

5-1998

The Social Construction of Gender in the Military and Resistance to the Integration of Women

Hilary Kathryn Aydt

Follow this and additional works at: http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp_theses

Recommended Citation

Aydt, Hilary Kathryn, "The Social Construction of Gender in the Military and Resistance to the Integration of Women" (1998).
Honors Theses. Paper 212.

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

Introduction

The military is one of the most powerful institutions in the United States today. It employs hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians, consumes billions of dollars of our nation's budget and owns bases all over the world; yet, at its most basic level -- combat - - the armed forces remain inaccessible to women. Military officials and members of the armed forces cite many rationales for not allowing women to serve in combat and combat-related occupational specialties. In this paper I plan to analyze these arguments and examine how they are related to traditional gender constructs. First, I will provide a brief history of the involvement of women in the armed services. Next, I will outline the ways in which the military enforces the social construction of masculinity and the demarcation of gender lines. I will then discuss the objections to women and examine methods that are used to exclude women and others who challenge socially constructed roles. Finally, after highlighting special effects of I will propose solutions that might ease the problems between male and female service members, and suggest who should implement these solutions.

History of Women in the Military

Women's roles in American society have changed drastically in the past century, especially regarding their roles within the armed forces. In the first and second World Wars, out of necessity and patriotism, women joined auxiliary forces of the Army and Navy, serving mainly in nursing and administration. When women filled positions in these traditional clerical and caregiver occupations, the men of the armed forces hesitantly accepted them because their work freed more men for combat (Rustad 25-26). In the early history of women in the military, external crisis is the determinant of female participation (43). Many women who enjoyed their work in the military and excelled in their occupations were forced out of the armed forces during peacetime and had to wait for wartime necessity to be mustered back into the services.

In 1948, the Women's Armed Services Integration Act was enacted, allowing a permanent place for women within the military. Before that time, special "women's corps" were auxiliary forces that were formed and dissolved according to personnel shortages (Peach, in Weinstein and White, 101). In 1951, with the Korean War raging, the Army made an attempt to increase the number of female soldiers to provide an additional pool of labor in the event of a total war effort. As the Korean War became more unpopular, the Army was

ordered to reduce the number of women within the ranks and slow the enlistment of new women. Later, during the Vietnam War, only 10,000 women out of 2 million were allowed to serve in Southeast Asia, and only then in the nursing corps (Rustad 39-40).

The emergence of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s forced Americans to reevaluate many long-held conceptions about gender roles and the division of labor. In 1967, the quota that stated that women could only make up 2 percent of the armed forces was lifted and the cap on promotions into higher ranks was removed (Mitchell 43). Soon afterwards, in 1970, the Army named two female generals.

Nineteen seventy-two proved to be the real turning point for women in the armed forces. The Equal Rights Amendment was passed by both houses of Congress, who made it clear that the ERA would not ban the possibility of the future draft of women. Although this decision did not effect current policy, it changed the outlook of military planners. In the same year, the draft was ended, and the Department of Defense ordered the newly created "All Volunteer Force" to double the size of its women's programs by 1977 (Stiehm 37-38).

The next advance for women came in the form of the desegregation of the prestigious military academies. On May 20,

1975, congress voted to admit women to the service academies the following year. In October of the same year, Gerald Ford signed an immense appropriations bill known as Public Law 94-106. PL 94-106 contained within it a small section that assured women a chance to compete, for the first time, for military academy appointments (Mitchell 41-42). In 1977, the Army approved integrated basic training for men and women and the next year, the Women's Army Corps (WAC) was abolished (Stiehm 33).

Although much progress had been made, a conservative backlash in the early 1980s under the Reagan administration had a number of negative effects. Military officials began to express doubt about the value of women in the ranks. As a result of this hesitancy, the Army announced a "pause" in the recruitment of women. In 1982, the ERA failed and soon afterward Army basic training was resegregated. Congressional speakers spoke gravely about the negative effect of women on military preparedness (Segal & Hansen 307).

Women saw combat conditions through a variety of missions and invasions throughout the 1980s. In 1983, during the invasion of Grenada, about 170 Army women provided support as military police, helicopter crew chiefs, and communication and maintenance personnel. In 1986, women copiloted non-combat airplanes in

support of the bombing of Libya. Finally, in 1989, the invasion of Panama put two women into the spotlight when they successfully led their military police units in ground combat (Bender, et al. 185). This participation highlighted the issue of women in combat and set the stage for the 1991 Gulf War.

