

To The AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
ATTN: ELIZABETH BRODERICK, chair of REVIEW PANEL.

I am a military retiree. I was an enlisted man for six years & an officer for 15, & a reservist for four years. I spent one year in Viet Nam & many shorter deployments. I was very happily married until 1993, when my wife passed away. I have three gainfully employed children; two have university degrees, as do I. I have never had any emotional illnesses. I have lived in Australia for over 40 years & am very concerned about it's future, & feel a sincere compulsion to express some thoughts on the situation of women in the Australian Defence Force.

The review panel should operate with the underlying principle that the A.D.F. is a different situation than other occupations. I have no quarrel with equal rights, but the Defence force is for the protection of the country - not elevating womens' rights or any other social programs, such as training etc. Having women serving along side men introduces so many problems that, in the long run, it does more harm than good.

The example of the Defence Academy is typical. I don't know how anyone in their right mind, could put men & women in

co-ed barracks, toilets, etc, and not expect to have serious problems. Those responsible should be severely disciplined, not those young people they exposed to such tempting situations.

It is difficult for me to find valid reasons for women to go into the services. Why would anyone want to be a dirt eating grunt? Why would anyone want to go to a war zone? Patriotism? I seriously doubt it! So what is it? I would suggest several reasons:-

1. Some girls might be a bit 'butch', doing the thing boys do & prove they are just as good - the 'Helen Raddy' thing. Of course, biological factors prevent them from being physically the same.
2. Some may have lesbian tendencies & the idea of close association in a women's barracks is attractive.
3. Some may realise the huge amount of money to be made from prostitution in the services. Do not dismiss this factor. It does happen!
4. Looking for love & attention. This is a distinct possibility. There are so many broken homes, incapable parents etc. these days, that young girls could be looking for a loving companion & maybe stability of service life.

I wonder also, if women consider what would happen if they were captured? Geneva Convention rules have never been heard of in most places around the world, where they would be in combat.

Also, senior military officers are sometimes required to make heart wrenching, life and death decisions - How many casualties will we take? Are the results worth the lives lost etc. etc. etc.? Everyone who does not have to make these decisions should be glad, including women.

hastly, I would say the recruiting ads are very misleading. They make it look like just fun & games; one big party.

With an unbiased look, men are probably discriminated against more than women, particularly in matters of discipline & promotion. My experience in these subjects is limited as I served before there were mass numbers of women in the forces. However, it was my experience that the promotion system at that time, was extremely fair. It would appear that one of the purposes of this study is to tilt the scales in favour of promoting more women to senior positions. This will have very ^{SERIOUS} repercussions and again, not fair to men.

At a lower level, in a combat situation, men are more likely to expose themselves to risk for the sake of female comrades; 'the make thing,' but again it's a discrimination - the women should not have been there in the first place, & also women have the advantage of getting pregnant if an undesirable posting is in the offing.

Now, the difficult part, but the crux of the matter - male testosterone.

You can say men should do 'this' & not do 'that' & pass laws accordingly, but again this is male discrimination, & the testosterone problem is still there, AND, it is powerful.

As our society becomes more permissive & less disciplined, these problems will increase.

Alcohol is a catalyst of course, but is freely available to military personnel - the big problem being testosterone.

It's here to stay, like it or not, we were created that way & that's the way it should be & always will be.

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If you are serious about A. D. F. discrimination, use the LORD'S prayer as your starting point - "Lead us not into Temptation." Common sense will tell us - don't have co-ed dorms, toilets etc.; don't send women to where men have postings away from their families; submarines are a prime example. Even the most bitch become beautiful, and very quickly, for young men, but not just the young ones. Senior men have ruined their careers as well.

Women can excel in many careers but the military is different. Their increased presence + authority will lower the effectiveness of our Defence forces.

Signed

MAJOR U.S.A.F. Retired.