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## ERA Would Mean Women in Combat

by Brig. Gen. Andrew J. Gatsis, U.S. Army, Ret.

There is an attempt today to liberalize the armed forces and unisex the society through the women's movement.

If you have been lulled into satisfaction by the refusal of Congress to vote for registration of women in the armed forces at this point and the Supreme Court's ruling against drafting women, you should take another look. Should the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) be ratified, drafting of women into the military will once again become a real probability. With the meaning of the Constitution changed to make sex the sole basis for prohibiting discrimination, it logically follows that if men are drafted and put in combat, women must be treated likewise.

Through my work in defending the nation's security, I have found that one of the prime objectives of the proposed ERA is to establish a legal equality which will force our women into the armed forces and subject them to combat. For, if they can be equalized with men in the most alien environment known to womanhood, no better example can be used to convince society that women can do anything men can do and that there is little difference between the sexes.

Make no mistake: ERA is definitely connected to our national security. The Pentagon, during the Carter administration, gave ERA goals high priority in the formulation of defense policy. Former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown pronounced in July 1980 that ERA is a defense issue. To date, under the present administration, I have seen no change in the Pentagon's policies with respect to this matter.

There are some women, certainly in the minority, who like the military, like to live and work with men, who have given an excellent performance in the past in certain noncombat positions such as clerks, telephone operators, computer technicians, supply supervisors, nurses and the like. World War II is ample proof of this. However, these roles do not satisfy the objective of the women's liberation movement—to gain total equality with men in all sectors of military activity, regardless of the damaging effect it has on our defense structure.

In the armed forces, this absolute equality disrupts

every aspect of good morale and the high state of discipline needed to maintain unit cohesiveness. After seven years of shaping our military structure to conform with feminist goals, the result has been a weakened combat efficiency and a reduced redeployment capability.

The army has been forced to recognize this problem, as evidenced by its request last January to Reagan defense officials to scrap the fiscal 1986 goals (an increase from 69,000 to 87,500 women) set by the Carter administration.

In spite of President Reagan's assertions that he is against ERA, his Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, who is known to be liberal on social issues, enthusiastically promotes the same feminist objectives as the Carter administration. The Defense Department has ignored the army's request to put these abnormally large female quotas aside and continues to work fervently toward increasing the size of the woman contingent in our military forces from 8 percent to 12 percent, a strength figure initiated by the Carter administration and unequalled by any other country in the world. On June 22, 1981, Secretary Weinberger stated in one of his speeches, "We hope to use more women in combat jobs."

The current drive to recruit large numbers of women into the military services stems from: 1) a shortage of volunteer male recruits, and 2) the intent to use the AVF as a mechanism for enhancing the goals of the women's movement. The first can be solved by drafting men. The second is harmful to the military and is not needed.

If ERA is passed and women are drafted, they will be subject to combat, whether such service is legally authorized or not. There are no more segregated women's units, as in the past. Women today are co-located with men throughout the armed forces, including positions within the combat support units. These units, situated as they are in the combat zone, are required to fight. In the event of a draft, women could not avoid these positions. The military structure demands it.

There is no such thing as separating combat from noncombat in the combat support units. Truck drivers, for example, in combat support units carrying supplies to the fighting elements must run the roads. Many will be ambushed by enemy breakthrough patrols. Supply points in the rear will be attacked by artillery, infiltrators and airborne forces. Women in these units will have to fight and will become casualties.

This is alarming enough, but even worse is that many women will be brought into the close combat units (fighting elements) to replace quickly the casualties of units which have been decimated or nearly destroyed. In such situations, replacements are needed immediately, and the quickest way to get them is from the nearby combat support units—which are now sexually integrated. This is a common occurrence in combat, for the replacement pipeline is slow and so complex that it never flows evenly or provides the replacements needed soon enough in an emergency. Anyone with real combat experience knows this. Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, and the Chosen Reservoir are excellent examples of using combat support units to reinforce combat elements.

