



# LESSONS LEARNED - LEADERSHIP IN A MIXED GENDER ENVIRONMENT



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## **LESSONS LEARNED - LEADERSHIP IN A MIXED GENDER ENVIRONMENT**

### **Commander 1st Canadian Division**

#### **Foreword**

The complete integration of women into the Army, and in particular into the combat arms, is an important and emotional initiative that the Army has embarked upon. To achieve this objective, the Army will undergo fundamental change, a change that is in accordance with the present values of Canadian society. This change must be viewed as a means of strengthening the Army team by providing the opportunity to tap as yet unused resources. If the Army is to continue to serve Canada effectively, it must have access to the best and the brightest. This includes Canadian women who wish to serve their country.

This issue of the Dispatches has been published to assist in successfully achieving the desired end-state of complete and successful integration of women into the Army. **It is a lessons learned document, as it illustrates procedures, actions and initiatives that have both been successful and unsuccessful in the past.** Identifying and analyzing how the problems that hindered integration in the past were approached, should assist leaders in setting the necessary conditions to make this integration successful.

It is clear that the culture of the Army has not been one completely conducive to accepting that service by women in the combat arms is either feasible or desirable. In some cases this culture has resulted in a leadership environment which if it did not actively resist integration, certainly might have been more successful in facilitating it. The culture of the Army must evolve, and it is important for all of us to promote the required change. This change does not imply adoption of a double standard, or for that matter a relaxation of standards. It simply demands that all members of the Army achieve the one standard that meets operational requirements. In the most basic sense, all soldiers must be treated equitably.

It is clear that leadership will be the fundamental element if this initiative is to succeed. Knowledgeable, proactive and effective leadership will be required at every level, but most importantly within the levels where the integration is actively occurring. The instructor, section commander, platoon warrant officer, platoon commander and on up to the RSM and CO have the most critical roles to play. It is primarily there where this issue of "Dispatches" should have the greatest validity. I urge you to read, contemplate, and discuss what is written. You must acknowledge the very important part each of you must play in this initiative. It is acknowledged that while the large majority of our soldiers possess the necessary attitudes and values to facilitate this change, these attitudes must continue to be reinforced by effective leadership. I urge you to be part of the solution to this worthwhile challenge.



**M.K. Jeffery**  
**Major General**

# **LESSONS LEARNED - LEADERSHIP IN A MIXED GENDER ENVIRONMENT**

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*“Women in the combat arms. Another reality, but an issue no one wants to touch, perhaps because they feel everything’s been said, or perhaps because they’ve become accustomed to rolling over once the Human Rights Commission has had its say. What about it - aside from the Sentinel-type PR stories and the sensationalistic ones in the mainstream press - does it work? What’s the honest feedback from soldiers, male and female, on the reality of women’s integration? Perhaps there have been no problems so there’s really no need to consider the subject further, in which case someone with experience should stand up and say so.”*

***Far too Canadian? Infantry Journal 26 1994 .***

## **PART 1 - INTRODUCTION**

***“Integrating them into units will result in a complete breakdown of discipline and unit cohesion.”***

***“They are only effective in service support roles.”***

***“They are only comfortable with their own kind.”***

The above quotes are not about women. They are the commonly accepted reasons why blacks were not employed in combat units (mixed or otherwise) in the US Army as late as 1944. Today, we can shake our heads in wonder about the naïve and uneducated attitudes of the past. However, it does show us how cultural myths can perpetuate themselves as policy.

Prior to 1989, the CF took initial steps in gender integration with the trials of Servicewomen in Non-traditional Environments and Roles (**SWINTER**) and **Combat Related Employment of Women (CREW)**. Since then, women have successfully integrated into areas that were traditionally male-only and they have been part of the combat arms for almost a decade. Over this period, there have been successes and failures with gender integration and considerable data on this subject has been collected through post operation reports (POR), operational studies and ALLC surveys.



The aim of this “Dispatches” is to capitalize on the leadership lessons we have gathered in the past. The target audience for this issue involves the spectrum of leadership from section/detachment commander to unit commanding officer.

Our problems experienced with gender integration stem from two separate sources. One is **culture** and the other is **conduct**.

The **cultural** difficulties encountered with gender diversity are best articulated by CFP 300, *Canada's Army*.

*"Armies by their nature are traditional in outlook and relatively slow to change. In some respects this is positive in that it ensures a degree of stability in an otherwise tumultuous world. As well, a cautious approach to change allows specific changes to be assessed in terms of their effects and outcomes, especially those with potential to harm operational imperatives. As an operative principle, however, the army must always be open to change in order to remain connected to its parent society. It must also view change as a process which can bring forth new opportunities and advantages."*

The bottom line is that although we, by our nature, are slow to change, our culture of arms must change to reflect the society which it protects. The employment of women in combat roles is part of that cultural change. **Your role in this cultural change is to be an effective leader in a cohesive unit that is ready for war.** If you cannot adapt or refuse to adapt, then you are part of the problem and not part of the solution.

*"The military's real problem isn't sex, but behavior that violates direct orders."*

**Catherine Ford, Southham Press**

*"No leader can turn a blind eye to misconduct or mistreatment of others. No leader can sit idly by, tacitly condoning discreditable conduct by silence or inertia, when assertive and decisive intervention is called for."*

**General JMG Baril, CDS**

The other area of difficulty has been one of **conduct**. Issues of conduct are easier to define than those of culture. Conduct is neatly defined by orders and policies that are articulated in the NDA, QR&Os, CFAOs, LFCOs and the like. Even without these policies, the army's ethos of duty, integrity, discipline and honour should be more than enough to guide us. Yet, when you examine the spectrum of incidents over the last decade, it is apparent that most of these failures of gender integration are clearly related to the conduct of specific individuals. While it can be argued these actions are those of a minority, it is equally arguable that we, as a culture, tolerated them by either our silence or inaction. Most of us are good leaders who take considerable pride in our service, but from a public perspective, it only takes the actions of one individual to taint us as a group.

***.....Canada's army is committed to developing an institutional culture that is not only forward looking and responsive to change, but will enable it to be a leader of change.***

**CFP 300, Canada's Army**

**If you are willing to be part of that culture,  
Read on.....**

## **PART 2 - CULTURAL MYTHS**

As with every culture, prejudices and attitudes are mostly perpetuated by myths or half-truths. Let's examine some of the more popular ones.....

### **Mixing women and men in the combat arms will result in a complete breakdown in unit cohesion.**

Unit cohesion has nothing to do with sexual or racial diversity. The sinew of cohesion is discipline. It is derived by equitable and impartial leadership at all levels of command. With respect to diversity, our own experience with CREW and SWINTER has shown us that unit cohesion starts to erode when we treat one visible group differently (adversely or favourably) from the majority. This affects the adherence of standards as well as collective and individual discipline. Once discipline goes, cohesion is not far behind. Diversity is not the cause of a breakdown in unit cohesion. However, it may be a catalyst if discipline is weak and leadership is inequitable.

### **There is a separate chain of command for women.**

Many people actually believe this. The only thing that can be construed as being outside the chain of command is the 1-800 number. That number exists for all service members, not just women, to report harassment or misconduct. If a separate chain of command exists, it has been a local or internal unit measure. For example, appointing a female officer/NCO as the point of contact for all women's issues undermines your junior leadership. There are no women's issues, only leadership issues.

### **Achieving gender equality in the combat arms will result in a lowering of standards.**

The first question one must ask is why? Training standards are well established in TS/TP, IBTS and CBTS. If you as an instructor or leader accept standards (because of gender issues) that are lower than those established, then you are the one at fault. There are no special standards for women. The EXPRES test is often cited as an example of gender based standards. However, EXPRES is a test of fitness. It is not a standard. The only fitness standard for LFC units is the LFCPFS which demands equal standards for both men and women.





