



REPORT TO CONGRESS
ON
WOMEN IN THE SERVICES REVIEW

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Executive Summary

The Department of Defense submits this report in response to section 526 of the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013” and the Senate Armed Services Committee’s National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 Report Special Interest Item, “Report on Assignment Policies Concerning Women in the Armed Forces and the Characterization of Certain Combat-Related Service.”

This report addresses Congress' inquiry into the implementation of the policy changes announced in the February 2012 report to Congress on the review of laws, policies, and regulations restricting the service of female members in the armed forces; the feasibility of incorporating gender-neutral occupational standards for military occupational specialties closed to female members of the armed forces; additional options to increase service and career opportunities for women; and the Department and Services' practices with regard to recognizing, recording, and characterizing combat-related service by female Service members.

Following the February 2012 report to Congress, then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta reiterated his commitment to removing all barriers that would prevent Service members from rising to the highest level of responsibility that their talents and capabilities warrant in a memorandum to the Services. The memorandum directed the Services to report to him in 6 months on the implementation of the policy changes announced in the February 2012 report, progress toward further reduction of gender-restrictive policies, and their assessment of the remaining barriers to full implementation of the Secretary’s vision of allowing all Service members to serve in any capacity, based solely on their ability and qualifications.

Also included in the Secretary's directive memorandum was the requirement for the Services to report on their efforts to pursue gender-neutral physical standards. The Services made the review of standards a priority, and dedicated resources toward the revalidation of job related occupational tasks and the development of physical assessment tests to guide the classification and retention of personnel into occupations and positions for which their ability and qualifications warrant.

In January 2013, the Joint Chiefs unanimously recommended to the Secretary of Defense that the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR) be rescinded and requested the time necessary to institutionalize this change and to integrate women into occupational fields in a climate where they can succeed. This included the formal review of the roles and employment of women in special operations, modifications to accommodate reasonable privacy and berthing for women, and time to review and validate occupational standards to ensure they are current and directly tied to an operational requirement and applied on a gender-neutral basis.

On January 24, 2013, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff eliminated the 1994 DGCDAR, which prohibited the assignment of women into direct ground combat units below the brigade level and had previously permitted the Secretaries of the

Military Departments to further restrict the assignment of women due to physical demands, privacy and berthing, and assignment to special operations units. In the same memorandum, the Secretary and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff tasked the Services to meet milestones for the full integration of women into these newly opened positions by January 1, 2016. They called for the Services and the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) implementation plans to be provided not later than May 15, 2013. The Services' and USSOCOM's implementation plans are provided as part of this report.

As requested by the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Department also reviewed Service policies for recognizing and recording combat-related service by female Service members, and found no indication of differentiation based upon gender.

The Department will continue to integrate women into all positions and occupations within the Armed Forces, to the fullest extent, over the next two and a half years. By January 1, 2016, the Services and USSOCOM will have opened all positions to women or will have requested an exception to policy to keep specific occupations or positions closed. The Department will continue to inform Congress of incremental changes to Service assignment policy and will implement changes only after the required congressional notification period has expired. We also stand ready to answer any questions the congressional committees may have on this issue.

Background

Summary of Requirements from the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act and Senate Armed Services Committee Report Special Interest Items

The Department of Defense (DoD) submits this report to respond to section 526 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13 NDAA) and the Senate Armed Services Committee's FY13 NDAA Report Special Interest Item, "Report on assignment policies concerning women in the armed forces and the characterization of certain combat-related service."

Section 526 of the FY13 NDAA, "Report on the Feasibility of Developing Gender-Neutral Occupational Standards for Military Occupational Specialties Currently Closed to Women," requires that:

not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report evaluating the feasibility of incorporating gender-neutral occupational standards for military occupational specialties closed, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, to female members of the Armed Forces.

The United States Senate Armed Services Committee's National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 Report Special Interest Item, "Report on assignment policies concerning women in the armed forces and the characterization of certain combat-related service," states:

The committee notes that in February 2012 the Department of Defense released a report to Congress, required by section 535 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 (Public Law 111-383), reviewing the laws and policies restricting the service of female members of the armed forces, and provided notice to Congress that the Department would open positions in ground combat units at the battalion level to women in occupational specialties for which they are already qualified to serve, and would eliminate the so-called co-location policy. According to the report, the changes will result in over 14,000 positions being opened to women that were previously denied. The committee believes this is a small step in the right direction, but that more work must be done.

