



Women and Military Services: A History, Analysis, and Overview of Key Issues

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Today, the armed forces of virtually all nations have women in them. In the United States, women represent about 10 percent of the active duty military population. Thus the topic of women and military service is an important and timely one. Women have served in and with the United States armed forces since the founding of our nation; yet it has only been since the 1970s that issues concerning women in the military have been seriously and systematically pursued by both scholars and military planners. This volume is an effort to identify and examine key events, questions, and policies pertaining to women in the United States armed forces. To do this, a multidisciplinary analytical strategy that incorporates the methodology and conceptual tools of history, social science, organizational theory, policy analysis, and future studies was adopted. Chapter 1 presents a history of women in the US armed forces. To understand the contemporary situation of women in the military, it is necessary to understand the historical roots of the issues. Many of the questions being raised about women in the military today have also been issues of concern in the past; thus these questions have a "military" history. In fact, there have been several recurring questions about the utilization of women in the military. These issues have relevance today, just as they had in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the ways in which we address and answer these concerns may be different now because of (1) changing patterns of societal expectations, and (2) changes in the military organization itself. It is these issues that form the basis for Chapter 2, which uses social science concepts and analytical methods to examine major instruments and patterns of change regarding women in the armed forces. Both internal military factors and factors external to the military organization are examined for their effects on the military roles of women. What forces seem to determine the extent and the scope of the utilization of women in the military? Is the question, that is explored. Chapter 3 identifies and analyzes 10 contemporary "key issue areas" pertaining to women in the military. It examines not only the visible symptoms of current problems but also the underlying causes that contribute to them. Utilizing an "organizational culture" approach, Chapter 3 examines the organizational values and assumptions upon which military policy is built and looks at the future of women in the US Armed Forces. Finally, it examines some potentially useful techniques that could be employed in future policy planning.

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