

Women in Combat: A Critical Analysis of Responses to the U.S. Military's Recent
Inclusion Efforts

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I analyze responses to the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR), the policy that until January 24, 2013 formally barred women from serving in combat. Specifically, I use feminist theories of embodiment, equality, and difference to interpret how interlocutors represent female service members in the “Letters” section of the *Marine Corps Gazette* and interviews I collected from members of the military community. I find that the most common arguments against women in combat locate gender difference in the physically sexed body, centering primarily on female nature, sexuality, and strength. Throughout this project, I demonstrate how these arguments are persuasive because the discourse understands equality as sameness to a male norm. This equality as sameness paradigm perpetuates gender-based barriers to parity by expecting women to function just like men. Ultimately, I argue for a more inclusive conception of equality that acknowledges difference.

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Introduction

On January 24, 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, endorsed the rescinding of the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR), a policy that formally excluded women from serving on the front lines. The lifting of this policy opens new opportunities for women to serve in combat positions, which has resulted in polarized discourses about whether women should occupy such roles.

Although some individuals argue that this policy change offers women equality and better opportunities for career advancement, many civilians, active duty personnel, and veterans oppose women's participation in combat. A particularly strong vein running through this oppositional discourse is the assumption that women's bodies are ill suited for meeting the demands of combat. In particular, these discourses crystalize around topoi of female nature, sexuality, and strength. This focus on embodiment reveals assumptions about female agency and equality in a predominantly masculine institution.

In this thesis, I perform a close reading of such references to female embodiment in the *Marine Corps Gazette*'s "Letters" section and interviews I collected from Naval Academy, active duty, and retired military personnel, using feminist theories of embodiment to inform my interpretation of the data. I will utilize these theories to unpack discourses centering on women's physical abilities in combat, working to illustrate their socially constructed and materially conscribed underpinnings while searching for emerging patterns. This study will begin with an introduction to the existing literature on women in combat, move on to its broader theoretical framework, and then will finally apply these insights to the datasets.

Literature Review

Introduction

After the onset of the Gulf War in the 1990s, the literature on U.S. women in combat spiked. During this time, blurred frontlines and more inclusive defense policies helped foster women's increasing participation in the war effort.

As Saskia Stachowitsch illustrates in her 2012 study, *Gender Ideologies and Military Labor Markets in the US*, while media representations of women in the military during the early 1990s were heavily gendered, women were often portrayed in a fairly positive light. This positive representation most likely stemmed from women's apparent participation in the Gulf War and policy changes extending their service options (81).

However, by the mid-1990s, a reduction of forces leading to greater job competition helped contribute to military women's negative portrayal in the media (Stachowitsch 93). During this time, Congress and Secretary of Defense Aspin repealed several exclusions that limited women's service options, but the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR) continued to block females from entering ground combat roles (Zeigler and Gunderson 43).

These factors led to renewed interest in women's participation in war efforts, which manifested in the media and academic scholarship at the time. In particular, the mid to late 1990s witnessed a surge in feminist scholarship that questioned women's exclusion from combat roles. Of these, some notable titles such as Judith Hicks Stiehm's *It's Our Military, Too! Women and the U.S. Military* and Rosemarie Skaine's *Women at War: Gender Issues of Americans in Combat* stand out.

More recently, renewed interest in female combatants surfaced after the War on Terror in the 2000s. In the early 2000s, publications such as Feinman's *Citizenship Rites: Feminist Soldiers & Feminist Antimilitarists* and Fenner and deYoung's *Women in Combat: Civic Duty or Military Liability?* worked diligently to present both sides of the issue. Meanwhile, researchers during the middle of this decade worked to identify and challenge assumptions about gender. Zeigler and Gunderson's *Moving Beyond G.I. Jane: Women and the U.S. Military* and Carreiras' *Gender and the Military: Women in the Armed Forces of Western Democracies* act on this impulse.

Following a relative lull in scholarship on the topic, deliberation on lifting the 1994 DGCDAR and this policy's ultimate removal in January 2013 excited interest in this topic again. While the media continues to debate the prudence of this decision, academic scholarship on this topic will take some time to surface.

Feminist Standpoints

As Ilene Rose Feinman summarizes, two camps of feminism have emerged in consideration of women's participation in combat: feminist egalitarians and feminist antimilitarists. I would also argue that a third group of feminist pro-militarists exists which includes individuals who are progressive in their views of women but eschew these "individualistic" values in favor of the military's collectivistic goals. While this third group is not unproblematic, it is prevalent and largely unexamined.

Feinman explains, "feminist egalitarian militarists use equal rights discourse and policies to insist that women play a full and unimpeded role in the military" (1). This position does not question the authenticity of the military as an institution, but bucks against the wholesale exclusion of women from certain parts of it based solely on their gender.

Air Force intelligence officer Lorry M. Fenner adopts this standpoint in her 2001 contribution to *Women in Combat: Civic Duty or Military Liability*, asserting that women's full integration into the military is necessary in order fulfill national defense, political, and democratic goals (4). Her main arguments for this standpoint include her contention that arguments against women in combat are based on outdated ideological constructs rather than reality (6-28), and women's full participation in democratic citizenship relies upon their inclusion in this occupation (51-73). Fenner's analysis disassembles many of the emotionally and ideologically based arguments used to justify women's exclusion from combat, but she also largely validates the connection between military service and citizenship without significant scrutiny.

Meanwhile, "feminist antimilitarists" consider combat a form of "violent diplomacy" that reflects the "military's culture of virulent masculinism" (Feinman 1). This second group of feminists condemn the military as a whole and contend that the "social, political, and economic apparatuses shaping masculinist militarism depend on the oppression of women" (Feinman 1). According to this perspective, any attempt to acquire women equal access to all positions within the military merely masks the symptoms of deeper institutional flaws.

Lucinda Roy Peach speaks to this concern in her article "Gender Ideology in the Ethics of Women in Combat," which was featured in the 1996 publication, *It's Our Military Too! Women and the U.S. Military*. Here, she asserts that the feminist egalitarian stance can distract individuals from "a critical analysis of the purposes and functions of military institutions" (178). Feminist antimilitarists argue that instead of contributing to such an institution, women should cultivate peaceful replacements to war (Peach 178).

Feinman stresses the feminist antimilitarist argument renders efforts to acquire women equal access to all military occupations irresponsible because it reveals the deeply entrenched connections between war, masculinity, and citizenship within American culture. Furthermore, Feinman asserts that the feminist egalitarian goal of gender equality in the military actually bolsters the connection between citizenship and masculinity (88-89). Indeed, the equal rights discourse espoused by this group appears to reinforce rather than undermine existing hierarchies through the appropriation of such values.

Despite the merits of the feminist antimilitarist approach, Peach's work points out key points it glosses over. First, this perspective does not recognize the legitimacy of the military in the face of unjust belligerents. In doing so, it avoids considering "the morality of leaving men responsible for national defense while claiming a privileged position as peacemakers." Ultimately, Peach asks readers to consider how citizens can equitably bear the burden of protecting the nation in the face of legitimate threats to a nation's safety (179).

Finally, feminists in a third camp value women's abilities but do not believe women should participate in combat. Unlike feminist antimilitarists, they do not wholly condemn the military institution and even value its successful functioning over the rights of women as a group. The retired Army chaplain Marie E. deYoung's contribution to *Women in Combat: Civic Duty or Military Liability?* follows this trend.

In this pre-War on Terror publication, deYoung offers what she deems a feminist argument in support of the military's combat exclusion rule. She contends that women's assignment to combat roles places women at risk by degrading military effectiveness (108). Specifically, deYoung problematizes gender-normed fitness standards, which throws into doubt women's ability to successfully fulfill ground combat duties (136-137). In addition, she

questions whether women have the mental fortitude to deal with combat training exercises that could be mistaken for or actually constitute acts of sexual harassment (146-147). While her arguments are well researched and logically executed, they fail to question the larger military system while blaming women for their presence in this environment.

Since the U.S. military will likely remain a powerful institution in the coming decades, feminist egalitarian arguments prove most serviceable in assessing current debates about women in combat. These arguments resist commonly accepted beliefs about women's ability to serve in this capacity, focusing primarily on nature, sexuality, and strength.

Nature

Several arguments forwarded in support of women's exclusion from combat devote themselves to stereotypes of female nature. Often, these appeals cite women's helpless, peaceful, or maternal temperament as justification for excluding them from combat positions. While American culture often takes these notions at face value, several researchers reveal the gender ideologies sponsoring such claims.

Sara L. Zeigler and Gregory G. Gunderson's *Moving Beyond G. I. Jane*, which first appeared publicly in 2005, engages with several issues germane to historical and contemporary discussions of women's inclusion in combat. In this publication, the authors work to unearth and shatter several arguments regularly used to rationalize females' exclusion from combat. For example, their critique of the "myth of protection," which asserts that men's preoccupation with protecting females in combat zones would reduce effectiveness, proves convincing. Zeigler and Gunderson contend that this popular argument is likely nothing more than a socially constructed myth of femininity, illustrating this point when they assert, "female military officers reported that during the Tet Offensive and other more common rocket and mortar attacks, they were often

pushed aside or run over as male soldiers attempted to take cover” (46). This evidence helps support Zeigler and Gunderson’s claim that the myth of protection does not represent a need to defend women but rather signifies a deep-seated desire to safeguard the boundaries between masculinity and femininity.

Zeigler and Gunderson’s resistance to the normalizing effects of gender ideologies gives their work its critical appeal and makes it an important contribution to the literature on women in combat. Rather than accepting common cultural myths, they posit the “true motivation behind those who want to protect women from the horrors of war may actually be to protect their image of what women are and what they do.” Furthermore, they locate opposition to female combatants within loyalty to traditional feminine roles (47), providing an entry point for current research on this topic.

Fenner’s research builds on this claim, suggesting that the myth of protection not only aims to shore up gender binaries, but it also provides a strong motivation for those who fight in wars. Like Zeigler and Gunderson, Fenner’s claim enriches popular discourses on this topic. Indeed, her claim that far “from abhorring the death of women in war, we apparently require it to justify war” (6) would no doubt shock modern audiences. However, other scholars reinforce her identification of this trope.

Susan R. Grayzel’s *Women’s Identities at War Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War* explores this trope in ways that elucidate modern debates about women in war. Her work focuses on how WWI propaganda features victimized women and children as motivators for going to war, coming to the conclusion that this method “overwhelmingly inscribed women as passive, ultimately sacrificial victims, as the emblems of the traditional home and family that the war was presumably fought to protect and

preserve” (85). Grayzel’s work is instructive because it outlines historically entrenched ideologies about women’s role in war. In doing so, it helps other researchers understand how women soldiers defy this ideological construct: when women can protect themselves, their persuasive power as victims of war diminishes.

Stachowitsch’s study speaks well to this issue, analyzing how the media continues to use such “gendered narratives” to garner support for war efforts. She uses the example of Jessica Lynch, an Army soldier who was captured by Iraqi forces in 2003, to demonstrate how even female soldiers can be viewed through the lens of gendered cultural myths that justify and motivate war. Stachowitsch’s analysis of this situation produces important insights, including how the media emphasized Lynch’s status as a helpless victim in order to amass support for the controversial Iraq intervention. Overall, Stachowitsch concludes that this episode demonstrates how even “fighting women” are sometimes portrayed as “objects of male protection” (112) and notes how this technique reasserts the division between masculinity and femininity that female soldiers blur.

The examples provided by these researchers suggest that protecting women has been and remains at least one of many rationalizations for going to war, a reality that regularly manifests itself within the rhetorical strategies of war-related discourse. In light of this observation, Fenner and deYoung find that “rationalizing war as the necessary defense of women and children (the requirement to protect them) is more difficult if women themselves are doing some of the fighting.” From these insights, Fenner and deYoung come to the same conclusion as Zeigler and Gunderson who argue for the “possibility that we do not object to killing women in war but to women killing” (6). These important arguments subvert the dominant discourses about women in combat, which often portray women fighting as simply unnatural or horrifying.

Zeigler and Gunderson continue to enrich the literature on this topic by addressing how gender ideology informs the types of turns these discussions take. For example, they argue, “There has always been a strong connection between manhood and war, between masculinity and combat” (47). Their insight invites new interpretations of resistance to women in combat, suggesting objections may in part stem from combat’s traditionally masculine roots; in a society that tends to celebrate the narratives of men while trivializing female pursuits, the potential “feminization” of war could appear as a threat to this masculine proving ground.