The Persian Gulf War was significant because of the high numbers of women who served in the conflict. The media highlighted women saying their goodbyes to their husbands and children and shipping off to Saudi Arabia. Over 8 percent of the forces in the Gulf consisted of women, in a variety of support positions. When circumstances revealed that numerous "support positions" were as vulnerable to Iraqi attack as official combat positions, the line dividing combat from non-combat occupations became blurred (Sadler in Weinstein & White 79-80).

Partly as a result of the performance of women under combat conditions in the Gulf War, the services began to question the combat ban. In December of 1991, Congress voted to lift the ban on women flying combat aircraft but because an administration change, the legislation didn't become law until April 28, 1993. In the same year Congress amended Navy policy to allow women to serve on combat ships.

Further review of military policy resulted in a reevaluation of

what constituted combat. Since 1994, the standard that defines combat has required three components: engaging the enemy on the ground, exposure to hostile fire, and a high probability of direct physical combat with the enemy (90). This policy has opened up a large number of occupations for women, so that today only direct ground combat units, such as infantry, armor (tank division), special forces, and field artillery continue to exclude women.

As of 1995, women comprised 12.7% of the overall armed services population. The numbers vary according to branch significantly, with the Air Force boasting 16.0% women and the Marine Corps having the fewest women proportionally with only 4.6%. Women comprise 12.2% of the Navy and 13.4% of the Army (D'Amico in Weinstein & White 216). The number of women recruits continues to grow slowly in every branch except the Marines, where the percentage of women has leveled off. As the percentage of women continues to grow, the need to resolve the issue of what roles women should take in the military increases. To understand the role of women in the armed services, future policies will have to examine the root of the problem: the construction of gender.

Construction of Gender within the Military

As the definition of masculinity is an extremely important

function of the military culture, binary logic requires that the feminine is also defined in opposition. The incursion of women into the soldierly lifestyle threatens distinctions between what is male and what is female, threatening everything that generations of military tradition has established. Furthermore, the very ability of women to compete as successful soldiers devalues the vocation.

Although segregation of the sexes is seen as ideal within military culture, when men and women are required to work together, a high degree of distinguishability between the sexes is considered desirable. One of the best examples of the gendering of male and female soldiers comes from the Marine Corps. Women recruits are required to wear make-up at all times -- at least lipstick and eye shadow -- or face reprimand. Mandatory classes in makeup, hair care, poise, and etiquette round out the feminization regimen (Lorber 26). Policies such as this reveal that for all the military's emphasis on supposedly objective arguments against women, ideologically, it finds the breakdown of gender differences reprehensible and seeks to keep the roles of men and women clearly demarcated.

The tremendous sacrifice of giving one's life for the homeland is justified if it means protecting the way things are. While some men join the armed forces for steady income or job training, many

men admit they derive a profound sense of personal importance from their role as protector. As noted by Navy Lieutenant Neil L. Golightly:

Consider the young man under fire and neck deep in the mud of a jungle foxhole, sustained in that purgatory by the vision of home -- a warm, feminine place that represents all the good things that his battlefield is not. Somewhere in that soldier's world view, though he may not be able to articulate it, is the notion that he is here...so that all the higher ideals of home embodied in mother, sister, and girlfriend do not have to be here (Mitchell 184).

Men whose primary reason for fighting is to protect this vision of feminine home and hearth are deeply disturbed by any disruption of this idealized vision. If women are able to defend themselves, the role of the male protector becomes obsolete. This gendered view of protector and protected is fundamental in evaluating military policy.

Another reason men resist the induction of women into the military is because they feel "the organization and its rituals are devalued if 'even a girl' can do them," (Britton and Williams 15). In Rosanna Hertz's study of Air Force security guards and their wives showed ample evidence of this phenomena. The security guards seemed unable to distinguish between the introduction of women and a devaluation of the occupation and those who perform it. Combat career field are prestigious precisely because they are

exclusive. Only the most masculine males are allowed to enter this combat field, and soldiers in these fields pride themselves on their elite image (Hertz 262-263). In an institution based on the accruelement of prestige and honors, any threat to the status of an occupation, such as the integration of women, will receive a hostile reception.