**Getting sufficient numbers of women in the combat arms can only be achieved through manning and promotion quotas.**

The army has established a recruiting target of 25% females. Unlike quotas, targets are flexible goals which are used for planning and evaluation, not selection. In fact, quotas are expressly prohibited by the Canadian Employment Equity Act. **TARGETED RECRUITMENT IS NOT TARGETED SELECTION.** Although the CF is actively trying to attract women to the army, once in the door of the recruiting centre, both men and women are treated equitably - only the best get in. Promotions, courses, and evaluations are based solely on the merit system, not gender. **BOTTOM LINE: THERE ARE NO GENDER, RACIAL OR ETHNIC QUOTAS IN THE ARMY. IF YOU ARE ORDERED TO PROMOTE OR PASS AN INDIVIDUAL TO MEET A QUOTA, YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN AN UNLAWFUL AND UNETHICAL ORDER.**

**Women have neither the strength nor stamina for the combat arms.**

As a general rule, women have most of their strength in their legs while a majority of men are stronger in the upper body. The U.S. Army Research Institute has concluded that a comprehensive and well designed physical conditioning programme would ensure 78% of all women could qualify for what they classify as "very heavy" jobs. From a PT perspective, it means that you must design your training to benefit both groups. Women need more upper body work, men need more lower body work and in both groups there will be individual exceptions to this rule. This is no different than when 30 male recruits arrive at the area training centre with varying standards of upper and lower body physical fitness. You tailor the PT to bring all of them to a specific standard.

**Women don't have the psychological makeup that would allow them to close with and destroy the enemy in close combat.**

*"Women are as cunning and deadly as their male counterparts" - Mao's Handbook on Guerilla Warfare. We do not recruit homicidal maniacs. Instead we train recruits in the disciplined application of violence and deadly force. We do it for men.....and we'll do it for women too.*



## **When you try to discipline a woman you're slapped with a sexual harassment complaint.**

Harassment complaints and the Canadian Forces policy on harassment are not tools meant to empower women. Quite simply, the Canadian Forces policy on harassment (CFAO 19-39) ensures that all members are treated with respect and dignity. No supervisor needs to fear being prosecuted for sexual harassment if they have carried out their duties, and this includes disciplining their subordinates, with integrity and honour.

## **Women look for and get special treatment in the military.**

Most women, like most men, do not look for, nor should they receive special treatment in the military. If a woman is excused from specific duties, solely because of her gender, it is the leader's failure, not the woman's. All leaders have a responsibility to ensure each member is treated equitably, regardless of gender.

## **Having women in the combat arms will just mean more work for the men.**

It will if you allow it. Again, the key is equitable and impartial leadership. If a man is not pulling his weight, he is disciplined. However, in the past, if a woman did not pull her weight, she was deemed incapable. If diversity is going to work, leadership and discipline must be applied on an equal and unbiased basis. Establish one standard for work and ensure that it is enforced.

## **Pregnancy is a cop-out to going on training and operations. A woman cannot be a professional soldier and mother at the same time.**

The pregnancy issue is often cited as one of the main operational detractors of having women in the combat arms. Ask yourself, who would purposefully get pregnant for nine months and then commit themselves to a child for a minimum of 18 years to get out of a six month tour? CSS units have employed a significant number of women on both operations and training over the last decade and not once has the pregnancy issue been reported in PORs as a detractor to operational effectiveness. Losing an NCO or an officer for six months is as much a problem for a service battalion as it is for an infantry battalion (probably more so since specific or unique technical qualifications will be required for some leadership positions). There need not be a manning shortfall for a unit if a member becomes pregnant. COs should request a backfill from their respective brigade HQ. Such a backfill will normally be the case if the position must be filled for operational reasons or is sufficiently critical that it must be filled from outside the unit. To say that a woman cannot be a soldier and a mother is like saying a man cannot be a soldier and a father at the same time.

If you are thinking that this issue has less to do with gender diversity and more to do with leadership, then you are on the right track.

**So much for myths.....**

**Let's now deal with concrete issues.....**



## PART 3 - WEAK GENDER OR WEAK LEADERSHIP?

The following are excerpts from a Post Operation Report (POR) titled **ENGINEER LESSONS LEARNED: OPERATION HARMONY**. This report provided lessons learned from the tour of two engineer units as part of Operation Harmony. It addressed the major points identified by a survey of 82 officers, Sr NCOs and NCMs from the two units. **Are the points they address ones of gender or leadership?**

Topic #22. Women were active members of field engineer sections in the Mission Area.

Discussion. In terms of female engineers in the unit, <Unit A> and <Unit B> differed widely.. <Unit A> did not have any 041 females in the unit while <Unit B> had a total of three (3); two (2) with 2 Troop and another with 1 Troop. The unit took a total of 12 female soldiers to Yugoslavia. This topic caused considerable discussion-- the major themes are listed below:

a. Physically women were considered a weak point in the engineer section. Some supervisors admitted to tailoring tasks around the female presence; others, based on what they witnessed at task sites, felt females had neither the strength nor stamina for heavy laborious work (sandbagging and bridging). One female sapper was not strong enough to cock the .50 calibre HMG. It was emphatically pointed out that while weak male sappers can be "sorted out" by their peers this could not be done with females.

b. Much resentment existed with the way the media and senior visitors brought attention to the female sapper(s). This was seen as disruptive to section cohesion.

c. Senior unit members (Officers and SrNCOs) admitted that they felt far more restrained when dealing with female sappers and at times, did not make fair and equitable decisions as a result of the gender issue.

d. It was felt that a critical point existed whereby a certain number of females in a field section would create a "weak" section. 30 - 50% female content was considered to be this "critical point".

Some members and supervisors saw no difference in the work capability of the female sappers; the point being that sections were too small to provide any "freebies". In these instances it was also generally acknowledged that the work was not particularly labour intensive (minefield supervision) and the living conditions were quite good. Harassment was considered to be prevalent.

Other concerns focussed on the non-accepting attitude that the Opposing Forces showed towards female sappers, the perception from wives back home about the female presence in the unit and about active dating, which existed, within the unit. It was also felt that one female sapper in a section was unacceptable; there needed to be at least two.

Finally, sappers acknowledged that if a female engineer could successfully graduate from the 041 QL3 course and be given no more chances than a male candidate, then that student had "proven" her physical prowess to be a field engineer. Amongst the group interviewed this was presently not perceived to be the case.

**Lesson Learned.** As female presence in the combat engineer world is a reality, better education and training orientation are necessary. The feeling of resentment remains largely a male problem; socially and militarily. It can not however, be dismissed as merely a growing pain. Supervisors (SrNCOs and Officers) need to understand the universality of training standards both physically and technically, accompanied by the knowledge that they can enforce these standards without retribution. Peacetime complacency and compromise is exposed dramatically in a theatre like Yugoslavia.

How did these women pass their 041 TQ3 course? Certainly sandbagging and bridging tasks are rather basic engineer skills. Perhaps someone should adopt the RCR motto of "Never pass a fault"! Not a gender issue. It's a training standards issue that finds its roots in inappropriate leadership!

If this soldier was unable to pull back the cocking lever on the HMG how did she ever pass her training on this weapon? How can you complete the HMG TsOETs without pulling back the cocking lever? Answer: You can't! If she was not properly trained to use this weapon, why was she manning one in the theatre of operations?

