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Fighting Words: A Dialogue on Women in Combat

Denise Buhr

Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne, buhrd@ipfw.edu

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FIGHTING WORDS:

A DIALOGUE ON "WOMEN IN COMBAT"

by

Denise Buhr

Male Voice-over: Resolve of the General Court. January 20, 1792. On the petition of Deborah Gannet, praying compensation for services performed in the late Army of the United States: Whereas it appears to this Court, that the said Deborah Gannett enlisted under the name of Robert Shurtleiff, in Capt. Webb's company in the fourth Massachusetts regiment on May 21, 1782, and did actually perform the duties of a soldier, in the late Army of the United States, to the 23 day of October, 1783; for which, she has received no compensation. And whereas it further appears, that the said Deborah exhibited an extraordinary instance of female heroism, by discharging the duties of a faithful, gallant soldier; and at the same time preserved the virtue and chastity of her sex, unsuspected and unblemished, and was discharged from the service, with a fair and honorable character. Therefore, resolved, that the Treasurer of this Commonwealth be, and hereby is directed to issue his note, to said Deborah, for the sum of thirty four pounds, bearing interest from October 23, 1783.

Female Voice-over: My mind became agitated with the enquiry—why a nation, separated from us by an ocean more than three thousand miles in extent, should endeavor to enforce on us plans of subjugation . . . For several years I looked on these scenes of havoc, rapacity and devastation, as one looks on a drowning man, on the conflagration of a city, without being able to extend the rescuing hand to either. Wrought upon at length, you may say, by an enthusiasm and phrenzy, that could brook no control, I burst the tyrant bands, which *held my sex in awe*, and clandestinely, or by stealth, grasped an opportunity, which custom and the world seemed to deny, as a natural privilege. And—not merely for the sake of gratifying a facetious curiosity—did I throw off the soft habiliments of *my sex*, and assume those of the *warrior*, already prepared for battle. Deborah Sampson Gannett.

Male 3: War is an uncertain business and yet on every uncertain day that our nation has had to face the grim business of defending itself, American women have stepped forward.

Male 2: Destroy all the men in America and we shall still have all we can do to defeat the women. British officer's report to Lord Cornwallis.

Female 1: We possess a spirit that will not be conquered. If our men are all drawn off and we should be attacked, you would find a race of Amazons in America. Abigail Adams, in a letter to her husband.

Male 1: Women have served in the defense of this land for years before our United States was born. They have contributed their talents, skills, and courage to this endeavor for more than two centuries with an astounding record of achievement that stretches from Lexington and Concord to the Persian Gulf and beyond.

Playwright: Women in combat. What does that mean?

Male 4: Throughout much of the world in the last 100 or 150 years, military service has been a critical event in the lives of men. The men may or may not appreciate the experience.

Female 4: In the case of women, life course stages have been historically restricted to a few options: girlhood, schooling, paid employment, marriage, motherhood, and widowhood. Military service has not been part of the life course for 99 percent of women.

Playwright: But for the other 1 percent . . .

Female 1: During the Civil War, women on both sides, black and white, served in a variety of capacities—as color bearers, saboteurs, spies, nurses, cooks, and scouts.

Female 2: During the Spanish-American War of 1898, an epidemic of yellow fever prompted the recruitment of 1,500 women by the Army under a civilian contract to work in fever-ridden camps throughout the South and in Cuba.

Male 3: In World War I, 30,000 women who could not even vote served in support roles, including the Navy's "yeomanettes." By law, all yeomen had to be able to serve at sea—and, also by law, women were prohibited to serve on board ships. So the Secretary of the Navy creatively solved the dilemma by assigning these women to ships that had been sunk in the bottom of the Potomac River.

Female 3: In 1917 General John J. Pershing requested bilingual enlisted women to serve with the American Expeditionary Forces overseas on the front line as telephone operators. The existing laws only permitted females to join the Army as nurses. However, 223 civilian women volunteered to serve with the AEF in France and England under contract with the Signal Corps, starting in March 1918. They became known as the “hello girls.”

Male 4: After World War I, Army planners were well aware that in the event of a future conflict that would embrace the concept of total war, the potential for a critical manpower shortage would find the military scrambling to mobilize as many people as possible. In 1926, a plan was submitted to the War Department that called for the induction of 170,000 women to meet menial needs in the event of war. The War Department rejected the plan.

Female 4: As America joined the fight in World War II in the early 1940s, it became clear that winning such a massive war on several fronts would require more military manpower than ever before. And just as it had in industry, the idea of employing women in less traditional jobs gained momentum in the Army and Navy.

Female 5: Yet at just about every turn, the idea was met with resistance in public opinion and, by extension, in Congress. Opposition was generally based on some mix of both disdain and protectiveness toward women.

Male 2: Take the women into the armed service and who then will maintain the home fires; who will do the cooking, the washing, the mending, the humble homey tasks to which every woman has devoted herself; who will rear and nurture the children; who will teach them patriotism and loyalty; who will make men of them, so that, when the day comes, they, too, may march away to war?

Female 4: When the U.S. government projected a shortage of men for service in World War II, society quickly redefined acceptable behavior for women. It was suddenly acceptable—even patriotic—for women to serve in the military. . .

Male 4: . . . and at the end of the war to give up their new jobs cheerfully and go back to their old ones. The traditional societal balance was expected to return to normal after the war.

Female 6 :“The WAC who shares your army life will make a better postwar wife.”

Female 4: Two months after Pearl Harbor it was becoming clear that the nation was going to require women not only to support the war effort, but also to join the military itself.

Male 2: Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers has been determined for some time to introduce a bill to provide a women’s organization in the Army. We have succeeded in stopping her on the promise that we are studying the same thing, and will permit her to introduce a bill which will meet with War Department approval. Mrs. Roosevelt also seems to have a plan. The sole purpose of this study is to permit the organization of a women’s force along lines which meet with War Department approval, so that when it is forced upon us, as it undoubtedly will be, we shall be able to run it our way. Brigadier General Wade H. Haislip, in a memo to Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall.

Female 1: The army needed them to do clerical work and other noncombatant jobs, to free up more men for fighting. Officials stressed how mundane the women’s role would be.

Male 3: We have found difficulty in getting enlisted men to perform tedious duties anywhere nearly as well as women will do it.

Female 4: The original assumption was that military women would perform clerical and administrative tasks primarily. Because of manpower shortages and necessity, they made their presence felt from aviation to clerical to supply management to instruction.

Female 3: The Army needs your help on important, interesting jobs like these, 239 kinds of them.

Female 2: 246 shore jobs opened to female Navy personnel.

Female 1: Women in the Marines eventually were allowed to fill more than 200 job categories.

Male 3: Patriotic reasons for enlistment dominated.

Female 1: My husband. . .

Female 2: . . . brother. . .

Female 3: . . . fiancé was killed at Pearl Harbor. . .

Female 2: . . . at Java Sea. . .

Female 1: . . . at Salerno.

Female 3: My uncle is a prisoner of war.

Female 1: I want to get this war over as quickly as possible.

Female 2: In civilian life I didn't feel I was doing enough.

Female 3: I just felt if I came into the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps I would be doing more.

Playwright: There were personal reasons as well.

Female 1: I didn't want to live with my aunt any longer.

Female 2: I had been working at a desk for 5 years and I thought I would like to get something that would give me a chance to be outdoors more.

Female 3: I was so sick and tired of that typewriter I couldn't stand it any longer.

