



# **COMBAT INTEGRATION HANDBOOK**

**A LEADER'S GUIDE  
TO SUCCESS**

**FIRST EDITION, SEPTEMBER 2016**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This handbook is the result of the groundwork laid by the intrepid servicewomen and women veterans who are vested in the successful and complete integration of women in the combat arms of the US Army. Although it was written by a few Army servicewomen, it is the life work of American women who served in the US Army since the Revolutionary War. From Revolutionary War heroine Margaret Corbin to the first woman infantry officer Capt. Kristen Griest, American women have answered the call when this nation needed them. Although former Staff Sergeant Antonieta Rico was the driving force and principal author of this handbook, Carolyn Washington, Inga Brown and Ellen Haring are contributing authors. We are grateful to the service members of the Combat Integration Handbook Working Group, who reviewed an early draft of this handbook and provided their experience and insights to inform the final product. We also would like to thank the staff at the US Army Women's Museum who offered a historical perspective on gender integration, an ongoing process in the Army for more than two hundred years.

### WIIS

Women In International Security (WIIS) is the premier organization in the world dedicated to advancing the leadership and professional development of women in the field of international peace and security. WIIS (pronounced “wise”) sponsors leadership training, mentoring, and networking programs as well as substantive events focused on current policy problems. WIIS also supports research projects and policy engagement initiatives on critical international security issues, including the nexus between gender and security.

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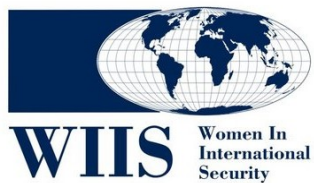
### WIIS Combat Integration Initiative

Women in International Security (WIIS) established the Combat Integration Initiative (CII) in 2013 to support the successful integration of women into combat arms positions in the US military. WIIS's Combat Integration Initiative program monitors the gender integration implementation process focusing on five activities deemed necessary for effective implementation. These five areas include: transparency of the implementation process; effective communication of policy changes; establishing job-based, gender neutral standards; providing training to leaders; and mentoring/Gender Advising.

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# INTRODUCTION

Today's Army leaders have a unique opportunity to maximize the capability and versatility of their fighting forces. Opening combat arms to women closes operational gaps and meets the critical on-the-ground demands of the modern battlefield. The Army has deliberately chosen to embrace the increased capabilities and opportunities full gender integration will bring in order to ensure decisive victories in current and future complex operational environments.

## **LEADERSHIP IS EVERYTHING**

Leaders set the climate, shape the culture and are the single biggest factor in determining whether full integration goes well or poorly in their units. Like everything in the military, success or failure is the responsibility of the command. Units who choose to build climates of excellence and professionalism will do well. Units who do not demand high standards of professionalism, dedication and excellence will struggle in every environment, as they always have. The Battalion Command team, Company Commanders and 1SGs, Platoon Leaders and Platoon Sergeants and Squad Leaders and Team Leaders are all instrumental in setting the stage for how the increase in capability, lethality and mission accomplishment that women will bring is viewed, received and treated in their units. Leaders have the responsibility to make personal excellence,

professionalism, readiness, deployability and realistic training an ingrained cultural norm in their units.

You, the leader, are the decisive point in your unit. You will have to choose, understand, visualize, describe and clearly outline what gender integrated excellence looks like in your unit. Your subordinates at every level will follow your example. If you do not, or if you choose to allow existing negative cultural norms to go unchallenged, then your subordinates will follow that path as well. According to Australian defense scientists, "the greatest threat to operational effectiveness, cohesion and morale in mixed gender units is the mind-set of the leader, and the subsequent overt and covert behaviors toward women in combat units."<sup>1</sup> This is your charge; to embody the profession of arms at the highest level. Ultimately, it defines your leadership and your time in command.

You, the unit leader from Team Leader to Battalion Commander are who this Handbook is aimed at. Your everyday actions, decisions, behaviors and representation of the profession of arms are critical in this effort both in garrison and on the battlefield. You will have to make hard decisions and choices. This Handbook is here to assist you when you need it. Your unit's effectiveness will improve, your Soldier's confidence in their

leadership – in you – will grow. Your job is to win our Nation’s wars and prevail in combat over an enemy who will use any means at their disposal to defeat us. America prevails when it calls upon the collective strength of its citizens, and the best of its professionals – men and women alike – who are dedicated and willing to serve.

### **THIS IS ABOUT QUALITY**

Research from the military, as well as countless industries, has shown that adding qualified women to your units and teams will make them better. Your teams will be collectively more intelligent and versatile, which will ultimately increase combat effectiveness.<sup>2</sup> This isn’t about *equality*; it’s about *quality*. The sooner Soldiers receive that message, the sooner your teams will benefit from the addition of women.

The Army draws from a national talent pool. Currently, less than 25% of young Americans qualify for military service and more women qualify than men.<sup>3</sup> If the Army is to meet its recruiting goals and enlist qualified candidates, it has to open all jobs to women. Although physical requirements may mean that fewer women qualify for combat occupations, there are women who will qualify and who want to serve in those occupations. Army leadership recognizes that it would be foolish to arbitrarily eliminate qualified women from the talent pool and has

determined that integrating women is important to the future of our Army.

Furthermore, the Army knows that gender integrated training and integrated units improve occupational and operational outcomes. In 1996, Congress directed the GAO to study integrated basic training because there was a push to go back to segregated training after some high profile sexual assault cases. The GAO found that data from before and after basic training was integrated showed that both men’s and women’s scores were higher on the APFT and Basic Rifle Marksmanship in integrated units.<sup>4</sup> More recently, data collected on the Cultural Support Team program found that Army Ranger teams that were supported by female Soldiers were 20% more effective on target than teams that had no women.<sup>5</sup> Well-led mixed gender teams will improve unit capabilities, not diminish them.

### **THE HANDBOOK**

This handbook will help answer some of the most common operational and cultural questions many leaders of all-male units have. WIIS interviewed combat arms officers and NCOs to determine what areas they wanted to see addressed. WIIS also drew from extensive research and interviews that we conducted in 2015 on the Cultural Support Team (CST) program. The CST program was a Special Operations Command initiative to select, train and attach female Soldiers to Ranger

and Special Forces teams in Afghanistan. We also drew from research from earlier integration efforts. The information provided in this handbook answers some of the common questions and concerns drawn from interviews with, and research of, combat arms leaders.

Many combat arms professionals expressed concern about successfully integrating servicewomen into their units and indicated interest in receiving a guide to help them succeed in this organizational change effort. In previous Army integration efforts the outcomes were more successful when leaders had handbooks to help guide them through the transition process.<sup>6</sup> This Handbook is written with that in mind and is primarily for commanders and NCOs at the battalion and company level. It answers common questions and provides advice and best practices relative to areas of general concern. While not official policy, WIIS has attempted to dispassionately and clearly address concerns with answers and solutions provided by the men and women who have already laid the groundwork for you. This Handbook represents the best efforts and practices of some of the earliest combat units to successfully integrate women, and the experience of Cultural Support Team members. Their level of expertise deserves emphasis.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE HANDBOOK**

The handbook is organized in two parts: cultural considerations and practical considerations. Within each part the sections are organized along the following lines: a brief introduction to an area of interest, answers from and references to existing applicable regulations and policies, and recommended best practices from Cultural Support Team members and women and men who were part of earlier integration efforts, as well as from partner nations who have already integrated their combat units. Finally, each section provides practical examples for how you might handle a new or challenging situation. This is not an all-inclusive handbook, but is intended to address the topics that were raised during our research.

This Handbook is a “first” edition and will be updated as we learn from the ongoing integration of combat arms units. Please email us at [cii@wiisglobal.org](mailto:cii@wiisglobal.org) with comments, suggestions and corrections for future editions.

WIIS wishes to thank all the men and women who serve in the U.S. military.

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# What Do You Do With A WAC?

OR  
HOW THE HELL DID WE  
GET INTO THIS MESS?



"What Do You Do With a WAC?" is a gender integration handbook created by the Racial Equality and Equal Opportunity Division at Fort Knox in 1975. The handbook was published after the Women's Army Corp was disbanded and women were integrated into the general purpose Army. *Courtesy of the US Army Women's Museum.*

## **PART 1: CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Most definitions of organizational culture refer to an organization's shared values, norms, rituals, stories, and expectations. Culture is the software that invisibly guides all aspects of an organization's

functioning. For combat arms units, culture is deeply linked to masculine identity. Out-dated social constructions of gender teach men that they, and not women, are responsible for fighting and protecting

their families, communities and countries. Men have historically viewed women as needing protection. As a result, integrating women into combat units presents a challenge to both masculine identity and organizational culture. However, hanging on to culturally-based opposition to women in combat arms creates barriers to the effective utilization of all Soldiers. Adapting to a change that will enhance operational capabilities should be easy, but it isn't. For some the transition may be deeply troubling. Despite these challenges, remember that all other branches of the Army have successfully gone through this integration process.

## **I. THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP**

Creating a "disciplined, cohesive fighting force capable of winning on the modern battlefield" will only be successful if "leaders at all levels, are professional enough to overcome their own feelings and prejudices about (integrating women into combat arms)."<sup>7</sup>

Leaders set the example for everyone in their organizations. Women in Cultural Support Teams (CST) repeatedly emphasized that the leadership of their teams and units set

### **Existing regulations**

**AR 600-100;** Army Leadership prescribes leadership regulations.

**FM 6-22;** Leader Development is the Army leadership manual from the Center for Army Leadership. The manual addresses in depth how to develop the professionalism of subordinates, including how to teach, counsel and mentor Soldiers.

the tone for their integration into Special Forces and Ranger teams. If leaders were receptive, the team was receptive. If leaders were resistant, the women struggled to contribute to their team's success. When leaders were receptive, CST members worked extensively and mission success increased by 20 percent.

According to one CST member, "All of the guys took the tone from the leaders ... sometimes it wasn't necessarily the platoon leaders. Sometimes it was some squad leader that was clearly an unofficial leader or a center of gravity or influence on the team."

"It really is about command climate," another CST member reported. "Had you not had leadership

who was invested, then you would not have gotten the integration. Had you not had those experienced sergeants who knew how to handle their (men) and knew how to train new Soldiers to integrate with their units, then we wouldn't have gotten there... So that command climate and leadership being invested, it really makes all the difference in the world."

### **Recommended Best Practices**

- Leaders must set the tone before the first women arrive in their units. This can be done through formal and informal discussions. What is vitally important is that men who have experience working with qualified women and actually believe integrating women will enhance unit capabilities lead the discussions. A leader directed to give "the talk" about gender integration, but who doesn't really believe women should be in their unit, cannot do it authentically or sincerely.

### **Practical Examples**

Below are some talking points for "The Talk" leaders should be having with Soldiers in their units.

1. Women who come to this unit have met all of the entry level standards that you met and they did so while defying culturally accepted gender norms.

2. They have passed MOS standards that have not been previously applied.

3. They don't want, nor do they expect, to be held to different or easier standards.

4. They know that they may be met with resistance and skepticism.

5. They may try to overcompensate to disprove biased assumptions about their capabilities.

6. They are not shrinking violets and you don't need to be afraid of working with them.

7. They have joined the Army and the combat specialties for exactly the same reasons that you joined. Like you, they too are patriots who have volunteered to give their full measure in defense of their country.

8. We expect their presence to improve our capabilities by increasing our versatility and our collective intelligence.

9. We expect to see increased performance from male Soldiers when women join our units.<sup>8</sup>

10. All Soldiers deserve to be treated just like you expect to be treated. They should be coached and mentored and not obstructed so that they can achieve their full potential and enhance our teams.

11. If anyone overtly or covertly tries to sabotage these new Soldiers

they will be held accountable for their actions.

12. We will hold women to exactly the same occupational standards that you are held to. Give them a chance to prove themselves.

## II. BONDING AND COHESION

The concept of unit cohesion is complicated. No official Army document defines it, nor does the Army ever measure it to determine unit readiness. However, it is commonly believed to be an important component of unit capability and is generally understood to be the connection that Soldiers share with each other, with their leadership and with their units. Research has determined that two key components form the basis of unit cohesion; task cohesion and social cohesion: “Task cohesion is the shared commitment among members to achieving a goal that requires the collective efforts of the group. A group with high task cohesion is composed of members who share a common goal and who are motivated to coordinate their efforts as a team to achieve that goal. Social cohesion is the extent to which group members like each other, prefer to spend their

### Existing Regulations

There is no regulation that defines cohesion.

