



First Sgt. Maria Levitre, the senior noncommissioned officer of Headquarters and Headquarters "Hammer" Troop, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, inspects the NCO saber during her change of responsibility ceremony July 12, 2013, at Fort Hood, Texas. (Photo by Staff Sgt. John Couffer)

Army Opens 33,000 More Positions to Women Soldiers

By David Vergun

Army News Service

Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh signed a directive last week authorizing more opportunities for women to serve in a wider range of roles within the Army. The authorization results in the opening of about 33,000 positions in units that were once closed to women, said Col. Linda Sheimo, chief of the Command Programs and Policy Division at the Directorate of Military Personnel Management, Army G-1.

"Soon, our formations down to company level will begin having female Soldiers arrive for duty to serve in positions once closed to women," said Lt. Gen. Howard B. Bromberg, deputy Army chief of staff and the Army G-1. "However, this will not happen overnight; we will continue to incrementally fill these positions with

Soldiers who have the ability, are qualified, and have the proven performance to complete the mission," he said.

The 30-day congressional notification required by law before implanting this change in policy was completed April 7, 2014.

As a part of the incremental strategy, the directive states "female leaders will be assigned first to provide a support network for junior female Soldiers and to offer advice to the unit's male leadership."

"The decision to open these positions to female Soldiers was made after U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command completed extensive validation studies, including physical fitness requirements," Sheimo said. "Nevertheless, women as well as men who do not meet

the standards will not be allowed into these MOSs (military occupational specialties),” she emphasized, explaining that the standards are fair and transparent.

“This initiative further aids Army leaders to select the best-qualified Soldiers for each position within the Army profession,” Sheimo said. “The Army’s efforts across various spectrums will also ensure all Soldiers have the opportunity to serve successfully.”

The deputy chief of staff, Army G-1 will issue additional personnel assignment guidance and unit training requirements in follow-on military personnel messages, according to the directive.

This change in policy means there are no more units in the Army that are closed to women. A closed unit was one that was expected to see combat. Because of this, women could not serve in those units — even if they served in MOSs that were open to women.

With the change, women can serve anywhere in the Army — even in combat units — within an MOS that is open to women.

The new directive does not include changes to closed occupations in the Army — the 14 MOSs in the Army that are currently closed to women. Those MOSs are: engineer (12B), field artillery (13B, 13D and 13F), infantry (11A, 11B, 11C and 11Z) and armor (19A, 19B, 19C, 19D, 19K and 19Z). Additionally, the new Army directive does not affect the special operations community.

More MOSs could be open for women in the future, Sheimo said. By Jan. 1, 2016, the Army will have completed validation studies for all 14 MOSs that are currently closed to women and will pass its recommendations on to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for review. ■



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