

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

AUGUST 26TH

19TH AMENDMENT

Women's Suffrage - Women's Right to Vote



Photograph from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographic Division.

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WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

PREFACE

The author, Cadet Christina M. Girotti, is currently a senior at the United States Military Academy at West Point and will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army upon graduation in 2002. She served as a participant in West Point's Academic Individual Advanced Development (AIAD) program with the Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) in June 2001 and conducted the research on Women's Equality Day to prepare this report.

SCOPE

The Academic Individual Advancement program at West Point provides cadets the opportunity to broaden their academic experience at West Point by volunteering to participate in academic programs both within and outside the Department of Defense. This particular AIAD provides cadets a unique opportunity to work on a diversity and/or equal opportunity project while on a three-week tour of duty at DEOMI. During their tour, the cadets use a variety of primary and secondary source materials to compile a review of data pertaining to an issue of importance to equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) specialists, supervisors, managers, and other leaders throughout the Services. The resulting publications (such as this one) are intended as resource and educational materials and do not represent official policy statements or endorsements by the DoD or any of its agencies. The publications are distributed to EO/EEO personnel and selected senior officials to aid them in their duties.

June 2001

Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed in this report are those of the author and should not be construed to represent the official position of DEOMI, the military Services, or the Department of Defense.

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INTRODUCTION

On August 26th, 1920 the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which granted women the right to vote, was ratified. This was the culmination of the long struggle by women searching for the right to vote. In 1971, the U.S. Congress designated August 26th as Women's Equality Day to commemorate the passage of the 19th Amendment and to celebrate women's continuing efforts toward equality.

WHY CELEBRATE WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

We celebrate Women's Equality Day to commemorate the tremendous positive change brought on by the Women's Movement. Due to the countless millions of women who planned, organized, lectured, wrote, petitioned, lobbied, paraded, and broke new ground in every field imaginable, our world is irrevocably changed. (22) Women and men of our generation, and the ones to follow us, are living the legacy of the women's rights won against staggering odds in a revolution achieved without violence. Women can be proud of the legacy of the Women's Rights Movement. (22) Today's activists remind us all to celebrate and cherish past and present accomplishments of the Women's Movement before they are lost to history. (29)

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE 19TH AMENDMENT

“Great spirits have always encountered opposition from mediocre minds.”

Albert Einstein

THE SENECA FALLS CONVENTION

The long struggle for women's rights formally began in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. The feminists of the late 19th century came together in the hometown of Elizabeth Cady Stanton to attend “The Rights Convention.” The two-day convention was headed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. It was the first time that Stanton read her “Declaration of Sentiments,” which would eventually be spread across the nation and embraced by millions of equal right's supporters. The document was patterned after the Declaration of Independence and contained her grievances and demands.

Stanton called upon women to organize and petition for their rights. The convention passed 12 resolutions. The first 11 passed unanimously; but the last, demanding the right of women to vote, was only passed by the insistence and influence of Stanton. The passing of Stanton's last resolution marked the formal beginning of the women's suffrage movement in the United States. (9)

THE DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS

Sixty-two women and thirty-eight men signed the Declaration of Sentiments. That number grew rapidly in the following years. The Seneca Falls convention inspired a reaction that led to the Women's Rights Convention being held regularly from 1850 to the Civil War. These meetings addressed the issues that were stated in Stanton's original Declaration. The campaign lasted for seventy-two years, with millions of supporters joining Stanton. (7)



**Elizabeth Cady Stanton (seated) with
Susan B. Anthony (Prints and Photographic
Division, Library of Congress)**

FACES IN THE CROWD

The Women's Rights Movement was headed by a number of fiery women who were able to conjure up the emotions of the masses. The hard work and determination of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony helped to blaze the path that led to the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

Stanton and Anthony began working closely in 1851, and remained active together for over 50 years. The two planned campaigns, spoke before legislature, and addressed gatherings in conventions, lyceums, and on the streets. Stanton, the better orator and writer, was perfectly complemented by Anthony, the better organizer and planner. Stanton and Anthony embarked on

several exhausting speaking and organizing tours on behalf of women's suffrage. In 1869, they formed the National Woman Suffrage Association, and it remained a large and powerful group right up to the passing of the 19th Amendment. (10)

Unfortunately, neither of these women lived to see the passing of the 19th Amendment. But the legacy that they began was carried on by the next generation leading to the final passing of the 19th Amendment, also referred to as the 'Anthony Amendment,' in 1920. With the issue of the new dollar coin in 1979, Anthony became the first woman to be depicted on United States currency. (10)

SUFFRAGETTES

“Men their rights and nothing more. Women their rights and nothing less.”

