

Selective Service in the United States of America

Should women be able to be drafted?



Selective Service

Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selective_service

The **Selective Service System** is the means by which the [United States](#) administers military [conscription](#). It entails registering all men between the ages of 18 and 25 with the system for the purpose of having information available about potential soldiers in the event of war.

Current status

The United States abandoned the draft in 1973 under President [Richard Nixon](#), ended the Selective Service registration requirement in 1975 under President [Gerald Ford](#), and then re-instated the Selective Service registration requirement in 1980 under President [Jimmy Carter](#).

Today the Selective Service System remains as a contingency, should a military draft be re-introduced.^[3]

Under current law, all male U.S. citizens are required to register with Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Certain male aliens residing in the U.S., including those present illegally, are also required to register if they are between 18 and 26 years of age. "Willful" failure or refusal to present oneself for registration is against the law.[]

[The current]...method of encouraging registration, federal legislators and most state legislators passed laws requiring that to receive financial aid, federal grants and loans, and certain government benefits, a young man had to be registered with Selective Service.

Source:

http://wiki.idebate.org/index.php/Debate:Women_in_Combat

Women and the Draft

Background and Context of Debate:

The past fifteen years since the collapse of the Cold War system have been as much a New World Anarchy as a New World Order. While the number of conflicts have steadily declined—33 have permanently ended between 1988 and 2002 - roughly two-dozen countries remain locked in organized violence. Over this period, although the world has seen reduced numbers of regional and local conflicts, war has gained in intensity and geopolitical significance with the rise of Al-Qaeda and the involvement of the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq. Especially in the NATO powers, this renewed military involvement comes at a time when educational and economic opportunity is removing the incentive for young citizens to enlist. Meanwhile, the development of high-technology weapons requiring considerable investment in training has contributed to the end of military conscription in many developed countries (Russia and Israel remain notable exceptions here). Both these developments place pressure on recruitment. At the same time the advance of equal opportunities laws and cultural change have opened many jobs to women which used to be closed to them - the military is now one of the very few parts of society to formally discriminate against women in some way. While women have gradually been allowed any number of roles within the military behind the front line of combat—including highly demanding jobs such as being a pilot of a refueling aircraft—there remains a cultural taboo in western militaries about a woman infantryman, tank crew member or combat pilot. The debate about whether women should be allowed to serve in combat roles has been active for over a decade now. In the past ten years both the US and UK militaries have considered whether female personnel should be allowed to serve on the front line, and decided against change. More recently, the situation in Iraq has meant that female soldiers and marines serving in support units have come under direct fire and have had to engage with the enemy. In May 2005 a move was made in the US House of

Representatives Armed Services Committee to reduce the roles women can take in the US military, to ensure that they do not become involved in combat situations of this type. This change was opposed by the US Army but the wider debate on women at war remains open

Capabilities - Are women capable of performing combat functions as effectively as men?

Yes

Many military women are more physically capable of meeting performance targets than men in combat roles: In general, it is easy to find, recruit, and deploy women who are in better shape than many men we send into combat. If a level performance target is set across genders, it would not be difficult to find women who could meet these standards, even if the proportion of women capable of doing so may be smaller. The key point is that *some* women would be capable of meeting these standards, thus making it unjustified that *all* women should be banned from combat service on the basis of lower physical abilities compared to men.[\[2\]](#)

The modern high technology battlefield increasingly means that technical expertise and decision-making skills are more valuable than simple brute strength. Women may even demonstrate a higher affinity for the details and organization thinking demanded in technical expertise and decision-making.[\[3\]](#)

Performance targets are already calibrated along youth and age, so why not for gender?: In the American army, for example, performance targets are regularly calibrated for age and position. A forty year-old senior non-commissioned officer faces a much easier set of targets than his 20 year-old subordinate, yet both are deployed in an active combat role on equal grounds.[\[4\]](#)

Women, some studies have shown, can perform as well as, if not better than men. In active combat, several Soviet women distinguished themselves as fighter aces-the elite of combat aviators. The Israelis make frequent use of women as snipers and sniper-trainers. The Rand Corporation studied increased deployment of women in all three branches of the United States military throughout the 1990s. They wholeheartedly endorsed further integration, having found no ill effects from expanding the roles of women in the different services over that period.[\[5\]](#)

No

While the vast proportion of jobs in the armed forces are open equally to men and women, there are some to which women are just not physically suited. While some women are able to meet the absolute physical requirements for front-line combat such as carrying a wounded soldier, throwing grenades or digging a trench in hard terrain, most are not. One expert estimate put the number of physically excellent candidates in the USA at 200 a year. While integration of women into combat is possible for those qualified, the small number versus the additional logistical, regulatory and disciplinary costs associated with integration do not make it a worthwhile move.



Military strength - Would the military be strengthened by the inclusion of women in combat roles?

