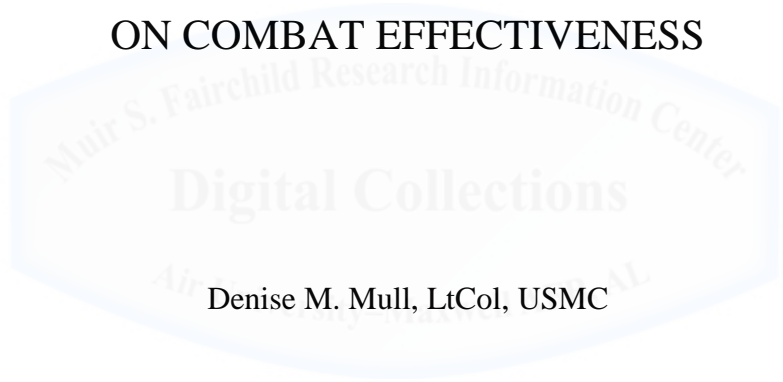


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RUSHING TO FAILURE?  
IMPACTS OF A GENDER-NEUTRAL MILITARY  
ON COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS



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## **Biography**

Lieutenant Colonel Denise M. Mull is a Marine Corps Logistics Officer assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. LtCol Mull was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in December 1993 following graduation from the University of Arizona. She most recently served as the Plans and Operations Officer, Marine Corps Forces Central Command. She has served in a variety of staff positions including a joint assignment with United States Central Command. In addition to company command, LtCol Mull commanded a combat logistics battalion in Afghanistan. LtCol Mull's additional operational experiences include a deployment to Kosovo and multiple deployments to Iraq.



## **Abstract**

Profoundly influenced by two post-9/11 protracted wars which highlighted the expanded role of women in combat, civilian leaders have pursued a gender-neutral military. The premise is women are not only qualified but bring a wealth of diverse talents that should be applied across all disciplines within the Armed Forces and, as true equals, women should be afforded the opportunity to ascend to more senior ranks in greater numbers. However, policy makers appear to have overlooked decades of medical research and evidence that strongly counter this seemingly straight forward logic. Arguably, integrating women in the Marine Corps' infantry will degrade readiness, deplete a talented pool of women from the total force, and erode combat effectiveness. Physiological differences affect attrition and readiness when exposing women to training that accentuates the disparities between genders. Given the Marine Corps' distinct approach to its mission, and comparatively small size, it already has the lowest percentage of women across all the services. As such, the Marine Corps' methodology of training its force, coupled with the physical demands of the direct ground combat arms specialties, will lead to a talent management issue. The potential outcome is a further reduction in the number of women in the service resulting in a less integrated and less diverse force. Ramifications of failure include high attrition, which will ultimately drive the redress of standards to correct discrepancies and disparities between genders, thereby degrading combat effectiveness. As an alternative, Congress should enact law prohibiting women from integration into direct ground combat arms specialties and allow military leaders to channel resources for recruiting and retaining women in the roles where they are best-qualified and fully capable of performing. This would permit the services to capitalize on their strengths and afford servicewomen the opportunity to ascend to and succeed at more senior levels within the national security system.

## Introduction

The events of 9/11 left an indelible mark on our nation and sparked the Global War on Terror, including the United States (US)-led military attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. Two protracted wars, costly in both blood and treasure, have accounted for more than 6,700 deaths and more than 50,000 casualties combined<sup>1</sup> including significant numbers of women and have highlighted the role of women in combat. Consequently, in November 2012, four servicewomen along with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) sued the Department of Defense (DOD) over the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR) established by then-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin.<sup>2</sup> The prevailing claim was that women were already serving in combat roles, but not receiving recognition and subsequently being denied equal opportunity to ascend in the ranks. Additionally, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) noted that women were largely absent in senior noncommissioned officer and flag or general officer ranks and had significantly lower retention rates.<sup>3</sup>

In 2013, then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta lifted Aspin's ban on women serving in direct combat roles,<sup>4</sup> ordering the services to provide compelling evidence and justification for an exception to policy by 30 September 2015 for review and decision by 1 January 2016. Senior members in Congress hailed the decision, which they saw as recognizing the expanded role of servicewomen in hostile environments for the past decade plus,<sup>5</sup> including distinguished action when exposed to enemy contact, living in forward operating bases, and in some cases even attaching to direct ground combat arms units. Apparently anxious to move the issue forward, on 3 December 2015, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced that DOD was opening all direct ground combat specialties to women across all the services, to include special operations units.<sup>6</sup>

It would appear that our senior civilian leaders have discounted the intricacies of our military's mission and the significant distinction between combat and direct ground combat in favor of a misguided attempt at equality. The mission of the US military is to fight and win our nation's wars. Critical to this mission is the combat effectiveness of the force. The very nature of the mission justifies employment discrimination on the basis that in building combat power, the services must be able to select those who are most capable of fighting and winning.<sup>7</sup> The distinction between direct ground combat and combat is not subtle; rather, direct ground combat, offensive in nature, seeks to locate, close with, and destroy the enemy; whereas being in combat can be defined more loosely in terms of a supporting role, such as that of logisticians or military policeman, potentially being exposed to but not seeking out the enemy in the execution of a mission. The aspects of direct ground combat missions necessitate the physical capacity to endure unforgiving environments for long durations and the unremitting exposure to the grueling, cruel, and violent nature of war. Throughout history, women have unquestionably acquitted themselves honorably and courageously in defense of our nation while serving in combat. Nonetheless, despite their proximity and exposure to violent combat and even their heroic endeavors, women did not serve in specialties whose mission entails deliberate offensive combat operations.

Little evidence suggests women are suited to fill the direct ground combat arms military occupational specialties (MOSs), and more specifically, those 6 percent (21 of 336 MOSs) in the Marine Corps that were recently opened by Carter when he denied the Corps' request for an exception to policy.<sup>8</sup> Rather, medical research, countless studies, and the Marine Corps' own internal analysis and experimentation have largely concluded that women are less suited for the physical demands of direct ground combat arms MOSs. Several studies<sup>9</sup> point to the realized and

potential detrimental health impacts to women associated with these physically demanding roles. The aspects of direct ground combat arms combined with the physiological differences between genders will inevitably degrade readiness, deplete a talented pool of women from the total force, and impact the overall combat effectiveness of the Marine Corps if women are fully integrated into direct ground combat arms specialties. Instead of integrating women in direct ground combat arms specialties, resources must be channeled toward recruiting and retaining women in roles where they are best-qualified and fully capable of performing and capitalizing on their strengths; therefore affording servicewomen the opportunity to ascend to and succeed at more senior levels of the national security system.

## **Thesis**

Integrating women in the Marine Corps' infantry will degrade readiness, deplete a talented pool of women from the total force, and impact the overall combat effectiveness of the Marine Corps.