Lesbians, gays, and bisexuals have suffered along with women in the armed services because the use of homophobia to enforce gender roles within the military. Men and women who step outside traditional sex roles are often threatened with the label of homosexual, and the subsequent exclusion from the benefits of heterosexuality. Bisexual and gay men are targets of extreme antipathy from heterosexual men because they stereotypically embody feminine mannerisms and sexual submission, degrading their status as "real men". Lesbian and bisexual women challenge the patriarchal system because their relationships with other women threaten men's access to women (Pellegrini 50). In this way, homosexuals and bisexuals threaten the inherent privileging of heterosexual men within the ranks.

Gay and bisexual men cannot be soldiers because not only are they "not real men", but they also threaten to change the public's perception of the nature of male bonding in the armed forces. Sports

and war are the only arenas that allow open affection between men and the heterosexual men who control the military have worked hard to prevent the public from viewing this "male bonding" as homoerotic in any sense (Pharr 19). It is because of these challenges to hegemonic masculinity that homosexuals and bisexuals along with women are excluded.

The Cult of Masculinity

These gender constructs work to form the military cult of masculinity. As Britton and Williams observed, "...the military's resistance to the full participation of both women and gay men and lesbians reflects an institutional privileging of a certain type of soldier -- the heterosexual male" (2). Few institutions embody hegemonic masculinity as fully as the military, which allows every man the chance to act as a protector to millions. The armed forces have enjoyed status as the guardians of American manhood. Popular mythology invokes the image of "making boys into men" and ingrainning hard work and responsibility in the most stubborn teenager. American society lacks many of the formalized rites of passage to adulthood other societies utilize and as a result the importance of keeping traditions in place in the military is greatly increased.

These gender constructs are responsible for a great deal of the resistance to women in the armed services. Since most objections are based upon generalizations about what roles men and women are capable of performing, the best way to overcome these arguments is to destabilize the gender constructs upon which the generalizations are based. Only then will women and men be judged on their individual aptitudes instead of their sex chromosomes. When examining the following objections to women in the military, it is important to keep track of how the argument is based on these constructions.

Objections to Women in the Armed Forces

Objections to women in the military assert that the inclusion of women threatens to reduce the effectiveness of the armed forces. These arguments generally fall along two lines, the first being that women are physically or mentally incapable of satisfying the standards of some important military occupations. Biological reasons cited for exclusion of women include reduced upper body strength, inconveniences of the reproductive system including pregnancy, menstrual cramps, and menstruation, as well as smaller body size. Mentally, women are thought to be easily overwhelmed, hesitant, and fearful in critical situations; incapable of taking a

leadership position and commanding respect. Many military men take the protectionist stance and claim that women's roles in the military should be restricted because of the sexual harassment they might be subject to.

The second objection is that the physical presence of women renders military men incapable of properly carrying out their duties. The situation of women is similar to that of gay men and lesbians today and African-Americans in earlier times; the military has attempted to justify their exclusion based on the prejudices held by other soldiers (Britton and Williams 6). Proponents of the exclusion of women argue that men will be unable to control their sexual impulses and will sexually harass or even rape female coworkers. Others claim that men will be too protective of women and jeopardize the effectiveness of the mission in the name of gallantry. These objections are generally based on the idea that men in the military are unable to unlearn their prejudices or exhibit the kind of control expected of civilian men.

Physical Characteristics

In order to maintain "combat readiness" the armed services require regular physical fitness testing. All male and female personnel must pass basic minimum standards based on the

completion of sit-ups, push-ups, running, and other physical activities. These tests require dual standards for men and women, allowing women to test with the flexed arm hang instead of pull-ups, pass with fewer push-ups and longer run times, etc. While men decry these "double standards" it is interesting to note how the test is based on male physiology. Push-ups, pull-ups, and the flexed arm hang all favor upper body strength that is a male advantage. The Air Force's standing broad jump is easier for taller people, generally men, to excel at. Traditionally, dominant groups have established standards that favor their own strengths and characteristics above those of others. Perhaps if women controlled the military, men would be considered unsuitable for service because of lack of lower body strength, inflexibility, and poor marksmanship.

Military jobs are classified according to the maximum and typical amount of upper body strength required under combat conditions to fulfill the physical demands of a task, even though women are only assigned to non-combat roles. This method holds women to the most extreme, rather than the most typical standard and bars them from some positions they might otherwise hold quite effectively (Stiehm 202). Dynamic women have found ways to overcome the bias towards upper-body strength. When confronted by wall to scale in an obstacle course, men traditionally used their

arms to drag the rest of their bodies over the wall. When women who ran the same course were condescendingly offered a step stool by skeptical officers, the women improvised and found that they could clear the wall by grabbing the top of the wall and using their superior lower body strength to walk up the wall and hook one leg over the top.