The committee understands that the Department and the services continue to evaluate additional options that would increase service opportunities by women, and that the services must report to the Secretary of Defense later this year on the viability of these options. The committee strongly encourages the services to continue these efforts. More than 75 percent of the Nation's youth do not qualify for enlistment in the military. Maintaining unnecessary barriers to service of those who are qualified and motivated to serve magnifies the challenge in recruiting the most qualified individuals for service in the All-Volunteer Force. By limiting their use of the talents of female service members, the Department and the services are handicapping efforts to field the highest quality force possible.

Finally, the committee remains concerned that assignment policies restricting service by women may continue to result in inaccurate characterizations of their service in combat, denying them earned benefits and in some cases needed care and services. According to the Department of Defense, over 284,000 female service members have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan in the past decade.

Of those women, 881 have been wounded and 144 have died. The committee directs the Secretary of Defense to report to the congressional defense committees no later than February 1, 2013, on its

implementation of the policy changes announced in the February 2012 report, its assessment and evaluation of additional options to increase service and career opportunities for women, and the current practice of the Department and the services in recognizing, recording, and characterizing combat-related service by female service members. The report should make recommendations for regulatory and statutory change that the Secretary considers appropriate to increase service opportunities for women in the armed forces.

This report will discuss:

- Implementation of the policy changes announced in the February 2012 report;
- The Services' efforts regarding elimination of gender-restrictive policy, which includes the review and validation of occupational standards to ensure they are applied on a gender-neutral basis;
- The rescission of the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR); and,
- The Department and Services' practices with regard to recognizing, recording, and characterizing combat-related service by female service members.

The Department's February 2012 report to Congress conveyed:

The Department of Defense is committed to removing all barriers that would prevent Service members from rising to the highest level of responsibility that their talents and capabilities warrant.

The report highlighted that there is no indication of women having less than equitable opportunities to compete and excel under current assignment policy, but that it was the Department's intention to:

1. Eliminate the co-location exclusion from the 1994 policy;
2. As an exception to policy, allow Military Department Secretaries to assign women in open occupational specialties to select units and positions at the battalion level (for Army, Navy, and Marine Corps) whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground;
3. Based on the exception to policy, assess the suitability and relevance of the direct ground combat unit assignment prohibition to inform future policy decisions; and,
4. Pursue the development of gender-neutral physical standards for occupational specialties closed due to physical requirements.

Implementation of Policy Changes Announced in the February 2012 Report

After expiration of the congressionally-mandated waiting period in accordance with title 10, section 652, the Department implemented the changes it announced to Congress. On May 14, 2012, 13,139 positions opened to women based upon the elimination of the co-location exclusion and an additional 1,186 positions opened under an exception to the 1994 DGCDAR (Appendix A) that permitted Service Secretaries to assign women in open occupational specialties to select units and positions at the battalion level (for Army, Navy, and Marine Corps) whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground.

Approximately 10,000 of the positions opened under the elimination of co-location were in 6 Army occupations previously closed to women. Since implementation of the policy change in May 2012, the Army has actively sought women to fill positions in these newly opened occupations. On April 30, 2013, the first two women graduated advanced individual training for 13M, Multiple Launch Rocket System Crewmember, followed by a second group of five who graduated on May 31, 2013, from advanced individual training for 91M, Bradley Fighting Vehicle Maintainers. As of the writing of this report, there are approximately 25 additional women who are undergoing training for the 6 occupations opened as a result of this policy implementation. The experience gained from opening these six occupations will provide the Army and the Department of Defense with valuable feedback regarding the development of best practices to successfully integrate women into occupations formerly open to men only.

The Services, through their existing personnel assignment processes, filled the remainder of positions (with both men and women) opened under the removal of the co-location restriction and the exceptions to policy throughout the summer of 2012, and this resulted in 346 women (Army – 286, Marine Corps – 47, and Navy – 13) being reassigned into the 1,186 positions opened under the exceptions to policy, and 106 women reassigned to positions previously closed to them in their current occupation under the removal of the co-location restriction. This number of reassignments is strong given that women comprise approximately 13.4 percent of the force across the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.

The Department set clear expectations for the Services, not only with a vision statement toward the elimination of all gender-restrictive policies, but with the establishment of a mandatory 6-month assessment directed by the Secretary of Defense (Appendix B). In order to assess the performance of women and report to the Secretary of Defense, the Services closely monitored these newly opened positions to assess the suitability and relevance of the direct ground combat unit assignment prohibition and to inform future policy decisions. The experience of opening these positions provided the Services valuable insight on actions that would be necessary to support opening more positions to both women and men. The Services each conducted their own assessments and plans were developed in a collaborative environment where ideas and suggestions were shared amongst the Services, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The Army Research Institute completed assessments across the nine Brigade Combat Teams that opened positions to women in the maneuver battalion headquarters. These positions were in open occupations that were previously closed to women due to the DGCDAR. The Army conducted 105 leader interviews and conducted 96 focus groups with 582 males and females, and administered surveys to 2,507 males and females to assess their perceptions of the assignment of females to maneuver battalion headquarters. The assessment topics were perceptions of individual and unit readiness, individual and unit effectiveness, cohesion and morale, recruiting and retention, and leadership. The surveys were used to form the Service recommendations regarding the DGCDAR.