Male 4: That woman probably erred in joining the Army, which at that time wanted women to replace the ham-handed male typists who were needed in combat units.

Female 1: There were no boys in our family. My sister and I thought we should join since there was no one else to go.

Female 2: It's not enough for me to say that my husband is doing it—and that's my part in the war. I want to do something myself. Do you see what I mean?

Female 4: For most women in their early 20s, World War II came at a critical juncture in their lives.

Female 1: I was fresh out of nursing school ready to take on the world.

Female 2: I was old enough to take life in stride and young enough to survive it.

Female 3: I knew that I should volunteer for this unique opportunity regardless of what it would be like.

Male 1: The idea that American men were fighting to protect the women back home was extremely powerful during the war, and many servicemen felt diminished by having women in the military. True, women were restricted to noncombatant duty, but most of the men never saw combat, either. 25 percent of soldiers never left the United States and only 1/8 of the soldiers ever saw combat. The only thing that identified them as defenders of the homeland was their uniform, and now women wanted to wear that, too.

Female 4: Even the idea that women were simply stepping in to free up men for the front lines drew a decidedly mixed reaction, depending on how enthusiastic the soldiers were about getting the chance to risk their lives for the country.

Female 1: I ran into the man whose job in processing payrolls I had taken and was told . . .

Male 3 (Sincere): Thanks for letting me go.

Female 2: A lieutenant I had been sent to replace refused to explain how to do the job, for fear that once I learned, he'd be sent overseas.

Male 4 (Sarcastic): Sometimes I think I'd like to meet the WAC who released me for active duty.

Female 3: The girl in a job equally open to men had to be better than the ordinary man to prove her capacity. When she had done so, she was often commended as though she had performed a miracle. The surprise of men at the accomplishment of women was not flattering, but it was fun.

Playwright: Or maybe not.

Female 5: There were about fifty men and four girls in our flight school class. We always knew that we had to do a better job of flying with a minimum of mistakes or we would come under scorn from the men. One time I was standing in a group of men students and instructors at the school when a girl bounced her plane—a little, not badly—when she landed. The men, not remembering that I was there, ridiculed the landing and said that girls should not be flying. Right behind her a male student landed his fighter and bounced so badly several times that it appeared he might really crash. The same men said, “Well, it looks as if old Joe is having a bad morning!” Nothing was said about him not being fit to fly.

Female 4: In its advertising and recruiting efforts for the WAVES, the Navy had to overcome not only male resentment at having women in the military but also female nervousness. Wearing designer uniforms that emphasized the figure and improved “poise and carriage” made them recognizable as representatives of American womanhood at its best.

Female 6: The uniforms of the Marines were a little different from those of the other services. The women wore the forest green of the male counterparts, with their jackets tailored to be more feminine. As with the WAVES, female Marines were encouraged to wear lipstick and fingernail polish, but it had to complement the red trim on their uniforms. Elizabeth Arden designed a shade of lipstick in honor of the female Marines called Montezuma Red, with that goal of coordination in mind.

Playwright: But perhaps the emphasis on good looks and glamour went too far.

Female 1: From the beginning there were rumors that the women were sexually promiscuous, that the WACs in particular were a sort of geisha corps recruited to improve the “morale” of the troops in the most basic way possible.

Male 2 (sarcastic): John O'Donnell, reporter for the *New York Daily News*. “Capitol Stuff” column, June 8, 1943. Contraceptive and prophylactic equipment will be furnished to members of the WAAC according to a supersecret agreement reached by high-ranking officers of the War Department and the WAAC Chieftain, Mrs. William Pettus Hobby. It was victory for the New Deal ladies. Mrs. Roosevelt wants all the young ladies to have the same overseas rights as their brothers and fathers.

Male 1: It raised hell. Long-distance calls from parents began to come in, telling the girls to come home. The girls all came in crying, asking if this disgrace was what they had been asked to join the Army for. It took all the pride and enthusiasm for the Army right out of them.

Female 2: The FBI was called in to determine if this was some sort of enemy disinformation campaign and found that most of the talk originated with male servicemen, who opposed the existence of the WAACs.

Female 3: There was a mean streak in the national character that presumed women who willingly went to live among thousands of soldiers could be after only one thing.

Male 4: It's no damn good, Sis, and I for one would be very unhappy if you joined them. Any service woman—Wac, Wave, Spar, Nurse, Red Cross—isn't respected. Why can't these Gals just stay home and be their own sweet little self, instead of being patriotic?

Female 5: Senior officers had mostly been opposed to the WAC, but almost unanimously reversed their position when they realized how effective the women were.

Male 1: The Wacs are good workers and much more so than many of our regular men. You perhaps have heard many wild stories about them but I wouldn't believe everything that I hear. In comparison, our men are a lot worse. So many men talk about them and it seems they are the ones who haven't seen a Wac, or doesn't know anything about them, or is even a little jealous. Then again some of the girls take over easy jobs that some of the men hold and they don't like it when they have to get out and work.

Female 4: It wasn't long before the question was launched . . .

Male 3: . . . "Are women brave enough for actual warfare?"

Female 4: During World War II, the stationing of nurses in combat zones was a fact for one in five.

Female 2: We are now somewhere in France. We are bivouaced in tents in an apple orchard, and are rapidly learning what the term "field conditions"

really means. It is definitely on the rough side, but none of us mind very much. We are getting pretty used to accepting whatever comes our way. We are living three women to a tent. We wash in our helmets and sleep in our clothes.

Female 3: It was in New Guinea that Lt. Anne Marie Doering was awarded the Bronze Star with a "V" for valor. If you asked her why she was awarded the medal she would laugh and wave you away. If you persisted, she would say she only sat on a guy who was starving. What happened was that somebody came to Anne Marie and said they witnessed a Japanese soldier in their camp. She and another WAC officer found that an unarmed Japanese soldier had broken into the mess hall. They fought him, subdued him, and called for assistance. So Ann Marie, all 100 pounds of her, sat on a starving guy and was awarded a Bronze Star. But the sobering fact was that Anne Marie was close enough to big trouble not only to get shot at but close enough to encounter enemy personnel.

Playwright: And then the fighting was over.

Female 1: At the end of the war, there were no ceremonies or anything. You were given a complete physical exam, given your ticket home, and that was it.

Female 2: Everything we heard about benefits programs was male oriented. There was never anything about women veterans. I came home, I put away my uniform and that was it.

Female 3: There was a poem, "What Is a Veteran?" *He* is this, *he* is that. No! It is not just "He." There are women veterans, also.

Male 3: The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 gave women a permanent place in the military.

Female 4: And so provided for a group of trained women who could be mobilized in an emergency.

Female 5: When the United States went to war in Korea, there were only 22,000 women altogether on active duty with the various services. One-third of them were nurses or medical technicians. Within four days of the first combat GIs arriving in South Korea, fifty-seven Army nurses landed at the

port of Pusan on the tip of the peninsula. Twenty-four hours later the nurses were tending to battle casualties.

Female 6: Since the war had erupted, the Pentagon refused to assign military women, other than nurses, to South Korea. No one in the Pentagon wanted to be responsible for the fate of American women if they fell into the hands of the Communist soldiers with their documented track record for brutality against POWs. As for the Army nurses, their skills were vital, so their destiny would have to be risked.

Female 4: When the ceasefire was signed on July 27, 1953, the Pentagon began a phase-out, reducing the number of Americans in uniform, including the number of women. For most of the next decade, the women's services became what one WAC officer called. . .