Zeigler and Gunderson’s claim is also in conversation with Judith Butler’s assertion that gender is performative (311), illustrating how combat emerges as only one of many activities through which males may perform masculinity. Their citation of Herbert illustrates how the success of this performance is contingent upon a lack of agentive female presence: men’s “affirmation of their sense of identity requires their doing something that can be seen as what a woman by her nature could not do, or at least could not do well” (Zeigler and Gunderson 47). Their research shows how this ideological construct relies on an apophatic reasoning that defines masculinity by what it is not (femininity). Zeigler and Gunderson’s important contribution to the literature enables us to better understand why women’s participation in heroic narratives of masculinity challenges these myths.

Sexuality

While arguments centering on female nature are historically significant, issues such as women’s protection declined as a topic of concern during the mid-1990s (Stachowitsch 97). Instead, discussions of women’s greater integration became highly sexualized, with sexual violence featuring as a common argument against their increased participation (Stachowitsch 99). During this time, Stachowitsch contends the percentage of females in the military rose as

military downsizing increased job competition. These circumstances contributed to negative media representations of female military members and a surge in sexual scandals (93).

Many researchers highlight how sexualized discourses surrounding women in the military reveal systemic issues in this institution. Zeigler and Gunderson's work illustrates how this highly masculine organization encourages activities reaffirming such masculine traits, often to the detriment of anything considered feminine. They cite basic training's regular use of "chastising men with feminine epithets," which "underscores the centrality of the 'masculine' in military culture and the accompanying stereotype of the 'weak female.'" Zeigler and Gunderson's analysis suggests these practices tend to support the lowered status and sexual objectification of females (122-123). In addition, these claims substantiate Stachowitsch's finding that sexual abuse is more prevalent and "tolerable" in institutions predominated by men (94).

In her 2006 publication, *Gender and the Military: Women in the Armed Forces of Western Democracies*, Helena Carreiras argues these systemic issues often support a culture of sexual abuse (53). Stachowitsch asserts such issues can become aggravated under certain conditions: "Sexual harassment and abuse increase when female representation rises and when opportunities are enhanced for women within an institution, but equal status is not awarded completely." During the 1990s, she argues the drawbacks of this institutional circumstance appeared in the Aberdeen Proving Ground Scandal, to name just one example (94). Carreiras corroborates Stachowitsch's claim that improved opportunities and unequal status contribute to sexual abuse, citing women's "lower organizational power due to usually subordinate positions in the rank structure" as a contributing factor. She notes that some researchers also agree women

are prone to such treatment in the military because “military personnel often live in close quarters together for long periods of time” (53).

Today, these concerns regularly manifest in arguments for combat exclusion in ways that blame women’s presence alone. Susan Bordo’s work in feminist scholarship helps elucidate how these systems of oppression function in arguments about female combatants. In her 1993 book, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, Bordo identifies the female temptress trope, so pervasive in western discourses, which supports the belief that it is only “natural” for men to experience arousal in the company of a woman. As she points out, this damaging mindset suggests a man’s sexual attraction “is the result of female manipulation and therefore is the woman’s fault” while working “to disclaim male ownership of the body and its desires” (6). This type of thinking marginalizes women in several ways, fostering destructive practices such as victim blaming. For instance, the fact that seventeen percent of media statements during the mid-1990s supported exclusion as a response to sexual violence in the military (Stachowitsch 93) demonstrates how women’s presence is seen as a major source of sexual harassment problems. Historically, it has also helped justify women’s exclusion from particular occupations such as the priesthood (Bordo 6). The implications of this construct appear in arguments that women will inevitably tempt men during prolonged cohabitation on combat missions.

Individuals also raise concerns about *consensual* sexual practices seen as interfering with combat efficiency and cohesion. Carreiras acknowledges this concern, noting how the military attempts to avoid such relations through “spatial segregation and the issuing of strict rules about adultery and fraternization.” During the mid-2000s when Carreiras’ study emerged, these issues surfaced frequently in disputes over women in submarine units (52).

Despite the pervasiveness of fraternization concerns, some researchers find evidence that this problem has been blown out of proportion. Zeigler and Gunderson argue, “the opponents of women in combat make too much out of the ‘sex in foxholes’ issue.” They hypothesize that unaccommodating and dangerous combat conditions will likely reduce libido. While this claim is difficult to substantiate, their observation that the “‘sexual tensions’ argument ignores the possibility that the sexes can interact in non-sexual ways” proves more convincing. Ultimately, they contend that sufficient adjustment time, proper training, and strong leadership can help alleviate the frequency of sexual relationships between servicemembers (52-53).

Fraternization may be a concern for women in combat because of the potential for pregnancy. Most of the literature agrees that pregnant women should not encounter combat situations due to negative effects on the unborn child. With the exception of a relatively brief interest in “birth defects with male combatant exposure to toxic chemicals” during the Gulf War (deYoung 155), little discussion covers the effects of males’ war experience on future children. The discourses do, however, focus extensively on how pregnant women’s evacuation from missions or inability to deploy altogether reduces readiness (deYoung 142). This can be a concern because it is difficult to anticipate these changes and plan accordingly. deYoung argues that many supporters of women in combat downplay such pregnancy-related issues (141), but she acknowledges neither the heteronormative assumptions undergirding her own argument nor offers any solutions for this problem.

Zeigler and Gunderson speak well to this issue, pointing out that women are not the only individuals who may be non-deployable at times. They assert, “men are non-deployable for a variety of reasons, but no one ever suggests that all men be prevented from assignment to combat

units.” They recommend that “planning and leadership” can help account for all of these changes (54).

While military readiness and human health are valid concerns, these discourses seem to reveal some deeper underlying gender ideologies. Many women may choose to become mothers at some point in their lives, just as many men may become fathers, but too often arguments about female servicemembers conflate womanhood and motherhood. Feinman illustrates this claim by pointing out that the U.S. Congress received several proposals aiming “to ‘protect’ women from war by virtue of their child-producing duties” during the Gulf War. In addition, she notes how media stories of this war prioritized female servicemembers’ status as mothers over their occupation (161). These observations are important because they demonstrate how gender ideologies tend to sexualize the female body while neutralizing the male.

deYoung offers one example of how women’s bodies are sexualized in other areas of the discourses as well. For example, her analysis of feminine hygiene practices circles back to women’s reproductive systems in a way common to arguments against women in combat:

When women go to the field as support soldiers, they minimally have access to porta-potties, which makes the experience of menstruation minimally hygienic and private. There are no showers or private bathing conditions. Ground combat soldiers do not train, let alone fight, in these “ideal” health conditions. They dig cat holes to bury their feces. They “leak” against trees. They have bath deprivation contests. It is not uncommon for male combatants to outdo each other with stories of weeks, even months, of bath deprivation. Fertile women, who serve in situations that are much safer than ground combat or ground combat training scenarios – that is, training situations that are

minimally sanitary – still suffer adverse health consequences when they live with lax hygienic conditions. (deYoung 138)

In addition to portraying women as disempowered and passive, this type of anecdote also uses hygiene practices as an opportunity to sexualize the female body through a focus on women's privacy and fertility. Meanwhile, the admissibility of men bathing and relieving themselves in public in this situation suggests the neutrality, rather than sexualization, of their bodies.

Unfortunately, these types of arguments also blame women for their presence in environments adapted to men's needs by portraying the former as passive rather than agentic.

An analysis of deYoung's argument is instructive for this very reason. Her example does not portray women as agentic and instead lists how accommodations for their *needs* are lacking in the field: "they minimally have access to porta-potties [...] There are no showers or private bathing conditions" (138). Conversely, the passage constructs men as taking control of their environment. For example, "They dig cat holes to bury their feces. They 'leak' against trees. They have bath deprivation contests" (deYoung 138). The number and kind of verbs in these sentences point to the amount of action attributed to men. In addition, they often construct women as incapable of controlling their own bodies and being overly needy, both of which portray women as passive rather than agentic. In contrast, any challenges men may face are omitted or glossed over, while the narratives construct them as actively solving any issues they face in the field. In these respects, deYoung's scholarship is consonant with normalized assumptions about why women should not participate in combat.

Zeigler and Gunderson challenge these mainstream assumptions, forwarding the argument that women are not needier than men but instead have different needs. They point out, "Men too encounter more health issues in the field than they normally would" (53). As this

insight demonstrates, all humans have bodily needs. However, the discourses deem accommodations required by women excessive. The acknowledgment of difference can be productive if it abandons the hierarchical baggage that deems difference from the norm inferior.

Zeigler and Gunderson forward a productive view of difference, acknowledging that deployed women have health concerns that differ from their male counterparts. When improperly attended to, such issues can degrade readiness. However, they refuse to support claims that making proper arrangements for women under these conditions will negatively impact military operations. For example, they dismiss one male, army major's concern that women in combat will necessitate shortages of food and ammunition so they can have access to feminine hygiene supplies. Zeigler and Gunderson articulate their general point well: "The 'special problems' of feminine hygiene are a legitimate concern when the military is in the field, but conscientious logistical planning should be able to resolve the situation without having to leave the 'bullets and MREs' behind" (53). In doing so, they locate the responsibility for proper planning in the military institution and remove the blame from women, an important technique for subverting "common sense" approaches to this topic.

Interestingly, women are often constructed as selfish in discussions centering on any needs they may have that differ from men. For example, deYoung notes that one-third of female soldiers interviewed in a 1997 study reported urinary incontinence during Army training exercises, a condition she argues "disproportionately affect women's ability to function in Army field conditions." Following this statistic, she comments that some respondents' decision to restrict fluids as a preventative measure leaves them "vulnerable to dehydration-related injuries" (138). While logical, these statements construct women as passive subjects to their bodies

without acknowledging similar limitations in males, thus casting doubt upon women's physical and intellectual trustworthiness.

deYoung further illustrates women's doubtful character when describing their methods for coping with menstrual pain. While her example initially aims to show how female naval pilots are more likely to take medical leave than males, it quickly turns to women's reproductive capacity. deYoung points out that while "women self-reported that they were twice as likely as male pilots to be medically grounded for a period of more than 30 days," this "figure did not include time lost for pregnancy or maternity leave." The conversation then ties women's reproductive systems to their questionably reliability, arguing that this study also failed to "consider the effect of menstruation on women's capabilities." While deYoung admits this is a "sore subject of discussion for women soldiers, raising outright hostility and denial of problems when the subject is openly addressed," her wording questions the ethos of female servicemembers. Meanwhile the phrase "denial of problems" presupposes that all women do in fact experience debilitating menstrual symptoms. She hammers the final nail into the coffin of their ethos when she asserts, "Yet 41 percent of all female aircrew members admitted to taking some form of medication for menstrual distress while in flight status – which, investigators noted, should raise safety-of-flight concerns" (138). This statement casts doubt upon female servicemembers' commitment to the team and portrays them as selfishly wanting to prove themselves in the face of the job.

While the topics raised in this section are not exhaustive, they offer some insight into some common arguments raised against women in combat. These arguments reveal deeper underlying attitudes about women. From these discourses, a couple of trends emerge. First, gender ideologies construct women as more needy and subject to their bodily functions than

men. In addition, the female body is sexualized in ways that the male body is not. This sexualization, whether it describes arousal or simply reproductive functions, often connects to doubt over female servicemembers' trustworthiness.

Strength

Another important topos surfacing in the literature is the argument that women are too weak to successfully participate in combat roles. Much of the literature in the early 2000s seeks to complicate this tacit belief. For example, Fenner highlights how this overgeneralization fails to discern differences *within* rather than simply *between* the broad categories of male and female. She stresses that "not all women are strong enough for all jobs – just as not all men are" (10).

Zeigler and Gunderson similarly complicate biologically deterministic claims of women's sweeping physical inferiority without turning a blind eye to scientific studies. They admit that while "[physical] fitness tests do show that the average young woman does not possess the strength and stamina that the average young man does," it does not necessarily follow that women are incapable of enduring combat conditions (57). In order to substantiate this claim, the authors point out a discrepancy existing within current military fitness standards: the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), the fundamental fitness measurement tool in the Army, "is both gender- and age-normed," and "[older] individuals, whether male or female, do not have to meet the same requirements as those who are younger" (Zeigler and Gunderson 55). This fact seems to suggest that policies such as the former DGCDAR essentialize females as a group, overlooking the diversity of strengths and skills they may possess.

