



More Combat Jobs Could Become Open to Women Soldiers

From the Army News Service

The Army announced its plan to integrate women into combat roles last month, opening positions within 27 brigade combat teams, which includes nine National Guard brigade combat teams.

The Army also opened positions within field artillery battalions down to the company level, so that female officers could serve in various leadership roles.

Other positions throughout the Army are being examined and could possibly open to women under the Soldier 2020 initiative, said Col. Linda Sheimo, chief of the Command Programs and Policy Division at the Directorate of Military Personnel Management, Army G-1.

The Army's Soldier 2020 initiative is about having the best Soldiers possible in the Army by 2020, Sheimo said. Part of that will be re-evaluating standards and validating gender-neutral standards for Army jobs, she explained.

The Soldier 2020 initiative requires the scientific validation of all physical fitness standards that are currently in place. This evaluation could make way for the development of a pre-test, so that individuals can take more time to train and prepare on their own for certain jobs.

"We're not lowering standards," Sheimo said. "We are ensuring that every Soldier knows what the standard is. The reality is that you will have some cases where men will not be able to meet that minimum requirement, they just won't have the physical capability, and there might be some women that do."

By summer 2015, recommendations will be made to Army senior leadership about what jobs can and cannot realistically be opened to women, she said.

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