Susan B. Anthony (40)

After Stanton died in 1902, and Anthony in 1906, a new wave of women came in and inherited the Women's Movement. The new wave of women picked up right where Anthony and Stanton had left off and demanded changes immediately. In January of 1917, women began parading in front of the White House for “woman suffrage.” The women started off standing silently, holding picket signs reading, ‘*Mr. President, what will you do for Woman Suffrage?*’ and ‘*How long must women wait for liberty?*’. But as time passed, the messages became more aggressive.



(Prints and Photographic
Division, Library of Congress)

The women took advantage of the United States entry into World War I on April 6, 1917. When Russian envoys came through Washington, picketers that proclaimed the United States was a democracy only in name greeted them. This caused bystanders to erupt in violence, which brought new attention to the movement. Between June and November 1917, 218 protestors from 26 states were arrested and charged with “obstructing sidewalk traffic” outside the White House gates.

The new leader of the National Woman’s Party, Alice Paul, held a hunger strike in jail after her arrest. Prison doctors had to force-feed her and others. With the combination of the negative publicity caused by the pickets, the arrests, and force-feedings of women protestors, President Wilson finally lent his support to the movement in January of 1918. Congress was a little more apprehensive to sign the bill. (21)

PRESIDENT WILSON JOINS THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

In the end, it was the service of women in the military and the defense works that gave a huge push to the passing of the 19th Amendment. In September of 1918, President Wilson addressed the Senate urging that they follow the House in passing the Amendment. His dramatic plea asked the Senators to recognize the contributions made by American women in the War. President Wilson proclaimed:

“Are we alone to ask and take the utmost that our women can give, service and sacrifice of every kind, and still say we do not see what title that gives them to stand by our sides in the guidance of the affairs of their nations and ours? We have made partners of the women in this war; shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right?” (38)

WOMEN’S INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD WARS

WORLD WAR I

In 1901 and 1908, the establishment of the Army and Navy Nurse’s Corps opened the door for women in the military. It wasn’t until the United States got involved in World War I did some parts of the government get serious about women power. (38)

THE NURSES CORPS

The Army stumbled around red tape trying to figure out how to enlist women, while the Navy simply ignored the War Department dissenters and quickly recruited women. The Defense Department continually thwarted the Army's request to have women serve as clerks and, as a result, women other than nurses did not serve in the Army during World War I. Those nurses who did serve were in Belgium, Italy, England, and on troop trains and transport ships. Army and Navy Nurses Corps served valiantly throughout the war and many received decorations for their efforts. At least three Army nurses were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the nations' second highest military honor. Several received the Distinguished Service Medal, our highest non-combat award, and over 20 were awarded the French Croix de Guerre for acts of bravery. (38)

WOMEN IN THE NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

In addition to the women serving in the Nurses Corps, nearly 13,000 women enlisted in the Navy and Marine Corps. These women held the same status as men, and wore a uniform shirt with insignia. The Navy's policy was extended to the Coast Guard, but only a handful served at the headquarters in Washington. When hostilities ceased on November 11, 1918, the supporters backed down, and the War Department scrapped plans for women in the military. (38)

WORLD WAR II

Despite the breakout of war in Europe and the women's superb performance in WWI, Washington refused to call on women for enlistment into the military. It was the insistence of Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rodgers and Eleanor Roosevelt that started the movement toward formation of the Army Auxiliary Corps. Congresswoman Rodgers introduced a bill on May 28, 1941, to establish a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps for service with the United States Army. By nature of it being an auxiliary corps, there was no hint of full military status for women. The bill was not taken seriously until General George C. Marshall took interest. Even after General Marshall got involved, little happened in Congress. In late November of 1941, there was still no definitive action. At this point General Marshall literally ordered the War Department to create a woman's corps. (37)

THE BOMBING OF PEARL HARBOR

The incident at Pearl Harbor reinforced this order. Military nurses were very much involved at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The Japanese attack left 2,235 servicemen and 68 civilians dead. Eighty-two Army nurses were serving at three Army medical facilities in Hawaii. Army and Navy nurses working side-by-side with civilian nurses and doctors treated hundreds of casualties suffering from burns and shock. The chief nurse at Hickam Field, 1st LT. Annie G. Fox, was the first of many Army nurses to receive a Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

Four days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and 23 years after the idea of women in the military was born, Congress stopped objecting and began planning. Finally on May 14, 1942, the bill to establish a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) became law. With a push from Eleanor Roosevelt, the Navy began authorizing a Women's Naval Reserve and the Marine Corps Women's Reserve. The Coast Guard followed soon after. Then, in 1943, the WAAC was changed to the Women's Army Corps (WAC) establishing it as part of the Army rather than an auxiliary corps. (37)