Female 1: . . . a "beauty contest" in which personal appearance outranked military ability.

Female 2: Bivouac training was dropped in lieu of makeup lessons.

Female 3: Courses on applying mascara and choosing the best shades of lipstick and nail polish to blend with each service uniform replace survival training and firing arms.

Female 2: Physical training emphasized keeping girlish figures firm and trim, rather than building a soldier's endurance and strength.

Female 1: Women were no longer trained for the rigors of war; once again they were taught to type.

Playwright: Even promotional brochures of the early 1960s stressed that women in the military were not there to fight.

Female 5: Does the WAC officer do a lot of drilling, marching and calisthenics?

Female 6: The WAC officer gets a taste of marching in her Basic Officer Course, as she gets a taste of various aspects of the Army. But when she assumes most jobs, she marches only if there is a special occasion or need. And certainly no calisthenics are required!

Playwright: But there was still a need for women in the military, especially as nurses.

Male 1: In 1956, the army instituted a Student Nurse Program to increase the number of nurses in uniform. This program paid for the final years of nursing education in return for service after graduation.

Female 2: To a student nurse from a working class background, the Army's monthly check meant she didn't have to take out loans or get a job to cover tuition and expenses. It also meant two or three years in the Army Nurse Corps—and a possible tour in Vietnam.

Male 2: Parents were used to sending their sons off to war but not their daughters. Fathers frequently shared a sense of duty and expressed pride at their girls' decisions. At the same time, however, they worried about what would happen to their daughters' morals. Many fathers had served in World War II. They held strongly to the stereotype that only women of low moral character went into the military.

Female 6: Mothers also could feel pride but most mothers greet the decisions with tears and upset. These mothers had guided their daughters through school and Girl Scouts and puberty. Their daughters had even chosen a good female profession. Going into the military and going to Vietnam did not fit the picture.

Female 3: My parents were very upset and said they did not understand me. My older brother had not even been to Vietnam. And here I was, their only daughter, going off to war.

Male 3: Although some areas of the country were harder hit than others, there were no clearly delineated front lines or rear areas in Vietnam. In effect, the entire country was a combat zone.

Male 4: One evening not long after the first group of WACs arrived in Saigon, a tremendous explosion rocked the Majestic Hotel where some of the WACs were quartered. Men and women soldiers in the building threw themselves to the floor or stood up and asked excitedly. . .

Female 2: . . . What in the hell was *that!*

Female 4: Replied a native restaurant waiter . . .

Male 4: . . . Vietcong.

Female 3: A Viet Cong terrorist drove a jeep loaded with two hundred pounds of plastique into the underground parking area of the Bachelor Officers Quarters in Saigon and detonated it. Two officers were killed and fifty-eight were wounded, including four nurses.

Female 1: We women, you know, were noncombatants in a place where we could have gotten killed just as easily as the men. Only we couldn't shoot back. We didn't have any weapons.

Female 2: That kind of insidious threat—the knowledge that there were no front lines, that everywhere was a combat zone—was a hard thing to live with.

Female 1: There was no rear—the VC was everywhere, even in the hospitals. The barber who cut my hair turned out to be a Viet Cong. You couldn't even trust the children. Only the speed of our feet and the bunkers kept us safe. And sometimes it didn't. During Tet, for ten days we're under siege. For days we live believing that all of us are going to die. I saw people cracking around me. There was this commander who didn't help things either.

Male 2: I'm not worried about being overrun. I've got trading material. I'll give them my females in exchange for our safety.

Female 1: Well, of course it was a joke. But the thought of being captured was terrifying. I had read about what happened to white women in Asia. Graphic, historical accounts and I decided that, if we were overrun, I'd grab a gun and kill myself. Because I believed I'd be raped and tortured if I managed to survive.

Female 3: Like so many men who had been over there, coming back to "the World" was quick and tough.

Female 4: Skills that had been painfully developed and finely honed in the combat zone were neither recognized nor respected back in the States.

Female 3: I don't mean this to sound foolish or anything but the year I spent in Vietnam was the most satisfying year of nursing I ever had. Because you got to give good nursing care without all the Mickey Mouse paperwork. If you needed something, you didn't have to make out fifty-five forms in quadruplicate, you could just pick up the phone. "Hey, we've just run out of such and such, you got any?" And they'd plop it on a plane and send it.

Female 1: I miss that special sense of power I had in Vietnam. And you always felt justified in using the power you had, because you were using it to do things for other people.

Female 2: I asked him how he'd gotten injured before.

Male 1: I was a Marine in Vietnam.

Female 2: I was in Vietnam, too.

Male 1: Gosh, I've never met a woman who was in Vietnam. You women were great.

Male 3: You know, my wife is a Vietnam vet, too.

Female 6: Oh, you are?

Female 1: Yes. . . . And that would be the end of it. In popular imagination, Vietnam remained a zone where no woman had been.

Female 3: I tried to join the American Legion, the VFW, any veteran's organization. I was denied membership or shunted off to the ladies' auxiliary. Older vets don't believe that women Vietnam veterans are really veterans. They feel like, well, if you weren't out in the bush fighting, you're not a real veteran. There's no respect for Vietnam vets anyway. Like last week at work a World War II vet was telling about his war experience and someone—not me!—mentioned that I was a Nam vet.

Male 2: Well, if I was a Nam vet, I wouldn't tell anyone.

Female 2: My experiences were that enlisted men treated me with respect. Like a human being. I wasn't government property, someone to be pawed at or to just sleep with. The enlisted guys respected me.

Male 3: Oh, shit! Oh, I'm sorry ma'am, I didn't mean to curse in front of you.

Female 2: You can curse any way you want.

Male 3: Ma'am, you sure smell good.

Female 2: He's in shock, wide awake, and he's telling me how good I smell. So I wrote home and said, "Send me bottles and bottles of perfume." I wore Chantilly. And you know, I'm still wearing it—I'm wearing it because I'm hoping to run into my patients, hoping that even if they don't recognize my face they'll recognize my smell.

Female 1: Yeah, I miss the devotion. I miss the respect I got as a nurse in Vietnam. One day, I remember, there was this infantry captain who came through my triage.

Male 1: Ma'am, I have all the respect in the world for you. Ma'am, I couldn't do what you are doing. I'd rather be out in the boonies ducking from Charlie than be in here doing your job.

Female 2: I was lucky enough to witness the special friendships between men that you rarely see in so-called real life. I learned that men can be gentle, tender, and loving with each other. I learned that men and women can work together with mutual respect and admiration.

Female 1: We were called upon to bear witness to vast suffering while serving as sources of perfect empathy for the soldiers in our care. We had to fill in as mother, sister, sweetheart, confidante.

Female 3: Wounded soldiers would think if we, as nurses or as females, could look at them, take care of them, and handle what had happened to them, that their wives or their girlfriends or their mothers would be able to, too. And sometimes it probably turned out that way, but I know so many times that it didn't. It just broke your heart to know what I was sending them home to.

Female 2: The day I left it was just weird; I remember going into the emergency room to say good-bye to everyone, and a Chinook helicopter was landing with mass casualties. Nothing had changed; it was exactly the same as

the day I had arrived. It was like, “How much longer is this going to go on?”

Playwright: While war was raging halfway around the globe in Vietnam, political and legal battles were flaring at home.

