

## **The Status of Women Militants Working in Ground Combat in the United States Armed Forces**

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Submitted 14 October 2015; accepted in final form 30 November 2015

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### **Abstract**

Achieving gender equality in the workplace is one of the key issues in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both men and women then should have equal opportunity in their workplace. Soldier has been seen as a man's job. The right to fight and lead wars then always belongs to men. This article aims to describe recent changes in women's role performing ground combat in the United States Armed Forces and to discuss whether these changes reduce gender discrimination in the workplace. To answer this question, documentary research method has been used in this paper. This research found that woman militants are not allowed to work in ground combat before Iraq and Afghanistan wars while some countries allow women working in ground combat. Women who served the military then faced gender discrimination at this time. However, after these two wars, the US Armed Forces allow women to work in ground combat because both men and women must be combat-ready for all times as there was the absence of a clear line between enemy and friendly territory in these two wars. Both men and women then have equal opportunity to work in all units. Nevertheless, the role of women working in ground combat would be different from now if the US Armed Forces do not have the war with Iraq and Afghanistan. The armed forces should not allow women working in combat as there is a strong belief in the military that women are not suited to work in combat and this idea is hard to change.

**Keywords:** *women militants, ground combat, gender discrimination in the workplace, equal opportunity in the military*

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### **1. Introduction**

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) announced its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which consisted of eight (8) goals to be completed by 2015. Gender issues form the basis of several of these goals, and are explicitly addressed in the third goal which states that countries should promote gender equality and empower women (United Nations, 2015a). In July 2015, the United Nations reported that member countries has achieved progress towards gender equity. For example, the number of women who have entered the workforce gradually increased to 41 percent from 35 percent in 1990 (United Nations, 2015b, p. 5). However, women still face discrimination in several areas such as education, economic assets and employment (United Nations, 2015b). As the MDGs was ended in September 2015, a new development agenda is needed beyond 2015. On September 25th, 2015, 193 members of the UN commit to 17 goals to achieve in the next 15 years (United Nations, 2015d). These 17 goals are called as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality is still one of these 17 goals to be achieved (United Nations, 2015d). The fifth goal states that country members should achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. This means that the UN sees gender equity as an important issue to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030 (2015b). The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (United Nations Population Fund, 2015) also argues that achieving gender equality is required for reducing poverty and advancing development. The UNFPA (2015) further explained this point that "gender equality demands the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. When women are empowered, whole families benefits, and these benefits often have a ripple effect on future generations". The United Nations Development Programme (2015a) also support this point by explaining that ending all forms of discriminations against women and girls leads to the development in other areas. Therefore, achieving gender equality should end poverty.

In order to achieve gender equality by 2030, the UN aims to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. This means that discrimination against women in the workplace, especially in the male-dominated occupations, such as policing and the armed forces, should be ended

(United Nations, 2015c). In society, the right to fight and lead wars always belongs to men. Soldier then has been seen as a man's job. In the past, women were only allowed to participate in the military only in some circumstances during wartime because "war has usually been defined as a male activity and highly valued masculine characteristics are often associated with it, the image of women warriors has been seen as inherently unsettling" (Carreiras, 2006, p. 5). When the war ended, women then left the military and went back to their home to look after family (Carreiras, 2006). This means that women faced gender discrimination in the armed forces as they were not allowed to work in the armed forces same as men. However, this idea was changed in 1970s when most Western countries started to recruit some women to work in the armed forces because of pressures from global trends on gender equity and changing in the military toward force reduction and professionalization (Carreiras, 2006, p. 3). Women started to gain military status and have been trained same as men. At the same time, all country members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) admitted to increase the number of women in the armed forces and allowed women to enter military academies since 2001 (Carreiras, 2006, p. 3).

Feminist activists have played an important role in focusing on the issue of the number and status of women in the military by engaging with the government from both inside and outside. The number of women in the military is gradually increasing (Enloe, 2000). For example, in the United States (US) military in 1975, the number of women uniformed personnel was only two percent (Enloe, 2000, p. 280) and was increased to 14 percent in 2011 (Patten & Parker, 2011). Most women serve in the Air Force – approximately 31 percent of military women are in the Air Force while only 22 percent of men do (Patten & Parker, 2011). In contrast, the number of women is less than men in the Navy – about seven (7) percent of military women are in the Navy compared to 16 percent of men (Patten & Parker, 2011). The growing number of women and these changing roles of women in the military are strong consequences to achieve gender equity.

