

## **Fact Sheet: Women in Service Review (WISR) Implementation**

### **Background: The Road We've Taken**

In light of the outstanding performance of more than 280,000 women who deployed and served alongside men in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Department of Defense in 2011 – 2012 conducted an extensive review of all laws and policies governing the assignment of women in the Armed Forces.

The primary policy restricting the service of female members of the U.S. Armed Forces was the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR). It consisted of one overarching prohibition against the assignment of women to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground and four additional discretionary restrictions:

- 1) Berthing and Privacy: Military Departments could restrict positions where the costs of appropriate berthing and privacy agreements were prohibitive.
- 2) Co-Location: Military Departments could restrict units and positions that were doctrinally required to physically co-locate and remain with direct ground combat units that were otherwise closed to women.
- 3) Long Range Reconnaissance and Special Operations Forces: Military Departments could restrict certain positions involving long range reconnaissance operations and Special Operations Forces missions.
- 4) Physically Demanding Tasks: Military Departments could restrict positions, which included physically demanding tasks that would exclude the vast majority of women.

As a result of the 2011-2012 review, the Department rescinded the outdated Co-Location Rule from the 1994 DGCDAR and notified Congress of its intent to open 14,325 positions to women in the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. In February 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta followed his decision to open those 14,325 positions with a directive to conduct an additional in-depth review of the remaining gender-based barriers to service.

After an additional nine months of study, the Joint Chiefs of Staff unanimously determined that the time had come to do away with the remaining barriers restricting the service of women in the U.S. Armed Forces and recommended to the Secretary of Defense that he rescind the 1994 DGCDAR.

On January 24, 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey announced the rescission of the 1994 DGCDAR and directed each Military Service, as well as United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), to develop plans to implement the change. Specifically, they were tasked to:

- o Review and validate all occupational standards to ensure they are occupationally and operationally relevant;
- o Complete all studies by Fall 2015; and
- o Ensure full implementation by January 1, 2016, or submit an exception to policy to the Secretary of Defense.

On February 27, 2013, the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (AUSD(P&R)) directed the Secretaries of the Military Departments and USSOCOM to provide quarterly implementation progress reports to the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the AUSD(P&R). The Services produced detailed plans outlining how they intended to implement the Secretary's directive. Each Service and USSOCOM articulated a formal process for reviewing any changes that might need to be made to their doctrine, organizations, training and education pipelines, or facilities. Their plans further included strategies for addressing any potential cohesion, morale, or

leadership issues. On May 21, 2013, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel reviewed the Military Service and USSOCOM implementation plans and the plans were subsequently provided to Congress and publically released on June 21, 2013.

Since 2013, the Department has provided 14 Congressional notifications, opening 24 occupations and more than 111,000 positions.

### **Implementation Process 2013-2015**

Throughout 2013-2015, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff held quarterly sessions with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to review Service and USSOCOM progress, while semi-annual updates of the same were provided to the Secretary of Defense. The Office of the Under Secretary of the Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Military Services, and USSOCOM held regular meetings throughout 2013-2015 to review progress, share best practices and lessons learned, and glean insight from each other's implementation planning progress.

The Services conducted more than 30 primary studies and reviews to inform their implementation of the policy change.

- Primary studies by the Army included the U.S. Army Gender Integration Study, conducted by Army Training and Doctrine Command, which considered institutional and cultural factors associated with gender integration, and the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine task assessment conducted by Army Medical Command, which considered physical factors.
- The Marine Corps conducted various studies and reviews, including the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCEITF), which was established to compare the performance of all-male and gender-integrated units in the various ground combat missions performed by Marines. The study was specifically designed to determine the impact of gender integration in small units on mission effects, fatigue, workload, cohesion and readiness.
- The Navy conducted extensive research in their Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) and Special Warfare Combatant Craft (SWCC) communities. They tasked the Naval Health Research Center, to conduct a series of focus groups and surveys with SWCC and SEAL subject matter experts (SMEs). The SMEs were asked to describe a variety of typical activities during "in-theater" scenarios, identify relevant personality and physical attributes, and determine whether their initial training was relevant to jobs performed in-theater. The Navy used this information to ensure the physical standards required for these positions were operationally relevant.
- USSOCOM conducted three primary studies: a Joint Special Operations Command University study that looked at unit cohesion, a broad analysis of focus group and survey data sponsored by the University of Kansas, and a RAND study that looked at the impact of female integration on combined operations with indigenous forces.
- The Air Force conducted studies regarding and physical fitness tests and standards for Battlefield Airmen, recommended Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery standards for Battlefield Airmen, and a validation review and documentation for Combat Rescue Officer, Special Tactics Officer, Combat Control Team, and Special Operations Weather Officer assessment programs.
- Additionally, extensive consultation was conducted with our partners and allies, to include Australia, Canada, and Israel to capture integration lessons learned.

