

# Integrating women into combat - a panel discussion

## Integrating women into combat

March 24, 2014 -- Unless our strategy includes women, we are failing, said one of three Army War College students who shared research and experience at a free public panel discussion at the Army Heritage and



Education Center about integrating women into combat roles.

The event in honor of Women's History Month was opened by Brig. Gen. Carol Eggert, USAWC Deputy Commandant for Reserve Affairs, who highlighted the historic contributions made by women in the military. The panel, moderated by Col. Lorelei Coplen, featured Col. Alan Kellogg, Lt. Col. Kevin Lambert and Lt. Col. Toya Davis.

With restrictions for women in ground combat removed by the Department of Defense in January 2013, the military has been testing and planning options for effective integration. Kellogg's and Lambert's research examined some of the positive aspects of this transformation, concluding that integrating women into previously closed specialties can improve team performance, and will better align the Army with the society it

serves, while enhancing the overall performance of combat arms units.

Kellogg's research was guided by Harvard Business School Professor John Kotter's book, *Leading Change*. Kellogg said that unless our strategy includes women, we are failing to achieve our full potential as an Army.

"Women often create a more mature and balanced culture," said Kellogg.

With respect to his research, Lambert, an infantry officer, concluded that there is a culture of resistance to this integration, and that this culture of resistance is largely misunderstood and must be identified. He said, "The more we are able to integrate ourselves in the infantry the better we are going to be."

Davis said that we have to make sure we do not set quotas for women, but select the best people based on performance. We have to tie progress to merit.

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