Part One: Reading comprehension

Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

1. Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a severe anxiety disorder that affects millions of people around the world. Individuals can develop PTSD after experiencing any event that results in psychological trauma. Symptoms of PTSD involve flashbacks to the traumatic event, nightmares, obsessive behavior, anger, insomnia, difficulty concentrating, and hyper vigilance. Individuals who suffer from PTSD can experience significant difficulties in social relationships, have lower self-esteem, and have trouble maintaining employment. People with PTSD experience a higher risk of committing suicide, developing a drug addiction, and suffering from alcoholism. Although PTSD can affect any individual, military veterans are especially susceptible to this debilitating affliction. Furthermore, within this population, women are more than twice as likely as men to develop PTSD. Studies have also shown that former service women who do develop PTSD experience more severe symptoms than their male counterparts. Recent changes made by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs have improved treatment options for female veterans living with PTSD, but there is still more that needs to be done.

2. Although studies investigating precisely why women are more likely than men to experience PTSD have not yet been completed, some experts have theorized that low unit cohesion is a major factor. Unit cohesion, defined as the mutual bonds of friendship and support among members of a military unit, is thought to be helpful in reducing the incidence of developing PTSD. According to recent surveys compiled by U.S. Army researchers, increased unit cohesion emerged as the most important factor determining whether soldiers developed suicidal thoughts. Women are more likely than men to experience low unit cohesion for a variety of reasons. One of the most obvious factors is the relative paucity of females in the military; currently, women make up only 20% of the armed forces. Pervasive male prejudice against women is another factor that can diminish unit cohesion for female soldiers. Because women are less likely than men to experience unit cohesion while serving in the military, women are less likely to develop the social support structures that will help prevent them from developing PTSD, depression, or other serious mental health problems.

3. Another issue at play is the stigma amongst military personnel that asking for help for mental health issues makes one “weak.” A recent Department of Defense study of returning combat troops shows that only 1 in 6 veterans acknowledged themselves to be suffering from symptoms of PTSD, and 3 out of 5 veterans were convinced that their comrades and commanding officers would lose confidence in them if they sought treatment for mental health issues. For women, this hesitation to self-identify as a sufferer of PTSD could be even greater; historically, female soldiers have struggled to be counted as equals to men on the battlefield. Women, stereotypically considered to possess less emotional fortitude than men, may be unwilling to admit that they are suffering from PTSD lest they appear to conform to this stereotype. Unfortunately for those who do not seek help, when PTSD goes untreated it is very likely to worsen over time.

4. Another challenge is that until very recently, treatment for PTSD has been more difficult for
women than men to obtain. Before rule changes were enacted in 2010, only veterans who encountered direct combat experience qualified to receive disability payments for PTSD. Because very few women are placed on the front lines, very few were eligible to receive free treatment for PTSD. However, recent regulation changes have ended these stipulations, allowing women who serve in any capacity to be eligible for benefits.

5. Even if female veterans are eligible for these benefits, the quality of the care a wartime PTSD sufferer receives can vary widely. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pays disability benefits to service men and women who have been diagnosed with PTSD and also provides these individuals with free health care. But while mental health counseling that comes directly from VA doctors is completely free to veterans, there are often long waiting lists for those who need to be evaluated or treated. Therapy provided by non-VA professionals may not be covered by health insurance. Access to mental health professionals who have been specially trained to treat wartime PTSD is often difficult for those not living near major urban centers.

6. Perhaps the biggest impediment to achieving quality treatment for women suffering from wartime PTSD is a lack of research. While both the VA and independent agencies have completed hundreds of studies researching the prevention of and treatment for PTSD amongst general military populations, there have been no studies completed that solely target women. Before adequate care can be provided, there must be greater understanding about the root causes of this issue as it affects women specifically. On both the research level and the policy level, more must be done to help the women who have sacrificed.

Questions
A- Answer each of the following questions in complete sentences

1. What is the primary purpose of the passage? (0.5 mark)

2. According to the passage, for what reasons do females develop PTSD more frequently than males? (1 mark)

3. Based on Paragraph 2, why are women less likely to develop the social support structures that help prevent them from developing PTSD? (1 mark)

4. Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that negative stereotypes about women in the military contribute to their increased likelihood to develop PTSD in certain ways. What are these ways? (2 marks)

5. Based on information in the passage, what is the author’s opinion about the mental health care provided for female veterans? (2 marks)

6. What is the main idea of Paragraph 5? (1 mark)

7. In the last paragraph, what suggestions does the author give to help women? (1 mark)
B-Choose the correct answer
Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that the author is most likely someone who…...(0.5mark)
A. does not believe women should be allowed to serve in the military
B. is a mental health care professional
C. has conducted studies on PTSD among veterans
D. believes that advocating for others can lead to change

C-Vocabulary
Give the meaning of the following words as they are used in the text(2marks)
1. mutual(Paragraph 2)
2. paucity(Paragraph 2)
3. diminish(Paragraph 2)
4. fortitude(Paragraph 3)
5. seek(Paragraph 3)
6. eligible(Paragraph 5)
7. provided(Paragraph 5)
8. impediment(Paragraph 6)

Part Two: Writing

Women should not be allowed to join the combat unit in the army because they are too emotional.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above statement?

In an essay of 250-300 words, discuss the above issue showing your position. Refer your own ideas, knowledge and experience. Support your argument with examples and relevant evidence. Your writing will be assessed for ideas, organization, language, and style.