WOMEN SERVE ACROSS THE GLOBE

By January of 1944, the first WACs arrived in the Pacific, and in July of 1944, WACs landed on the beaches of Normandy. There were over 100,000 women in uniform late into the U.S. involvement in WWII. Women continued to serve overseas through 1945 and, at one point, there were over 2,000 women in North Africa alone. From there, women were sent to Italy to serve with the 5th Army and these women served throughout Italy during the Italian campaign handling the communications, earning commendations, bronze stars, and the respect of their fellow soldiers as they sloughed through mud, lived in tents, dived into foxholes and dugouts during the Anzio air raids. (37)

Toward the end of the war in Europe, the European Theater boasted over 8,000 WACs stationed across England, France, and Germany. Ironically, regulations did not permit the women in the Navy, Coast Guard, or Marines to serve overseas until the war was almost over. However, the Navy Nurses were serving aboard hospital ships, in air evacs, and every place from Australia to the Pacific. Nurses received 1,619 medals, citations, and commendations during the

war, reflecting the courage and dedication of all that served. Countless women served in all branches of the service stateside and relieved or replaced men for combat duty overseas. Women performed admirably in every conceivable job. (37)

Even though 400,000 thousand women gave a part of their life for their country, once the war ended and the military was demobilized, women were again taken out of the military. (37)

THE SECOND WAVE

“A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle”.

Gloria Steinmen (3)

THE 1960’S STIR UP

When the book The Feminine Mystique, by Betty Friedan, was published in 1963, it sparked a new interest in the Women’s Movement. According to Daniel Horowitz from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, when Friedan’s book was published everything changed. Horowitz said: “The Feminine Mystique helped transform the course of America’s political and social history.” (16) The key to the book’s popularity was Friedan’s steadfast claim that it was born of an average housewife’s suburban discontent.

In 1966, other women who were dissatisfied with the lack of progress joined Friedan and together they founded the National Organization for Women (NOW). (16)

THE ACTION OF THE 1970’S

The year 1970 marked the 50th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Women’s liberation organizations urged women in the home or in the office “to confront your own unfinished business of equality.” (31) The unfinished business included a list of goals that nearly all women liberationists agreed upon. They called for equal pay for equal work and a chance at jobs traditionally reserved only for men. They also wanted nationwide abortion reform and round-the-clock, state-supported childcare centers in order to cut the strings that tied women to the kitchen. (31)

On August 26, 1970, NOW called upon women nationwide to strike for equality, and the women responded. Women in 40 cities organized demonstrations to protest the fact that women

still did not have equal rights. In New York City, 50,000 women marched down Fifth Avenue to demonstrate their support of the Women's Movement and equal rights. Former NOW president Betty Friedan, feminist Gloria Steinmen, and others addressed the crowd and the event was an extraordinary success in demonstrating the breadth of the support for women's rights. In 1971, Congress officially recognized August 26th as Women's Equality Day. (11)

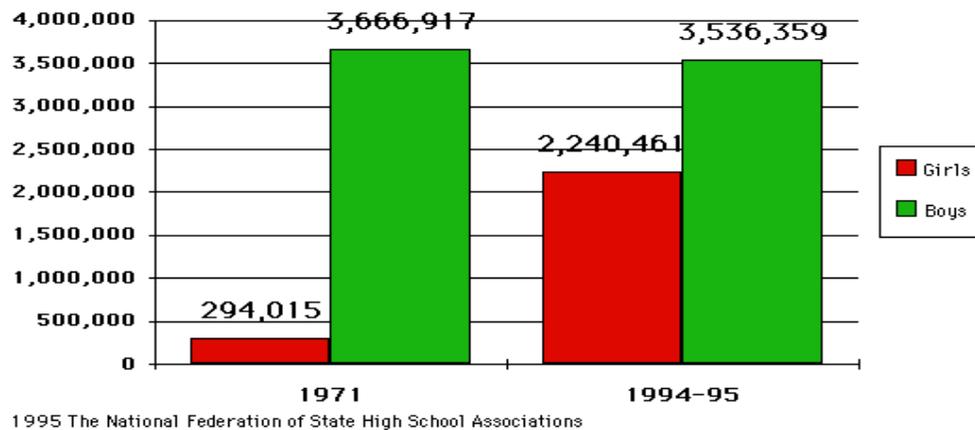
WOMEN WORKERS

Although women were the numerical majority in 1971, with 51% of the U.S. population being female, they were still treated as second class citizens. More than a third of the American work force was female with 42% of women 16 and older working outside of the home. In 1968, the median salary for a full-time-year-round worker was \$7,870 for White men, \$5,314 for non-White men, \$4,580 for White women, and \$3,487 for non-White women. The median wage for full-time women workers was 58.2% of that for men. In the 70's, on the average, a woman needed a college degree to earn more than a man did with an eighth-grade education. (31)

TITLE IX OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

Women did enjoy many victories during the 70's. In 1972, Title IX of the Civil Rights Act was put into order declaring that: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...." (33) Title IX opened the door for women in sports. It forced schools to create equal opportunities for women, particularly on the athletic fields. Title IX meant a sweeping change in the number of women involved in sports at both the high school and collegiate level. (See table.)

