

U.S. allows women to fight in wars

26th January, 2013



The U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has announced one of the biggest reforms of the American military in decades. He has lifted the ban on

women fighting on the front line in future wars. The new ruling reinforces the fact that women have been putting their lives at risk for many years. Mr Panetta told reporters: "Female service members have faced the reality of combat, proving their willingness to fight and, yes, to die to defend their fellow Americans." Panetta said many very able women soldiers have been prevented from doing a job they love because of their gender. He said: "We owe it to them to allow them to pursue every avenue of military service for which they are fully prepared and qualified."

The Defense Secretary announced there was an important proviso to his new ruling – that women must be able to meet the military's standards, including physical ones. Army Sergeant Jeremy Grayson agreed, saying: "Women would have to be able to do the physical stuff that men do. They have to be able to pull their own weight." Another Army spokesman, Anthony Lemaitre, warned the public to be prepared to handle seeing women troops come home in body bags or with lost limbs. He said: "It's harder to see a mother or a daughter dead." There could now be up to 237,000 positions available for women that are currently off limits to them. The Army says the ruling will benefit the military in many ways.

Sources: BBC / The Washington Post

Writing

It is a man's job to protect women and children. Women should never fight on the front line. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

biggest reforms / American military / the front line / future wars / willingness / gender / proviso / standards / physical stuff / pull your own weight / troops / off limits

True / False

- The U.S. Secretary of State has announced important military reforms. T / F
- Women will still not be able to fight on the front line. T / F
- Leon Panetta said women have already been ready to die in combat. T / F
- Panetta wants women to do any military job they are qualified to do. T / F
- Mr Panetta said he would make the standards lower for female troops. T / F
- A soldier said a woman must be able to carry her own weight. T / F
- Another soldier said Americans must be ready to see female casualties. T / F
- There could be almost a quarter of a million jobs open to women. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. announced | a. removed |
| 2. lifted | b. go after |
| 3. reinforces | c. enthusiasm |
| 4. willingness | d. deal with |
| 5. pursue | e. things |
| 6. proviso | f. declared |
| 7. stuff | g. closed |
| 8. handle | h. arms and legs |
| 9. limbs | i. backs up |
| 10. off limits | j. condition |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think of female soldiers?
- Should women be allowed to fight on the front line?
- Why do men in government tell women they cannot fight in combat?
- Would you fight to defend your country?
- What would enemy soldiers think about fighting women?
- What do you think of soldiers who are ready to die to protect their fellow citizens?
- Do you think you would be a good soldier?
- How important is this new ruling?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. He has lifted the | a. to fight |
| 2. on the front | b. their own weight |
| 3. putting their lives | c. available |
| 4. proving their willingness | d. to his new ruling |
| 5. allow them to pursue | e. line |
| 6. here was an important proviso | f. limits to them |
| 7. be able to pull | g. at risk |
| 8. handle seeing women troops come | h. every avenue |
| 9. 237,000 positions | i. home in body bags |
| 10. that are currently off | j. ban on women fighting |

Discussion – Student B

- How difficult is it for a woman to do exactly the same as men?
- Do you always pull your own weight?
- How would people's view of war change if they saw many women in body bags?
- How different would you feel if your daughter went to the front line than if your son did?
- Are there extra dangers for women soldiers?
- What could women do on the front line better than men?
- How might the new ruling benefit the U.S. military?
- What questions would you like to ask Leon Panetta?

Spelling

- the American irlyiatm
- The new ruling rrcnese fio the fact
- proving their sngleiiwnls
- because of their nrdege
- allow them to rspueu every avenue
- fully prepared and qfauidile
- an important iroospv
- do the lhpsiyac stuff
- pull their own hwtegi
- lost bilms
- mother or a ehgadtru
- 237,000 positions laiabalve

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. a	3. i	4. c	5. b
6. j	7. e	8. d	9. h	10. g

Role Play

Leon Panetta - You think it is OK for women to fight on the front line. Tell the others three reasons why. You think women can do exactly the same job as men. You don't agree that protecting a country is only a man's job. You think your new ruling will make your country stronger.

Long-time soldier - You totally disagree with women serving on the front line. Tell the others three reasons why. You saw many bad things in your time as a soldier. You don't think women should see those things or put their lives at risk. There are many military women can do without fighting on the front line.

Woman soldier - You love your job. Tell the others three reasons why. You are better at soldiering than many men. You think it's unfair you could not fight on the front line. Wars have changed and the risk to all soldiers has reduced. All women should be allowed to defend their country.

Anti-war campaigner - You think armies are crazy. Tell the others three reasons why. You disagree with all the others. No country should have an army. That would end all wars and millions of lives could be saved. You think the money spent on the military should be used to promote peace.

Speaking – Daughter's Job

What job would you like for your daughter? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| • model | • flight attendant |
| • police officer | • front line soldier |
| • tax accountant | • English teacher |
| • store manager | • software designer |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.