**AR 600-20:** Army Command Policy addresses hazing and bullying. It defines hazing as “Any conduct whereby a servicemember or members regardless of service, rank, or position, and without proper authority, recklessly or intentionally causes a servicemember to suffer or be exposed to any activity that is cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful.” The regulation further states that the Army prohibits such practices because they contradict Army values.

According to AR 600-20, “Bullying is any conduct whereby a servicemember or members, regardless of service, rank, or position, intends to exclude or reject another servicemember through cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful behavior, which results in diminishing the other servicemember’s dignity, position, or status... Bullying tactics include, but are not limited to, making threats, spreading rumors, social isolation, and attacking someone physically, verbally, or through the use of electronic media.”

social time together, enjoy each other's company and feel emotionally close to one another."<sup>9</sup>

Research indicates that task cohesion is far more important to unit performance than social cohesion and some studies show that high social cohesion is actually linked to negative group behaviors. High social cohesion can lead to groupthink, polarized attitudes, low levels of creativity and, in the worst case, poor decisions and unethical behavior by group members.<sup>10</sup>

Cohesion develops over time and is most influenced by leadership. The successes or failures of a group also impact how quickly groups bond. Groups that experience success during challenging training and during deployments bond quickly and strongly, while groups that experience failure struggle to bond and may become disaffected and splinter. How leadership handles failure greatly impacts how the unit copes. The presence of women does not affect group bonding as long as unit members see women performing their duties just as capably, and without preferential treatment, as other team members.

Although no regulation defines cohesion, some regulations and policies address initiation rites and

hazing, two practices commonly used to admit new members to a group. These activities are sometimes thought to garner bonding and increase cohesion. Army Regulation 600-20 explains hazing as conduct toward another servicemember that is "cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful."

Bullying is the opposite of hazing. People bully individuals to isolate and exclude them from the group. According to AR 600-20, bullying is "cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful behavior" which belittles another servicemember.

Gossip is akin to rumors and is also a harmful behavior commonly used to isolate and exclude individuals in an organization. A rumor is a story or report of questionable truth spread through gossip. Men are as guilty as women of gossiping and spreading rumors. When Soldiers circulate rumors about women, the rumors are frequently stories related to sexual promiscuity or sexual orientation. Men often label women in the military as "sluts, bitches or dykes." These are all derogatory terms and leaders must stop the common use of such labels.

Bullying, hazing, rumors and gossip have a direct impact on unit cohesion and team effectiveness.

Such unprofessional behavior can lead to the loss of Soldiers from the unit and will keep the unit from coalescing into an effective fighting team. High turnover keeps commanders from maximizing each individual's contribution to unit readiness.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Recommended Best Practices**

- Servicewomen may find themselves isolated and excluded from the larger group through the use of the tactics described above. Be on the lookout for such behavior and shut it down when you see it. This behavior destroys unit cohesion and negatively impacts unit effectiveness.

- Another seemingly innocuous tactic that regulations don't mention, but is also harmful, is the frequent use of jokes that target women and other minorities. This is a subtle but insidious way to demean and isolate a teammate. In addition to the behaviors outlined in AR 600-20, watch for this behavior and stop it when you see it. An Army training tool that explains how this works is the video "Not In My Squad" which can be accessed at:

<http://cape.army.mil/videos/smanims-workshop-intro>.

- Don't ever laugh if you see other Soldiers making a member of your

team the butt of jokes. The way you respond to such behavior either shuts it down or encourages it. Encouraging it is bad for team cohesion.

#### **Practical Examples**

In a study of women who worked with Special Operators, one woman reported being treated like a "lesser human being." She gave the example of another Soldier knocking her tray of food off the table "and telling me, 'clean that shit up bitch.'"<sup>12</sup> She further reported that one of her supervisors asked her every day if she wanted to leave, to which she replied "Absolutely not. Nope." The supervisor should have directly confronted those who were bullying this Soldier rather than offer to pull her out of the unit.

### **III. STEREOTYPES AND MYTHS**

Stereotypes are widely held but fixed and oversimplified images and ideas about a particular type of person. While some women can't handle combat and don't want to, the same applies to some men. Women have proven themselves capable of engaging in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan and as far back as the American Revolution, yet myths and

stereotypes about women in combat persist. These stereotypes and myths are most commonly held by those who have never actually served with women. Below, we tackle the top myths found through CST interviews, military surveys and research reports.

### **Myths**<sup>16 17 18</sup>

#### ***1. Women are physically incapable of handling the rigors of combat arms.***

While the average woman has less muscle mass than the average man, the women who arrive at combat arms units will be far from average. The women coming to your units have already met and passed the gender neutral standards for the MOS and graduated infantry or armor officer and enlisted training courses. None of them are likely to fit any stereotype.

While some women might be at a disadvantage compared to large men because of their average smaller size and probable lack of weight training, remember that a man and a woman of the same size, who have trained equally, have comparable strength. Being smaller than the average man does not disqualify any person from being a competent combat arms Soldier. The most decorated American Soldier, Audie Murphy, was 5' 7" and weighed 139 lbs at the end of WWII.

When he enlisted at 18 he was just 5' 5" and weighed 112 lbs.

Maintaining a proper strength training routine for women will ensure they are capable of performing the physical tasks required of a combat arms MOS. As far back as 1975, the U.S. Army Infantry School recognized this, stating that there was no "inherent weakness" in female upper body strength that couldn't be solved with proper physical training: "Their arms and shoulders are constructed just like men's... It is a weakness of disuse or lack of use rather than of anything different in the women's arms and shoulders."<sup>19</sup>

Almost every person in the Army can tell a story of a woman who is a physical stud. If anything, leaders should be concerned that women might push themselves too hard and too quickly and not whether they will be strong enough to perform their jobs.

Leaders should also curb any tendency to excuse women from physically demanding, undesirable or unpleasant tasks out of a benign instinct to "protect" them. At the same time, do not over compensate by treating women with unfair harshness. Earlier gender integration efforts in the Army found that, "Some units demand too much from women in the

name of 'equality,' while other units let the women 'get over.'"<sup>20</sup> Both circumstances harm morale and negatively impact unit capabilities.

Just train Soldiers to standard and maintain the same high standard for the women as the men and the women will rise to the challenge.

*2. Women's hygiene needs require special accommodations.*

No Army regulation mandates women shower more frequently than men. This myth comes from outdated guidelines and a complete lack of knowledge about women's physiology. The belief that women have special hygiene needs which are incompatible with combat operations comes as a shock to military women who have

several deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, have gone months without showers and have lived in austere conditions while carrying out missions overseas.

"I lived in the middle of nowhere; I didn't shower for 47 days, washed my clothes in a stream, cooked on a fire, lived like an animal... It's completely incorrect that women cannot live, hygienically, past a week in the middle of nowhere, it's just a myth," said one CST member who lived in an austere site while attached to a Special Forces team in Afghanistan.

Another CST member with multiple combat deployments put it more bluntly: "That's ridiculous. I am able to keep myself clean no matter where I am!"

First Lt. Elyse Ping Medvigy conducts a call-for-fire during an artillery shoot south of Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, Aug. 22, 2014. Ping is the first female company fire support officer to serve in an Infantry Brigade Combat Team supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. *U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Whitney Houston.*





Sgt. 1st Class Wendi Jeter, an operations sergeant assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, provides security at a consultation conducted with the Female Engagement Team-Chief in the Tarnek Wa Jaldek District, Zabul Province, Afghanistan, 2013. *U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kandi Huggins.*

If leaders would like to address field hygiene with their Soldiers, the unit medic can give two classes on the issue; one for women and one for men. Women should not be singled out for special hygiene classes.

### *3. Women will be a distraction.*

Any new thing is a distraction until it loses its novelty. After the natural adjustment period passes, having women around will become the norm just like it has in all other military occupations and units. When people talk about 'distraction' they are usually referring to sexual tensions. This is a discipline and leadership issue. If you find any Soldiers showing off, or paying special attention to any other Soldier for the sake of attention, you have to take corrective action. Counsel the Soldier about the impact

of their behavior on the team and the team's capabilities. Soldiers must set personal guidelines of conduct about their work relationships. If peers do date, they must remain professional at all times during work hours. When relationships inevitably occur, leaders should deal with such relationships on a case-by-case basis, and the issue should not be blown out of proportion. If two people become a problem at work, deal with it professionally. This is not a problem caused by integration; distraction is a discipline problem that must be mitigated by strong leadership.

### *4. Women will destroy unit cohesion and bonding.*

People bond through shared hardship, whether the shared hardship is with a woman or a man. The

experience bonds people, not their gender. Military leaders first learned this when integrating black Soldiers into the Army, and commanders leading gender integrated units in the Army today already know this.

One CST member talked about bonding with combat arms Soldiers: "Because you share this experience... you create this bond. Male, female, dog; it doesn't matter."

Leaders in combat arms have to remember that just because a unit is all-male does not mean the unit is cohesive. Leaders build cohesion in a unit, and they must build that cohesion whether they lead Caucasians, African Americans, men, women, gay Soldiers or any person they may or may not like. The challenge for a leader is to successfully play the hand he or she is dealt.

Often the concern about bonding and cohesion in combat arms comes from the knowledge that some bonding rituals involve acts and language that denigrates women. Your leadership task is to create cohesion without isolating or demeaning anyone. You wouldn't build morale by demeaning racial minorities so don't do it by belittling women. Ultimately, you will degrade unit morale and effectiveness by creating divisiveness.

##### *5. Men will abandon the mission to protect women.*

The Soldier's Creed directs Soldiers to place the mission first but never leave a fallen comrade, man or woman. Not a single example exists of a male Soldier risking a mission in order to protect a female Soldier. SSG Leigh Ann Hester didn't receive the Silver Star because her platoon sergeant told her to stay safely in her vehicle. She received it for her actions after her platoon sergeant told her to follow him directly into a firefight. If on the off chance a male Soldier compromises the mission to protect a female Soldier, take corrective action. Counsel or remove the man for compromising the mission. Don't remove the woman for doing her job.

One CST member who worked with Army Rangers described her experience with men saying they were no more protective of her on mission than they were of the other enablers. "I don't think it is true that because I'm a female [that they will protect me], I think that it is because I'm a Soldier... they protected all the other enablers just as well as they protected us... they protected their own guys. That is just part of being a Soldier."

*6. Unqualified women will be pushed through to satisfy political requirements.*

The belief that unqualified women will be pushed through training and out into combat units is widespread. This claim has been made every time women integrated new occupations. However, in some cases the opposite may be true during early integration periods. Because of the intense scrutiny on gender integration, women are often held to the most exacting standards by cadre who don't want others to perceive them as relaxing standards for political reasons. When the first women attended Ranger School, some believed that women would not be held to the same high standards. However, the Ranger Training Brigade cadre went to extensive measures to document the fact that the women were held to the highest standards, nitpicking to the point that the classes that had women in them had historically high washout rates for the men and women.

If an unqualified woman arrives at your unit, treat her no differently than if you received an unqualified man. When a man fails to meet the standards, he receives remedial training and if he still can't meet the standards, he is reclassified or chaptered out of the Army. Treat women the same way, but don't hold

### **Existing regulations**

#### **AR 600-20, Chapter 7:**

#### **Prevention of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment and sexual assault are two different problems that exist on the same continuum, but their difference must be understood by leaders and Soldiers to reduce the uncertainty that surrounds SHARP.

The key part of the sexual harassment definition is that it involves "deliberate or repeated unwelcome verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature," and that "submission to, or rejection of, such conduct" affects the Soldier's career and work environment. For the full definition see AR 600-20.

Leaders should be cognizant of the key words "deliberate or repeated" in the definition of sexual harassment, which means that if a Soldier inadvertently makes an inappropriate joke without intending to create a hostile working environment it might be necessary to have a conversation about professionalism, but it does not present a SHARP issue. If the conduct is repeated then it becomes an issue.

them to higher arbitrary standards in an attempt to prove that you *are* maintaining standards.

#### **IV. SWEARING, DEBAUCHERY AND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS**

Soldiers and leaders rightly take pride in the "combat arms culture" which includes a strong sense of brotherhood and loyalty. Bonds forged through some remarkable experiences are something to be proud of. An infantry general has described "hilarious debauchery" as a component that helps forge the combat arms bond.<sup>21</sup> With integration, some leaders are worried that women will not understand that type of bonding. They believe putting women in this culture will automatically lead to complaints of sexual harassment and a rise in sexual assaults.<sup>22 23 24</sup>

This belief in women's oversensitivity comes from a lack of experience working with women, many of whom can outdo men in the profanity and crudeness department. "You are not going to get the wilting flower; you are going to get a hard-charging female," a member of a CST said.<sup>25</sup>

Nonetheless, as a leader you should understand that demeaning language

or behavior toward members of your team, whether women or racial minorities, does nothing to forge the bonds of brotherhood in a unit. This is not about political correctness, it is about mutual respect and professionalism. Disrespecting, belittling, even making jokes at someone's expense eventually damages unit cohesion and therefore negatively impacts combat effectiveness. We've already addressed cohesion, but let us summarize by saying it is best established through successful task accomplishment, not through shared harassment of fellow Soldiers.