To achieve the kind of equality the women's movement seeks in the armed forces requires women soldiers to perform tasks they cannot do in many of the military occupational specialties to which they are now assigned. Two reorganizational changes have caused this problem: 1) sexually integrating the army, rather than segregating male and female as in the past, and 2) assigning women to roles that were formerly nontraditional for female soldiers, such as line pole climbers. From this situation has evolved the exact opposite of equal pay for equal work: What exists is equal pay for unequal work.

The imbalance of work performance resulting from the policy of total sexual equality stems from at least six conditions: physiological differences between the sexes, sexual abuse, large numbers of pregnancies, sole parenthood, sexual fraternization among the ranks, which creates permissiveness, and female inability to cope with psychological stress as well as men.

Women generally are physically weaker than men, particularly in upper body strength—the kind of muscle needed to do most of the heavy manual tasks required by the military services in combat support units. Female soldiers assigned to these units find that they cannot discharge many of the duties required of them, and most of those they can do they accomplish at a slower rate than men. The result is less work.

In an army that authorizes 95 percent of its job categories for assignment to women, and in which 40 percent of the women are filling traditionally all-male positions, such as mechanics, truck drivers, explosive demolition technicians and the like, this physical strength deficiency has a bad effect on job efficiency and is becoming alarmingly worse as the military in-

creases female enlistments. A recent training and doctrine command army study shows that efficiency goes down proportionally as the ratio of women soldiers to that of males increases in military units. In the combat arena, it takes upper body strength to dig a foxhole quickly in hard ground, cut a path through the thick jungle all day with a machete, fight an enemy soldier with a rifle butt and a bayonet, cut, lift and carry heavy logs for constructing defensive bunkers or pull a man out of a crashed burning helicopter.

Even in the noncombat skills required in the combat support units (that is, nontraditional roles) women find that they cannot do many of the tasks required, and those they can do, they accomplish at a slower rate. This obviously results in less work and reduced operational efficiency. As a general rule, female soldiers have trouble with or cannot lift heavy equipment such as ammunition, mechanics' tool sets, sandbags, food crates or large camouflage nets. They cannot move field range stoves, teletype machines, heavy generators or big field desks. During field exercises, they have great trouble changing heavy truck tires, hitching trailers to the trucks and carrying people on medical litters. They cannot brake, steer and drive trucks in rough terrain, cannot put up cumbersome antennas, erect large bulky tents, construct ammunition bunkers, dig adequate latrines or handle lifting tackle off recovery vehicles. These kinds of tasks are only samples of what is required in the combat support category—not to mention a great many more difficult military skills needed for women to defend themselves.

When her physical limitations are coupled with her living and working environment, where she is frequently subject to sexual abuse, the woman soldier becomes an even greater liability. For example, a woman soldier is not normally allowed to perform guard duty at night alone. Most frequently, she is excused from this duty entirely. In most tactical units, women are not allowed to drive over 10 hours or late at night. In a military field exercise named "Reforged," held several years ago, women soldiers refused to service generators in the dark for fear of being attacked.

Another hard fact that the army can no longer afford to ignore is that at any given time in the year, 10 percent of the army's women are pregnant and cannot redeploy overseas. This amounts to 6,900 out of a 69,000 woman contingent who cannot be shipped out in the event of mobilization. For obvious reasons, there are substantial periods of time during the pregnancy and immediately after it (approximately 105 days) when the female soldier is unable to perform her duties. Someone else must take on these additional jobs. Imagine what a 10 percent nondeployment rate, applied to a 6-million drafted woman contingent, would do to combat readiness: 600,000 women could not be used in case of an emergency.

Another pressing problem confronting the army today is that sex integration and changing societal standards have created a large number of unmarried

one-parent families in the service. These unmarried parents have no spouses to help them take care of their children and cannot devote full time to their jobs throughout the year. Frequent absences from duty are caused by such problems as sick children. Who will take care of the child when mama must go off to war? The Department of Defense has not been able to solve that one yet in computerized war games exercises.

Combine the elements I have discussed, and they are bound to have a debilitating effect on our army's ability to fight. The Russians and Israelis found this out the hard way in combat. As evidence, women make up less than 1 percent of the Soviet armed forces and 3 percent of the Israeli military. All serve in noncombat traditional roles. Compare this with an 8-percent woman contingent in the U.S. Army, projected for 12 percent, and it suggests that our leaders have lost their sense of proportion.