The Marine Corps conducted two assessments of the newly integrated units, collecting feedback from commanders and senior enlisted leadership as well as the female participants (marines and sailors in the grades of O-1 to O-3 and E-6 to E-7) assigned to 19 separate units. All Navy positions opened as exceptions to policy were assigned previously closed units. The first assessment was distributed within the initial 3 months of most members' arrival at their

units, and the second assessment was distributed when most participants had been serving with their units for approximately 6 months. An assessment will follow as the 1-year anniversary of this assignment approaches, and will include a command climate survey that each unit will complete. In order to provide additional insight on the potential for female marines to serve in the most arduous specialty, the Marine Corps made available the physically demanding Infantry Officer Course (IOC) in September 2012 to female volunteers for research. Additionally, in June 2013, following notification to Congress, the Marine Corps opened 56 Ground Intelligence Officer positions to women. Female officers, upon graduation from the Basic Officer Course, who wish to volunteer to attend IOC have been provided the opportunity and the Marine Corps will continue to assess the performance of women in the course.

Overall, the experience of women in the newly opened positions has been positive, and provided valuable insight for the Services toward the opening of additional positions. The majority of positions closed to women under the 1994 DGCDAR were restricted due to job-related physically demanding requirements. In order to eliminate this restriction while preserving the trust and confidence of our military Service members and the American public, the February 2012 report to Congress indicated the Department's intention to pursue the review and validation of occupational standards for those specialties closed due to physical requirements.

Service Progress Regarding the Elimination of Gender-Restrictive Policy

Public Law 103-160, section 543, Gender-Neutral Occupational Performance Standards, specific physical requirements must be put in place prior to opening positions and occupations to women.

As stated in P. L. 103-160, Section 543, Gender-Neutral Occupational Performance Standards:

- (a) Gender Neutrality Requirement - In the case of any military occupational career field that is open to both male and female members of the Armed Forces, the Secretary of Defense--
 - (1) shall ensure that qualification of members of the Armed Forces for, and continuance of members of the Armed Forces in, that occupational career field is evaluated on the basis of common, relevant performance standards, without differential standards of evaluation on the basis of gender;
 - (2) may not use any gender quota, goal, or ceiling except as specifically authorized by law; and
 - (3) may not change an occupational performance standard for the purpose of increasing or decreasing the number of women in that occupational career field.
- (b) Requirements Relating to the Use of Specific Physical Requirements
 - (1) For any military occupational specialty for which the Secretary of Defense determines that specific physical requirements for muscular strength and endurance and cardiovascular capacity are essential to the performance of duties, the Secretary shall prescribe specific physical requirements for members in that specialty and shall ensure (in the case of an occupational specialty that is open to both male and female members of the Armed Forces) that those requirements are applied on a gender-neutral basis.
 - (2) Whenever the Secretary establishes or revises a physical requirement for an occupational specialty, a member serving in that occupational specialty when the

new requirement becomes effective, who is otherwise considered to be a satisfactory performer, shall be provided a reasonable period, as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary, to meet the standard established by the new requirement. During that period, the new physical requirement may not be used to disqualify the member from continued service in that specialty.

- (c) Notice to Congress of Changes - Whenever the Secretary of Defense proposes to implement changes to the occupational standards for a military occupational field that are expected to result in an increase, or in a decrease, of at least 10 percent in the number of female members of the Armed Forces who enter, or are assigned to, that occupational field, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report providing notice of the change and the justification and rationale for the change. Such changes may then be implemented only after the end of the 60-day period beginning on the date on which such report is submitted.

The 1994 DGCDAR authorized the Service Secretaries to close entire occupations based upon the presumption that job-related physical requirements would necessarily exclude the vast majority of women Service members. Since the rescission of the DGCDAR makes that presumption no longer valid, the Services must now review and validate the occupational standards to ensure they are current, directly tied to an operational requirement, and applied gender-neutrally. Should a Service determine that a specific position or occupational specialty will remain closed to women, an exception to policy will be submitted to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and the Secretary of Defense for final determination.

