



UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER
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13 January 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, 1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON,
WASHINGTON, DC, 20301-1000

SUBJECT: US Special Operations Command Implementation Plan for the Integration
of Women

1. REFERENCE: Memorandum, Secretary of Defense, 3 December 2015, Subject: Implementation Guidance for the Full Integration of Women in the Armed Forces.
2. BACKGROUND: As a result of your 3 December 2015 announcement opening all remaining closed occupations and positions to women, US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has developed the following Implementation Plan.
3. I reviewed the Service plans and crafted ours to be consistent with theirs and focused on your concerns. Transparent standards, population size, physical demands and physiological differences, conduct and culture, talent management, operating abroad, and assessment and adjustment are areas requiring deliberate thought and planning to optimize integration success.

A. Transparent Standards. USSOCOM executed a rigorous third party review process resulting in the validation of our existing assessment, training, and occupational standards as operationally relevant and gender-neutral. Established standards are key to the selection, training, operational readiness, and continued performance of Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel. Adherence to these rigorous standards is crucial to our combat effectiveness and the preservation of unit readiness, cohesion, and morale.

B. Population Size. USSOCOM anticipates a small number of female volunteers. Utilizing our Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy (DOTMLPF-P) analysis we have made adjustments to our supply inventories, facilities, and medical protocols and will continue to monitor through our Longitudinal Implementation Plan Assessment.

C. Physical Demands and Physiological Differences. USSOCOM operates primarily in small teams with significant load bearing demands. Our injury mitigation efforts start with our physical screening processes and candidate physical preparation and culminates with operational physical fitness and rehabilitation programs. Due to the nature of SOF missions there is little flexibility in mitigating the load bearing requirements of our operators.

D. Conduct and Culture. Conduct and culture starts with leadership. Leaders at all levels will ensure appropriate training, work, and billeting environments are established

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and maintained. Attitudes toward team performance will be addressed through component education and training. SOF will continue to uphold high standards regarding the behavior of our highly adaptable military professionals.

E. Talent Management. USSOCOM is attuned to monitoring the talents and career progression of small numbers of personnel in highly specialized and challenging fields. We will rely on this experience and our close relationships with the Services to continue managing the career progression of our operators. We will continue to manage the careers of our operators based on performance and potential regardless of gender.

F. Operating Abroad. USSOCOM and the Geographic Combatant Commands are well versed in matching the skills and characteristics of our small teams to the mission requirements and local conditions during mission planning. We will ensure SOF planners take team demographics into account during the mission planning process.

G. Assessment and Adjustment. USSOCOM will conduct a longitudinal implementation plan assessment that will include measuring and tracking candidate and operator physical and academic performance, injury rates, health, promotion, qualifications, and retention. Additionally, female cadre plan and DOTMLPF-P impacts will be assessed and reporting criteria and periodicity will be specified. We anticipate data from this assessment will help identify demographic trends and lead to possible mitigating strategies.

4. USSOCOM will execute our Implementation Plan using a three-phased approach.

A. Phase 1. Preparation, begins immediately. Candidate selection will be conducted by individual Components in coordination with their respective Service Recruiting Commands. Components will institute plans for public affairs, communications, and outside observation. Components will modify infrastructure, processes, and protocols as reflected in the DOTMLPF-P reports. Female cadre are in place and prepared for this integration initiative. USSOCOM prepares longitudinal implementation plan assessment and publishes directive.

B. Phase 2. Training, begins once Component assessment and selection programs receive the first volunteer female candidates. Current estimates indicate first female candidates will arrive no earlier than third quarter Fiscal Year 2016. Initiate longitudinal implementation plan assessment and analyze gathered data. Manage the initial assignment of female graduates in accordance with respective Service policies. Continue public affairs and communication plans and outside observation policies. Prepare the leadership and operating force to receive the first female SOF graduates.

C. Phase 3. Operational Assignment, begins when the first female SOF graduate reports to her operational command. Continue longitudinal implementation plan assessment to include the operational force.

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5. USSOCOM Implementation Plan will consist of four lines of effort (LOE).

A. LOE 1. Accession. USSOCOM will work closely with the Services to ensure our combined transparent recruiting efforts select the best qualified candidates. USSOCOM will monitor Component accession processes to ensure Components identify candidates with the requisite abilities and attributes and have the greatest potential for completing SOF training pipelines.

B. LOE 2. Talent Management. USSOCOM will work closely with Service assignment and personnel systems to match the individual's attributes to the requirements of the Force in a manner that provides the greatest opportunity for success within each career field. We recognize that this is a long-term effort that will require frequent monitoring and review.

C. LOE 3. Communication. SOF leaders will brief implementation plans to their training staffs and operational force to prepare them for the integration of women. Each Component Command will establish public affairs postures and plans consistent with my guidance and in cooperation with their respective Service.

D. LOE 4. Assessment. Components will coordinate with Service research organizations in order to collect, organize, and report data points articulated in the USSOCOM Longitudinal Implementation Plan Assessment directive. USSOCOM will use the results of the Component assessment plans to identify most effective implementation practices, areas of concern, and potential adjustments.

6. USSOCOM recently completed three years of analysis, studies, and surveys to design our integration plan in order to fully prepare for this policy change. We are committed to the successful integration of women into Special Operations career fields.

7. My primary point of contact is Major General Christopher Haas, Director, Force Management and Development, commercial telephone [redacted] Defense Switched Network [redacted] unclassified email: [redacted]

(b)(3) (10 U.S.C. § 130b), (b)(6)

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