I only wish those who push for drafting and placing women in combat could see it as I have. Are they ready to see their daughters and wives exposed to the wrath of the enemy because they could not dig into the hard ground in time for protection? Do they desire to have them subjected to the stench of bloated and ripened bodies left in the sun several days, where fumigation is required by aircraft daily to minimize nausea? Do they want their daughters out on recovery patrols to shovel up decomposed human flesh into rubber sacks for evidence identification? Should they have to hear the screams of burning human torches trapped in the entanglements of barbed wire after napalm cans are exploded? Are they ready to see our women horribly mangled in a trapped mine field which no one can penetrate? Have the ERA proponents thought about what our women would suffer from the dregs of our own army alone, not to speak of what the enemy would do to them as POWS (such as a soldier attempting to have sex with a dead old Vietnamese woman)? How can we reconcile our moral perceptions of women with these immoralities of war?

No one who has seen real combat could believe that our congressmen, state legislators and governmental leaders would talk about legislation that would subject our women to these horrors of war.

We must understand what is at stake. One does not send in the second team when our national survival is in jeopardy, just to satisfy the whims of a disgruntled group of women liberationists. No matter how hard the feminists try to achieve total equality in the armed forces, the most they can hope to become is second class men.

I hope that the new administration and Congress will recognize that a strong defense is more than an increased budget, additional weapons systems, advanced technology and more people. The most essential ingredients are esprit de corps, male-to-male bonding, high morale, strong discipline and the ability for people to redeploy and perform efficiently on the job. These are the basic elements that make a fighting unit. Without them, you lose. And these are the components the women's movement tends to destroy.

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*Brig. Gen. Gatsis was an instructor in military science at La Salle Military Academy, New York, before being assigned to the Pentagon as a logistics staff officer. He became manager of plans and policy for all European and Middle Eastern country military assistance programs. He then served two years as an infantry battalion and brigade commander in Vietnam, where his brigade in Long An Province earned a reputation as one of the most effective units in Vietnam for eliminating the enemy. Later he became the senior advisor to the South Vietnamese 25th Division and, as the first American soldier to cross over into Cambodia with the South Vietnamese army, accompanied the incursion there.*

*Brig. Gen. Gatsis became chief of the department of tactics at the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga. He then proceeded to Hawaii, where he became deputy assistant chief of staff for plans in the highest military headquarters in the Pacific area. Thereafter, he became assistant division commander to the 25th U.S. Infantry Division and commander of the U.S. Army Support Command, Hawaii, in charge of all army installations in Hawaii.*

*Among many schools Brig. Gen. Gatsis attended and completed, the most significant are the Counter-intelligence School, Command and General Staff College, Armed Forces Staff College and the Air War College.*

*He is one of the most decorated officers in the armed forces. He has been awarded the nation's second highest decoration for valor (Distinguished Service Cross) and the nation's highest decoration for meritorious service (Distinguished Service Medal). In addition, he was awarded two Silver Stars, four Legions of Merit, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Bronze Stars, 27 Air Medals, two Army Commendation Medals, two Purple Hearts, the South Vietnamese Army Distinguished Order and three Gallantry Crosses with Gold, Silver and Bronze Star.*

*Brigadier General and Mrs. Gatsis currently reside in Rocky Mount, N.C., with two of their four children.*

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## Abortions at West Point

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point has secretly put into effect a policy of encouraging abortions and of allowing the cadets who have them to remain in good standing. The policy induces abortions rather than live births for cadets who have illegitimate pregnancies, and encourages promiscuity by promising confidentiality and no penalties.

The Academy's honor code has been a cherished possession of cadets and graduates. It supposedly requires complete integrity in word and deed and is strictly enforced; violations are a cause for dismissal. But, under the new policy, the female cadets who have illegitimate pregnancies are protected against dismissal and are kept in good standing as though they were honorable cadets.