On March 2, 2015, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness directed the Secretaries of the Military Departments to certify that their occupational standards are occupationally specific, operationally relevant, and in accordance with federal law, pursuant to requirements set forth in the Fiscal Year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. Additionally, the Secretaries of the Military Departments were directed to require his or her Inspector General to implement a compliance inspection program to assess whether the Services' occupational standards, together with their implementing methodologies, are legally compliant.

On June 21, 2015, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics issued guidance to the Secretaries of the Military Departments regarding combat equipment for female military members, directing them to take immediate steps to ensure that combat equipment provided to female service members is properly designed and fitted to accommodate their requirements, and that it meets required standards for wear and survivability. They were also directed to continue to monitor and address female sizing and fit issues in current and future combat equipment development and programs of record.

On September 30, 2015, the Secretaries of the Military Departments submitted their final recommendations for those occupations and positions that remained closed to women to the Secretary of Defense, along with certifications of their occupational standards.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps requested two broad exceptions to policy from the Secretary of the Navy and consisted of 48,779 positions in the Active and Reserve Components of the Marine Corps and Navy:

- One for specific military occupational specialties (Infantry Officer, Infantry Weapons Officer, Rifleman, Light Armored Vehicle Crewman, Reconnaissance Man, Machine Gunner, Mortarman, Infantry Assaultman, Antitank Missileman, Infantry Squad Leader, Infantry Unit Leader, Special Operations Officer, Critical Skills Operator, Fire Support Man).
- One for types of units (Infantry Regiments and below, Reconnaissance Battalions, Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalions, Force Reconnaissance Battalions, Marine Raider Companies, Combat Engineer/Assault Companies).

The Secretary of the Navy did not approve the Commandant of the Marine Corps' request, but did forward the requests for an exception to the Secretary of Defense for his review. After careful review and consultation with key leaders, to include the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense decided to open all remaining occupations and positions to women with no exceptions.

**Today, the Department is opening to women the remaining approximately 213,600 closed positions spanning some 52 closed military occupational specialties. This announcement culminates nearly five years of extensive research, analysis, and scrutiny.**

### **Final Implementation Mechanics and Timeline**

Following the required Congressional waiting period, these occupations, positions, and platforms will be available for the assignment of all men or women who meet the validated occupational standards. Anyone, regardless of gender, who can meet operationally relevant standards, will have the opportunity to serve in any position.

The Secretary of Defense has directed the Secretaries of the Military Departments and Chiefs of the Military Services to provide their final, detailed plans to the AUSD(P&R) no later than January 1, 2016, detailing their timelines for integrating newly opened occupations and positions using their existing recruiting, accession, training, and assignment procedures. Positions will be open for accession as soon as

practicable following the congressional notification period and in accordance with final approved service implementation plans. The Services will be prepared to execute those plans not later than April 1, 2016. Deputy Secretary Bob Work, and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Paul Selva, will work with the services and AUSD/P&R office to oversee the final implementation.

The Military Departments will be mindful of the extensive work that has already been completed towards this effort. Moving forward, the Military Department efforts will consider seven overarching concerns: transparent standards, population size, physical demands and physiological differences, conduct and culture, talent management, operating abroad, and periodic assessment and adjustment.

The Department's goal is to ensure that the mission is carried out by the best-qualified and the most capable Service members and that mission effectiveness be retained. The Department will continue to proceed in a measured and responsible way that ensures the success of individual service members and preserves the unit effectiveness, readiness, cohesion, and quality of the All-Volunteer Force.