High School Athletic Participation



(33)

INTEGRATION OF U.S. SERVICE ACADEMIES

A huge victory for women's rights activists' came in 1975 when the doors to the U.S. Service academies were opened to women. The Service academies had been exempt from Title IX and so it took an entirely new bill to open this opportunity up to females. The United States Military Academy at West Point, the oldest of all of the Service academies, had been all male since being established in 1802. The first classes, of approximately 100 women, entered the academies in 1976. They followed the same track as the men, conducting the same training and being held to the same tough academic requirements. The only changes made were "the minimum essential adjustments in such standards required because of physiological differences."

(34)

ROLE MODELS

Many new role models emerged in the 70's. These role models were in areas previously dominated by men such as sports, politics, and business.

- **Billie Jean King** was one of the first role models for female athletes. King, a pro-tennis superstar, was selected as the "Outstanding Female Athlete of the World" in 1967. In 1972, she was named Sports Illustrated "Sportsperson of the Year," the first female to be so honored. And in 1973, she was dubbed "Female Athlete of the Year." She was also the first

female athlete to win over \$100,000 in prize money in a single season. King spoke out for women and their right to earn comparable money in tennis and other sports. Her constant lobbying and commitment broke down many barriers. Her efforts established the first successful women's professional tennis tour and founded tennis clinics for underprivileged children. (41)

- **Dr. Phyllis Chesler** lectured and organized political, legal, and religious rights campaigns both in the United States and in other nations across the world. She is a founder of the Association for Women in Psychology (1969) and The National Women's Health Network (1974). Dr. Chesler's nine books, many articles, and hundreds of speeches have inspired both women and men, lay people and professionals, on many diverse issues. (27)
- **Coco Chanel** was ahead of her times and she was ahead of herself. The way she mixed up the role of male and female clothes and created fashion that offered the wearer a feeling of hidden luxury rather than ostentation are just two ways that her taste and sense of style have affected today's fashion. Although Chanel would not have considered herself a feminist, she was undoubtedly part of the Women's Liberation Movement. She threw out a life jacket to women not once but twice, during two distinct periods decades apart; the 1920's and 50's. By the time Katherine Hepburn played her on Broadway in 1969, Chanel had achieved first-name recognition and was simply Coco. (28)
- **Kate Millett** stepped into the spotlight when her doctoral thesis, "Sexual Politics," was published and became a bestseller. Millett "assails romantic love, calls for an end to monogamous marriage and the family, and proposes a sexual revolution that would bring the institution of patriarchy to an end." Her work woke up thousands and changed their view of women. Millett was hailed by Time magazine as the Mao Tse-tung of Women's liberation. (7)

FEMINISM IN THE 90'S

“The first problem for all of us, men and women is not to learn, but to unlearn.”

Gloria Steinmen (40)

STEPPING INTO THE LIMELIGHT

In the 1990's women stepped into new positions all across the nation. Women were taking over positions they had only dreamed of in the past while new opportunities presented themselves every day. The new First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, was an excellent role model for this new era of women in power. She arrived at the White House after serving as First Lady of Arkansas for 12 years. But this First Lady was not just a pretty face. She was an educated woman with a law degree from Yale and refused to choose between her own ambitions and her husband. While serving in Arkansas, she worked as a full time partner of a law firm, chaired an education committee that set public school standards in Arkansas, managed a home, and cared for her husband and child. She was truly a woman who could do it all. When she arrived in the White House as the new First Lady, she did not abandon her own dreams. She was appointed by her husband to head of the Task Force on National Health Care Reform, one of the President's highest priorities. (42)

WOMEN IN POLITICS

As well as having a woman head his Task Force on Health Care Reform, President Clinton also appointed a female attorney general. Janet Reno was the first woman Attorney General of the United States of America. She was one of only 16 females to enter Harvard Law School in 1960, out of a class of more than 500 students. After a distinguished career as a lawyer, she was nominated by President Clinton in February of 1993 and served as his Attorney General until he left office in 2001. Her strength, tenacity, vision, and commitment made her a role model for all that seek justice. (43) But politics was just one of the many arenas in which women began taking on new roles. Women also began to emerge in the media, as well as academia, and the athletic arena.