The Services made standards review a priority, and have dedicated resources toward the revalidation of job-related occupational tasks and development of physical tests to guide the classification of personnel into occupations and positions for which their ability and qualifications warrant. The Department projects completion of the review and validation of standards no later than September 2015.

The Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) launched two major lines of efforts in support of this full integration of women soldiers. In its first effort, TRADOC initiated a scientific review of standards, partnering with the U.S. Army Medical Command, U.S. Army Research Institute for Environmental Medicine, and Army Research Institute to assist in the review and validate physical standards for all military occupational specialties and positions closed to women. In the second line of effort, TRADOC is examining the institutional and cultural barriers related to integrating women into closed military occupational specialties and units in order to facilitate the successful integration of women.

The Marine Corps' Training and Education Command, partnering with the Naval Health Research Center, initiated a review of all military occupational specialties to validate physical occupational tasks. The focus of the research is centered on the development of a physical screening test that will assess the propensity for success in physically demanding military occupational specialties. In addition to this line of effort, the Marine Corps is seeking the assistance of the Center for Naval Analysis to assist in the assessment of the force to gain insight into what may be required for the successful integration of women into closed units and occupations. Marine Corps efforts are being conducted in coordination with the Navy, as the opening of closed units will apply to Navy personnel who are assigned to Marine Corps commands (for example, corpsmen and chaplains).

The Air Force's Air Education and Training Command (AETC), in close partnership with Air Force Special Operations Command and RAND Project Air Force, is conducting a scientifically based study to review and validate occupational standards for all seven previously closed occupations by July 2015.

The 6-month assessment directed by the Secretary of Defense required each of the Secretaries of the Military Departments to provide their assessments regarding the newly opened positions in November 2012. The assessment included discussion on efforts to review and validate standards, highlighted additional positions being considered to open, and provided an update regarding their progress toward fully implementing gender-neutral assignment policies. The overall assessment from the Military Departments was that the implementation of the positions opened in May of 2012 was positive, and that they would continue to assess the performance of women in these positions as well as additional positions they planned to open in the future.

Following this assessment, the Services continued to review their existing barriers to the elimination of gender-restrictive policy, culminating in the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendation to the Secretary of Defense that the direct ground combat exclusion rule be rescinded.

The January 9, 2013 memorandum from the CJCS stated:

The time has come to rescind the direct combat exclusion rule for women and to eliminate all unnecessary gender-based barriers to service. The Joint Chiefs of Staff unanimously join me in proposing that we move forward with the full intention to integrate women into occupational fields to the maximum extent possible. To implement these initiatives successfully, and without sacrificing our warfighting capacity or the trust of the American people, we will need time to get it right.

Rescission of the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule

In response to the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on January 24, 2013, the Secretary of Defense issued a memo to the Secretaries of the Military Departments and Chiefs of the Military Services which rescinded the direct combat exclusion rule and eliminated all unnecessary gender-based barriers to service:

“...the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule excluding women from assignment to units and positions whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground is rescinded effective immediately.”

“Integration of women into newly opened positions and units will occur as expeditiously as possible, considering good order and judicious use of fiscal resources, but must be completed no later than January 1, 2016.”

The memorandum directed the Services to submit to the Secretary of Defense by May 15, 2013, plans for the implementation of women into all occupations and positions by January 1, 2016. Additionally, Services were directed to review and validate occupational standards that will be used to assess and assign Service members not later than September 2015. The Services and the USSOCOM will complete all studies no later than September 30, 2015. In addition, the

Services and USSOCOM will provide periodic updates through the CJCS and Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) to the Secretary of Defense.

The percentages of Active and Reserve Components positions across the Services to which women may be assigned are listed below. The remainder of the previously restricted positions were addressed within the Service’s implementation plans, and will be incrementally opened by January 1, 2016, as a result of the elimination of the 1994 DGCDAR.

TABLE 1: Active Component

Service	Grade	Number of Active Component Authorized Positions¹	Percentage of Authorized Positions Open to Women²	Percentage of Total Active Component Women³
Army				
	Officer	71,440	83%	18%
	Warrant Officer	13,383	90%	9%
	Enlisted	413,077	64%	13%
	Total	497,900	68%	13%
Marine Corps				
	Officer	19,489	78%	6%
	Enlisted	162,611	68%	7%
	Total	182,100	69%	7%
Navy				
	Officer	51,298	98%	17%
	Enlisted	266,912	90%	17%
	Total	318,210	91%	17%
Air Force				
	Officer	64,999	99.6%	19%
	Enlisted	260,461	99%	19%
	Total	325,460	99%	19%