However, female militants still face discrimination in the workplace, even though the number of women who have been recruited in the armed forces is slightly increasing. Women who work in a masculinized organization are pushed to the margins. For instance, women soldiers are less likely to be promoted or awarded a pension and have experienced sexual harassment that they have little chance to speak out about (Enloe, 2000). In the US Armed Forces, men and women soldiers have been trained similarly, but women are not allowed to work in ground combat same as men.

This article therefore aims to discuss more gender equalities in the military workplace. This paper will be divided into four parts. The first part explains documentary research method that has been used in this article. The second and third parts describe the role of women in ground combat in the US Armed Forces before and after Iraq and Afghanistan wars. These two sections explain how the US Armed Forces defines the term combat that may prevent women to work in ground combat. The last part discusses whether the changing role of women in ground combat before and after Iraq and Afghanistan wars reduce gender discrimination in the workplace.

## **2. Methodology**

This paper uses documentary research method. Both printed and electronic material were used to gather information on the changing role of women working in ground combat in the US Armed Forces before and after Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Document analysis is one research method in qualitative research that has been used in social research which aims to find an explanation for or to understand patterns in social phenomenon (Mogalakwe, 2006). The documentary research method is the analysis of documents that contain information about social phenomenon that researcher would like to study (Mogalakwe, 2006). Payne and Payne (2004) also describe the documentary research method as the technique used to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources. The documentary research method often uses written documents such as books and brochures, journal articles, press releases, newspapers and organizational or institutional reports in both private and public domain. Therefore, documentary research method is used like other analytical methods in reports and journal articles in order to explain social phenomenon.

### 3. Women in combat

#### 3.1 Women in combat before Iraq and Afghanistan wars

The military, in particular, is traditionally a highly patriarchal institution where there is a strong notion of 'combat' that relies on central concepts of 'manhood' and justifications of the superiority of maleness in the social order (Enloe, 1988). In other words, to be a soldier means to have the experience of combat, and combat aims to test a man's masculinity. Therefore, this notion presents stumbling blocks for women to becoming soldiers because "women must be denied access to 'the front', to 'combat' so that men can claim a uniqueness and superiority that will justify their dominant position in the social order" (Enloe, 1988, p. 15). Enloe (1988, p. 15) further stated that "to allow the entrance of women into the essential core of the military would throw into confusion of all men's certainty about their male identity and thus about their claim to privilege in the social order". This means that although women are allowed to work in the military, Enloe was uncertain that they would be fully admitted as soldiers in combat.

And indeed although women have been recruited into the armed forces, many militaries still believe that they have to recruit and deploy women in limited numbers and roles in order to protect the fundamentally masculinized culture of the military. Enloe (2000) suggests that militaries intend to recruit women to no more than a third of the military's manpower. She claims that "principally, militarizes seem to believe that if women cannot be controlled effectively, men's participations in the militarizing enterprise cannot be guaranteed" (Enloe, 2000, p. 294). Both Brian Mitchell (1988) and Martin van Creveld (2001) attempt to prove that there is a lower number of women in the military service in general and in combat because the military leaders believe that women cannot fight wars. Feinman (2000) further explained that there are two reasons why the armed forces believe that women cannot fight wars. The first reason is that women are so much physically weaker and it does not seem appropriate for women to fight wars. The second reason is that the culture of the military forces that has never allowed females to fight wars.

Moreover, the military makes an effort to recruit women without losing the support from the public who hold restricted notions of proper masculinity or proper femininity and without endangering the military's reputation where men can prove their masculinity. The dominant strategy that has been used to work around these phenomena is that militaries have often recruited women to perform in non-combat duties such as serving in the medical corps, serving in the military police, the military guard units or the military intelligence units in order to preserve the presumably manly aspects of military occupations for men (Enloe, 2007).