WOMEN IN LITERATURE

Maya Angelou has expressed greatness through literature. She is an internationally respected poet, writer, and educator. She is one of the few women admitted into the Director's Guild, an elite society for those who have demonstrated excellence in directing film or television. Through her personal outreach to improve women in the Third World, primarily in Africa, she has helped change the lives of thousands of less privileged. She gives with all her heart and soul and has become a true role model for African-American women, showing through her lifelong achievements that anything is possible for those who are willing to put forth the effort. (44)

WOMEN IN SHOW BIZ

Rosie O'Donnell is yet another woman who broke her way through a male-dominated career field. At the age of 20, O'Donnell decided to take her comedy act on the road. She performed for minimal pay and slept in filthy communal condominiums. She traveled along with an ever-changing cast of other comedians, most of them male, up and down the East coast. In the 1980's, a female comedian was somewhat of an anomaly. O'Donnell estimated that she was one of about eight women doing stand-up comedy at the time. She was up against various forms of sexism, including lower wages for female comics, but refused to let those challenges stand in the way of her dreams. O'Donnell persevered and, by the end of the decade, had succeeded in building a successful career as a comedian. She extended her horizons to work on cable's VH1, TV prime time sitcoms, and box office hit films; but, in 1995, she decided to switch career tracks to a more stable position as a talk show host. (23)

STEPPING INTO THE ARENA

Women have officially made it to the "center court" of athletics. When Title IX became law, a dramatic change took place in America's schools. Women began to play. In 1971, the year before Title IX took effect, fewer than 300,000 high school girls played interscholastic sports. By 1991, that number had risen to 2.4 million and has continued to grow. Times have changed so drastically that many girls today do not realize the struggle that female athletes went through. After winning two gold medals for the United States in the 1964 Olympics, swimmer Donna de Varona could not obtain a college swimming scholarship. They did not exist for

women. Thankfully, women today are not concerned about this issue, with one third of all athletic scholarship dollars in 1997 going to women. (33) It took outstanding female athletes to pave the way and prove that they were deserving of the scholarships and recognition.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

One sport that is clearly indicative of the growth of interest and recognition of female athletes is women's basketball. In 1972, 132,299 girls played high school basketball. By 1995, that number had increased by 300 percent to over 412,576. When the American women won a Gold Medal at the 1996 Olympics, it catapulted them into the media and increased attention to NCAA women's basketball and led to the opening of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) in 1997. (33) Although women began to play basketball in 1892, it took over a century for the opportunity for women to play professionally in the U.S. to develop.

When women first began playing basketball, many feared that the game was too rough for ladies and they would become seriously ill from continual running. They were limited to play in a three-court game wearing floor length dresses and slippers. As players developed over the years, they proved to the world that they could play just as hard and just as physical as the men. Players such as Lisa Leslie, Sheryl Swoopes, and Rebecca Lobo took over the game and made the WNBA a huge success and gave young female players the ability to dream of playing professionally. (18)

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Basketball was not the only sport that opened its arms up to women athletes in the 90's. Other arenas, which had formerly been considered male only, suddenly began to embrace the female athlete. Women's soccer was also brought to America's attention during the 1996 Olympics when the U.S. won the first ever Gold Medal awarded for the sport. (33) The team established its position as the premier soccer program in the world and won over the hearts of millions of people watching from their home. When the women returned from the Olympics, they managed another great feat. The women of the American national team received the same salary as the men, a first in the history of professional athletics. (1)

WOMEN IN BOXING

Two other women are also drawing the attention of the public. Laila Ali and Jacqui Fraizer-Lyde, the daughters of boxing legends Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier have both stepped into the ring. Although neither of the women are remotely close to the level of fighters that their fathers were, the fact remains that they may serve as an inspiration to the younger generations who may hear about them fighting and think, “Hey, I can do that too!” (13) The importance of their entry into the sport of boxing goes well beyond their ability to throw a left or right jab, it shows that women are entering into areas that they never thought were possible.

MYTH VS. REALITY

WOMEN IN THE U.S. MILITARY DURING AND AFTER THE GULF WAR

From The Kinder, Gentler Military, by Stephanie Gutman

MYTH: Military women are protected from exposure to combat.

REALITY: This was the principal myth exploded by the war. Whether or not military personnel were exposed to enemy attack depended more on luck and circumstance than on law or policy. Modern weapons of war did not discriminate by gender, job, or location in the combat theater.

MYTH: During mobilization for war, women could not be counted on to deploy.

REALITY: From the outset, women demonstrated that they were as committed to fulfilling their military obligations as their male counterparts. After the war, the Department of Defense (DoD) reported to Congress that the deployment of women was highly successful. Data on personnel who were nondeployable suggested that the rate for women was somewhat higher than for men, with pregnancy accounting for the largest difference. However, it did not affect the overall conduct of the operation.

MYTH: The presence of women in the combat area would destroy male bonding.

REALITY: Throughout Desert Storm, the combat support units, ships, and aircrews with women performed their missions well even under direct fire. When the action started, the mixed units and crews bonded into cohesive, effective teams. According to Capt. Cynthia Mosley, commander of an Army combat support company that was in the thick of the action during the ground attack into Iraq stated: “When the action starts every soldier does what they’re trained to do. Nobody cares whether you’re male or female. It’s just: ‘can you do the job?’”