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## **WOMEN IN SERVICE REVIEW STUDIES**

1. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness: RAND report regarding Establishing Gender-Neutral Standards for Closed Occupations.
2. United States Army: Gender Integration Study conducted by Training and Doctrine Command.
3. United States Army: Medical Command (MEDCOM) United States Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine task assessment.
4. United States Army: Medical Command Injury & Attrition Rates Working Group.
5. United States Army: U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy Risk Assessment & Suitability Analysis.
6. United States Army: One-time Pilot program at U.S. Army Ranger School.
7. United States Marine Corps: Marine Corps Operations Analysis Division – Line of Effort 1 Thematic Research, Expanded Unit Assignments Study.
8. United States Marine Corps: Marine Corps Training and Education Command Line of Effort 2 Research Assessment and Findings Final Report.
9. United States Marine Corps: Marine Corps Operational Testing and Evaluation Activity Line of Effort 3 - Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force Experimental Assessment Report Final Report.
10. United States Marine Corps: University of Pittsburgh Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force Research Final Report.
11. United States Marine Corps: Center for Naval Analyses - An Analysis of Female Representation and Marines' Performance in Aviation and Logistics Occupations.
12. United States Marine Corps: RAND Implications of Integrating Women into the Marine Corps Infantry Report.
13. United States Marine Corps: Michigan State University Gender Diversity in Male-Dominated Teams – The Impact of Compositional Configurations Over Time.
14. United States Marine Corps: Marine Corps Operations Analysis Division – The Experience of Female Combat Engineers and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Study Results
15. United States Marine Corps: U.S. Naval Behavioral Health Needs Assessment Survey Report.
16. United States Marine Corps: Marine Corps Operations Analysis Division Smart Adaptations for the Gender-Integrated Marine Corps Final Report.
17. United States Marine Corps: Center for Naval Analyses – A Quick-Look Analysis of the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force Baseline Climate Survey.
18. United States Marine Corps: Center for Strategic and International Studies Red Team analysis of Marine Corps research and analysis on gender integration.

19. United States Marine Corps: Center for Naval Analyses - Assessing How Delayed Entry Program Physical Fitness is Related to In-Service Attrition, Injuries, and Physical Fitness.
20. United States Marine Corps: Center for Naval Analyses - Relationship between Initial Strength Test (IST) and Attrition, Injury, and Physical Performance.
21. United States Marine Corps: Center for Naval Analyses - An Analysis of Marine Corps Female Recruit Training Attrition.
22. United States Marine Corps: Center for Naval Analyses - Implementing Force Integration: Issues and Challenges.
23. United States Marine Corps: Naval Health Research Center - Analysis in Support of the Women in Service Restriction Review Study.
24. United States Marine Corps: Military Medicine - Changes in Combat Task Performance Under Increasing Loads in Active Duty Marines.
25. United States Marine Corps: Marine Corps Force Innovation Office – International Studies (United Kingdom, Israel, Canada, Australia).
26. United States Navy: Center for Naval Analyses Enlisted Women in Submarine Task Force study to provide analytic support on sustainability of female submariners and consider effect of integration of women in submarines on the rest of the Navy.
27. United States Navy: Naval Health Research Center evaluation and validation of gender neutral standards for the selection of Sea, Air, and Land and Special Warfare Combatant Craft candidates along with conducting a comprehensive analysis of the physical demands for Sea, Air, and Land and Special Warfare Combatant Craft operations.
28. United States Air Force: Air Education and Training Command study to develop and validate occupationally-specific, operationally-relevant, science-based criterion physical fitness tests and standards for Battlefield Airman specialties.
29. United States Air Force: Air Force Personnel Center study on recommended Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery standards for Battlefield Airman specialties.
30. United States Air Force: Air Force Personnel Center validation review and documentation for Combat Rescue Officer, Special Tactics Officer, Combat Control Team, and Special Operations Weather Team assessment programs.
31. United States Special Operations Command: Joint Special Operations University study on Special Operations Forces Mixed-Gender Elite Teams.
32. United States Special Operations Command: RAND report on Implications of Indigenous Cultures on Mixed-Gender Teams.
33. United States Special Operations Command: University of Kansas Project Diane study exploring potential barriers and benefits of integrating females into Army Special Forces positions closed to females.