

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Office of the Secretary  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington DC 20350-1000

SECNAVINST 1300.12B  
Pers-00W  
16 July 1996

SECNAV INSTRUCTION 1300.12B

**From:** Secretary of the Navy  
**To:** All Ships and Stations

**Subj:** ASSIGNMENT OF WOMEN  
MEMBERS IN THE DEPARTMENT  
OF THE NAVY (DON)

**Ref:** (a) Public Law 103-160, section 541  
(NOTAL)  
(b) Public Law 103-160, section 542  
(NOTAL)  
(c) SECDEF ltr of 4 Feb 94 (NOTAL)  
(d) SECDEF memo of 13 Jan 94  
(NOTAL)

1. **Purpose.** To prescribe the guidelines under which women, both officer and enlisted, in the Navy and Marine Corps may be assigned to duty in ships, aircraft, and units of the Navy and Marine Corps. This instruction is a complete revision and should be read in its entirety.

2. **Cancellation.** SECNAVINST 1300.12A.

3. **Scope.** When the United States Coast Guard is assigned as a service within the Department of the Navy (DON), the policies set out in this instruction will apply to women of the Coast Guard.

4. **Background.** Reference (a) repealed Title 10, United States Code Section 6015, the "combat exclusion law." This authorizes the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) to change military personnel policy to assign women to any combat unit, classes of combat vessels, and combat platforms. Reference (b) directed SECDEF to provide 30-day notification to Congress prior to implementing any changes which open units, classes of vessels, or types of platforms that were previously closed to women, and 90-day notification prior to any changes to the ground combat exclusion policy. Prior to the repeal, women could be assigned to all combat logistic force, support, auxiliary, and special category ships, as well as non-combatant

units. Reference (c) notified Congress that the following were open to the assignment of women: all afloat staffs, all combat air squadrons, aircraft carriers (CV/CVN), cruisers (CG/CGN), destroyers (DD/DDG), frigates (FF/FFG), amphibious warfare ships (LHA/LHD/LPH/LPD/LSD/LST), mine countermeasure commands and control ships (MCS) and all units of the Naval Construction Force. Reference (d) issued the direct ground combat exclusion policy, and directed the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) to designate which positions, units, and platforms meet direct ground combat criteria. This policy also authorized SECNAV to recommend restriction of the assignment of women where: the costs of appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements are prohibitive; units and positions are doctrinally required to physically collocate and remain with direct ground combat units; units engaged in long-range reconnaissance operations and Special Operations Forces missions; and/or job-related physical requirements would necessarily exclude the vast majority of women servicemembers. Reference (d) states that Services will use this guidance to expand opportunities for women. No units or positions previously open to women will be closed under these instructions.

5. **Definitions**

a. **Direct Ground Combat Rule.**

Servicemembers 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. **Direct Ground Combat.** 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 combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing



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with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect.

**c. Temporary Duty.** Temporary duty (TEM DU) orders are orders which involve detachment from one station and assignment to another station or stations for TEM DU pending further assignment to a new permanent duty station or for return to the old permanent duty station. Members on TEM DU are not attached to any permanent duty station.

**d. Temporary Additional Duty.** Temporary additional duty (TEM ADD) orders are orders which temporarily assign members to duty in addition to their present duties, and which direct them upon completion of this TEM ADD to resume regular or temporary duty.

**6. Policy.** It is DON policy that women, officers and enlisted, will be assigned to billets commensurate with their capabilities to the maximum extent practicable. The policy delineates when women may serve on board Navy ships, aircraft, and with Marine Corps units, but does not mandate assignment of women to any particular ship, aircraft, or Marine Corps unit. Accordingly, women:

**a.** May be assigned to all afloat staffs, all combat air squadrons, and all surface ships that have been modified to allow appropriate berthing arrangements.

**b.** May be assigned TEM DU or TEM ADD to all squadrons and ships, and all units authorized for permanent assignment of women, without restriction.

**c.** May be assigned TEM DU or TEM ADD to units, closed to the assignment of women due to direct ground combat exclusion, that are not expected to conduct a combat mission during the period of temporary duty. If women are so assigned to a unit that is closed and the unit is subsequently assigned a combat mission, every reasonable effort will be made to remove the women prior to execution of such mission.

**d.** May embark in any unit for official purposes not requiring TEM DU or TEM ADD orders, such as for the performance of inspections, support functions, or visits.

**e.** May not be assigned to sea-air-land (SEAL) teams, infantry regiments and below, artillery battalions and below, any armored units (tanks, amphibious assault vehicles, and light armored reconnaissance), riverine assault craft units, units and positions which are doctrinally required to physically collocate and remain with direct combat units that are closed to women, and units engaged in long-range reconnaissance operations and Special Operations Forces missions.

**f.** May not be permanently assigned to currently designed classes of submarines, MCMs, MHCs, and PCs due to the prohibitive cost to modify these ships for appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements.

**7. Action.** The Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps shall develop and issue specific directives for assignment of women within the policy contained here. Assignment policies for women of the Navy and Marine Corps shall be: in the best interests of the naval service; in accordance with this instruction; and consistent with the principles of fairness and equal opportunity.

**JOHN H. DALTON**

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