## **Background**

### **The Road to Lifting the Ban on Women in Direct Ground Combat Arms Roles**

The expanded role of women and their distinguished performance during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm attracted the attention of Congress, which in 1991 ordered the creation of the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. Established by the Defense Authorization Act, which became Public Law 102-190, the Commission was required to “assess the laws and policies restricting the assignment of female service members and to make recommendations to the President by 15 November 1992.”<sup>10</sup> Prior to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, policies for the Marine Corps and Army were largely shaped in terms of a linear battlefield characterized by front lines populated by combat arms

units that faced imminent danger and rear lines populated with command and control and combat service support units in a comparatively safe area.<sup>11</sup> The Commission conducted a comprehensive review of service policies and analyzed the physiological rigors of the direct ground combat arms service member through testimony, comprehensive research, and public surveys.<sup>12</sup>

The Commission recommended that DOD policy encourage the recruitment of and optimize the utilization of women in the armed forces, that military readiness remain the driving factor regarding assignment policies, that women should be excluded from direct land combat units and positions, and that service policies concerning direct land combat exclusions be codified.<sup>13</sup> More importantly, the Commission highlighted key factors that remain relevant today despite being based on what is now considered an outdated definition of direct ground combat given the present-day characterization of the non-linear battlefield. Specifically, the Commission found that despite technological advances, the characteristics of direct ground combat remained just as hazardous and physically demanding as in previous generations. Additionally, the Commission cited evidence of the distinct physiological differences between genders; specifically, women are shorter in stature, have less muscle, and weigh less than men.<sup>14</sup> Inferior muscular strength and aerobic capacity place women at a distinct disadvantage when performing tasks required for direct ground combat specialties, which include marching under load for prolonged periods, lugging weapons and ammunition, navigating obstacles, and carrying the wounded or dead.<sup>15</sup> The Commission also determined that while some women could meet the physical standards for direct ground combat arms specialties, the evidence showed most women are physically incapable of meeting the standards.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, in a 1992 survey of 900 Army



servicewomen, only 12 percent of enlisted soldiers and 10 percent of noncommissioned officers were interested in serving in direct ground combat arms roles.<sup>17</sup>

Shortly following the Commission's findings and recommendations in 1994, the DOD under Aspin established the DGCDAR replacing the former Risk Rule policy. Under the Risk Rule policy, women were precluded from serving in non-combat units or missions in which the risk of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture was equal to or greater than that of combat units they support.<sup>18</sup> Women were also banned from being collocated with combat units. While the DGCDAR substantially expanded the roles of women in the military, women were still restricted from serving in units whose primary mission below the brigade level is direct ground combat.<sup>19</sup> In 2013, Panetta rescinded the rule and directed the military services to develop implementation plans for full integration of a gender-neutral military with a deadline to notify Congress of their plans by 1 January 2016. Central to Panetta's decision to lift the ban was his declaration that women had increasingly found themselves in the reality of combat during the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and admitted that, while not everyone can meet the qualifications required of the direct ground combat arms specialties, everyone was entitled to the opportunity.<sup>20</sup> With his landmark decision on 3 December 2015, Carter stressed that women would be held to the same high standards and dispelled the notion of quotas, acknowledging that many units would remain mostly male.<sup>21</sup>

## **Physiological Differences Between Genders**

### **How Eve Is Different from Adam – It Is About the Law of Averages**

Ample evidence should inform military and civilian leadership regarding this topic. Bolstering the findings from the 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, a British Ministry of Defense report on Women in Ground Close Combat

released in December 2014 found that in general, “women have smaller hearts, about 30 percent less muscle, and a slighter skeleton structure and wider pelvic bones, resulting in less explosive power and upper body strength.”<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the report concluded that the “physiological differences between the sexes disadvantage women in strength-based and aerobic fitness tests by 20 to 40 percent; so for the same output women have to work harder than men.”<sup>23</sup> Three decades of research and numerous studies regarding the physical capacity of servicewomen have repeatedly underscored the significant differences in strength and endurance between genders that occur as a result of unalterable anatomical and physiological differences. Furthermore, Dr. William Gregor, Professor of Social Sciences at the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, KS, noted that numerous studies have consistently found that few, if any, women possess the physical capacity to perform in heavy lifting or combat arms MOSs and that when training in these specialties, disproportionate higher musculoskeletal injury rates occur in women in comparison to their male counterparts.<sup>24</sup> Correspondingly, there is also no evidence to indicate that women can overcome the physical disparity between genders with training. According to Rear Admiral Hugh Scott, USN, retired, an expert in military medicine, unalterable androgenic hormones in men account for greater muscle power and aerobic capacity for endurance, which is the reason why they develop larger muscle bulk than women do in weight training and exercise.<sup>25</sup> This extensive body of evidence-based science challenges the premise of a gender-neutral military. Moreover, the evidence suggests that a gender-neutral military will be costly to individual servicewomen’s health and careers, and detrimentally affect the readiness of the services.

## **Compromising the Health and Welfare of the Force**

### **High Attrition and Impacts to Readiness**

The aforementioned findings are consistent with what the 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces reported and thus not groundbreaking, however they do reinforce present-day medical findings and research. Two decades after the 1992 Commission, the Center for Military Analysis reported that the Army disclosed the alarming higher injury rates for female soldiers in relation to their male counterparts participating in combat and heavy lifting specialty training.<sup>26</sup> A June 2015 Army Surgeon General study found that “women not only suffer more injuries than men during combat training” but also that “female soldiers suffer depression at more than double the rate of men and that one of the triggers is exposure to combat.”<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the Marine Corps reported significant evidence of higher injury rates for females when compared to males in its analysis of the integration of female Marines into direct ground combat arms specialties. The report attributed the injuries to the upper and lower-body strength deficiency and higher fatigue levels in women as the cause of overuse injuries, such as stress fractures.<sup>28</sup> On the battlefield, strength deficiency and fatigue lead to diminished survivability and lethality, which translates to staying alive and killing the enemy. These disproportionate injury rates result in significant expenditure of medical resources for the services and decrease overall readiness and combat effectiveness of the force and cannot be summarily dismissed.