Men who have challenged the ability of women to do heavy work have sometimes been surprised by the ingenuity of their coworkers:

Two WAVEs assigned to a warehouse were told by a couple of strapping men, "Look, the job that you've got to do is to get these truck tires stowed away up in that loft," and they knew they couldn't do it. And they went off gleefully, chuckling to themselves. When the men returned they found the tires up in the loft. When asked, "How on earth did you do it?" one WAVE replied, 'We rigged a pulley, of course,' (Elshtain & Tobias 113).

Women seeking to prove their physical suitability in military occupations often run up against a double bind. In an Army survey in the 1970s, women were experimentally integrated into various exercises to determine what percentage of women would be required to decrease military effectiveness. The results showed that the women performed well and without a negative impact on unit performance, yet when skeptics were presented with this evidence,

they claimed that field exercises cannot accurately represent combat conditions (Miller 44). Using this reasoning, women cannot be allowed in combat because we do not know whether they might endanger themselves and their units, but we can never prove their effectiveness without sending them into combat. This catch-22 has been very effective in maintaining the status quo, despite its apparent contradiction.

Mental and Social Characteristics

In addition to charges that women are physically incapable of combat, many argue that the psychological characteristics of women make them unsuitable for the military. Traditional views of women hold that "feminine" characteristics, which are viewed as socially constructed by many sociologists, are actually biologically inherent and cannot be diminished or eliminated. A few of these characteristics are passivity, compassion, mental hesitance, and emotional weakness. These attributes stand in opposition to the development of soldierly traits such as aggressiveness, detachment, quick judgment, and emotional stamina.

The view of the ideal soldier is based upon the "mechanized man" who is able to follow orders unfailingly, exhibit superior detachment, and survive in incredibly adverse physical and mental

conditions (Kimbrell 66-67). Women, by role definition, are unable to fulfill any of these conditions being compassionate, vacillating, and frail. In everyday military work, commanders often assign women to paperwork tasks, leaving the men to complete the heavy "grunt" work. This arrangement causes many military men to resent women, who they feel take advantage of their "delicacy" (Miller 46-47). These attitudes combined with protector and protected roles, make the inclusion of women in combat forces highly objectionable to some.

The ability to lead and make critical decisions is an crucial skill within a hierarchical organization such as the armed services. Research regarding gender differences in decision making and leadership has revealed a number of trends. Those who study the division of labor find that within the realm of management, men are at a tremendous advantage in the amount of decision making power. Reskin and Ross found that while both men and women hold positions of authority, women generally advise while men make the final decisions (Reskin & Ross in Jacobs 136-139). These unequal opportunities reflect the beliefs of some that women are unable to exhibit leadership and perpetuate these ideas by making it difficult for a woman to prove their competency. During a study of soldiers in Korea in the 1970s, 45 percent of men stated their belief that "a

woman cannot be a good leader of men," reaffirming the carry over of attitudes into the military setting (Stiehm 97). Attitudes are changing slowly, because of the performance of women in leadership positions but gender roles still limit the perception of leadership skills in women.

Methods Used to Exclude Women

The incursion of women into a previously all male field has resulted in a widespread backlash. Many men see their jobs and their very social definition as under siege by unsympathetic feminists. Traditionally, six approaches have been used by men when women have attempted to break into a career. They are:

1. prevent women's entry into an occupation
2. push out women who gain entry
3. flee from occupations where women have entered
4. ghettoize them
5. devalue them
6. deprive them of authority (Stone in Jacobs 416-417)

Since women have been able to win inclusion in almost every military task except direct ground combat, men who object to their presence have resorted to techniques designed to ghettoize and devalue positions women have access to, deprive women of authority, and push out women through harassment. If these

techniques prove unsuccessful, perhaps the most outraged men will begin to flee the services.

If the purpose of the military is to turn young boys into men, the motives of women who enter the services are seen as highly suspect. The popular myth is that "military women are all either whores or lesbians" still exhibits great vitality and women have to walk a fine line to avoid being categorized as one or the other. Men who wish to exclude women from the "masculine institution" of the armed forces capitalize upon these stereotypes, using sexual harassment and lesbian baiting to discourage servicewomen from remaining in the military.