No one will deny that peers will automatically maintain standards in a highly disciplined group. However, it is the leader's responsibility to "sort out" weak team members, not the peer group. Where were the officers and NCOs?

Constantly reported as a hindrance to cohesion by both men and women. This is favoritism and inequitable leadership!

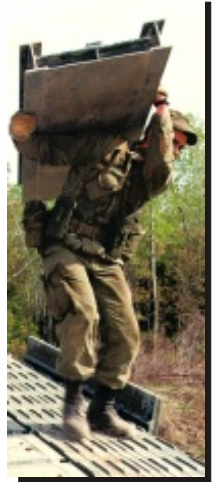
Sounds like a personal problem. Is this a gender issue or a product of weak and uncertain leadership ..... or is it cultural?

Instead of conducting extra physical training for these soldiers, they decided to have a cut-off mark to determine a weak section.

Harassment was considered to be prevalent? If it was prevalent, then obviously it was allowed to happen over a considerable period of time. Where were the officers and NCOs?

Officers condoned active dating! While on operations no less! This was contrary to published orders and is an indicator of weak leadership!

Adherence to training standards is an essential element of effective unit cohesion and team building.



**TRUE. THESE ARE NOT GENDER ISSUES.  
THEY ARE LEADERSHIP ISSUES!!!!!!**

## **PART 4 - LEADERSHIP LESSONS LEARNED!**

Almost every negative issue associated with gender integration has it's roots in inappropriate leadership. There are no bad units, there are only bad leaders. From the most junior leader to the most senior general, all soldiers have the responsibility to exercise good judgement and leadership in everything they do; the integration of women into the army has not changed this. The following points illustrate the all important role leaders play in achieving a successfully integrated and diverse fighting force.

### **Issue 1: Your Attitude as a Leader.**

Command attitudes on gender generally fall into two camps.

**Those who are willing to deal with it.....**

*"It is too simple. The difficulty is in the cowardly and mealy-mouthed approach that much of our current leadership takes. Mixed gender leadership was so simple as to be missed by all of the socio-economic EXPERTS. Treat ALL soldiers with the dignity that is their right as a Canadian citizen. Do not show favouritism. NEVER allow ANYONE to abuse their authority AT ANY TIME. Make all soldiers push themselves to their absolute limits both physical and psychological. If a woman complains of menstrual cramps then excuse her from PT in the same way that a man is excused when he has a pulled groin muscle. NO big deal. NO special attention. NO fraternization of soldiers of ANY sexual combination. NO fraternization of anyone who is in a position of authority with someone in their chain of command. NO EXCEPTIONS."*

**CO's Comment (Armd), ALLC Gender Survey**

**.....and those unwilling to deal with it.**

*"I have also had the unfortunate pleasure of having a militia female MP section assigned to me as a protection party in 7/24 field operations. (I think Brigade HQ did this as a joke as they did not know how to employ them). This experience was unbearable as I could not pee, fart, swear, eat, or chew people out without being observed upon and I believe this affected my ability to command. The solution was to send them to A Echelon. I will accept that I am "old school" and having females around in those circumstances made my life miserable. Younger officers can probably deal with this much better than I."*

**CO's Comment (Inf), ALLC Gender Survey**

The above quote was not used to make sport of the individual. It was used to illuminate a theme that may be prevalent amongst some members of the army. For some individuals, the issue of diversity is an extreme cultural change that they simply cannot handle. Their fear and discomfort with this issue is real and it is visible to the troops. This discomfort clouds their ability to command and make sound decisions. His choice to send the section to the A Ech was not based on their performance but on his inability to live in a mixed gender environment. What sort of message does this CO send to his battalion?

There is no set rule for who will be uncomfortable with this. It's not just the "long in the tooth" crowd that may be unable to adapt to this cultural change. As an example, both of these officers had the same amount of "time in" and almost identical career progressions. Both are now retired.

**How a unit feels about a particular subject ultimately flows from the attitude exhibited by the CO. If the CO exhibits and ensures a positive but no-nonsense approach, this will manifest itself throughout the unit. Historically, COs that exhibit this attitude have few diversity problems except those that are based on the conduct of specific individuals. Gender diversity is only a problem for your unit/sub-unit if you as its commander make it one from the very start. Examine your own prejudices first.....**

*"After a lot of self-examination; one of the critical problems I experienced was learning to come to grips with my own prejudices and putting them aside. It was only then that I could do my job effectively. Once you treat everyone with the dignity and respect their rank or position deserved, regardless of gender, it is returned tenfold".*

**Senior Officer Comment (Armd), ALLC Gender Survey**

**.....and at the same time ensure you account for the cultural attitudes of others under your command.**

*"My experience with mixed gender environments has been positive. The greatest difficulty is when some of the "old salts" show their true colours. Males who can't cut it are considered wimps while females who can't cut it are just that.....FEMALE. Fortunately, I have not experienced any problem at the lower levels."*

**Junior Officer Comment (Inf), ALLC Gender Survey**

*"I found myself biting my tongue every time I gave an order. It was like walking on egg shells!"*

**Senior NCO Comment (Inf), ALLC Gender Survey**

*"Frankly, I don't see what the big deal is. Let's get on with the job."*

**Junior NCO Comment (Arty), ALLC Product Survey**

*"...they [men] clearly do not want you, as a woman, to be there. It's not so much the young guys, your peers, but the old guys, the instructors...with the young guys, their mentality is different. If you can prove to them you are capable, they'll accept you. But the instructors are more limited."*

**Recruit Comment - PRT 98-1, The Davis Report**



## **Issue 2: Unit Cohesion and Team Building**

*In many trades such as administration, medical, dental, and air observer, to name a few, the employment of women is successful as they succeed to help create a high degree of efficiency and team work in their respective field. However, in the Armoured Corps, the **employment of women would most likely disrupt the troop cohesion**, productivity and efficiency. Consequently, it is the author's opinion that Canadian servicewomen should not be employed in the Armoured Corps.*

**Armour Bulletin No 14, 1982**

An interesting quote, but consider the authors words carefully. If women contribute to the efficiency and teamwork of CSS units, how does their mere presence destroy the cohesion of combat arms units? Answer: It doesn't! Is unit cohesion more difficult in a diverse unit? Yes, but it is an interesting leadership challenge, not an insurmountable problem.

Unit cohesion is commonly brought up as a concern in mixed gender units. Tools used to promote team cohesion in a homogeneous unit cannot be transferred easily to a mixed gender environment. Homogeneous groups tend to bond quickly as they can easily identify a common framework of experience or interests. Essentially, in the past it has been easy for us to achieve this.

In a non-homogeneous environment, there is a search for common ground or a point on which all can identify, but it is not immediately evident. **It is a leadership responsibility to provide the framework and common ground to facilitate team building.** However if distinct groups within that environment are not trained to the same standard or treated in an equal manner (positively or negatively) then these differences are magnified. The destruction of unit cohesion is not far behind.

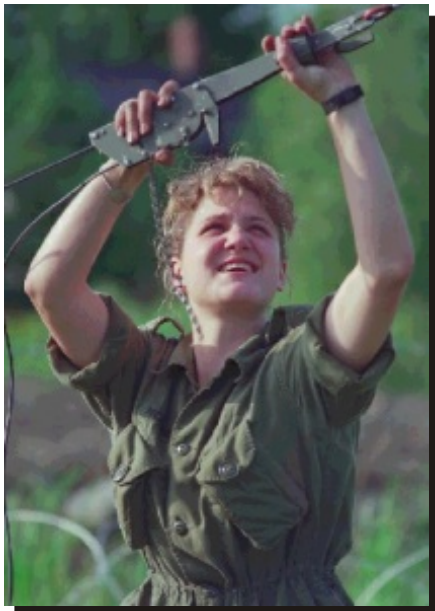
Therefore, gender diversity is identified as a detractor to unit cohesion, but in reality it is not. The cause of a breakdown in unit cohesion, especially where gender is concerned, stems from the following items:

- ✓ **Inequitable leadership and discipline**
- ✓ **Favouritism or harassment of distinct groups**
- ✓ **Fraternization (especially within the chain of command)**
- ✓ **Isolation and segregation of distinct groups**



These are not new themes that have surfaced because of gender integration. These detractors have been identified in our leadership doctrine since the day it was written. One might say that we have not been practicing what we've been preaching. Each of these issues will be examined in more detail later in this publication.