Yes

Including women would be a means to combating falling retention rates in some militaries:

Widening the applicant pool for all jobs guarantees more willing recruits. Not only does it help military readiness, it forestalls the calamity of a military draft. Without the possibility of active combat duty, many patriotic women will put off enlisting, as they know they will be regarded as second-class soldiers.[\[7\]](#)

Women are not able to climb rank without combat experience: Combat duty is usually regarded as necessary for promotion to senior officer positions, denying female personnel this experience ensures that very few will ever reach the highest reaches of the military and so further entrenches sexism.[\[8\]](#)

Women are vitally needed for Low-intensity conflicts. LICs require tasks to “win hearts and minds” such as intelligence gathering,

medical assistance, policing, and mediation, as well as the ability to kill an opponent in close combat. Cultural differences and demographics mean that woman will be vastly more effective in some circumstances than men. For example, the job of many of the female marines killed and injured in June 2005 was to search women for explosives at checkpoints to avoid the near-universal sense of humiliation engendered by a member of the opposite sex conducting an intimate bodily search. Allowing women to serve also doubles the talent pool for delicate and sensitive jobs that require interpersonal skills not every soldier has. Having a wider personnel base allows militaries to have the best and most diplomatic soldiers working to end conflict quickly.



No

Men are likely to act foolishly to protect women in their combat units. This may lead to resentment of women’s presence and harassment.[\[10\]](#)

Men, especially those likely to enlist, maintain traditional gender roles in a heavily masculine military subculture. As more women enter the armed services, abuse incidents rise. At the three US service academies, one in seven women report being sexually assaulted, and fully half have been sexually harassed. Both these problems create tensions and affect morale, and so weaken the military in combat situations.[\[11\]](#)

Much has been made on integration’s effect on morale and readiness. While the kind of widespread infighting caused by ‘competition for female affection’ claimed by alarmists is unlikely in the face of military discipline, the maintenance of active combat relationships does weaken the will to fight. In addition to the regular masculine plague of drug use and violence, women already serving in the navy and air force often end up pregnant. Up to 10% of active duty women personnel in the US armed forces are unavailable for call-up and duty due to pregnancy. The British Royal Navy has also found this a problem since allowing women to serve equally on warships.[\[12\]](#)

Biological arguments can be enlisted in the case against women in front line combat: Pregnancy is already a problem in the military, reducing unit readiness. However, if women were to see greater deployment and presence in the armed forces, it would only worsen the problem. Especially with national guard soldiers who build lives and families at home, pregnancy is much more likely to be a problem than with active-duty woman soldiers. Likewise, it can be a means of avoiding call-up. Men have even used this tactic during the Vietnam War: Unpleasant as the thought may be, Dick Cheney conceived a child the day after the draft was to be expanded to married men without children. When women face active duty call-up or a draft, some will do the same.

Examples - Have the nations that have expanded their combat roles to include women seen positive results?

Yes

No countries have repealed integration orders: Of the more than twenty nations who have expanded their roles for women to positions where they might see combat, none of them have repealed their orders. Regardless of the issues about whether women are as well-suited to combat as men, they are clearly good enough that many countries rely on their services. [

No

Prisoner abuses - Are women at greater risk of being abused if they become prisoners of war?

Yes

Women in the military are already exposed to risks in wars without "front lines": Perhaps the only thing to take from the grossly misreported Jessica Lynch case is that the idea of a 'front line' in guerilla warfare is a fiction. These conflicts are 'Low Intensity' conflicts, defined by the US Military as "... a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It



frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies... It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments." The front line is nowhere, and everywhere. In late June of 2005, two women marines were killed and about a dozen injured in a pair of suicide attacks. In the modern world of combat, women serving in the military are exposed to "front-line risks". People show broad support for women serving in the armed forces, and it has not wavered as warfare has changed, a clear sign that the necessity of women serving in combat is recognized.

No

The threat of increased abuse of women prisoners is a serious one. Male prisoners also contend with the threat of torture and rape, but it is quite possible that misogynistic societies will be more willing to abuse woman prisoners. The threat of female prisoners of war being misused in this way may adversely affect the way in which their captured male comrades react to interrogation. And in a media age the use of captured female soldiers in propaganda broadcasts may have a different effect on the television audience back home, perhaps weakening the nation's determination and commitment to the war effort. [16]

The presence of women on the battlefield can increase the odds of physical abuse and sexual trauma: A prevalent theme in many nationalist conflicts is to extinguish the bloodlines of the enemy culture, and to proclaim that the enemy is trying to do the same to them. This manifests itself, especially in the different Balkan conflicts, as mass murder of the men of the village and a systematic rape of the women. It is unlikely that women from a third intervening power in this situation will be treated any differently if that kind of fearsome mentality has already set into the minds of combatants

Name _____

Period _____

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Should women be able to be drafted?

1. What is the purpose of the Selective Service system?
2. Define the term conscription.
3. According to current law, who must register for selective service and when must they do so?
4. What incentive does the US government use to encourage people to register for Selective Service?
5. What current threats does the United State face?
6. Why is enlistment among young citizens falling?
7. What positions are women denied in the military?