1. Defense Resource Data Warehouse/FY14PB (P&R[R&FM][TFM], 26 April 13

2. As provided by the Services

3. Defense Manpower Data Center data as of April 30, 2013

TABLE 2: Reserve Component Data

Service	Grade	Number of Reserve Component Authorized Positions ¹	Percentage of Authorized Positions Open to Women ²	Percentage of Total Reserve Component Women ³
Army NG				
	Officer	44,440	88.2%	12.8%
	Enlisted	313,800	68.0%	15.6%
	Total	358,200	70.5%	15.3%
Army Reserve				
	Officer	42,075	85.6%	24.4%
	Enlisted	162,925	89.5%	22.6%
	Total	205,000	88.7%	22.9%
Marine Corps Reserve				
	Officer	3,717,	70.8%	7.4%
	Enlisted	35,883	56.9%	4.2%
	Total	39,600	58.2%	4.5%
Navy Reserve				
	Officer	14,854	97.8%	17.8%
	Enlisted	47,646	98.3%	22%
	Total	62,500	98.2%	21.1%
Air Force NG				
	Officer	14,632	99.8%	18.4%
	Enlisted	91,068	99.1%	19.0%
	Total	105,700	99.2%	18.9%
Air Force Reserve				
	Officer	15,650	99.7%	26.4%
	Enlisted	55,230	99.7%	25.7%
	Total	70,880	99.8%	25.8%

1. Defense Resource Data Warehouse/FY14PB (P&R[R&FM][TFM], 28 April 13

2. As provided by the Services

3. Defense Manpower Data Center data as of 28 April 13

The Secretary of Defense also directed the Service plans to be consistent with the guiding principles in the CJCS January 9, 2013, memorandum. These guiding principles require the Services to successfully integrate women into the remaining restricted occupational fields, while keeping our guiding principles at the forefront. The guiding principles are:

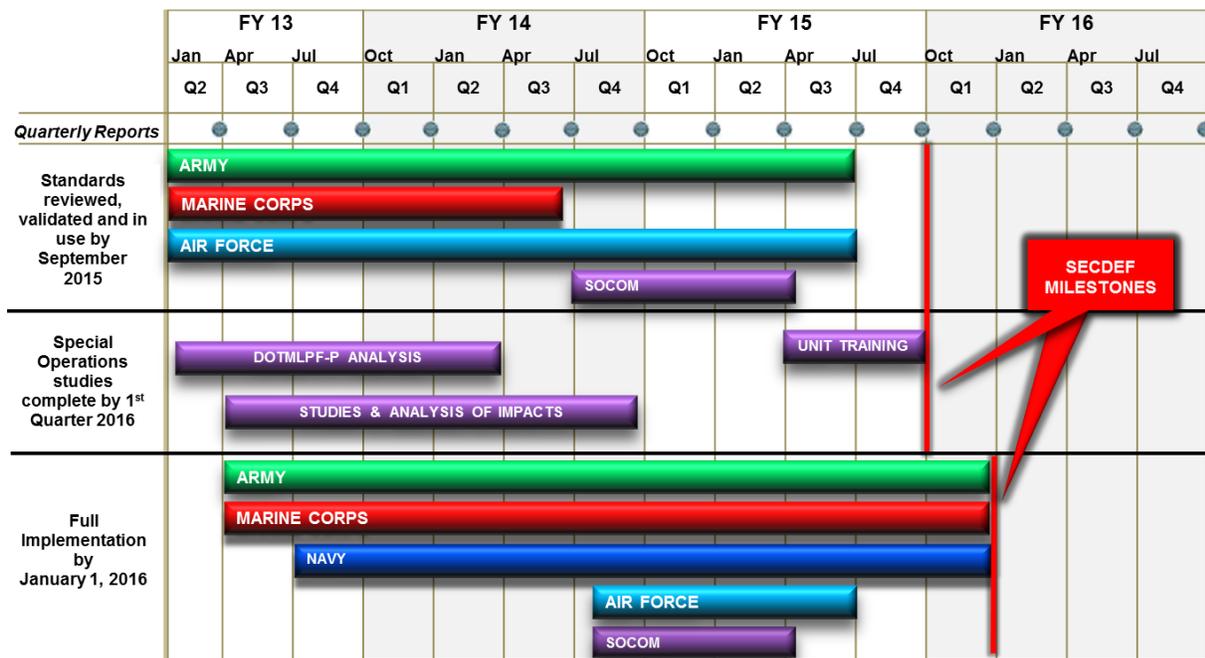
- Ensuring the success of our Nation's warfighting forces by preserving unit readiness, cohesion, and morale.
- Ensuring all Service men and women are given the opportunity to succeed and are set up for success with viable career paths.
- Retaining the trust and confidence of the American people to defend this Nation by promoting policies that maintain the best quality and most qualified people.
- Validating occupational performance standards, both physical and mental, for all military occupational specialties (MOSs), specifically those that remain closed to women. Eligibility for training and development within designated occupational fields should consist of qualitative and quantifiable standards reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for each occupation. For

occupational specialties open to women, the occupational performance standards must be gender-neutral as required by Public Law 103-160, Section 543 (1993).