Sexual harassment

Unlike men, when a woman advances quickly through the ranks, she is assumed to have "slept her way to the top," (Miller 37). This perception enables men to rationalize that women are incapable of performing at the level of men and must resort to their "feminine wiles" to accomplish anything. In an interview with Air Force security guards and their wives, Rosanna Hertz found many believed that women guards would consciously use sex to manipulate coworkers and supervisors and receive promotions (Hertz 270-271).

The characterization of military women as manipulative sexual

predators focuses the attention away from the men who perpetuate harassment. Sexual harassment is based in power differentials and the emphasis on sexuality has lead many to dismiss harassment as harmless flirting when in fact it is often used to try to pressure women out of an occupation or the military altogether. The recent exposure of widespread harassment of recruits at the Army's Aberdeen proving grounds highlighted the problems that arise when some men are given a vast amount of power over their subordinates.

Lesbian Baiting

Lesbian baiting is a powerful tool that is used by men against all women, not just lesbians, to keep them from overstepping gender barriers and to coerce women into sexual relations. Whenever women have sought to expand their choices and freedom, men have attempted to discredit them by questioning their sexuality (Wolf 68). The threat of being perceived as a lesbian is a powerful incentive for silence, especially when that perception can lead to the loss of your livelihood.

Women who excel in characteristics that are desirable in soldiers such as aggressiveness and athleticism find themselves subject to rumors of lesbianism. In a review of military policy regarding women in the armed forces, one researcher posits why he

believes lesbians predominate in the military:

"Lesbians thrive in the military...because it allows and encourages them to act like men. Compared with heterosexual women, lesbians are generally more at home in the military. They are more martial in their personal bearing, more athletically inclined, more accepting of the lot of soldiers or sailors, and often more committed to their jobs and their careers" (Mitchell 181).

According to these criteria, any woman who is athletic, enjoys the military lifestyle and is committed to her career is suspect and risks investigation for lesbianism, a crime that can carry jail time under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Sexual harassment is often backed with the implied or stated threat of accusations of lesbianism. Unscrupulous commanders sometimes ask women to perform sexual favors to prove their heterosexuality. In the past, it was possible for women to say "no" without any insinuations of sexual inadequacy. In today's military climate, it is harder for women to refuse advances without casting doubt on her sexuality.

The prevalence of lesbian baiting has led to a climate of fear among military women. "Witch hunts" are conducted without warning against women who raise the ire of the military establishment and discharges are ordered with or without evidence of lesbianism. Department of Defense statistics show women are

discharged for homosexuality almost ten times as often as men, most likely reflecting selective prosecution of women (Moskos 110).

Without a drastic reevaluation of the military's policy towards lesbians and gays, lesbian baiting will continue to be used by men to force women out of the military.

Gender Harassment

When women can successfully accomplish feats defined as masculine, the boundaries of masculinity are encroached upon. This "encroachment" has caused a peculiar reaction among the men of the military. Although heterosexual men are the most privileged class within the armed services, many have adopted resistance strategies usually used by the powerless. Laura Miller addresses this paradox in her analysis of the use of gender harassment as a form of protest. She concludes that, "Individuals' perceptions of power...do not always echo our academic assessments of it. These perceptions of power, whether or not we find them accurate, influence behavior," (Miller 32).

Gender harassment is pervasive throughout the military, and it takes many forms. Men under woman officers or NCOs often participate in foot-dragging and work slowdowns or feign ignorance when given orders. Women are subject to extreme scrutiny and are

forced to prove themselves time and again to suspicious peers and leaders. If a woman is promoted to a coveted post, men spread rumors that she slept her way to the top (36-38). These techniques are often difficult to ascertain and prosecute, and as a result, nearly impossible to stop. As long as men are able to undermine women's power in a non-sexual manner, without fear of reprisal women will not be taken seriously.

Special Problems of Women of Color

The double impact of sexism and racism has had profound effects on women of color in the armed forces. The Department of Defense figures show that in 1995, women of color comprised 39.4% of women personnel. Black women were 23.9% of female personnel and "Hispanic" women represented 10.5% of female personnel. These figures seem to show strong representation of women of color but when calculated as a percentage of overall personnel, black women accounted for 3.9% and Hispanic women less than 1% of all servicemembers (D'Amico 219-220). Interestingly enough, the Department of Defense does not collect data on Native Americans or Asians, choosing to lump them together under the "other" race category. This makes the study of these populations difficult and renders many people invisible.

