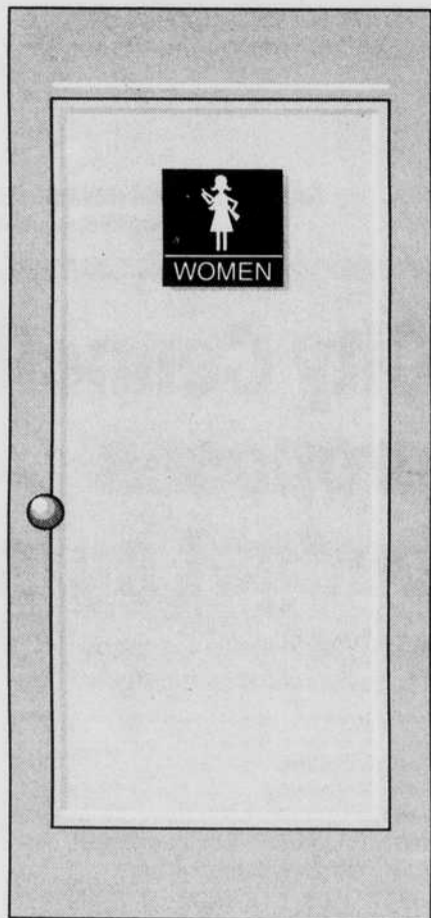


EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
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Ryan Frank
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Ashley Bach & Brian Diamond

OPINION

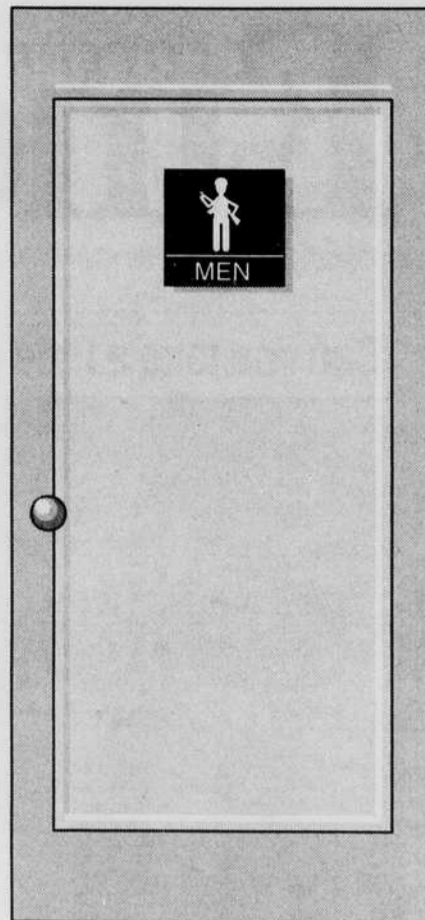
editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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A Divided ARMY

Men and women
soldiers may soon be living
behind different doors



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

OUR OPINION: The U.S. Army's consideration of resegregating its training facilities by sex could lead to a separation that strikes to the heart of our Armed Forces

Since this country was founded, the U.S. Army has been a primarily male institution. In fact, women still aren't allowed to serve in units that have a high probability of ground combat. But women are increasingly playing a larger role. Females now make up 14 percent of the Army's 495,000 troops and 20 percent of the force's new recruits.

To adapt to this influx of women soldiers, the Army worked to integrate both sexes in advanced, and later, basic training. By 1994, men and women trained together at all levels. The Navy and Air Force also implemented similar programs.

However, this seemingly effective system was threatened last November when female recruits accused male superiors at a Maryland army base of sexual assault and harassment. Soon, accusations appeared from bases all over the country, and Army officials were left in a lurch. In a quick response to the controversy, Army officials are now backpedaling away from this innovative integration policy — and fast.

With a nationwide backlash against the Army and the Armed Forces in general, officials are considering a return to segregation by sex in basic training. This return to

ancient policies is utterly wrong for the Army, female soldiers and citizens for many reasons.

As many women have claimed, this return to segregation would return the Army to a darker, less aware time — when men and women were separated by their sex and not their rank or speciality. Officials in favor of the new policy say it would relieve female recruits of stress from sexual tension early in their careers. A former Navy Secretary called it a much-needed "return to normalcy."

Normalcy? The proposed policy would only further misunderstanding and alienation among male and female recruits. This may be normal for the Army, but it is far from right. How can different parties ever understand each other if they do not work together?

Perhaps training programs at all corporations and companies should be segregated to avoid "sexual tension." We wouldn't want males and females to actually learn from each other. Sexual tension, instead, is a part of life. Male-female relationships will always have a special dynamic that other affiliations lack. This is no different in the Army, despite its unique problems with this "tension."