Male 1: In 1967, Public Law (PL) 90-30 eliminated the ceiling and promotion cap, and thus repealed parts of the Integration Act of 1948. Some restrictions on assignments were also removed, such as the legal ceilings on women’s promotions that had kept them out of the general and flag ranks. President Lyndon B. Johnson believed that the underutilization of women was a waste the country could no longer afford.

Female 4: In January 1970 Colonel Anna Mae Hays and Colonel Elisabeth Hoisington were both promoted to brigadier general. A short time later, Air Force Colonel Jeanne Holm was promoted to one-star general. In July 1972, Captain Alene B. Duerk became the Navy’s first rear admiral. American women had finally reached near the top of the military profession.

Female 1: That same year, the National Organization for Women and other feminist groups, along with their supporters, were pressuring Congress to pass an equal rights amendment to the Constitution.

Female 6: Conservative members of Congress wanted the ERA to include provisions that prohibited women from being drafted into the armed forces or assigned to combat duty. NOW and other feminist groups feared that these exemptions would weaken the amendment. Debate was heated.

Male 1: If a woman wants to volunteer for combat, should she be treated any differently than a man? Senator Birch Bayh, Democrat, Indiana.

Male 2: Indeed she should be! Women have no place on the battlefield! Senator Sam Ervin, Democrat, North Carolina.

Female 5: In March 1972, with the draft and combat exemptions for women struck from the bill, the ERA passed the House and Senate handily. ERA supporters now had seven years for thirty-eight state legislatures to ratify the amendment for it to become the law of the land. These boosters had

no way of knowing that the removal of the draft and combat exemptions would one day doom the ERA.

Male 3: On July 1, 1973, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announced the creation of the All-Volunteer Force.

Female 3: Almost from the beginning the AVF concept ran into major problems. Patriotism had hit an all-time low. Thousands of career officers and noncommissioned officers quit. Few men drafted during the Vietnam war reenlisted. And despite financial and other inducements, young men in droves were steering clear of recruiting offices.

Male 1: We are concerned that the Department of Defense and each of the military services are guilty of “tokenism” in the recruitment and utilization of women. We are convinced that in the atmosphere of a zero draft environment, women could and should play a more important role. We strongly urge the Secretary of Defense and the service secretaries to develop a program which will permit women to take their rightful place in serving our armed forces. Report from the Special Committee on the Utilization of Manpower in the Military.

Male 2: The best soldiers are created in a harsh, cruel, and stressful environment that represents a rite of passage into manhood. The arrival of the women has robbed these young men of their manhood in the interests of some ludicrous travesty of equal opportunity.

Male 4: With all my terror of going to the Army—because I figured that I was the least likely person I knew to survive—there was something seductive about it, too. I was seduced by World War II and John Wayne movies. One way or another in every generation where there was a war, some male in the family on my father’s side went to it. I never had it drilled into me, but there was a lot of attention paid to the past, a lot of not-so-subtle “this is what a man does with his life” stuff when I was growing up.

Male 2: Military training exists to break the recruit down to his fundamental self, take away all that he possesses, and get him started out in a way that you want him to be. Issue him all new clothes, cut his hair, send his possessions home, and tell him he doesn’t know a damn thing, that he’s the sorriest thing you’ve ever seen, but with my help he’s going to be worthwhile again.

Male 4: I saw a couple of guys snap. But by the time you get to the end of that whole process, you feel you're the baddest thing that ever walked the earth. When they call you Marine in graduation ceremony, there's tears in your eyes.

Female 5: The military, even more than other patriarchal institutions, is a male preserve, run by men and for men according to masculine ideas and relying solely on man power. It doesn't need women except as sweethearts, pin-ups, or prostitutes.

Male 2: Women are coming into this organization and we're all equal is what we say. Those were the rules that everybody lived by until that one day when a female walked in that door. I remember reading about women wanting to be in the Boy Scouts. Well, as soon as they get in, they wanna change this, this, and this. I go, this is the Boy Scouts. There's the Girl Scouts—if you wanna do this, go join the Girl Scouts. Why join my Boy Scouts and change my organization?

Female 3: And there is the crux of the matter. The military is a male organization.

Male 2: The presence of women inspires creeping doubt. Nor is it women as individuals who are problematic; it is women simply as females.

Male 4: Male soldiers are raised by women, grow up with women, marry women, and are keenly interested in women. They know women. And they understand—even if they cannot articulate it—what effect the presence of women has on them as men.

Male 3: Images of girlfriends, wives, women yet to be met, along with memories of mothers, sisters, and daughters offer soldiers something to live for beyond honor, duty, and the respect of the filthy, smelly, belching males beside them. Women mean far more to soldiers than sex. They represent a contradictory bundle of good things, including comfort, motherhood, family, home, and everything else worth fighting for.

Male 2: If women become peers to turn to during combat, men will have lost them as a source of succor (and sanity) to return to—and that may be reason enough to keep females out of foxholes.

Playwright: But women may see it differently.

Female 1: As women were increasingly catapulted into traditionally male spheres of work during World War II, the female soldier came to symbolize the ultimate liberation. It was assumed that entry into the military, the most masculine of occupations, would herald a new dawn of equality.

Female 2: If women could now defend their country, went a popular argument, they must be guaranteed political power.

Female 3: The military plays a particular role in our country's psyche. When soldiers risk death or die in a just war, they are accorded a special honor. Even in an era of volunteer armies and career soldiers, fighting for your country means assuming the heaviest of our national burdens. In an era when we are told that everyone wants rights and no one wants responsibilities, this is one time when people are fighting for the right to be responsible.

Female 5: The best way to insure women's equal treatment with men is to render them equally vulnerable with men.

Female 1, 2, and 3: Women have a right to die for their country.

Male 2: Left unsaid was that they might take to their deaths with them a large number of male comrades because most women were not physically or psychologically constituted to cope with the horror of the battlefield.

Female 6: Feminist arguments for integrating women into the military rest primarily on the demand for equal rights of women as individuals. This organization is particularly unwilling to sacrifice efficiency for the sake of equal rights because the possible stakes are life and death, not reduced profit margins.

Female 4: While the military has definitely moved toward being an occupation rather than an obligation, it is not a "job bank" of sorts.

Male 1: If the military were "just a job" involving a daily commute to the Pentagon—and if equal opportunity were all that was at stake—it would be hard to oppose opening combat to women.

Female 5: Advocates for the exclusion argue that opening career opportunities for women is not a function of the armed forces. But for years career opportunity has been an argument used to promote the military services for men.

Male 4: But the realities of war render the military different from the society it protects. The military is one of the few jobs where you may have to tell someone, “Go die.”

Female 4: For this reason the armed forces have justified excluding people from service because of their age, weight, and mental and physical ability; they have closed certain Military Occupational Specialties, such as piloting, to those with color blindness and less than perfect vision.

Male 2: The desire for equal opportunity is, in practice, usually translated into the demand for equal results. The consequence has been the watering down of standards to accommodate the generally lower physical capabilities of women. No one can deny that “gender norming” is widespread.

Male 3: Other officer programs are capable of producing combat leaders, but West Point had always guaranteed it, made it the reason for its existence, as described by General Douglas MacArthur in his final speech to the cadet corps in 1962.

Male 1: Your mission remains fixed, determined, inviolable—it is to win our wars. You are the men who are trained to fight; yours is the profession of arms.

Male 3: One of the first changes at West Point to accommodate women was in physical fitness programs. Classes in boxing and wrestling had long been staples. These one-on-one encounters toughened the men and taught them how to survive in life-or-death fights on the battlefield. Because women were given less-strenuous substitutes for these classes, they never had bloody noses. The men knew that war was about bloody noses.