#### **Sexual Harassment**

First, let's acknowledge the very real problems of sexual harassment and sexual assault within the ranks. In the most recent data from 2014, DoD reported that 10,400 men and 8,500 women in the military were sexually assaulted. Men were less likely to report sexual assaults than women, but overall 86 percent of victims do not report the incident.<sup>26</sup> Concerns about sexual assault and harassment rightly exist in the minds of leaders and Soldiers. However, the term "SHARP" (Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention) itself has become a bad

word. The perceived inefficiencies of the SHARP program have left Soldiers feeling either persecuted or cast in the role of victim.<sup>27</sup>

But SHARP concerns do not need to be a cloud of dread hanging over leaders tasked with integrating their units. A clear understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment and assault should mitigate these concerns.<sup>28</sup>

We found that when leaders speak of a rise in SHARP cases, they are most often actually referring to two scenarios: a rise in sexual harassment complaints against male Soldiers because women won't be able to understand or 'handle' the combat arms culture, and a fear that men will be accused of sexual harassment when they attempt to discipline female Soldiers.

First, as previously mentioned, men may be surprised by the grit of the women who join combat arms. And while some part of the combat arms culture will have to change as women integrate, it is wrong and naive to assume the change is for the worse. An added layer of professionalism and mutual respect within any unit will serve to enhance combat effectiveness, not degrade it.

Second, leaders must overcome the fear that they will be accused of sexual

harassment when disciplining a female Soldier. Proper discipline is not sexual harassment. Your leadership style might have to change if your previous methods of correcting a Soldier included words meant to ridicule a particular gender, but treating others with respect will only increase cohesion in your unit. Professional and appropriate corrective actions will not result in sexual harassment accusations.

To prevent the above scenarios, leaders and Soldiers might wrongly decide to ostracize women. Ostracizing women because male Soldiers don't clearly know the regulations and are unsure of the line between harassment and discipline, or because they do not know how to behave appropriately around women, is not the answer. Feeling uncomfortable speaking or interacting with women is a problem male Soldiers and leaders have to overcome. Knowing the SHARP policy, understanding what constitutes appropriate discipline, education and clear communication between leaders and male and female Soldiers is critical in mitigating Soldiers' concerns about unwarranted sexual harassment charges.

Gender integration in combat arms units will come with an adjustment

period, and leaders need to acknowledge that it may take time for some Soldiers to change their language and behavior. According to MSG Jeff Fenlason, an NCO who has worked extensively on junior leader mentoring, expect people to make mistakes but know that they will learn and adjust quickly, especially if leaders encourage open communication.<sup>29</sup> Young Soldiers will need a lot of coaching and leaders will need to exercise patience with their Soldiers and with themselves. Fenlason acknowledged the burden on the command team saying, "Company Commanders and 1SGs and people in leadership positions are going to be very nervous about screwing it up; no one wants to get it wrong." He advised they should adopt a mindset that allows for human mistakes, but operate on the principle that "everyone wants the best from each Soldier, regardless of gender."<sup>30</sup>

### **Recommended Best Practices**

- Communication is key. The unit needs to address the culture change issues upfront. Leaders should lead *informal*, open and honest conversations with Soldiers in their companies, platoons, or squads and explain their expectations.

- Encourage Soldiers to actively ask about what is considered acceptable and professional behavior and language. They need to have open and ongoing conversations with each other, with their leaders, and with the women who join their units.

- Encourage Soldiers to proactively communicate to their fellow Soldiers what behavior and language they find offensive and unacceptable. This type of communication requires a high level of professionalism, but leaders and Soldiers should be confident in their abilities to behave as professionals.

- Disciplining a Soldier is not sexual harassment, however, corrective action must be appropriate and professional and not include words or actions that belittle a particular gender.

- Leaders should educate their Soldiers on the difference between sexual harassment and corrective discipline in order to avoid misunderstandings and a climate of fear and resentment.

### **Practical examples**

Foul language may be unprofessional, but it is not sexual harassment. Foul language rises to that level when it is deliberately and repeatedly directed at a specific person

or the swear words are inherently directed at one gender.

Accidentally coming into contact with a Soldier's chest or crotch area during training or a uniform correction may be awkward, but it is not sexual harassment. When the "accident" is deliberate or becomes repeated, then it is a problem.

You fail as a leader if you don't discipline a Soldier because you fear being accused of harassment simply because you are unfamiliar with the sexual harassment regulation.<sup>31</sup> The Canadian military integrated women into combat arms about two decades ago and learned that a failure to discipline a female Soldier out of fear created a double standard which directly resulted in resentment and hostility throughout the rest of the unit.<sup>32</sup> Discipline should not be different based on gender or lack of knowledge of regulations.

Women who served as CST members described the initial adjustment period between male and female Soldiers as the women integrated combat arms units:

"They didn't know what was acceptable or not. We had to have an open discussion about this, offline and casual. They (didn't) understand how

to interact with us as teammates instead of females, and it was a big scary thing," said a CST member.

**Important Note:** The situations that arise from the cultural change of integrating women can mostly be handled by Soldiers and leaders at the unit level. However, **you must be able to distinguish between benign misunderstandings and deliberate instances of Soldiers sexually harassing other Soldiers.** In these cases, the chain of command or third parties should become involved and the harassed Soldier has the option of filing a formal complaint. See AR 600-20, Chapter 7, and Appendix D for procedures to follow.

## V. SEXUAL ASSAULT

While integration can bring a potential rise in sexual harassment complaints, it is not expected to result in more incidents of sexual assault.<sup>33 34</sup> The Department of Defense has found that about 55% of military sexual assaults are male-on-male, so if your unit has a problem with sexual assault, it is likely already occurring and needs to be taken seriously whether it involves men or women.<sup>35</sup>

With the integration of women, leaders should know that men fear being falsely accused of sexual assault<sup>36</sup> when engaging in what they believe to be consensual sex. This concern arises from confusion about what constitutes consent and a mistaken belief that false sexual assault accusations are rampant.

*What is Consent?* "Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity." To eliminate confusion, consent should be an ongoing verbal agreement throughout sexual activity.<sup>37</sup> If consent is still an unclear concept for you, [watch this video](https://vimeo.com/126553913) (<https://vimeo.com/126553913>), which teaches the meaning of consent, highlights that consent can be withdrawn at any time and explains that when consent cannot be given by

### Existing regulations

**AR 600-20**, Chapter 8:  
Sexual Assault Prevention and  
Response Program

either party sex should not occur.

*False rape or assault accusations.* The fear of facing a false accusation can partly be attributed to gossip, rumor and fear-mongering. The reality is that sexual assault is a seriously underreported crime; most victims are too afraid and ashamed to come forward. As already noted, about 86 percent of sexual assaults actually go unreported. Furthermore, only about 3 percent of the assaults reported are actually ruled "unfounded" or false.<sup>38</sup> The myth of widespread false rape accusations needs to die.



The "Tea Consent" video explains how consent is as simple as tea. *Screenshot.*

### Recommended Best Practices

- Ensure your Soldiers know about affirmative or positive consent which means that both partners clearly communicate consent to each other.
- Address and debunk the myth of false rape or assault accusations.
- Believe the person reporting the sexual assault and monitor for retaliation against the victim.
- Units must maintain a zero-tolerance policy for sexual predators.

It is your responsibility as a leader to learn the Army's established procedures for handling sexual assaults. Consult with your unit SHARP representative if you have any questions and ensure you have picked a mature and respected member of your unit to be your SHARP representative. Hold him or her accountable for properly training the unit.

### Practical Examples

The best practical example of what constitutes consent can be found in the [video](#) mentioned above.

## VI. FRATERNIZATION

Leaders and Soldiers also worry about fraternization which they believe will lead to preferential treatment of women. Fraternization is

### Existing regulations

Fraternization is covered by **AR 600-20**, Paragraph 4-14. The fraternization regulation applies to relationships between *Soldiers of different ranks such as officer and enlisted or NCOs and junior enlisted, if the relationship adversely impacts the unit.*

Leaders must ensure they understand the fraternization regulation. *As the regulation states:* "All relationships between Soldiers of different grade are prohibited if they— (1) Compromise, or appear to compromise, the integrity of supervisory authority or the chain of command. (2) Cause actual or perceived partiality or unfairness. (3) Involve, or appear to involve, the improper use of grade or position for personal gain. (4) Are, or are perceived to be, exploitative or coercive in nature. (5) Create an actual or clearly predictable adverse impact on discipline, authority, morale, or the ability of the command to accomplish its mission.

not only an issue of receiving preferential treatment, but more significantly, it is an issue of a higher ranking Soldier or supervisor abusing their position by engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a

subordinate. Fraternization is not gender specific, as Soldiers who have dealt with favoritism within their units already know. Mixed gender units throughout the Army have managed problems of fraternization between men and women for decades.

#### **Recommended Best Practices**

- All relationships between officers and enlisted, NCOs and junior enlisted, and supervisors and subordinates must remain professional to avoid perceptions of unfairness and partiality.

#### **Practical Examples**

Situations that may create perceptions of unfairness or favoritism include:

- Any relationship perceived to cause a conflict of interest within the chain of command.
- Over familiarity between supervisors and subordinates such as repeatedly calling a Soldier by their first name.<sup>39</sup>
- Supervisors repeatedly socializing with their Soldiers after work hours.

According to the regulation, “Commanders should seek to prevent inappropriate or unprofessional relationships through proper training and personal leadership.” The regulation provides a range of

responses commanders can use in fraternization cases.

## **VII. RELATIONSHIPS AND DATING**

Another worry for leaders is the potential for emotional and/or sexual relationships developing between Soldiers in integrated units.

Consensual relationships between same rank Soldiers are different from fraternization and are not prohibited by Army regulation, except on some deployments. However, leaders and Soldiers commonly see these relationships as a minefield that will destroy operational effectiveness. But the fact is that your Soldiers will develop relationships with each other and dealing with the impact of these relationships is just part of the job. Whether you are having to deal with two best friends fighting or a romantic relationship ending, the key is to teach Soldiers to act professionally at work. Forbidding relationships in your unit is pointless because they will happen regardless.

If conducted unprofessionally, relationships between same rank Soldiers can damage the cohesion of a unit. Soldiers of the same rank who choose to engage in a relationship should be made aware of the possible

negative impact their relationship could have on the unit.<sup>40</sup> Leaders have different tools at their disposal to handle these relationships.

### **Recommended Best Practices**

- If a leader becomes aware that two Soldiers in their unit are in a romantic and/or sexual relationship, the best practice is for leaders to acknowledge the relationship and counsel their Soldiers on remaining professional. Relationships should remain discreet and not be conducted while in uniform. Activities pertaining to romantic and/or sexual relationships should not be conducted during work hours.

- Both Soldiers in a relationship should remain professional at work. If the relationship ends, the Soldiers must continue to act professionally in their work environment and keep the fallout from the end of their relationship outside of work, out of uniform and off social media.

- Methods for dealing with relationships do not have to be negative. Leaders can encourage one or both of the Soldiers in the relationship to excel and complete professional requirements in order to facilitate their promotion and/or a move to another section.

### **Existing regulations**

There is no regulation that prohibits consensual emotional and/or sexual relationships between peers; the fraternization policy prohibits relationships between *officers and enlisted*, and *NCOs and junior enlisted Soldiers*, only. Also prohibited are relationships between supervisors and subordinates.

[ALARACT 350/2011](#) gives some guidance on public displays of affection, but is not punitive. It states that military custom prohibits public displays of affection while in uniform or in civilian clothing if on duty, however it allows for 'modest' displays of affection during appropriate circumstances such as welcome home ceremonies.

Remember that relationships in combat arms are not new or gender-specific. Best friends fight, gay Soldiers serve in combat arms and leaders already have experience dealing with these kinds of relationships among unit personnel.

### **Practical Examples**

*General Order #1.* Sexual relations between Soldiers can pose additional challenges to a unit during deployments. However, relationships

are situational and some may be permissible while others are not. Most Combatant Commanders realize this and General Order #1 will specify the limitations of sexual relationships during deployments.

One CST member describes the damage caused by a perceived sexual relationship between her team partner and a SF Soldier she worked with: "(It) became very negative... It caused a lot of strife among the team itself, it caused a lot of strife between my partner and the team." Ultimately, leaders removed both Soldiers from the team.