MYTH: Men and women could not work together in a combat theater without sex getting in the way.

REALITY: Although sexual tensions and harassment did occur in the Gulf War, there was no evidence that it interfered with operations. In fact, the men and women serving side-by-side in the Gulf demonstrated that they were capable of working together as teams; they could be comrades without “fraternizing”; they could share tents without sharing beds; they could share common dangers without feigning chivalry. (15, 462-3)

THE NEW WARRIOR

“This is not your Father’s Army anymore!”

Claudia Kennedy

First three star female general in address to the Corps of Cadets, West Point, 1997

(15: 27)

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY TODAY



A female LT enjoying some down time in Saudi Arabia.



The face of the new warrior.



Meghan Devine receiving her commission from USMA. (34)

Today, the United States Armed Forces have adapted a whole new attitude concerning the role of women. Women have come a long way from the days of World War I and II when they had to beg to be accepted. Now women are entering almost every field, in every branch of the military. But it did take a long time for women to arrive at their present position. After the Vietnam War and the establishment of an all-volunteer force, the role of women started to change. Once the military could not rely on men being conscripted, women took on a new importance. The ceiling on the number of women in the military and their promotions was removed. Today, even though the size of the military has been decreasing, the percentage of women in uniform has been on the rise. (39)

WOMEN IN THE GULF WAR

In Desert Storm, women earned new respect. Desert Shield would be the first major U.S. deployment since Vietnam, and the largest deployment of military women in U.S. history. There were 40,793 American servicewomen in the Persian Gulf War: 30,855 Army, 4,246 Air Force, 4,449 Navy, 1,232 Marines, and 11 Coast Guard. Seventeen women gave their lives, and three

were held prisoners of war. (26: 296) Women were there, and there was no ignoring them. This war was the first time the American public began to realize that women had become an integral and significant part of the new military, serving side-by-side with the men in the field, doing the tough, dirty, risky jobs of war. During the operation, American military women did just about everything on land, at sea, and in the air except engage in the actual fighting and, even then, the line was often blurred. (17: 440-5) Retired General Jeanne Holm remembers:

(Women) piloted and crewed planes and helicopters over the battle area, serviced combat jets, and loaded laser-guided bombs on F-117 Stealths for raids on targets in Baghdad. They directed and launched Patriot missiles, drove trucks and heavy equipment, and operated all kinds of high-tech equipment. They manned .55 caliber machine guns, guarded bases from terrorist attack, and ran prisoner of war facilities. They repaired and refueled M1A1 tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, and earth-moving equipment. Navy women served on naval replenishment and repair ships, fleet oilers offshore and at facilities ashore; Coast Guard women were involved in harbor security. Other women commanded brigades, battalions, companies, and platoons that provided support and services to the troops in the field. They staffed medical facilities ashore and afloat to receive, treat, and evacuate casualties. (17: 445)

Women took on roles that many never thought that they could handle. They rid the Army of almost all of its distinctions between men's and women's work. An Air Force chaplain with two years of experience in the Civil Rights Movement and nine years of ministry in a church stated:

To me, it's a statement of failure that we have to have a military. It's a tragedy that we have to train anyone in how to kill. But, I take pride that women have chosen to say that there are responsibilities that come with citizenship, and I will bear the responsibilities, and I will take my share of the burden. (26:292)

WOMEN IN COMBAT

For their own protection, women in the Army were not supposed to serve in the front lines or in direct combat units. However, it was clear from the first encounter that the front lines

were not what they use to be. There were no clear positions and “the front” changed hourly. It was quickly apparent that, with new long-range artillery, the rear combat support and combat service support units would be taking casualties as well. “The Iraqi missiles were unisex weapons that did not distinguish between combat and support troops.” (17: 446) Women in all of the Services had to deal with some sort of job limitations.

The law forbade women in the Air Force to fly on aircraft involved in combat missions. But, women were at the controls and in the crews of the jet tankers that refueled them in midair during attack missions. The tankers were unbelievably easy targets since they were unarmed and contained precious fuel necessary for the success of the attack missions. Navy women were banned from any assignments on the carriers off shore. The mission of the carriers and the bases were the same, but the carriers had the protection of the entire fleet. But it was the women of the Marine Corps that found themselves in a unique situation at the beginning of the war. The Marine Corps deployed to the Middle East without any women. When the Marine’s shipped out, the female Marines in the same units were left behind. When the all-male Marine Corps arrived in the Gulf, they quickly realized that they could not function without the women and they sent for the women five days later. (17: 448-49)

AMERICA WATCHES THE WOMEN AT WAR

This was the first time that America was able to watch a war in real-time. What they saw was a large number of women fighting and winning the war in the Middle East.