The definition of 'combat' then is very important. For instance, the NATO, which is an intergovernmental military alliance, has defined what constitutes combat and clearly defines where women can or cannot serve alongside men (Enloe, 2007). The US also has a similar understanding of the role of women as NATO. In the 1980s, the US army redefined the term 'combat' to include electricians and carpenters because sometimes electricians and carpenters were called to perform their work at the front. Therefore, women at that time were not allowed to be electricians and carpenters in order to protect them from the dangers of combat (Enloe, 2007, p. 84). In 1994, the Department of Defense (DoD) in the US passed the DoD assignment policy that prohibits:

'the assignment of women to any unit below brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct ground combat. Direct ground combat is 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.'

(Department of Defense, 2009)

The 1994 Combat Exclusion policy blocked women from serving in infantry, artillery, armor, combat engineers and special operations units of battalion size or smaller. In the case that female members of the armed forces may still find themselves in situations that may require combat action, such as defending themselves or their units if they come under attack, women are allowed to fight (Department of Defense, 2009).

The reason that the DoD does not allow women to be assigned in the ground combat is because of combat effectiveness. Combat or operational effectiveness is the key factor to consider on assigning

personnel. The study of the Combat Effectiveness and Gender commented that female soldiers should be excluded from ground combat because their presence should increase the risk for combat unit (Woodward & Winter, 2004). This study explained this point that:

‘under the conditions of high intensity, close-quarter battle, group cohesion becomes of much greater significance to team performance and, in such an environment, failure can have far-reaching and grave consequences. To admit women therefore, would involve a risk without any offsetting gains in terms of combat effectiveness.’

(Ministry of Defence Press Release No. 126/02, 2002).

Furthermore, the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) explained why they believed that women would reduce combat effectiveness. The British MoD stated that:

‘in battle, each individual in a team, while under extreme pressure including pervasive uncertainty and imminent fear of death, must summon up the continuing determination to go forward with an absolute focus and impose their will on the enemy. They must then go on to do so again and again over a period of days or even weeks. Even the smallest failure at this level can affect adjoining teams and thus spread to threaten the objectives of the larger unit. We have no way of knowing whether mixed gender teams can develop the bonds of unconditional trust, loyalty and mutual support that must be strong enough to survive the test of closed combat. Nor can we tell what will be the impact on the other members of a team if a member of the opposite sex is killed or maimed. Moreover, there is no way of testing to find out, since no conceivable trial could simulate the full effects of close combat.’

(Woodward & Winter, 2004, p. 291)

This means that the British MoD believed that women are emotional and may not suit to work in emotional work (trust, loyalty and support) in order to secure combat effectiveness. They also believed that women presence in the ground combat has influence on teamwork to fighting units in achieving objectives. This idea may be not fair for women because this explanation to exclude women based on emotion, not physical differences in strength and stamina. Some women may pass the selection test required for ground combat such as infantry training and if they pass it, they inform us that they have the same ability to work in ground combat same as men. Women militants who can pass the selection test, should not be excluded to work in ground combat. However, Woodward and Winter (2004) reviewed literatures about the UK Armed Forces and found that physical strength is important for ground combat, but loyalty and strong support between team member are more important. The objectives for ground combat may fail if there are some women presenting the fighting units. They further explained this point that military is highly masculinity and militants have seen themselves as the “band of brother where trust, loyalty and mutual support ensure that no man is left behind” (Woodward & Winter, 2004, p. 292). Male militants then see women as ‘other’ and not belong to them. Therefore, male militants could not gain trust and loyalty from women militants. In addition, the 1998 Strategic Defense Review (cited in Woodward & Winter, 2004, p. 290) also indicated that “the three Services are wholly committed to maximizing opportunity for women in the Armed Forces, except where this would damage combat effectiveness” in the United Kingdom. In other words, the armed forces in Western countries give similarly opportunities to women and men to enter and to work in any unit, except combat unit.

Not only combat effectiveness, some scholars also believe that women should be protected from harm and should not be killed (Putko, 2008). Skaine (2011) also interviewed Dr. Peter Lillback who is the President of the Westminster Theological Seminary, about universal morals around women in ground combat. Lillback argued that:

‘the duty to protect someone who is more vulnerable to harm and hurt by those who are stronger. Generally speaking, in a just war, you do not put your most vulnerable, most unskilled, those most at risk of harm in the place of danger. You put your most well-prepared, strongest and wisest and developed defenders in the place of battle....’

