to face just because of the simple fact that they are women.

They realize at a very early start that war for men and war for women are two distinct things. It is a given that women are much more susceptible to negative aspects of war like sexual assault and sexual harassment. The fifteen percent of women that make up the military have chosen to overlook these negativities and have chosen to join the military regardless. These women are aware of the risks and dangerous and still have chosen to join the military. The courage, dedication and willingness of women in the military alone, should be the reason for why they should be allowed to fight in combat.

The debate on women fighting in combat has a similar history to the debate on the policy " Don't Ask Don't Tell. " In 1950, President Truman signed the

Uniform Code of Military Justice. This policy sets up discharge rules for homosexual members or anyone seen acting out in homosexual ways (Cristina Rivero, 1). This was the beginning of disallowing openly gays from joining the military. During Ronald Reagan's presidency, it was made clear from his staff that " Homosexuality is incompatible with military service. Those that were believed to act in homosexual ways or were gay were discharged because of the fear that homosexuals would disrupt the order of the military. According to the supporters of this ban, the disruption was going to be so great, that the military as a whole was in jeopardy. Many people felt, that this " would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability. " (Wiki, 1) In essence, military officials were scared that soldiers would end up betraying or not performing to their peak if there were an openly gay member in their unit.

This would all change In 1993 when President Clinton, ordered that a bill be passed that military members would not be asked their sexual orientation. This would become to be known as " Don't Ask, Don't tell. " In simple terms, if one was gay and was in the military, one could not openly express themselves as being gay. This stirred a lot of controversy because people believed that one should be able to express their sexual orientation without repro caution or fear of being discriminated against. Even though in 2003, President Clinton would want the " Don't ask, don't tell" policy removed, it would not come about until years later.

In 2011, don't ask, don't tell would come to an end. As the end of don't ask, don't tell came, a lot of military officials came out. Several high ranking

military officials decided it was the appropriate time to finally come out. For years, the fear that openly gay members would be detrimental to the military kept many military men and women from being open about their sexuality. There was such a great fear when in reality there was minimal or even no consequences from openly gay members serving in the military. This is much like the debate on women fighting in combat today.

Women have been serving in the military for decades. Hundreds of women have been hurt and even killed while proudly serving their country. With the proper training, any military member should be able to perform at their peak. If someone is not physically, mentally ready to be out on the battlefield, one should not be out there. There have been gay members in the military that have had the proper training leading to successful military careers. The fact of their sexual orientation did not limit or hurt them while serving in the military. Like men, women have been serving their country with honor and pride for decades.

But unlike men, the women in the military do not tend to receive as much recognition for their service to their country. Women may only make up fifteen percent of the military, but they have been excluded from twenty percent of the jobs in the military. " According to the Department of Defense, ending the ban will open up 237, 000 positions to women. " (Hallman, 1) With the uplift of this ban, more opportunities will be opened for women not only in the types of jobs that they can have, but the rankings that they could possibly reach. Sexual assaults in the military towards women tend to go unreported.

By allowing women to reach higher-rankings, there could be the possibility that sexual assaults go down or more likely to go reported. " Recent surveys of female veterans found that close to a third were victims of rape or assault while they were serving, which is double the rate in the civilian population. " (Hallman, 1) More often than not, sexual assaults go unreported in the military. By having women as higher-ranking officials, the sexual assault epidemic in the military may start being addressed properly. The proper steps in reporting sexual assaults may take place.

There is always this fear that there will be severe reprobations if women come forward. Women may feel a lot more comfortable reporting sexual assault to a women high-ranking official. Allowing women to fight in combat will be a positive movement that may even get rid or limit the negative aspect of the military. During war, soldiers encounter a variety of difficult tasks, mishaps and dangerous situations. All of these things are inevitable and are a part of war. Soldiers are put through situations that are not only physically but also mentally exhausting. Because of this a lot of soldiers develop PTSD or post traumatic stress disorder. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. " (Mayo Clinic) From 2009, post-traumatic stress disorder diagnoses have increased in women from fifteen percent up to twenty-two percent. Men have increased from nine percent to fourteen percent in the diagnosis of PTSD. (Anderson, 1) This alone raises a lot of questions whether women are mentally stable enough to be on the front lines.

Though it is true that women are being diagnosed at a much higher rate than men, there are probably a lot of men that are not willing to come forward and admit that they have post-traumatic stress disorder. Men in general tend to not want to come forward because of the fear that they will be looked as less of a man or less honorable. Women on the other hand are much more likely than men to come forward and because of this, the statistic may not be as accurate and be swayed. Women are traditionally viewed as these caring, emotional, and even soft individuals when compared to men.

But realistically, in the military all of these characteristics of traditional women are dropped. It takes a certain kind of individual, man or woman, to join the military. The women that do decide to join the military are not like the traditional women. These women are tough, rigid individuals that are not much different to their male counterparts. The military lifestyle is a lot different than the civilian lifestyle. Yes it is true that women officially may not be allowed to fight on the frontlines, but that does not mean that women are not exposed to the same dangers as the men who are.

USA Today States, " since the start of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, 292, 000 women have served in those combat zones out of a total of almost 2. 5 million, Pentagon records show. In both wars, 152 women have died from combat or noncombat causes, records show, and 958 have been wounded in action. " Much like the men, some women that have served for their country have died. This just goes to show that even though women typically aren't in the battlefield, the risk of them dying is significant. The military should be black and white not male or female.

A lot of people are calling the uplifting of women fighting in combat an “experiment”. Is it really an experiment or just an official document that allows women to fight in combat? Women in the military are exposed to the same dangers as much as the men are. With the uplifting of this ban, men and women will now receive the same training essential for the front lines. Both men and women should receive this training in order to guarantee that both will be successful. If a soldier is not prepared mentally or physically, they should not be allowed to fight in combat.

There should be rigorous testing on each individual soldier determining if they are combat ready. The sex of the soldier should not be the deciding factor whether or not someone is combat ready. There are plenty of men that are physically and mentally ready, but there is also plenty of women as well. Women are becoming more equal in our society vastly due to the fact that they are fully capable of doing any task that men can perform.

Citations

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