



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

January 13, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
(PERSONNEL AND READINESS)  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
(RESERVE AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: DIRECT GROUND COMBAT DEFINITION AND ASSIGNMENT RULE

References: (a) SECDEF memo, April 28, 1993  
(b) SECDEF memo, February 2, 1988  
(c) FY94 National Defense Authorization Act

My memorandum dated April 28, 1993, directed the Military Services to open more specialties and assignments to women and established an Implementation Committee to ensure that those policies are applied consistently. I also charged the Committee to review and make recommendations on several specific implementation issues.

The Committee has completed its first such review, that of the "appropriateness of the 'Risk Rule'", reference (b), and concluded that, as written, the risk rule is no longer appropriate. Accordingly, effective October 1, 1994, reference (b) is rescinded.

My memorandum restricted women from direct combat on the ground. The Committee studied this and recommended that a ground combat rule be established for assignment of women in the Armed Forces. Accordingly, the following direct ground combat assignment rule, and accompanying definition of "direct ground combat," are adopted effective October 1, 1994 and will remain in effect until further notice.

A. Rule. Service members are eligible to be assigned to all positions for which they are qualified, except that women shall be excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground, as defined below.

B. Definition. 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. Direct ground

Enclosure (1)

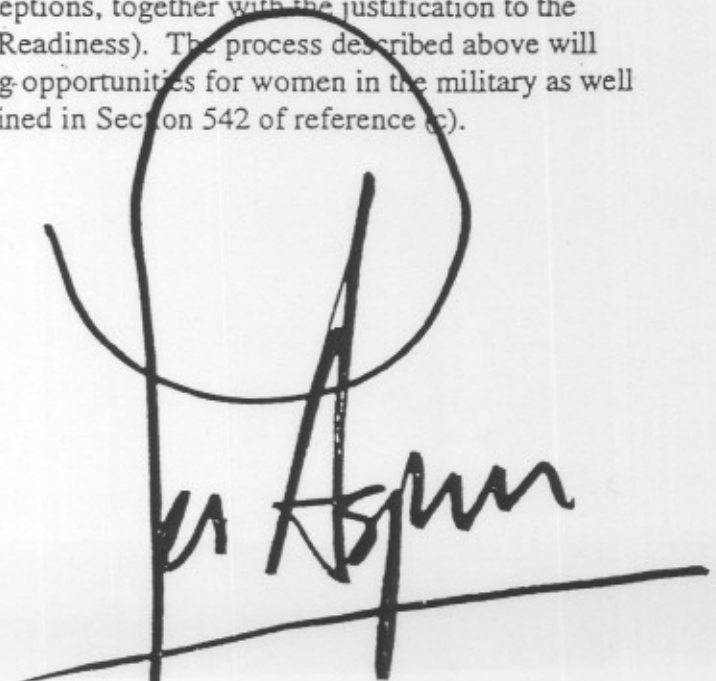
combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect.

The Services will use this guidance to expand opportunities for women. No units or positions previously open to women will be closed under these instructions.

The Services will provide the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), not later than May 1, 1994, with lists of all units and positions closed to women and their proposed status based on implementation of this policy. These lists will be arrayed in three columns: jobs currently closed that are proposed to be opened, jobs currently closed that are proposed to remain closed, and a column justifying each entry. The proposed changes will be reviewed by the Implementation Committee and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness). The Services will then coordinate approved implementing policies and regulations with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) prior to their issuance. These policies and regulations may include the following restrictions on the assignment of women:

- where the Service Secretary attests that the costs of appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements are prohibitive;
- where units and positions are doctrinally required to physically collocate and remain with direct ground combat units that are closed to women;
- where units are engaged in long range reconnaissance operations and Special Operations Forces missions; and
- where job related physical requirements would necessarily exclude the vast majority of women Service members.

The Services may propose additional exceptions, together with the justification to the Assistance Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness). The process described above will enable the Department to proceed with expanding opportunities for women in the military as well as comply with the reporting requirements contained in Section 542 of reference (c).



The signature is handwritten in black ink. It features a large, prominent circle around the first few letters, which appear to be 'P' and 'A'. Below the circle, the rest of the signature is written in a cursive style, including the letters 'er' and 'Aspin'. A horizontal line is drawn across the bottom of the signature.



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

UPR

JUL 30 2007

The Honorable Ike Skelton  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 541(b) of Public Law 109-163 requires that I review the current and future implementation of the Department of Defense (DoD) Policy of January 13, 1994, regarding the assignment of women. The statute specifically directed that I *"...closely examine Army unit modularization efforts, and associated personnel assignment policies, to ensure their compliance with Department of Defense policy articulated in the January 1994 memorandum."*

Following careful review, including analysis by RAND's National Defense Research Institute, it has been determined that Army modularization efforts and associated assignment policies, and assignment policies of the Departments of Navy and Air Force comply with the 1994 DoD Policy.

Women in the military continue to make important contributions, as well as profound sacrifices, in roles critical to the national defense. The Department appreciates your interest in the management of women in the Armed Forces. A similar letter is being sent to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Sincerely,

cc:  
The Honorable Duncan Hunter  
Ranking Member



OSD 06638-07



8/1/2007 1:26:06 PM



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

JUL 30 2007

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 541(b) of Public Law 109-163 requires that I review the current and future implementation of the Department of Defense (DoD) Policy of January 13, 1994, regarding the assignment of women. The statute specifically directed that I "*...closely examine Army unit modularization efforts, and associated personnel assignment policies, to ensure their compliance with Department of Defense policy articulated in the January 1994 memorandum.*"

Following careful review, including analysis by RAND's National Defense Research Institute, it has been determined that Army modularization efforts and associated assignment policies, and assignment policies of the Departments of Navy and Air Force comply with the 1994 DoD Policy.

Women in the military continue to make important contributions, as well as profound sacrifices, in roles critical to the national defense. The Department appreciates your interest in the management of women in the Armed Forces. A similar letter is being sent to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Gates".

cc:

The Honorable John McCain  
Ranking Member



OSD 06638-07



8/1/2007 1:26:09 PM