“After being exposed to the media coverage of the war and seeing women’s performance on live television, the American public and members of Congress understandably began to question the logic of the rules and law governing women’s participation in the military, particularly as they related to combat situations.” (17: 450)

One female officer commented that, “the Gulf demonstrated that combat exclusion policies do not keep women from dying in war, they just keep them from advancing to the highest ranks in the military.” (15: 150)

BARRIERS LIFTED OFF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

The exemplary performance of women serving in the Gulf greatly helped women advance in every branch. The Naval policy has been adjusted so that now all communities in the Navy are open to women officers with the exception of submarines and the SEALs. Officer and enlisted women are assigned to 130 combatant and 13 non-combatant ships. There are no restrictions on women in aviation. Accessions and pipeline selections are gender neutral, and all aviation ratings are open to enlisted women. Both enlisted and officer women may be assigned to any type of squadron and embarked on any type of ship. Women have taken advantage of the new opportunities and have quickly risen up the ranks. The highest-ranking woman in the Navy is a three-star Admiral, and she is joined by 12 other female naval flag officers. (36)

WOMEN TAKE OFF



Colonel Eileen Collins (24)

On July 23rd 1999, Eileen Collins, a Colonel in the United States Air Force and a NASA astronaut, became the first ever woman Shuttle Commander. She was selected by NASA in January of 1990 and became an astronaut in July of 1991. She is a veteran of three space flights and has logged over 537 hours in space. She served as a pilot on STS-63 (February 3-11, 1995) and STS-84 (May 15-24, 1997) and was the commander on the STS-93 (July 22-27, 1999). She was the first woman ever to pilot (drive) a Space Shuttle and then the first woman to command (be in charge of) a shuttle mission. (24)



One Naval Academy Cadet takes charge. (35)

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN AT THE SERVICE ACADEMIES

Women have also taken great strides at the Service academies. In 1996, the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), as well as the Naval and Air Force academies, celebrated the 20th anniversary of the entrance of female cadets. “Women as a group have done a superb job,” says one USMA official, “They are earning their appointments clearly. They are performing very well and serving with distinction as commissioned leaders in the Army.” (32)

WOMEN AT THE CITADEL AND VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

While the national Service academies were celebrating their anniversary, the Virginia Military Institute and the Citadel in South Carolina doors were just being pried open. The historically all male schools were forced by a Supreme Court decision in 1996 to allow women to enter. The Supreme Court ruled that women were capable of all the activities required of the state-supported schools. (2) In 1996, women entered the Citadel, outnumbered 1,817 to 4. By the year 2000, the number of women enrolled had risen to 79 making up 4.4% of the Corps, a significant increase from the previous 0.2%. (5)

WHAT NEXT?

“The challenges of change are always hard. It is important that we begin to unpack those challenges that confront this nation and realize that we each have a role that requires us to change and become more responsible for shaping our own future.”

Hillary Rodham Clinton (40)

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT?

By virtue of their sheer numbers, female voters now control politics in the voting booth. Women go to the polls in higher numbers than men. The issues that rank at the top of the nation's agenda such as schools, medical care, and Social Security are the ones women pay closest attention too. Feminine slices of the electorate are the crucial swing votes, the last to decide, and the most sought after in the final days. Women were the crucial swing vote in the Gore-Bush election of 2000, but whether a woman will ever make it to the Oval Office as President is still to be seen. If women can continue to press the issues and gain the support of the major parties, it may not be long until we are saying 'Madam President.' (12)

VICE PRESIDENT'S WIFE CHOOSES WORK

Lynne Cheney, the wife of Vice President Dick Cheney, has made a groundbreaking decision. In the true feminist spirit, she has announced that she will work outside of the home, she will get paid for it, and she will not apologize. Mrs. Cheney has never cared much for the niceties of politics. She is brash, outspoken, and proud of her prickly intelligence. She has written five books, co-hosted CNN's Crossfire, and consistently enraged liberals with her conservative views on feminism, education, and political correctness. At 59, Cheney is not ready to give up the only life she has ever known. "I have worked in some fashion my whole life," she told Time, "It would seem as if I were turning into someone who was not me if I were to take another path." (25) Her income will pull in over \$150,000 dollars, and you can be sure that there is no law against this. (25) Who would have thought that a woman would want to work when she could easily live off the power, prestige, and wealth of her husband? Welcome to the new millennium.