**From a diversity perspective, the contributing factor to the destruction of unit cohesion is uneven treatment or the perception of uneven treatment. It is something that will divide a unit almost immediately creating an environment of hostility for the favoured or injured minority.**



### **Issue 3: Discipline**

*"In my humble opinion this is the most serious matter or concern in the Armed Forces today. During the two World Wars, it was relatively easy to instill discipline in men because society at that time was generally structured hierarchically. Individual freedoms were not as liberally defined as they are today by the Constitution, and religious principles had a catalytic effect on the lives of the people. Today, however, our permissive and materialistic society does very little to promote military discipline, and the entry, sooner or later, of women in combat arms, is not likely to do much to improve the situation."*

**Brigadier-General J.A. Ross, CFP 325-1, *The Past Serving the Future***

*"... there are four essential conditions without which high morale cannot exist, namely leadership, **discipline**, comradeship, and self-respect."*

**Montgomery**

Does discipline start to deteriorate because of the inclusion of women? Or, does discipline begin to deteriorate because some leaders enforced two separate standards: one for men; and, one for women?

*"Officers and NCOs admitted that they felt far more restrained when dealing with female sappers and at times, did not make fair and equitable decisions as a result of the gender issue."*

**POR, *Engineer Lessons Learned, OP HARMONY***

*"I had male NCOs who have never worked with women who treat them differently and less forcefully out of concern or fear of being accused of abuse or harassment and therefore initiate double standards of discipline."*

**Senior Officer Comment (Inf), ALLC Gender Survey**



Many leaders are hesitant to discipline their female subordinates in the same manner as their male subordinates. The following are the most popular stated reasons:

### **Unfamiliarity**

Unfamiliarity with the regulations concerning female dress and deportment, particularly hair. ***This stems from lack of experience as the male leader knows what to tell his male soldiers based on what he himself does.....***

### **Uncertainty of dealing with an emotional reaction**

Many male leaders are afraid that they'll make the female soldier cry or that she'll be easily upset. **So what if they do?**

### **Harassment**

Many leaders are afraid of being placed in a position that could be interpreted as harassment. They see the harassment policy as a means of getting even with perceived harsh or uneven treatment. **Appropriate disciplinary action is not harassment.**

### **Embarrassment**

A fear of having to deal with "embarrassing women problems" prevents the leader from dealing with transgressions by female soldiers. **Physiological differences are not a stumbling block to effective discipline. The answer is education.**

### **Behaviour**

There is uncertainty about how the female soldier will react to obscene language. **Since when is obscene language a prerequisite for good leadership?**

**Ask yourself this question. Why does discipline for one soldier have to be different than another? Answer: It doesn't. If you adopt multiple standards for any leadership activity, you are doomed. Not exactly a lesson learned is it?**





## Issue 4: Equitable Treatment

*"The capacity of soldiers for absorbing punishment and enduring privations is almost inexhaustible so long as they believe they are **all getting a square deal**, that their commanders are looking out for them, and that their own accomplishments are understood and appreciated."*

**General Dwight D Eisenhower, US Army**

In the examination of the data, inequitable leadership in gender diverse organizations has been the root of many problems. Past failures in equitable leadership cover both ends of the spectrum. On one hand we have favouritism and on the other is harassment. Favouritism inappropriately elevates one group over another and causes resentment within the majority. Harassment destroys the confidence in a particular group and its presence causes resentment within the majority. The negative result on unit cohesion is the same in both cases.

### Issue 4-1: Favouritism

Individual favouritism, masked as chivalry, manifests itself as "helping" where help is not needed. Inappropriate "helping" with a physical task implies that the person is too weak to handle it themselves. It reinforces a stereotype and degrades the individual's capabilities. It also places the leader in an awkward position.

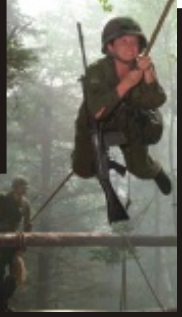
*"I recall how the problem of favouritism was addressed in my maintenance platoon in Calgary. The first female (stunningly good looking, a 12 on the 0 to 10 scale) arrived with a group of three other males and reported in for work. Her boss, a MCpl, took the four under his charge. She and the others drew their kit, including a rather heavy toolbox (which she could carry - its a PO on QL3). The MCpl then proceeded to carry her toolbox down the shop floor to the work area. On his return I intercepted him, directed that he tell the four QL3s to go for coffee, and then he was to carry the tool boxes for the three male QL3s to the work area as well. He was rather angry at the time, but the issue of favoritism seemed to disappear."*

**CO's Comment (CSS), ALLC Gender Survey**

However, there is a fine line between inappropriate helping and teamwork. Common sense should be your guide. Frequently female soldiers have been accused of not pulling their weight within a section/detachment/crew. This is because some leaders allow individuals to take assistance when offered in inappropriate situations. An example of appropriate teamwork is the female soldier being a part of the chain when loading the team's kit. An example of inappropriate help is a female soldier requesting assistance carrying and loading her own personal kit.



Another aspect is group favouritism. In our attempt to paint a positive and diverse picture of the army we sometimes end up doing more damage to ourselves as a group. Focusing media attention on a diverse group puts them in a spotlight that diminishes the accomplishments of the entire team. Don't shoot yourself in the foot in an attempt to publicly display how diverse you are. Equitable media attention is a must!



*“Much resentment existed with the way the media and senior visitors brought attention to the female sapper(s). This was seen as disruptive to section harmony.”*

**POR, Engineer Lessons Learned, OP HARMONY**

*“One incident really stripped my gears. It was when the [VIP] visited our unit in Yugo. 700 of us were on parade. When we were being inspected, the only time the [VIP] stopped to talk to one of the troops was when it was a woman. 12 women. 12 stops. 12 photo opportunities. If you think the troops don't notice something as obvious as that then you are wrong. I talked to the women afterwards, they were even more PO'd than the guys!”*

**Senior NCO Comment (Inf), ALLC Gender Survey**

*“On one exercise, my platoon was visited by the PAffO and photographer on six separate occasions. Each time it was to take pictures of a particular female MCpl who also happened to be black. She was also acknowledged as the best MCpl in our company but the media people seemed to be more interested in her sex and colour than in her abilities. It's kind of hard to ensure everyone is being treated the same when your superiors keep sticking one particular individual in the limelight. She found the whole incident insulting and demeaning.”*

**Junior Officer Comment (CSS), ALLC Gender Survey**

## **Issue 4-2: Harassment**

*“Women who have spent time in the combat arms training and/or employment environment consistently describe a total experience that includes harassment, intimidation, and petty incidents on a day-to-day basis. They report that women are commonly referred to as ‘bitches’, ‘sluts’, ‘cunts’, ‘whores’, ‘split-asses’, etc. Most women report experiencing this directly and frequently, while others indicated that they were aware that they were being referred to in this way ‘behind their back’. Informal discussion among male peers, and in the presence of the women, was frequently loaded with sexual innuendo, causing several women to fear sexual aggression from their male peers and, in some cases, their superiors. In several cases the women’s fears were founded; one rape and several physical assaults requiring medical treatment or hospitalization were reported....*

*Finally, women do not express confidence that harassment and more serious incidents such as assault are adequately dealt with within the chain of command. Women often reported that they either had no one to turn to discuss and understand such incidents, and/or their motivations for reporting and prior social behaviours became the target of investigation. Male soldiers who participated in the Regular Force focus groups do not believe that they can discipline, motivate and lead women without risking accusations of harassment.”*

**PRT 98-1, The Davis Report**

Unless you have been living in a cave, you are aware of the recent rash of sexual harassment complaints that have plagued us as an army. Like favouritism, harassment is relatively easy to solve. Both require swift and decisive action by leadership at all levels of command. Harassment is based on prejudices and it manifests itself as outward but unwarranted hostility, verbal abuse and physical assaults. Once it starts, it flows through your unit like a cancer.