While this line of reasoning fails to recognize that norming of any kind historically has been absent from combat-related training such as Ranger School ("Ranger School Preparation"), Fenner speaks well to the issue when she claims the military's reliance upon "some imagined or

group stereotype” is undesirable. Instead, she advocates the chance for a person “to measure herself or himself against appropriate standards to field the most physically effective military force” (10). However, what constitutes “appropriate” standards is hotly debated in historical and contemporary discourses, especially when women and combat are involved.

Fenner’s work identifies the ongoing difficulties of defining appropriate physical standards for various jobs within the military, suggesting how this complicates the historical argument that women are too weak to engage in combat. As she explains, “historical evidence shows that physical ‘requirements’ for most military specialties are not based on any real measure of the specific strengths required to do a particular job.” Furthermore, she recognizes that “the military has repeatedly changed standards for a whole variety of reasons, the least of which are political” (7).

These insights apply to current debates about military physical standards and can help clarify some of the language used in the recent rescinding of the DGCDAR. For example, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta directly addresses this discrepancy in his 2013 press briefing detailing the withdrawal of the DGCDAR when he calls for “setting clear standards of performance for all occupations based on what it actually takes to do the job” and “ensuring that these standards are [gender] neutral in occupations that will open to women” (1).

Panetta’s statement addresses the ongoing disconnect between standards and job requirements that will hopefully be amended in the coming years.

In light of this information and Fenner’s critique, it seems as though the claim that women are simply too weak to inhabit combat roles is a non sequitur. Without a clear understanding of the physical requirements of particular occupations, including combat positions, would it not follow that women’s prior exclusion from combat has been based more on

arbitrary standards that happen to favor men's typically higher levels of brute strength than relevant measures of the physical requirements?

This also raises questions about why sheer physical strength has been used as a measure of an individual's capacity to perform in combat. As Zeigler and Gunderson point out, strength arguments such as this rest upon "the assumption that combat, especially ground combat, *does* require stamina and strength," an assertion that "seems to reflect common sense" (55). Combat surely requires soldiers to be in exceptional physical condition, but measuring a person's ability based on brute strength alone overlooks the fact that tasks can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Fenner points out that numerous examples "can be found of women exceeding the expectations of their physical capabilities, finding work-arounds for heavy tasks, or teaming with their co-workers to complete their assignments to best effect" (7).

Regardless of the veracity of these observations, they are notable because they represent current arguments either supporting or opposing women's participation in combat. Most notably, they reveal the importance of physical strength in current debates, a trend that holds true in the *Marine Corps Gazette* Letters and the personal interviews I collected from past, present, and prospective military members. I will discuss my findings in-depth the following chapters of this interview after an introduction to this study's theoretical underpinnings.

Theory

Introduction

Since the rescinding of DGCDAR, conversations about whether women possess the capacity to participate in combat have resurfaced and proliferated. While many individuals support women's equal participation in combat roles, many also worry that women's involvement will hinder military efforts. Overwhelmingly, opponents of women in combat cite physical limitations that appear to be rooted in hard fact.

Ideology

While the discourses centering on women's participation in combat seem to operate on purely logical postulations, one must recognize the ideological assumptions operating through them. According to Louis Althusser in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (162). Maria Sturken and Lisa Cartwright expand Althusser's theory, interpreting "ideologies as the broad but indispensable shared sets of values and beliefs through which individuals live out their complex relations in a range of social networks." Essentially, ideology is the social construct that allows humans to relate to the material world. More importantly, ideology has the power to naturalize such values and assumptions so that they are difficult to detect (23).

Gender Ideologies

Such naturalized assumptions are present in conversations about women in combat and manifest in the form of gender ideologies. While gender ideologies have a long history, modern conceptions of the female form have their roots in the nineteenth century discipline of anthropometry. Anthropometry was a system measuring the human body with the aims of

enacting “rigorously standardized methods” to produce “quantifiable results” (Urla and Swedlund 287). Although this discipline aimed to remove bias through the implementation of such scientific techniques, the “systematic comparison of the human body across race, nationality, and gender” inevitably led to prejudiced results (Urla and Swedlund 287).

One reason such bias may have surfaced is because “more often than not it was the biologically male body that stood in as the generic and ideal representative of the race or of humankind” (Urla and Swedlund 288). With the (White) male body serving as “the unspoken prototype, women’s bodies were frequently described (subtly or not) as deviations from the norm” (Urla and Swedlund 288). Not only did anthropometry establish the White male body as the norm, but it also conceived of this body type as ideal. This naturalized assumption meant that scientists viewed women’s bodies “as variations from the generic or ideal types (their body fat ‘excessive,’ their pelvises maladaptive to a bipedal [i.e. more evolved] posture, their musculature weak)” (Urla and Swedlund 288). Interestingly, these perceived deficiencies arise precisely because the male body is established as the ideal norm through gender ideology.

With their eyes trained to detect difference, anthropometrists also tended to focus on women’s reproductive systems. As Urla and Swedlund point out, “woman’s body was understood through the lens of her reproductive function; her physical characteristics, whether inferior or superior to those of males, were inexorably dictated by her capacity to bear children” (287). With this increased sexualization of the female form, they note “women’s bodies, particularly their reproductive organs, genitalia, and secondary sex characteristics, were instead more carefully scrutinized and measured within ‘marital adjustment’ studies” (288). The vestiges of such thinking are still visible in modern discourses about women’s bodies in combat debates,

which often gravitate towards women's capacity to bear children or stimulate sexual desire in male service members.

As these examples demonstrate, anthropometry's seeming lack of bias was possible because assumptions about gender seem natural. Nevertheless, gender ideologies operated through this discipline and influenced scientific results. Despite their subtlety, gender ideologies continue to influence our understandings of the human body today, and the discourses surrounding the issue of women in combat are no different.

Gender Ideologies and Women in Combat

Several researchers have assessed how gender ideologies function in discussions of women in combat. In "Gender Ideology in the Ethics of Women in Combat," Lucinda Joy Peach defines gender ideologies as the "assumptions, prejudices, stereotypes, and myths about male and female 'natures' and 'proper' sex roles" (157). She contends that these gender ideologies preserve established understandings of what men and women can and should achieve, which "are frequently the products of sexist attitudes and of values maintained by a still-patriarchal culture." Moreover, gender ideologies create stereotypes that do not always match reality and regularly fail to account for diversity within a given group (161).

Stachowitsch's *Gender Ideologies and Military Labor Markets in the US* comes to similar conclusions, tracing the role ideology fulfills in debates about women in combat. Stachowitsch acknowledges a relationship between material conditions and ideologies when she explains how military gender ideologies help shape which institutional tasks women's bodies are allowed to perform. For example, Stachowitsch describes how such ideologies "are crucial in adapting integration patterns to the military's needs by enabling a modernized view of women's abilities and suitability for some tasks while referring to traditional notions to justify exclusions

from others” (17). Stachowitsch’s nuanced analysis highlights how ideology inheres in the materiality of the sexed body, an observation I explore further in the following section.

Embodiment

Theories of embodiment consider how the physical body influences lived experience. As Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury explain in their introduction to *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, “there is a tension between women’s lived bodily experiences and the cultural meanings inscribed on the female body that always mediate those experiences.” The authors maintain that theories of embodiment serve as productive tools for assessing discussions of women in combat because they refuse to discount the importance of the body while admitting the ideological forces influencing “how discourse has contoured the category of ‘woman’” (1).

Like these authors, Donna Haraway and Susan Bordo forward theories of female embodiment that strike a satisfying balance between social constructivism and materiality. In doing so, they refuse to promote understandings of the body as purely produced by discourse or wholly determined by biology. This approach presciently accomplishes what Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman request years later in their anthology, *Material Feminisms*, when they assert, “we need a way to talk about the materiality of the body as itself an active, sometimes recalcitrant, force” (4). They also explain how women possess bodies that mediate lived experience, but discourses also shape the body (3). Alaimo and Heckman recognize the inextricability of these two processes and acknowledge the complexity of the embodied experience, a view shared by Bordo and Haraway.

Bordo’s introductory chapter to *Unbearable Weight*, entitled “Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body” analyzes female embodiment in ways that prove serviceable for my own

project. First, Bordo establishes how western thinking possesses a bias against the body as she explains, “In the sixteenth century the epistemological body begins to be imagined not only as deceiving the philosopher through the untrustworthy senses (a Platonic theme) but also as the site of our locatedness in space and time, and thus as an impediment to objectivity” (4). This understanding of objective knowledge devalues and even demonizes the body, sentiments Bordo encapsulates through her use of words such as “deceiving” and “untrustworthy.” This ideological construct disadvantages women because historically, they have been associated with their physicality.

As Bordo cogently stresses, dualism frequently colors western thought and often is gendered in ways that support particular ideologies about the bodies of women and men. Dualism, according to Bordo’s usage, simply denotes a hierarchical split between the body and “the self,” with the latter occupying a superior position. Within this construct, “woman [is] cast in the role of the body, ‘weighed down,’ in Beauvoir’s words, ‘by everything peculiar to it.’” Indeed, discourses surrounding female combatants tend to focus on their peculiarities or differences from their male counterparts, concentrating intense focus on the female body. While males appear relatively free from bodily limitations, women’s association with the body gleans unfortunate results (5). As Bordo reasons:

For if, whatever the specific historical content of the duality, the body is the negative term, and if woman is the body, then women are that negativity, whatever it may be: distraction from knowledge, seduction away from God, capitulation to sexual desire, violence or aggression, failure of will, even death. (5)

With the negative associations of the body, it becomes clear why members of empowered groups deemphasize their embodiment. This practice surfaces in arguments against women’s inclusion

in combat, which dissects issues of female sexuality and strength, while male bodies fade into the background.

The virtual disappearance of male bodies in discourses of female integration into combat roles exemplifies what Bordo describes as a “dis-embodied view from nowhere.” The masculine perspective favors this disembodied objectivity because it supposedly represents “the only way for the mind to comprehend things as ‘they really are.’” This belief operates on the assumption that individuals can in fact separate the mind and body, which Bordo contests. Since all perspectives must come from a body, disembodied objectivity is merely a myth or illusion that allows individuals to appear unbiased. For example, Bordo claims, “Because we are embodied, our thought is perspectival” (4). This assertion holds true even for the apparently bodiless patrons of objective knowledge, who Haraway asserts must “leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere” (581). Haraway’s claim demonstrates that this “infinite vision” that associates materiality with bias traces back to a body, and therefore the “gaze from nowhere” of “infinite vision is an illusion, a god trick” (582).

This god trick is pertinent to discussions of women in combat because it helps us recognize that all arguments, even those supported by seemingly objective scientific fact, are in service of a particular perspective. While these discourses seem neutral and objective, the way they are constructed functions as a power play that lends one group credibility and authority. In Donna Haraway’s “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” her analysis of the relationship between embodiment and perspective supports these insights.

In this work, Haraway, like Bordo, recognizes the bias existing against incarnated knowledges in favor of disembodied views and explains the implications of this perception.

While Haraway's argument outlines how scientists work to discredit feminist scholars, its core claims are applicable to discourses concerning women in combat. Haraway argues that "invisible," distinguished members of society discredit marginalized groups or "embodied others [...] who are not allowed not to have a body" (575). Haraway's claim demonstrates how the "invisible" group in power emphasizes the embodiment of marginalized groups. This emphasis perhaps occurs because the body of the "other" provides an object upon which the "invisible conspiracy" can set its gaze. Haraway argues this technique enables the disembodied or "unmarked category" the opportunity to "claim the power to see and not to be seen, to represent while escaping representation" (581).

This power play regularly appears in arguments against women's in combat. While the male physique is not a central focal point of the conversation, the female body is heavily scrutinized. Undoubtedly, major changes within any organization will cause tension and elicit scrutiny. However, why focus on women's differences from rather than similarities to men? Ultimately, this technique draws attention away from any limitations males may have in combat situations while emphasizing the bodily limitations of women as a group. This practice has the effect of delegitimizing supporters of women's equal participation in combat while making their opponents seem more objective.

Additionally, this trick of perspective constructs women as outsiders while blaming them for their differences from men. For example, one recurring argument is that women are too weak to carry a man out of battle. This argument places males at the center while focusing on females' "otherness." In order to discover which perspective is privileged in this scenario, one need only to flip the situation in a manner reminiscent of Derrida. The flip side of that argument would be that men are too big for women to carry, an argument that privileges the stereotypical qualities of

women over men. As this example shows, Haraway's theory of perspective reveals a great deal about how positions of power manifest in discourse.