THE MOVEMENT TODAY

"Do you consider yourself a feminist?" This question has been posed to women since the Women's Rights Movement began. From the beginning of the women's revolution, people have been looking for an end, but no one is sure just when, or what, would constitute an end. Many are quick to say that feminism has seen its end in the new millennium. This idea has become especially prominent now that most women are rejecting the title of 'feminist.' No one in the

new generation wants to grab onto the title for fear of being rejected by main stream society. Most women would agree that they support the definition or rather the ideals purposed by the prominent feminist speaker, Dr. Phillis Chesler. Dr. Chesler said that, "There are many definitions, but equal rights...spiritually, economically, etc..., is a good working definition." (30) The feminists of the day are not man haters or lesbians, but women looking for equal opportunity and the chance to advance. Chesler says that today's feminist is:

"...Every woman who leaves a dead marriage or a violent boyfriend. It is every woman who speaks out about incest, it is every woman, and man, who fights for women's equal rights and the right to abortion. It is every battered woman who fights back, tragically then being punished for saving her own life, by being put away in jail for life. It is every man and woman who dares to be kind to a woman in need or in crisis, despite the bad names they may be called for caring about others." (30)

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

There is a new wave, or rather the next wave, of women emerging. In a meeting of students in the women's study department at Wheaton College, Massachusetts one woman said, "there is a notion that we are done, but we are not finished." (14) The student goes on to say that young feminists in this new third wave are fighting for true equality and the identity of the movement that was left behind in the 1970's. Gloria Steinnam, one of the most well known feminists from the 1960's, was a guest at this college meeting. Steinnam stepped in to drive home a point. "Feminism is worthless," she said, "unless it can be used as a tool outside of the classroom...feminism is about what you do." (14) These words are a warning to students, and people in support of women's rights at every level. It is not enough to say that you are for equal opportunity and equal rights, you must take action.

LETTER TO A YOUNG FEMINIST

An excerpt from the book by

Dr. Phillis Chesler (4)

Yes, the world is different now than it was when I was your age. In only thirty years, a visionary feminism has managed to seriously challenge, if not transform, world consciousness. But the truth is, women are still far from free. We're not even within striking range.

The most extraordinary legal victories are only scraps of paper until human beings test them on the ground. Women are still punished for trying to integrate male bastions of power. Like their African-American counterparts before them, these women will not be deterred—but they will pay a high price. As a feminist, we learned that one cannot do such things alone, only together.

I want you to know what our feminist gains are, and why you must not take them for granted. (Although it is your right to do so—we fought for that, too). I also want you to know what remains to be done. I want you to see your place in the historical scheme of things, so you may choose whether and how to stand your ground in history.

You must stand on our feminist shoulders in order to go further than we did. Stand up as early as you can in life. Take up as much space in the (male) universe as you need to. Sit with your legs apart, not together. Climb trees. Climb mountains, too. Engage in group sports. Dress comfortably. Dress as you wish.

How do we stop injustice? We begin by speaking truth to power. That child who told the emperor he was naked is one of ours. We begin, of course, by fighting back.

To quote Edmund Burke, "All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing." Ah Burke, evil also triumphs when good women do nothing. Toward that end, you must move beyond words. You must act. Do not hesitate because your actions may not be perfect, or beyond criticism. "Action" is how you put your principles into practice. Not just publicly, or toward those more powerful than you, but also privately, toward those less fortunate than you. Not just toward those who are (safely) far away, but toward those with whom you live and work. If you're on the right track, you can expect some pretty savage criticism. Trust it. Revel in it. It is the truest measure of your success.

Those who endure small humiliations—daily—say that the most lasting and haunting harm resides in growing accustomed to such treatment, in large part because others insist that you do. After all, they have. What’s so special about you? “So your boss asked you and not your male colleague to make coffee at the meeting—big deal. At least you have a job.” “So, your husband keeps forgetting his promise to help with the housework—at least you have a husband.” Always implied, though unspoken: “It could be worse.” But things could be better. That will not happen if you do not act heroically.

TEN WAYS TO CELEBRATE WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY
From Living the Legacy: The Women's Right's Movement 1848-1998
Curriculum and Program Ideas

1. Devise a one page quiz to test your colleagues and friends on a who's who in the women's suffrage movement. Include more recent feminists too!
2. Print out a chronology of the Women's Movement to remind everyone of the struggle that women endured not too long ago.
3. To really get people thinking ask, "How has the Women's Movement affected your life?" or "How do you think your life would have been different if you had been born into the opposite sex?"
4. To catch people's attention post short notices about the Women's Rights Movement on bulletin boards.
5. Plan a party in honor of the day for your entire organization!
6. Dress in patriotic or suffrage colors (white with a gold and purple chest sash).
7. Rent or purchase a video to show at a brown bag luncheon for your organization highlighting the life or achievements of one of America's extraordinary women.
8. Work with your local newspaper to develop a series of articles about the Women's Movement in your local area, focus in on any local individuals who may have participated.
9. Request a resolution from your city, base, or county proclaiming the day to be celebrated in honor of the Women's Rights Movement.
10. Establish a Women's Hall of Fame to honor women from your community, or branch that have advanced the status of women over the last 200 years. (22)

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