

Report from the Center for

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Women in the Military

To make its research easily available to a broad audience, the Center for Philosophy and Public Policy publishes a quarterly newsletter: *QQ—Report from the Center for Philosophy and Public Policy*. Named after the abbreviation for “questions,” *QQ* summarizes and supplements Center books and working papers and features other selected philosophical work on public policy questions. Articles in *QQ* are intended to advance philosophically informed debate on current policy choices; the views presented are not necessarily those of the Center or its sponsors.

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The Supreme Court decides the constitutionality of all-male selective service registration, as the Pentagon rolls back voluntary female recruitment. What role should women, as full and equal citizens, play in the defense of their nation? p.1

Few professions are as mistrusted as the law. The reason may lie in essential conflicts between the professional responsibilities of lawyers and ordinary morality p. 6

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Women are employed more extensively in the American armed forces than in the military forces of any other nation in the world. This increased reliance on women for our national defense is currently facing intense reexamination. The Army has recently ordered a “pause” in the escalated recruitment of female soldiers. And last year Congress, responding to President Carter’s call for renewed Selective Service registration, voted, in opposition to the president’s wishes, against female registration. The constitutionality of the male-only draft has been challenged in the courts, but the Supreme Court has upheld the restriction. Meanwhile, public opinion continues to oppose full integration of women into the military. Through all the controversy surrounding this issue, the moral question remains: Should men go off to war while women weep?

This question resolves itself into several further sets of questions. First, do women have a right to serve in their nation’s armed forces, and if so, what is the source of this right? Second, what limits should be placed on this right? Are there sound empirical grounds for arguing that women’s right to serve should not include a right to full participation in offensive combat? Finally, if men are drafted to serve, should women be drafted as well? Or should the female presence in the military remain voluntary? The answers we give to these questions depend on our views on the significance of sex-related differences, the purposes of the military, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.