Sexual segregation would also hurt the Army, not to mention all of us who count on its services. Basic training is an integral step in the preparation of soldiers for war. By separating the sexes, training deviates from reality. In war-like conditions, true

segregation cannot be afforded; everyone is the Army. Men and women work and count on each other in extreme, life-and-death situations. "Sexual tension" is not even considered. Segregated training could leave soldiers ill-prepared to do their jobs — and in turn, unable to protect us.

The new policy could also make cohabitation difficult for soldiers when they are integrated after basic training. Why separate recruits in the beginning if they are to be joined together later anyway? The possible difficulties in adapting to the opposite sex down the line are too dangerous to gamble on.

The Army would seem to prove itself wrong as well. In the early 1990s, the force conducted a series of research programs on gender integration. The conclusion, in short, was that the program significantly increased the morale of female soldiers and improved general cohesion and teamwork among recruits as well. In other words, it helped everyone involved.

The accusations of sexual harassment and assault among Army officials are indeed serious and should be dealt with accordingly. A solution will not come, however, from rekindling tired, forgotten policies. Progress was hard enough to achieve in itself. A regression to the past could make that progress nearly impossible.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

Overheard

"I'm not a political figure, nor do I want to be one. I come with my heart, and I want to bring an awareness of people in distress."

Princess Diana explaining her role in calling for a ban on land mines.

"It's hard because there are so many women out there who go through this, and now I know how they feel."

Tonya Harding after reporting an alleged kidnapping attempt.

"I like and respect people who are truly liberal and truly conservative. The people who trouble me are the moderates who have no real convictions, who are blown by every passing wind."

Bill Sizemore on politics, as quoted in the Feb. 16 *The Register-Guard*.

"No matter how much money I am offered, I would never confess to a crime which I did not commit."

O.J. Simpson's reaction to Fred Goldman's proposal to drop all charges if he signed a detailed confession that he is a murderer.

"And suddenly, I'm in the show-me hell of entertainment."

Cuba Gooding Jr. on the popularity of his catch phrase, "Show me the money" in the film "Jerry Maguire."

"To adopt term limits is to play Russian Roulette with the future."

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde on the defeat of a term-limit amendment in the House.

"If we only put out pleasant films, nothing would really stop, except that people would stop going to the movies."

Director David Lynch on violence in films.

"It would be like Paris without the Eiffel Tower."

Clog manufacturer Eeike Scheron's reflection on a Dutch proposal to ban clogs in the workplace.

"I don't think it's worth fighting, and I don't think we can get out."

Lyndon B. Johnson on Vietnam, taken from the recently released tape of his phone conversations on May 27, 1964.

"I study the market comedically."

Comedian Chris Rock's approach to the competitive comedy field.

"I am proposing that there is a specific circuitry in the brain that lights up to make you feel attracted to and focus on one mate as opposed to others."

Anthropologist Helen E. Fisher with a scientifically romantic view of love.

LETTERS

Fight for Footnotes

Sending Footnotes packing would be a sin. Several times a term I find myself at Footnotes, glad they exist. Without a copy shop on East 13th Avenue anymore, making the decision to remove Footnotes from the EMU and the vicinity of the student populace would be negligence on the part of the EMU Board of Directors.

I hope that it would also prompt (harsh) action by much of the student body (impeachments anyone?). Local copy shops do more for the average student than the MCC, the EMU Board of Directors, or anyone else who desires the space. This is my fourth

year on this campus, and I hope you take this seriously.

Stefan Baratto
Instructor Mathematics

Support women too

Pathetic. That is what the student support for the Oregon women's basketball team is. Saturday against the Stanford Cardinal, the students were sparse. Why is this? The women are doing a lot better than the men as far as the Pac-10 Conference is concerned.

The student section sells out almost every game for the guys. Why not support the women, too? Saturday afternoon, when the

women took on Stanford, was one of the most intense games I've attended here at the University.

The Oregon women fought hard to battle the No. 3 team in the country. They deserve more support from the same students who go to the men's games and go wild for a team that continues to find a way not to win.

Who knows, maybe some of that noise the guys get could have helped the women to floor the mighty Cardinal. Even if it hadn't, at least they would have had some support.

Mike Ross
Psychology

Letters policy

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be typed, double spaced and include the author's name, signature, and phone number. The identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted. Submissions signed by more than three people must include at least one and no more than three names designated to represent the group.

Letters must be limited to 250 words or less. The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar and style.