



DACOWITS Public Statement
Submitted by Dr. Ellen L. Haring
Program Director, Women In International Security
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Women in International Security (WIIS) is an international organization with 6 US chapters and 23 international affiliates. Today our organization is expressing concern over the possible repeal or roll back of newly instated policies that allow US servicewomen access to all military occupations and positions. WIIS tracks, researches and supports the full integration of women in national militaries. Right now the US is on track to join 15 other national militaries including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden in affording women full access to all military occupations. There should be no hint of backtracking to times when women were excluded from areas of military service.

All of the countries that afford women full access to all occupations have experienced no degradation in the fighting capabilities of ground combat units. Indeed, many countries report improved professionalism and increased capabilities after integration women. The US itself found that Ranger Teams that included women via the CST program had a 20% greater likelihood of mission success than teams that had no women.

Furthermore, the US Army is having great success with women training for ground combat specialties. For example, in October, 10 women graduated from the first integrated infantry officer course and 3 of those women were on the commandant's list which means they ranked among the top 20% of their class. Women are attending Ranger School and other advanced infantry skills courses similar to their male counterparts. Additionally, just last week 13 women graduated from the first integrated Armor officer course. Of those women 2 ranked in the top 20% of the class. Clearly, despite all of the naysayers, women aren't just eking by, many are excelling. Most notably, the first female Infantry Captains, both Ranger qualified, were assigned to the 82nd Airborne over the past 60 days.

More significantly, despite predictions that there would be a low propensity for women to enlist in combat occupations, close to 200 women have already contracted for Army infantry and armor occupations this year. Additionally, the first non-commissioned officer completed reclassification training last month and is the first female NCO within the Cavalry Scout occupation. They begin training in early 2017 and will be assigned to the same units with the first women infantry and armor officers.

The Marines have had less success with recruiting and training women for infantry and armor occupations. Indeed, despite the fact that more than 130 enlisted women successfully completed infantry training during a trial period only 3 of the qualified women have actually been allowed to move into a combat arms unit and no women officers have completed infantry officer training nor are any in the training pipeline.

At the last DACOWITS meeting The Basic School Commander reported that eight women officers have successfully completed the Combat Endurance Test (CET) at the Marine Corps' Infantry Officer Course (IOC). Colonel Clingan further explained that the CET is a screening tool used to weed out officers who are not prepared to pass the rest of the course. Clingan said that six of the eight women had passed the CET in the top 50 percent of their class and two of the women passed in the top 10 percent of their class. All 8 women were later eliminated during hikes when loads began to exceed 120 pounds.

When committee members asked why enlisted Marine women had been so much more successful in infantry training, Clingan said that infantry officer's must be able to carry a "sustainment load" of up to 152 pounds for 9.3 miles at a 3-mile-per-hour pace in order to graduate from their course, while loads are much lighter, 62 pounds, for enlisted Marines. According to Clingan, basic enlisted infantry training trains Marines to a much lower bar with the expectation that once they reach their units they will be "trained up" to meet the 152 lb standard.

Later in the briefing the Marines showed a slide that quoted the FY15 NDAA which requires that occupational standards "accurately predict performance of *actual, regular and recurring* duties of a military occupation." During the break, I asked a Marine representative how often Marines *actually* carry 152 pounds 9+ miles; he said "*infrequently.*"

A further informal poll of a few Marine infantry officers yielded some surprising responses. One infantry officer with two combat deployments, one as a Weapons Company Commander said, "I'm trying to imagine the type of fighting and tactical task that requires you to move around administratively in an AO with 150-plus pounds on your back... Nothing is impossible, but trying to come up with a situation, mission and METT-T where this would be required is... a unicorn in my opinion." I also received this response, "I won't lie, I can't get my mental digits around 152 pounds. At an actual unit, that is just a non-starter to me (but) I can totally see the staff at IOC running wild just to see what the lieutenants can handle and endure as part of the rite of passage that is IOC." And then there was this response; "On the regular infantry battalion side, I would challenge anyone to go to Camp Pendleton and find a platoon or company in the fleet that can meet that standard (152 pound load/9 miles/3+ mph) or that is spending the time to work up to that standard."

A Marine infantry officer suggested a review of the Infantry Training and Readiness Manual (T&R) might be enlightening. The Infantry T&R manual says a "sustainment load is the load taken from the point of origin into the assembly area. The sustainment load will be such that the average infantry Marine will be able to conduct limited movement within the confines of Naval shipping, embark and debark aircraft or amphibious craft, and limited marching from the landing zone into a secured area." There is nothing in the T&R manual that requires Marines to march over 9 miles at the rate of 3 mile per hour carrying a sustainment load. So why is it a requirement to graduate from the Infantry Officer Course?

This begs bigger questions of the Marine Corps standards. Where did they get them? Who validated them and who can actually meet them? They don't appear to be operationally based and Marine infantry units are not required to meet them. They certainly aren't *regular or recurring* requirements to be a Marine infantry officer which means they don't meet legal standards.

The Marine Corps has consistently slow rolled the directive that they received to integrate their units and today they show little progress in opening all occupations and units.