(Skaine, 2011, p. 71)

In other words, it is not appropriate to allow women to work in ground combat because women are vulnerable to enemy abuse and atrocity. However, Lillback supports women working in ground combat if there is a shortage of men in ground combat. In addition, most countries only allow women soldiers to work in ground combat when their countries are in a state of emergency and there is a shortage of men soldiers (Segal, 1995). Table 1 shows the lists of countries that allow women soldiers to work in one or more of the four types of combat (military aircraft, combat ships, ground combat and submarines).

**Table 1** Military occupations in which women in other countries serve

Occupation	Countries
Military aircraft	Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, India, Japan, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, United Kingdom
Combat ships	Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom
Ground combat	Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel (some), the Netherlands (except the marines), New Zealand, Norway, Portugal (except marines and combat divers), Spain, South Africa, South Korea, and Sweden.  Other nations allow female soldiers to serve in certain Combat Arms positions such as the United Kingdom which allow women to serve in Artillery roles while still excluding them from units with a dedicated Infantry
Submarines	Australia, Canada, Spain, Sweden

**Source:** Skaine, Women in combat: A reference handbook, Santa Barbara, USA (2001)

Although women militants in some countries allowed to work in the ground combat, women soldiers in the US Armed Forces were still not allowed working in the ground combat at this time even though there were many studies which confirmed that if women soldiers pass the required standard of fitness and endurance in their chosen specialisation, they are able to perform equal or better than male soldiers. The next section will describe the role of women working in combat since 2000s.

### 3.2 Women in combat during Iraq and Afghanistan wars

The definition of combat have changed since 2001 because the US had to send troops to Iraq and Afghanistan. In the beginning of the 21st century, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in 2001 and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2003 required more soldiers to serve the armed forces. The number of soldiers for crucial jobs, such as bomb disposal and intelligence, were not enough, so, army commanders then had to request more soldiers to work in these areas (Alvarez, 2009). At the same time, the 1994 Combat Exclusion policy was also obsoleted when there was the absence of a clear line between enemy and friendly territory in both Iraq and Afghanistan wars (Service Women's Action Network, 2015). This means that both men and women must be combat-ready for all times. Although the US military forces still forbids women to work in ground combat, the Army commander then explained this by saying that “women have been ‘attached’ to a combat unit rather than ‘assigned’” (Alvarez, 2009). In fact, women militants were assigned to ground combat as members of Forward Support Companies (FSCs), Lioness Teams, Cultural Support Teams (CSTs) and Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in Iraq and Afghanistan wars (Service Women's Action Network, 2015). These women soldiers were trained to search women at checkpoints in these wars because of local cultural sensitivities. This assignment is considered to put female soldiers at risk in the same way it does male soldiers (Myers, 2009). Therefore, the joining of women in ground

combat then made the 1994 policy meaningless and women soldiers also had a chance to prove that they had the same ability as men to work in ground combat.

After these wars, the US army changed the definition of 'combat' to be more specific to give women more chances to work in the military and the impact of this is that the submarine corps, armored divisions, fighter plane squadrons, paratroops, infantry regiments and the US Army's Special Forces are the only areas where women are not allowed to work (Enloe, 2007). In 2009, more than 92 percent of specialist positions were open to women in the military forces (Department of Defense, 2009). Interestingly, Judith Stiehm (2012) who is on a Harvard University panel mentioned that as women are not allowed to be assigned to combat arms, this may be one reason why the number of women in the military is low; certain positions in the armed forces require the experience of combat arms.

In 2005, CNN, USA Today and Gallup conducted surveys about whether women should serve in ground combat. They found that approximately 44 percent agreed that women should be assigned to ground combat (Putko, 2008, p. 28). Moreover, in 2009, Captain Ervin R. Stone prepared a report on Women in Combat: Standardize the Physical Fitness Test. In this report, he proposed that "allowing women who meet the mental and physical combat requirements of the Marine Corps to serve in any military occupational specialty will ensure the military of the future fulfills the expectations of our nation" (Stone, 2009, p. 1). This means any female who perform equal to or better than male soldiers in mental and physical combat are able to work in ground combat with a unified combat standard and proper training. Stone (2009) believes that the Marine Corps should establish the requirement of physical standards for men and women and anyone who passes this requirement should be allowed to work in all fields.