Embodiment, Equality, and Difference

The focus on female embodied difference in combat debates is a means of imposing inequality. But what if equality were possible while accepting physical differences in a non-hierarchical way? Joan W. Scott's "Deconstructing Equality-versus-Difference: or, The Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism" articulates one way of achieving this goal. Working from the Foucauldian definition of discourse and Derridean deconstruction, Scott unpacks the equality/difference binary, illustrating how these concepts are mutually dependent in a way that elucidates arguments about women in combat.

Scott uses Foucault and Derrida to demonstrate that differences between men and women do not impede equality. She summarizes Foucault's contribution as the "historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs" through which "the elaboration of meaning involves conflict and power." Scott values Foucault's theory of language and power because it "provides an important way of thinking differently (and perhaps more creatively) about the politics of the contextual construction of social meanings, about such organizing principles for political action as 'equality' and 'difference'" (35).

Meanwhile, Derridean deconstruction "involves analyzing the operations of difference in texts, the ways in which meanings are made to work." This process includes "the reversal and displacement of binary oppositions" that elucidate "the interdependence of seemingly dichotomous terms and their meaning relative to a particular history." Ultimately, this dislodgment denaturalizes the oppositions, revealing how they are culturally constructed. Scott finds this method useful because the "'equality-versus-difference' debate among feminists"

establishes a binary “to offer a choice to feminists, of either endorsing ‘equality’ or its presumed antithesis ‘difference.’” As Scott observes, “the antithesis itself hides the interdependence of the two terms, for equality is not the elimination of difference, and difference does not preclude equality” (37-38).

These theoretical tools enable Scott to address the dichotomous equality/difference binary pervasive in feminist scholarship, arguing that “it makes no sense for the feminist movement to let its arguments be forced into preexisting categories and its political disputes to be characterized by a dichotomy we did not invent.” Furthermore, they support her solution: “the unmasking of the power relationship constructed by posing equality as the antithesis of difference and the refusal of its consequent dichotomous construction of political choices” (43-44).

She performs this unmasking by explaining how difference is part of equality, defining the latter as the “ignoring of differences between individuals for a particular purpose or in a particular context” (Scott 39). Her definition suggests the “political notion of equality thus includes, indeed depends on, an acknowledgement of the existence of difference,” so equality “might well be defined as deliberate indifference to specified differences.” While people may assume that the opposite of difference is “sameness or identity,” Scott reminds us that there “is nothing self-evident or transcendent about difference, even if the fact of difference – sexual difference, for example – seems apparent to the naked eye.” Scholars must instead ask the following questions: “What qualities or aspects are being compared? What is the nature of the comparison? How is the meaning of difference being constructed?” (44).

Ultimately, Scott concludes that we must resist normative constructions in favor of “the systematic criticism of the operations of categorical difference, the exposure of the kinds of

exclusions and inclusions – the hierarchies – it constructs, and a refusal of their ultimate ‘truth.’” Furthermore, this refusal must rely upon a definition of equality that “rests on differences – differences that confound, disrupt, and render ambiguous the meaning of any fixed binary opposition.” Otherwise, she says, we merely “buy into the political argument that sameness is a requirement for equality, an untenable position for feminists (and historians) who know that power is constructed on and so must be challenged from the ground of difference” (48).

Scott’s work illustrates the violence exacted by linguistic and conceptual binaries, a move that can help scholars approach discourses of female combatants in more productive ways. Her theory shows how forcing ideas such as equality and difference into agonistic opposition limits how we can conceive of human relationships. Unfortunately, this dualism encourages individuals to associate difference with hierarchy and similarity with equality. Scott’s deconstruction of the “difference dilemma” proves serviceable for my own scholarship on discourses about women in combat, which identify physical differences between women and men in such terms. I believe Scott’s analysis could attenuate some of the tension in these discourses, which are located firmly in the equality versus difference conceptual system. Furthermore, Scott’s conceptual system helps us identify how the discourses use the hierarchical differences between male and female bodies to impose this agentive/passive binary.

Embodied Difference

Working from the theories I have cited in this chapter, I offer a definition of embodied difference that I will employ throughout this research project. My understanding of this concept is largely informed by Judith Butler’s explanation of sexual difference in *Undoing Gender*. In this book, she refuses a foundationalist interpretation of this term when she claims, “Sexual difference is not a given, not a premise [...] rather, as *a question* that prompts a feminist inquiry,

it is something that cannot quite be stated, that troubles the grammar of the statement, and that remains, more or less permanently, to interrogate” (Butler 178). By destabilizing this concept, Butler illustrates how sexual difference entails social meanings that cannot be reduced to pure biology, even with the “difficulty of determining where the biological, the psychic, the discursive, the social begin and end” (185). Admittedly, this understanding of sexual difference, or embodied difference in my use of the concept, produces more questions than answers. However, I do not view this irresolution as a weakness. Rather, I find that the unsettled nature of this term lets me consider the ways bodies influence experience without getting mired in arguments that reify biology as destiny. Thus, I use the term embodied difference to account for a range of human diversity as I work with the rather arbitrarily defined categories of man and woman. Essentially, following Scott’s lead, I ask how my datasets construct the meaning of difference.

Marine Corps Gazette “Letters”

Introduction

As my previous chapters show, debates about women in combat have been going on for some time. With the January 2013 policy change increasing American women’s participation in combat, these debates have resurfaced with increased exigence. In this chapter, I try to understand how arguments about women in combat are influenced by beliefs about gender. I particularly want to analyze how these arguments portray women within the military community. For this reason, I ask the following questions: what types of arguments do people make about women in combat, and do these arguments deviate from common arguments made in the past?

The *Marine Corps Gazette (MCG)* offers me a window into these conversations. This journal publishes articles on current matters of importance to the Marine Corps, and it encourages debate over these topics in its “Letters” section. The August 2012 “Letters,” published five months before the policy change, marks the beginning of renewed debates about women in combat. My analyses follow the discussion from this point through the year following the policy change, ending in November 2013. Eighteen letters submitted by seventeen different people weigh in on women in combat. Individuals writing these letters include nine male, retired members of the military; three female and two male active duty members; and two male and one female civilian submitters.

When analyzing these letters, I found strength, sexuality, and nature to be the most prevalent arguments about women in combat. In general, the letters tend to oppose women in this role. Most of the justifications for this position emphasize the female body’s difference from the male norm while attributing gendered characteristics to the sexed body. Meanwhile, the letters generally insist that these embodied differences preclude equality in combat oriented

occupations. These implicit views about difference and equality also render women passive, which is very much in line with historical arguments used to keep women helpless. I begin with an overview of the topics covered in the letters before proceeding to deeper analysis.

Data

In the August 2012 “Letters,” the issue of women in combat makes a brief appearance. In his letter titled, “Women in Combat,” retired United States Marine Corps reservist (USMCR) Maj Greg Sheehan forwards his view that women should not serve in combat units, placing special emphasis on uniform physical fitness standards (Sheehan, “Women in Combat” 9).

A month later, this topic surges in popularity as people respond to Capt Katie Petronio’s *MCG* article, “Get Over It! We are not all created equal” (*MCG* July 2012), a provocative article in which Petronio draws from her own combat experience to suggest women are unable to physically sustain combat conditions in the long run (30). This article sparked five letters in the September 2012 issue of the *MCG*. Four of the five letters support Petronio’s argument, building on it to reflect their own justifications for women’s exclusion from combat (Fox; Sheehan, “Get Over It”; Swenson; Bauer). Their arguments include women’s lack of physical strength for combat, their status as sexual distractions to men, suggestions that military insiders are the only individuals qualified to speak to this issue, and the potential for overly politicized attempts to ensure equality. Meanwhile, one letter remains rather neutral on the subject. Instead, it suggests a solution for her grievance that there is not enough data on female attrition (Rustchak 4).

In October 2012, attention to women in combat significantly drops off. Only one letter from USMCR Maj Karen M Walker mentions the topic. Unlike the previous submissions congratulating Petronio for her article, Walker resists the arguments forwarded in “Get Over It!” and affirms women’s right to compete for positions in combat military occupational specialties

(MOS). She believes the services should reevaluate how success is measured in the infantry and argues for identical standards between women and men (6). Meanwhile, November 2012 features USMC (Ret) 1stSgt Larry Pryor's letter signaling support for Petronio's article. Pryor describes his claim that women cannot keep up with men in combat as "just a physical fact" and distances himself from the emotionalism he views in arguments for women in combat (4).

In January 2013, Larry Koewing and 1stLt R. K. Wallace offer lengthy responses to Maj Amy McGrath's November 2012 article titled "Women in Combat." In this article, McGrath deems the Department of Defense's combat exclusion policy outdated for modern warfare and indicates how it limits the Marine Corps' ability to assign the most qualified Marine to a particular occupation (47-48). Both Koewing and Wallace vehemently oppose McGrath's article, suggesting her arguments are in defiance of reason. While Koewing emphasizes women's lack of the necessary physical strength (6-7), McGrath extends such arguments to include issues of sexual desire and the selfishness of inclusion efforts (7).

In April 2013, Nanette D. Massey reconsiders her support for inclusion in response to Petronio's article. Massey quickly denies her authority to speak on this issue because of her status as a military outsider (10). This troubling forfeit of credibility suggests that those who have not experienced combat first hand should not voice their opinion on it, which implicates many female military members.

USMCR Col P.J. Ferraro's May 2013 letter critiques General Martin E. Dempsey's news conference about revising excessively rigorous standards. Ferraro's incensed response to this proposition suggests that such political goals will unnecessarily compromise military capability. Finally, he views changing standards as an attempt to artificially achieve equality that is inhibited by physical differences between women and men.

Capt Michelle E. Augustine's June 2013 letter responds to Billy Birdzell's article, "Are All Marines Really Created Equal?" Birdzell's article argues that uniform physical fitness tests are the only way for women to be considered equal (9). Augustine argues that women should be given the opportunity to test themselves against appropriate standards in order to join combat MOSs, regardless of their gender (9).

The September 2013 "Letters" display a resurgence of interest in the topic of women in combat. Three letters cover this subject, one of which responds to Augustine's June letter. Retired USMC Sgt Reuben Darby's letter suggests Augustine's submission fails to appropriately address the importance of physical fitness in combat, citing the vivid example of servicemembers needing to carry their wounded to safety (Darby 6). The other two letters respond to 1stLts R. K. Wallace and B. L. Brewster's June 2013 article, "Let Us Fight For You," an article arguing that combat service is the duty and responsibility of men and opposes the claim that modern warfare does not possess frontlines (67-68). 2dLt Christine A. Hannigan's letter confronts how Wallace and Brewster's article relies on gender stereotypes to justify exclusion (6). Meanwhile, USMCR Col Stuart Mock's letter laments what he sees as the military's pliancy to political goals, as demonstrated by integration efforts (6).

The November 2013 "Letters" section marks the end of my data sample. This issue contains two submissions pertaining to women in combat, each responding to different *MCG* articles. Chris Platt's letter replies to Capt Marissa Loya's September 2013 article, "Combat Exclusion Policy." As the title suggests, this article addresses the 1994 Combat Exclusion Policy, opposing its relevancy in modern wars and suggesting it imposes cumbersome limits on commanders (79).

Platt effectively dismisses Loya's article as hyperbolic and goes on to offer a series of arguments about male and female nature in support of the exclusion policy. Specifically, he argues that men are naturally drawn to combat units, and their innate desire to protect women endangers a combat unit (5).

Capt Brian O'Shea's letter uses Capt Josef E. Patterson's article, "One Marine Corps, One Standard," as a springboard for further discussion of physical fitness standards. Patterson's article argues for uniform physical fitness standards in consideration of the policy change (37). While critiquing the letter's call for a supplementary combat fitness standard, which he believes will "only exacerbate the inequality that exists in the Corps," O'Shea endorses Patterson's critique of gender normed standards (5). In this way, O'Shea's letter emphasizes the necessity of identical fitness standards to ensure both equality and effectiveness.

Analysis

As in my literature review, arguments in this dataset primarily fell under the categories of nature, sexual issues, and physical strength. The success of these arguments depends upon their ability to successfully conflate gender and the body. Through my discussion of nature, sexuality, and strength, I show that arguments about the female body are not based purely in biology as they purport but instead operate on beliefs about gender. Furthermore, this insistence on embodied difference grounds attempts to preserve clear, hierarchically defined gender categories. Ultimately, this move ascribes passive gender roles to women in war.