However, another CST member deployed at the same time as her husband and when the two of them overlapped on the same FOB, they shared a CHU with no negative ramifications to the unit.

## **VIII. IDENTITY THREAT**

Having women in combat arms presents a significant challenge to many men's notion of their traditional role as men and the masculine identity of a "combat arms Soldier." Soldiers generally say they object to women in combat arms because of a fear that the presence of women will harm operational effectiveness due to physical differences between men and women. Many also don't believe

women should have such a potentially violent role.<sup>41</sup> Insisting that women don't belong in combat arms units violates national values of equality and individual merit as well as the core Army value of duty and fulfilling your obligations, since it is Army policy to integrate combat units. Leaders should not disregard this struggle between national and Army values and personal beliefs. Leaders should address the underlying conflict that many of their Soldiers feel about having women in their units.

Our research, Army research and probably your own anecdotal experience shows that after objections based on physical ability and degradation of operational effectiveness have been raised, what usually follows are comments such as the example below made by a junior enlisted combat arms Soldier:

"It's a slap in the face telling us that chicks can do our job. It's not the physical aspect that bothers me. My issues are morale and retention. This wouldn't be special to anyone anymore."<sup>42</sup>

This comment demonstrates how the "combat arms Soldier" identity is tied to gender and being a man. To overcome this conflict, leaders must "de-gender" the combat arms identity by stressing the ideal attributes of a

“combat arms Soldier” and emphasizing that none of the attributes are gender-specific. This is a perfect time to emphasize all the attributes of the well-rounded combat arms Soldier; someone who is not hung up on PT test scores but embodies other necessary qualities as well including excelling at strategy, tactics, technical proficiency and leadership. This is a way for both men and women to be able to see each other as “combat arms Soldiers.”

### **Recommended Best Practices**

- Leaders should have *informal* discussions with their Soldiers that address the traditional beliefs they have about the appropriate roles men and women play and why they think these roles are appropriate. Both men and women attribute certain characteristics to each other's sex based on these deep-seated beliefs. The result is that when they engage with another person they are not engaging with the individual in front of them but with the stereotypes they hold about that person, in this case with stereotypes they hold about gender.<sup>43</sup>

- According to a Georgetown University professor who is internationally recognized as an expert in negotiations, “We negotiate with

our images of the other, not with the other as they actually are.”<sup>44</sup> This is detrimental to military units since it keeps Soldiers from being utilized effectively.

- Challenges to socially acceptable gender roles affect women as well as men. Some female Soldiers will have trouble navigating expectations of feminine identity while performing what has been traditionally thought of as a “man’s job.” If not addressed, this internal identity conflict could impact women's decisions to stay in combat arms. Studies have found that some women may deal with this identity conflict by adopting “hyper-masculine” traits that lead to troubling trends such as the “trivialization of sexual harassment” even when they are the target of the harassment.<sup>45</sup>

- Identities are not static. They change over time and they often expand to include others. If you base your concept of your self-worth on the exclusion of women from combat arms that means you define your worth by external factors over which you have no control. The military has decided it needs women in combat arms and it is unlikely to reverse that decision. Men can take pride in their combat arms identity based on the fact that only an elite few can handle the difficulty, danger and high

standards of the job, regardless of their gender.

### **Practical Examples**

When leaders negotiate the perceived challenges of interacting with women, a few simple ways exist to check for their preconceived notions. When you aren't sure if you are acting according to gendered identities ask yourself: "What would I do in this situation if this Soldier were a man?" If your plan is different than it would be if you were dealing with a male Soldier, then ask yourself why it is different. Reflect on why you would treat a male Soldier differently than a female Soldier and then, unless there is a very compelling reason to treat this Soldier differently, default to how you would have treated any male Soldier.

Another way to check yourself is to replace the word "woman" in your mind with "African American." For example, in the previous quote, what if the Soldier had said, "It's a slap in the face telling us that African Americans can do our job...This wouldn't be special to anyone anymore." When you replace "women" with "African American," or



Cultural Support Team members in Afghanistan.  
*Courtesy photo.*

any other minority group, the falseness and discrimination becomes obvious and is clearly not in keeping with Army values.

Self-awareness is important. When considering unit tasks, performance reviews or general interactions with women in your unit, ask yourself if you are dealing with the individual or if you are engaging with your stereotype about their gender. Constant vigilance toward this human tendency is a must.



Women from Cultural Support Teams prepare to go on a mission in Afghanistan. *Courtesy photo.*

## **PART 2: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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As some people continue to debate whether or not women should be in combat arms, no-nonsense leaders are moving forward with the job and orders they have received. This section is for leaders who are looking for resources and advice on the practical aspects of gender integration. The section answers questions about

how gender integration will affect everything from housing to field training and the use of equipment. Most leaders will discover that there is little to no change to time-tested standard operating procedures. Your Soldiers will continue to train and carry out missions exactly as they always have, regardless of gender. For

the instances where changes may occur, read on.

## I. ARRIVAL

In-processing for female Soldiers is no different than for male Soldiers. For the most part, you can treat a female Soldier exactly as you would any male Soldier. Although the Army suggests assigning same-gender sponsors, doing so probably won't be possible due to the likely low number of women in combat units. Besides, most currently serving female Soldiers have had male sponsors many times in their careers. More important than gender is a willingness to become a sponsor. Ask for volunteers and pick mature male Soldiers to sponsor female Soldiers who have requested a sponsor. We recommend married Soldiers sponsor married Soldiers and single Soldiers sponsor single Soldiers, as they are more likely to relate to each other and have similar concerns.

After completing installation in-processing, your Soldier will report to her unit as required. When assigning women their roles within the company beware of bias. Previous studies by the Army have shown that leaders tend to assign women to roles they deem easier and less demanding.<sup>46</sup> A tendency to concentrate women in headquarters positions might occur,

### Existing regulations

Guidance on the assignment of Soldiers to barracks housing is given by: [First Sergeant's Barracks Program 2020 Handbook](#), post 'Blue Books' or Commanding General policy letters.

These guides do not differentiate between female and male Soldiers.

[Army Regulation 420-1](#), Section IV, 3-23 (1)(c) states that "Men and women occupying UPH (PP) [Unaccompanied Personnel Housing (Permanent Party)] will be similarly housed; however, separate and secure sleeping and bathroom facilities will be provided." If barracks do not meet adequacy standards Army Regulation 420-1 lets leaders bring the facilities up to standard "as soon as reasonably possible."

There is no Army requirement to house women separately from men in a garrison, deployment or field environment. Requirements for initial entry training and AIT housing differ from UPH and are governed by TRADOC Regulation 350-6.

Posts in general prohibit the display of sexually explicit material in barracks. Check the Blue Book or policy letters for the guidance specific to your installation.

Fort Bragg [Division Pamphlet 600-2](#) prohibits posters, wall displays, or screen savers that are in "bad taste" and could be construed as offensive. Examples of offensive and inappropriate displays include nudity.

Fort Hood [Command Policy Memo CSM-02: Single Soldier Quarters Living Standards](#) and [Commanding General's Policy Letter #15](#) prohibit the display of sexually explicit material in the barracks.

especially when they arrive at units in small numbers. When assigning women to platoons or squads make assignments based on MTOE staffing requirements and unit needs, not on gender-based considerations. The Army has determined that women do not need to be assigned to the same platoon, so long as another female leader is in the company.<sup>47</sup>

However, in our experience, simply having other women present in the organization isn't a guaranteed recipe for success. Although the Army is assigning company grade women to combat units before the first entry level women arrive, many of the company grade leaders may themselves struggle with integration. Sometimes, when women struggle to fit in, they avoid spending a lot of time with other women and they may or may not be willing to assist and mentor junior women. More important than having other women in place is the leader for whom the women will work. The first line leader is the most important person in any new Soldier's unit. Selecting the right leaders for your first integrated platoons is far more important than having a hundred women staff officers in the organization.

## **Barracks**

The Army has had integrated barracks for decades and housing women on the same floor as men is already common practice in most units on post. The only special consideration you need to make is about assigning roommates. The Army requires that Soldiers billet with same-gender roommates and if barracks rooms have connecting bathrooms, they connect to the room of another same-gender Soldier. If your barracks do not meet these "adequacy standards," Army Regulation 420-1 instructs you to bring the facilities up to standard "as soon as reasonably possible." If you have any special concerns, you should ask a leader in an integrated unit. While combat arms units are the last to integrate, the rest of the Army is fully integrated and many leaders on post can guide you through this transition. Seek them out.

Many commanders, NCOs and Soldiers know that the bonds between Soldiers in a garrison environment are built through shared experiences in the field and the barracks. Excluding women from the unit's barracks can create resentment from male Soldiers who may assume that women are receiving preferential treatment and are avoiding company duties like

cleaning the barracks or pulling CQ. Segregated barracks can also exclude women from important information sharing that occurs after work. Segregation sets women up for failure because it sends the message that they are different and not full members of the team.

The main reason leaders might consider segregating female Soldiers in the barracks or during field training and deployment is their concern about sexual harassment and sexual assault. Many leaders and Soldiers expect a spike in SHARP cases in their units once the units integrate. For the most part, this concern is unfounded. In fact, a study conducted by the Norwegian army found the opposite to be true: in army units with co-ed living arrangements (six men and two women in the same room), cases of sexual harassment dropped. The study attributed these results to a "de-gendering" process that occurred as men and women lived together. They stopped seeing each other as "guy" or "girl" and instead saw each other as teammate or "Soldier."<sup>48</sup>

As stated earlier in the handbook, some of the fear about SHARP cases spiking comes from the expectation that women will be unfamiliar with the "locker-room" type environment of the combat arms barracks, which will

lead to charges of sexual harassment. This is simply not true. Women are no strangers to a male-dominated culture; as one CST member observed, she saw women match the men when it comes to swearing and sharing crude stories.

This apprehension will change once men start working closely with women. According to another CST member, "After they realized that they could basically just treat us like one of the guys, everything kind of relaxed."

This should help to put some leaders' fears to rest, but it does not absolve them and all Soldiers from the responsibility of creating an inclusive environment in their units and in the barracks. Leaders should talk to their Soldiers about language that is denigrating to fellow Soldiers, whether it is racist language or language that belittles Soldiers based on gender. For more on this topic, see the Sexual Harassment section of the handbook.

### **Billeting During Field Training & Deployment**

Integrated units in the Army also conduct integrated field training and deployments. They house Soldiers in the same tents or open areas during training, regardless of gender. Deployment is no different. If you are lucky enough to have rooms in

buildings or CHUs, follow the same-gender roommate restrictions as on-post billeting. If everyone is sleeping or living in the same open building, room or tent, or sleeping on the ground or inside a vehicle, the arrangements should be fully integrated. That means no segregating Soldiers by gender. In such situations, isolating female Soldiers by making them sleep separately from the rest of their team is dangerous. If you wouldn't make a male Soldier sleep separately, don't make a female Soldier do it. Many men and women who have trained and deployed together are used to changing clothes within their sleeping bags or behind a poncho. Lack of privacy is not a problem.

#### **Recommended Best Practices**

- Carefully select, educate and train the first line leaders for whom female Soldiers will work.
- Assign incoming Soldiers based on qualifications. Don't automatically assign women to administrative or headquarters duties.
- While the option to house women separately from men may be available, we do not recommend the practice. Separating team members could have long-term negative

consequences to team and unit cohesion.

*Policy Recommendation:* Each post commander should amend their Single Soldier Quarters policy letters to affirm the principle that unit integrity must be maintained in permanent duty station barracks and leaders should not segregate unit Soldiers based on gender.

#### **Practical Examples**

Women who received segregated housing during training and deployment report that they miss out on important information sharing which leads to negative perceptions of them as Soldiers. For example, not hearing last minute information often shared in the barracks has caused them to miss formations, be late for movements and generally be less well informed than their peers. They also report that when they are separated from their teams they feel less secure, not more secure, and isolated. They say it negatively impacts their interaction with their teams.

## II. UNIFORM & GROOMING STANDARDS

Some male leaders may be unfamiliar with women's hair and uniform standards even in existing mixed gender Army units. Often, male leaders rely upon women in the unit to correct women's uniform violations. Some leaders are reluctant to address uniform issues because they don't know the regulations and fear formal complaints, especially in the case of hair standards. This reluctance to correct women can also come across as favoritism, creating resentment from those who think women can get away with uniform violations. Not knowing the regulations as they pertain to women is not an excuse for not enforcing standards. Female leaders don't have the luxury of neglecting regulations that pertain to

### Existing regulations

**Army Regulation 670-1,** "Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia" prescribes the Department of Army's policy for proper wear and appearance of the Army uniform and insignia for all military personnel.

male Soldiers. Men must similarly learn and enforce women's standards in order to be consistent for all Soldiers.

