from Phyllis Schlafly

July 25, 1991

Let’s Hear the Whole Truth About Combat

The day the Senate Armed Services Committee held hearings on the feminist proposal to repeal the laws that exclude women from military combat, the television networks showed only a 20-second soundbite from one general who seemed to oppose the idea merely from male bias rather than evidence. But a transcript of the entire hearing shows that the heads of all four military services, who sit with Gen. Colin Powell on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were unanimous in opposing this feminist notion.

Gen. Alfred M. Gray, Jr., USMC: “I see no need to change the law or the exclusion policy.” Gen. Merrill A. McPeak, USAF: “I would like it to stay on the books personally." Adm. Frank B. Kelso II, USN: “It’s my personal view that the law should remain as it stands.” Gen. Carl E. Vuono, USA: “I do not believe you should change the law. You should keep it the way it is.”

The hearing showed that repeal of the combat exclusion laws would not make combat optional for servicewomen, but would subject them to involuntary assignment to combat. Sen. Sam Nunn: “If we expand the opportunities of women into combat arms, could we sustain as a matter of policy a distinction between men and women in terms of involuntary assignment?” Gen. Vuono: “should you change it and open up all those positions to women soldiers, then they would be involuntarily assigned to those positions.”

Sen. Nunn: “What effect would it have on women being willing to go in the military for the jobs they now hold?" Army Staff Sgt. Susan Leifeste: “That would change my mind.” Marine Gunnery Sgt. Jean A. Amico: “Sir, if the law did that, I believe that enlistments of women in the Marine Corps would definitely go down… I do not think we would have very many women Marines left.”

Contrary to what we’ve been told for the last several years, the hearing showed that the U.S. Armed Services give servicewomen preferential treatment through double standards on physicals and “gender norming” on tests. Sen. Nunn: “so there are differences in the physical test in the Army?” Gen. Vuono: “Yes. The test is the same, the standards are a little different.”

Sen. Nunn: “To achieve passing grades on that test, there is a lower criterion [for women], is that right?” Gen. Vuono: “Yes.” Adm. Kelso: “We have a fitness standard and the standard is different for males and females.”

Sen. Nunn: “Admiral, [is there] a distinction between what the women have to achieve and [what] the men have to?” Adm. Kelso: “Yes, sir.” Gen. McPeak: “Yes, sir, the physical fitness standards in the Air Force are different for men and women.” Gen. Gray: “The physical standard requirements are definitely different between male and female in the Marine Corps for the obvious reasons of physical strength and the like.”

The hearing showed that the enlisted women oppose the idea of assigning women to combat. Marine Sgt. Amico: “I do not wish to go into an offensive combat role. . . We do not wish to carry a rifle and lug a pack around and live the way the grunts do.tl

General Robert H. Barrow, former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps; “I know the [female] Marines; they’re terrific; [but] I’ve never met one who wanted to be an infantryman. Who wants them to be an infantryman? The hardline feminists do…They have their agenda, and it, doesn’t have anything to do with national security.”

The hearing reminded us that repeal of the combat exclusion would remove the basis for exempting women from the draft and from draft registration. Gen. Barrow: “I do worry about this thing called the draft... I believe if this thing persists. somewhere down the road that women would not only register for it, but if we had a draft they would be compelled to serve, and yes, they would end up in the infantry.”

Sen. John Warner asked Gen. Barrow to “put aside modesty and tell about some of his combat experiences.” Gen. Barrow: “I was in Wor1d War II, Korea, and Vietnam -- in command in all three. And I found nowhere any place for women to be down in the ground combat element. I [was in]… the Chosin Reservoir, 40 years ago, December 1950, North Korea, probably one of the greatest epics of all times the First Marine Division confronting eight Chinese divisions spread out over a long 25-to-40-mile linear disposition, north-south, in extreme co1d, minus-25, winds out of Siberia bringing the wind chill down to God knows what, mountains, constant attacking, they attacking us, we attacking them, for days, night and day, death all about, frostbite, inadequate clothing, Suppose we had 15 percent

women, 20 percent women… I wouldn't be here. I guess Kin Il-Sung would be taking care of my bones along with everybody else's in North Korea."

Gen. Barrow concluded: "I know about my service. If you persist in pushing [women] down into the combat area, it would destroy the Marine Corps. Simple as that -- something no enemy has been able to do in over 200 years."