### **How the Reality of Gender Disparity Plays Out in the Public Sector**

Examination of the US Fire Service provides insight into a comparable civilian sector organization. Specifically, there are strong parallels between the Marine Corps and the US Fire Service in strength and aerobic requirements, the necessity to operate in varying and dangerous

environments, and the correspondingly high injury rates reported among women. The Marine Corps, currently at about 188,000 Marines, is made up of approximately 7.7 percent women.<sup>29</sup> The US Fire Service, a force of about 307,000 employees, is made up of approximately 3.5 percent women.<sup>30</sup> The Marine Corps direct ground combat arms specialties and the US Fire Service rely heavily on a high level of intense physical capacity. Where lack of physical ability translates to a lethality and survivability issue for Marines, the lack of physical ability in firefighting can lead to diminished survivability of the firefighter or the subject of rescue attempts. Dr. Paul Davis, founder of First Responder Institute and leading expert on physical fitness and standards for military, firefighters, and law enforcement, offers that “there are strong similarities between the Marine Corps and US Fire Service. Injury rates among women working in this industry are similar to those reported in military settings where the incidence is four times that of their male counterparts.”<sup>31</sup> The basic conclusion is that physiological differences do lead to disproportionate injury rates for women when subjected to the rigorous physical demands required for occupations that rely heavily on physical strength and aerobic capacity, in both the military and civilian sectors of society.

### **Marine Corps’ Tenet – Train Like We Fight, Fight Like We Train**

The intensity of training required to sustain a high level of readiness in the direct ground combat arms MOSs increases after entry-level training in order to prepare for full-spectrum conflict and high deployment operational tempo, especially for Marine Corps infantry battalions. Training for full-spectrum conflict entails a much different approach than training for counterinsurgency operations. One stark difference is forces are not tethered to forward operating bases and sustained by contracting entities as they have been during the past two counterinsurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, where women have excelled. The strategic

operating environment as outlined in *Joint Vision 2020*, and as reflected in the Marine Corps' capstone concept *Expeditionary Force 21*, calls for Marine forces to operate in an increasingly more fluid and distributed battlespace with less reliance on external logistics, consequently placing even greater demands on the individual infantry Marine.<sup>32</sup> While some medical experts have agreed that physically elite women (commonly referred to as Amazons<sup>33</sup>) can train to the initial standards required for direct ground combat arms specialties, the evidence suggests they will not be able to maintain the status quo on par with their male counterparts once they enter the operating forces.

Davis asserts that while anyone can improve with extra training, maintaining the higher bar is another thing entirely and, for women, often results in injuries that are a consequence of over-training and can be career-ending.<sup>34</sup> In spite of the assurances of those advocating for integration that standards will not be lowered, it seems inevitable that lowering standards would be the only way to neutralize the physical disparity. Additionally, the evidence supports that the cumulative health impacts that result from women's physical disparities as they progress in their careers should they be subjected to the direct ground combat arms specialties will most likely exacerbate the normal changes associated with aging, to include degenerative arthritis, osteoarthritis, and osteoporosis.<sup>35</sup> Instead of being offered more opportunities for career advancement, women are being offered specialties with high attrition in which they have no realistic chance to succeed. They are being set up for failure. Accordingly, as Marine General John Kelly recently predicted, pressure might develop to lower standards so more women can serve in direct ground combat arms specialties.<sup>36</sup>

## **Impacts of Gender Integration on Talent Management**

### **Changing Peer Norms Will Ultimately Subvert Retention Efforts**

Currently, women comprise approximately 15 percent of the armed forces, with the majority (by percentage) serving in the Air Force and then the Navy with the least amount serving in the Marine Corps, the smallest service.<sup>37</sup> Some supporters of integration contend the low numbers are a result of direct ground combat arms MOSs being closed to women; however, when presented with the undisputed opportunity to go to combat, there was an insignificant increase of women serving in the Marine Corps. From 2001 to 2010, when the Marine Corps ballooned from 172,914 to its peak of 202,441 Marines, a wartime end-strength high, the percentage of women only increased from 6.1 percent to 6.7 percent of the force.<sup>38</sup> One explanation could be the physical demands of a pre-deployment cycle compounded by the high operational tempo with little deployment to dwell that characterized this period of rigorous combat operations. Interestingly, this period afforded men and women alike an excellent opportunity to gain combat experience and ascend in the ranks, regardless of MOS. Central to the ACLU lawsuit is the claim that the DGCDAR limits a woman's opportunity for further service. However, there is no evidence to substantiate this claim, which is best dispelled by Lieutenant General Greg Newbold, USMC, retired, in his article, "Seven Myths about Women in Combat", "Myth#5 – Opening the infantry will provide a better pathway to senior rank for the talented women."<sup>39</sup> As Newbold pointed out, changing women's peer norms when they are injected into direct ground combat arms specialties will likely stunt their careers, rather than providing them an opportunity for career advancement.<sup>40</sup> If the expectation is to rise in the ranks as a leader, whether officer or enlisted, meeting the standards is not good enough.

Credibility, especially in the direct ground combat arms specialties, is largely based on a leader's physical abilities because of the grueling demands and shared misery that are characteristic of the profession. Subordinates expect their leaders to exceed standards and raise the bar. A third-class fitness test, the lowest end of the scale, will not inspire Marines to follow their leader regardless of gender. It must be leadership from the front, where leaders set the highest examples for their Marines to follow. If they stave off injury through MOS entry-level training, women will find the competition fierce in the operating forces, especially at the more senior company grade and junior field grade levels in the officer ranks and noncommissioned and staff noncommissioned officer enlisted ranks. Physical disparities will be on full exhibition. The Marine Corps' current pyramid grade structure is already highly competitive. For example, it only boasts one active duty female Marine general officer, or .004 percent of the Marine Corps officer population.<sup>41</sup> Hence, the very few women deemed qualified to serve in direct ground combat arms specialties will find the system even harder as male Marines will have a clear advantage in direct ground combat arms specialties.

### **What About the Women that are Better than the Bottom Five or Ten Percent of Men?**

The intent of the MLDC was to increase overall percentages of women across the military services and create career advancement opportunities for women at more senior levels. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen labeled this a strategic imperative initiative.<sup>42</sup> Placing exceptionally talented women with unlimited potential in direct ground combat arms specialties would appear to contradict and undermine the basis of diversity of this strategic imperative initiative. Furthermore, in May 2015 during his address at the US Naval Academy, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus called for an increase of women in the Naval Services, to include the ambitious goal of 1 in 4 enlisted Marines to be women.<sup>43</sup> It is widely

known that less than 1 percent of citizens serve in the military<sup>44</sup>, and of those, a very small percentage are women. If the intent is to simultaneously increase women across the armed forces while placing them in specialties that by their very nature lead to high attrition and make women less competitive among their peers, then these initiatives are in direct contradiction. With the Marine Corps aggressively working to answer Mabus' call to further diversify the force it is difficult to ascertain the logic in opening specialties characterized by high attrition to women that are at a distinct disadvantage to their male counterparts.