A common theme has developed. Where harassment has been an endemic problem in a unit, it was clear that the leadership was negligent, indifferent or weak, discipline was poor and supervision was non-existent. Problems are exacerbated when the chain of command adopts a “laissez faire” attitude to harassment complaints as opposed to taking swift and appropriate disciplinary action under the NDA. There have been no lack of policies or command direction on this subject..... just weakness and indifference on the part of a minority of leaders. However, it takes only one poor leader to screw it up for the rest of us. The resulting media frenzy degrades the morale of the entire army. Are you tired of getting tarred with the same brush because of another’s incompetent leadership?



Units that have had few, if any, harassment problems are ones where the CO's policy on the subject has been clearly articulated and forceful. When complaints arose, they were immediately investigated in accordance with the guidelines detailed in CFAOs. If the accusations were founded, discipline was swift and public. The same action was taken if the accusations were intentionally fabricated. Leadership, discipline and supervision were held to a high standard in these units. COs of these units also encouraged open dialogue on the subject to ensure that all ranks understood the difference between harassment and discipline.

*"The major problem was the threat of harassment interfering with team-building. The approach was for me to talk about the issue a couple of times in front of the Battle Group where the key point was that the issue was so serious that anyone harassed was to come to me personally. The leadership was then briefed separately."*

**Senior Officer Comment (Armd), ALLC Gender Survey**

*"All leaders within the unit MUST be on side. If they do not support the process and do not enforce a conducive environment then they must be dealt with."*

**Senior Officer Comment (Inf), ALLC Gender Survey**

*"The major problems were one of: A. Setting the right tone and mechanisms to deal with any issues; B. Ensuring the education of the unit in what would constitute a problem, from my perspective (as I defined it probably in more restrictive terms than the policy at the time); and C. Dealing with the problem quickly and with high profile. All these must be done by the CO and OC level personally. As an aside I dealt with several non gender harassment issues the same way."*

**Senior Officer Comment (Arty), ALLC Gender Survey**

*".... the resolution of complaints must be two tiered with action against (a) the accused if the complaint has merit and (b) the accuser if the complaint lacks merit."*

**Senior Officer Comment (CSS), ALLC Gender Survey**



## **Issue 5: Sexual Misconduct and Personal Relationships**

All COs are in agreement. One of the quickest ways to destroy unit cohesion is to permit sexual misconduct, in particular the allowing of inappropriate personal relationships to develop between members of the unit. If a leader indulges in such misconduct, for example by entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with a subordinate, his or her credibility is lost. They are seen to have abused the trust and confidence placed in them. The impact on unit cohesion is significant. It can be argued that the leader's judgement can no longer be trusted.

In certain instances, inappropriate personal relationships may also include those between peers, or between superiors and subordinates in separate chains of command. It is clear that when romantic relationships that include sexual activity take place while deployed on operations or training exercise, or within the training environment, the result is a serious and negative impact on discipline, morale and cohesion. Soldiers must be aware that engaging in personal relationships that involve sexual activity, while under such circumstances, is not appropriate. In accordance with CF policy on sexual misconduct, it cannot be tolerated, and is grounds for disciplinary action.

*"Unfortunately, almost all of the cases I did hear about only surfaced to my level after the individuals had returned home. I was therefore never successful in controlling it as well as I should have been able to. Fundamentally, however, personal relationships were not the real problem. Leadership was. Leaders at various levels in the contingent knew about cases of improper relationships and did nothing. Most of the cases actually involved leaders."*

**Senior Officer Comment (CSS), ALLC Gender Survey**

*"Fraternization. This subject was also dealt with up front because it is often a source of conflict, especially in Reserve component units. There was one incident which took place in which a young Regular Lt met a female Reserve Pte in a bar and they had a short affair. According to both parties they had not realized when they met that the other was in the military, let alone in the same Regt. Once they did realize the situation, the Lt broke off the relationship and reported the matter to his OC. The Lt was reassigned to other duties in the Regt and this was properly seen by all ranks as a sanction. The matter was then closed."*

**CO's Comment (Armd), ALLC Gender Survey**

Also be aware that the threat of fraternization has a distinct effect on spousal attitudes and the morale and well being of the military family. One CO had an interesting solution.....

*"#1 problem was spousal attitudes - hubby departing in the company of females for 6 months. This was addressed by making a policy of ANY male/female fraternization would result in both parties immediately sent home (this was not a formal disciplinary punishment, but very effective because their biggest fear was losing \$1400 a month tax-free). The policy was publicly announced to the Battle Group by myself and then also announced to the families when they were briefed. It was one of the few policies which I made which no-one complained about."*

**Senior Officer Comment (Armd), ALLC Gender Survey**



## Issue 6: Training Standards

Standards are published for a reason. They ensure all soldiers meet the required standard and guarantee the individual's preparedness in peace and in war. As leaders, we all have the responsibility to ensure published standards are applied equitably. Lowering or increasing the standards based on a person's gender, or for any other reason, is unacceptable. Furthermore, discriminating against individuals once they have met the published standard is also reprehensible. The standards are clearly established in a multitude of forums: IBTS, CBTS, EO's and PO's in TS/TPs, etc. Your job as a trainer is to ensure that each soldier meets those standards.

Yet, when you browse through PORs, it is evident that individuals have passed training without meeting standards. There are numerous examples in PORs where women (and in some cases specific men) were cited as unsuitable for sandbagging, bridging, track maintenance, hand to hand combat, refueling AFVs from jerry cans, loading of artillery ammo, heavy weapons handling, etc. How could these soldiers have passed their courses and training without acquiring these basic skills that are EOs and POs? They couldn't have unless their instructors let them. To advance any candidate because of gender or diversity is a disservice to the individual and the army alike. Never pass a fault!

On the other hand, trainers also have a responsibility to identify inequitable and outdated standards to their chain of command.

**There are no separate standards or training quotas based on gender. There is only one standard ENFORCE IT!** At this point most of you are saying, "Wrong ALLC! What about the separate PT standards for men and women"?

..... read on





### **Issue 7: Physical Fitness**

*“The physical fitness situation today is confusing. The impression that many officers share is that there are a myriad of testing devices which seem to be only in place to qualify the test and not address the fitness problem. It should also be pointed out that, with mixed gender training no longer a trial, there are two standards of physical training at Cornwallis, one for men and one for women.”*

**SOLDIERS' COMBAT PHYSICAL TRAINING** *Infantry Journal 21, 1991*

Do women have to meet a lower physical fitness standard than men?

