

Gender conflicts case study-women in combat roles vs. countries that do not allow it; a look at the Israeli experience.

This week's case study is a look at gender conflicts, specifically the discussion of whether females can and should be allowed to serve in a combat role, or a "combat arms" unit while serving as a member of a military force. For the purposes of this case study, the following will be used to define "combat arms";

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amCehEbkK_U

Obviously, there are some differing opinions of what type of units should be included in a "combat arms" unit, but all agree the infantry, which does the majority of the combat operations, incurs the greatest numbers of casualties and requires the greatest level of soldiering skills are "infantry" units, so for the purposes of this discussion, we will narrow our focus to females serving in infantry units. For the purpose of this case study, the term "infantry" will be defined as:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqrbN-di1Dc>

Let's start the discussion with this video that discusses "what **science says** about women in combat".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cibtp4-FxdU>

As we learned, the governmental tests used three criteria in the discussion of who should and who should not be allowed to serve in a combat role. Those criteria include:

1. Mental health,
2. Physical fitness,
3. Proper training.

According to the video:

- men and women have been found to handle the mental health aspects equally,
- women are physically less able to handle combat than men and have about a 30% greater chance of incurring injury as a result,
- current training is not based on "science" and should be changed to ensure it is, without lowering any of the current standards.

Having said that, let's look at the Israeli military (IDF) experience with females in their combat arms roles. The Israeli experience seems to support the study discussed above. Here is a video on the IDF's experience with women in combat roles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OETKT69pJyw>

Is there a difference between Israeli women and say American women; apparently not

as there are several American females serving in the IDF. Here are interviews with two of them:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7H-ZKSpYf0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8FgBJXXE3s>

So, that is the pro side of the argument. On the con side, in 2015, the Department of Defense (DoD) ordered each branch of the military to integrate females into **ALL** ground combat units by the end of the year, or explain why women cannot do the job. As a result, the Marine Corps (USMC) conducted an extensive study on the issue, **again based on science**. Here is a CBS News review of that study while it was being conducted:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTTN3VsbEQQ>

And here are the results of the USMC test;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URGhMw1u7MM>

So, the bottom line findings on this USMC study showed;

- men were faster in all tactical movement tests,
- men had better accuracy, faster and registered more hits,
- men had a "noticeable" difference in their ability to overcome obstacles and evacuate casualties (Gereben, Wenger, Kavanagh, Wong, Oak, Trail, Nichols, 2015).

So, while there are obviously differing opinions/findings on this issue, there is one part of this question that must be addressed. The issue is "close quarters combat". For the purposes of this case study, we will use the following definition of close quarters combat:

1. a narrow cramped space or position,
2. at close quarters,
 - a. engaged in hand-to-hand combat,
 - b. in close proximity; very near together (dictionary.com, 2017).

Close quarters combat is basically hand-to-hand fighting, engaged in by infantry soldiers. This involves situations where soldiers (almost always infantry soldiers) engage the enemy physically, often using great body strength/physical tactics and small weapons such as knives to overcome the enemy. Close quarters combat is something infantry troops train to do and have engaged in at some point every major military conflict known in history.

The issue of close quarters combat is brought up because it is a real situation that is

probably the most violent and taxing situation infantry soldiers are confronted with and that being said, must be brought into the discussion.

Case Study Focus Question

As we have learned, there are several different jobs in the military "combat arms" field, however the one discussed in this case study was specifically the infantry. It is generally agreed that women can function as well as men in most of the "combat arms" jobs with the exception of the infantry.

That being said, many believe this to not be correct and as a result, a conflict, regarding allowing women to serve in ALL combat arms positions, to include infantry units, has gone on for many years. Considering what we have learned in this case study, do some research and discuss your findings and final conclusions on the discussion of females serving in military infantry units.

In addition, you must address the question of "close quarters combat" and state what you think about females being assigned to "combat arms" units that have the potential (such as infantry units) to become involved in this type of combat.

Finally, using the conflict resolution tactics discussed thus far in the course textbook, through the use of hindsight, is there a solution to this gender conflict?