The service is challenged with not only recruiting more women<sup>45</sup> but also with retaining higher percentages. Statistics show that the Marine Corps is losing women after the rank of captain for officers and after the rank of sergeant for enlisted.<sup>46</sup> The service would be better served investing resources in programs focused on retaining women among its more senior ranks than to expend finite resources searching for the physical elites that may possibly replace the bottom 5 percent or 10 percent of men in direct ground combat arms specialties. According to a RAND Corporation study, targeting women for infantry specialties could cost the Marine Corps \$2 million annually in additional recruiting and retention expenditures.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, how does a woman advance through the ranks when she's only as good as the bottom 5 percent or 10 percent of her peer group? The answer is she does not; in the case of enlisted Marines, they are not approved for reenlistment and for officers, they are not career designated. The statistics bear out that women are not limited by their exclusion from serving in direct ground combat arms specialties; rather, they are limited only by their personal desire and choice to pursue prolonged careers in an already demanding occupation, especially in the case of the Marine Corps.



## **The Law of Unintended Consequences**

The magnitude of the second-and third-order effects of rescinding the DGCDAR has not been adequately addressed by policy makers. Presumably, civilian leaders will place the burden on the services to grapple with the details of a gender-neutral military and will suggest that leadership will overcome any challenges or obstacles. Enlisted assignment policies are one example that highlights the complexity of this issue. While male enlisted personnel can choose whether to pursue a direct ground combat arms MOS or not, male Marines assigned to non-combat arms MOSs do not get a choice of unit to which they are assigned. If women are fully integrated into direct ground combat arms MOSs, women assigned to non-combat arms MOSs will now be eligible to serve in direct ground combat arms units, regardless of their desires.

A 2014 Army survey revealed that more than 92 percent of women were not interested in being assigned to a direct ground combat arms unit that is currently all-male.<sup>48</sup> This percentage is consistent with the 1992 Presidential Commission findings. The sentiments of women surveyed remain unchanged over the course of two decades. Given the lack of interest in serving in a capacity affiliated with direct ground combat arms specialties, this will most likely alienate the career force and, most assuredly, dissuade females from leaning towards military service. Additionally, Congress will have to address Selective Service registration. Ultimately, the legal rationale for all-male conscription would dissolve, subjecting women to the draft. What will the optic be to American families? Suggesting that women be given a choice regarding what unit to serve in or whether or not to register for the draft would run counter to the gender-neutral concept. Placing women, a low-density capability in the armed forces, in specialties that lead to high attrition is not prudent management of the most vital resource the service has – the individual Marine. Best summarized by the current Commandant of the Marine Corps General

Robert Neller in his commander's guidance, "Our strength is the talent, skill and discipline of our Marines and Sailors."<sup>49</sup>

## **Combat Effectiveness**

### **Every Marine a Rifleman... but not Every Marine an Infantry Person**

Marines live by the motto "every Marine a rifleman," regardless of MOS. This ethos has allowed Marines to serve with great distinction on many battlefields and foreign shores, in war and in peace. Every Marine Corps officer attends The Basic School (TBS), a six-month intensive course that emphasizes the role of an infantry platoon commander and focuses on patrolling, war-fighting tactics, and basic combat skills. Similarly, all entry-level enlisted Marines assigned to non-combat arms MOSs attend Marine Combat Training Battalion, a 29-day course focused on basic combat skills training for Marines in order to prepare them to survive, excel, and lead in combat. While female Marines have acquitted themselves with exceptional professionalism, competence, and courage in combat and have distinguished themselves in the non-linear, extremely complex operating environments of Iraq and Afghanistan, it is because they were trained to survive and succeed in a combat environment. But, serving in a combat environment or exposure to enemy action in combat does not translate into what is required for a Marine whose mission it is to locate, close with, and destroy the enemy, which is foundational to direct ground combat arms. Furthermore, the performance of women in combat is testament to the service's ability to judiciously manage its talent and provide world-class training to its service members. To jump to the conclusion that women are now suited to serve in direct ground combat arms specialties because they acquitted themselves so well in combat, or to point to the accomplishments of the few women that graduated from the Army's Ranger School as justification for a gender-neutral military, is misguided.

## **The Bias Is Not Institutional, the Bias Is Physiological**

The Marine Corps has taken a transparent, methodical approach in addressing integration of women into direct ground combat arms specialties. Shortly after Panetta's announcement to rescind the DGCDAR policy, the Marine Corps embarked on a comprehensive analysis and experimentation campaign, executed according to DOD's prescribed methodology.<sup>50</sup> The methodology was strongly endorsed by Mabus in his Department of Navy Talent Management address to the Brigade of Midshipmen in May 2015, noting "in the Marine Corps, we are conducting the most comprehensive assessment of physical standards ever undertaken – and the results will enhance combat readiness and effectiveness in all Military Occupational Specialties, independent of gender."<sup>51</sup> The research spanned three main lines of effort that included Expanded Unit Assignments, Entry Level Training, and the Ground Combat Element-Integrated Task Force (GCE-ITF) that set out to answer the question of whether women could perform at the same level as men in the infantry.<sup>52</sup> The Marine Corps' analysis concluded in July 2015 with the completion of the nine-month GCE-ITF experiment. The preliminary findings were published by the *Washington Post* and the *San Diego Tribune*. As reported by the *Washington Post*, the study found that overall the male-only direct ground combat arms units performed better than the gender-integrated direct ground combat arms units. Specifically, male-only infantry units shot more accurately, carried more weight, and moved more quickly through specific tactical exercises.<sup>53</sup> Male-only units were more lethal and thus more combat-effective than the gender-integrated units. Women had higher injury rates than men, including stress fractures that resulted from carrying heavy loads.<sup>54</sup>

Despite evidence in the report, proponents of the full integration of women questioned the validity of the findings on grounds that the experiment had predisposed outcomes, the

women selected were average, and that the women were not afforded the ability to train to the standards. Only three months after his speech strongly endorsing the Marine Corps' experimentation methodology, Mabius publicly challenged the Marine Corps' conclusions and openly criticized the caliber of its female participants.<sup>55</sup> The GCE-ITF unit was assembled as an all-volunteer force, including the women, just as the military is assembled now. The purported physical elites that defy the law of averages were not attracted to the opportunity to participate in the physically demanding direct ground combat arms study. Furthermore, while the male Marines serving in the direct ground combat arms units possessed direct ground combat arms specialties, the provisional male Marines and their female counterparts both possessed non-ground combat arms specialties so they were on equal footing. According to the report, not only did the all-male direct ground combat arms teams outperform the integrated direct ground combat arms teams in almost every evaluated event during the GCE-ITF experiment, but the all-male provisional platoon also outperformed the integrated provisional platoon, dispelling the myth that women did not succeed due to a lack of training.<sup>56</sup> The outcome of the provisional platoon portion of the experiment is a vital indicator of how integrated units fare against their all-male counterparts without any preparatory training – essentially, a level playing field exposes the impacts of integration.