Male 4: It was not lost on male cadets that double standards meant lower standards. Aware of the men’s attitudes, the West Point administration eventually created a euphemism for double standards: equivalent training. This meant, it was explained, that equal *effort* rather than equal

accomplishment was expected from all cadets. A first-classman dryly observed:

Male 2: I guess it won't make any difference if we win the next war, just so we *tried!*

Female 4: The Army Physical Fitness Test is routinely conducted to evaluate soldiers' fitness; it includes two mile timed runs, two minutes of sit-ups, and two minutes of pushups. It is normed by age and gender and does not vary by MOS.

Female 1: Men willingly accept the differing age standards that affect them but loudly complain about the "lower" standards for women.

Male 2: How can she claim equal rights when she doesn't have to do as many push-ups as I do? How can she claim to be my equal when she can't run as fast?

Female 2: If in order to be respected, we need to meet the same standards, I will always pass the PT tests at the same level as my troops—despite the age- and gender-norming that would allow me to do differently.

Male 2: You may be here thinking that you can do the same things we can, but really, we're the real men and you're not.

Female 3: This reassertion of gender difference comes out when women officers "max" their PT tests and are feeling proud and happy. Then a male peer, often a friend, says with a jocular, but sneering response that it did not really mean much because the bar was not set very high for women.

Female 5: Does running a mile a minute faster enable a man to outrun a bullet faster than a woman?

Male 2: They want equal rights? They want equal access to competing for my job? Let's see them prove they deserve it! Man to man, woman to man, let's see how many push-ups you can do and let that determine our promotions.

Female 5: One has to wonder about the proposed reliance on push-ups as the marker of military leadership potential.

Male 2: It's not fair! FIRST of all, you are competing with me, when you shouldn't be—after all, it's my organization—AND you are getting an unfair advantage.

Female 1: Even as a measure of fitness, current tests are arbitrary and biased toward male capabilities. Many fitness experts agree that flexibility is a crucial part of overall fitness, but this element of fitness, one in which women tend to score higher than men, is not included in the tests.

Female 2: A 1978 Department of Defense study states: "The average woman available to be recruited is smaller, weighs less, and is physically weaker than the vast majority of male recruits. She is also much brighter, better educated, scores much higher on the aptitude tests and is much less likely to become a disciplinary problem." The latter standards are not the standards that the male standards discussion is about.

Female 3: Even when standards have not been changed, and no female-specific standard has been added, some believe that women are unfairly allowed to pass without meeting the standard, or with extra help, for political reasons—that in practice, the standards are de facto different, that there are informal double standards.

Male 2: The Colonel's Promotion Board just met and women were promoted at the highest rate of anyone. You kinda sense that someone said, "Make darn sure that we get some women. It better look good." When I see you as a colonel in my group, I kinda go—well, someone made damn sure that you made colonel. They didn't make sure I made colonel, but they made darn sure you did.

Female 5: No one considers an alternative interpretation of the facts, the possibility that more women are ranking higher this year because in previous years men were the beneficiaries of "special treatment" and women were discriminated against.

Playwright: Anatomical differences make all the difference.

Female 6: The female soldier is, on average, about five inches shorter than the male soldier, has half the upper body strength, lower aerobic capacity and 37 percent less muscle mass. She has a lighter skeleton, which may

mean, for instance, that she won't be able to "pull G forces" as reliably in a fighter plane.

Male 4: There is no question that a woman can fly a fighter plane during takeoff and landing. Now let's put that fighter in its fourth engagement of a sortie, at nine G's with a MiG on the tail, an air-to-air missile on the way, chaff and flares, and we find ourselves in a completely different scenario. At nine G's all the muscle mass in the body is being called upon to squeeze blood back into the brain; the neck, which is used to support a thirty-pound head-helmet combination, is now maneuvering two hundred and seventy pounds, and the lungs are still trying to catch up with the previous three assignments. This is just the physical side.

Playwright: Anatomical differences make all the difference.

Male 2: The female soldier cannot pee standing up.

Female 6: The Army's "Guide to Female Soldier Readiness" states: "Females should be allowed time to urinate on a regular basis, especially since they have to remove much of their gear and require more time than men."

Female 5: As a female vet from Iraq, I tell the newbies, learn to pee in water bottles with the tops cut off, because the truck convoy isn't going to stop in ambush country for a woman to urinate. And shed any qualms about cleaning yourself up in front of men.

Playwright: Anatomical differences make all the difference.

Male 4: Equipment and survival gear carried by today's combat soldiers, including electronic weapons and ammunition, satellite communication devices, batteries, and water weigh 50-100 pounds. Modern body armor alone weighs 25 pounds. This weight is proportionately more difficult to carry by females. In close combat women do not have an "equal opportunity" to survive, or to help fellow soldiers to survive.

Male 3: In the Army we have this thing called a battle buddy. You never go anywhere by yourself, and you always take your battle buddy because they are there to protect you and you are there to protect them. If I can't depend on the soldier next to me . . .

Female 1: Secretly, and sometimes aloud, the women worry about finding themselves in combat with men who would not be adequate to back *them* up.

Female 2: I see men allowed the chance to serve in a combat role who I know I would outperform. They fail physical fitness tests and MOS proficiency tests. Some are overweight. That's not a description of combat ready.

Female 3: The real issue is training. Some women can indeed carry as much weight, throw as far and run as fast as some men in physical strength and endurance. Such athletes as pitching ace Kathy Arendsen, who throws a softball 96 miles per hour underhand, and Florence Griffith Joyner, who runs the 100 meters faster than O.J. Simpson ever ran while competing for USC, would scoff at the "girls can't throw" argument. These women demonstrate that trained individuals can do anything.

Male 4: Policies must be based on the majority of average soldiers, not the exceptional few.

Male 2: Even if certain women have the physical capability to lift the rucksacks, walk the distance, raise the tank hatches, load the TOW missiles, break the tank track and put it back together again, assigning them to combat units would still introduce complicating factors that would make the task harder. This is not Olympic diving. We do not get extra credit for adding an extra degree of difficulty.

Female 2: Differences in physical ability exist between the genders, but some of those same differences exist within each gender. Males help their friends who may be a little less physically able.

Female 5: There is a heavy tire on the biggest trucks that is said to be difficult for them to change. It is a well-known fact of Army life that the puniest soldiers with a truck-driving specialty will be assigned to the heaviest trucks. If they are men, the men help each other, but if the women need help, letters are written to the papers.

Female 3: Those charged with developing the standards should also consider whether the organization of the workplace or equipment design makes the job unnecessarily heavy. For example, cable could be portioned in 50-pound reels instead of 100-pound reels, and heavy tool chests could be mounted on wheels.

Male 2: Some artillery rounds weigh over one hundred pounds. So far, scientists haven't figured out a way to put suitcase wheels on this heavy gear.

Male 4: But strength and stamina are not the only pertinent biological differences between men and women. Men are, statistically speaking, more aggressive than women, and at least some of this difference is inherent—due to the effect of the male hormone testosterone on the brain. Even if the military were gender-blind and physical strength were irrelevant, full parity would be highly unlikely; barring genetic engineering, there will never be as many women who want to kill, and are good at it, as men.

Female 1: As with physical strength, differences between the sexes in aggressiveness or bravery needn't stand in the way of individual women; insufficiently aggressive women (and for that matter insufficiently aggressive men) can, in principle, be weeded out. This may be tricky. You can't tell how mean someone is by counting push-ups.