Women of color make up a very small minority in the overall makeup of the military and as a result, they are highly scrutinized. The military's use of the witch hunt against women of color is particularly evident the U.S.S. Yellowstone investigation in 1988. In the naval investigation, every African-American woman on board was accused of lesbianism. (Britton and Williams 8). This incident and other point out the effects of the intersection of racism and hetero/sexism within the armed services.

Officers versus Enlisted

The inaccessibility of combat leadership roles available to men has hindered the career prospects of many women junior officers (second lieutenant-captain). It is these women who are protesting the combat exclusion most vehemently (Yarbrough 50). In the officer corps, one in six lieutenants is female, but only one colonel in thirty is a woman (Moskos 111). With no chance of a command assignment to a combat unit, almost all women are precluded from becoming generals or full colonels. When Charles Moskos interviewed female officers in Panama, he found three-quarters favored women being able to volunteer for combat arms and about 25% believed women should be compelled to enter combat units as men are (113). These attitudes reflect strong support among female

officers for the opening of combat roles.

Enlisted women held very different views on the role of women in combat. Of all the enlisted women Moskos interviewed in Panama, 75% objected to women in combat arms, 25% thought women should be able to volunteer and none supported the conscription of women into combat arms. Differences in career intentions between officers and enlisted probably account for these divergent opinions. Enlisted women had lower expectations for their military careers and many foresaw their future goals as revolving around family (113). From these figures, we can see that military women's own opinions on the roles of women in combat vary from officer to enlisted, based on future aspirations.

Possible Solutions

While it is impossible to end discrimination in any setting, there are a number of reforms the armed forces could enact to help curb male-female tensions. These suggestions are based upon analyses of common complaints among service members and focus on breaking down gender distinction and opportunity for harassment.

Reform of Laws Criminalizing Private Sexual Activities

The first policy that should be reformed is the criminal code

that governs the private sexual lives of soldiers, including the ban on homosexuals and bisexuals. The current ban undermines the prosecution of sexual harassment by allowing lesbian baiting and limits the lives of all military women. Many women speak of being reluctant of associating with each other because of the constant fear of persecution. Their fears are not unfounded, as the military's policy is enforced disproportionately on women. "A woman in the military, depending on the particular service and year, is between two and ten times more likely to be booted out for homosexuality than a man is," (Shawver 110). On the basis of on these figures, one can infer that the ban on homosexuals is being used as a powerful tool of coercion against women. Women who are threatened with accusations of lesbianism are much easier targets for sexual harassment, acceding to men's demands in an attempt to prove heterosexuality.

The current military prohibition against "fraternization," friendships and romantic relationships between service members of different rank, has done little to stop dating between officers and enlisted. Enforcement has varied from lax to draconian, adding to the confusion of what interaction between the sexes is acceptable (Stiehm 209). The widespread violation of this regulation has led many soldiers and sailors to resign themselves to the constant

presence of sexual misconduct. Excluding the necessary restrictions against relationships with those in the direct chain of command, the decriminalization of fraternization may eliminate much of the hypocrisy that has limited the effectiveness of the campaign against sexual harassment.

Prosecution and Investigation of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a problem that has plagued the military and tarnished its image for too long. The Navy "Tailhook" conference became the center of national attention in 1991 when twenty-seven women came forward with complaints of sexual harassment by Navy and Marine Corps aviators at the annual meeting. When the Navy bureaucracy seemed more intent on protecting the careers of the men accused of harassment than actually investigating claims, the Department of Defense took over the investigation.

The resulting investigation was successful and not only implicated 117 officers in one or more incidents of indecent assault but also removed three high ranking Navy personnel responsible for the initial investigation. In the trial of three officers charged with sexual harassment, prosecutors found that the Navy's top officer, Admiral Frank B. Kelso II, had "witnessed the sexual misconduct, had not tried to stop it, and had subsequently covered it up" (D'Amico in

Weinstein and White 235-236).

The military has proved itself incapable of objectively investigating its members for sexual harassment. In the best interests of the men and women of the armed services, an outside agency should be appointed to examine claims of sexual harassment. An outside agency would be free of the conflicts of interest that have crippled internal investigations.

Standardization of Occupational Requirements

Much of the resistance to women in the armed forces is based upon the belief that women are not held to the same physical standards as men. If the requirements of military occupations are reexamined and standardized based on typical conditions, women should be able to compete with men by passing a unisex standard. Regulations should state that no one will be excluded from an occupation on the sole basis of sex, allowing anyone who can physically qualify for combat positions to serve in those positions. If men and women are held to the same occupational standards and allowed to participate in combat, many complaints of unfairness and "double standards" will lose their legitimacy and women will be able to access combat positions that lead to rapid promotion through the ranks.

