



“WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO DESTROY THE LAST
GOOD THING
MEN HAVE?”

UNDERSTANDING RESISTANCE TO WOMEN IN COMBAT JOBS

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*THE OPINIONS PRESENTED ARE THE AUTHOR'S OWN AND NOT THOSE OF U.S. NAVY OR THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE*

“These guys were raised to think that girls were weaker and inferior, and put all their identity and manhood in what they do. So when these guys see women in the field, they panic, thinking ‘oh my God, what does that make me?’”

–Senior Noncommissioned Officer (E-8), US Navy SEAL

NOT NEW, ONLY NEWLY ACKNOWLEDGED



A LONG HISTORY



A NATO PERSPECTIVE

2016 Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations

2014

70.3%

2015

84.6%

2016

96.3%

**of NATO member nations have all military
positions open to women.**

WHAT DOES “COMBAT” MEAN?, ANYWAY?

1943: Gen Marshall commissions—and hides—study finding mixed-gender combat units are more effective, cohesive, and professional

1948: “duty in aircraft engaged in combat and to vessels engaged in, or likely to be engaged in combat missions”

1988: “Risk Rule”: risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture were

equal to or greater than the risks in the combat units they supported

1994: “Direct ground combat is engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force’s personnel. Direct ground combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect.”

WOMEN ARE BORN. MEN ARE MADE.

Masculinity must be proven over and over again.



*“there is still the widespread presumption that a man is **unproven in his manhood** until he has engaged in collective, violent, physical, struggle against someone categorized as ‘the enemy.’”-Enloe, 1983*

*Combat is synonymous with power;
being a “combat operator” implies having power*



IF A WOMAN CAN DO IT, HOW DO I PROVE I'M



Women in combat “tramples the male ego”-General Robert H. Barrow, Commandant of the Marine Corps, 1980.

IGNORING OPERATIONAL REALITIES



“A lot of the guys lost 30 pounds in the first two weeks. The women barely lost any weight. And they starve you in Ranger School. I think that was one area where women actually had an advantage over the guys.”-Major, U.S. Army



“Diversity of qualifications and resources ...ensure that peace and security are achieved and maintained.”

–LtGen Steven Shepro, US Army. Deputy Chairman, NATO Military Committee



Questions?

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