Female 2: There is no systematic effort to gauge such psychological factors in basic training, but such tests may be useful adjuncts to a plan to open some Army units in every type of combat specialty to women on a four-year test basis. The ultimate test of such tests, though, can only come in combat.

Female 3: It is a hard fact that if the military doesn't experiment during the relative security of peacetime, it will almost surely be forced to do so in the exigency of war.

Male 1: It is simply not true that women in the military are a social experiment; we have decades of experience by which to assess the performance of women.

Female 5: Women are and must remain an integral part of the U.S. armed forces and current restrictions on women's participation in combat are about one thing and one thing only—equal opportunity and keeping women from promotions and career progression. Representative Pat Schroeder, Democrat, Colorado.

Male 4: In February 1988, the Department of Defense adopted a Department-wide policy called the Risk Rule which excluded women from noncombat

units of missions if the risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture were equal to or greater than the risk in the combat units they supported.

Female 3: In January 1994 the Secretary of Defense rescinded the Risk Rule. In DOD's view the rule was no longer appropriate based on experiences during Operation Desert Storm, where everyone in the theater of operation was at risk.

Female 1: At the same time the Secretary of Defense established a new DOD-wide direct ground combat assignment rule that allows all service members to be assigned to all positions for which they qualify, but excludes women from assignments to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is direct ground combat.

Male 3: Direct ground combat—"Engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force's personnel. Direct ground combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect, or while repelling assault by fire, close combat, or counterattack."

Male 2: "Close combat" is defined as finding, closing with, and killing or capturing the enemy; it is more than the experience of being in danger. In that brutal environment, women don't have an equal opportunity to survive, or to help their fellow soldier to survive. It's not realistic to expect that for men war will be hell, but for women it will just be heck.

Female 6: I want my name to go on record as having stood up to oppose women being trained or assigned to combat units. My male colleagues tell me—and I believe it—that war is hell. Heads are blown off; arms and legs are maimed; suffering is so intolerable it affects a man for years. It is bad enough that our young men have to endure this, but do we want our women to suffer it too? Retired Brigadier General Elizabeth Hoisington.

Female 2: 40,000 American women went to war in Operation Desert Storm. Some were killed, some were captured, some earned Purple Hearts.

Male 2: Being killed is not combat. Combat is killing. It's uncivilized. And women can't do it.

Female 5: The entire country is a combat zone. We had a gun truck on every run with a machine gunner sitting half in and half out of the top of the Humvee. And sometimes those gunners were women. When we convoyed, the first thing you did when you pulled over was get out and 'pull' a perimeter. Everybody had a section. You got out and you loaded your weapon and you kept people away. That may not be hand-to-hand combat, but if it isn't combat, I don't know what is.

Male 4: We hear that combat is combat is combat. I'm here to tell you, it is not. First of all, it's one thing to be in a combat area; it's different when you know that you are the guy that is going to have to seek out, close with, and do whatever it takes to wipe out the enemy. You. You're going to go out there and confront him—one on one. It's quite different from those who think they've been in combat because they were working or refueling or resupplying in a combat area. They don't have to go and seek out the enemy face to face.

Female 5: The close combat units are conducting reconnaissance patrols on the roads, in the villages, and throughout the countryside. But women truck drivers drive up and down these same roads every day. If you were going to attack someone, would it be an Abrams tank or a five ton truck full of diesel fuel? The close combat units man checkpoints on the roads but so do some military police units with women. Do the men get the "dangerous" ones? How do you tell? The close combat units that man these checkpoints need food, fuel, water, and maintenance support every day; all brought to them by units with women. Do we just hope that no direct ground combat occurs during lunch hour?

Female 3: Women are fighting in Iraq in what looks like combat, feels like combat—and kills like combat. Combat is inherent to the profession of arms. If you're going to exclude people from combat you ought to exclude them from the military.

Male 3: Combat roles do not carry the same risks and rewards for all women.

Female 1: Enlisted soldiers, who make up 84 percent of Army women, typically enter with a high school diploma. They are less likely to make the military

a career. For soldiers, intending only a limited period of military service, combat roles such as infantry, tank crews, artillery, and combat engineering, are less desirable because they do not train people in skills that are useful in civilian occupations.

Female 2: Rank is a primary factor in the discussions of combat restrictions. The women who want access to combat missions are officers whose promotions and career paths are blocked without combat-related jobs.

Male 4: Not only women are limited in this way. Men in noncombat roles face the same disadvantage in relation to men in combat roles.

Female 5: Men have the option to join the combat arms.

Female 3: Only a tiny minority of military women want combat units. Women don't grow up playing with GI Joe dolls.

Female 1: Enlisted women are like blue-collar workers in their career progression. I don't think they want to be in the infantry.

Male 3: And who can blame them? A person might see the movie "Top Gun" and want to fly like Tom Cruise. But has anyone walked out of "Platoon" and signed up to be a grunt?

Female 2: It just blows my mind that people who have never even served in the military, been deployed, or been in combat, can try to formulate opinions and make decisions based on what they think is right.

Female 3: Tell Schroeder to get out of my boots! She's never been in the service and doesn't know what she's talking about!

Male 2: Of course, only a fool desires combat and advocates it to advance a career. No one who understands war wants it.

Playwright: For many women who had other reasons besides a career for joining the military, combat may be an unexpected, and unpleasant, surprise.

Female 1: My family had limited resources for sending me to college, so I joined the army to "be all I could be" right out of high school. My intention was to let my Uncle Sam support me for a few years and then pay for my college.

But first I wound up being part of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. That was an experience I hadn't expected.

Female 3: You're not generally told as a female that you will be in that type of situation where you are in harm's way directly. I never dreamed that I would wake up every night and have to run to a bunker and take cover because we were being attacked or under direct fire.

Female 6: And there is the matter of motherhood. The military has traditionally preferred single men to married men, the childless to those with children. Now we are sending not just young fathers but also young mothers into harm's way.

Female 5: In 1948 and 1951, the federal government explicitly stated that the military could discharge any woman who became the parent, stepparent, or guardian of a child under age 18, or who became pregnant or gave birth to a child, thereby upholding the notion that mothers did not belong in the military.

Playwright: Then in the 1970s . . .

Male 1: I'm pleased to announce a regulations change which will allow married women who are pregnant, have had terminated pregnancies or who become parents to remain in the Army. These women would have to ensure that the child will not interfere with her army duties and that her army duties will not result in negligence of the child.

Female 6: When the U.S. military sent nursing mothers of six- and eight-week old babies out to fight the Persian Gulf War in 1991, the American people recognized this as the ridiculous result of the feminist ideology that women can do anything men can do.

Female 2: One mother of a twenty-one-month-old child and a five-month-old nursing baby was called up. She pleaded to be able to wean her baby, but the Air Force said no. Another mother got her orders and went into labor the next day.

Female 6: What sort of society is capable of displaying the depraved indifference to the lives of children evidenced by the desire of some women and the

willingness of some men to send mothers and, maybe soon, pregnant women into harm's way?

Male 1: Women sign a contract when they join the All Volunteer Force and the Army requires that parents have a plan for child care. So what's the problem?

Female 6: This is a volunteer army, but there aren't volunteer children.