- Ensuring that a sufficient cadre of midgrade/senior women enlisted and officers are assigned to commands at the point of introduction to ensure success in the long run. This may require an adjustment to our recruiting efforts, assignment processes and personnel policies. Assimilation of women into heretofore "closed units" will be informed by continual in-stride assessments and pilot efforts.

In accordance with the memorandum, the Military Departments and USSOCOM forward their proposed plans for the Secretary's review through the CJCS and the Acting USD(P&R). The plans are found at Appendices B through H, and the Department will monitor the progress of the Services through the full integration of women in January 2016, or until an exception to policy is approved.

FIGURE 1: Depiction of timelines and Lines of Effort as contained in the implementation plans:



The implementation plans propose a thoughtful and deliberate approach to the integration of women. In all cases, the Department recognizes that notification to Congress is required prior to incremental opening of positions. All of the proposed plans culminate in the complete opening of positions open to women, or exceptions to policy requested, by January 1, 2016.

Each Service and USSOCOM will manage the incremental opening of their respective currently closed positions, following the statutory notification to Congress and expiration of the waiting period. Closed positions will be opened along two general categories:

1. Currently open occupations which were restricted (for example, administration clerk in a tank battalion or intelligence analyst in an artillery battery).
2. Currently closed occupations which require development, review, and validation of occupational standards (for example, infantry and armor).

Additionally, the Services and USSOCOM are working with various scientific and research agencies (U.S. Army Research Institute for Environmental Medicine, Center for Naval Analyses, Air Education and Training Command, and RAND) to review and validate occupational standards to ensure they are operationally valid and gender-neutral. Concurrently, they are conducting a thorough Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy (DOTMLPF-P) analysis to ensure deliberate and responsible implementation. As part of the DOTMLPF-P analysis the Services and USSOCOM will review and identify any health and welfare issues that may impact integration of women into the previously closed occupations or positions. As a result of these concurrent efforts, each Service and USSOCOM have identified decision points by which they will make final determinations to open positions or to request an exception to policy to keep a position(s) closed. Exceptions to policy must be approved by CJCS and the Secretary of Defense.

Below are highlights from the Services and USSOCOM's implementation plans:

- Army has 68 percent of its positions currently open to women. The Army's Training and Doctrine Command is working with U.S. Army Medical Command, the U.S. Army Research Institute for Environmental Medicine, and Army Research Institute, to conduct a scientific review which will assist in the review and validation of physical occupational standards. The Army is on target to complete all studies and have occupational based performance standards applied on a gender-neutral basis by the end of 2015. The Army recently expanded the assignment of women into additional units, opening approximately 6,200 positions. The Army plans to start expanding opportunities for women that currently serve in open occupations, but are restricted by unit, later this summer. The Army will continue to assess these newly opened positions to any issues, and incrementally open additional positions prior to the implementation deadline of January 1, 2016.
- Marine Corps has 69 percent of its positions currently open to women. The Marine Corps Training and Education Command will review and validate physical standards for all primary closed occupations and develop a physical screening test to support the initial occupation classification process. The projected completion of this screening test is December 2013, with reassessment and refinement as necessary throughout the following year. The Marine Corps will continue to assess all newly opened positions. The Marine Corps will also set conditions for success that will include the placement of the female leadership cadre, integration training, and facilities revision as necessary. Starting in 2014, all who are recruited into any newly opened occupational specialties would be awarded that MOS upon meeting the gender-neutral occupational standards. The Marine Corps will evaluate all data using the DOTMLPF Process in order to provide senior leaders with informed recommendations to either request notification to Congress of the Marine Corps' intent to open positions, or request an exception to policy to keep positions closed beyond January 1, 2016. The Marine Corps will continue to open units/occupations via a logical sequence that will align with the CJCS guiding principles by January 1, 2016, except for those units/occupations for which an approved exception to policy is granted.