The reality of a level playing field was also apparent in two experiments conducted during the enlisted and officer Entry Level Training assessments. During highly publicized integration testing conducted at Infantry Officer Course (IOC) over the course of a two-and-a-half year period, with the Marine Corps setting a goal for 100 volunteers, only 29 females volunteered. This after Marine Corps officials expanded the pool of eligible participants midway through testing to all female company grade officers, not just newly commissioned lieutenants

that were recent graduates of TBS. Of the 29, none completed the training, with the majority not making it past the Combat Endurance Test at the start of the course.<sup>57</sup> Most of the IOC failures occurred immediately after the women had completed TBS, when they could not have been better prepared. In contrast, during that same timeframe, 71 percent of the 978 males completed the grueling course.<sup>58</sup> Finally, only 36 percent of enlisted females graduated from the ITB experiment compared to 98 percent for their male counterparts during that same timeframe.<sup>59</sup> The findings all reinforce the original position of the 1992 Presidential Commission that there is an inextricable linkage between physical capacity and job performance in the direct ground combat arms specialties. There is no escaping the reality that women, even with the law of averages aside, are at a distinct competitive disadvantage relative to their male peers because of the heavy emphasis on physical strength and aerobic capacity.

### **The 'Dempsey Rule' Will Compromise Standards**

Development of gender-neutral standards for direct ground combat arms MOSs assessed during nine-month GCE-ITF experimentation is a positive by-product of the gender-integration discussion.<sup>60</sup> The new gender-neutral standards implemented on 30 September 2015<sup>61</sup> are meant to augment or replace Training and Readiness manual standards and will affect direct ground combat arms requirements for entry-level MOS-producing schools.<sup>62</sup> The results even revealed where some standards should be raised for infantry men.<sup>63</sup> With these new gender-neutral standards under development and in practice, the GCE-ITF still yielded lopsided results between the all-male and gender-integrated units. Additionally, the study reported that females were 19 percent more likely than males to incur an occupational-related injury and that 40.5 percent of females sustained musculoskeletal injuries, compared to 18.8 percent for their male counterparts.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the results of the study that includes revamped standards, Mabus appeared to have already made up his mind, proclaiming that, “I’ve been pretty clear, and I’ve been pretty clear about this for a while: I’m not going to ask for an exemption for the Marines.”<sup>65</sup> Therefore, civilian leadership has based policy decisions on input other than the facts or evidence and has also convinced some senior military officials as well. In January 2013, following Panetta’s announcement to repeal the DGCDAR, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey said that if “a particular standard is so high that a woman couldn’t make it, the burden is now on the service to come back and explain to the secretary, why is it that high? Does it really have to be that high?”<sup>66</sup> Finally, despite the heralded success of the two women soldiers who graduated the Army’s elite Ranger School in August 2015, there are questions as to the integrity of the assessment. Republican Congressman Steve Russell from Oklahoma requested performance records on the female students that graduated Ranger School for verification that standards were not altered.<sup>67</sup> Internally, officials from Fort Benning claimed that an Army general announced a woman would graduate Ranger School as preparations were being made for the first females to attend the gender-integrated assessment.<sup>68</sup> The real question then is what constitutes gender integration and thus, what will satisfy the civilian leadership and those advocating for full integration? The implication is that it will not be good enough to simply open these direct ground combat arms specialties to women, but rather, to guarantee their success in suitable numbers. When the law of averages kicks in, overwhelming evidence suggests that current standards will lead to attrition. Attrition will have a knock-on effect on health, welfare, and talent management that goes completely against the intent of gender-diversity goals.

The crux of the issue for the Marine Corps is determining what successful integration looks like, especially if no women officers can pass IOC and only a handful of enlisted female

Marines make it through ITB. In September 2015, Vice Admiral Walter Carter, superintendent of the US Naval Academy, asserted that he could produce female SEALs.<sup>69</sup> Yet, none of the women officers that attempted IOC, to include available Naval Academy graduates, made it through the less elite and considerably shorter IOC training. Ostensibly, gender-diversity goals will force standards to be reassessed and lowered over time, essentially backing the services into the Dempsey Rule, despite fervent claims from the current Secretaries of Defense and Navy that training standards would not be lowered.<sup>70</sup> Dismissing the overwhelming evidence and the crude and grueling nature of close combat solely for the purpose of expanding opportunities for women is derelict, and as Brigadier General George Smith, Director of the Marine Corps Force Innovation Office, stated in his memorandum to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, “Our future enemies will be the ultimate arbiter of such decisions – when lives of our Marines are in the balance. Those who choose to turn a blind eye to those immutable realities do so at the expense of our Corps’ warfighting capability and, in turn, the security of the nation.”<sup>71</sup>

### **Recommendation**

The author’s recommendation is that Congress should enact law prohibiting women from integration into direct ground combat arms specialties in order to preserve readiness, grow the talented pool of women, and ensure combat effectiveness of the military force. Proponents that advocate for opening direct ground combat arms specialties to women will posit that leadership is what will make the difference in making final integration of a gender-neutral military a reality. In one respect, they may be right. However, it’s not the leadership from within the military that is required. Our nation needs its civilian leaders, not those that make policy, but those that legislate law, whose mandate under the US Constitution, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 14, gives Congress the authority “to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.”<sup>72</sup>

Our nation and our military must now turn to Congress to hold objective hearings and consider the body of evidence they have in order to determine what is in the best interest of national security, not the individual, while remaining mindful of potentially unintended consequences of a gender-neutral military. The DOD should be compelled to diversify the force by placing women in roles they can succeed and excel in and use resources to target retention in order to promote careerism at more senior levels of the military. Many women are leaving the service for personal reasons, not due to a lack of opportunity.<sup>73</sup> Instead of spending money to pursue placing women in specialties with high attrition, emphasis should be placed on retaining women in the career force. The services should continue to examine and adapt standards as necessary for the benefit of the entire force in order to maximize potential while eliminating injury rates of the entire force, not just women. Sound public policy and legislation require prudent use of money, time, and assets.

### **Conclusion**

Compelling empirical evidence challenges the rationale of a gender-neutral military and further suggests that integrating women in the Marine Corps' infantry will degrade readiness, deplete a talented pool of women from the total force, and impact overall combat effectiveness of the Marine Corps. Those advocating for expanding the roles of women based on individual capabilities are dismissing the adverse effects and unintended consequences, which include disproportionate risks of debilitating injuries, impacts to readiness, consequences for recruiting and retention, and reduced combat effectiveness, to name a few.