**The answer is “NO”.** All members of the CF must be able to successfully complete five common military tasks which are the stretcher carry, sea evacuation, low/high crawl, entrenchment dig, and sandbag carry. The pass/fail standard for these tasks is the same for men and women. The problem with these tasks is that it takes approximately two days and significant resources to evaluate a soldier's ability to perform them. Therefore the CF has adopted a “predictor test”, simpler and quicker to administer, to accurately predict a soldier's ability to successfully perform the five common tasks. The test chosen was the CF EXPRES test. Based on the fitness profiles of men and women who were able to successfully perform the five common tasks, a model was developed to establish the relationship between these tasks and the EXPRES test. Not surprisingly, given the physiological differences between men and women, the fitness profiles of the women who were able to perform the common tasks were different than those of the men. It is these different profiles which have led to the differences in the EXPRES requirements for men and women. It has been scientifically determined that **a woman who achieves the standard for women on the EXPRES test is as capable of successfully performing the five common tasks as a man who meets the EXPRES test standard.**

For both the Basic Military Swimming Standard Test and the Land Force Command Physical Fitness Test (LFCPFS) better known as the 13 Kilometre Forced March, the standard for men and women, regardless of age or sex, is the same. For the LFCPFS, this is march 13 kilometres in two hours and 26 minutes while carrying 24.5 kilograms of personal equipment and clothing, followed by carrying a simulated casualty of approximately the same body weight 100 metres in 60 seconds.



*"If we expect our soldiers to fight and win on a high intensity battlefield, we must have a professionally trained, properly equipped and combat fit force. All combat physical training must have a purpose and **the exercises performed must have military value**. What is needed is a program designed for the Infantryman's role: one that will produce soldiers with endurance, strength, self-confidence and physical combat skills."*

**SOLDIERS' COMBAT PHYSICAL TRAINING**, *Infantry Journal 21, 1991*

The physical fitness training conducted on a course must be centred on the physical aspects of achieving POs and EOs which are derived from bona fide occupational requirements. Examples are: gunners must be able to load a number of 155mm projectiles in a given time; linemen must be able to climb poles with the assistance of climbing equipment, tankers must be capable of performing heavy track maintenance; and, every soldier must be able to dig a trench.

*Physical fitness standards are based on physiological requirements of men and little to do with strength or fitness as it applies to the employment of the individual. For example a female gunner in <unit> was one of the best loaders in the battery, loading faster than the average male but the member was placed on remedial PT for upper body strength as she could not accomplish five chin ups IAW the <Brigade> PT standard.*

**Junior Officer Comment (Arty), Dispatches Writing Team**

**COs of training establishments must conduct fitness training to allow candidates to be capable of achieving physically demanding performance objectives.**

**Unit COs must conduct fitness training to prepare the unit to meet current operational tasks while maximizing the cohesiveness benefits of fitness training.**

**Physical Fitness training is a command responsibility and must be based on bona fide operational requirements.**



## **Issue 8: Isolation**

Regrettably, both formal policies and informal processes have, in the past, done much to reinforce women's isolation and negatively effect unit cohesion. For example, regulations that prohibited men or women from entering each others rooms isolated women from their peer group.

*....there were strict rules forbidding her male peers from entering her room. She described one situation in which a male peer was asked by instructors to help her move a locker in her room. In spite of the fact that she was in a room alone with no roommate to help with physical tasks, they believed she received special attention in this case. She noted that she also had to complete routine cleaning and other tasks alone, while her peers were working together. In another instance when some of her peers were discovered waiting outside of her room to talk to her, she was accused of having men in her room, accused of lying when she denied it, and would have been charged if a Warrant Officer, had not intervened.*

**PRT 98-1, The Davis Report**

In garrison and in ATCs, the locally generated policies of no mixed gender interaction in quarters must be lifted. Rooms should be allocated by gender to allow a degree of privacy, but to keep unit/sub unit cohesion intact, your quarters should go co-ed. Mix them up in platoon and company lines as need be. Any other action will have a negative effect on your unit cohesion. Latrine and shower facilities should be gender specific. Laundry facilities can be shared.

In bivouac, the classic female all ranks modular tent, surrounded by burlap, razor wire and trip flares, has to go. Women must be integrated fully. If you have one tent per section, keep section integrity intact. Men and women must learn to live with each other professionally in the field (see the annex to this Dispatches). Talk to your soldiers. For long deployments, privacy measures may be considered for the comfort of both genders as long as it does not impair cohesiveness. Anything less will hamper unit cohesion. Shower facilities should be gender specific.

In a tactical setting, arctic tents, hooches and shelters are by teams, not by gender.



Isolation isn't just about physical isolation, it is also mental and emotional. Leaders should be cognizant of the fact that the normal peer group usually will not include female soldiers in a male dominated organization. This isolation leads to a number of problem areas with the social interaction of the female subordinate and is usually linked with group cohesion and problem behavior of the female soldier. Isolation may lead to disciplinary problems. Attempts at integration into the group may lead to behavior that the female wouldn't normally indulge in. In some cases it appears that sexual promiscuity has been an approach used by some immature females in an effort to gain acceptance. Leaders should be aware of the potential problems that may result from such actions.

## Issue 9: Critical Mass & Role Models

*“..... I appointed a “mother” who was comfortable with the personalities in the Regiment, who was charged with keeping a eye on things, regardless of rank - and who was specifically charged with informing the RSM/myself of any incident whatsoever.”*

**Senior Officer Comment (Armd), ALLC Gender Survey**

*“I would want at least one female officer and one female NCO to be role models and if required a contact for communication with the females. Women will only report rape or sexual assault to another woman regardless of their respect or trust with a male officer or NCO. In addition they need to see that they do not have to become men to succeed. In addition, female officers and NCOs will not tolerate fraternization.”*

**Senior Officer Comment (Inf), ALLC Gender Survey**

Is the above an abdication of a leadership responsibility? Is a leader's cry for **critical mass** and **role models** generated by a desire to delegate leadership responsibilities to someone of the same gender? If you create a special point of contact for women's issues, are you undermining the chain of command in your own unit? Are you sending a message to your subordinate leaders that they are ill-equipped to deal with mixed gender leadership problems? **The answer to all these questions is YES!**

There are no such things as women's issues - just leadership issues.

The army has cited that **“critical mass”** is a goal to assist in the expanded integration of women into the combat arms. This will help reduce some of the difficulties women face when arriving at combat arms units, particularly in the area of isolation. It is not a tool to reduce or minimize your leadership responsibilities towards your female soldiers. Whether we achieve this critical mass remains to be seen as it is dependant on recruiting, successful graduation and retention. **At the end of the day, our leadership must be successful whether we have only one woman in the unit or 100.** It all boils down to leadership in the end. If the leadership is weak, the plan will fail whether you have critical mass or not. We may not achieve critical mass all the time. **The infantry section that has only one female in it has to be as effective as any other.**



**What are designated mixed gender units?** *“The designation of mixed gender units is an administrative activity which aims to create a supportive environment by focusing resources. This will take the form of encouraging the creation of a “critical mass” of women. Women may continue to serve in units not designated mixed gender and this will in no way limit their employment. For example, women will take normal career courses, extra regimental employment etc which will not be affected by the designation of certain units. LFC’s focus at this time is upon entry level combat arms members and their subsequent employment. Problems at this level were clearly indicated in the Davis reports and by attrition rates that indicate that women drop out of the combat arms at a rate of 42% as compared to men at 10%. The idea is to normalize the working relationships of men and women in these units which cannot be accomplished on a one by one basis where women will continue to remain oddities. **It should be noted that the intent is not to create gender designated platoons or sections within these units.** This would very quickly limit the employment opportunities for women and put them at a disadvantage for accruing the necessary work experiences for normal professional development. In summary, the aim is to integrate both genders so as to create a supportive, normal working environment.”*

**Senior Officer Comment, Director Land Personnel**



*“Prejudice against women coming into the Combat Arms - Humans like to be part of an exclusive club to which not all other personnel can belong. This can only change with the introduction of a critical mass of women into Combat Arms units. You must have female officers in that unit as well before the troops arrive! In <unit>, I had a Sgt clerk and a Signal Officer who were both extremely physically fit and that helped dispel some of the rumours of females not being able to keep up on training.”*

**CO Comment (Inf), ALLC Gender Survey**

Is having positive female **role models** in your unit a good thing? Yes! Is it an essential element to the success of gender integration? No. It's important but not critical. **Role modeling is a leadership responsibility, not a product of policy.** Due to factors such as posting preferences, training cycles, career courses, etc, circumstances will arise where a majority of your subordinate leadership may be male (or maybe even mostly female). Like critical mass, this will not happen overnight. Whether you have 100 positive female role models or whether you have none in your unit, the responsibility for effective leadership is the same.