While most provisions of AR 670-1, "Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia," pertain equally to both men and women, for example the wear of the utility uniform, some specific regulations apply differently to women.

The following chapters are worth



An NCO competing in a U.S. Army Reserve Best Warrior Competition is tested to see if he can spot, in three minutes, all discrepancies on the uniforms of both a male and female Soldier. *U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Sharilyn Wells.*

noting:

**Chapter 3, Appearance and Grooming**

*Hair and fingernail standards and grooming policies.* In general, several hairstyles are acceptable as long as they are neat and conservative. Female hairstyles are grouped into three basic categories: short, medium and long. Short hair can be no shorter than 1/4 inch and medium and long hair cannot extend beneath the lower edge of the collar. The Army regulates hair holding devices such as rubber bands, barrettes and bobby pins. The regulation also covers particular policies for braids, cornrows and twists. Women are authorized to wear pony tails while actively conducting PT. Nail length is prescribed and only clear nail polish is authorized.

*Cosmetics.* Female Soldiers are authorized to wear “modest and conservative” make up in all of their uniforms.

*Jewelry.* Unlike male Soldiers, women are authorized to wear earrings of certain metals and diameters in all uniforms except the utility uniform.

**Chapter 5, Maternity Work Uniform**

Specific uniforms are authorized for pregnant Soldiers and are outlined in 670-1.

**Chapter 14, Service and Dress Uniforms; Chapter 15, Maternity Service Uniforms; Chapter 17, Blue Mess Uniforms; Chapter 1, White Mess Uniforms**

The above chapters give specific details on the wear of female uniforms which differ in some ways from male uniforms. For example, women are authorized to wear skirts, make-up and jewelry with the service/dress uniform, blue mess and white mess uniforms.

**Recommended Best Practices**

- The bottom line is that leaders should be familiar with the uniform provisions for all Soldiers, male and female, and should enforce regulations without regard to gender.

**Practical Examples**

Leaders often make special allowances for women in the wear of the uniform, especially during formal events such as the Army birthday and branch celebrations, when some female Soldiers request to wear formal civilian dresses in lieu of the uniform. Leaders should insist that all Soldiers attend official events in uniform. This is not only necessary for a uniform appearance of Soldiers attending the event, but also to prevent special treatment for female Soldiers. If you

don't let men opt out of wearing their uniforms, don't allow women to do so.

### III. PT AND TRAINING STANDARDS

Physical readiness and training is fundamental to mission effectiveness. The APFT measures general fitness levels by age and gender. It is not a measure of occupational qualification. APFT scores are gender- and age-normed as an acknowledgement of different physiological capabilities and expectations based on age and sex.

In the move to integrate women, the Army has validated clear, gender-neutral occupational standards that are neither age nor gender normed. Validated MOS standards for infantry and armor MOSs are outlined in DA Pam 611-21 and HQDA EXORD 2016-01, Annex C. The standards associated with MOS skills are gender neutral and change based on skill-level or grade, not gender or age. In addition to the new MOS standards the Army has developed the Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT) which serves as a screening mechanism that will determine if a Soldier has the physical ability to succeed in their contracted occupation or branch. The Army

#### Existing regulations

**Army Regulation 350-1,**  
Army Training and Leader  
Development  
Field Manual 7-22, Army  
Physical Readiness Training  
Army Doctrine Publication 7-  
0, Training Units and Developing  
Leaders  
U.S. Army Public Health  
Command, Technical Guide  
Series 255A-E, U.S. Army  
Pregnancy Post-Partum Physical  
Training Program (PPPT)

plans to begin using the OPAT to screen new recruits in fiscal year 2017.

Until the Army decides to have gender-neutral APFT standards, become familiar with both the male and female standards. Train and evaluate every Soldier, regardless of age or gender, according to the established MOS and mission essential task list (METL) standards applicable to your organization.

Physical readiness training, MOS skills training and METL training are opportunities to overcome concerns during the gender integration process as Soldiers of all genders establish trust and confidence in each other's abilities to perform their assigned tasks.

Pregnancy alone is not a reason to miss MOS skills and METL training. Pregnant Soldiers should participate in training according to the guidance of their medical care provider. Many Soldiers in support units have performed duties right up until their delivery. Pregnant Soldiers should maintain individual fitness through the Pregnancy Post-Partum Physical Training Program (PPPT).

### **Recommended Best Practices**

- Physical training can be a productive way to integrate a unit and build team cohesion. All Soldiers bring unique physical abilities to the team and leaders should ensure that physical training and physical challenges don't only showcase what men tend to be good at but also highlight the unique capabilities of various team members.

- On average, women are more flexible and have better balance than men. They also tend to have high endurance and more developed lower body strength. A good PT training regime would take into account developing lower body strength for men and upper body strength for women.

- Do not demand that women complete physical tasks in exactly the same way as men; women have

learned to draw on their own physical strengths and will adapt to physical tasks differently. For example, women tend to negotiate obstacle courses differently than men but with equal success. This can be an asset in an operational setting.

- The women who join infantry and armor units may try to overcompensate to prove themselves. Be careful that they don't injure themselves as they try to prove their physical abilities. For example, one CST member reported, "If the guys were carrying two two-by-fours, I was carrying three. If they were up at seven, I was up at six thirty. If they were in the gym for an hour, I was in the gym for an hour and a half."

- Proficiency in MOS skills and mission essential tasks is more important than physical fitness test scores because it directly relates to mission success. Focus your interest on how well male and female Soldiers perform MOS tasks. Your female Soldiers will likely try to be the "best of the best" because they are struggling to overcome a stereotype. A CST member reported that, "You couldn't do it as well as their average guy, you had to do it as well as their good guys because if you couldn't, that would be a problem because you were a girl." Another CST member

reported that her team sergeant didn't want her to fail in front of the team so he "came to my room and made me (disassemble and reassemble a weapon system) like twenty times, to make sure that I was in the acceptable time window."

- Nothing removes skepticism about physical capabilities faster than seeing fellow Soldiers perform. Men who attended Ranger School with the first women graduates admitted that they were highly skeptical about women's ability to accomplish the same physical challenges as men but that their skepticism vanished quickly when they saw some women outperform many men.<sup>49</sup> As one of the men said, "One particular event that stood out in my mind was the 12-mile ruck march in which we had 50 pounds plus ... and the women, these two women at least, finished well ahead of some of the males and well ahead of at least 60 other men who didn't even complete the ruck march."<sup>50</sup>

### **Practical examples**

**Ability Groups.** Organize physical training sessions by ability groups, not age or gender. Although the physical readiness testing standards vary by age and gender, individual men and women perform at different levels.

Tailor training according to ability to maximize physical training sessions. Ability groups are especially important because women's physical fitness compared to men is often used as a litmus test for deciding whether women belong in combat arms, regardless of their proficiency in other MOS skills. Women in Canadian combat arms units reported that although they passed the standard for PT (which is the same for men and women), their acceptance rested on meeting subjective higher standards.<sup>51</sup> For example, in group runs the fastest, most fit man set the pace and if women failed to keep up the entire group was forced to continue running until they caught up. Although leaders might have intended to build teamwork, they actually subjected the fallouts to derision from the entire group. Women said this was used as a strategy to single them out and prove they "didn't belong" in combat arms, even though other men failed to keep up, also.<sup>52</sup>

**Post Raw APFT Results.** Some men resent the fact that women get scored on a different scale, but the truth is that many women pass on the men's scale and the men don't even realize it. To avoid the perception that the women aren't as fit because they are graded on a gender-normed scale,

post raw scores. List run times, sit-up, and push-up totals for male and female Soldiers together without changing them into gendered scores. This technique shows everyone how they compare to each other and eliminates the gender difference in the scoring system that may be perceived as unfair. One CST member explains how this perception affected her: "You can do something amazing, but because you are female, they think that 'well, you are female, so your standards are different, of course you did really great ... because you didn't have to meet our (standard).'"

**One Standard.** Despite APFT age and gender scoring differences, integrated units must train to the same mission standard. Women in aviation, combat engineers, CSTs and others repeatedly express the importance of equal job requirements to successful integration and overall performance. Don't assume that women will not be able to accomplish a task. As one CST member noted, "I was active duty for five years. I was a reservist for four. That whole time women didn't have to do pull-ups, so I never bothered trying to do a pull-up. I got picked up for the CST program and I was doing pull-ups four months later because I was told you have to be able to do pull-ups to pass this assessment."

Women themselves say they don't want to be judged by a different standard. The CST members consistently said, "One standard for men and women. I think that would help squash a lot of myths, gripes and complaints about whether or not women should be able to do it." A lesson learned report from the Canadian Armed Forces gender integration process indicates that the perception of unequal treatment contributed to the destruction of unit cohesion. The Canadians found that unequal treatment comes in two forms: favoritism in the form of lowering the standard for the minority group which creates resentment from peers; or harassment in the form of setting harsher standards for the minority group, which destroys their confidence and motivation.

"The negative result on unit cohesion is the same in both cases," according to the report.<sup>53</sup>

#### IV. COUNSELING AND MENTORING

Counseling, coaching and mentoring are well established leadership activities that are defined and detailed in FM 6-22. This FM is a great tool for understating the role each of these activities plays in

building your teams. However, some leaders are worried about counseling and mentoring members of the opposite sex because they fear being accused of acting inappropriately.

Mentoring is an informal activity that occurs throughout the Army. Generally, mentoring occurs when one Soldier, usually someone senior, takes a junior Soldier under his or her wing and provides them with career advice. Mentoring relationships work best when they happen naturally, that is when a leader sees a promising junior Soldier and begins to coach and advise them as they progress in their careers. Unfortunately, women have fewer opportunities for mentorship because many men are afraid to mentor women and there are few to no women above them in leadership roles who could mentor them.

### **Recommended Best Practices**

- FM 6-22 advises leaders to, “Conduct the counseling in an environment that minimizes interruptions and is free from distracting sights and sounds.” Ideally, counseling occurs in a private or semi-private location so the leader and subordinate can speak candidly without being overheard. If you are worried about perception, counseling doesn’t have to occur behind a closed

door. It just needs to occur in a location where distractions are minimal and others can’t eavesdrop on your conversation. However you decide to counsel your Soldiers, make sure that you treat men and women the same. If you keep the door open when you counsel women then keep it open with men as well.

- In their new book, *Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women*, Navy officers Brad Johnson and David Smith talk about the challenges men face mentoring women and how and why they should overcome their fears. Most importantly they point to the added benefits to the organization of having the most capable Soldiers promoted and selected for leadership roles. They note that as long as relationships are transparent, challenges to integrity are not likely. They advise that male leaders who want to mentor high-speed women should “ignore the realities of outside perception or the challenge created by feelings of intimacy.”<sup>54</sup>

### **Practical Examples**

In some instances complete privacy may be required for counseling. In cases where privacy is required it is common practice, but not required, to have one other Soldier present during

the counseling. Many leaders counsel Soldiers of the opposite sex in their offices every day without ever being accused by anyone of inappropriate behavior. Ultimately, it is the leader's behavior that determines whether or not other Soldiers will question his or her integrity.

Some units have tried to set up formal mentoring programs for minority groups. However, minority Soldiers are often reluctant to use formal mentoring programs because they don't want to be seen as different or requiring special consideration. Therefore, if formal mentoring programs are established, participation should be voluntary. The best mentoring relationships are those that develop naturally. For example, the Women's Mentorship Network is a group established informally by a few servicewomen at Fort Hood, Texas. The group has grown and expanded and now has a [website](http://www.womensmentorshipnetwork.com/) (<http://www.womensmentorshipnetwork.com/>) that provides support to other potential grassroots mentoring programs.

#### **IV. SMART ADAPTATIONS**

Military equipment has been designed and fielded to best fit and

serve the average male body.

Consequently, relatively small and very large Soldiers have frequently had trouble effectively utilizing some equipment. Average-sized women are roughly the same size as small men and will encounter many of the same problems that small men encounter with equipment fit. Furthermore, equipment designed for men relies on an assumption about where primary body power resides, which for men is in the upper body, but for women is in the lower body. Poorly fitting and inappropriately designed equipment impacts job performance and combat effectiveness.

In 2015, Congress directed DoD to remove "artificial barriers to the service of women in the Armed Forces" and specifically called attention to the fit, wear and use of uniforms and equipment.<sup>55</sup> A Marine Corps research study found a number of potential adaptations that would benefit smaller sized Marines. Most of their findings are similarly applicable to male and female Soldiers. For a complete list of recommended adaptations see *Smart Adaptations for a Gender Integrated Marine Corps*.<sup>56</sup>

#### **Recommended Best Practices**

- Be creative and flexible. There are likely many more adaptations that can

and should be made to ensure all Soldiers are able to contribute to the maximum extent possible to the capabilities of combat teams.