On January 24, 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced that both men and women are eligible to be assigned in ground combat. The DoD ordered all branches of the military to fully integrate women into every job field or request an exception to policy by January 1, 2016 (Kamarck, 2015). After announcing this new policy, there were 14,325 positions that were opened for women in that year (Kamarck, 2015). Panetta further stated that if members of our military can meet the qualifications for a job, then they should have the right to serve, regardless of creed, colour, gender or sexual orientation.

Furthermore, Brownson (2014) conducted research about the equivalency of females in the US Marines Corps, which is one of the toughest and most masculine of all military organizations. Brownson (2014) explained that the term 'equivalent' is opposed to the term 'equal' to understand "the distinction between the physicality, skills and behaviors both males and females bring to their Marine Corps experience. In other words, even though female marines may not have 'equal' strength and endurance to male marines, females can be accepted as 'equivalent' when they prove to male peers that they perform competently and professionally in their chosen specialism. In the Marine Corps, both females and males have to pass the required standard of fitness and endurance in their chosen specialism. Normally, most female marines cannot pass tests or perform the physical standards of marine infantry, which is the hardest combat role. Female marines who want to work in the combat arms, like marine infantry, cannot simply be equivalent to male marines, but they must be the physical equals to their male peers. Therefore, at present only a few women are qualified to work in combat arms (Brownson, 2014). The accession of women in the combat arms in the US military forces is approximately one percent or less (A.C. King, 2014, p. 385). However, most female marines pass the lower standard of fitness and endurance to work in noncombat specialisms (Brownson, 2014). Brownson's (2014) research further confirmed that female marines who are able to demonstrate their ability to meet the physical standards and their professional competence have been accepted as equivalent to male marines. In addition, King (2014) indicated that women soldiers should be allowed to work in ground combat in 2016 in the US and some of the combat troops will be all female.

Interestingly, the military services should further be improved if the armed forces allows women to work with men in the ground combat. King (2013) argues that the armed forces at present rely on the combat performance which are training and professional competence. This means that individuals are judged on their professional ability, not on their gender. He further explained that if the infantry judges female militants from their ability, not their gender when they allow female militants to work in the ground combat in 2016, female militants who have professional ability should be integrated into the infantry and work as strong militants for country. A good example which clearly shows that female militants have the same ability as male militants to work in ground combat, is that there were two female militants who have

been recognized as heroism in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and they earned Silver Star medals which are the nation's third-highest medal (Burrelli, 2013). Both these two female militants worked in the ground combat and have fought alongside men in these two wars. The next section will discuss whether these changes reduce gender discrimination in the workplace.

#### 4. Discussion

In workplace context, 'discrimination' refers to employers who treat male and female employees differently (Crosby & Stockdale, 2007; Giele & Stebbins, 2003). The term 'gender discrimination' refers to practices whereby employers refuse to hire and promote any person or who treat any person differently because of their gender (Gregory, 2003). In the US, the term sex discrimination has been used instead of gender discrimination. According to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, sex discrimination refers to "an unlawful employment practice for an employer to ... fail or refuse to hire or discharge any individual or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment because of such individual's ... sex" ("Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," 1964). To achieve gender equality in the workplace, the Armed Forces Overarching Personnel Strategy also stated that:

'to achieve universal acceptance and application of a working environment free from harassment, intimidation and unlawful discrimination, in which all have equal opportunity, consistent with our legal obligations, to realize their full potential in contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of operational effectiveness.'

(Ministry of Defence, 2000)

This means that to have gender equality in the workplace, men and women who work in the armed forces should have the same opportunities to work in ground combat.