Nature arguments draw from outdated gender stereotypes to position women as passive bystanders to war while granting men a more active and empowered role. Historically, appeals to nature have portrayed women as too nurturing to engage in the brutality of war, granting men the full responsibility of defending the nation and its inhabitants.

This theme naturalizes the connection between gender characteristics and embodiment, which can be observed in Wallace's claim that "in every people group on earth [sic], women are the smaller/weaker/more compassionate demographic," while men are "generally larger/stronger/more violent demographic" (7). Here, Wallace tries to tie characteristics such as compassion and violence to the sexed body by lumping them together with the physical traits of women and men. As a result, compassion and violence should appear as though they are inherent to men and women's bodies.

This attempt to naturalize gender beliefs lets us observe how arguments about the body enforce a gender hierarchy supporting women's exclusion from combat. Arguments that women are naturally nurturing and men are naturally protective use embodied difference to affirm clear gender categories. Specifically, these arguments about male and female nature play into gender ideologies that render women passive and men agentic. This attempt to affirm gender differences by grounding them in the body reflects how masculinity is constructed and maintained in the context of war. In the western world, active, embodied participation in warfare has been one important means of performing masculinity (Zeigler and Gunderson 47). Importantly, the successful performance of masculinity depends upon it being something that women's bodies cannot do because men's "affirmation of their sense of identity requires their doing something that can be seen as what a woman by her nature could not do" (Herbert qtd. in Zeigler and Gunderson 47).

Platt illustrates this phenomenon when he argues, "If the ban is lifted, I predict a great number of qualified men would opt out of military service and pursue other uniquely male challenges" (5). This statement demonstrates how the presence of agentic female bodies challenges the perceived masculinity of this traditionally male occupation. Platt's hypothesis that

men will seek out other purely male activities signifies a gesture towards arenas where the gender lines are not so blurred. This illustrates the need to affirm difference to preserve gender categories, a need that often is articulated through arguments about the body and what it can do. Thus, combat as a masculine sphere of action depends upon excluding female bodies.

Specifically, women are made to appear naturally nurturing because it suggests they are incapable of being warlike, reaffirming the necessity of men as natural warriors. One of the clearest ways this manifests is through the protection myth, which surfaces in Platt's letter. He argues, "men have an innate desire to protect women, a desire that is incompatible with a 'coed' combat unit" (5). This claim represents men's traditional gender role as protectors as an inborn trait, which reaffirms women's status as inherently defenseless damsels in distress.

Arguments about women as sexual distractions in the combat zone are very infrequent compared to historical debates on this topic, surfacing only twice in the letters. Sexually based justifications for women's exclusion from combat exhibit several similar processes as arguments about nature, especially through a commitment to female's passive status.

The increased sexualization of the female body is largely a product of gendered interpretations and fetishism of embodied difference from a male norm. With the male body serving as the "generic and ideal representative of the race or of humankind" (Urla and Swedlund 288), women's sexual organs serve as one of their primary distinguishing factors from men. So, while men's bodies appear relatively neutral, traditionally, "woman's body was understood through the lens of her reproductive function; her physical characteristics, whether inferior or superior to those of males, were inexorably dictated by her capacity to bear children" (Urla and Swedlund 287). This increased sexualization of the female form is readily apparent in

contemporary culture and combat debates that focus on how women will arouse sexual desire in male servicemembers.

While these types of arguments are informed by gendered assumptions, they adopt the guise of being neutral and natural. For example, Wallace argues that sexual attraction is “natural, mutual, and essentially continual and unchanging” (7). Fox too suggests that sexual desire is irresistible when men and women inhabit the same spaces, asking, “[Would] sex not be alive within each individual?” (4). While such urges are a regular part of the human experience, these arguments situate nature as something outside of human control and fail to account for the ways such compulsions are mediated by culture.

We can observe how representations of sexual desire are socially governed and implicated in power structures in Wallace and Fox’s arguments. They both represent women as the trigger for desire in men, suggesting that a female’s presence alone is the source of sexual conduct issues in combat. Their arguments appear to be in line with what Susan Bordo identifies as the female temptress trope, which suggests it is only “natural” for a man to be attracted to a woman (6). This mindset represents woman as little more than a sexual object producing pleasure in the men around her. For example, Wallace describes Capt Katie Petronio as “an attractive woman in an active combat zone,” evaluating her as “DISTRACTING!” (7). This statement suggests that Petronio’s presence alone is responsible for the desire Wallace felt. Correspondingly, Fox fixates on the woman’s role in exciting attraction when asking, “If one or more [infantry members] is female, will there not be pairing off?” and claiming, “A female in a rifle squad is going to get focus and attention” (4). These types of arguments not only rest upon heteronormative assumptions, but they also eschew male responsibility for sexual conduct violations.

Such arguments enable males to renounce ownership of their bodies and place the full burden of sexual desire on females (Bordo 6). This apparent disembodiment functions much like Haraway's view from nowhere, giving males the "the power to see and not to be seen, to represent while escaping representation" (Haraway 581). This renders women as passive sexual objects, unable to escape the power of the agentive male gaze. Furthermore, this mentality implies a man's sexual attraction "is the result of female manipulation and therefore is the woman's fault" (Bordo 6). Such arguments obscure male responsibility for letting themselves be distracted and for following through thoughtlessly on their "urges."

The gender ideologies operating within strength arguments are more difficult to discern than the themes of nature and sexuality. Surfacing in twelve of the letters, appeals to physical strength appear as though they are predicated on common sense and biological facts. Pryor even calls his assessment of women's inability to serve in combat "just a physical fact" (4). Yet, like the other themes, arguments about strength rely on naturalizing the weak female body, positioning women as passive bystanders to war in the process.

The letters do this by suggesting male physical capabilities are the natural choice for effective combatants. One of the most perceptible ways this manifests in the letters is through considerations of fitness standards, which tend to favor gender-neutral over gender-normed criteria. Gender-neutral standards, as the name suggests, offer one fitness requirement for both men and women. Meanwhile, gender-normed standards require different physical fitness expectations for women and men. The letters offer overwhelming support for a single, gender-neutral standard for combat occupations (Walker 6; Ferraro 8; Augustine 9; Darby 6; O'Shea 5). Meanwhile, gender-normed standards are portrayed as deficient and are even described as a danger to combat readiness. For example, Darby offers the frightful example of a leader who

“barely squeezed through a gender-normed combat fitness test” trying to rescue fellow servicemembers (6). Clearly, Darby is not concerned that an individual who barely passed the male version of the normed standard will be unable to rescue his comrades. This suggests that gender-normed standards are a problem only because they refer to women’s perceived lower fitness requirements.

In light of this realization, one can observe the push towards gender-neutral requirements as the reassertion of the “high” and “time-tested” standards asked of males (Dempsey qtd. in Ferraro 8; Ferraro 8). By failing to acknowledge that these “neutral” fitness standards are not in fact impartial but are tailored to the ideal male physique, the letters create a situation in which many women appear as though they don’t measure up to the requirements of combat. This representation of male standards as neutral allows male physical capabilities to seem naturally superior for effective combatants. This illusion of neutrality can be summed up in the often-cited scenario that female combatants would be too weak to carry their male counterparts to safety, which does not acknowledge a privileging of the male, but seems only to prove women’s weakness. This perpetuates the idea that women lack something necessary for combat that men have, namely strength. As a result, the female body appears substandard because of its deviance from the male precedent. However, if we argue instead that women are not too weak but men are too heavy, we operate on an understanding of strength that privileges females. This demonstrates that arguments about strength are not as objective as they pretend to be but instead impose a hierarchy depending on the notion of strength they privilege.

This imposition of hierarchical physical difference is made possible by a commitment to the belief that difference precludes equality. Scott names this the equality paradigm, which dictates that “sameness is a requirement for equality” (48). As Scott observes, this antithetical

thinking ignores that difference is always already part of equality (38). For example, differences among rather than simply between women and men exist, yet this fact does not surface in the letters with great frequency. Instead, many of the letters that emphasize physical difference explicitly argue that equality between the sexes is either false or impossible. For example, Wallace believes that these differences are being ignored in favor of “false equality” (7). Darby similarly connects identical fitness standards and equality, arguing, “Combat is not an egalitarian exercise in political correctness,” and women who want to achieve true parity must earn it through exhibiting the “same physical and combat fitness standards as their squadmates” (6). This commitment to equality as sameness, however, is not limited to opponents of women in combat.

Even most of the letters that argue for women’s inclusion in combat operate on the understanding that difference is the antithesis of equality. Many of them try to smooth over differences between the sexes in order to make the case for men and women as equals. In her letter, Walker draws parallels between the physical exertions and injuries endured by all servicemembers (6). Likewise, Augustine’s letter glosses over differences to argue that equality in combat is possible. She suggests combat roles should be assigned based on merit and “regardless of gender” or any differences altogether such as “race, religion, or gender” (9). Such moves are unproductive because the general degradation of female capabilities ensures that differences are ignored in order to more closely approximate an idealized male norm, which will likely reaffirm the status quo. That is, arguments within the equality paradigm that do not acknowledge difference fail to change the norms but simply argue some women can function like men.

However, the male body is not in fact the natural and unbiased measure for determining combat readiness. In fact, this type of thinking exhibits a very limited and strictly masculine understanding of brute physical strength. When Fox offers the derogatory evaluation that men and women “are not the same in strength and physical capabilities,” it is with his understanding that women may not be as effective as men at carrying the same heavy loads (4). We can see how this type of argument privileges a particular conception of strength while blaming women for not matching it. By establishing the ideal, male body as the norm against which everything else is measured, these arguments make the female body appear deficient by virtue of it not being male.

We know that the discourses privilege an impoverished and strictly masculine understanding of strength through this disparaging of difference. Furthermore, we can consider how different approaches to similar tasks do not need to be viewed as deficient if they do not match a male norm. For example, feminist scholars have recognized that women and men may have different ways of performing similar tasks. This is not something that current physical fitness standards, “neutral” or normed, are willing to measure. With the unspoken belief that differences from an established norm are somehow deficient, the existing system devalues any workarounds women may develop to meet similar tasks as men. Nevertheless, scholars have illustrated how different approaches to the same task certainly can be considered an asset. Fenner points to this fact when she cites an experiment conducted by the Navy in the 1970s to determine strength requirements for postal workers:

They set up an experiment using typical forty-pound bags of mail. The bags were set on the mailroom floor, and the postal clerks were told to weigh them. When the first clerk entered the room, he lifted each bag onto the scales on the counter. When the next clerk

entered the room, she took one look at the bags and the scales, then moved the scales to the floor and proceeded to weigh the bags. The requirement, after all, was to weigh the bags, not to lift the bags to counter height. The researchers discovered that they would have to take creativity and initiative into account in setting physical job standards. (8)

As this example demonstrates, general physical differences between women and men do not necessarily prevent them from accomplishing similar tasks, even as different means are employed to achieve similar ends.

A perhaps more general way to conceptualize how combat debates continue to privilege a masculine conception of strength while disparaging difference from it is through a consideration of the hand people learn to write with. Many classrooms primarily have desks for only right-handed people. This environment seems relatively neutral until a student who writes with his or her left hand must use one of these desks. While the left-handed student does not write better or worse than right-handed students, he or she will have more difficulty using a desk designed with a right-handed student in mind and will therefore appear to be at disadvantage. In the past, people may have considered this student's left-handedness as a sign of inferiority. However today it is easy to see that the desk that is made for a right-handed student, and not the left-handed student, is the issue. When we apply this type of thinking to the combat debates, we can observe how arguments that women are too weak for combat really only prove that women do not exhibit the same types of strength as men. Like the left-handed student using a desk developed with a right-handed student in mind, many of the standards of measurement and activities that women must undertake to qualify for combat assignments were developed with male bodies in mind. This suggests that the discourses' focus on women's difference from male standards does not prove women are incapable of serving in combat.

When we recognize that the letters demonstrate a deep commitment to a masculine understanding of strength, we are able to see how insidiously the discourses attribute gender ideology to the sexed body. This successful naturalization of the connection between gender ideology and the body reaffirms the very traditional gender roles dictating that women are passive bystanders to war while men take an active part in it. This lends legitimacy to biologically deterministic claims that women are simply too weak for combat and therefore should be excluded.

