

Warriors in High Heels Part II: How do their deaths affect society?

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Back in January of this year, we featured John Wills' blog post on the [officer.com](#) website, "Warriors in High Heels: Don't Test Their Mettle!" As a former Chicago police officer, John offered his opinion of women as police officers. You can [read our original Bloglight](#) for that opinion.

We are featuring John's latest blog post about other Warriors in High Heels, the women who serve in combat in our United States armed forces. We all hear the debate about whether or not a woman's place is on the battlefield and each side is passionate about their reasons for and against. John's response to women in combat?

"If you've ever seen an angry female bear defending her family, you have an idea of how ferocious our warriors in high heels can become. We need them on the front lines."

If you're on either side of the issue, or if you're just curious about John's reason for supporting a woman's right to serve in combat, take some time and read his post on [officer.com](#).



Photo by John M. Wills

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Warriors In High Heels Pt. 2

How do their deaths affect society?

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By John M. Wills

Female officer shooting AR-style rifle. Are her bullets any less effective on the target?

JOHN WILLS

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Officer.com

I pen this article on Memorial Day, 2010, a sacrosanct occasion that I hope politicians never try to change or abolish, like they have done with other important days in our nation's history. This morning while I was working out, I tuned in to a local radio talk show. The host and his listeners were discussing the recent phenomenon of female soldiers killed in combat. He posed this question to his audience: *Does the fact that we send women into combat enhance society, or degrade it?* My gut instinct was that it improved our society and culture, but I listened to some callers who were convinced that women have no place on the battlefield.

An article in the *Sunday Washington Post* (linked below), dated 5/30/2010, revealed some interesting statistics that may surprise some of you. During World War II, American servicewomen suffered sixteen combat deaths; Vietnam produced only one. However, deaths from the wars in the Middle East have resulted in eighty U.S. servicewomen killed due to hostile action, more than from any other causes, such as accidents. The numbers have risen because women are directly involved in fighting, even though officially they are barred. Operating as fighter pilots, EOD techs, helicopter gunship pilots, platoon leaders, and machine-gunners on convoys, women are in the thick of the fight. You can't be in these types of positions and not be in harm's way.

As I continued to listen to callers to the radio show, people on both sides of the argument opined, some strident in their assertion that women belonged at home. Didn't children need their

mothers? I instantly yelled at the radio: *Kids need their fathers just as much!* Others took the position that the feminist movement was the cause of this morphing of a woman's role in society. That's a hot-button issue that I wouldn't touch, but as I thought further about the issue, I found myself taking the position that women in military combat were no different than our female police officers on the streets of our cities and towns.

In January of this year, I wrote an article entitled, *Warriors In High Heels* (also linked below). In it, I described some of the more recent events in which women played a pivotal role in saving lives. Some of the incidents resulted in the officer losing her life, something which all of us know can occur once we pin on the badge. Female police officers, just like their male colleagues, serve on the front lines, 24/7. They sometimes find themselves in situations which are life threatening. Do we ban them from police work because the possibility exists that they might be killed? Of course not. We expect they will react accordingly, based on the training we've given them - the same training we've given their male colleagues.

Then the talk show host posed this question: *Is it worse when a female servicewoman is killed in the line of duty; is it a degradation of our society when we send women to fight for our country?* After all, we've become accustomed to men losing their lives on the battlefield, but women?

Let me make a point here. In Israel, all physically able citizens, men *and* women, must serve in the army for three years. In contrast, the U.S. is fortunate to have an all-volunteer fighting force. Men and women who join the armed forces in our country are serving because they want to, not because the government has compelled them. Women who join do so of their own volition - even those in combat. I see no difference in women who join either a police department or the military, both recognize they will be physically challenged, and are up to the task. Indeed, some of our female warriors are doing both simultaneously - serving in the military and the police force. None of these women is looking for sympathy or shortcuts. They know that respect is earned, never given. They don't countenance playing favorites; they expect to do the job. When one of our women in uniform loses her life, whether their garb is military or police, we mourn the loss for what it is - a fallen warrior.

Does it make a difference if the death is that of a male or female? Of course not; both are equally mourned; no one sex takes precedence over the other. The loss of a husband, wife, mother, or father, is devastating. Ask any family who has suffered such a tragedy, and they will simply tell you they've lost a family member. It matters not whether that loved one was a man or a woman.

In the United States there are 900,000 law enforcement officers protecting you and me every day. Twelve per cent of that complement is female. They serve proudly, and fearlessly face danger from knuckle-draggers who would just as soon kill them as any male officer. In fact,

according to the National Law Enforcement Memorial, 237 female officers have been killed in the line of duty. They've made the ultimate sacrifice; they've paid the price.

Women in combat - good or bad? My answer: a resounding good. I've trained women in PT/DT, and in firearms, and I've seen them react under stress. I've gone through doors with them and worked alongside them on protracted surveillances. Some have whined, as have some men; most have simply steeled themselves to the challenge. To withhold them from serving on the battlefield is a mistake and dishonors the memory of those who have fallen. To over-react when one of them is killed is to pay a disservice to those willing and able to serve. If you've ever seen an angry female bear defending her family, you have an idea of how ferocious our warriors in high heels can become. We need them on the front lines.

Stay safe, brothers and sisters!

Web Links:

- [Washington Post article](#)
- [Warriors In High Heels Pt. 1](#)
- [National Law Enforcement Memorial](#)
- [LivSafe--Stay Aware, Stay Safe!](#)
- [Chicago Warriors Midnight Battles in the Windy City](#) by John Wills
- [Gripped By Fear](#) by John Wills

John M. Wills spent 33 years in law enforcement as a Chicago Police Officer and FBI Special Agent (Ret). He is a Freelance Writer and Speaker whose first book, *Chicago Warriors Midnight Battles in the Windy City*, is now available online at Amazon and Barnes & Noble. His second book, *Gripped by Fear* is available through Total Recall Press. Contact John through his website: www.johnmwills.com.



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