Diversity Isn’t ‘Pink’: The Benefits of Gender Diversity in the Military

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Introduction

• Women comprise ~14.6% (214,098) of the military1.
• They have previously been denied some of the same benefits that men have been given including:
  – Serving in combat positions2,3.
  – Equal access to benefits and recognition for their service4,5.
  – Registration for the Selective Service6,7; and
  – Promotion advancement8,9.
• Over the last 5 years, some of these barriers have been lifted; however, the integration of women into the military is still resisted by some10.
• Thus, a double standard still remains11, primarily in regards to gender inequality12.

Purpose

• To debunk myths versus realities of women serving in the military
• To increase gender diversity in the military via awareness of the roles and experiences of women

Table 1. Overview of Literature Review and Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Construction</th>
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| Goal: To showcase the progression and integration of women into the U.S. Military to debunk current myths. | 1. Researched various databases to obtain up-to-date articles.  
2. Searched the history of women in the military and diversity of women in the military.  
3. Created an annotated bibliography of these articles.  
4. Constructed timeline and myths versus realities table this articles into an annotated bibliography. |

Table 2. Myths versus Realities of Women in the Military

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myths</th>
<th>Realities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women are not strong enough to fight in combat.</td>
<td>Women have passed the same physical fitness tests as men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periods and PMS will get in the way of women doing their jobs.</td>
<td>Men’s bodies are just as unpredictable. Periods can be suppressed by contraceptives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The morale and cohesion of a unit will be decreased by women.</td>
<td>Women have been proven to boost morale and cohesion in integrated units currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Diversity also helps to improve morale and cohesion of the unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women are not as emotionally stable as men.</td>
<td>The depression rates between men and women are the same. Men are more likely to commit suicide than women.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women are more likely to be sexually assaulted.</td>
<td>Women have a higher proportion of sexual assault but more men have been victimized than women.</td>
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Table 3. Video and Interview

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2. Obtained question and video approval.  
3. Conducted interview.  
4. Edited video. |

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Best Practices for Promoting Gender Diversity in the Military

• Maximize the differences women bring to the workplace by building better teams in the workplace.13.
• Give women leadership opportunities14.
• Promote gender equality throughout the military in terms of uniforms and access to healthcare15.
– Look beyond filling demographic quotas16.

What “FIRSTs” Does the Future Behold for Women?

• Open the Selective Service to women
• Encourage more women to serve in Special Operations and combat roles across all Services
• Make uniform costs equal
• Level the playing field for career advancement
• Eliminate the gender inequality divide

Disclaimer: The opinions and viewpoints expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect endorsement of the DoD or DEOMI. Not all individuals in a generation will follow the characteristics and traits listed. References available upon request.