### **Practical Examples**

1. Even the smallest issue ruck sack frames may be too big for smaller Soldiers. Frames that are too big reduce mobility and cause injuries. There are commercially available frames that are relatively low cost and can be locally procured for Soldiers who require smaller frames. For example [Mystery Ranch Nylinear Individual Carrying Equipment](#) offers frames that adjust to fit people as small as 4'11."

2. Body armor is uncomfortable for everyone but it is particularly uncomfortable if it is ill fitting and restricts movement because it was not designed for your body type. The Army is making advances in body armor design, particularly for female Soldiers who have been required to wear body armor that was made for men's bodies. Make sure women in your unit are issued the newly designed, female-specific body armor and are not simply told to take a smaller man's size.

3. Many women who have long hair have indicated that wearing a bun with a helmet is sometimes problematic because it impedes vision and mobility. One female Soldier explains: "If you do wear your hair correctly, it pushes the helmet over your eyes and you lose half of your sight picture." Commanders have occasionally authorized uniform and grooming variations based on operational necessity. During training and deployments some leaders have simply relaxed hair standards and we recommended that when using their weapon, women be allowed to wear their bun at or below the collar, or that they be allowed to wear their hair in a braid or pony tail. Another adaptation is to ensure that female Soldiers have an H-style retention harness for their helmets. [This retention harness](#) is more adjustable than the standard harness.

4. Soldiers with smaller hands and/or arm reach may have trouble utilizing some weapon systems. For example the M1A1 Tank utilizes an M240 with a butterfly trigger that smaller tankers have had trouble reaching. Consider using the butt stock version of the M240 in the M1A1 to accommodate all Soldiers.

5. Casualty evacuation through a turret is difficult for all Soldiers but it is particularly difficult for smaller stature Soldiers who must lean down into the turret to reach a casualty. Consider utilizing and training with [casualty assist devices like the hasty harness](#).

## VI. HEALTH AND HYGIENE

A leading concern for combat arms leaders and Soldiers is female-specific health issues, primarily pregnancy, but also hygiene and menstruation during field training or deployment.<sup>57</sup> Although not a regulation, the Army already provides a comprehensive guide to these issues in the booklet *A Guide to Female Soldier Readiness*. Although the guide takes a "worst case scenario" approach by anticipating practically every possible female-specific health issue that might come up, most leaders will likely never see all those issues. However, it is available if leaders are ever stumped by a woman's health problem. The topics we focus on in this section are the few that are new or that leaders seem most concerned about relative to women's health.

### Existing regulations

Retention or Separation for Pregnant Soldiers: Enlisted, AR 635-200, Chapter 8. Officers, AR 600-8-24.

*Deployment availability:* Soldiers are deployable 6 months after giving birth per AR 614-30.

*Maternity Leave:* 12 weeks authorized by [Army Directive 2016-09](#).

*Breast Feeding and Lactation policy:* [Army Directive 2015-43](#).

*Pregnancy Counseling Checklist:* AR 635-200.

*Family Care Counseling:* AR 600-8-24, AR 600-20, AR 601-280, AR 635-200.

*Source: Guide to Female Soldier Readiness, Breastfeeding in Combat Boots*

### Pregnancy

Fear that a Soldier's pregnancy will affect combat readiness is uppermost in leaders' and Soldiers' minds. While losing Soldiers to pregnancy can impact unit readiness, pregnancy is not a more substantial issue than other factors that affect the readiness of male Soldiers. Less than 5 percent of the total female force is pregnant at any given time and less than 1 percent



Capt. Aimee Tibbetts participates in the workout of the day. She is eight months pregnant and says CrossFit workouts have kept her healthy during her pregnancy. *U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Malcolm McClendon.*

is not available for duty due to pregnancy.<sup>58</sup> For comparison, a study found that about 14.5 percent of Soldiers in male Brigade Combat Teams were non-deployable due to medical, behavioral or other admin issues<sup>59</sup> and currently about 10 percent of the Active Duty Army is considered non-deployable.<sup>60</sup>

So although pregnancy is an added issue that will affect the number of deployable combat arms Soldiers, it is more likely that you will lose more male Soldiers to other medical, administrative, or behavioral issues than you will lose your female Soldiers

due to pregnancy. If loss of workdays or loss of Soldiers before a deployment is a concern, leaders should have an honest and open conversation about all the issues which can affect unit readiness. This includes issues that are more likely to prevent men from deployment, such as alcohol-related behavioral problems, DWIs, domestic violence, motorcycle accidents, sports injuries, etc. Don't fixate on pregnancy, a normal life event that only makes a Soldier non-deployable for a short period of time. Pregnancy should not be viewed as a more objectionable

non-deployable status simply because it only affects women.

When speaking about pregnancy, stop the gossip about women using pregnancy to avoid deployment. Not many women are willing to go through pregnancy, child birth, 18+ years of financial liability and a lifetime of responsibility to avoid a one-year deployment. While occasionally a woman might do so, we also know that a man might shoot himself in the foot to avoid deployment. Both scenarios are about as likely and they are not an indictment of the entire male or female gender.

Remember that women in your combat arms units have overcome many cultural obstacles to become infantry and armor Soldiers, and they likely have a higher incentive to avoid a pre-deployment pregnancy. They will not derail all of their hard work by becoming pregnant before deployment.

However, pregnancies can be and are planned around deployments. Female Soldiers are entitled to have families, like male Soldiers, and they are free to make their own reproductive choices. Because someone chooses to serve in the military does not mean they have to give up having a family. Many

Soldiers, both men and women, balance a family life with serving in the military. Women become pregnant and pregnancy is a normal, healthy, temporary medical condition and natural part of life. With proper planning, the impact on unit readiness can be minimal.

### **Recommended Best Practices**

- It is imperative that Soldiers receive information about family planning when they first report to their unit and throughout their assignment. Of the Soldiers who become pregnant in the Army, 10.5 percent report that the pregnancy was unintended.<sup>61</sup> This percentage is higher, 16.29 percent, for the youngest group of women, those who are 20 or younger.<sup>62</sup> Ensure that all Soldiers, men and women, have easy access to family planning options such as birth control.

- If a Soldier wants to have a family, the Army has established procedures for what to do once a Soldier informs their leadership of a pregnancy. Army regulation requires company commanders give a pregnancy counseling using DA Form 4856, which includes a specific checklist of topics the pregnancy counseling must cover. The regulation covers information on all military-

specific aspects of pregnancy including the service member's decision on whether to stay in or chapter out of the Army, when and how a Soldier can obtain maternity uniforms and an overview of physical and training restrictions during pregnancy. The booklet *A Guide to Female Soldier Readiness* has a sample form for the pregnancy counseling.

- Once a pregnancy has been medically confirmed, the health care provider gives the Soldier a pregnancy profile. When it comes to pregnancy, leaders should not only be concerned with unit operational effectiveness; it is a leader's duty to take care of the well-being of their Soldier. Following the Soldier's pregnancy profile should ensure this, for the most part.

- If your Soldier is single or married to another Soldier, she must establish a Family Care Plan as soon as possible after the birth or adoption of a child. The requirement for a Family Care Plan is not just for women. Any male Soldier who is married to another service member or is a single Soldier who has custody of a child must similarly maintain a Family Care Plan.

- Women have worked for decades in non-combat arms units and balanced pregnancy, motherhood, training and deployments. A

pregnancy affects the mission of a support unit just as much as it will likely affect a combat arms unit.

Support units have experience with this; remember you have units on post with decades of integration experience and they have continued to be operationally effective and successful. Ask for their advice.

*Policy Recommendation:* The Army should update *A Guide to Female Soldier Readiness* to reflect recent regulations and remove some outdated information.

### **Practical Examples**

A Soldier's initial counseling can mitigate concerns about pregnancy affecting unit readiness. This counseling should include an honest conversation about best practices for family planning during a combat arms Soldier's career progression. Initial counseling can outline the career progression through the combat arms ranks, including informing the Soldier of required staff time and other points in their career that are most conducive to pregnancy and having a family. While leaders should avoid any perception that they are trying to dictate to their Soldiers when they should have a family, a blunt discussion about deployments, training and pregnancy is advisable.

This point is important for male Soldiers, too, as having young children at home also affects their ability to focus on training and deployments.

For example, using the career progression of an infantry Soldier, leaders can counsel on the following:

E-1 through E-4: These are the most physically demanding years of an infantry Soldier's career and may be the least compatible with pregnancy.

E-5 through E-9: Soldiers who plan to have a career in combat arms have many considerations. In the E-1 through E-4 ranks, Soldiers are pretty confined to infantry line units. As they move up through the ranks, they have many traditional and nontraditional infantry assignments, some of which are more compatible with pregnancy than others. For example, besides staff positions in infantry battalions, Soldiers will have opportunities to serve as instructors, ROTC cadre, recruiters and more. These assignments may be more compatible with pregnancy if a Soldier wishes to have children during her infantry career. With careful career planning, female and male Soldiers can have a family while serving in combat arms.

A Danish infantrywoman who now has two kids and continues to serve talks about her own experience with pregnancy and becoming a mother

while in combat arms: "If I could give personal advice to a young woman, I would tell her to wait with the children until she is in her late 20s in order to try all the fun stuff as an infantry(wo)man before settling down to becoming a mother," she said. "One thing I learned was that the second I had a child my priorities changed completely even though I was a very hardcore infantrywoman—it took me completely by surprise. Of course, not all women will experience that, but some will. I got very divided between my army career and being a mother and it took me some time to accept that I could not do both perfectly at the same time."<sup>63</sup>

### **Other Health Concerns**

***Iron Deficiency:*** Almost a third of women enter the military suffering from iron deficiency, which affects their physical performance.<sup>64</sup> By the time they arrive at AIT, more than half are iron deficient. Physiological factors like menstruation along with strenuous physical activity exacerbate women's iron deficiency. Women in basic training who were iron deficient and took an iron supplement ran up to 50 seconds faster on the APFT than women who took a placebo.<sup>65</sup> For women who were anemic at the start of basic training, an iron

supplement made them an average of two minutes faster on their two-mile run. If you want to ensure that the women in your unit are in top physical shape, encourage them to consult their primary health care provider to check for iron deficiency or anemia. They should ask their medical provider if an iron supplement, such as a prenatal vitamin with iron, is appropriate for them.

***Hygiene:*** Although periodic showers are recommended for both male and female Soldiers, showering is not more critical to women's health than men's health. Generally speaking, neither men nor women like to be dirty, but dirt isn't any more detrimental to women than it is to men. Provide a canteen of water and some privacy for meeting basic hygiene needs. If water is in short supply, Soldiers can use baby wipes as a substitute. When changing one's undergarments regularly is not an option, many women wear pantliners and change them as needed.

***Menstruation:*** Men's knowledge of female health is often lacking, which explains why women's periods are often cited as a barrier to adequate job performance.<sup>66</sup> Women in the Army have learned to live with their

periods and continue to perform their job (some have the option of using birth control to stop their periods during training and deployments), so they need very few accommodations. A few women with menstrual disorders might require extra medical attention, but in this case the woman will have medical guidance from her health care provider. Overall, leaders should have no special health concerns, or expect any work days lost, due to a woman's period.

***Urinary Tract Infections:*** Encourage Soldiers to drink water during field exercises and missions and make sure they have adequate opportunities to urinate. Some women might avoid drinking water because of a lack of bathroom facilities and this can lead to a higher likelihood of urinary tract infections.<sup>67</sup> Many women won't be shy about relieving themselves while on missions, but help make it easy by ensuring that they know about and have access to female urinary diversion devices like the She Wee, the Go Girl and Travel Johns which come in reusable and disposable versions and cost less than \$20. Travel Johns and Biffy Bags are good for men too when Soldiers are trapped inside vehicles for long periods of time. Unit supply sections

can order these devices or purchase them at any camping supply store.

## **VII. MEDIA ATTENTION**

The first women in your units are likely to attract media attention. The post Public Affairs Office will provide guidance on how and when to interact with the media. What follows are lessons from previous integration efforts on how to handle media attention for the best outcome for your unit.

The Canadian Armed Forces found that media attention negatively impacts unit cohesion if attention focuses on just a few members of the unit.<sup>68</sup> Such focus “puts (a few individuals) in the spotlight and diminishes the accomplishment of the entire team.” This situation creates resentment from the overlooked team members. It also puts an inordinate amount of pressure on the Soldiers receiving the attention whose sole focus should be on learning how to become combat arms Soldiers.

