



## **Chronology of Significant Legal & Policy Changes Affecting Women in the Military: 1947–2003**

### **1947**

- Congress passes the Army-Navy Nurse Act which:
  - Establishes the Army Nurse Corps and the Navy Nurse Corps as permanent staff corps of the regular Army and Navy.
  - Integrates nurses into the officer ranks of the regular Army and Navy with Lieutenant Colonel/Commander as the highest permanent ranks. Nurse Corps directors are authorized to hold the temporary rank of Colonel/Captain.

### **1948**

- Congress passes the Women's Armed Services Integration Act.

Women are eligible to serve in the regular active peacetime forces under the following conditions:

- Women can constitute no more than 2 percent of the total force.
- The number of women officers can total no more than 10 percent of the 2 percent.
- Promotion of women officers is capped above paygrade 0-3 (Captain/Lieutenant).
- Paygrade 0-5 (Lieutenant Colonel/ Commander) is the highest permanent rank women can obtain. Women serving as directors of WACs, WAVES, WAFs, and
- Women Marines are temporarily promoted to paygrade 0-6 (Colonel/Captain).
- Women are barred from serving aboard Navy vessels (except hospital ships and certain transports) and from duty in combat aircraft engaged in combat missions.
- Women are denied spousal benefits for their husbands unless they depend on their wives for over 50 percent of their support.
- By policy, women are precluded from having command authority over men.
- The Coast Guard is not included in this legislation, but a few SPARS remain in Women's Coast Guard Reserve.

### **1951**

- The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) is created.
- Executive Order 10240 authorizes the services to discharge any woman who becomes pregnant or a parent by adoption, or who has a minor child/stepchild at home at least thirty days a year.

## **1967**

- The Women's Armed Services Integration Act is modified by P.L. 90-130:
  - The 2-percent ceiling on women's numbers is lifted.
  - The caps on officer promotions above paygrade O-3 are removed and women become eligible for permanent promotion to paygrade O-6.
  - Women become eligible for Flag/General Officer rank.

## **1969**

- The Air Force opens ROTC to women.
- The Joint Armed Forces Staff College admits women.

## **1971**

- The Air Force allows pregnant women to request a waiver of the automatic discharge policy. The Air Force also changes recruiting rules to allow the enlistment of women with children—the first service to do so.

## **1972**

- *Frontiero v. Richardson*—This Supreme Court decision strikes down the differences between men and women with respect to dependent's benefits.
- The Army opens ROTC to women.
- Chief of Naval Operations Elmo Zumwalt issues a directive, Z-116, which:
  - Suspends restrictions on women succeeding to command ashore.
  - Authorizes limited entry of women into all enlisted ratings.
  - Opens assignment aboard the hospital ship USS *Sanctuary* to all women.
  - Allows women officers into additional occupational fields such as intelligence, cryptology, public affairs, and maintenance.
  - Opens the Chaplain Corps and Civil Engineering Corps to women.
  - Opens Navy ROTC to women.
  - Allows women to be selected for war college.

## **1973**

- The draft ends with the expiration of the Selective Service Act. As the era of the All-Volunteer Force starts, recruiting goals for women begin to increase.
- Navy women become eligible for aviation duty in noncombat aircraft.
- The Coast Guard begins accepting women for regular active duty.

## **1974**

- Army women become eligible for aviation duty in noncombat aircraft.

## **1975**

- Women enroll in the Coast Guard Academy.

## **1976**

- Congress opens the remaining service academies to women through P.L. 94-106.
- In *Crawford v. Cushman*, a U.S. Court of Appeals rules that Marine Corps regulations mandating the discharge of pregnant Marines violate the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution.

### **1977**

- ❑ Air Force women become eligible for aviation duty in noncombat aircraft.
- ❑ The Coast Guard assigns women to shipboard duty.

### **1978**

- ❑ As required by P.L. 95-79, Sec 303, the Department of Defense (DoD) provides a definition of combat to Congress.
- ❑ The Coast Guard removes all assignment restrictions based on gender.
- ❑ *Owens v. Brown* – District Judge John J. Sirica, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia rules that 10 USC Section 6015, which precluded the permanent assignment of women to Naval vessels other than hospital and transport ships, is unconstitutional.
- ❑ As part of FY-79 Defense Authorizations Act, 10 USC 6015 is amended to allow permanent assignment of women to non-combatant ships and temporary assignment to any ship not expected to have a combat mission.

### **1979**

- ❑ The Navy opens the Surface Warfare and Special Operations (diving and salvage) communities to women officers. Enlisted women become eligible for many shipboard occupations.