Ultimately, the military's ability to support national defense must take precedence over all other considerations, including the career prospects of individual service members and misguided and misunderstood justifications for equal opportunities, and thus does not warrant



the expense, concession, and associated risk acceptance. In 1986, the *Goldman v. Weinberg* Supreme Court decision firmly established that the military profession was not subject to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, stating, “The military is, by necessity, a specialized society [separate] from civilian society .... ‘The military must insist upon a respect for duty and a discipline without counterpart in civilian life,’ in order to prepare for and perform its vital role .... The essence of the military service ‘is the subordination of the desires and interests of the individual to the needs of the service.’ ”<sup>74</sup> By enacting law, Congress could prevent the misuse of limited resources, including human capital, and could preserve the combat effectiveness of the services.

None of the proponents of a gender-neutral military has argued that setting aside all the overwhelming evidence in support of a gender-neutral military is justified by military necessity. Why should the military pay the price and bear the burden to promote equal opportunities and career progression for the ambitious few? There is no doubt that not all men are qualified to serve in the direct ground combat arms, nor do they want to. However, there is also not a shortage; rather, the direct ground combat arms specialties are fiercely competitive. The debate is really about a perfunctory few individuals who have yet to materialize, these physical elites or Amazons, who apparently will defy decades of medical research and evidence.

The 27th Commandant of the Marine Corps General Robert Barrow’s testimony to Congress in 1991 remains timeless in capturing the essence of the argument in that, “This is not nor should it be about women’s rights, equal opportunity or career assignments for enhancement purposes for selection to higher rank. It is most assuredly about combat effectiveness, combat readiness, winning the next conflict, and so we are talking about national security.”<sup>75</sup> As such, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford, while serving in the

capacity of the 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps, remained steadfast against political pressure and public rhetoric. Instead, he provided his best military advice in recommending against the full integration of women in all direct ground combat arms specialties based on evidence and facts.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the Marine Corps has been forthcoming with information throughout its analysis and experimentation, avoiding deceit and misconception throughout. For those advocates of a gender-neutral military who wish to invalidate the analyses and experimentation conducted by the Marine Corps, where is the evidence to suggest that integrating women in direct ground combat arms roles is prudent? So far, none has been produced. The facts and evidence bear out that there exists absolutely no cogent, convincing case for assigning women to direct ground combat arms specialties and thus putting at risk our nation's blood and treasure.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Defense Manpower Data Center. "US Military Casualties." [dmdc.osd.mil](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_sum_reason.xhtml), as of 22 January 2016. [https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report\\_sum\\_reason.xhtml](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_sum_reason.xhtml) (accessed 23 January 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Hlad, "Women sue Panetta over combat exclusion," *StarsandStrips.com*, 27 November 2012, <http://www.stripes.com/news/women-sue-panetta-over-combat-exclusion-1.198571> (accessed 21 November 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Laura L. Miller et al. *The Extent of Restrictions on the Service of Active-Component Military Women*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012), xii.

<sup>4</sup> Molly O'Toole, "Leon Panetta Lifts Ban on Women in Combat," *Huffingtonpost.com*, 23 January 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/23/leon-panetta-women-in-combat\\_n\\_2537575.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/23/leon-panetta-women-in-combat_n_2537575.html) (accessed 15 October 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Dan Lamothe, "In historic decision, Pentagon chief opens all jobs in combat units to women," *WashingtonPost.com*, 3 December 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/12/03/pentagon-chief-to-announce-how-womens-roles-in-the-military-will-expand/> (accessed 3 December 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Robert T. Herres, *The Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces: Report to the President, November 15, 1992*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 44.

<sup>8</sup> Brigadier General George W. Smith Jr., Director Marine Corps Force Innovation Office, to Commandant of the Marine Corps, pre-decisional memorandum, subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment of Women in Service Assignments, 18 August 2015. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/sep/23/marines-report-to-commandant-women-in-combat/>.

<sup>9</sup> This paper specifically references the British Ministry of Defense report on Women in Ground Close Combat, Army Research Findings regarding women participating in combat and heavy lifting specialty training, Army Surgeon General Study of June 2015, and the United States Marine Corps Assessment of Women in Service Assignments.

<sup>10</sup> Herres, *The Presidential Commission*, iii.

<sup>11</sup> Miller et al., *The Extent of Restrictions*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Herres, *The Presidential Commission*, 24-26.

<sup>13</sup> Kristy N. Kamarck, *Women in Combat: Issues for Congress*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, September 2015, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42075.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2015) [page 6]

<sup>14</sup> Herres, *The Presidential Commission*, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>18</sup> Miller et al., *The Extent of Restrictions*, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Kristy N. Kamarck, *Women in Combat: Issues for Congress*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, September 2015, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42075.pdf> quoted from Department of Defense, *Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule*, January 13, 1994. As defined in the Direct Combat Exclusion Rule, "Direct ground combat is engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons, while being exposed to hostile fire and to a high probability of direct physical contact with the hostile force's personnel. Direct ground combat takes place well forward on the battlefield while locating and closing with the enemy to defeat them by fire, maneuver, or shock effect." Kristy N. Kamarck, *Women in Combat: Issues for Congress*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, September 2015, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42075.pdf> quoted from Department of Defense, *Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule*, January 13, 1994.

<sup>20</sup> Justin, Fishel, “Military leaders lift ban on women in combat roles,” *Foxnews.com*, 24 January 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/01/24/panetta-opens-combat-roles-to-women/> (accessed 15 October 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Mathew Rosenberg and Dave Philipps, “All Combat Roles Now Open to Women, Defense Secretary Says,” *NYtimes.com*, 3 December 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/04/us/politics/combat-military-women-ash-carter.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/04/us/politics/combat-military-women-ash-carter.html?_r=0) (accessed 3 December 2015).

<sup>22</sup> Center for Military Readiness Policy Analysis, “New British Ministry of Defence Review Paper Shreds Case for Women in Ground Close Combat (GCC),” [cmrlink.org](http://www.cmrlink.org), [http://www.cmrlink.org/content/home/37629/new\\_british\\_report\\_shreds\\_case\\_for\\_women\\_in\\_direct\\_ground\\_combat](http://www.cmrlink.org/content/home/37629/new_british_report_shreds_case_for_women_in_direct_ground_combat) (accessed 12 August 2015). [page 3]

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>24</sup> William J. Gregor, Information Paper, Subject: Physical Suitability of Women for Assignment to Combat and Heavy Work Military Occupational Specialties, 26 April 2012, <http://www.cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/Images/CMRDocuments/Gregor-Info-Paper-20120508.pdf> (accessed 23 August 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Hugh P. Scott, Letter, To Congressman Howard McKeon, Chairman House Armed Services Committee, Subject: Physical and physiological issues associated with assignment of women to direct combat units, 22 June 2012, <http://cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/hscott-mckeon-wicc.pdf> (accessed 23 August 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Center for Military Readiness Policy Analysis, “Co-Ed Combat Tests Hazardous to Women’s Health,” [cmrlink.org](http://www.cmrlink.org), [http://www.cmrlink.org/content/home/37700/co\\_ed\\_combat\\_tests\\_hazardous\\_to\\_women\\_s\\_health](http://www.cmrlink.org/content/home/37700/co_ed_combat_tests_hazardous_to_women_s_health) (accessed 12 August 2015), [page 1-2] “The US Army Medical Command compared male/female injury rates in formerly all-male units such as field and air defense artillery. Previously undisclosed data show that female soldiers suffered injuries averaging *double* men’s rates in specific MOSs. In the Field Artillery Surveyor Meteorological Crewmember MOS, for example, injuries for women were approximately 112% higher than men’s. In the Bradley fighting vehicle system maintainer MOS, the rate was 133% higher. Another document provided by the US Army Institute of Public Health reports that in basic combat training, approximate average injury rates for women were 114% higher than men’s. In training for engineers and military police, they were 108% higher.”