Furthermore, we may identify how arguments about strength, like the nature arguments, emphasize embodied difference in order to maintain combat as a purely masculine sphere of activity. As I explained earlier, masculinity can only define itself in opposition to femininity, which is performed through men's bodies engaging in tasks that women cannot do, or cannot do well (Herbert qtd. in Zeigler and Gunderson 47). Platt hints at this phenomenon in his letter when he argues that women's inclusion in combat will likely encourage men to seek out other uniquely male challenges (5). Hannigan also illustrates how heavily masculinity depends on its difference from femininity when she argues, if "a male feels threatened by a woman's presence, one must question his manhood to begin with" (6). As these examples demonstrate, the entrance of female bodies into combat jeopardizes the perceived manliness of the occupation. This realization allows us to understand how arguments about physical strength ground the negotiation of gender boundaries in very concrete examples of embodied difference. This provides a strong impetus for representing masculine understandings of strength as natural for combat because it predetermines the answer to whether women can meet the demands of combat: since women are not men, they will almost always be found wanting.

Importantly, gender ideology also reaffirms combat as a purely masculine realm of *authority*. By subscribing to purely masculine understandings of strength, the letters deny that women can engage in combat successfully. This delivers a damaging blow to the status of military women in a discourse community that greatly values embodied experience with combat. The letters illustrate how such experience confers authority to those who voice their opinion about it. For example, most of the letter contributors cite some sort of experience with combat or commensurate experience to bolster their authority to speak on the topic (Fox 4; Swenson 4; Bauer 4; Walker 6; Pryor 4; Darby 6). Moreover, the letters tend to disparage attempts by those without such experience to make decisions about combat occupations, which is exhibited by their dissatisfaction with the civilian “political masters” who have chosen to integrate in the first place (Ferraro 8) or through their assertion that those “who have never served, never will serve, and neither will most of their kids serve” should listen to those with experience (Swenson 4).

This system of authority creates a troubling tautology in which women, who have until recently been prevented from serving in combat, have little authority of their own to speak about this issue. Wallace’s letter demonstrates the impulse towards maintaining this status quo when he takes issue with claims that women should be allowed access to combat assignments because blurred front lines mean they have already been serving in this capacity (7). Arguing that danger and combat are not synonymous, Wallace denies women the authority they might have gained from such experience. He uses this circular argument to oppose women’s continued exclusion by virtue of their exclusion in the first place. Ultimately, this denial of authority relegates women to a marginal and passive status by denying their right to be heard.

Results

As I have illustrated, arguments about women in combat come down to gender and the body. Crystalizing around the themes of nature, sexuality, and strength, these arguments locate gender difference in the physically sexed body. Unlike the other two themes, the strength argument does not seem at first glance to rely on ideology and is therefore more difficult for inclusion proponents to renounce. However, as I have shown, arguments about physical strength are just as implicated in gender ideology as arguments about nature and sexuality. The letters I examined from the *Marine Corps Gazette* illustrate how physical fitness standards in particular represent a salient point of contestation by offering a very concrete way of measuring physical difference and enforcing the status quo. Standards will likely be a divisive factor in either inhibiting or enabling women's entrance into combat occupations in the future. However, our current hierarchical commitments to male physical qualities and the perceived defectiveness of female difference from those qualities will likely reproduce existing social structures under the guise of gender-neutral requirements. In this chapter, I have worked to dispel the illusion of neutrality and naturalness suffusing current debates about women in combat. With this new understanding, I hope we can abandon our commitments to equality as sameness and commit to new paradigms that will enable a more productive approach to integrating women into combat occupations.

Interviews

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore attitudes towards the policy change by analyzing interviews I collected from six members of the military. Building on my previous chapter's findings, I consider the implicit assumptions that encourage interviewees' apprehension towards integration. Specifically, I look for the interlocking relationship between arguments about the female body, equality, and the belief that integration will degrade the military mission.

Methodology

For my dataset, I conducted six Institutional Review Board (IRB) interviews between May 2014 and August 2014. Because I used an opportunity sample, which is not a probability-based selection procedure, my dataset is not representative of all military members' view of integration. Nevertheless, this collection method is valuable for sampling the types of arguments people might make about this topic.

To begin, I identified an initial group of interviewees through personal contacts. These individuals then referred me to other servicemembers interested in being interviewed. My final sample included the following: one retired female Army soldier who spent twenty years on active duty; three retired Marine Corps colonels who each spent nearly thirty years in the service; one federal employee who serves as a physical fitness advisor for the Marine Corps; and one female Naval Academy cadet.

Due to the geographic diversity of my participants, I conducted interviews over the phone and collected an audio recording of our conversation. After they signed a consent form that I emailed to them, I asked them the following questions to which they responded freely:

- *What is or was your position in the Marine Corps?*
- *How long were you a member of the Marine Corps?*
- *How long have you been a civilian (if retired)?*
- *How many active deployments did you participate in and for how long?*
- *What do you think about the recent policy change allowing women into combat positions?*
- *Why do you think that?*
- *What are your thoughts about women's ability, in general, to fulfill combat roles?*
- *Do you think women have the physical capacity to fulfill these roles and why?*
- *What effect do you think women's inclusion in combat roles will have on combat units?*
- *Why do you think that?*
- *Are there any other comments that you would like to add to your remarks? Needless to say, some of the questions did not apply to all participants.*

After recording their answers, I transcribed the recorded interviews for analysis. My transcription process involved listening to the audio recordings several times to ensure accuracy and typing each interview into a document on my computer. I used ellipses to mark any pauses in the interviewee's response and retained any fillers such as "like" or "um." To preserve the anonymity of my participants, I assigned each respondent a roman numeral (Interviewee I, Interviewee II, etc.).

To begin my analysis, I began coding my interviews for some of the themes I discussed in the previous chapter. While coding for these themes, some broader categories such as concern for the military mission began to emerge. Because of these observations, my analysis in this chapter extends the ideas introduced in my previous chapters. Furthermore, this chapter takes a

less theoretical and more real-world application approach than the previous. I provide a table outlining each interview before proceeding to analysis.

Data

For the sake of brevity and clarity, I offer the following table to illustrate each interviewee's demographic information and most salient arguments.

Figure 1: Depicts the sex, branch and duration of service, number of deployments, and most salient arguments relating to the themes for which I coded.

Interviewee Data					
Demographic Information			Argument Type		
Inter- view Sex (M/F)	Branch Service (Years)	Deploy- ments	Nature	Sexual	Strength
I (F)	Army (20)	0	<p>“[Women] will be part of the unit, and I think, in many ways, our society has not really trained young men and boys to consider women equal in this matter. Men in our Christian society and even men in America [...] will not tolerate the idea of a woman in a combat uniform being fired upon by enemy troops [...]”</p> <p>“I believe women should be able to serve their country as well, but not in the last bastion of manhood [...] because one, you degrade the integrity of the men by allowing women into that field.”</p>	<p>Physiologically speaking, women do not belong on the combat field [...] the nature of a woman's body makes it more difficult for her to maintain a hygienic environment for herself.”</p> <p>“Now, when you put females into a combat environment, with men who are trying to focus on a mission and are constantly bombarded with the interruption of females in their area of operation, then you create a bit of a problem.”</p>	<p>“Now, there are women who possess the mental and physical characteristics that are necessary in order to endure certain strenuous missions.”</p> <p>“I believe there was a female captain who wanted to go...she wanted to be a ranger. Now, she fought to go to Ranger School. Finally, she won the chance to go through a ranger class, and she failed.”</p> <p>“There is a true difference between being a man and being a woman, and I do not, I'll come out and say this, I do not believe in people trying to be anything other than what they are physically.”</p>
II (M)	Marine Corps (30)	5	<p>“So, my only other desire was to be combat infantry, and so the rest of my philosophical upbringing was I still maintained and lived in this bastion of, really, an all male gendered</p>	<p>“Right now, we have not embraced unisex lavatories. Not fully. [...] I know that sounds trivial, but the social norm right now is we segregate our lavatories.”</p>	<p>“[One female recruit could] out-lift, out-run, out-climb pretty much most ... a significant number of men that I knew personally.”</p> <p>“What I do know is that there is a physical, no</p>

			<p>world.”</p> <p>“Boys and girls: I think there are true differences in how we view life. I think there are differences in how we are made up.”</p> <p>“I know we played differently than the girls on the block, and I’ve watched my daughters. I know and I’ve seen how they behave. I’ve also watched a couple of the guys come by who want to date my daughters, and guys and men bond as only guys can, and women have a marvelous way of relating to women, as women can.”</p> <p>“I would love to see a survey done of all the women out there with the one piece of... how many of you want to literally be assigned into infantry units, and [who would (?)]¹ I don’t know.”</p>		<p>kidding, unarguable difference between male and female. So, I’ve kind of embraced science.”</p> <p>“[Male] bodies can handle more weight. Their bodies distribute weight differently. [...] They’ve got to adjust these scores so that they make it commensurate, but then it’s not equal.”</p> <p>“Most of those guys you see right out there walking out there, no kidding, on the open ranges, and hills, and mountains of Afghanistan... all weights included, they’re probably up around 80-90 pounds. It’s just, it’s grueling, and it’s ... even for them... even for the most fit guy.”</p> <p>“Until we develop that technology that makes everyone completely equalized on the battle field, and your robotics take over and make up any differentials between physical strength, then you are literally shooting and moving equally on the battlefield.”</p>
III (M)	Marine Corps (27)	Several	<p>“I think there’s a, at least from the male perspective, I can’t say from female to male, there is a certain ... people want to deny it, okay, but there’s still, you know, an inbred, or from our experiences in life, or how we were raised, a certain bit of a desire to protect females. [...] if it’s a distractor, then it’s going to lessen somebody’s focus in an</p>	<p>“If you look how anatomically, they’re built to carry weight low [...] and up front. That’s pregnancy, you know, if you think about it.”</p> <p>“[The] reactions of male to female, or female to male, or straight to gay, or gay to straight or whatever ... whatever those interactions might be</p>	<p>“To fly a plane, you know, to do something... to drive a ship, you know, naval combat, if it’s the ability to deliver ordinance, or doing ground attach from a helicopter, whatever, I don’t see that much of a difference, if there is. I don’t even know what that would be.”</p> <p>“The question in terms of women’s abilities in general ... if you take the</p>

¹ Unreliable phone connection interfered with clarity on the recording. The brackets indication my best attempt to interpret what the interviewee said.

			environment that requires so much focus. That's a concern."	when you're introducing some new variables that weren't there before ... the people that have to deal with this are those small unit leaders."	male cohort of, let's just say, eighteen to twenty-two year olds versus female, you know, in terms of body structure and capabilities in the aggregate, you know, there's no question that the males can carry a larger load ... the average male than the average female, you know, for a longer period of time. You know, and it's a less challenge to do so, and I say this from some basis of knowledge."
IV (M)	Marine Corps (28)	8	"Um, and there are also the, you know, psychological that occur when men and women are together in any situation, whether that be enclosed situations, combat situations. You know, the ... whether its true or not, there's the perception out there that, you know, guys would, um, would look out for a woman before they would look out for a guy."	"[If] you have, you know, if you have [a woman become] pregnant... you would be out of that specific cycle. That's one of those, um, things that the services need to look at very very closely because that's a discriminator between men and women in that women can get pregnant and guys can't. It's, so, it's one thing that would be, you know, something that would be physically, I'd say, debilitating because you would have somebody who is, you know, carrying a child in an organization in combat." "It's like even today, pregnant women can go onboard a ship up to a certain time, and then they have to be taken off that ship. So they are essentially not combat capable for a specific period of time."	"Having a woman be a leader for men, for example, and have to carry a base plate over the border, which is over fifty pounds [...] it's the fact that you're not able to conduct the specific task, which you may be asked to do something that you weren't physically built to do." "Um, there are certain tasks you can do, that women can do, and there are certain tasks that physically they may be able to do up to a certain point, but maybe not to a level of sustaining." "I think that right now, it would be, um, difficult for any of the services to have a combat physical fitness test or a test that would not have gendered scores."
V (M)	Federal (25)	N/A	"[It's] one of those things that males have traditionally taken care of females, and, um, I ... that's going to be a	"The other area that I think will also be a challenge is, um, some of the hygiene issues are a little bit different	"In general, I think that there are some females that are well equipped, um, for the physiological, psychological, emotional

