



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

January 13, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
(PERSONNEL AND READINESS)  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
(RESERVE AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: DIRECT GROUND COMBAT DEFINITION AND ASSIGNMENT RULE

References: (a) SECDEF memo, April 28, 1993  
(b) SECDEF memo, February 2, 1988  
(c) FY94 National Defense Authorization Act

My memorandum dated April 28, 1993, directed the Military Services to open more specialties and assignments to women and established an Implementation Committee to ensure that those policies are applied consistently. I also charged the Committee to review and make recommendations on several specific implementation issues.

The Committee has completed its first such review, that of the "appropriateness of the 'Risk Rule'", reference (b), and concluded that, as written, the risk rule is no longer appropriate. Accordingly, effective October 1, 1994, reference (b) is rescinded.

My memorandum restricted women from direct combat on the ground. The Committee studied this and recommended that a ground combat rule be established for assignment of women in the Armed Forces. Accordingly, the following direct ground combat assignment rule, and accompanying definition of "direct ground combat," are adopted effective October 1, 1994 and will remain in effect until further notice.

A. Rule. Service members are eligible to be assigned to all positions for which they are qualified, except that women shall be excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground, as defined below.

B. Definition. Direct ground combat is engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force's personnel. Direct ground

Enclosure (1)

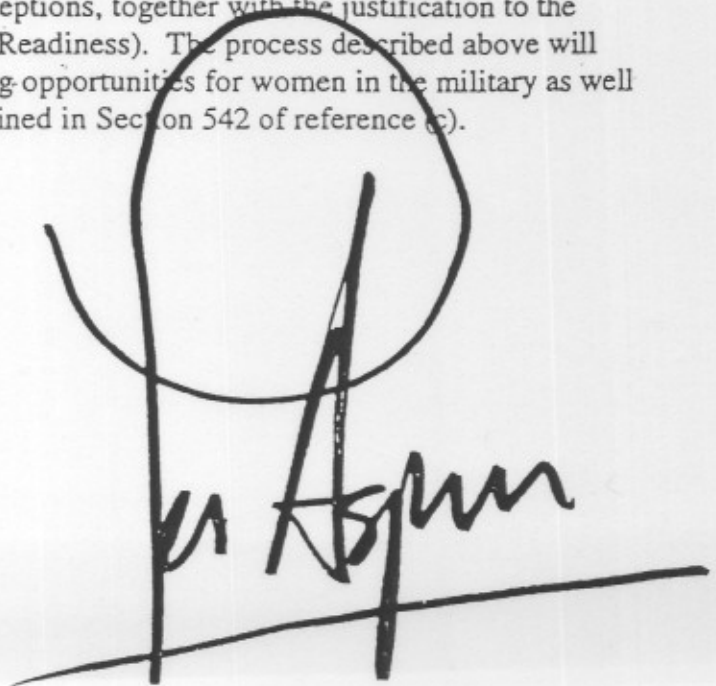
combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect.

The Services will use this guidance to expand opportunities for women. No units or positions previously open to women will be closed under these instructions.

The Services will provide the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), not later than May 1, 1994, with lists of all units and positions closed to women and their proposed status based on implementation of this policy. These lists will be arrayed in three columns: jobs currently closed that are proposed to be opened, jobs currently closed that are proposed to remain closed, and a column justifying each entry. The proposed changes will be reviewed by the Implementation Committee and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness). The Services will then coordinate approved implementing policies and regulations with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) prior to their issuance. These policies and regulations may include the following restrictions on the assignment of women:

- where the Service Secretary attests that the costs of appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements are prohibitive;
- where units and positions are doctrinally required to physically collocate and remain with direct ground combat units that are closed to women;
- where units are engaged in long range reconnaissance operations and Special Operations Forces missions; and
- where job related physical requirements would necessarily exclude the vast majority of women Service members.

The Services may propose additional exceptions, together with the justification to the Assistance Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness). The process described above will enable the Department to proceed with expanding opportunities for women in the military as well as comply with the reporting requirements contained in Section 542 of reference (c).

A large, stylized handwritten signature or set of initials is present at the bottom right of the page. It features a large, circular loop at the top, followed by a vertical line that descends and then curves back up to complete the circle. Below this, there are several more fluid, cursive-like strokes that appear to be initials or a signature. A long, horizontal line is drawn across the bottom of the signature area.