



Never before has this country seen so many women paralyzed by the psychological scars of combat. As of June 2008, 19,084 female veterans of Iraq or Afghanistan had received diagnoses of mental disorders from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including 8,454 women with a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress — and this number does not include troops still enlisted, or those who have never used the V.A. system.

Their mental anguish, from mortar attacks, the deaths of friends, or traumas that are harder to categorize, is a result of a historic shift. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the military has quietly sidestepped regulations that bar women from jobs in ground combat.

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