			<p>challenge for male Marines to be able to overcome and realize that, yes, she's a female, but she's a Marine just like the male Marine that's standing next to her."</p>	<p>for females in combat. Again, the Marine Corps is going to have to be ready to answer to that, and they're working on that. There are things in place to help females to be in an austere environment. Um, I cannot answer if we are there yet though."</p>	<p>challenges of combat, um, and I would say, just as much as there are some males that are fit for that as well."</p> <p>"So, as much as, you know, we have to look for proper ways to identify males, those are the same measures that we have to use to properly identify females. Percentage wise, it may not be as many, and that's okay."</p>
VI (F)	Naval Academy (3)	N/A		<p>"[How] long do they have to actually stay in and serve before they want to have kids or their body breaks down?"</p> <p>"[Male cadets] treat you differently. It's not even that they'll treat you like another guy. They step around you like you would never ever expect. It's kind of opened my eyes, and from, like, if that happens in living in school where we have separate rooms by gender ... we're not allowed to close the door with another guy in the room. I mean, what would it be like living in the field or, you know, being in combat with that pressure. I think it really does affect the group dynamic, like extremely [...]"</p>	<p>"Like, we would never put a football team out with, like, a third or fourth string just to prove that they can go too. We put out our best players, and if your best player isn't a female, then they shouldn't even go out."</p> <p>"I know [...] females that went EOD and did EOD training and kicked the guys' butts, but at the end of the day, like, there are few women that can physically meet the standard, and if they can, like, like hoorah for them, but there, like, there's so many ... just the preventative breakdown more and more."</p> <p>"[Out] of one hundred percent of women, how many women can actually pass that PRT and meet the standard? Out of that, how many women that could, don't get shin splints or injuries from it because of their different anatomy. Out of those women, how many women that can and make it through [before] their body breaks down?"</p>

Analysis

Within the dataset, one of the major trends that emerged was the sense that integration harms the military mission. Through careful analysis of the interviews, I argue that this concern stems from the understanding that female bodies are inadequate for meeting the demands of combat. Justifications for this view coalesce around the traits that distinguish women from men in ways that undermine the female body's perceived self-sufficiency. This disparagement of female difference results from both a commitment to the male body as the paradigmatic combatant and the deeply held belief that sameness is a condition for equality. We can see this pattern come forth in the major themes I outlined in previous chapters and find once again in the interviews.

The interviewees make it clear that the military mission is preeminent, surpassing individual rights or concerns within this institution. For example, Interviewee I understands military service as a contribution to "the higher good, or the greater good," while Interviewee III explains that "we employ the military in defense of our national interests or our economic, our political, our communication, our capabilities." Interviewee IV advances the importance of physical abilities achieved "at a level of proficiency that wouldn't bring any harm to organization." He elaborates, "in other words, you have to be able to, um, do your mission or do your task to enable mission accomplishment." Interviewee VI offers a similar representation of the military, explaining, "Personally, I feel like the ethos of the entire military is, like, about winning and being the best and not about proving that an individual female can keep up with an individual male. It's all about warrior ethos and group ethos." These statements illustrate the military's collectivistic rather than individualistic ethos, which favors institutional success above all else. This commitment is particularly true of combat occupations, which are often dangerous and ask servicemembers to wager their lives for the benefit of national defense. As I will

demonstrate later in this chapter, combat's defensive function is particularly relevant in discussions of women's equal access. Within the context of combat-related occupations, interviewees often whitewash concerns for individual rights.

The dangerous nature of combat occupations contributes to interviewees' ambivalence towards equality. Specifically, several interviewees ask if the U.S. truly wants equality if it will require our nation's women to go through the horrors of combat. Interviewee II expresses this view when he posits, "It's not that I think women cannot do that and haven't experienced the tragic loss of life and limb on the battlefield because they have, but there is a part of me that wonders, while we've broken the glass ceiling, which I am not opposed to, that world, even for the men, is [...] I don't know how many of us want that for our kids." He continues by explaining, "I'm all about fair, equitable, equal treatment of all human beings, and I got to tell you, I'm not sure it's cracked up to be the great social experiment that you want to mess with." Others such as Interviewee IV deny equality's place altogether, making the emotionally-based appeal that "this isn't something that is, you know, a societal thing where diversity ... it doesn't embrace diversity, or opportunity, or those other types of things because, you know, it's a situation where, um, it's the ultimate [...] the ultimate sacrifice that needs to be made." These statements sharply distinguish between what interviewees characterize as society's utopic vision for equality and the military's practical "need" to elide such preoccupations. By placing in opposition the seemingly cosmetic social goals for equality with the potentially fatal nature of combat, these arguments deemphasize the exigence of integration.

This trend continues when the interviewees suggest that integration is unnecessary in the first place, representing its goal to institute formal equality as a frivolous political exercise. Interviewee IV very clearly argues that he does not see the purpose of the policy change,

explaining, “I haven’t heard anything saying that says Joe or Jane Six Pack has a problem with [the situation] where all guys go in combat organizations, and they make the ultimate sacrifice.” More than people’s perceived lack of desire for integration, he denies the need for it: “I personally don’t know anybody that’s served in the military, anybody that I’ve talked to that’s been a civilian that’s looked at that and said, ‘Yeah, let’s go ahead and change that, and women aren’t doing enough now. It’s time to have them step up.’” He concludes with the claim that integration is a concession “to appease society’s want for us to be the same or equal across everything to the military.” This statement reveals doubt that such equality is achievable otherwise. Interviewee VI also reduces equality’s place in combat occupations, explaining, “I think a lot of public media, um, veer towards just showing the gender equality and that women are just as physically comparable, but in my opinion, that’s not exactly [...] that’s not everything you have to take into account.” These arguments continue to undermine the importance of integration, drawing their strength from the assumption that women will bring little benefit to the organization overall.

In fact, interviewees suggest integration will harm military effectiveness. For example, Interviewee I argues the following about women’s integration: “You degrade the mission, and I don’t think it’s worth it.” Similarly, Interviewee II worries, “I would really want to know in my heart that the efficiency of accomplishing the dirty mission of closing with the enemy by fire maneuver or close combat if we were enhancing our capability or if we were satisfying this other thing, and I’m not trying to undermine it.” The “other thing” Interviewee II worries integration would satisfy to the detriment of the military is the goal of social equality: “If it is about equality, and that this is the way our society deems is the final bridge that needs to be crossed in order for women to have every opportunity that men currently have, then, you know what, that’s the

direction that I think this country is going to move towards with complete abandon.” These anxious comments imply integration’s egalitarian ambitions and military effectiveness are at odds with one another. Furthermore, interviewees’ conviction that integration will harm the military’s smooth functioning suggests women do not merit equality in this context. As I will argue in the following sections, this belief comes, in part, from their understanding of equality.

Interviewees’ sweeping claims about equality make it difficult to pin down what exactly they mean when they invoke this term. However, their justifications for why women are unfit to serve in combat serve as useful clues. Most of the arguments against females in combat denigrate the traits that make women different from men. This disparagement of female difference suggests that the discourse is committed to the male body as the paradigmatic combatant. In order to merit equal access to combat, the discourse expects women to match this paradigm and finds them inadequate when they fail to do so. This reveals the deeply held belief that sameness to the male norm is a condition for equality. Specifically, interviewees seem invested in the masculine ideal of self-sufficiency so central to the vision of an effective combatant, even as such individuals work in a team setting.

The following excerpts demonstrate how the discourse attempts to enforce sameness to the male norm as a condition for equality. Arguments about physical strength offer the most distinguishable examples of sameness as equality. One of the most interesting instances of this occurs when interviewees consider technology’s potential impact on combat’s fitness demands. Interviewee II argues that once “we develop that technology that makes everyone completely equalized on the battlefield, and your robotics take over and make up any differentials between physical strength, then you are literally shooting and moving equally on the battlefield.” This

remark suggests that true equality is otherwise attainable because of physical differences between women and men.

Similar sentiments arise when interviewees mention contexts where this type of equality has already been achieved. Specifically, one pattern indicates that interviewees see no equality issues in technologically mediated occupations. For example, Interviewee III argues, “To fly a plane, you know, to do something [...] to drive a ship, you know, naval combat, if it’s the ability to deliver ordinance, or doing ground attack from a helicopter, whatever, I don’t see that much of a difference, if there is.” Similarly, Interviewee IV believes women can shoot automated weapons or maneuver vehicles at the same level as men. Clearly, these examples grant women equal status because technology allows them to perform tasks in the same ways as men. Unfortunately, this theme reaffirms rather than challenges the commitment to physical sameness as equality that disenfranchises women in other arenas where they may not perform tasks identically to men. In particular, this view fails to challenge the privileged masculine understandings of strength that women are expected to replicate in order to merit equal status.

This privileging of masculine strength is most apparent in representations of token females. The interviews regularly invoke examples of a few exceptional women who are able to match or surpass male physical fitness standards. For example, Interviewee I concedes that “there are women who possess the mental and physical characteristics that are necessary in order to endure certain strenuous missions,” despite her general opposition to the integration. Interviewee II also admits he served with some female marines who “were the top of the top” and “excelled at everything they did.” Correspondingly, Interviewee III cautiously acknowledges that “certainly there are females or women that could make it to the top,” but he asks if it is worth restructuring the entire combat military occupational specialty (MOS) for those

few. In concordance with these sentiments, Interviewee V believes some women “have the physical capacity just as much as some males have the physical capacity,” suggesting his response does not tokenize women in the way that most of the interviews do. Interviewee VI also offers examples of token females without conceding her opposition to integration. She explains, “I know that people in my company [...] that, um, females that went EOD [Explosive Ordnance Disposal] and did EOD training and kicked the guys’ butts, but at the end of the day, like, there are few women that can physically meet the standard, and if they can, like, like hoorah for them, but there, like, there’s so many [...] just the preventative breakdown more and more.” Such statements represent the majority of women as inadequate while reaffirming the existing status quo that favors particular exhibits of strength, devaluing any contributions they might offer if they do not match the masculine ideal. Furthermore, Interviewee VI’s comment about “preventative breakdown” represents another important trend regarding women’s ability to sustain masculine activities.

Interviewees will concede that women might be able to “keep up” in combat, but their bodies would inevitably break down over time. This word choice circulates throughout exclusion arguments and is a concept worth deeper consideration. The argument reads as a warning against pushing women’s bodies past what they are apparently designed to do. One of the ways the interviews do this is by focusing on the short amount of time women would have in combat before their bodies undergo some version of breaking down. Interviewees’ use of this term is noticeably vague, but it seems to signal the physical disintegration of the female body. For example, Interviewee IV argues, “There are certain tasks that physically [women] may be able to do, up to a certain point, but maybe not to a level of sustaining.” Meanwhile, Interviewee II saw women engage in male training standards and explains, “their bodies, quite frankly, just would

inevitably break down over time.” Interviewee VI asks, of the women who can engage in certain combat related activities, “how long do they have to actually stay in and serve before [...] their body breaks down?” Interviewees’ focus on longevity suggests women are not a wise investment for the military. Correspondingly, these arguments share a biologically deterministic view of the female body, claiming that it simply is not built for combat. Female’s higher injury rate is viewed as proof of this, suggesting the “break down” trope functions as a metaphor for female weakness.

A focus on heavy lifting exaggerates this construction of the female body as weak. This representation stems from an overly reductive method of comparison between the sexes that constructs men as strong and women as weak. We can see this theme come through in claims that women’s biological inaptitude for heavy lifting leads to higher injury rates. Interviewee II, for example, ties women’s higher instances of stress fractures to “the load bearing thing” and the fact that “the musculoskeletal structuring of a female who’s [...] developed something different anatomically than men [doesn’t] lend itself as well to combat.” He believes the “break down” of women’s bodies “probably had everything to do with the physical construct of what has historically been thrown on the back of the infantryman.” As he explains, many infantrymen “are loading in at [...] probably up around eighty/ninety pounds,” and “it’s grueling, and it’s ... even for them... even for the most fit guy.” Interviewee IV drives this point home in the following claim about women (and men): “It’s the fact that you’re not able to conduct the specific task, which you may be asked to do something that you weren’t physically built to do.” These examples judge women’s ability to lift against a male benchmark, a move that stacks the cards in favor of men. Because men successfully meet the definition of strength, which oddly seems to be based on what men can do anyways, women must be weak if they do not do so as well. People

often view this form of brute physical strength as a marker of manliness. More importantly, interviewees' focus on female atrophy in the face of this task indicates the more symbolic meaning of weakness as a lack of control over one's own body. By emphasizing the "break down" of female bodies, the discourse refuses women this same level of control and self-sufficiency it grants to men. According to the discourse, men have mastery over their bodies, but women crack under the pressure. This argument that their bodies will break down portrays women as an unreliable source of labor because they cannot take care of themselves, which implies they will not be able to take care of their teammates or contribute to the military mission overall.

