DEBATE OVERVIEW:
AGAINST WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

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HSP 402

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Fall 2013

A big controversial law has passed in the United States. A law allowing women in the infantry. However, is it really so controversial? It is not as if the United States would be the first nation to open its infantry to women. According to Max Fisher of the Washington Post, “**Denmark**, **Estonia**, **Finland**, **France**, **Germany**, **Lithuania**, **Netherlands**, **Norway**, **Poland**, **Romania** and **Sweden**. Elsewhere: **Australia**, **Canada** and **New Zealand** in the Anglosphere; plus **Eritrea**, **Israel**, and **North Korea**” (2013) all allow women in their infantry.

Regardless of the new policy, however, there were (and still are) people against putting women in the frontlines. The reasons are many—from sexist stereotypes to natural dislike of war altogether. My team was chosen to emulate a few key points from this side of the debate

When my team first met, after being formed, to prepare our debate on the topic of women in the infantry, I’ll admit it was slightly awkward. A team of all *women* fighting against *women* in the infantry. However, I believe we pulled through the awkwardness. Each one of the four of us had strengths that supported our team. To detail them, I’ll go in the order that each of us presented.

Starting with our opening statement, April is someone I’ve always worked well with. She is incredibly organized (No, seriously, you should see her apartment!) and goal oriented. Before the debate, she helped our team commit to deadlines so that we could be fully prepared and set up a GoogleDoc and color-coded system so that we could all use it without it getting cluttered. During the debate, she has a strong, firm tone that was easy to be drawn in to and a pace that made each sentence she spoke comprehensible to our audience and easy to follow. After the debate, she effectively cited and answered several questions without hesitations and did it in a respectful way that included the other team.

Our first rebuttal was made by Ashley (Manzoni). I’d never worked with Ashley before, but I appreciated her professional approach to the entire assignment. She and I dove in to research right away and both came back with interest in the issue of sexual abuse being more traumatic than combat. Our difference in the preparation period of the assignment was that, while I was good at narrowing down and summarizing my teammates’/team’s ideas, Ashley was great at coming up with even more compelling thoughts that tied in to our stance and no one thought of. During the debate, like April, she spoke with a strong, convicted tone and her pace and flow allowed people to be drawn in at the moments when she spoke her most compelling arguments. After the debate, she was “on it” with answering questions and was able to bring up notes that we had only glazed over in the debate or hadn’t mentioned before.

Monica presented the second rebuttal. I’d been on the same debate team as Monica during the first rounds, but that debate was much shakier and less organized—not to say that Monica was not a strong part of the team. Rather, I really enjoy the frantic, “I am concerned and so should you be” tone she speaks in (whether it is actually from nerves or not). Monica took on the role of researching old policies in the military that will be affected by the newer policy of allowing women in the infantry. It was a topic I hadn’t even thought of and, but I had learned from the last rounds that Monica had the ability to think of things that I could not. I really liked that we were able to get a new perspective through her. During the actual debate, she spoke hurriedly and with the same “franticly concerned” tone. I, personally, understood what she said because I had seen her notes, but if the audience ever got lost be the way she spoke, I believe they were able to hear her key points, because Monica did a great job of enunciating through her entire speech and slowing down at key points. Overall, I believe my team was successful in this debate. We were a cohesive, communicative, supportive team.

The reality of the situation, even though my team debated against women in the infantry, is that the policy had already passed early 2013. Several women have already passed the grueling test to join such ranks (even though they are not actually going to follow through) and many more *will* follow. However, regardless of my team’s stance, have my own opinion. See, I am against war altogether. That said, my stance is not that *only* women should stay out of the military. I wish that for *every human being* on the planet. Still, I honor those who sacrifice their comforts to defend others. It is a gift that many in our selfish world do not hold. I am honored by those sacrifices, and, one day, I hope to give back to them my own sacrifice, so that they too can feel protected.

References

Fisher, M. (2013, January 25). *Map: Which countries allow women in front-line combat roles?*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/01/25/map-which-countries-allow-women-in-front-line-combat-roles/