



Letters to the Editor

Because of space, letters to the Editor should contain no more than two hundred words. All letters must have the complete name and address of the writer and must be signed.

We do not print unsigned letters, but we will withhold your name from publication on request and protect your privacy.

Brigade soldier speaks out on pregnancy issue

True, many pregnant females in Europe are leaving the Army. This is probably due to the difficulties of caring for small children in an overseas environment and also probably influenced by the battalion's "equal pay, equal work" attitude. Soldiers know and understand that the problems of parenthood cannot be solved by the chain of command assigning field duty, charge of quarters (CQ), and other details to other soldiers.

Many times prenatal leave is kept to a minimum. This should not be viewed as or intended to be a harsh measure, but as a realistic one, based on a competent medical evaluation of each person and her capability to continue to function as a soldier while pregnant. Field duty is not a problem. When females are precluded from field duty because of pregnancy, female soldiers should be left in the garrison to perform necessary, "stay behind" duties.

The obvious drawback to this situation would, of course, be deployment for combat.

As for lost duty hours, lost time and similar matters sometimes causes a high degree of resentment among male soldiers. This can be prevented by close personnel involvement of the chain-of-command, by assigning meaningful duties, which encourage the pregnant female to work.

The last issue I would like to comment on concerning pregnancy deals on the emotional issue of birth control. Classes can be given to make aware to all soldiers different birth control aids that are available, trying not to be bias with demoralizing overtones. Soldiers should not be encouraged nor discouraged as to obtain birth control aids. The intent should simply be to insure that each soldier had the necessary information upon which to base a personal decision.

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FIVE by FIVE

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