Male 3: The corporate world, rightly or wrongly, has long presumed that women of childbearing age are less dependable than men. The fact that women do avail themselves of maternity leave, surrender high-status positions after birth, or quit their careers entirely merely confirms many men's suspicions that women's priorities and loyalties will shift. The concern will always lurk that women could be absent for prolonged, and thus potentially critical, periods of time.

Male 4: The percentage of women medically non-available at any time is twice that of men. Obviously, if you are ill, someone must care for you; if you can't do your job, someone else must do it for you.

Female 4: At this point, someone will inevitably bring up pregnancy and menstruation.

Male 2: Most females just aren't prepared to live in the woods the way we do; they can't shower; they've got female problems every month.

Female 6: Dealing with daily bodily functions while in full-body chemical warfare gear is challenging enough without the added difficulty of changing menstrual hygiene products.

Male 2: What group of SEALs would launch an ocean mission in shark infested water with a menstruating woman in their midst?

Female 4: One might also wonder what woman would put herself in this kind of danger.

Playwright: A menstruating woman might be an advantage . . .

Female 3: . . . according to a story laughingly told by a female Air Force captain to explain the large female presence in the desert during the Gulf War, despite official Pentagon protests that servicewomen were not being deployed to the front lines.

Female 5: U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney was going to send over five thousand more Marines to reinforce the desert front lines, but he decided to send over five hundred women with premenstrual stress instead. Cheney rightly figured the women would retain water better and shoot anything that moved.

Playwright: The female reproductive system has been a concern of the military since World War II.

Female 1: The Women Airforce Service Pilots had to fight against military attempts to ground them when they had their period. An army flight surgeon, Nels Monsrud, conducted a rigorous study of the women's performance and produced scientific evidence that menstruation had no effect on their capacity to perform as pilots.

Female 2: It wasn't the only theory about female biology circulating in the corridors of power. Men in both the military and Congress still believed that as women approached menopause they lost their reason, and the Surgeon General was called in to beat back an attempt to require women with military commissions to retire before their fortieth birthday.

Playwright: But pregnancy remains the most divisive component of female biology.

Male 3: The military is and must be predicated on the notion that everyone who trains together will deploy together.

Male 1: We're going to train together because we're going to fight together.

Male 3: Otherwise, training with the same people day in and day out serves no practical purpose. All members in a squad or fire team have to be familiar with one another's quirks for something so simple as a patrol to go well.

Female 5: Some men see pregnancy leave as an inequity, but is the absence of a soldier because of pregnancy any different from the absence of a soldier because of an attack of appendicitis?

Male 2: In hard-charging combat units, soldiers and Marines will often suffer with pain and forgo medical treatment precisely to avoid being released from duty. One distinction between pregnancy and an unforeseen illness or injury is that a pregnant woman cannot simply “suck it up”; pregnancy requires that a woman be removed from duty. In addition, pregnancy and problems associated with menstruation can hardly be considered random or accidental events that could happen to any soldier. No comparable, or separate but equal, set of “disabilities” renders males non-deployable.

Female 5: The percentage of Navy women nondeployable for Desert Shield/Desert Storm was 5.6. The percentage for male Marines was 8.8. However, no one believed that the high rate for male Marines was a cause for concern.

Female 4: In 1977, a comprehensive DoD study of lost time for service members concluded that the difference in lost time for men and women were not significant because men lost much more duty time on average than did women for absence without leave, desertion, alcohol and drug abuse, and confinement.

Female 1: It is a simple supply and demand equation. If there are not enough men, women will serve.

Female 5: The best ideas and the best warriors are necessary to win future technology-based battles. The pool of talented females must be tapped to marshal victory on the technology-dependent battlefields of the nascent century.

Male 2: Because of the changed nature of modern warfare, feminist groups and other advocates of women being assigned to combat-related jobs were convinced that combat no longer depended on physical strength, toughness, and endurance. Battles of the future will consist mainly of . . . lasers, “smart bombs,” guided missiles, microprocessors, and other sophisticated devices. War of the future will be an antiseptic endeavor. No muss. No fuss. “Fighting” will be conducted from a long distance. Much like playing Nintendo games.

Female 5: It was never about women's equality to the exclusion of readiness considerations. It was about the privilege of serving one's country without artificial barriers based solely on gender.

Male 1: I have absolutely no problem with women in combat units. The idea that women can't make good soldiers is a mindset, not an incontrovertible fact.

Female 3: If you tried to pull women out of the equation, this country could not fight a war.

Male 1: Yes, there are differences between men and women but why on earth would you discourage anybody from entering military service by offering them a second-class experience?

Female 2: I recognize that I'm different. I recognize that I stick out, and I'm not going to fight it.

Female 4: Enlisted women as well as officers say they often feel they need to prove themselves over and over again, responding to what one called . . .

Female 1: . . . the "goldfish bowl effect" . . .

Female 2: . . . the feeling that they are being scrutinized, and that any failing will be used as evidence against all women.

Female 3: Assignments should be determined by women's choice, ability, and military need, not by gender. I do not want to do a disservice to women by assigning them to jobs they cannot perform successfully, thereby lowering the evaluation of women's contribution to the service.

Female 1: The literature on civilian work shows consistently that although women are sometimes slower than men at completing nontraditional tasks, they work more safely and more accurately, and deliver a superior product. Arguing from the viewpoint of increased performance is not only more appealing to the military; it also improves women's image and is hard to refute.

Male 1: I'm in charge of heavy equipment maintenance, including tanks. When women were placed on my team, they took better care of the tools and

equipment than the men, worked more carefully at their tasks, and kept their areas cleaner and better organized. The men on the team also acquired these habits, thus improving the status of the work unit overall.

Male 3: I like having women in my organization because the presence of women has raised the performance level of the entire group. Men aren't going to let the women outperform them.

Male 4: Look, I can handle anything, but I can't handle being worse than a woman.

Female 5: Special Operations units, like the SEALs are completely mission oriented. Teams are so eager to try anything new or different they think might lend them an edge. So you have to wonder: why are they so resistant to women?

Male 2: In more than twenty years I've never heard anyone explain what women can do, and how they would help rather than hurt my teams. Yes, there are women who would gladly shave their heads like G.I. Jane and can bench press 240 pounds. Others might even be able to outrun, outgun, and outlead [me]. But there is not a woman alive who could contribute enough to one of my teams over the long haul to make up for what her presence would do to the trust among my men. Women who nevertheless try to join these units obviously do not understand this point. And the fact that they do not understand it is itself proof that they can never belong.

Female 6: Most feminists equate bonding with sedentary young men in fraternity rites or those wearing funny hats at men's clubs. But among warriors facing a common lethal crisis, bonding is essential for achieving a military objective—or even surviving.

Female 1: Before this war, people only imagined how women would react in combat roles and thought that they couldn't handle it. But for the first time women are shooting back and doing heavy lifting in a real war. The bullets are real, so are the roadside bombs and the blood. Now we see that women are bonding with the men and not going to pieces.

Female 2: I've made friends. The men tell me about the "Dear John" letters they've received or other problems back home because I'm easier to talk to than the male soldiers.

Male 1: It helps a lot just having them around. You can talk to them in a way you can't talk to men.

Female 2: But I could use a break from boy talk.

Female 3: I'm sick of hearing about cars and how you're going to soup up your car and what you're going to do with your truck.

Female 1: Though more than one soldier wore lace underwear under her fatigues, serious military women are careful never to remind the people they work with of their femininity.

Female 3: Women who performed under pressure invariably downplayed the dangers. Many gave off an I'm-just-doing-my-job attitude; they did not want to be singled out because of their sex, did not want a hint of look-what-Janie-can-do condensation to trivialize their achievements.