In this case, it shows clearly that there is the changing role of women in ground combat before and after the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Before the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, female militants faced gender discrimination in the US Armed Forces. Female militants did not have the same chances as men to work in ground combat because the DoD passed the 1994 Combat Exclusion Policy to exclude women from being assigned to ground combat. This policy is used as a good excuse to exclude women from ground combat and this is called gender discrimination in the workplace. However, in 2001, the definition of combat was changed. Women are allowed to work in many positions that have not been seen as feminine work, but still not allow to be assigned in ground combat. Later, the DoD announced that both men and women are eligible to be assigned in ground combat in January 2013. This means that men and women have the same chances to work in all unit. This means that female militants face less gender discrimination in the armed forces as the DoD still allows fighting units to submit their proposal to exclude women by January 2016. The changing roles of women militants in ground combat clearly show that there is an improvement to achieve gender equality in the US Armed Forces.<sup>1</sup>

A good example to inform that there is less gender discrimination in the armed forces is that women are allowed to be assigned to the Marine Corp. After Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced that women are eligible to be assigned in all units in 2013, the Marines Corp which is a unit in ground combat which is one of the last all-male bastions in the military starts to look for women to serve in this unit. Twenty-six women have attempted to the three-month infantry officer course (CBS News, 2015). However, all of them have to drop out from this course on the first day because of the brutal training that women are not able to pass it. Brigadier General George Smith who is the officer in charge of the Marine Infantry Officer Course explained about this point that the course "is designed just right and there are no plans to change it" because "the realities of combat are not going to change based on gender as the enemy does not care whether you are a male or female" (CBS News, 2015). The reason that women do not pass the course training is that the body structure of woman is different from man. Women's hips do not design to carry the heavy loads that are required for combat. In this test, both men and women are required to carry

<sup>1</sup> There are several types of gender discrimination in the workplace, such as the gender pay gap, welfare and promotion. However, this article is only interested in gender discrimination in the workplace, that is, when women and are treated differently in the workplace because of their gender. For instance, men and women do not have the same chance to do the same work.

a 14 kilogram of pack and rifle and they do not know that how long they have to carry it. Men militants can carry it at least for 14 hours while women cannot do it (CBS News, 2015). Therefore, there are no women who has passed this course in the past two years. The Marine Corp is still all male militants even though women are eligible to be assigned. This is a good example to show that both men and women have the same chance in the armed forces to work in all units even though no women do pass those required course training.

However, there is a question that need to be asked here if the US Armed Forces did not have to send troops to Iraq and Afghanistan wars; there are enough soldiers to serve the military, will the armed forces allow women to work in all units same as nowadays? The answer of this question should be 'no' even though the armed forces show that they are strongly supporting equal opportunity in the workplace. A good example to support this case is the British Armed Forces which is a member of NATO and send troops to Iraq and Afghanistan wars same as the US Armed Forces. The British Armed Forces also shows high positive and enthusiastic to provide equal opportunity in the armed forces. In March 1999, the British Armed Forces Minister announced that "Every day is International Women's Day in the modern Armed Forces" when the armed forces allow women to be assigned to some specialist positions, exclude ground combat (Woodward & Winter, 2004). Woodward and Winter (2004) further stated that in the military, there is a highly maculine culture that male are different from women and the latter are not suitable to work in ground combat. This idea is very hard to be changed. Furthermore, Christine Cnossen (cited in Woodward & Winter, 2004, p. 296) argued that "even when faced with personnel shortages, the military desperately attempts to exclude women from ground combat positions and constantly revises based on studied and unstudied areas in order to justify its exclusionary policies". This means that the major reason that the armed forces exclude women from ground combat is a culturally based reason rather than biological. As mentioned earlier that working as a team in ground combat requires a strong loyalty and support in achieving objectives. It is then impossible for a highly masculine organization like the military that men and women gain trust and loyalty from each other. Therefore, it is quite hard to believe that the US Armed Forces will allow women working in ground combat as like what happened today.

In conclusion, there is a changing policy in the US Armed Forces after Iraq and Afghanistan wars to allow women to work in ground combat. This creates equal opportunity between men and women in the military. Women militants then face less gender discrimination in the armed forces. However, this situation should be changed. Women militants still face gender discrimination if the US Armed Forces do not have to send troops to Iraq and Afghanistan wars because the US Armed Forces may not allow women to work in all units as there is the culture of the military that has never allowed females to fight wars.

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