Claims about heavy lifting and atrophy also co-occur with arguments about reproduction, suggesting interconnectivity between these concepts. So, for example, Interviewee II believes women's heavy lifting injuries result from their evolutionary development to bear children. In his words, "anatomically, they're built to carry weight low [...] that's pregnancy, you know, if you think about it." This claim echoes the biologically deterministic tenor of other heavy lifting arguments, suggesting claims about women's reproductive capacity fulfill a similar role in combat debates.

Just as Interviewee II's claim suggests women's evolution to bear children inhibits their ability to perform heavy lifting, other reproduction arguments suggest women are insufficiently autonomous to be considered capable in combat. Specifically, women's capacity for pregnancy threatens the notion of independence so central to the vision of an ideal combatant. For instance, Interviewee IV deems this difference between the sexes a valid "discriminator between men and women in that women can get pregnant and guys can't." His claim suggests women lack autonomy and self-determination. Even the wording, "get pregnant," suggests it is something

that happens to women and is beyond their control. He continues, “It’s, so, it’s one thing that would be, you know, something that would be physically, I’d say, debilitating because you would have somebody who is, you know, carrying a child in an organization in combat.” The use of the word debilitating here is quite interesting, almost as though the interdependence between mother and child during pregnancy is an indication of weakness. It seems as though this embodied experience, by its nature, defies the very sense of self-rule valued in the discourse.

This perceived lack of self-reliance casts doubt on women’s ability to contribute to the team in reliable ways. For example, Interviewee VI seems to believe motherhood represents a lack of commitment to combat, something fatherhood evidently does not signify. She asks of the women who can succeed in combat training, “how long do they have to actually stay in and serve before they want to have kids or their body breaks down?” Interestingly, she also coordinates this concept with the claim they will “break down.” From these observations, we might conclude that the interrelated concepts of heavy lifting, physically breaking down, and reproduction signal the perception that women lack the self-sufficiency necessary to successfully engage in combat in a way that does not compromise the military mission. These concepts all signal the belief that female bodies themselves are compromised and therefore are expected to fail.

This issue of autonomy holds true in the final common assumption that men will want to protect women who join combat units, an argument that renders women’s bodies incapable of defending themselves. We can see this assumption when Interviewee IV’s contends, “You know, the ... whether its true or not, there’s the perception out there that, you know, guys would, um, would look out for a woman before they would look out for a guy.” Interviewee V also believes, “It’s one of those things that males have traditionally taken care of females, and, um, I [...] that’s going to be a challenge for male Marines to be able to overcome and realize that, yes, she’s a

female, but she's a Marine just like the male Marine that's standing next to her.”

Correspondingly, Interviewee III claims, “People want to deny it, okay, but there's still, you know, an inbred, or from our experiences in life, or how we were raised, a certain bit of a desire to protect females.” These comments tap into the myth of protection, a deeply entrenched cultural narrative that constitutes the female body as passive and dependent while granting male bodies agency and hero-status. This argument suggests women lack the independence necessary to take care of themselves. By representing women as incapable of defending themselves, this theme challenges their authority to participate in a job committed to defending the nation. In light of this observation, it would seem that this cultural narrative depicting women as damsels in distress is directly at odds with what it means to be an effective combatant.

Indeed, by presupposing that the female body is incapable of defending itself or others, the protection myth assumes that women really are not equal to men in combat. Interviewee I illustrates this claim most clearly when she argues, “Men in our Christian society and even men in America will not tolerate the idea of a woman in a combat uniform being fired upon by enemy troops” because “our society has not really trained young men and boys to consider women equal in this matter.” This sentiment casts men in the role of paternal protectors while infantilizing women, a characterization that suggests a power differential between the sexes.

This assumption of inequality ultimately feeds the belief that women will damage the military's larger mission by distracting their protective male counterparts. Interviewee V hints at this when he argues men's protective instinct could have “potentially negative impacts” if women enter the mix. However, Interviewee III develops this claim more clearly when he argues, “If it's a distractor, then it's going to lessen somebody's focus in an environment that requires so much focus. That's a concern.” Here, we can see how the myth of protection blames

women and their apparent dependence and lack of autonomy for any reduction of military effectiveness. In doing so, the myth of protection illustrates how representations of women as dependent implicate equality.

Results

The themes I analyzed in this chapter render women incapable of mastering their own bodies, whether it is through a supposed inability to lift large loads, the capacity to “get” pregnant, or a need for protection. As my examples demonstrate, the discourse values the very autonomy and independence these arguments deny women. Interestingly, these themes emphasize embodied differences between women and men in a way that suggests characteristics associated with the male body are simply better for combat. These claims support the belief that women cannot successfully perform the types of tasks that merit equality in combat. Specifically, such arguments reaffirm the belief that women must be the same as men in order to be considered equal. Thus, the discourse takes women’s differences from the male norm as a sign that they are unqualified to meet the demands of war. Indeed, the very qualities that distinguish women from men signify deviances from the ideal combatant. This trend suggests interviewees’ vision of the paradigmatic combatant is informed by masculine characteristics. Essentially, interviewees consider combatants effective when they are manly. This stacks the deck against women, who are physically different from men. When the discourse operates on the understanding that equality comes from matching a masculine paradigm, and the ideals of self-sufficiency, independence, and autonomy that go along with it, women are found lacking. Thus, integration’s attempt to institute formal equality comes across as artificial and even detrimental to the military mission.

Conclusion

When Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced in January 2013 that certain combat roles would now admit women, he marked an important moment in military history. Until this point, the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule had promoted formal inequality between the sexes. The note of hesitancy in Panetta's briefing first attracted me to this topic as he claimed the military would move "forward with a plan to eliminate all *unnecessary gender-based barriers* to service" [emphasis my own] ("Press Briefing by Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey from the Pentagon"). The phrase "unnecessary gender-based barriers" struck a dissonant chord with me because it seemed to presume that the military does in fact need some gender-based barriers. To me, this discordance signaled that formal equality between the sexes would not automatically erase implicit prejudices towards women within the military institution.

As I sifted through journal articles, news reports, blog posts, and whatever else I could get my hands on in the months following the policy change, I noticed the same ambivalent tenor I detected in Panetta's speech. While many people certainly supported the change, much of the literature vehemently opposed women's inclusion in combat roles because of seemingly insurmountable gender-based barriers. The barriers opponents of women in combat most frequently cited centered on female embodiment. Claims that females lack the necessary upper body strength for combat, are sexual distractions, can get pregnant, or will sidetrack their protective male counterparts stood out as common themes within the discourse. While some of these arguments were not difficult for me to discredit, others were hard for me to argue against because they seemed to possess a rather common sense, factual basis. As a feminist, I was and remain troubled by the use of such biologically deterministic claims to limit women's life choices. To me, these arguments sound little different than racist or eugenicist rhetoric.

Curious to see what others had to say about such arguments, I found a wealth of literature on female combatants in feminist scholarship. These researchers offered invaluable counterpoints to the more mainstream arguments against women in combat, with feminist antimilitarists on one end of the spectrum and pro-militarist egalitarians on the other. While their work offered cogent insights into the discourse, I quickly noticed that many of their responses seemed to validate arguments about men's physical superiority by simply denying it was true in all cases, an approach I recognized as tokenizing female combatants. Many of these scholars worked to prove that some women could be just like men, an argument I found unconvincing. One major limitation of the literature was its propensity to argue the content of the issues, rather than dissecting *how* such arguments work rhetorically. This strategy seemed to validate rather than question the terms of the conversation and the qualities it privileged. Thus, the existing scholarship largely failed to account for strength differences and proved unserviceable when it came to sexual issues where the differences between women and men are especially difficult to deny. And why should we want to deny embodied differences? This denial of the characteristics that make women unique seemed to suggest there was something shameful in being a woman.

My escape from these self-defeating strategies primarily emerged from the works of Fenner, Scott, and Haraway. First, Fenner's example of men and women's different approaches to performing the same work in a mailroom embraced rather than attempted to deny physical difference. Thus, her view of equality encompasses physical differences between the sexes in a way I viewed more productive. Furthermore, Scott's theory of equality was instrumental in helping me complicate the assumptions I encountered in combat debates. Her recognition that we tend to believe equality can only be achieved through sameness was certainly present in arguments stressing women's general inability to keep up with their male counterparts. In

addition, Haraway's "view from nowhere" helped me recognize that the benchmark for measuring women's qualification for equality was not objective, neutral, and disembodied. These insights served as my entry point into the discourse and allowed me to treat the claims I encountered more productively.

These insights guided me as I ventured into my datasets, which I selected for several reasons. First, the *Marine Corps Gazette* "Letters" section served as a rich rhetorical space for engaged members of the military community to negotiate the meaning of the policy change. Second, the interviews I conducted allowed me to sample the types of arguments people might make about women in combat. While neither of these datasets is representative of all opinions regarding integration, they allowed me to enter the broader national conversation by closely examining more manageable discursive exchanges.

When I initially delved into the "Letters" and my interviews, I was not quite sure if or how these feminist theories would manifest. Rather, I began with initial questions about how the discourse converged on embodied difference. I was able to develop a taxonomy within this broader category, dividing it into the themes of strength, sexuality, and nature. The discourse frequently invoked these themes as justifications for women's inability to participate successfully in combat. In the "Letters," these topoi revealed how naturalized gender ideologies construct women as passive. Meanwhile, my interviews suggested strength, sexuality, and nature become focal points for emphasizing female difference because they seem to undermine masculine ideals of autonomy and independence that members of this discourse community value in combatants.

Ultimately, the principles developed by Scott, Haraway, and others mentioned in my theory chapter helped me interpret how these arguments fit into a larger framework. In the same

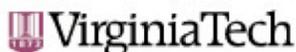
vein as Haraway, my datasets illustrate how people's disparagement of female embodied difference reveals how they conceptualize the ideal combatant as male. Thus, my analysis gives a body to the supposedly objective benchmark against which female combatants are constantly measured and found wanting. With this in mind, we must recognize the impracticality of a commitment to what Scott deems the equality as sameness paradigm, which unfairly expects women to be just like men. If the military truly wants to make good on its promise of eliminating unnecessary gender-based barriers, it needs to adopt a more inclusive conception of equality. This act of redefinition is imperative because the military is committed to implementing formal equality through practices that have very real effects on the life choices of women.

Whether the military and the American people believe we are meeting this goal is largely dependent upon *how* we define equality. The current consensus in the samples I studied suggest a general belief that equality in combat means sameness to a male norm. People are taking actions based on this definition, and I fear that it will encourage the continued informal inequality and marginalization of women. With the findings of my research in mind, we can no longer remain blind to the ways current military practice obscures its preference for qualities and characteristics associated with males while blaming women for their differences. The types of arguments individuals forwarded against women in combat demonstrate how military leaders' assertion that equality will be so and the actual facilitation of such parity are two different things. My project attempts to address this communicative breakdown and push military leadership to adopt a vision of equality that embraces difference. To do so would involve challenging institutional practices that tend to favor men while disadvantaging women. For example, the military could accommodate difference by determining what physical abilities combat actually requires,

devising new methods for completing certain tasks, and even offering gear designed specifically with different bodies in mind, to name a couple of examples.

Panetta's ambiguous use of the term "unnecessary" shows that much work remains to be done for women to gain equality in the military. In this project, I have tried to understand where some of this ambivalence comes from, and I have concluded that the promises made by integration efforts will be more difficult to keep than military leadership may have anticipated. While Panetta's speech marked the institution of formal equality, current understandings of this term will ensure that informal inequality remains in place. I hope that my findings serve as a tool for reaching a more productive understanding of equality and thus as a tool for positive change.

Appendix



Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
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 300 Turner Street NW
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
 540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
 email irb@vt.edu
 website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 21, 2014
TO: Bernice L Hausman, Ashley Hughes
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)
PROTOCOL TITLE: Marine Corps Personnel Interviews for Masters Thesis
IRB NUMBER: 14-413

Effective April 18, 2014, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7**
 Protocol Approval Date: **April 18, 2014**
 Protocol Expiration Date: **April 17, 2015**
 Continuing Review Due Date*: **April 3, 2015**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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