

Pentagon Announces Progress in Opening Jobs to Women

By Karen Parrish

American Forces Press Service

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WASHINGTON, June 18, 2013 – The services and U.S. Special Operations Command have completed plans to gradually open jobs to female service members that used to be closed to them, senior Pentagon officials announced today.

Joined by senior service officials at a Pentagon news conference, **Juliet Beyler**, the Defense Department's director of officer and enlisted personnel management, said today's announcement is a milestone.



In January, then-Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, rescinded the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule. That policy barred women from jobs performed near combat units.

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jobs -- such as tank mechanic and field artillery radar operator -- performed near combat units. It also prohibited women in jobs such as intelligence, communications and logistics from assignment at units smaller than a brigade.

"Our goal is to ensure that the mission is met with the best-qualified and most capable people, regardless of gender," Beyler said in prepared remarks. This year, she added, the services and Socom have worked diligently to plan two lines of effort aimed at integrating women:

-- Currently open occupations that were restricted: for example, administrative clerk in a tank battalion or truck driver in an artillery battery; and

-- Currently closed occupations that require review and validation of occupational standards: for example, infantry, armor and combat engineer.

The services and Socom have filed separate plans, which Defense Secretary **Chuck Hagel** has reviewed, she noted. Beyler added that while

the plans differ, they all involve work with scientific and research agencies to review occupational standards and ensure they are current, operationally valid and applied on a gender-neutral basis.

All the plans are incremental in opening closed positions, which requires congressional notification, she said.

"Each service and Socom is conducting thorough doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities and policy analyses to ensure deliberate and responsible implementation," she said.

Pentagon officials said the department expects to issue a report to Congress later this summer detailing more implementation specifics. Full implementation across the services should occur by Jan. 1, 2016, officials said.

The services and Socom have identified decision points by which they will make final determinations to open occupations and positions or to request an exception to policy to keep a position or occupation closed, Beyler said. The defense secretary and the Joint Chiefs chairman must personally approve any exceptions to policy, she added.

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 18 June 2013