

INFORMATION PAPER

ATSH-IP / DAPE-ARI-RS
17 Aug 17

SUBJECT: DACOWITS RFI #1

Purpose: Respond to DACOWITS RFI #1 “When was the recruit/entry level training first gender integrated and why? What have been the positive and negative effects on warrior ethos, current gender integration efforts, and on occupational standards? What have been the lessons learned from gender integration of the Infantry, Officer Basic Course?”

1. Facts:

a. The Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course (I-BOLC-B) has been executed as a gender integrated course since June 2016. The Armor Basic Officer Leader Course (A-BOLC-B) has been executed as a gender integrated course since Jul 2016.

b. The Infantry and Armor One Station Unit Training courses have been executed as gender integrated courses since February/March 17. Junior enlisted female recruits were placed in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP), allowing female Officers to complete training and reach units identified for gender integration at least 30 days prior to junior enlisted female Soldiers' arrival in accordance with the Army's Leaders First policy.

c. There have been no significant lessons learned related to the conduct of I-BOLC-B during the first year of gender integrated training that necessitate a change in the content or execution of the course. The following general observations are noted regardless of gender:

(1) Lieutenants are Lieutenants: I-BOLC-B graduation standards represented the minimum essential level of performance required to be awarded Area of Concentration (AOC) 11A. The ability of any Officer to distinguish themselves from their peers and achieve a higher level of performance is based on individual commitment and drive. Three of the twenty-four female graduates have earned, “Commandant's List” distinction by their performance and peer evaluations. This is a statistically similar rate as observed in male I-BOLC-B graduates.

(2) Transparency of Standards: Regardless of training population, the need for all courses to have clearly defined, articulated, and recognized standards of performance that are equally and impartially enforced across all segments of the student populations by professional cadre members is critical to success. The publication of the I-BOLC-B Individual Student Assessment Plan (ISAP) on the course's web page allows all students to see what is expected of them throughout the course and the standards to which they will be held accountable. Understanding the specific requirements and grading system allow Officers to have a greater control over their performance and ultimately their class ranking.

d. The Army Research Institute (ARI) conducted end of training surveys and focus groups for the first two integrated I-BOLC and A-BOLC classes as well as three other gender integrated BOLC classes. Due to the small sample size (30 female Officers have enrolled to date), performance differences between I-BOLC-B male and female students cannot be empirically evaluated. Female Officers represented less than 1.5% of the FY16-17 Training loads to date. The focus groups revealed very few areas of concern in the training environment.

(1) Training Environment. Male and female students were more accustomed to and comfortable with training in a mixed gender environment than instructors but instructors quickly became comfortable in a mixed gender training environment.

(2) Physical Standards. Maintaining clear and consistent physical fitness standards improved warrior ethos. The female students unofficially evaluated their APFT performance based on the 'Male 22-25 Age Group' standards, which led to improved unit cohesion. All students reported the High Physical Demands Tasks standards were too low to serve as a physical fitness standard for combat arms.

(3) Consistent Application of Standards. Male and female students reported concern over consistency of disciplinary actions, recycling officers, and availability of coaching based on gender. Instructors stated that standards and coaching were applied consistently across gender.

(4) Field Hygiene. Field hygiene for males and females should be taught by a medical professional to all students. Later classes incorporated this recommendation.

e. Infantry and Armor OSUTs began in February and March 2017, respectively. ARI has not completed data collection for the Infantry and Armor OSUTs, therefore it is premature to provide any recommendations or lessons learned.

f. The performance of the initial COHORT of volunteers and YG14 and 15 VTIP Officers may not be indicative of future performance, particularly when the Army institutes forced branching regardless of gender into the Infantry.

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