

## Mother McGrory's Military ©

by

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President Clinton, our nation's First Psychiatrist and First Mother, as evidenced by his empathetic rallying of Americans in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, has a new Secretary of Defense. Mary McGrory, the distinguished syndicated columnist, has clearly stated the nation's new post-Cold War military objectives. *"In recent years,"* she proudly declares (*"Academy of Horror"*, The Washington Post, 30 May), *"we have been made glad by the sight of U.S. troops doing good, guiding old ladies across streams in northern Iraq, entertaining ragged tots in other Third World countries."*

Indeed, in addition to 'feminizing' the U.S. Navy and implementing affirmative action quotas (i.e. the Navy's 12/12/5 plan), our armed forces look more like the Department of Health and Human Services than a fighting establishment. In today's armed forces [1], the 2.5 million family members, including 1.4 million children, overshadow the 1.5 million active-duty men and women. Today, close to 65 percent, including many young enlisted people, are either married or are single parents. The need to provide adequate housing, child care and medical services competes with the costs of essential training, new weapons systems and maintaining aging equipment.

The elite Boomers (e.g., the Strobe Talbotts) and their media enablers (e.g. the Ms. McGrorys) have made changes in our foreign policy that forces our military establishment into an even more ridiculous posture. Now, in the advent of leadership obsessed with providing humanitarian aid to collapsing tribal/ethnic states bent on civil wars of self-destruction, our armed forces are being shaped into a world-wide Salvation Army. Indeed, they are becoming a world-wide 'meals on wheels.'

They have been sent to Rwanda to 'bury the dead,' a chore so foul that volunteer relief workers can stand only a few weeks before emotional and psychological burnout. For example, headlines told us that our G.I.s were recently rushing supplies to feed starving Rwandans in Africa. They told us more. *"Gruesome task faces G.I.s in Goma: Burying the dead,"* jumps out from the front page of The Washington Times [2]. This task, amid the absolute horror of the aftermath of the slaughter of up to 500,000 Tutsis in Rwanda, was carried out in a backdrop of starving, diseased, and dying refugees who had migrated en masse to Rwanda's borders. Such carnage is so emotionally devastating that a veteran war correspondent, James Wooten of ABC Television, has exclaimed [3], *"This is such a horror that if it ever happened again, I would have to turn down the assignment."*

Fortunately for Mr. Wooten, he has the choice of turning down such an assignment. Our soldiers do not have such a choice, once having signed up. Can you imagine the recruiting posters? *"Join the Army and bury the starved, sickly, and infected corpses in a land that you never heard of."* Who would volunteer to join such an organization engaged in activities so far removed from the survival of American democracy, so far removed from vital American interests? The answer is, 'very few.' Armed forces recruiters are 'struggling' to fill volunteer goals in all services. American youth who previously met the challenge of military life are now passing on it. Implicit acceptance of homosexuals, 'feminization' of combat billets, top-level Navy leadership 'cover-up' of 'dual standards' in flight training, and discharge of a naval officer for privately telling his superiors that *"...his religious views led him to question the suitability of women in combat,"* have created an atmosphere wherein our best youth will not answer the call. In fact, experienced officers are turning down command opportunities because of the impossible 'social engineering' goals imposed by civilian authority.

If our leaders in the executive and legislative branches don't watch their step, fewer and fewer Americans will volunteer to join our armed forces and those who have volunteered will leave. Common sense predicts this result! Our military establishment, a primary tool in the forging of a coherent foreign policy, will be unable to carry out vital missions for our national security.

Now comes our self-appointed Secretary of Defense, Mary McGrory, decrying the Air Force's Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) program. Her idiotic bleating is almost too much to bear. As one combat veteran of the Vietnam War who underwent such training, I can assure Ms. McGrory that most of us remain convinced that such 'sanctioned sadism' was extremely valuable in understanding and preparing for the kinds of torture, beating, isolation, and psychological manipulation that the North Vietnamese would employ to break our resolve as American fighting men. Ms. McGrory should ask CAPT Jerry Coffee, CAPT Jim Bell, or her favorite, Senator John McCain, whether or not their SERE training provided important knowledge and testing in preparation for resisting, as much as humanly possible, the enemy's brutal methods. These methods had been ascertained from POWs of the Korean War, who experienced the same kind of treatment to which we were subjected in preparation for combat in Vietnam. The Vietnam experience contributed heavily to the knowledge and formulation of training techniques that are now incorporated into SERE training. Experience regarding female POWs in the 100-day Gulf Storm conflict have also been incorporated in the SERE course.

The new ingredient in SERE training since the Vietnam War is the matter of gender. Gender introduces a vulnerability that we did not have to contemplate in Vietnam. Indeed, if the reality of brutalizing American females to prepare them to kill our enemies on command and suffer being abused in training (physically and psychologically) to better prepare them for much more brutal treatment by potential enemies is too much for Ms. McGrory and her ilk, maybe it is, as she admits, *"...justification [for the view] that women cannot withstand the horrors of combat."* But McGrory's personal squeamishness and outrage concerning the Air Force's SERE training is much more instructive of what 'women-in-combat' will mean in a future with female POWs exposed to ruthless enemies who will turn the emotional knobs of American citizens, men and women, to further their goals as McGrory's emotional knobs have been turned by a mere SERE training program.

Millions of Ms. McGrorys will howl 'outrage' but not at the enemy. Our civilian and military leaders will be the targets just as surely as Ms. McGrory, Jane Fonda, Joan Baez, and others undermined our Vietnam War troops, sat in and aimed North Vietnamese anti-aircraft guns at 'imaginary' American airmen, and sang the songs of the anti-war elite. Their current cheerleading for women-in-combat will be forgotten. Their goals of 'equal career outcomes' and piercing the 'glass ceiling' of military command will be conveniently forgotten in the face of the reality of war. Torture, psychological breaking of individuals, brutal and sudden death in vast numbers will not seem to be such an 'equal rights' outcome as she sits on some future Sunday television pundit show, after having comfortably breakfasted on quail's eggs and caviar, and elaborates on how dreadful the U.S. military is for not having prepared her 'sisters' and the American populace for the the psychological impact of an enemy's brutal treatment of our POWs.

While it may be true that the Air Force SERE training would be more appropriately timed to coincide with 'pre-combat' deployment, rather than at the Air Force Academy, this training is essential for America's armed forces. Ms. McGrory should read the large number of books, many written by the POWs themselves, which provide detailed accounts of the brutal physical and psychological treatment received at the hands of the North Vietnamese. In the future, with women-in-combat, this treatment will only be more brutal and inhumane. After all, the goal of the enemy will be to break the will of not only the POWs, but the will of American leadership and the American people to support their national security interests. If the enemy finds such extreme soft spots, as displayed by the likes of Ms. McGrory who have great influence over public opinion, there will be no way America can stand firm in its resolve to protect itself from a brutal and ruthless enemy.

Maybe it is time to eliminate women-in-combat from the equation as an additional vulnerability that we can now see all too clearly, given Ms. McGrory's reaction to reality. In addition, maybe it is time to weed out the Ms. McGrory's from serious public discourse. If they are too squeamish to face the trials imposed by an increasingly hostile and brutal world, maybe they should stand back and let the real leaders lead.

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Footnotes:

- 1) Santoli, Al, "When It's Tougher Here Than Over There," Parade Magazine, pp. 4, 28 May 1995.
- 2) Hedges, Michael, "Gruesome task faces GIs in Goma: Burying the dead," The Washington Times, 31 July 1994.
  
3. Wooten, James, "Good Morning America," with Joan London, ABC Television, Channel 7, 8:12 a.m., 9 August 1994.

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