Female 2: If you do your job, men don't see you as a female, but as a soldier.

Female 1: Complications when men and women eat, sleep, work and sweat through danger together tend to disappear with time and experience.

Playwright: Though not all women tried to be "one of the boys."

Female 3: I don't know what's come over me. I just want to read a good home decorating magazine or go shopping. Go shopping and wear makeup and feminine clothes. The closest thing I can get to feeling like a woman in Iraq is wearing perfume but that attracts bugs, like pesky sand fleas that leave marks for weeks. You just can't win.

Female 2: Did we dye our hair in the field? Heck, yeah we did! Did we paint our nails? Yeah we did the whole pedicure thing! So, it doesn't mean you can't be a female. In fact, I think when you are with a group of women you actually try to hang on to that. You hang on to that one dimension that is uniquely female.

Male 3: The only problem I have with females is if they don't want to do something. It's too easy for them to say, "Guys, can you do this for me?" And some dumb guy always does.

Female 1: Are we equal to men? We are not the same, but we are equivalent. Each gender has its own strengths and weaknesses. I never try to be a male soldier because I am not! And I would stink at it. I am proud of being a female soldier, because there are unique things I bring to the table.

Male 4: I favor greater opportunities for women, but my wife does not. She worries about me going to sea with women. She doesn't worry about what I'll do; she worries about what they'll try to do to me.

Female 6: Most senior officers are—in a word—scared. They do not want to take disciplinary actions against women, even when deserved, because they are scared they will get slapped with a sexual harassment suit and have their careers ended.

Female 4: One way men avoid the problem is to avoid women. Women are being isolated in their units by men who, in some cases, would not even speak to them.

Playwright: Which is a far cry from how relationships between military men and women have been promoted in the past.

Female 5: "During your WAC officer career, you may be assigned to almost any branch of the Army, which means you'll be working in a pleasant coeducational world—side-by-side with officers who regard you as a professional equal."

Male 2: A woman complained that a male subordinate sexually harassed and physically intimidated her, with the result that she was marked down on leadership because she couldn't handle the situation by herself. Good. Sez me, she ought to find a job she can do. Being physically intimidated by subordinates is conclusive evidence of incapacity to lead.

Female 5: The combat exclusion policy stigmatizes servicewomen as second class and untrustworthy in a fight. This stigma means the good men can't trust them and leaves them endlessly vulnerable to disrespect, harassment, and assault by dirtbags and criminals.

Male 2: Activists who argue that women can manage hand-to-hand combat with an enemy often simultaneously portray military women as crippled by

sexual harassment. Opponents of expanding women's roles find it incongruous to argue that women are helpless victims of sexual harassment by men in their unit but, if given the opportunity to participate in direct ground combat, they would prove to be fearless warriors.

Female 6: Deliberate exposure of women to combat violence in war is tantamount to acceptance of violence against women in general.

Female 5: Over the last decades, we have seen a phenomenon that can only be described as "fragging by rape"—the use of sexual harassment and assault to drive women out of a unit or service.

Male 1: For a man to intentionally harm his sisters is a profoundly shameful act that should be regarded as such—and he should be treated accordingly. No one who does, abets or tolerates this is fit to wear the uniform, let alone serve as an officer.

Female 5: It's very disconcerting to have somebody who is supposed to save your life, who has your back, turn on you and do something like that.

Female 1: When I arrived, I had to participate in a program in which the troops are told about the country, its customs and currency, its laws and language. The first class was a question-and-answer session with the post commander. He was cautioning the young males about sexual harassment when a male soldier stood up and said:

Male 4: I guess it happens because there are so few young women, not enough of 'em to go around.

Female 1: The commander was flabbergasted. And I was so mad, I stood up and said, "Excuse the hell out of *me*, sir, but I'd like to correct the impression that we're here to cater to any Tom, Dick, or Harry on post. I'm here to do a job."

Male 2: You want to do this? You want what's mine? Okay, but if you want to try to get it, you must play exactly by my rules and do everything a man would. And if you aren't prepared to do that, to go all the way, then you shouldn't be on my turf at all.

Female 2: I swore the same oath that everybody else who is in the military did. It is not by exception, it is not by exclusion. I swore to defend the country, my country and my Constitution.

Female 3: Opponents of women in combat argue that the only experts on the issue are military and particularly retired senior officers because they have “real” combat experience. This group is also the oldest, had the least exposure to women in the military, and the most stereotypical views of women in general.

Male 4: I can’t get over this image of old men ordering young women into combat.

Female 4: Many have deep-seated cultural and family values. As one person put it, those values can be summed up in one simple phrase . . .

Female 6: Good men respect and defend women.

Male 2: Why do these women want to trade the best of what it means to be a woman, for the worst of what it means to be a man?

Female 5: To those who might prefer us to return to the days of hoopskirts and fans in magnolia gardens . . . We still like magnolias and moonlight, roses and romance, but we’ll answer the call when needed.

Female 1: We’re regular Americans, just doing our jobs. This war has really tapped the National Guard, so the average soldier out there could be your mechanic or your plumber. Maybe your dentist. Or the girl at the cash register.

Female 3: When someone is shooting at you, you don’t say, “Stop the war. I’m a girl!”

Male 1: The military can’t afford to exclude women—not from service, not from combat. Regulations shouldn’t suggest that Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester shouldn’t do the job, couldn’t do the job, didn’t do the job. The Silver Star says she did.

Female 2: It really doesn’t have anything to do with being female. It’s about the duties I performed that day as a soldier.

Female 5: Not a semi-soldier. A soldier. A decorated combat veteran who happens to be female. Soldiers fight. That's what they do.

Female 6: Yes, these women are all volunteers, but the question is not whether they are willing but whether we should ask them to take these risks.

Female 5: Twenty years ago Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger suggested that our sons were somehow more expendable than our daughters by saying:

Male 2: I think women are too valuable to be in combat.

Female 1: When I hear things like, "You could get hurt," I answer, "Men could get hurt too or are you saying that men's lives are not as valuable?" Men are fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands.

Female 2: Is the death of one woman more tragic because she was a woman? The idea that one life is more valuable than another insults both sexes; it diminishes all people.

Female 3: People used to tell me not to worry, that my daughter would be many miles back. I know how committed she was, and I used to tell people that with what she was doing, she was bound to be close to the front lines. I knew that if something needed to be done, she would never say, "No, I'm not going. That's combat zone." She wouldn't think of it.

Male 3: She wouldn't have said, "Let it be a man." She would have said, "Let it be me."

Male 1: When I talk about women aviators, the face that I see is of my daughter. I'm asked, would you let your daughter fly combat with the possibility of her becoming a POW? My answer is yes, because we have to send in our best to support our best.

Female 4: War is senseless. Neither the lives of young men or young women should be wasted. But, if we cannot stop the killing, we know we cannot choose between our sons and daughters.

Male Voice-over: We commonly form our Idea of the person whom we hear spoken off [*sic*], whom we have never seen; according as their actions are described, when I heard her spoken off [*sic*] as a Soldier, I formed the Idea of a tall, Masculine female, who had a small share of understandg [*sic*], without education, & one of the meanest of her Sex.—When I saw and discoursed with [her] I was agreeably surprised to find a small, effeminate, and converseable Woman, whose education entitled her to a better situation in life. Paul Revere, writing in a letter on behalf of Deborah Sampson Gannet.

The End