### **1980**

- ❑ Congress passes the Defense Officer Manpower Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) which:
  - Abolishes laws requiring separate appointment, promotion, accounting, and separation procedures for women officers in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. (The Air Force, founded in 1947, operated under laws providing a single personnel system from its inception.)
  - Requires that women in the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps now must be selected (rather than appointed to) Flag/General officer rank, i.e., that they must compete with male peers for promotion.

### **1981**

- ❑ In *Rostker v. Goldberg*, the Supreme Court upholds the constitutionality of excluding women from the draft and Selective Service registration.

### **1983**

- ❑ Operation Urgent Fury (the invasion of Grenada)—170 women soldiers serve, as do Air Force women in air transport crews.
- ❑ Air Force women in KC-135 and KC-10 tanker crews participate in a raid on Libya. Congress passes P.L. 98-160 establishing the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.

### **1988**

- ❑ The DoD Risk Rule is promulgated. It sets a single standard for evaluating positions and units from which the services can exclude women. As a result, 30,000 new positions are opened to women.

### **1989**

- ❑ Operation Just Cause (the invasion of Panama)—770 women deploy or are already there. A woman MP commands troops in a combat-like operation. Women flying Black Hawk helicopters come under fire.

### **1990/1991**

- ❑ Persian Gulf War
  - 40,782 women deploy to the Persian Gulf.
  - 13 women are killed and 2 are taken prisoner of war.

### **1991**

- ❑ The Kennedy-Roth Amendment to the FY 1992-93 Defense Authorizations Act repeals the provisions of Title 10 USC 8549 banning women from serving aboard combat aircraft engaged in combat missions.
- ❑ The Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces is convened.

### **1993**

- ❑ Secretary of Defense Les Aspin:
  - Orders all services to open combat aviation to women (in spite of the recommendation by the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces that Congress reinstate the ban).
  - Directs the Navy to draft legislation to repeal the combat ship exclusion, Title 10 USC 6015 (as recommended by the Presidential Commission).
  - Directs the Army and Marine Corps to study opening more assignments to women.

### **1994**

- ❑ Over 1,000 women participate in operations in Somalia between 1992-1994.
- ❑ The DoD risk rule is rescinded. This rule closed many units supporting ground combat operations to women. As a result, 32,700 Army positions and 48,000 Marine Corps positions are opened to women.
- ❑ Congress repeals Title 10 USC 6015, opening most Navy combatant ships to women (submarines and a few smaller ships remain closed).
- ❑ P.L. 103-446 requires the establishment of the Center for Women Veterans within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

### **1995**

- ❑ Over 1,200 women deploy for peacekeeping duties in Haiti.
- ❑ The Marine Corps selects a woman for aviation training for the first time.

### **1996**

- ❑ The peacekeeping operation in Bosnia begins—as of March 2001, over 15,000 American servicewomen had served in this operation.

### **1998**

- ❑ Operation Desert Fox (enforcement of the no-fly zone in Iraq) begins. Women aviators fly operational combat missions for the first time.

### **1999**

- ❑ The Navy opens Coastal Mine Hunters and Mine Counter Measures ships to women.
- ❑ Women aviators participate in combat operations during the air war in Kosovo. As of 2001, over 8,000 American service- women have served in Kosovo.

### **2000**

- ❑ Two women sailors are killed and several wounded in a terrorist attack upon the destroyer USS Cole.

### **2001**

- ❑ Six military women are among those killed during the September 11th attack on the Pentagon.
- ❑ Military women deploy to the Afghan theater as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, the war on terrorism.

### **2002**

- ❑ The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) allows the DACOWITS charter to expire and issues a new charter, which reduces by over half the number of committee members and modifies the committee's mission. Among the changes is the addition of family matters to the list of issues within the purview of DACOWITS.
- ❑ The Army decides to remove all eight women soldiers from its first Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition (RSTA) squadron. RSTA squadrons are expected to be part of the Army's planned fast-deploying combat brigades.
- ❑ A woman Marine is the first American military woman killed in theater in Afghanistan. She was one of several Marines killed in the crash of a military aircraft.
- ❑ The FY 2003 Defense Authorizations Act forbids military commanders from requiring (or strongly suggesting) the wearing of the abaya by military women serving in Saudi Arabia.
- ❑ The Act also requires the Department of Defense to submit an annual report on the status of women in the services.

### **2003**

- ❑ *Schwartz v. Rascon* filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts challenges the males-only provision for Selective Service registration.
- ❑ Over 25,400 women deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. One woman is killed and two are taken as prisoners of war.