### **Recommended Best Practices**

- A savvy leader can use media attention in a manner that positively showcases the entire unit, thereby improving morale and increasing cohesion. Media exposure should be

kept to a minimum but it doesn’t need to be completely avoided.

- Minimize media attention on one specific individual and instead refocus it on a variety of team members. Women will likely be uncomfortable with all the media attention and not welcome it. They just want to do their job and constant interviews about their gender can detract from their training and their other accomplishments as Soldiers. Soldiers have the option of turning down interviews.

### **Practical examples**

- If PAO asks for media interviews, ensure that you set a time and place that is not disruptive to unit training. Soldiers will act differently in front of a camera or reporters, which can compromise training. If PAO and the chain of command direct you to provide Soldiers for interviews, have them conduct the interviews away from ongoing training exercises.

- Ensure Soldiers chosen for interviews include a wide representation of your unit, not just the female members. Men are a critical part in successful gender integration in combat arms, and they should be included in media interviews.

- Ensure any VIPs or reporters visiting your unit pay as much

attention to the accomplishments of your male Soldiers as they do to your female Soldiers. Be prepared with bullet points to highlight the achievements of all the exceptional members of your unit.

## VIII. MANAGING CHANGE IN YOUR UNIT

Organizational change is hard, but a multitude of resources are available to advise and guide you through the process. John Kotter's "8 Stage Change Process" is a model the Army teaches at the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. [This model](#) lays out a step-by-step process for achieving systemic organizational change.<sup>69</sup>

A very brief outline with some practical guidance is provided here.

### **Step 1.** *Establishing a Sense of Urgency*

In order to mobilize people and resources leaders must overcome not just active resistance but a multitude of sources that contribute to complacency and impede change efforts. Creating urgency and momentum for change requires bold or even risky action. Battalion and company commanders can set their unit's integration goals or objectives

with benchmarked timelines to create this sense of urgency.

### **Step 2.** *Create a Guiding Coalition*

A guiding coalition is a group of people who have power, expertise, credibility, good leadership skills and are committed to making this change succeed. They advise other leaders and oversee, assess and monitor the change efforts from beginning to end. Indicators to monitor the success of gender integration in your unit are given in the next part of the handbook.

### **Step 3.** *Developing a Vision and a Strategy*

Vision tells people where the organization needs to go and why it needs to go there and strategy provides a way to get there. The best visions and strategies include some degree of member participation to garner buy-in. Battalion and company commanders should gather their leaders together and develop a feasible vision and strategy.

### **Step 4.** *Communicating the Change Vision*

According to Kotter a "shared sense of a desirable future can help motivate and coordinate the kinds of actions that create transformations."

Insufficient communication and mixed messages lead to confusion about the desired end state and will undercut change efforts. Commanders must clearly articulate expectations and they must encourage open and honest conversation.

**Step 5. *Empowering Employees for Broad Based Action***

Removing barriers gives Soldiers the power and resources to effect change. Structural barriers, recalcitrant leaders and lack of training are all potential barriers to change. Carefully select the right leaders to lead the first integrated teams and ensure those leaders have the training they need to be successful.

**Step 6. *Generating Short Term Wins***

As an organization begins to change, it is important that members see and understand how the change is benefiting the organization. If short term successes aren't highlighted, then skeptics will begin to challenge the efficacy of the change. For example, to highlight the benefits of having women in combat arms units, leaders can include a realistic scenario during MOUT training that demands body searches of foreign women with hidden intelligence. Because of cultural considerations applicable in

the modern battlefield, only the women in the squad can search the women during the training, thereby obtaining the needed intelligence.

**Step 7. *Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change***

Resistance to change is "always waiting to reassert itself." Hardcore obstructionists continue to look for opportunities to undermine the change process and short term gains are not enough to transform the entire system. The interdependent nature of complex social systems means that change must be widespread across all systems in the organization before long-term transformation is realized.

**Step 8. *Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture***

Culture is arguably the most difficult challenge to tackle in an organization. Not only is culture hard to change but according to Kotter it should be the last area of focus of any organizational change effort. Kotter says that "culture changes only after you have successfully altered people's actions, after the new behavior produces some group benefit for a period of time." Kotter's rule of thumb is that any organizational change plan that sets out to change culture as a first step is doomed to

failure from the start. Start by changing behavior; beliefs, values and culture will follow.

## FINAL WORDS

Changing the culture of an organization steeped in two centuries of masculine identity and tradition will be hard. However, culture and identity do change, and the Army culture has been changing for more than two hundred years.

In the 1860s, Army nurses could only serve if they met the following criteria: “They must be thirty years of age or older, very plain looking, dress in brown or black and wear no curls, jewelry or hoopskirts.”<sup>70</sup> During World War I, women serving overseas were not authorized medical care if they were gassed and if they died, the military would not ship their bodies back to America. Their families had to pay to bring them home. Just fifty years ago women couldn’t serve on Navy ships; now they command them. In the early 1970s, women could not attend the service academies, but today we have more than three

decades of female academy graduates. At every step of the way, traditions have been challenged, identities have expanded and been reshaped and the changes have only made our Army stronger.

Everything old is new again, so our final words are those used in an Army gender integration handbook created in 1975 to ease women into the general purpose Army: **“Those who cannot, or will not, grow in this timid new world will find themselves lost when it becomes a brave one.”**<sup>71</sup>

## **APPENDICES: TOOLS, RESOURCES AND REFERENCES**

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Expecting leaders to successfully lead gender integration in their units without training, education and access to outside resources is unreasonable. Leaders have many different tools at their disposal to help them successfully integrate women into combat arms and the Army is developing an education plan to support integration. Gender integration is an ongoing process that must be carefully monitored and supported in order to be successful. This section gives a small sample of the resources available to commanders as they tackle this process.

### **APPENDIX A. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

A plan to monitor and evaluate gender integration is an essential tool for success. But before beginning any plan for assessing successful gender integration in your unit, you must first define what success looks like. We've been integrating units for decades and every post has examples of integrated units that are successful. A solidly integrated unit displays the following attributes: 1. Every Soldier works in an environment that gives them an equal opportunity to succeed, regardless of gender; 2. Roles, tasks, rewards, discipline and promotions are given equally to men and women and without consideration of gender; and 3. Conflict inside units is based on normal individual faults, and not on gender-based factors.

Successful integration requires ongoing monitoring and evaluation and Command Climate Surveys are a tool commanders can use to monitor progress on integration. The survey is constructed in such a way that you can customize several questions to make them specific to gender integration. Ask your EO rep how you can customize the Command Climate Survey to get a picture of how gender integration is progressing. Remember, it might not be possible to disaggregate data by gender because of the likely small numbers of women, although you can also try and ask your higher headquarters if they can give you the data disaggregated by gender. Otherwise, don't rely on the combined unit data to get a pulse on your unit because the small number of women's responses will be averaged into the much larger male pool and may not reveal a problem that they are experiencing in the unit.

AR 600-20, November 2014, directs commanders to conduct a command climate survey within 30 days of taking command, at the 6-month point and annually thereafter. Because "climate is a short-term phenomenon created by current

leadership,” command climate surveys should be used frequently for taking the pulse of your unit. Take the results of your command climate survey seriously and don’t hand wave away findings that you don’t like or that are perplexing.

As a supplement to Command Climate Surveys, the section below provides a simple outline commanders can use to monitor ongoing progress toward their goal.

At a minimum monitoring and evaluation includes four steps:<sup>72</sup>

- 1. Initial assessment and education.*
- 2. Monitoring.*
- 3. Evaluation.*
- 4. Re-assessment.*

**1. Initial assessment and education.** This step creates a baseline understanding of where your unit is with gender integration and helps you implement an education plan. You, the leader, or an officer or NCO in the unit, can be designated to assess the integration process at the local level. Assessing the factors below is a starting point, but they are not all-inclusive. Some research by the person designated to monitor and evaluate your unit's preparation and subsequent success with gender integration should turn up more points to assess.

*Practical Considerations:* Is your equipment gender neutral? Do your medical kits contain equipment to treat women? Have your Soldiers been educated in the practical aspects of gender integration? The designated person in charge of monitoring and evaluation can begin assessing whether women can easily use unit gym equipment, if packing lists have been updated to include female-specific items, if your unit medic stocks supplies that treat medical conditions of both men and women, etc. Also ensure your unit has the answers to the practical questions Soldiers might have on gender integration such as the ones discussed in this handbook. For example, do your squad leaders know that men and women can be billeted in the same tent during training exercises?

*Cultural Considerations:* Assess Soldier attitudes toward gender integration in your unit. Command climate surveys with added questions like those below, sensing sessions, focus group and informal discussions should give you a baseline assessment

of where your unit stands, and where there is room for progress. Some sample questions for culture assessment of your unit follow, but you can have the designated point person on gender integration tailor the questions toward what you most want to know. Sample questions<sup>73</sup> to assess Soldier attitudes can include:

- 1. Do you believe women are physically capable of performing a combat arms job?*
- 2. Do you believe women are emotionally capable of performing a combat arms job?*
- 3. Do you believe women negatively impact unit cohesion?*
- 4. Do you believe women positively impact unit cohesion?*
- 5. Does working in a mixed-gender environment bother you?*

*Communicate and Educate:* Have you as a leader communicated to your Soldiers your expectations for unit culture? Have you explained that you expect a fair and equitable unit culture where every Soldier, regardless of gender, has the chance to succeed? Have you communicated gender integration cultural considerations, such as the ones mentioned in this handbook, to all your leaders and Soldiers in your unit?

**2. Monitoring.** Once you have a baseline assessment of where your unit stands in both practical and cultural considerations, you can assess what you need to do to move forward. Set specific targets/goals you want to achieve. Create a checklist of actionable tasks with deadlines. For example, if supply does not have devices for women to urinate while in vehicles, put that in your checklist and set a deadline for when they must be stocked. Regarding culture and attitudes, based on the command climate survey and sensing session results, assess how your unit is feeling and whether you should have *"The Talk"* with your Soldiers or debunk Gender Myths and Stereotypes. Ask for weekly progress reports from the designated gender integration point person. Are the items in the checklist being implemented? Have unit leaders held informal talks with Soldiers to address their concerns about gender integration and communicate the company commander's vision? If not, identify the barriers.

**3. Evaluation.** Evaluation is about assessing whether the steps you are taking to address practical and cultural change are adequate or if you need to readjust. Evaluate the actions that have worked. Essentially, this is the time to do an After Action Review of your gender integration processes and note lessons learned.

**4. Re-assessment.** Continue periodic assessment of unit cultural attitudes and practical considerations. Reassess your target goals based on new information and observations. Ensure there is an anonymous way for Soldiers to express their views. Make sure that you are getting the point of view of the women in your unit through gender-disaggregated data. To do this you can create a woman-specific informal survey about unit culture or simply ask them about their experience so far. Sample questions can include:<sup>74</sup>

- 1. Are you having problems with training or with receiving guidance and direction from your supervisors?*
- 2. Are you having problems performing your job?*
- 3. Are you having problems with safety in the unit?*
- 4. Do you think women are treated fairly in the unit?*
- 5. Are you having problems with your peers?*

### **Indicators**

There are other informal ways to monitor gender integration. Here are some indicators you should be looking for during the day-to-day activities of your unit.

*Indicator:* Women do their jobs and leaders do not assign women to "special duties." Supervisors and team members rely on them to perform the exact same duties as the other members of their team.

*Indicator:* Commanders and NCOs select women for Soldier of the Month boards, leadership positions and roles in proportion to their male peers.

*Indicator:* The unit recognizes female Soldiers for their accomplishments on par with their male peers and selects women for promotion, or promotion waivers, in proportion to the men.

*Indicator:* Officers and NCOs respect all Soldiers as contributing team members as opposed to highlighting or calling attention to "female Soldiers."

*Indicator:* Soldiers do not refer to women as “girls” or “chicks” but by their rank and name or as “Soldier.”

What do you do if these things aren’t happening in your unit? First investigate and, if necessary, take corrective action. Some things will be easy to correct like ensuring Soldiers don’t refer to women as “chicks,” while others may take time. If a unit is not promoting women at the same rate as their peers, this could be due to a range of factors that must be tackled. It is possible, but not likely, that they just aren’t performing as well as their peers. It is also possible, and more likely, that their supervisors evaluated them differently and lower due to unconscious bias. Lower performance evaluations for high performing women are a well-documented phenomenon that is harder to correct.

## APPENDIX B. RESOURCES

In addition to the Army regulations and field manuals that have been identified throughout this document a number of additional resources are available to assist you. Following is a list of resources with a short description of each.