**In a truly diverse army, positive role models must not be gender based. Male NCOs and officers must be positive role models for female NCMs. Conversely, female leaders must be positive role models for their male subordinates.**

## Issue 10: Health Considerations

*Well! Challenge this! We're real, we fart, we're hot, we're cold.....*

***Cathy Jones, This Hour Has 22 Minutes***

We pride ourselves on ensuring the physical well being of our soldiers, especially in the field. The introduction of women into the combat arms does not change this. Physically, they feel the same pain, temperature and stress as men (some studies seem to indicate that they can handle more than men). However, there are physiological differences. If you are ignorant of them, you endanger the health of your soldiers and the combat effectiveness of your unit.

One health consideration is menstruation. Many men find the subject distasteful and would prefer to remain ignorant of it. You cannot afford this luxury.

*"I commanded mixed platoons at CFOCS for three years as a pl offr, pl comd and coy 2ic. Women who are wet, cold, tired, hungry and stressed will (out of cycle) menstruate. They also need to urinate more frequently than men. If they do not keep themselves exceptionally clean they develop **urinary track infections (UTI)**... I did not realize this as a male instructor until a nurse sorted me out. **In the meantime, all of the women that I commanded developed UTI's in the field.** The solution was simply to ensure they had the privacy to urinate and give them sufficient time to keep themselves clean. In bivouac ensure that each sex has privacy in latrines and washing/changing."*

***Senior Officer Comment (Inf), ALLC Gender Survey***

*"Women that are menstruating, especially in high stress situations, may require some iron and vitamin supplements. These should be added to individual kit lists and quantities should be held at your UMS for extended deployments. Feminine hygiene products must be held by individuals and QMs at all levels."*

***Junior Officer Comment (Med), ALLC Gender Survey***

It has been suggested informally in some training institutions that taking birth control pills without giving the normal break between cycles is a method for avoiding menstruation in the field. The Land Staff Medical Advisor has stated that while birth control pills may be used to postpone menstruation for valid reasons, in all cases women should consult a doctor before initiating such action.

Attached as an annex is a guide written by a female combat arms officer that covers leadership and personal points on this subject.

Another consideration is pregnancy. Issues of pregnancy are well covered in QR&Os. During the initial months, the member will likely be on light duties and your MO may detail specific restrictions for an individual. Most pregnancies are planned. From a leadership point of view, you should discuss the subject with your female members.

## **PART 5 - CONCLUSIONS**

**As with any issue effective leadership is fundamental to success. From a lessons learned perspective, the following leadership considerations are paramount:**

Gender diversity is only a problem for your unit/sub-unit if you as its leader make it one from the very start. Your role is to be an effective leader in a cohesive unit that is ready for war.

The cause of a breakdown in unit cohesion, especially where gender is concerned, stems from the following items: inequitable leadership and discipline, favoritism or harassment of distinct groups, fraternization, and isolation/segregation of distinct groups.

From a diversity perspective, the contributing factor to the destruction of unit cohesion is uneven treatment or the perception of uneven treatment.

If you adopt multiple standards for any leadership activity, especially in the area of discipline, you are doomed.

In the examination of the data, inequitable leadership in gender diverse organizations has been the root of many problems. This manifests itself as favouritism or harassment or both.

All COs are in agreement. One of the quickest ways to destroy unit cohesion is to permit sexual misconduct, in particular the allowing of inappropriate personal relationships to develop between members of the unit.

There are no separate standards or training quotas based on gender. There is only one standard - ENFORCE IT. Trainers also have a responsibility to identify inequitable and outdated standards to their chain of command.

COs of training establishments must conduct fitness training to allow candidates to be capable of achieving physically demanding performance objectives.

Unit COs must conduct fitness training to prepare the unit to meet current operational tasks while maximizing the cohesiveness benefits of fitness training.

Physical Fitness training is a command responsibility and must be based on bona fide operational requirements.

Formal policies and informal processes have, in the past, done much to reinforce women's isolation and negatively effect unit cohesion. Be aware of the impact that physical and emotional isolation has on your soldiers.

In a truly diverse army, positive role models must not be gender based. Male NCOs and officers must be positive role models for female NCMs. Conversely, female leaders must be positive role models for their male subordinates.

Be aware of the physiological difference between genders. Ignorance of these issues may have a negative impact on the health and well being of your soldiers and your unit's operational effectiveness.



## ANNEX A

# LESSONS LEARNED - A FEMALE PERSPECTIVE ON LIVING IN THE FIELD

## Hygiene In The Field

### A. Menstruation

Menstruation is a perfectly normal bodily function or at least it is to women. It is easily managed when in the field with some preparation prior to deployment.

Prepare kits in waterproof bags (ie ziplocs) with sanitary napkins, toilet paper and baby wipes. Make up two or three of them, keeping a days supply on you at all times, as you never know when you'll be separated from your kit. These bags fit easily into the pocket of a combat shirt/pant and will allow you to deal with your period as hygienically as possible. The baby wipes are used to clean your hands, to clean your groin and to provide you with extra material to wrap up used pads. Soiled sanitary napkins should be placed in a ziploc bag and disposed of, in the garbage vice burying. Burying is environmentally unsound as these products are made of plastic and they will not decompose quickly.

Extended deployments usually require bringing a lot of sanitary napkins that bulk out your kit quickly. The Platoon Warrant Officer or Company Quartermaster should provide a space in platoon stores or in vehicles going on the road move. If there is a limit on the amount of kit brought for a long deployment, the female soldier will leave something else behind to bring feminine hygiene products.

Sanitary napkins are available through the supply system. The QM should be able to access a supply and if a canteen is being run offering razors and other type products, feminine hygiene products (preferably modern types) should be made available as a part of the services offered.

Note that I refer to sanitary napkins not tampons. This is a personal decision in what to use but here are the cons against the use of tampons. I found that I could never predict when I would have the opportunity to change tampons (ie. during a combat team trace) and when left for an extended period of time I was prone to uncomfortable infections, for example bladder infections (UTI) or yeast infections. Also a bit more privacy and time are required to change tampons. And, last but not least, even with baby wipes and a canteen it was difficult to get my hands clean enough to insert tampons in a hygienic fashion.

If you are the lone female in your unit and you don't have the supplies, another source is the medics, as they probably have some absorbent dressings that will do in a pinch.

Do not use a field dressing. It is so bulky that you will be walking like you have a basketball between your thighs and it is meant for emergency first aid. Women have done this, as they were embarrassed to talk to their supervisors about obtaining sanitary napkins.