Conclusion

Military ideology and the construction of gender are intertwined in so many ways that it is often difficult to separate them. The introduction of women has presented many difficulties for the armed forces. If government officials truly wish to remedy the problem of sexism, they will attack the problem at its origin: the construction of gender.

Military leaders have proven that they are unwilling to remedy problems with sexism. The power of self-interest is too persuasive, as has been proven by the shameful Tailhook cover-up. Federal mandates from congress can compel the armed forces to change its policies toward women but attitudes will take much longer to change. Until that time, women will continue to be outsiders within the military.

Bibliography

Bender, David L., Bruno Leone, Bonnie Szumski, Carol Wekesser, and Matthew Polesetsky. eds. *Women in the Military*. 1991. San Diego: Greenhaven Press.

Britton, Dana M. and Christine L. Williams. 1995. "'Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue': Military Policy and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity." *Journal of Homosexuality* 30(1): 1-21.

D'Amico, Francine. "Policing the U.S. Military's Race and Gender Lines". Laurie Weinstein and Christie C. White. 1997. *Wives and Warriors: Women and the Military in the United States and Canada*. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.

Elshtain, Jean Bethke and Sheila Tobias. 1990. *Women, Militarism, and War*. Savage, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Hertz, Rosanna. 1996. "Guarding Against Women? Responses of Military Men and their Wives to Gender Integration." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 25(2): 251-283.

Hurrell, Rose Marie and John H. Lukens. 1995. "Dimensions of Attitudes Toward Women in the Military: Factor Analysis of the Women in the Military Scale." *Psychological Reports* 76(3///2): 1263-1266.

Kimbrell, Andrew. 1995. *The Masculine Mystique: The Politics of Masculinity*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Lorber, Judith. 1994. *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Miller, Laura L. 1997. "Not Just Weapons of the Weak: Gender Harassment as a Form of Protest for Army Men." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 60(1): 32-51.

Mitchell, Brian. 1989. *Weak Link: The Feminization of the American Military*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway.

Moskos, Charles. "Women's Experiences in the Military: An Overview." Bender, David L., Bruno Leone, Bonnie Szumski, Carol Wekesser, and Matthew Polesetsky. eds. *Women in the Military*. 1991. San Diego: Greenhaven Press.

Oskamp, Stuart and Mark Costanzo. 1993. *Gender Issues in Contemporary Society*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Peach, Lucinda Joy. "Behind the Front Lines: Feminist Battles over Women in Combat." Laurie Weinstein and Christie C. White. 1997. *Wives and Warriors: Women and the Military in the United States and Canada*. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.

Pellegrini, Ann. "S(h)ifting the Terms of Hetero/Sexism: Gender, Power, Homophobias." Warren J. Blumenfeld. ed. 1992. *Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Pharr, Suzanne. *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*. 1988. Little Rock, Arkansas: Chardon Press.

Reskin, Barbara F. and Catherine E. Ross. "Jobs, Authority, and Earnings Among Managers." Jerry A. Jacobs. ed. 1995. *Gender Inequality at Work*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Rustad, Michael. 1982. *Women in Khaki: The American Enlisted Woman*. New York: Praeger Publishers.

Segal, Mady Wechsler and Amanda Faith Hansen. 1992. "Value Rationales in Policy Debates on Women in the Military: A Content Analysis of Congressional Testimony, 1941-1985." *Social Science Quarterly* 73(2): 296-309.

Shawver, Lois. 1995. *And the Flag Was Still There: Straight People, Gay People, and Sexuality in the U.S. Military*. New York: Harrington Park Press.

Stiehm, Judith Hicks. 1989. *Arms and the Enlisted Woman*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Stone, Pamela. "Assessing Gender at Work: Evidence and Issues." Jerry A. Jacobs. ed. 1995. *Gender Inequality at Work*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Sadler, Georgia Clark. "Women in Combat: The U.S. Military and the Impact of the Persian Gulf War." Laurie Weinstein and Christie C. White. 1997. *Wives and Warriors: Women and the Military in the United States and Canada*. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.

Wolf, Naomi. 1994. *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How to Use It*. New York: Fawcett Columbine.