Women in International Security offers courses that may assist you in transitioning to a gender inclusive organization. Course descriptions are available on our website. Two of the most applicable courses to integrating combat units are “Leading Change: Integrating Women into Combat Units,” and “Unbiased Performance Evaluations.”

**Leading Change: Integrating Women into Combat Units.** Women’s integration in the US military has been occurring for decades. Each move to allow women access to ever expanding opportunities has met varying levels of resistance and challenges to organizational change. Some integration efforts have gone better than others, but all efforts have produced lessons that inform best practices. This course provides a brief historical overview, followed by an examination of legal frameworks and policies. It introduces the student to the vast number of research studies that have already been conducted on this topic and it ends with practical methods for leading organizational change including assessing and monitoring integration in military units.

**Unbiased Performance Evaluations.** Professionals responsible for evaluating individuals in their jobs and in a training/educational environment are required to exercise their authority in a manner that maintains established standards of performance. To successfully do this, an evaluator must be objective, focusing solely on performance without bias. While the requirement of objectivity is a core component of military values, in reality all people, consciously or subconsciously, are biased.

Research in neuroscience has shown the powerful impact unconscious thinking processes make on decisions. Unintended, unconscious biases can create situations where an individual’s experiences and values are projected onto others. For evaluators, this can result in uneven assessments. Uneven assessments mean that performance standards are not consistently applied. This, in turn, indicates that

evaluation requirements are not achieved, and the end state of creating the best-trained military force is not accomplished.

This training session is designed to: 1) Increase evaluators' awareness concerning bias, specifically regarding gender and 2) Provide tools to prevent it. Evaluators completing this session will contribute to more objective assessments thereby maintaining performance standards fairly and consistently.

#### *Session overview*

1. Brief lectures and discussion concerning how:
  - Gender roles are learned and transmitted
  - Gender affects operations
  - Gender impacts interactions at work
2. Self-assessments and practical exercises to help participants recognize gender-based bias.
3. Tools for overcoming gender bias to include:
  - Exercises to test and challenge notions about the roles of men and women
  - Methods for applying a gender neutral lens to the workplace

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

[\*Human Resource Metrics Guide for Commanders, 2013\*](#). This guide provides commanders with methods for tracking and analyzing Soldier data. However, the guide does not instruct commanders to separate the data by gender. Gender disaggregated data often uncovers differences in the treatment and performance of men and women. If you use this guide make sure to collect and analyze data by gender.

[\*Women in Services Review Reports and Studies, 2015\*](#). This site provides all of the recent research and studies that were conducted in preparation for integrating women into combat units.

[\*Trend Tools\*](#). The Inspector General Action Requests (IGARs), Defense Evaluation Support Activity (DESA), and the Equal Opportunity Reporting System (EORS) can all be used by commanders to assess and analyze how trends in IG, SHARP and EO complaints relate to gender integration.

[Command Climate Surveys](#). Some of these [surveys](#) may not provide data by ethnic/racial/gender group if the minority group is very small which is likely to be the case with women. This is done to keep the survey anonymous. If your data doesn't break out minority group responses have a member of your unit conduct a focus group discussion with minority group personnel. Assign a leader from the minority population to conduct the focus group discussion.

### **Organizational Change Resources**

[Kotter International, 2015](#). This site provides detailed information for managing and assessing organizational change.

[LaMarsh Global, 2016](#). This organization provides change management experts who can be contracted to evaluate, guide and mentor you throughout the change process.

[Mentorship Networks](#). The Women's Mentorship Network provides coaching and resources for how to establish a mentoring program for women Soldiers.

[LeanIn Military Chapter](#). The LeanIn Military Chapter connects Soldiers to more than a 100 military mentorship "circles" located in military installations worldwide.

[eMentor](#). An online mentoring program that connects military personnel, veterans and spouses to mentors. People can sign up to be mentors or protégés.

## APPENDIX C. QUICK REFERENCE CARDS

### JUNIOR LEADER'S SMART CARD

***Note:** The junior leader's smart card is intended to be a quick reference card that summarizes points made throughout the Combat Integration Handbook.*

Women are joining combat arms. It is your duty and in your unit's best interest to ensure women are capable, competent and successful. The following "10 Guidelines for Success" should serve as a quick guide to understanding gender integration and the contributions you can make to its success, and thereby the success of your unit and fellow Soldiers.

#### "10 GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS"

1. *Leadership.* Your Soldiers are looking to you for their cue on how to treat women. If you utilize women effectively, without bias and treat them fairly, your Soldiers will follow your lead. Include all Soldiers equally in team tasks and activities, make sure women also receive the information put out to other Soldiers and do not ostracize women.

2. *One Standard.* Hold men and women to the same job standards. Don't show favoritism by giving the easy tasks to women because you think they can't handle more physically demanding tasks. Favoritism creates resentment. Women don't want special treatment; they just want the chance to prove themselves. Train all Soldiers equally.

3. *Billeting.* In a field or training environment there are NO restrictions on where women can sleep. Put the women in the same place as the men; do not separate them and break up your teams. Women can sleep in the same vehicles, tents, rooms, buildings, etc., right beside their male team members. Isolating women from the rest of the unit is dangerous in field or deployment conditions.

4. *Privacy.* Privacy can be achieved with a poncho. Men and women can change inside their own sleeping bags. Men and women can take turns in the same showers and latrines.

5. *Hygiene & Health.* There is no Army requirement that women have to shower more than men; that belief is a myth. In austere conditions, bathing needs can be met by a bucket of water, a canteen or baby wipes for both men and women.

6. *Beware of Gender Socialization.* Your instinct might be to help women, but what you may see as helpfulness, for example an offer to carry a woman's equipment, can

actually create problems for the woman. Treat women as fellow Soldiers, not dainty “ladies,” and demand and allow them to share in the completion of all tasks.

7. *Beware of Stereotypes and Myths.* Women are not inherently weak; to be strong they require proper weight training and physical conditioning. Don't automatically dismiss a woman from helping with a task because it requires heavy lifting, but do ensure you train them properly, as you would a male Soldier. Abandon the myth that women are a distraction and instead focus on instilling discipline in your Soldiers. Soldiers bond through shared hardship and, despite stereotypes, that means women can bond with their male team members, too.

8. *Language and Harassment.* Swearing is not harassment. Keep in mind that some Soldiers, men and women, will have absolutely no problem with it while others find it unprofessional. This might be challenging at first, but once you get to know your fellow Soldiers knowing how to behave around them will come naturally. Make sure that your language does not belittle the female members of your team.

9. *Relationships.* If you engage in a relationship with a peer, be discreet and keep it off post, away from work, away from fellow Soldiers and off of social media. Stay strictly professional at work, even if the relationship ends. Do not allow the emotional fallout from a relationship affect work. Supervisors cannot engage in a relationship with their subordinates.

10. *Mentoring and Counseling.* Mentor young Soldiers equally. Help female Soldiers the same as you would male Soldiers. Give them the benefit of your experience, coaching them on weapons, combat arms tasks or taking them to lift at the gym equally. Don't be afraid to counsel or mentor female Soldiers, but ensure your behavior while doing so is professional and above reproach. You can do this by keeping doors open during the counseling of all Soldiers or ensuring that all Soldiers see you in battle buddy teams.

## SERVICEWOMEN'S SMART CARD

**Note:** *The servicewomen's smart card is for leaders at all levels to share and discuss with the women who integrate their units. The information is not intended as a list of characteristics to measure the women against. Nor is it a list of the climate and culture of all units, or unit leaders. It is intended to provide an honest assessment of the most common challenges women have faced historically, and are likely to face presently as the Army moves forward with full integration. Women entering a newly-opened career field must go in with their eyes wide open and with realistic expectations of what they are facing, what they can accomplish and what they can contribute. The thoughts listed below are offered for consideration and discussion to the command team providing the leadership and direction for women's inclusion. Remember that the desired end state is the most capable, lethal and able unit.*

First, know that you may never be "one of the guys," and shouldn't kill yourself trying to be one. However, you can be equally successful and part of the team without having to be or act like one of the guys. Spend your time being a consummate professional. Determine what the Army requires of you and perform your duties as best you can. Second, some unit members will accept and respect you, some will come to over time, while others never will. Know that their attitudes are not a reflection of your abilities, but are a result of their upbringing and our culture. Also be aware that in many aspects of society those norms are changing and you are the first to be able to offer a glimpse of that to many in combat arms and the Army at large.

Women who integrated combat arms 20 years ago in Canada found<sup>75</sup> that because they were women:

- *Their physical and mental ability was questioned*
- *Their leadership ability was questioned*
- *Their social activities were questioned*
- *Their sexual activity was questioned*
- *Their thoughts and perceptions were questioned*

You will face similar challenges. In addition to these challenges you will probably find that some equipment won't fit you, training will be set up to accommodate the average man, and administrative procedures will not take both men and women into account. But many women have come before you, from those who initially integrated other Army occupations, to women who have spent decades attached to combat arms units and it is their success that has laid the ground work for you to follow.

The following "10 Rules for Success" were gleaned from interviews with women who integrated Special Operations teams in the last five years and from women from earlier integration efforts.

## **“10 RULES FOR SUCCESS”**

1. *Prove yourself.* Be technically competent and physically capable. Your physical ability is the main factor by which you will *initially* be judged. Some women may have to spend more time at the gym to achieve similar results to their male peers. At work, you must constantly practice your combat arms MOS skills. Your goal is always to be the best Soldier in the unit.

2. *Be Professional.* Professionalism will ease any potential awkwardness or sexual tension when you arrive at your unit as male Soldiers learn to see you as a fellow Soldier and not a "female."

3. *Know Your Team.* People tend to bond over common interests. Don't be afraid to show your interest in the activities of your fellow Soldiers, their families, backgrounds and hobbies. Take part in unit social activities and don't self-isolate. Share your interests with them as well. You are not asking their permission to be part of the unit. You *are* in the unit and a member of the team. It is incumbent on both sides to open the pathways to successful unit cohesion.

4. *Work on being the best.* As a woman, you will be judged by some more harshly than the men. While this is unfair it is the reality that many women face. Being average might be enough to get by for the men; you will have to be better to be judged their equal. Train better, train harder. Remember that you had the grit to enter combat arms and get to this point, so believe in yourself.

5. *Pull your own weight and be aware of gender stereotypes.* Don't let anyone do your tasks and reject "helpful offers" to carry your equipment.

6. *Be Confident and Independent.* In combat arms, confidence and decisiveness is respected. Stand up for yourself and speak out when you see a problem. As one CST member advises, "Don't be a sheep in a wolves den." When somebody makes comments or takes actions that you are uncomfortable with, address them immediately. Talk to the person offline and explain the exact behavior or language you found unacceptable and why, as well as what would be a more acceptable way of acting or speaking. Be direct, low-key and professional.

7. *Stay Calm.* Some of your male colleagues don't want you there and will test you. Don't let them see you rattled. Although you may need to maintain a stoic exterior, don't adopt behaviors to fit in that are not in keeping with your true personality. Stay true to yourself. Their behavior is a reflection of their values and beliefs which many not be in keeping with the Army Values. This is not your responsibility, although it may be hard to handle. Have the courage to call out offensive and unprofessional behavior.

8. *Be self-aware.* Remember you are one of the first and under intense scrutiny. You are a role model, whether you want to be or not. One CST member explains: "All the males that you are ... with right now, they are going to see you and their first impression about females in the military is going to come from you." Take time to consider who you are, what your beliefs and values are, what you will stand for and what you will not. Think about and consider those who are your role models and determine to fill that role for someone who will follow you.

9. *Beware of rumors and gossip.* Military units are notorious for gossip. Rumors and gossip degrade and can ruin team and unit cohesion. You may be subjected to untruthful rumors and gossip that could damage your reputation. Your sexual activity will be under a microscope, whether you are actually having sex or not. If you engage in a relationship, be discreet, keep it away from work, away from fellow Soldiers and off social media. And never, ever participate in gossip about other Soldiers.

10. *Build and maintain a support network.* It's not easy being first and you will get frustrated and want to vent. Remember your professionalism and pick the time, place and audience carefully before you "go off." Make sure you have a circle of friends you can vent to. Keep in touch with other women going through the same experience so you can share perspectives and offer each other encouragement and advice. Seek out higher-ranking women as mentors.

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<sup>73</sup> Thomas, Patricia J. "Women in the Military: Gender Integration at Sea. NPRDC Tech. Note 81- 13." *Navy Personnel Research and Development Center*. May 1981.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Army Lessons Learned Centre. "Lessons Learned – Leadership in a Mixed Gender Environment." *Dispatches 5(2)*. Canada: National Defence. September 1998.