I have been in a "woman's lecture" where it was suggested informally that taking Birth Control pills without giving the normal break between cycles is a method for avoiding menstruation in the field. This seriously messes with your system and medical personnel that I've approached on this have stated that this is **DUMB, DUMB, DUMB!** As the Land Staff Medical Advisor has pointed out, use of birth control pills to avoid menstruation may be for valid reasons. However, if you are at all considering this, talk to your doctor about it first.



Birth control pills should be kept in a waterproof bag as they dissolve in water and they are not something you can borrow from a bud. They should also be kept in your pocket as you could become separated from your kit.

If you are subject to cramps, be aware that you'll need something to deal with it. Bring your own MIDOL or Ibuprofen to deal with it. Consult your UMS.

Some have suggested that woman should take multi-vitamins when menstruating in the field as they require supplements to certain vitamins and minerals that they may not get from normal hayboxes or IMPs. Consult your Medical Officer.

## **B. Urinating in the field**

Urination is good indicator of your health in the field. If you are urinating regularly then it is an indicator of good hydration. If you're not going regularly (ie at the same rate as when you are home) it is an indicator of dehydration.

The environmental procedures on most ranges require porta-potties to be located where any mass of troops may be, therefore the following applies for situations where such facilities are unavailable.

I always carry toilet paper in a waterproof bag with me (or the baby wipes can be used as toilet paper).

Going to the bathroom is not a stealth mission or a long-range recce patrol. Don't hike miles for a bit of privacy, as this could lead to safety problems especially on a live trace.

When you come into a position do a quick scout about. Make sure that it's not near any major transit routes or night sentry positions as your peers will not be impressed if they end up lying on 'your spot' when on sentry. If you can, do a recce in daylight as Poison Ivy/Oak is not something you want on your butt.

When you have to go let somebody know where you're going in a casual manner, not a formal announcement. ("Going to pee" worked for me.)

The actual mechanics. If there is an approach route to your position, face it while your urinating. When urinating, squat as low to the ground as possible. This affords you more privacy and you have less chance of splattering your own clothes. If you use toilet paper or baby wipes, bury the used stuff close to where you've urinated. It is a good indicator to anyone digging a hoochie in that area in the future that the ground is soiled.

During mounted advance to contact or similar traces, in front of the vehicle is the safest place. It is not a good idea to move any distance from the vehicle especially when traveling in a combat team as other vehicles will not be anticipating a person on foot in the shrubs.

Frequency is the key to success in this game. Go as often as you can. If there is a spot where you can go, go. Nothing is worse than having to go to the bathroom desperately and not being able to find a suitable spot.

Frost bite on the gluteus maximus is not a comfortable sensation. Try and use a windbreak when urinating. Don't remove all layers of personal clothing, as it's a good way to lower your body temperature quickly. Try and leave as many clothes on as you can, while still achieving the aim. Undo zippers, buttons, strings that will have to be undone in a place of shelter, as your hands will quickly freeze.

I only gave crewsuits a one shot wear and then decided that they were a garrison thing. Do not wear a crewsuit in winter as you have to strip down naked to go to the washroom. This may seem self evident but as they looked really cool, I wore mine and the impracticalities did not occur to me until I was in the field and it was time to go to the bathroom. Duh!

## **Appearance**

Hair. CFAOs are specific on how hair shall be worn by females in the military. These rules also apply in the field. Ponytails or long loose swinging hair is a hazard when in the field and can cause injury if not secured (ie. Hair catching on fire while fighting grass fires on a range).

Proper helmet fit with hair can be awkward. Ensure when being sized for a helmet that your hair is worn how you will wear it in the field. If long hair will be put into a bun in the field, ensure that the bun is worn low in order to allow the helmet to sit properly on the head and that it allows you to lift your head when shooting.

## **Living With Men (Professionally)**

### **A. Privacy**

When living in a tent group privacy will be nil, therefore do you really need it in a bivouac situation? It depends on what you're most comfortable with. In most cases its not worth the segregation and hassle of not knowing what's going on, to get a little privacy. Set up some ground rules, be open, and tell the guys that they don't have to make special efforts to accommodate you.

Effective group dynamic is key to a successful team. Part and parcel of this is living with men in close quarters without discomfort. When a section/detachment/crew share an arctic tent, it's a great way to get to know each other. It also makes normal things like changing underwear a bit challenging. There is the straightforward approach of just doing it, but this can make some males uncomfortable no matter how at ease the female is with the process. There are three other options:

- (1) Change in a discreet place, many woman do it inside their sleeping bag (This, I found requires a certain level of coordination);
- (2) A second option is to not change your underwear at all but just change panty liners regularly; and
- (3) The last option is to change at available opportunities (a surprise visit to a porta-pottie, a radio shift or at the end of an sentry shift when the remainder of your tent group is asleep).

Changing a bra requires a Houdini like skill that is natural to most woman, taking your bra off under your t-shirt. Be aware that kit lists are now specifying hook-less bras (bras with hooks tangle up the laundry bags) which usually mean they have to pull them on over the head. I'm told that this can be done under the t-shirt but I've never managed it.

Avoid suspenders as they have the same limitation as crew suits making you take layers of clothing off just to get your pants off.

## **Kit**

### **A. Rucksacks**

Rucksacks were not made with the average woman in mind. Here are a few ways to operate with more comfort:

The goal is to be able to carry the rucksack using the strongest muscle group, which for a woman is usually her legs. The weight of the rucksack should be on the hips leaving the shoulders, chest and back muscles relatively free from weight.

The "Clothe the Soldier Program" is currently addressing the "size" issue of load bearing equipment. Until new equipment is available, there are some suggestions for leaders to assist their soldiers of smaller stature. First thing I change is the butt pad at the base of the rucksack. I flip it upside down so the padded area is in the small of your back and not rubbing on the top of your butt avoiding those pesky butt blisters that occur otherwise. The second thing is to get rid of the useless hip strap that's issued and put a civilian style wide belt (attached by lacing and gun taped) on the base of the rucksack. Almost all civilian style back packs have this type of hip belt and I used one as a model. Lastly, if I'm going to be humping it long distances I unlace the bag from the frame and move it down  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way on the frame. This is tricky to re-lace but it allows you to put the heaviest part of the rucksack, the valise, on the top by your shoulders. This will change the design of the rucksack so it models the old style rucksack. Having the weight of the load on your hips, reduces the cut off of circulation to your arms.

Blisters from bra straps develop the same way as blisters on your feet. You want to ensure that the bra has wide straps and has nothing on it, such as adjustable clips, which will result in hot spots or blisters. A sock or some other padding under the straps can be used once a hot spot occurs.

### **B. Gloves**

The "Clothe the Soldier Program" will be addressing the issue of proper sizes for all combat clothing. In the meantime, you will have to customize as much of your kit to your size as you can. The biggest problem I had was finding gloves/mittens that were up to the rigors of the field and were warm. If you have small hands you should invest some money into a good pair of mitts/gloves, for if the glove doesn't fit, you won't wear it and your hands will freeze.

### **C. Bras**

The "Clothe the Soldier Program" is actively pursuing the issue of a "combat" bra. Until that reality unfolds, here are a few pointers. Sports bras are essential pieces of kit. Lacey, fluffy bras are not suitable and will not provide the support required for PT or in the field. Vigorous PT sometimes requires wearing more than one bra at a time. An inappropriate bra can result in pain and permanent damage to your breasts. Underwire bras should not be worn during unarmed combat training. It's a great way to break your ribs.

## Documentation and References

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**Special Thanks:** The ALLC wishes to thank the officers and NCMs that participated in the Impromptu Gender Integration Survey. Your feedback was key to the success of this mission.

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