<sup>27</sup> Rowan Scarborough, “Army women hurt more often in combat training, experience more mental health issues,” *The Washington Times*, 17 December 2015, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/dec/17/army-women-hurt-more-often-in-combat-training-expe/?page=all> (accessed 18 December 2015).

<sup>28</sup> BGen Smith Jr., pre-decisional memorandum, subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment.

<sup>29</sup> Kamarck, *Women in Combat*, 13.

<sup>30</sup> Paul O. Davis, “Looking for a Few Good Women,” *The Marine Corps Gazette*, 98, no. 7 (2014), <https://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/response-looking-few-good-women> (accessed 17 August 2015).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> James E. Amos, “Expeditionary Force 21 – Forward and Ready: Now and in the Future,” [mccdc.marines.mil](http://www.mccdc.marines.mil), 4 March 2014, <http://www.mccdc.marines.mil/ef21> (accessed 15 October 2015), 11.

<sup>33</sup> The Culture Trip. “A History of Female Empowerment: The Mino of Benin.” [Theculturetrip.com](http://www.theculturetrip.com), <http://www.theculturetrip.com/Africa/benin/articles/a-history-of-female-empowerment-the-mino-of-benin/> (accessed 30 August 2015). “In Greek Myth, the *Amazons* were a terrifying group of women. A matriarchal society, the women governed and fought, whilst the men performed household tasks and served to impregnate their superiors. This tribe is a fantastical myth, yet their namesakes, the ‘Dahomey Amazons’, were decidedly real, a brave and terrifying all-female militia who ferociously fought for and defended the country of Benin, then known as Dahomey.”

<sup>34</sup> Paul O. Davis, “Looking for a Few Good Women,” *The Marine Corps Gazette*, 98, no. 7 (2014), <https://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/response-looking-few-good-women> (accessed 17 August 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Hugh P. Scott (United States Navy, Retired), interview by the author, 24 August 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Lolita C. Baldor, "Marine general predicts Pentagon vows to maintain equal standards for men and women won't last," *US News.com*, 8 January 2011, <http://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2016-01-08/marine-general-predicts-lower-standards-for-women-in-combat?page=2> (accessed 8 January 2016).

<sup>37</sup> Kamarck, *Women in Combat*, 13 and US Marine Corps Concepts and Programs, "Almanac," *Marine Corps Concepts and Programs.com*, <https://marinecorpconceptsandprograms.com/almanac> (accessed 25 September 2015). Women comprise approximately 7.7 percent of the Marine Corps with 6.8 percent officers and 7.8 percent enlisted.

<sup>38</sup> Email regarding Marine Corps End Strength and Attrition Statistics, Manpower Information Systems and Technology Branch (MIT), Manpower Information Division (MI), Head Quarters Marine Corps, 22 October 2015.

<sup>39</sup> G.S. Newbold, "Seven Myths About Women in Combat," *Time.com*, 14 March 2013, <http://nation.time.com/20130314/seven-myths-about-women-in-combat/print/> (accessed 3 August 2015).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> US Marine Corps Concepts and Programs, "Almanac," *Marine Corps Concepts and Programs.com*, <https://marinecorpconceptsandprograms.com/almanac> (accessed 25 September 2015).

<sup>42</sup> Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs, "CNO Calls Diversity a Strategic Imperative," navy.mil, 30 June 2006, [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=24463](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=24463) (accessed 21 November 2015). In 2006, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Mike Mullen who eventually became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called for diversity as a strategic imperative, defining it as "having the cultural skills, having the diverse backgrounds in order to literally achieve our mission is really critical." Admiral Mullen further noted that, "diversity is about creating opportunities for all, not breaking down barriers for some."

<sup>43</sup> Pentagon Brief, "Mabus: 1 in 4 Marine recruits should be women," *Pentagon Brief* (blog), 28 May 2015, <http://pentagonbrief.blogspot.com/2015/05/mabus-1-in-4-marine-recruits-should-be.html> (accessed 11 August 2015).

<sup>44</sup> Pew Research Center. "Small Share of Americans in Active Military Duty." Pew Research.Org, 23 May 2012. <http://www.pewresearch.org/daily-number/small-share-of-americans-in-active-military-duty/> (accessed 23 January 2016).

<sup>45</sup> Lance M. Bacon, "Marine recruiters don't expect sharp rise in female accessions," *Marine Corps Times*, 20 December 2015, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/12/20/marine-recruiters-dont-expect-sharp-rise-female-accessions/77382086/> (accessed 20 December 2015). Lieutenant General Brilakis, Deputy Commandant for Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs, has stated that while "recruiters would be given new quotas to recruit more women," the Marine Corps had already been pushing female recruiting over the past three to four years with some success, but only expects a little more than 10 percent of new Marine enlisted and officers to be women this fiscal year.

<sup>46</sup> US Marine Corps Concepts and Programs, "Almanac," *Marine Corps Concepts and Programs.com*, <https://marinecorpconceptsandprograms.com/almanac> (accessed 25 September 2015). Marine Corps statistics reveal that there is a sharp drop-off of enlisted women Marines between the rank of sergeant to staff sergeant of 16.25 percent to 8.74 percent and for women Marine officers between the rank of captain to major of 31.70 percent to 14.53 percent. There is another sharp drop-off from major to lieutenant colonel of 14.53 percent to 4.40 percent.

<sup>47</sup> Hope Hodge Seck, "Opening Marine Infantry Jobs to Women Will Raise Recruiting Cost: RAND," *Military.com*, 8 December 2015, <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/12/08/opening-marine-infantry-jobs-women-raise-recruiting-cost-rand.html> (accessed 4 January 2016).

<sup>48</sup> Center for Military Readiness Policy Analysis, "Co-Ed Combat Tests Hazardous to Women's Health." cmrlink.org, [http://www.cmrlink.org/content/home/37700/co\\_ed\\_combat\\_tests\\_hazardous\\_to\\_women\\_s\\_health](http://www.cmrlink.org/content/home/37700/co_ed_combat_tests_hazardous_to_women_s_health), (accessed 12 August 2015).