- Navy has 91 percent of its positions currently open to women. The Navy plans to maximize all feasible professional opportunities for females in the Navy, resulting in no closed occupations, a very limited number of closed positions, and an equal professional opportunity for females in every officer designator and enlisted rating in the Navy by January 2016. As coordinated with the Marine Corps, the Navy intends to assign females to Marine Corps Ground Combat Elements as positions are opened by the Marine Corps. Navy personnel will adhere to Marine Corps occupational standards where applicable. As coordinated with USSOCOM, the Navy and the Naval Special Warfare Center Command intend to follow the USSOCOM-developed integrated timeline for the potential integration of females into Special Forces. The Navy intends to submit for Congressional notification their intent to open Coastal Riverine Force small craft to female officers and enlisted. Upon approval, there will be no restrictions to the assignment of females in the Coastal Riverine Force. Navy has opened opportunity to women officers on all submarine types (Attack Submarines; Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarines; and Guided Missile Submarines). Navy will decide no later than March 2015 whether in addition to Virginia-class submarines, women officers will be assigned to Los Angeles and Seawolf-class submarines. As publically announced in January 2013, the Navy intends to assign enlisted women to Virginia-class submarines. A task force is currently working on the specifics of that plan and will present it to Navy leadership no later than March 2015. Women officers and enlisted currently serve on virtually every surface ship class in the Navy and the Navy will continue to expand opportunity as new ships and ship classes are commissioned. The Navy will decide no later than June 2014 to expand assignment opportunity for enlisted women to Frigates (FFG) (all but one FFG due to be decommissioned by 2016), Mine Countermeasure Ships (due to decommission by Fiscal Year 2024, replaced by Littoral Combat Ships with Mine Warfare Mission Module), and Patrol Coastal Craft (due to decommission by 2024).
- Air Force, which has 99 percent of its positions currently open to women, has been working with AETC and Air Force Special Operations Command to complete a physical performance standards study to develop and validate occupationally relevant, operationally specific, gender-neutral physical performance standards for its seven previously closed Air Force specialties by July 2015. AETC will 1) assess and review training content and methods used for all initial and recurring mission qualification requirements, 2) will review logistical requirements for all training pipelines, considering unique requirements for berthing, restrooms, equipment, and hygiene. The Air Force is on track to complete all integration activities and prerequisites by the January 1, 2016, deadline, and does not expect any significant obstacles to fully integrating women into all previously closed ground combat occupations.
- USSOCOM's initial focus is on a USSOCOM-wide DOTMLPF-P analysis with special emphasis on operationally-valid gender-neutral training standards in Special Operations Forces entry courses. This is being executed in parallel with a study by the Center for Special Operations Studies and Research which will research and analyze the social science impacts of integrating women into small, elite teams that operate in remote, austere environments. Lastly, USSOCOM contracted the RAND Corporation to provide an independent, non-biased analysis of USSOCOM's efforts. All assessments, including those from RAND, are projected to be completed by summer of 2014. Their plan is to assess the integration of women into Special Forces Groups, Battalions, and Teams;

SEAL Teams and Platoons; Ranger and Special Operations Aviation Regiments; Air Force Special Operations Command Battlefield Airmen functions; and Marine Special Operations Teams and identification of positions that will be opened to women will be completed by July of 2015.

Recognizing, recording, and characterizing combat-related service

The Department unequivocally recognizes the bravery and contributions of all Service members in combat and does not use gender as a discriminating factor when recognizing or recording combat-related service. While the now-rescinded DoD policy restricted the assignment of women to ground units below the brigade level when the unit's primary mission is to engage the enemy, many men and women assigned to units not primarily missioned to engage in direct ground combat had nevertheless encountered and engaged with, or have been engaged, by the enemy. Due to the asymmetric nature of counterinsurgency, these instances notably increased in operations throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. The Department and the Services recognize the importance of accurately recognizing and recording a Service member's combat-related service and do so through regulatory standard practices that record an individual's experience, service, and actions, irrespective of gender.

In February of 2012, former Secretary Panetta rescinded the co-location restriction which had allowed the Military Services to prohibit the assignment of women to units and positions that are doctrinally required to physically co-locate and remain with direct ground combat units. Rescission of this outdated portion of the 1994 DGCAR allowed the Services to directly assign women to operational units based on mission requirements. It removed the apparent contradiction created when female Service members were "attached" instead of "assigned" thereby allowing servicewomen to receive appropriate recognition of their combat related service. Furthermore, the Department recognizes combat-related service through the awarding of medals, ribbons, and badges such as expeditionary and campaign medals, the Purple Heart medal, and combat action badges/ribbons. It is DoD policy that both female and male members of the U.S. Armed Forces, through the DoD Military Awards Program, receive tangible recognition for participation in military operations against an armed opposing force, in limited hostilities against an opposing foreign force, or in military operations where Service members are exposed to the imminent threat of hostilities. DoD policy, contained in DoD Manual 1348.33, "Manual of Military Decorations and Awards," also provides for recognizing personal acts of valor or heroism, and exceptional service or achievement.

The Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, for example, indicates that the member served in military expeditions to combat terrorism, as defined by regulations, on or after September 11, 2001, and before a terminal date to be prescribed by the Secretary of Defense. Campaign medals recognize that a Service member, while deployed or assigned to a designated area of eligibility, participated in, or directly supported, a designated military campaign or operation that was of a large-scale and/or long-duration. For example, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal is awarded to Service members who deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Award is limited to those who have physically participated in the campaign from within the actual area of eligibility.

Each Military Service has slightly different methods for recognizing members who engage, or were engaged by, the enemy. The Army awards the Combat Action Badge (CAB) to

both female and male soldiers who, while performing assigned duties in an a hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay area, personally actively engage or are engaged by the enemy. Award of the CAB is not limited by one's branch, gender, or military occupational specialty. Female and male soldiers serving within combat arms or maneuver elements would be eligible to have any combat-related service evidenced through the award of the CAB if during that duty assignment the member directly engaged or was engaged by the enemy. The Marine Corps and the Navy award the Combat Action Ribbon to both male and female marines and sailors, in any grade including and below that of colonel in the Marine Corps and captain in the Navy, who have rendered satisfactory performance under enemy fire while actively participating in ground or surface engagement, including direct exposure to the blast of an Improvised Explosive Device. The Air Force awards the Air Force Combat Action Medal to members who were under direct and hostile fire while operating in unsecured space (outside the defended perimeter), or who physically engaged hostile forces with direct and lethal fire.

The DoD further records combat-related service through documents such as contingency orders and evaluations which are all included in the development of a culmination document issued at the end of active service on the Department of Defense Form 214 (DD Form 214), which is issued to a Service member at the end of a period of active duty service. The DD Form 214, by policy, serves as an accurate and complete summation of the Service member's active military service. Gender is not identified on the DD Form 214. After the termination of active military service, the DD Form 214 becomes the critical source document used by the Department of Veterans' Affairs to characterize combat-related service for purposes of assessing and determining earned benefits and ratings.

While combat service is not characterized by the Department, the DD Form 214 does provide a characterization of the member's service in one of six categories ranging from "Honorable" to "Dishonorable" or "Uncharacterized." Additional information regarding combat-related duty performance can be found in Blocks 13 and 18 of the document. Block 13 entitled "Decorations, Medals, Badges Citations, Campaign Ribbons Awarded or Authorized," recognizes and records the Service member's individual service regardless of unit of assignment or attachment. Block 13 lists all decorations, medals, badges, citations, and campaign ribbons awarded or authorized for all periods of service in the priority of sequence. Further, the badges listed in block 13 may indicate if the Service member actively engaged or was engaged by the enemy. The Block 18 "Remarks" section provides a descriptive narrative for the purposes of post service benefits and entitlements. The narrative includes titles of named operations in which the Service member participated, such as Operation IRAQI FREEDOM or Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, dates of service, and if the Service member served in an imminent danger pay area.

The Services complete the DD Form 214 in coordination with the Service member to ensure accuracy. The worksheet, DD Form 214WS, provides the member the opportunity to ensure the DD Form 214 is an accurate representation of their military record and military Service prior to completion and certification of the DD Form 214. The original copy of the DD Form 214 is provided to the member upon separation. Should the member later discover that the DD Form 214 failed to reflect their service, they have the ability to apply for a correction of military records to have this error corrected.

Conclusion

The Department is proceeding in a measured, deliberate, and responsible manner to implement changes that enable Service members to serve in any capacity based on their ability and qualifications, unconstrained by gender-restrictive policies. Over time, these steady changes will ensure that opening positions will not negatively impact our Service members, nor the readiness and combat effectiveness of our military. The standards set for both men and women must be uncompromising, established for the task of defending our Nation, rooted in carefully analyzed requirements in order to field the very best qualified volunteer men and women that America has to offer.

The Department greatly appreciates the interest and assistance of the Armed Services Committees in achieving this vision to the benefit of all the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines in the service of our great Nation. The Department will continue to provide Congress with the requisite notification prior to opening additional positions or units of assignment in accordance with title 10, U.S.C., section 652, and will continue to provide the Committees with additional information and notifications as requested.