All the female cadet needs to do in order to cover up her fornication and be kept in good standing is to accept counseling and then take a three-day leave over the weekend to have her abortion. If she gets married or has her baby, she will be unceremoniously dismissed from the Academy.

This policy is all set forth in a directive called "Counseling Procedures and Administrative Instructions in Cases of Cadet Pregnancies" issued on May 28, 1981 by Colonel Harvey H. Perritt, Jr., who signs himself Chief of Staff/Deputy Post Commander.

The new USMA policy states that pregnant cadets "will have the following options: (1) tender resignation, (2) request leave without pay, (3) take such measures as she determines appropriate, and remain a cadet in good standing unless medically disqualified." The policy directive continues: "Cadets who wish to remain a cadet may do so provided they meet all medical qualifications. ... Tactical officers may ... grant up to three days of leave for cadets who so request in conjunction with pregnancy. ... Unless circumstances prohibit, this one-time leave will be granted between Friday and Monday..."

It is rather obvious that a "one-time leave" of "three days" is long enough to have an abortion but not long enough to have a baby. Other parts of the policy directive are also crafted to induce abortions.

In order to "meet all medical qualifications" necessary to remain a cadet, she must never be more than three months pregnant. "In the average pregnancy, the point of medical inability to perform duties usually will not be reached until the end of the first trimester, at approximately the twelfth week as judged by the Surgeon, USMA." Once the cadet passes that point in her pregnancy, she has lost her chance to request leave without pay, because only "cadets not medically disqualified may request leave without pay for up to one year."

If she requests leave without pay prior to that point in time, she then is subject to another provision in the directive: "Cadets requesting leave may return to USMA, providing they meet the same requirements as for original admission, to include being medically fit, not married, and not having custody or legal responsibility for a child."

The cadet who finds she is pregnant is absolutely compelled to submit to the USMA counseling procedure. "The cadet will further be advised that consultation, within 48 hours of verification of pregnancy, with the Counseling Coordinator or Alternate, is a mandatory duty."

## VFW Opposes Women in Combat

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, at their 1981 convention in Philadelphia, passed their usual raft of resolutions calling for a strong military defense and veterans' benefits. But Resolution No. 424 was different. In two pages of "whereases," it tackled a subject that few military men or politicians have dared to discuss.

First, the resolution pointed out that "the number of women in the armed forces has more than quadrupled since 1972, from less than 2% of the total force to about 8.9%." It points out that "women comprise 26% of the ROTC force at 291 colleges, while 36,000 women are in Junior ROTC programs."

Making a point for which the English language has not yet developed satisfactory terminology, it says that "in 1972, 90% of the women in the armed forces were in 'women type' jobs. Today, this percentage has shrunk to about 50%." The resolution bluntly states what few Americans know: that "on December 20, 1977, the Secretary of the Army approved the assignment of women to 'hazardous assignments near combat areas.'"

The resolution then points out that "no other country, except New Zealand, has brought so many women into their armed forces. The Soviet Union has only 10,000 women in forces totalling over 4.6 million; Israel about 8,000 out of 278,000. In short, we are the only nation going this route."

Having stated the basic facts, the resolution then draws its conclusions. "The presence of thousands of women in our armed forces, and the prospect of many more thousands in the future, is a 'quiet revolution' with profound implications for our national security."

The resolution continues: "As structured today, should our armed forces be committed to action, women would be killed, wounded and captured in numbers that have no precedent in the history of the modern world." It then reminds the Congressmen that "the most *profoundly political* — not narrowly military — action representative government can do is to call upon its young citizens to fight and possibly die in defense of the nation or the nation's foreign policy objectives."

Then, the VFW resolution lays the decision-making responsibility directly on our civilian representatives. "The Congress should be called upon to face up to the 'no win' position they have placed the armed forces in (i.e., equal rights now, never mind the probable security and human cost), and codify, under the United States Code, the role the people's representatives desire American women to play in future combat."

The VFW gives its own advice: "Now, therefore be it resolved, that the position of the VFW on this question before the Congress and the Executive Branch will be: No women will be assigned to ground, sea or air jobs that call for aggressively seeking out, closing with, and destroying the enemy."

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