<sup>49</sup> Robert B. Neller, "A Message from the Commandant," *marines.mil*, September 2015, <http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/cmc/Home.aspx> (accessed 28 September 2015).

<sup>50</sup> BGen Smith Jr., pre-decisional memorandum, subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment. The Marine Corps' assessment integrated multiple Marine Corps analytical agencies and a number of reputable research agencies that participated in the study to include the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Center for Naval Analysis, the University of Pittsburgh, and the RAND Corporation, to name a few.

<sup>51</sup> Ray Mabus, United States Secretary of the Navy, "DoN Talent Management" (address, Brigade of Midshipmen, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, 13 May 2015).

<sup>52</sup> BGen Smith Jr., pre-decisional memorandum, subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment.

<sup>53</sup> Dan Lamothe, "Marine experiment finds women get injured more frequently, shoot less accurately than men," *WashingtonPost.com*, 10 September 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/09/10/marine-experiment-finds-women-get-injured-more-frequently-shoot-less-accurately-than-men/> (accessed 15 October 2015).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Hope Hodge Seck, "Navy Secretary criticizes Marines' infantry study in interview," *Marine Corps Times*, 11 September 2015, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/09/11/secnav-criticizes-marines-infantry-study-interview/72059308/> (accessed 11 September 2015).

<sup>56</sup> BGen Smith Jr., pre-decisional memorandum, subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment.

<sup>57</sup> Hope Hodge Seck, "Last IOC in Marine infantry experiment drop female officers," *Marine Corps Times*, 7 April 2015, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/04/07/last-ioc-in-marine-experiment-drops-two-officers/25418867/> (accessed 15 October 2015).

<sup>58</sup> BGen Smith Jr., pre-decisional memorandum, subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> BGen Smith Jr., pre-decisional memorandum, subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment. "The National Defense Authorization Acts of 2014 and 2015 served as the impetus for each of the Services to validate that standards across all occupational specialties are operationally relevant, occupation-specific, gender-neutral, and reflect the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the tasks associated with a particular occupational specialty."

<sup>61</sup> Gina Harkins, "Marines unveil new gender-neutral standards for 29 jobs," *Marine Corps Times*, 5 October 2015, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/10/02/marines-unveil-new-gender-neutral-standards-29-jobs/73173524/> (accessed 5 October 2015).

<sup>62</sup> BGen Smith Jr., pre-decisional memorandum, subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Hope Hodge Seck, "Mabus: I'm not asking for women-in-combat exemptions," *Marine Corps Times*, 15 September 2015, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/09/15/mabus-m-not-asking-women-combat-exemptions/72306514/> (accessed 15 September 2015).

<sup>66</sup> Pete Winn, "General Dempsey: If Women Can't Meet Military Standard, Pentagon Will Ask 'Does it Really Have to Be That High'", *cnsnews.com*, 25 January 2013, <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/gen-dempsey-if-women-can-t-meet-military-standard-pentagon-will-ask-does-it-really-have> (accessed 6 September 2015).

<sup>67</sup> Michelle Tan, "Congressman wants proof standards weren't fudged for female Ranger School attendees," *Armytimes.com*, 23 September 2015. <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/09/22/congressman-wants-proof-standards-werent-fudged-female-ranger-school-graduates/72651796/> (accessed 23 September 2015).

<sup>68</sup> Susan Keating, "Was it Fixed? Army General Told Subordinates: 'A Woman Will Graduate Ranger School,' Sources Say," *People.com*, 25 September 2015. <http://www.people.com/article/female-ranger-school-graduation-planned-advance> (accessed 6 October 2015).

<sup>69</sup> Brian Witte, "Naval Academy head says school could produce female SEALs," *Navytimes.com*, 28 September 2015, <http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/09/28/naval-academy-head-says-school-could-produce-female-seals/72977046/> (accessed 28 September 2015).

<sup>70</sup> Ash Carter, United States Secretary of Defense, Address, American Legion National Convention, Baltimore, MD, 1 September 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech-View/Article/615534/american-legion-national-convention> (accessed 1 December 2015) and Gwen Ifill, Interview with Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, "Navy secretary: Gender should not bar women from Marine combat roles," *Newshour*, PBS, 22 September 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/navy-secretary-gender-bar-women-marine-combat-roles/> (accessed 1 December 2015). During a speech to the American Legion National Convention on September 1, 2015, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter acknowledged that "when put to the test, not everyone – not everyone, only a select few, will meet our standards of combat excellence," suggesting women would be held to gender-neutral standards. Similarly, during an interview with PBS, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus acknowledged that "what my view is, set high standards. Make sure those standards have something to do with the job. And then whoever meets those standards, gender is not crucial. If you can meet the standards, you should be able to serve," also suggesting standards would not be altered for women.

<sup>71</sup> BGen Smith Jr., pre-decisional memorandum, subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment.

<sup>72</sup> US Constitution Online, "US Constitution, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 14," [usconstitution.net](http://www.usconstitution.net), [http://www.usconstitution.net/xconst\\_A1Sec8.html](http://www.usconstitution.net/xconst_A1Sec8.html) (accessed 8 November 2015).

<sup>73</sup> Center for Military Readiness Policy Analysis, "Pentagon Pushes "Diversity" for Women in Land Combat," [cmrlink.org](http://www.cmrlink.org), <http://www.cmrlink.org/content/military-culture-and-diversity/34572/pentagon-pushes-diversity-for-women-in-land-combat> (accessed 11 September 2015). Women are being promoted at rates equal to or faster than men. The Center for Military Readiness cited a briefing by Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness Vee Penrod, "...if you look at promotions in fields where women currently serve or are partially open, that there was no disadvantage in the promotion rate of women."

<sup>74</sup> Herres, *The Presidential Commission*, 45.

<sup>75</sup> Senate, *Women in Combat: Testimony of General Robert H. Barrow, USMC (Ret) Former Commandant, US Marine Corps, before the Manpower and Personnel Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services*, 102nd Cong., 1st sess., June 18, 1991, Microfiche S201-24, Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993, Part 6, Manpower & Personnel, Congressional Information Service, 1991, 895.

<sup>76</sup> Fox News, "Marines expected to ask to keep some combat jobs closed to women," *FoxNews.com*, 18 September 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2015/09/18/marines-reportedly-will-ask-to-keep-some-combat-jobs-closed-to-women> (accessed 18 September 2015). On behalf of General Dunford, on 18 September 2015, it was reported by FoxNews.com that a Marine official said the Marine Corps would request an exception to policy to exclude women from serving in infantry and artillery units, but not its armor units.

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